

**The Comic History
Of England
part(13)**

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The Comic History Of England

Gilbert Abbott A'Beckett



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CHAPTER THE SECOND. WILLIAM THE THIRD.



WILLIAM was now en garçon upon the throne of England; but, to use the words of a quaint commentator, "he missed his mis-sus" very grievously. When spoken to on business, he for several weeks returned no other answer than an intimation that business might experience that fate which attends a dramatic production when an audience will not listen to a word of it. The Princess Anne, his sister-in-law, sought a reconciliation through Somers, the lord-keeper, whose reception was not by any means as mild as a summer's day, and who congratulated himself on having the royal conscience rather than the royal temper in his keeping. The keeper, however, was determined to keep it up, and so importuned William to be reconciled to Anne, that his majesty ultimately roared out, "Do as you like, but don't bother me, for I'm not fit for business, nor indeed for anything," Somers arranged an interview between sister Anne and the king, who gave her St. James's Palace as a residence, and a quantity of the jewels, which the late queen, whom he called his "duck of diamonds,"

had left behind her. The Marlboroughs, who had gone quite out of favour with the king, but were the right and left hand of Anne, expected to have a share of the reconciliation, and an interest in its proceeds.

Early in 1695, a glut of unpaid washing-bills which were floating about the neighbourhood of all the barracks, threw a doubt on the honesty, or at all events on the prudence, of the soldiery; and it was determined by the Government that an inquiry should be made into the causes of this paltry irregularity.

The disgraceful discovery was instantly arrived at, that the soldiers could not pay their scores because the gallant fellows had not received their salaries, Corruption and bribery of the lowest kind in the highest quarters were soon brought to light, and it was proved that the secretary of the treasury had taken a large percentage on the money he had to pay, as a sort of bonus for giving himself the trouble to hand it over.

Sir John Trevor, the Speaker of the House of Commons, turned out a shocking old rogue, and was found to have been in the habit of receiving bribes for putting questions from the chair, or for smuggling measures through their various stages.

He had, in fact, undertaken to get bills done for anyone who brought him a tempting douceur, and a sum of £1050 was distinctly traced to the pocket of the venerable knave from the promoters of the Orphans' Bill.

He was punished by being compelled to put from the chair of the House the resolution that he, Sir John Trevor, was unworthy of sitting in the House, and deserved to be kicked out of it. The "Ayes" decidedly had it, and Sir John Trevor would have had it too, if he had not instantly withdrawn, to avoid the unpleasantness of forcible ejection.

Mr. Hungerford, the chairman of the committee on the same bill, was also accused, when, yielding to a loud cry of "Turn him out!" mingled with occasional mutterings of "Throw him over!" the dis-honourable member sneaked away from the senate. A

further series of corruptions would certainly have been detected had not William determined to avoid further scandal, or at all events further exposure, by dissolving the Parliament.

James was constantly urging his friend Louis to invade England, and he was at length persuaded to collect a fleet and army on the coast, while James himself sent over Sir George Barclay and the Duke of Berwick to attempt an insurrection. The idea of a couple of adventurers coming over to upset the Government was of itself absurd, and the affair was rendered more preposterous by Barclay having taken a lodging in Hatton Garden, where a garret formed his place of business for conducting the affairs of the conspiracy. A simple notification to “ring the top bell,” was all that pointed out this nest of treason to those who took an interest in its progress. Even the modern accessories of a boy and a board-room, with a provisional committee, a dozen chairs, and a dining-table, were wanting to this desperate scheme, and indeed, while Barclay was away in order to get his meals—for there was no cooking on the premises—a recommendation to put letters through the door, and leave messages with the porter at the lodge, formed the entire instructions upon which the subordinate conspirators had to act when they chanced, in the absence of their chief, to call at the chambers.

Such were the contemptible arrangements of this project for turning the thrown upside down, and burying, or at all events, bonnetting, William in the ruins of the outraged upholstery. We cannot be surprised that its progress was not by any means encouraging, but Barclay had heard of a plot to assassinate the king, in which one Sir William Perkins was concerned, and thus the since celebrated firm of Barclay and Perkins may be considered to have originated in a partnership project for brewing the storm of revolution. Barclay thought well of the scheme, and was introduced to one Porter; but in those days Barclay and Perkins turned up their noses at Porter, “who was a drunkard and a blab,” and they therefore were unwilling to put any faith

in him. Barclay, however, resolved to persevere in his regicide scheme, and applied to one Captain Fisher, who lived in King Street, Westminster, and was understood to be open to an offer as decidedly as if there were written over his door, "Murders carefully performed. Assassins' work in general."



The proposal of Barclay, whatever it may have been, was not sufficiently liberal; for Fisher would only undertake to kill one of the royal coach-horses between Hyde Park and St.

James's, but he declined any higher responsibility at the price that was offered. Barclay called Fisher a fool, and they never came to terms; but the former resolved to make the attempt on William's life, and the romantic Green of Turnham, over which the king was about to pass, on a day appointed, was selected as the scene of the treasonable experiment.

The party of assassins had swelled to thirty-five, who planted themselves in ambush behind some bushes, when news was brought that the king had changed his mind, and would not come to Turnham Green; "Which," says Burnet, "was enough to turn 'em pale with anger and disappointment."

There being some fear that the plot would be discovered,

Barclay sneaked off to France, abandoning his fellow-conspirators to their fate, and believing that his old companion Perkins would be nicely left in the lurch; but by a strange coincidence, that personage had entertained a similar notion with regard to his associate, and had got away first, so that the recreant couple had been equally deep in their cowardice and duplicity.

It appeared that Fisher, who had volunteered the horrible office of knacker upon the coach-horse of the king, disclosed to Lord Portland the particulars of the plot, and the result was that several more of the traitors, finding confession the order of the day, went forward to tell not only all they knew, but a great deal more that they had invented for the sake of having something to communicate. This glut of confidential intelligence was so embarrassing, that the Government did not know what to believe or what to doubt; but nevertheless a proclamation was issued, offering £1000 and a pardon to any gentleman involved in the scheme, who would be fool enough to criminate himself, and villain enough to betray his accomplices. There were, of course, several candidates for the cash, and disclosures at £1000 each poured in at such a rapid rate, that it was difficult to meet the demands made on the treasury, on account of the news for which the Government had advertised. To make a long story short, several were tried, found guilty, and executed, for having shared in the treasonable design against William, and among them was one Keys, a trumpeter, who was a mere instrument—like his own trumpet—in the hands of any one by whom he could be played upon.

William's popularity increased, on account of the plots that had been put into operation against him; for it is a beautiful trait in the English character, that the people will become suddenly attracted towards any one who seems to be an object of dislike to others. Unfortunately, however, this generosity is somewhat inconsistent in its nature, for it is usually accompanied by an excess of illiberality in an opposite direction, and if a man is a martyr to a spirit of hostility, the sympathy evinced for him

by the public is joined with a savage desire to make martyrs of his enemies. Upon this principle, poor Sir John Fenwick was pounced upon for having compassed or imagined the death of the king, and though there is every reason to believe that such an idea was quite out of the compass of his wildest imagination, he was brought to the scaffold.

It is doubtful, notwithstanding the fuss we now make—and, indeed, have been making ever since the event—about the glorious Revolution of 1688, whether we really had anything like full value for the trouble it occasioned us. However numerous the blessings we have since derived from it, we must contend that it did not pay in the first instance; for as long as England derived no other advantage than William for its king, the good achieved by the Revolution of 1688 must be considered rather more than dubious. He spent his own time and his new country's money in sustaining his own title against the attacks made upon it by foreign powers, whose interest in supporting the doctrine of the "right divine of kings to govern wrong," kept them constantly in a state of active sympathy with James, whose misconduct had caused his forfeiture of the crown, which would otherwise have been legitimately his beyond the power of any one on earth to take it away from him. William was consequently at perpetual warfare with some of the continental states; and it was only when he got into discredit with his subjects that he seemed to rise in favour with some of the absolute monarchs, who then, for the first time, appeared disposed to bear with him. Louis of France listened to the terms of an arrangement; but he never intended to keep faith with William, and was, in fact, intriguing with Spain to defeat the very project he pretended to be willing to carry out with the duped majesty of England. It was evident that the British public did not look with favour upon the individual that had been chosen to enact the part of king; and though, like the frogs in the fable, the people had rejoiced in being relieved from the devouring stork of absolutism embodied in the

Stuarts, the Dutch log of which William formed the type was quite as distasteful to the nation in general.

It would be most unprofitable to unravel the tangled thread of events that made up the complicated but most uninteresting annals of this worrying reign, which was distinguished by the multiplicity and the pettiness of the disputes between the prince and a portion of his people.

The loggishness of the sovereign seemed to affect the whole nation with the loggerheads; and not only were parties arrayed against each other, but on some occasions the Lords and the Commons came into very serious collision.

The disputes in which William was involved with foreign governments were exceedingly costly to his own country, but he finally, on the 7th of September, 1701, after having been a party to several treaties that had been either violated or "gone off," entered into a "second grand alliance" at the Hague, with various powers. By this arrangement all the parties were bound to provide men and money, which their people of course had to pay; and the emperor, who had made himself liable to furnish a contingency, was so excessively hard up, that he was compelled to borrow the money upon his quicksilver mines; but no silver, however quick, could keep pace with the rapidity with which the money was called for and got rid of.

We will now return for a few minutes to James the Second, who was in a very bad way at St. Germain's, and was understood to have been dying all the summer. At length, on Friday, the 2nd of September, he was taken very bad indeed with a fainting fit, but got better, until another and another still succeeded; and the last fit was stronger than the first. On Tuesday, the 13th, Louis came to his bedside to say "How d'ye do?" but poor James was unable to answer the polite and obliging inquiry, for he was almost without consciousness. Louis kindly endeavoured to comfort his last moments by promising to protect his family, and treat the nominal Prince of Wales as actual King of England,

but this recognition was not likely to do much good either to the dead or the living, as the only parties who were capable of giving it effect, namely, the English people, would have nothing whatever to do with it.

Poor James, who was dosed with a great deal of medicine, and swallowed no end of James's powders, was now beyond the aid of medical skill, and he died on the 16th of September, 1701, at the age of sixty-seven. An attempt was made to pitchfork this very indifferent sovereign into the Roman Calendar as a first-rate saint; but there has never been any disposition among the English to award him the honours of martyrdom.

William was by no means the thing in his own health, when the news of the death of James was brought to him. A report was indeed spread that, like a bill at thirty days, he had only a month to run; but this rumour was circulated by the friends of Louis the Fourteenth, who fancied that if William was once out of the way, the grand monarch might be as potent in Europe as the bull of fabled lore was at his ease in the china shop. William had been in Holland, where he was really dangerously ill; but he contrived to get back to England, where he dissolved Parliament in November, 1701, and called a new one together, which met on the 31st of December, to see the old year out and the new year in, and for the despatch of business.

The king made a long and rather an effective speech, which had been written expressly for the occasion by Lord Somers, and had a great effect in giving an impetus to the waning fidelity of the people towards the sovereign of their selection. They might, however, have exclaimed with the poet, that they "never loved a young—or old—gazelle," without the usual unhappy result; for just as they were getting to know

William well, and love him—or at least to pretend to do so—he was attacked in such a manner as to make him "sure to die."

He had been a great deal shaken by the severity of the winter; but it was hoped he would recover in the spring, which

he probably might have done, but for an accident that befel him on the road between Kensington and Hammersmith. "A-hunting he would go, would go" in that savage suburb, whose wildness is remarkable to this day, and his horse coming to a block of stone, was unfortunate enough to find it a regular stumbling-block.

William was thrown with some force, and experienced a fracture of the collar-bone, when, having been removed to Hampton Court, the medical men began to quarrel about the treatment of his majesty.

They of course made no bones about setting the collar; but a dispute arose about the necessity for bleeding the king, and in the heat of the argument, the physicians all pulled at his pulse with such fury, that they unset the bone "while intending," says Burnet, "to make a dead set at one another." The doctors continuing fractious, the fracture got worse, and at length, on the 8th of March, 1702, the royal patient expired.

He had reigned thirteen years and a half, and was in the fifty-second year of his age, when the fatal catastrophe happened. The character of William will not add much to the reputation of British royalty in former days, when sovereigns were so bad that they would never have been allowed to pass current in times like these, in which there is a disposition to examine closely the weight and quality of the metal, He was by no means popular when alive, and bad characters do not, like old port, improve by keeping.

The state of parties during his reign made him the centre in which a great deal of odium met, for he happened to form in his own person the embodiment, or rather the representative, of certain principles which were regarded with the utmost aversion by many.

The most valuable attribute of William, which has handed him down as an object of respect and even of enthusiasm in the minds of some, is the fact of the question of constitutional monarchy having been settled in the affirmative by his elevation to the throne of England. His case is certainly valuable as a precedent, but its greatest value consists in the probability that its

existence will spare the country hereafter from the disagreeable necessity of being obliged to follow it.

English sovereigns have learned the possibility of their being set aside like James the Second, and replaced by one who, like William the Third, owed his power to the will of the people. Such Revolutions as that of 1688, notwithstanding the glorious character that belongs to it, are better as beacons for rulers than as precedents for the people, since a change of dynasty, however constitutionally effected, must be at all times an unpleasant, not to say a deplorable process.

William the Third is entitled to the very highest admiration for having succeeded in holding firmly a position from which the slightest vacillation would have inevitably shaken him. His early stipulation for all the throne or none, and his repudiation of the right of his wife to interfere, though domestically harsh, was politically respectable.

The constitution underwent during his reign some of the most substantial and valuable repairs that were ever bestowed upon it, either before or since, notwithstanding some very high-sounding nominal advantages that the country has in ancient and modern times experienced. It was in William's reign that the Commons took the purse-strings of the country tightly in hand, and the censorship of the Press was, during the same period, permitted to expire. The judges were secured in their places during good behaviour; and members of the Privy Council being compelled, by the Act of Settlement, to sign the measures they proposed, we obtained from William's reign the blessing of a responsible Cabinet. It is true that official heads fell more frequently before than since, but the great salubrity of the provision to which we allude is shown in the fact that it has secured the good conduct of ministers so effectually, as to have preserved their heads upon their shoulders. It is a curious truth that the National Debt increased marvellously during William's reign, and there would seem, therefore, to be some reason for the common assertion, that this

tremendous liability is a mark of our national prosperity.

It certainly proves our credit to be good, as a load of debt in the case of an individual would make it evident that his tradesmen had trusted him; but no one will contend that, on that account, he must be considered more prosperous.

It was the great increase of the Government expenses that had caused the augmentation of the National Debt, and afforded another illustration of the infallible principle, that nothing good can be had without liberally paying for. We might get a republic done for us no doubt at a hundredth part or less of the cost of our present excellent constitutional monarchy; but we do not think any reasonable person would feel very anxious to try the cheap and nasty experiment. Some historians who have preceded us, fall into what we consider the error of eulogising William as if he had been the author of all the good that occurred in his reign, when the fact is that a great deal was accomplished, not alone without his agency, but actually in spite of him.

When he came, or rather when he was called to the throne, the nation had profited by experience, and had become equally sensible to the dangers of democratic excess and of absolute monarchy.

The tyranny of the Republic, no less than that of the Stuarts, had pointed out the safety of a middle course between the two sorts of despotism; and William, as a very middling person in every respect, was well adapted for the situation that appeared to be made for him. It was owing to no particular merit on his part that his reign was not arbitrary, for he sometimes tried his hardest to make it so; but the good sense of the nation, sharpened by the troubles it had lately passed through, preserved it against further victimisation at the hands of either kings or demagogues.

As the first really constitutional sovereign, William is, we repeat, entitled to our respect and admiration; but we must not forget that the people themselves made the mould to which, we will admit, he was exceedingly well adapted, for he was pliable enough to take the right impress, and sufficiently firm to give body

and substance to the nation's beau ideal of a limited monarchy. THE accession of Anne to the throne of her Anne-cestors, as Hume in a most humiliating attempt at humour hath it, was hailed with general satisfaction, for it usually happens that a new reign is welcomed on the old principle of "anything for a change," and most people expect that some good may come out of it. It will be remembered that Anne was originally a Miss Hyde, being the child of James by his first wife—the daughter of Old Hyde, afterwards Earl of Clarendon; and she had been married to the young man known among his familiar friends as "Georgey Porgey, Prince of Denmark."

It is a beautiful remark of Thomson, that "the women never can keep quiet;" and Anne soon realised this estimate of the female character by declaring war against France with the utmost promptitude. The Commons voted the supplies necessary.



CHAPTER THE THIRD.

QUEEN ANNE.

THE Dutch and the Germans perceiving that the King of France had “got no friends,” felt that the time had arrived for hitting him, and echoed the English declaration of war, though their puny voices came upon the French monarch’s ear like the penny whistle after the full-blown ophicleide.

Marlborough was appointed generalissimo of the allied army, and he certainly proved himself worthy of the confidence reposed in him. He made the Low Countries lower than they had ever been before, and subsequently throwing himself upon Bavaria, he swept the independent elector before him, leaving that unhappy individual to make his election between flight and compromise. On the 12th of August, 1704, Marlborough observed the enemy marking out a camp near Blenheim, and merely muttering to himself, “So so, my fine fellows; that’s what you’re after, is it?” he resolved on their instant discomforture. He determined to give battle, and on the 13th, notwithstanding a swampy country, which greatly tested his determination to stick at nothing, he commenced an attack in three columns, each of which behaved so gallantly as to have deserved a supplementary column to its memory. The contest was exceedingly fierce on both sides; but the superior skill of Marlborough rendered the English victorious.

The general was rewarded by the grant of an estate, upon which was built a magnificent mansion called Blenheim, after the place near which the battle was fought; and future Dukes of Marlborough have turned many an honest, though not a very honourable shilling, by sharing with the housekeeper and other servants the gratuities received from the visitors to this splendid monument of a country’s generosity.

England could not rest satisfied without interfering in the disputes of other states, and had lent a helping hand to the Arch-

duke Charles of Austria, who was playing a sort of game at bob-cherry with the Spanish crown, which hung suspended over his head in a very tempting manner.

A fleet was sent under Admiral Sir George Booke to convey the archduke to Lisbon; and Booke, who was as cunning as an old crow, proceeded towards Barcelona, which would have been nuts for him had he succeeded in taking it. In this attempt, however, he failed; but putting his vessel astern, and altering her gib towards Gibraltar, he made an attack on the fortress, which he took with the utmost facility.

For this service the conqueror was rewarded with an empty vote of thanks, and he had no sooner got the copy of the resolution than he put it in his pipe and smoked it according to some; or, as others say, he merely lighted his pipe with the valueless document.

Domestic affairs did not progress very pleasantly, and the English began to quarrel with the Scotch, who evinced their national propensity to come to the scratch in a very annoying manner.

The Parliaments of the two countries came into decided collision and the English legislature having prohibited the importation of Scotch heifers, "there arose," says Swindle, "a heffervescence of the most deplorable character.

" The queen proposed that there should be an immediate union of the two Parliaments; but the little matter could not be arranged; and as the two negatives could not be induced to make an affirmative, Anne put an end to both by a dissolution. In the summer of 1705, Marlborough, who had been waiting on the banks of the Blue Moselle, forced the French lines, and very hard lines they proved both to the vanquished and the victors. We must here be permitted to introduce the beautiful episode of Sir Isaac Newton, and turn from the turmoils of war to the peaceful pursuits of science. We are sure we shall not be accused of irrelevancy if we step aside from the rushing stream of history which, like a cataract, is hurrying us rapidly along,

and enjoy a few moments of calm reflection on the life and merits of the great philosopher.

Isaac Newton was born in 1642, and came as unusually little into the world as he went greatly, and indeed gigantically, out of it. His mother declared he might have been put into a quart pot at his birth, and therefore, had he been always judged by the rule of “measures not men,” he would never have attained the

elevation he has arrived at. In early boyhood he displayed a great mechanical turn, and buying a box of carpenter’s tools, he got perhaps the first insight into plane geometry, and deduced from a few wise saws, a variety of modern instances.

He was very fond of measuring time, but not by its loss alone, for he constructed a wooden clock, and ascertained the position of the sun by driving nails into the wall—hitting, no doubt, the right one on the head very readily. Having a shrewd suspicion that there was something in the wind, he would occupy himself in leaping with it and against it, to ascertain its power.

These pranks did not elevate him much in his class, of which he was generally at the bottom; for the routine of his school education did not include trials of strength with old

Boreas, and the other exciting pursuits in which Master Isaac Newton indulged himself. In course of time he was removed to Cambridge, where the works of Des-Cartes fell into his hands, and where those ponderous volumes, from their soporific effect upon youth, often fall out of the hands they have fallen into. Young Newton grasped them with energy, and he soon profited amazingly by their contents, which set his own mind at work to add to the stock of discovery already in existence.

During the great plague in 1665, he was compelled to leave Cambridge for a rural retirement, though the rustication was not of the ordinary kind: and while sitting in an orchard, “his custom sometimes of an afternoon, an apple fell upon his head with considerable violence.



Beginning to reason from this “argumentum ad hominem,” he asked himself why every other object did not at once fall to the earth; and he even speculated on the possibility of the moon alighting heavily, and leaving him in a literally moon-struck condition. It was some time before he discovered the laws of gravitation by which the apple had been carried to his head; and it is not true, as is commonly believed, that he was struck all of a heap with the great truths that he has given to posterity.

They were published in 1687, at the expense of the Royal Society, under the title of the “Principia;” and it is a curious fact, that the critics of the day were not altogether pleased with it. Some few pronounced it “a work that ought to be on every gentleman’s sideboard,” and our old friend, the evening paper, patronised it as a production that might “repay perusal;” but some very learned, very cold, very dull, and very stupid, “gentlemen of the press” regretted that Mr. Newton should have wasted so much time upon a work of such a description.

” They were angry with him for what they considered his levity in popularising serious matters, and advised him to keep his hands off the moon, which was far too lofty a subject for him to meddle with.

A curious puzzle has been suggested by a celebrated arithmetician, who has expressed a desire to know how many of the works that the reviewers say will “repay perusal” are likely to “repay the printer.”

It has been noticed as a very unaccountable circumstance, that Newton never made any important addition to scientific discovery after he had completed his forty-fifth year; though he lived to be eighty-four, and had therefore got beyond the period at which the poet’s apostrophe, “O Vir be-eighty,” might have been addressed to him.

He was exceedingly fond of tobacco, and it is believed that he felt more at home in his astronomical reflections when he could envelop himself in a cloud of his own blowing.

The old saying, that “There is no smoke without fire,” received an apt confirmation from the fact that Newton was scarcely ever without a pipe in his mouth during the most brilliant and blazing period of his genius.

We now return to Anne, who, anno 1705, went to Cambridge, where she knighted Mr. Newton, who was the Mathematical Professor at Trinity College.

We feel we ought not to pass over in silence a piece of wonderful self-denial on the part of a lawyer, which gives to this reign a peculiarity that ought to make it stand apart from all that have preceded or followed it. There had been formerly an old custom of making a present to the Lord Chancellor

on New Year’s Day, at the cost of the practitioners, who usually contributed about £1500, which previous keepers of the royal conscience had most unconscientiously pocketed.

To the great honour of Lord Chancellor Cowper be it spoken, he declined the proffered bonus, which appeared to him to

resemble somewhat too closely a bribe, and thus set an early example of disinterestedness, by which the tone of judicial morality was improved, and has at last reached the perfection we have at the present day the satisfaction of witnessing.

The subject of the Union between England and Scotland, which had from time to time been discussed, was at length taken into serious consideration at a place called the Cockpit, from which the reader must not infer that it was considered as a sporting event, and that the betting men were chiefly interested in promoting it. After a great deal of disagreement, the preliminaries were ultimately settled, and on the 6th of March, 1707, the royal assent was given to the Act of Union.

There were no less than twenty-five articles, by the majority of which the Scotch had been cunning enough to make the best bargain for themselves; and they had taken care that if the British Lion got the lion's share, they would at least secure the fox's perquisites.

The Union took effect from the 1st of May, and the queen went in state to St. Paul's, to celebrate the event with due solemnity. The 22nd of October, in the same year, derives a mournful interest from the loss of poor Shovel, whose ship got scuttled on the rocks of Scilly, and though Shovel himself went at it "poker and tongs" to save the vessel, his own and two others were involved in the same* calamity.

On the 28th of October, 1708, the queen lost her husband, Prince George of Denmark, who died of asthma at Kensington. His malady of course prevented him from having a voice in public affairs; but, if he had had one, he would certainly have been afraid of using it. He combined the mildness of the moonbeam with the stupidity of the jackass, and not only had he been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, but he had become one entire spoon—fiddle-head and all—in his excessive pliability.

He was, however, one of those spoons that made very little stir, and his removal from the busy scene of life left a gap that was scarcely perceptible. Within little better than three months, both Houses of Parliament addressed the queen, imploring her to marry again, which shows that they did not estimate very highly her grief at the loss of her first husband. Her majesty's reply con-

tained no specific answer to the petition, but intimated her belief that a decided response was not expected by the applicants.

On the 5th of November in the same year a political parson, named Dr. Sacheverel, began to raise the since famous cry of "Church in danger," which, like that of "Wolf," has been since so frequently and foolishly set up, that it stands a chance of being neglected when it really may require attention.

The object of all the rant in which this noisy churchman indulged, was to obtain popularity, flavoured with a spice of martyrdom, and his opponents being silly enough to fall into the trap, they kept up the ball for him with a vivacity that must have equalled his most sanguine desire. Like a shuttlecock, that must drop to the ground if its elevation is not secured by frequent blows, Sacheverel would have tumbled

irredeemably to the earth, if he had not been kept aloft by the knocks he experienced. He was ultimately exalted into the position of a delinquent standing to take his trial at the bar of the House of Lords; and when he was found guilty of having preached a sermon, warning the public of danger to the Church, he had reached the highest point of glory in the estimation of the large mass of people who are under the influence of bigotry and prejudice. He was condemned to forbear from preaching for three years; but his sentence not excluding him from accepting a good living, one was placed at his disposal immediately afterwards.

The reverend sufferer for conscience' sake eventually got something still better, in the form of the living of St.

Andrew's, Holbom, where, finding it no longer worth his while to quarrel with the Government, he sought a vent for his turbulent disposition in repeated rows with his parishioners.

His first sermon after his new appointment sold forty thousand copies, and a little calculation will give some idea of what the reverend gentleman's martyrdom brought him in from first to last in the shape of livings, copyrights, and other contingencies

that arise out of a well-managed popularity, In the latter end of 1711, some very disreputable disclosures, in which the Duke of Marlborough and Mr. Walpole were chiefly involved, were brought before the House of Commons. Marlborough, not satisfied with his pay, pensions, and other emoluments, had been taking a percentage on every transaction in which he had been confidentially concerned; while Walpole, in his capacity of Secretary at War, had been playing the same game as the illustrious soldier. Marlborough and his wife were in the enjoyment of upwards of £60,000 a year, so that there was no excuse for them on the score of poverty; and even if they had been in want of cash, they might have done what, as we have already hinted, their successors have done since, namely, shown Blenheim to the public, and shared with their own domestics the daily proceeds.

The duke and duchess were deprived of their offices, while Mr. Walpole was expelled from the House of Commons, amid a chorus of "Serve him right!" from nearly the whole of his fellow-countrymen.

Marlborough was further accused by Lord Paulet of having knocked his own officers on the head, in order to be enabled to sell their commissions; but this would seem to have been a most superfluous piece of atrocity, for he might have easily got their heads knocked off in a more regular and reputable manner, by exposing them to the blows of the enemy.

The duke challenged Lord Paulet for having made this assertion; but after an interchange of hostile messages, the seconds contrived so to complicate the business as to lose sight of the real matter of dispute, and the duel was prevented.

The reputation of Marlborough was so damaged by what had taken place, that he obtained permission of the queen to go abroad, and he crossed over to Ostend, in the vague hope that a sea voyage might have the same effect it is said to produce on a bottle of Madeira, and cause an improvement of his quality.

The disgrace of the British general had been fortunately delayed till the period when his services were no longer required, for the treaty of Utrecht, which was signed on the 30th of March, 1713, secured the peace of Europe. By this celebrated arrangement the Protestant succession in England was formally recognised; the crowns of France and Spain were split into two, giving those countries one apiece; the harbour of Dunkirk was demolished, and other little matters of difference settled to the satisfaction of all parties, except the Emperor of Germany, who stood aside in a corner by himself, objecting to everything.

Just before the close of the year, while political matters of importance were on foot, the gout laid Queen Anne by the heels, at Windsor, and the funds suffered in sympathy with the toe of royalty. There was a rapid run upon the bank; but the gout abating so far as to enable her majesty to bear the weight of a shoe, the pressure was relieved immediately and the country stood much as before, which may also be said of the sovereign.



On the 2nd of March, 1714, the queen came down in a sedan to open Parliament. Her use of the chair arose from her being very chary of her foot, which retained some of the effects of the hav-

oc that gout had performed upon it. In the course of her speech she took the opportunity of assuring the House that the Protestant succession was not in danger, and the House of Commons subsequently assured itself of the same fact—as far as words could go—in a resolution that was carried by a large majority.

These repeated assurances proved more than anything else that the Protestant succession was not quite so safe as the queen and the Parliament could have desired, and a number of precautionary measures directed against the Pretender and the Jacobites furnished still stronger proofs that the Government really entertained the fears it seemed so very anxious to repudiate. On the 29th of July, 1714, the queen, who was almost tired out by the disputes of her ministers, fell into a lethargy, and the Council, who had been quarrelling in the Cockpit, adjourned to Kensington. At this critical juncture, an individual of the name of Mr. Craggs suddenly started on to the canvas of history as a writer of a letter to the Elector of Brunswick, apprising him of the perilous condition of the queen, and telling him that his succession would be quietly provided for. On the 1st of August, poor Anne expired of dropsy, in the fiftieth year of her age, the thirteenth of her reign, the third of her gout, and the first of her lethargy.

In person, Anne was of the middle size, as far as height was concerned; but if we look at her as a piece of measurement goods, and take her by her bulk, we shall have to put upon her a very different estimate. It cannot be said that she was one of Nature's favourites, though Nature had certainly made much of her, and perhaps more than the queen herself would have desired. Her hair was dark brown, and her complexion a sort of clear mahogany, while her nose standing prominently out from a very round face, gave her something the appearance of a perpendicular sun-dial. Her voice was as clear as a bell, and her tongue as active as the clapper. Her capacity was good, but her acquirements miserably few, and her mind therefore presented a resemblance to a fine site for building, which had remained uncovered

for want of the necessary capital She was very fond of hunting, but she had a very odd way of showing her fondness, for she used to follow the hounds in a pony chaise, which of course became a vehicle for a good deal of merriment.

All historians concur in saying that she lived very fast, but whether it was in eating or in drinking that her weakness, or rather her strength, was shown, the various authorities are not yet agreed upon She was a mother to her people, a master to her husband, a pattern to her own sex, and a terror to ours.

She was obstinately attached to her own way, and it was only the fortunate feebleness of her intellect that prevented her from developing herself into that gigantic nuisance, a strong-minded woman.

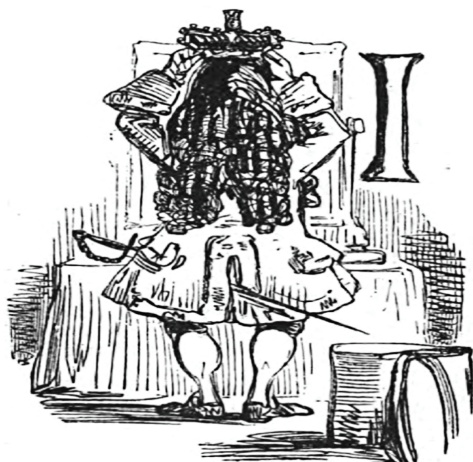
Though her own mental powers were not sufficient to throw lustre on her reign, it was rendered glorious by numerous men of learning and genius who were the contemporaries of her majesty We have already enjoyed a paragraph or two with Newton, and we must not forget Locke, who furnished so many keys to the understanding and the difficult arts of government.

Considering the fuss that has lately been made about the merit of having originated penny and twopenny publications, we ought not to forget that the modern claimants to the honour of the idea did but steal it from Steele, whose "Tatler," started in 1709, was followed by the "Spectator" and the "Guardian."

To the more recent projectors of cheap periodicals we are quite ready to allow the originality of their assertion, that their speculations are not intended for their own profit, but to fulfil exclusively the great purpose of benefiting the community. In compliance with these large hearted and benevolent intentions, we may, we suppose, look with confidence to the day when the produce will be paid over for the benefit of the people, whom the existing race of cheap periodical proprietors love so very much better than they do themselves, if we are to believe their protestations and their prospectuses.

We may at all events say for the reign of Anne, that it was much freer than the reign of Victoria from these wondrous professions of disinterestedness, which we have been waiting in vain, for the last ten years, to see carried into practice.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH. GEORGE THE FIRST.



It is not without some feeling of humiliation and regret that the historian finds England so badly off for a sovereign as to be obliged to borrow one from abroad, and her throne in the seventeenth century, like her stage of the nineteenth, to be indebted for its support to foreign adaptations.

The British Lion must have been a poor cub in those degenerate days, for there does not seem to have been a roar of remonstrance from that indifferent beast when the Elector of Hanover quietly took the crown from the royal bandbox, caused it to be altered to suit a gentleman's instead of a lady's head, and, using the sceptre for a walking stick, coolly stepped into the kingly office.

This somewhat more than middle-aged gentleman was the

eldest son of Ernest Augustus, first Elector—and anything but an independent elector of Brunswick, and of the Princess Sophia, grand-daughter to James the First, through whom he had pretensions to a good title, though, oddly enough, the Stuart family being repudiated, the only legitimate portion of his claim was that which the country refused to recognise.

It seemed, however, that England, after its numerous wars of succession, which had formed a long succession of wars, was resolved upon putting up with anything for peace and quietness—a contented disposition of which we have long experienced the blessings, inasmuch as it has given us a family of sovereigns under whose constitutional sway the country has enjoyed an unexampled degree of prosperity and happiness. George the First was a sober, decent, steady-going person of fifty-four when he arrived to undertake the superintendence of England, by the day, week, month, or year; and, in fact, to do monarch's work in general. He was proclaimed king in London, on the 1st of August, 1714, but was in no particular hurry to enter upon his new dignity, for he only arrived, via Greenwich, on the 18th of September, and his coronation took place on the 20th of October following.

He was of course old enough to know pretty well what he was about; and though he had attained that respectable maturity which, among the feathered tribe, is believed to form a protection against capture by chaff, he seems to have acted on the impression that younger birds might certainly be caught by the same unsatisfactory material. His first plan, therefore, upon his arrival, was to go about uttering what he called his “maxim,” which he said was “never to abandon his friends, to do justice to all the world, and to fear no man.

This egotistical puff for his own qualities may have been politic, but it was by no means dignified, and reminds us more of the old self-laudatory naval song, commencing “We tars have a maxim, d’ye see,” than of any language or sentiment becom-

ing to the mouth and mind of a monarch.

If the English people had put upon the clap-trap sentiment of the Hanoverian its true interpretation, they would have seen that it pledged him more to his old subjects than engaged him to his new ones; posed to take of the meaning of his "maxim. Immediately on the death of Anne, the Privy Council had met and deputed the Earl of Dorset to go over and apprise George of his accession to the Crown, when the earl mixed up the announcement with so many fulsome compliments, that flattery took the name of Dorset butter—a figure that has remained in force from those days to the present.

One of the best, and perhaps the boldest acts of the Council, was the appointment of Mr. Addison—the celebrated contributor to what was termed *par excellence* the P. P. or popular periodical of the day—to a post in the Government.

The late ministry had been ignominiously displaced, and

Bolingbroke used to dangle about at the door of the Council-room with a bag of papers in his hand, expecting, or at least hoping to be called in, while menials were instructed to deride, or, as the modern phrase has it, to "chaff" him in the passages. Bolingbroke was mean enough to brook even this for the chance of place; but he would occasionally turn round and shake his fist, including his bag, in a menacing manner at the crew who passed upon him these insults.

Occasionally they would slap him on the back, exclaiming, "Well, Bolly, my boy, you are indeed a regular out-and-outer." Nor can it be doubted that, had the air been popular at the period, the Ethiopian melody of, "Who's dat knocking at de door?" would have been frequently sung or whistled in the face of Bolingbroke by the scamps in the waiting-room.



The king had only just arrived, and had merely gone into his bedroom to put on a clean collar—that of the Order of the Garter, if we may hazard a shrewd guess—when a party of Whigs rushed in, and began to ear-whig him with the utmost industry. In fact, the touting that took place for the vacant offices can only be imagined by an individual who has once landed at Boulogne, and found him-self torn to pieces by the hirsute representatives of some fifty hotels, each anxious to accommodate the new arrival. The whole of the Whig party pounced upon George, and thrust their pretensions before him with the perseverance of the class of Frenchmen, commonly called commissioners, to whom we have alluded.

As these persons snatch at a traveller's cloak, walking-stick, or carpet-bag, the Whig touters almost snatched at gold sticks, official portfolios, or anything else they could lay their hands upon. "Allow me to take charge of your conscience, sir," roared Lord Cowper; "you'll find it very heavy to carry, sir; pray give it to me, sir; I'll take it down for you, sir;" and thus the Chancellorship was in a measure seized by this determined place-hunter.

“You’ll lose that privy seal, sir, if you don’t take care,” bellowed the Earl of Wharton; “you had much better entrust it to me; there are some very bad characters about just now,”—and thus, by a mixture of warning and worry, the privy seal was secured for himself by the rapacious nobleman.

Bolingbroke, after hanging about the official passages for a short time longer, now listening at the door, now peeping through the keyhole, and alternately bullied or bantered by his more fortunate rivals as they passed to and fro, resolved on flying to the Continent. Several significant exclamations of “You’d better be off!” “Come, come, this won’t do!” and “We can’t have a parcel of idle fellows lurking about the Treasury!” convinced him that he had nothing to hope, and everything to fear from the new Parliament. He accordingly took from the corner of his sitting-room an old official wand, and sobbing out, “Farewell, my once cherished stick!” he cut it for ever.

The monopoly of all the snug places by the Whigs rendered them extremely overbearing, and as “Britons never, never, never will be slaves” to the same party for any considerable length of time, they became impatient of Whig arrogance, and ready for an alternative in the shape of some regular old Tory tyranny.

The king became unpopular, and his birthday passed over without the smallest notice, as if to hint to him that he was not to be borne at all, unless he changed his system.

George, instead of conciliating, attempted to crush the disaffected, and like a bad equestrian mounted on a restive horse, he began pulling at the rein and tightening the curb, instead of mildly but firmly exclaiming, “Wo, wo, boys! steady, boys; steady!” to his now somewhat frisky people.

The Habeas Corpus Act—the great British Free List—was suspended, and the Pretender was used as a pretence to alarm the people, and reconcile them to the most arbitrary measures. The Riot Act was in this year, 1715, read a third time and passed,

but it has this peculiarity, which distinguishes it from every other legislative Act, that it requires to be read again on every occasion of its being brought into requisition.

These measures only added fuel to the fire that was now setting the country in a blaze; and even the University of Oxford was threatened with assault by Major-General Pepper, who was the first to make the now venerable joke about mustard, which, with all our courage, we confess we dare not chronicle.

The curious reader is referred to "Joe Miller." Perhaps the edition brought out under the title of "The Family Joe Miller," is the best for the student's purpose. In the north, the insurrection took a very bold form, and Mr. Forster, a gentleman of great ability—a barrister, we believe—joined with the Earl of Derwentwater, who was ready with all his retainers, the only kind of retainers, by the way, with which his learned colleague was at all familiar. Being joined by some gentlemen in blue bonnets, who had come from over the border, they proclaimed the Pretender, and would have seized upon Newcastle, with the intention of sparing the coals and sacking only the city; but the gate had been shut, and the whole party was not strong enough to force it open. They retired therefore to Hexham, and a literary gentleman among them bewailed their failure as he sat in the coffee-room of the inn at Hexham, in doleful hexameters. They next retired by way of Lancaster to Preston, whose Pans they hoped would prove preserving pans to themselves; but General Wills being sent to attack them, proved the fact, that where there are the Wills there are always the ways of accomplishing an object.

Mr. Forster, hearing that there was no hope, despatched a trumpeter—a gentlemanly young man, who was quite equal to a solo of the kind—to negotiate a treaty. He could get no other answer than an intimation that the rebels might expect to be slaughtered; and, being very much cut up by the news, they wisely resolved to surrender. The noblemen and officers of the party were sent to London, where they were led through the streets bound together

and pinioned, which caused one of them to wish that his pinions were those of a bird, so that he might be enabled to fly away from his captivity. Though the Pretender must have known, or might have known, that his pretensions were about as hopeless as they could possibly be, he resolved on landing in Scotland, and he positively arrived with nothing more than a special train of six gentlemen. He came in disguise, and passed through Aberdeen without being known, till he came to Feterosse, where he was met by the Earl of Mar and thirty nobles of the first quality, though all their quality could not of course make up for their lamentable deficiency in quantity. When the Pretender saw his friend's beggarly show of adherents, he addressed Mar with great levity, telling him he had been "a sad Mar to his hopes," and indulged in other poor frivolities. "As I've come, however," he added, "I may as well be proclaimed." And the ceremony was gone through with mock gravity. He next proceeded to Scone, "for," said he, "we must have a coronation, you know." And he behaved altogether in such a manner as to lead us to believe that he relished the ludicrous points of his own very ridiculous position. Having gone so far in the mockery, he crowned the absurdity instead of being crowned himself, by making a speech to his grand council, intimating that he had no arms to fight with, no ammunition to load the arms with if he possessed any, and no money to purchase the ammunition if he felt disposed to try its effects upon his enemies. Under these circumstances, he intimated that his presence among them should be regarded as a flying visit, just to say "How d'ye do?" and "Good-bye"; after which, with the latter salutation on his lips, he popped into a boat, and was "off again" for the Continent.

Instead of allowing this miserable rebellion to die a natural death—we cannot say that it ended in smoke, for the rebels had no money to purchase gunpowder—the Government of the day had the rashness to keep the thing alive by prosecuting those who had been concerned in it. Half a dozen nobles were seized

and put upon their trial, when the poor creatures whimpering out an acknowledgment of their guilt, were sentenced to death, and two were taken to the scaffold. A third, the Lord Nithesdale, had also been condemned; but his mother having come to see him in prison, they got up between them a dramatic incident, by effecting an exchange of dress; and while the lady remained in gaol like a man, the gentleman walked away in female attire. The prosecutions were not limited to the chiefs of this rebellious movement—if that can be called a movement which stuck fast in its very first steps—but some of the humblest adherents, or suspected adherents, of the Pretender's cause were included in the proceedings taken by the Government. Several were hanged, and some hundreds experienced what was facetiously termed the "royal mercy," by undergoing transportation for life to North America. This unnecessary and injudicious rigour had the effect of making the Government so unpopular, that, although according to the Triennial Act the Parliament ought to have been dissolved, the ministers were afraid of appealing to the country, and formed the audacious determination to introduce a Septennial Act, which, by the force of perseverance and impudence combined, was positively carried. Though George resided personally in England, his heart had never quitted Hanover, and he was continually keeping his eye upon the aggrandisement of that paltry electorate. For this purpose, he made free use of English money; and having intelligence at all times of the small duchies that the poverty of their owners occasionally threw into the market, he picked up those of Bremen and Verden at a very low figure.

Among the inconveniences occasioned to this country by allowing the sceptre to get into foreign hands, was the involving of England in foreign quarrels about foreign interests. Spain being in an unpleasant predicament, called upon George the First to join a league in her favour, and threatened to repudiate his claims to his dismal little duchies of Bremen and Verden, if he

did not take the step that was required of him. As he could not well commit himself thus far, a war was commenced against England, and a Spanish expedition under the Duke of Ormond was fitted out to make a descent upon Scotland. With that happy adroitness in ruling the waves for which Britannia has long been celebrated, she caused them to rise as one billow against the hostile fleet, which was rapidly dispersed by the ocean's uppishness. Though the buoyancy of Britain, assisted by the boisterous energy of the sea, defeated the attempts of foreign powers, the internal condition of the country was far from satisfactory.

King George neither comprehended the character nor the language of his new subjects, and a good understanding between the prince and the people was therefore impossible.

His majesty spent as much time and as much money as he could upon the Continent, leaving his ministers to propose what measures they pleased, while he transmitted by post his consent to them, without knowing, or caring to inquire their object.

Perhaps, however, the heaviest blow that England's prosperity ever received was the result of one of the most marvellous instances on record of a co-operation between knavery and folly. To add to the extraordinary character of the infatuation we are about to record, the scheme that led to it was not original, and the victims had consequently received a warning by which they failed to profit.

A Scotchman of the name of Law had swindled the whole of France by starting a company to pick up fortunes in the Mississippi, which proved one of the most gigantic misses ever known; but as one batch of fools will make many, it was calculated, shrewdly enough, that the Mississippi hoax, instead of putting people on their guard against fraud, would have just the effect of preparing them to be taken in by it.

A scrivener named Blunt—a fellow of uncommon sharpness, whose name is emblematical of a great partiality for cash—suggested a concern called the South Sea Company, which was to

purchase all the debts due from the Government to all trading corporations, and thus become the sole creditor of the State. The National Debt was in fact to be bought up, and as there is a pretty clear understanding that the National Debt never will, or never can be paid, the advantages of the project must, upon the slightest reflection, have appeared at best apocryphal.

The scrip in this grand concern came out heavy, for the securities were flatter than the public, when a bright idea flashed across the mind of Blunt for raising the wind and puffing up the shares in the South Sea Scheme to the utmost height that could be desired. He spread a report through paid paragraphs in the newspapers, that Gibraltar and Minorca were about to be exchanged for Peru, and the whole world went mad at the peru-sal. The story of this monstrous piece of universal insanity would afford a fine subject for an article from the pen of

Dr. Forbes Winslow; and indeed had he lived in the eighteenth century, the whole population would have been worthy to become the patients of that able and experienced master of the science of mental pathology.

See the "Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology." Edited by Forbes Winslow, M.D.

The mental aberration of the public proved itself in the most preposterous demand for shares from persons willing to stake not only every penny they had, but many pounds which they had not. The proverb that "one fool makes many," found a parallel in the fact that one knave makes many; for the South Sea schemer called into existence a number of imitators, all anxious to profit by the credulity which he had excited.

One adventurer made his fortune one fine morning by issuing a prospectus intimating that he would secure to every one who paid two guineas on the instant, an annuity of £100.

The preliminary deposits poured in so plentifully that he obtained two thousand subscribers in a few hours, though the details of the plan were only to be forthcoming at some future

day. We regret exceedingly our inability to form an opinion on the merits of this project, for its originator having been called away suddenly on the very night after the first day's subscriptions had been paid in, pursued his way to the Continent by the light of the moon, and has never yet returned. Charity bids us presume that he died in the effort to mature the gigantic idea he had conceived for enriching those who had honoured him with their cash and their confidence

. A few little episodes of this description tended to shake the faith of the public in the great parent hoax, and the monster bubble, formed, as it were, by the whole of the South Sea concentrated into one tremendous drop, gave symptoms of dropping to the ground.

Those who witnessed the Railway Mania of 1845 can form a conception—though a very inadequate one—of the madness that prevailed in the early part of the eighteenth century, under the cunning influence of Blunt, who, strange to say, was a living illustration of a marvellous misnomer, for this Blunt was the essence of sharpness, at a time when obtuseness was the characteristic of all the rest of the community.

The amiable weakness which, in 1845, induced the whole population to concur in planning railways for every hole and corner of the world, the philanthropy which would have whirled the Cherokees through the air at sixty miles an hour and twenty per cent, profit, or brought Kamschatka, Chelsea, the Catskill Mountains, Knightsbridge, and Niagara, all into a group by the aid of trunk-lines or branches connecting the whole of them together, the mixture of benevolence and self-interest which suggested these noble achievements, cannot bear a comparison with the universality of the movement that the South Sea Bubble called forth. Its bursting, however, nearly swamped the entire nation, for the bubble had been so extensive that scarcely any one escaped its influence, or could keep his head above water, when the awful inundation occurred.

Royalty itself had not been exempt from the prevailing madness, and the Prince of Wales had been appointed Governor of the Welsh Copper Company, which was to have supplied saucepans to the whole civilised world, and kept the pot boiling for the inhabitants of every corner of the globe.

The capital proposed to be raised for all the various bubbles in agitation, amounted to £300,000,000, though few of the concerns had even the capital of the soi-disant millionaire in the farce, who having made promises of boundless liberality, and undertaken to make the fortune of the waiting-maid of his inamorata, finished with a tender of a threepenny piece as an earnest of his future bounty.

It would form a curious chapter in this or any other history, to trace the fluctuations in South Sea Stock; but we cannot afford to convert our pages into a share list of the eighteenth century. Upon the first fall in the stock, attempts were made to preserve it from a further decline, first by shutting up the transfer books, and secondly by preposterous promises of impossible dividends. The directors kindly guaranteed fifty per cent, for twelve years, from and after the ensuing Christmas; and it is probable that the old saying, that "Such a thing is coming, and so is Christmas" first arose out of the South Sea Bubble, for the stock fell from eight hundred to one hundred and fifty, between the 26th of August, when the prospect was held out, and the 30th of September, when people had got a shrewd suspicion that it would never be realised.

In proportion to the extreme credulity the nation had shown, was the savage disappointment it now exhibited.

The directors of the South Sea Company who had been encouraged in their audacious swindling by the blind rapacity of their dupes—who in their haste to devour everything they could lay hold of, swallowed every knavish story they were told—the directors, who after all had merely speculated on the avarice and stupidity of the rest of the world, were assailed

with the utmost vindictiveness, Their conduct was brought before Parliament; some of them were taken into custody, and all were called upon to explain the grounds on which these calculations of profit were made, though the stockholders were not required to state what reasons they had for believing with their eyes shut, all the evidently fallacious promises that had been held out to them. A confiscation of the property of most of the directors took place, and an inquiry before Parliament proved that several members of the Legislature, and even ministers, had received considerable slices of South Sea Stock for their assistance in promulgating this monster swindle.

The ruin that had been brought upon all classes of society, was aggravated by a necessity for further taxation to carry on the increased expense of Home Government, and of the costly foreign relations which the country had entered into.

It has unfortunately happened that the foreign relations of England have been generally very poor relations, and they have consequently taken a great deal out of her pockets by their necessities, while they have added little to her respectability by their position and character.

Like poor relations in general, they were a dreadful drag, and it was necessary to contribute to their support by putting fresh burdens on the British people. Among these was a tax on malt, which, being extended to Scotland, caused a general fermentation; for the Scotch were always remarkable for their love of whisky, which they easily promoted into a love of liberty, when it suited at once their pocket and their purpose to assume the attitude of patriots.

The tax—not the whisky—was, however, crammed down their throats in spite of the cry they had succeeded in getting up for untaxed toddy, which they, of course, pronounced to be the safeguard of their constitution, as everything else becomes in its turn when it seems to be placed in jeopardy.

The rioters, however, could get no persons of rank or influence

to join in the great whisky movement, which the masses had taken into their heads, and order was restored after a few lives had been sacrificed.

On the 2nd of November, 1726, Sophia Dorothea, nominally, but never practically, Queen of England, died in the prison at Hanover, to which her husband had committed her.

This lady had formed an attachment for a Count Koningsmark, whom the king, her husband, then Elector of Hanover, unceremoniously butchered in an anteroom. As the historians who have preceded us call his majesty a strong-minded man, we presume that there is something intellectually vigorous in the commission of a murder, though we confess we are at a loss to discover the extraordinary fact which other writers appear to have recognised. Not very long after the death of his wife George repaired—or rather, he went very much out of repair, for his health was greatly damaged—to Hanover. He was taken very ill on the road, and was seized with apoplexy to the unhappy perplexity of his attendants, whom he nevertheless desired to “push along and keep moving.”

They accordingly did so, and the royal carriage was hastened, but his majesty was only being driven to extremities, for on the 11th of June, 1727, he expired at Osnaburgh, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and the thirteenth of his reign.

The particulars of his death have been very circumstantially given, and as they are rather characteristic of George the First, we will give them with our accustomed brevity.

He had been in perfect health on the previous evening, and ate a hearty supper of sheep's hearts, including a tremendous melon, to which the melancholy result has been attributed. Resuming his journey towards Hanover at 3 a.m. he was seized with griping pains, but believing that one mischief would correct another, he fancied the supper that had disagreed with him would be counteracted in its consequences by a dinner, which he began lustily calling for. When it was placed before him he could eat

nothing—an incapacity so unusual with George, or as some called him, Gorge the First, that his attendants were seized with alarm and astonishment. Having again entered his carriage, he exclaimed in quaint French, “C’est fait de moi” which we need scarcely intimate means either

“I’m done for,” or “It’s all up with me.” In the course of the same night his existence coming to an end proved the too fatal accuracy of his own conclusion George the First had nothing in his character to justify us in keeping George the Second waiting to be shown up to the throne, where in the ensuing chapter we shall have the pleasure of seeing him. The first George was a person of somewhat feeble intellects, exceedingly shy in public, but he could “come out” at a private tea-party at home very effectively. His tastes were none of the most refined, and he voted all letters exceedingly dry but O.D.V.—such was the wretched pun the king made on eau de vie—which he was very partial to. It might be regarded as a redeeming point in the character of his majesty that he was very fond of Punch, which he regularly “took in,” but this feather in his cap must be plucked out, for we find the Punch he patronised was the liquor, and not the periodical. Avarice was another of the most prominent features of his character, and he actually risked the throne itself on several occasions, because he would not spare a few pounds for the purchase of that floating loyalty that, in consequence of the venality and poverty of the ancient aristocracy, was always to be had at a certain price in the market.

He had also the shabby trick of never carrying any money in his own pocket, so that he was always obliged to dip into the pockets of his companions to pay the expenses incurred, either at home or abroad, and many of his Court used to get as far away as possible from the side of the king when there was anything to pay, for he was sure to ask them for a loan on such occasions.

It seems from pretty good authority that he fancied himself to be an usurper; but he flattered himself a great deal too much in be-

believing that the English nation would have quietly allowed an act of usurpation from so unimportant a personage as he would have been, but for the position into which he was called by the voice of the people He preferred Hanover to England; “but,” says Smith, “there is no accounting for tastes,” and we will therefore make no effort to unravel the mystery of this absurd preference.

The Court of George the First was remarkable for its laxity, though there was more external propriety than used to prevail in the days of Charles the Second.

The latter monarch openly offended against the rules of decency; but George the First was just as bad in a quiet way, and imported into the aristocracy of England two or three vulgar, low-born, German, female favourites, whose successors now boast of their illustrious ancestors It is a somewhat interesting fact that charity schools were first established in the year 1698, when the predecessor of George the First was on the throne; and the antiquarian will perhaps tell us whether the muffin-cap is of greater antiquity than the muffin. We believe such to be the case, for the muffin is of comparatively modern date, and is the contemporary of its rival or companion, the crumpet.

How the muffin-cap came to put the muffin into anybody’s head is a question too difficult for any but the archaeologist.



CHAPTER THE FIFTH. GEORGE THE SECOND.

WHILE George the First was alive, he and the Prince of Wales were always having high words in low Dutch to the discredit of themselves and the disgust of the bewildered courtiers.

To such a pitch had the animosity between father and son been carried, that young Master George, the heir apparent to the throne, had been forbidden the palace, and he had frequently held long conversations through the fan-light with the hall porter, who could only show his face above the door-way, and exclaim, "Very sorry, your royal highness, but it's the governor's orders, and I can't let you in." Which of these two unnatural

relatives may have been most to blame we are not in a condition to determine, but the father who shuts his doors against a son, and drives him from home, is, *prime facie*, a brute, and George the First's conduct to his wife affords collateral evidence of his being devoid of feeling towards those who were nearly allied to him. It may be generally taken for granted that sons are only indifferent towards parents who are bad, and if young George failed in respect or affection towards old George, it was because old George had done nothing to inspire in young George the sentiments which should have been entertained by a son for his father. Sir Robert Walpole, the minister, had endeavoured to bring the precious couple together on friendly terms, but they would often quarrel in his presence, and appeal to Sir Robert, until the frequency with which they invoked the support of their referee, by loud exclamations of "So help me Bob!" turned the phrase into a proverb, which is to this day prevalent among the lower and more energetic classes of the community.

When George the Second came to the throne, he expressed his desire to "keep on" Sir Robert Walpole as minister, if the situation

continued to suit that individual, whose acknowledgment that he was "very comfortable." concluded the arrangement for the continuance of the existing Government, Walpole was one of the most dishonest ministers that ever lived, and it was his policy to resort to corruption of the grossest kind to ensure success; "for," as he would sometimes say, "the manure must not be spared, if you wish for an abundant harvest."

He accordingly laid it on so extravagantly thick, that the expenses of the cultivation of his personal objects of the minister.

The sinking fund had a tremendous hole made in it, where—to steal a figure from the plumber's art—a waste-pipe was inserted, and laid on to the pocket of the premier, who, collecting the floating capital into a private reservoir of his own, turned it on among his creatures with great prodigality.

To meet the drain that was going on, new taxes were imposed, or in other words, the people were treated as if they had been an Artesian well, and were bored to the most frightful extent for the sort of currency by which a liquidation of the liabilities of the State was to be effected.

The nation, recognising a swindling spirit in its rulers, gave symptoms of the imitative mania which invariably causes the vices of the great to be copied by the little.

Speculations of the wildest and most dishonest nature were set on foot among every class, from the highest to the lowest, and there is no question that the Rogue's March would have been the most appropriate National Anthem for the period.

From quiet fraud, the country soon fell into downright robbery, and the people got into the habit of plundering each other in the thoroughfares, without going through the formality—common in our own days of issuing a prospectus, and advertising a project. The first advertisement generally came upon the victim in the shape of a blow upon the head in the public streets; the preliminary deposit was extorted from him in the shape of the first article of value that could be easily snatched away, and the

calls were exacted in rapid succession by a demand upon every one of his pockets There was no hope of protection from the police, for the members of the force were too busy in robbing on their own account to bother themselves about the robberies that were being committed by others.

It was, in fact, a case of Every Man his Own Pickpocket; and protection, being everybody's business, was soon considered nobody's business, until the whole kingdom was exposed to a sort of daily scramble, in the course of which Shakespeare's description of Iago's purse, "'Twas mine, 'tis his," was every hour realised. Things were, of course, in a most unsettled state, for nobody thought of settling anything—not even a washing bill—during the existence of the universal plunder system, and a riot every other day was the ordinary average of popular turbulence, Even the Scotch grew warm, and becoming conscientiously opposed to the legal infliction of death, they attended the execution of a smuggler to make a great moral demonstration against capital punishment. In the excess of their philanthropic sympathy with the convict, they began pelting the authorities, who were on the point of being murdered, when John Porteus, the captain of the guard, interfered to save the lives of his comrades. Some time afterwards, the philanthropists, to prove their consistent abhorrence of the punishment of death, seized upon Porteus, who had officiated in keeping the peace at the execution, and hanged him at the Salt Market.

In the year 1737 the queen died, and the king sent up a piteous howl, though he had ill-used her majesty on many occasions; but it was well remarked by a philosopher of the period, that by the sincerity with which George the Second wept her dead, he almost teaches us to forget the severity with which he wapt her living.

The year 1740 was rendered remarkable by a severe frost, which confined Father Thames to his bed with a dreadful cold, until the 17th of February, from the 26th of December previous. A fair was held on the ice, but amid these rejoicings the watermen were

dissatisfied at being deprived of their ordinary fare, and the fishermen complained that they had been able to net nothing during the frost's continuance.

The disputes of the Continent furnished occupation, as usual, for English troops and English money, nor was it long before a difference between the Elector of Bavaria and Maria Theresa caused the Earl of Stair to be sent to keep his eyes open, with sixteen thousand men, in the lady's interest. Stair, after staring at sixty thousand Frenchmen face to face for some time, began to think he had a very poor look out, though joined by the king himself, and his son, the Duke of Cumberland. The whole three of them got beaten like so many old sacks by Marshal Saxe at the battle of Fontenoy. Cumberland, who had put his best leg forward, got it badly wounded. George rode along the lines—at the back, we believe—urging on the soldiers to fight for their king, while Stair seems to have been lost sight of, or perhaps to have run away, though we must admit that this flight of Stairs must be considered apocryphal.

While these disasters were going on abroad, a correspondence was being kept up between the Pretender, James Stuart, and his British friends, who promised that if he or his son Charles Edward would effect a landing in Scotland, there should be a good supply of horses and carriages; but one would imagine his friends were a parcel of jobmasters, by the quality of the aid they tendered, and indeed a job was their object, for all but the most unprincipled of the party were for abandoning the hopeless project.

Though James himself was a bird far too venerable to be attracted by Caledonian chaff, his son was sanguine enough to hope that by coming over to be met by a few glass coaches and hackney chariots, his cause would be aided.

He wrote to say when he might be expected, and without waiting for an answer, he put to sea in a small frigate.

He was joined by the *Elizabeth*, a sixty-gun ship, when an English liner, called the *Lion*, appeared on the foaming main, and an

engagement commenced, which rendered it necessary for the Elizabeth to go into Breſt harbour for refuge.

At the end of eighteen days he reached the Hebrides, but the prospect was so wretched that the few adherents who met him recommended him very strongly to be off again as speedily as possible. Charles Edward was, however, obſtinate, and on the 11th of Auguſt, 1745, he took out of his portmanteau and unfurled the banner of the Stuarts in the paſs of Glenfinnan.

Attempts were made to obtain recruits, but they poured, or rather dribbled in ſo ſlowly, that the whole inſurrection might have been broken up had it been nipped in the bud; but while Sir John Cope, the commander of the king's forces, was capering about the hills, and dragging his army of flats acroſs the mountains, the young Charles Edward gained time enough to add to the ſtrength of his company.

Cope not coming up to cope with the rebels, they pushed on to Perth and Stirling, but they ſoon made an acquisition of ſtill more ſterling value, by taking poſſeſſion of Edinburgh.

Here the young prince, who had landed only with ſeven adherents, found himſelf at the head of four thouſand men, moſt of whom had neither arms nor diſcipline, but brimming over with the froth of enthuſiaſm, they preſented to their chief a reſreſhing aſpect.

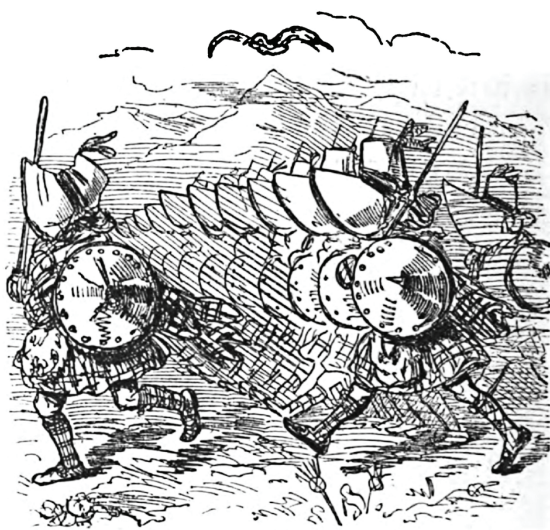
Sir John Cope, having fumbled his way out of the hills, had got to Preſton among the pans, where he was ſeized with a panic, and being ſet upon by the Scotch, was utterly routed. Returning to Edinburgh after his ſucceſs Prince Charles Edward had King James proclaimed in the uſual form; and the King of France, who had ſtood aloof while the reſult was doubtful, ſent over a ſmall parcel of arms and a few packets of powder, by way of

encouragement. He promiſed alſo that a French army ſhould ſoon follow the arms, for Charles Edward had no ſoldiers to match the matchleſs matchlocks that had arrived from the French ſovereign. Truſting to the word of his Gallic majeſty, the young Pretender ventured to croſs the border in a blue bonnet,

attended by a large body of adherents in the same interesting coiffure, and on the 29th of November, 1745, he fixed his headquarters at Manchester.

The alarm excited in London was something utterly indescribable. People who lived in the town rushed into the country to be out of the way, and the inhabitants of the provinces poured into the metropolis as the best place for avoiding danger.

The householders took up arms, and formed themselves into squares, crescents, lanes, streets, alleys, or anything. Some bolted their doors, others bolted themselves, and all gave unspeakable symptoms of terror and confusion.



A camp was ordered to be formed in the suburbs, and after getting a large force together it was at first resolved to turn 'em out at Turaham Green, but Finchley was at length decided upon as the place of rendezvous.

George, who had been summoned from Germany, came blustering over to England, and began immediately to boast, in bad grammar and wretched pronounciation, that he would "vite vor his Binglish bossessions," and would "meet the Bretender

how or where he bleased." His personal valour was not put to the test, for Charles Edward, who had expected instalments of friends to continue meeting him at every large town, had the mortification to find that the more he kept looking for them the more they kept on not coming; and eventually, by the unanimous voice of his officers, he was compelled to retreat. When he first heard their decision, he observed that the messenger must be joking, and his features wore a faint smile, but when the porter who brought the intelligence shook his head, as much as to say, "It's no joke, your honour," the features of the young Pretender fell, and those who watched him narrowly for the rest of his life, declare that he was never afterwards seen to smile again. It is impossible to recite the misfortunes of Charles Edward without a feeling of grave sympathy at the failure of the many noble qualities with which he was endowed.

In April, 1746, he advanced to Culloden, intending to astonish the English, but he and his followers, like the individual named in the song who had resolved to "astonish the Browns," finished by astonishing no one but themselves.

The rebels advanced in two columns; but the soldiers fell asleep, and we are not surprised at the fact, for any newspaper reader will admit that in the very idea of two columns there is something soporific in the extreme.

The exhausted troops fell from fatigue; others lost their way; and the second column found it impossible to keep up with the first. This threw a damp upon the energies of even consternation on the boldest; and with a mental ejaculation of "Oh! it's no use," the very best of Charles Edward's adherents retired. Notwithstanding the valour of a corps consisting of picked men, there arose among them a feeling of dissatisfaction at standing unsupported, to be picked out by the artillery of the enemy; and though one gallant body withdrew, playing on their pipes, the pipes were very soon put out by a smart shower of bullets. Such was the upshot of one of the most spirited enterprises that ever

was undertaken; and its chief, the unfortunate Charles Edward, became a pauper fugitive, with scarcely clothes to cover him, and there was quite as much necessity as nationality in the bareness of his legs, during the period of his wanderings.

One of these fogs which are so accommodating in romance, but very rarely present themselves opportunely in history, was obliging enough to make its appearance for that night only on an evening of September, 1746, and by its kind assistance in doing the heavy business on that occasion, Charles Edward was enabled to pass unobserved through an English squadron, and cross in a vessel to Morlaix in Brittany.

The unfortunate Pretender seems to have taken his discomfiture so seriously to heart, that from a fine spirited young fellow, he lapsed into all sorts of excess, and having taken to drinking, he fell into a constant reel, which formed the sole remaining vestige of his once enthusiastic nationality. Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, walking about Florence in the year 1799, tumbled over an intoxicated individual, and raising him from the ground, had no sooner carried him towards a light, than he recognised the features of the young Pretender.

Matters might possibly have gone on very peaceably with England, for there was nothing to fight about at home, but a dispute arose with the French about the respective influence of the two nations in some of their distant colonies.

A contest for the Nabobship between some of the native tribes in the Carnatic, became the subject of a desperate quarrel between the two great European powers; one of whom supported the claims of Anwar ad Dien, the other promoting the pretensions of Chunda Sahib, and both caring, in fact, not a button about either. A war was, nevertheless, entered upon with intense vehemence, and was carried on for some time, with alternating success; but, not having the bulletins of the day at hand, and the despatches being equally out of the way, we are unable to give the particulars of the various contests.

The quarrelling, though at a great distance, made at the time sufficient noise to be disagreeably audible at home, and preparations were made in the two mother countries to send out large forces to thrash the children on both sides out of their turbulence.

Though all this bickering had been going on for some time in the colonies, war had not been formally declared; but whenever an English or a French vessel had a chance of worrying the other, each made the most of the opportunity. On one occasion, two French sail of the line got treated very unceremoniously, and eventually captured; when the Government of Paris began expressing a great deal of surprise and indignation, and professing utter ignorance of the fact that the two powers were quarrelling. It is absurd to suppose that France was sincere in this declaration, for it could not have been understood to be “only in fun,” that the French and English were knocking each other about most unmercifully and energetically in America. The circumstance of the capture to which we have referred, caused an immediate understanding that both parties were henceforth in earnest; and there was a mutual calling-in of their outstanding ambassadors.

George, however, instead of thinking about the colonies, became solicitous only about his “little place” at Hanover, and while he neglected therefore the American war, which became a series of mishaps, he threw his whole strength into the defence of the wretched spot, that would not have been “had at a gift” even by the ambitious enemy.

Higher game was, in fact, in view; and the possession of the rock of Gibraltar and the island of Minorca by the English having long been envied, the French made up their minds to have a dish at one of them. Gibraltar was speedily pronounced impracticable, but Minorca seemed to be in a state of helplessness that tempted a resolute foe, and Fort St. Philip was suddenly invested.

No preparations having been made for defence, the authorities ran about asking each other anxiously what was to be done, for most of the officers of the garrison were absent on leave; and General Blakeney, who was on the spot, though a very gallant fellow, was old and shaky

His spirit was consequently more effective as a fine piece of acting than for the purposes of actual war; and though the old fellow, tottering about in his dressing-gown and slippers, might have exclaimed "Aye, aye—let 'em come; I'm ready for them," and have relapsed with affecting feebleness into the sufferings of a gouty twinge, the spectacle, which might have been beautiful on the boards of a theatre, was, in the midst of a town threatened with a siege, most painfully ridiculous.

Relief was ordered from Gibraltar; but the governor, who was either very stupid or did not like the job, pretended to, or really did misunderstand the purport of the instructions sent out to him. At home, the same want of energy prevailed, for the acting representative of the Government picked out a few

ill-manned vessels, which he dignified with the name of a squadron; and calling to him an admiral, since notorious but then unknown, observed to him, "Here, Byng; you had better take this force, and go and see what they want at Fort St.

Philip." Admiral Byng did not at all like the job, and began to hesitate about undertaking it; but being told to call at Gibraltar for fresh troops, he plucked up sufficient pluck for the enterprise. On his arrival at Gibraltar, the governor pretended not to know what Byng had come about; and when asked for troops, merely exclaimed, "Nonsense, nonsense; there's some mistake.

I can't part with my troops, for I'm as nervous as an old aspen myself, with the very little protection that is left to me."

Byng became more disheartened than ever by the refusal of the expected aid, and went grumbling away, muttering, "Well! they'll see; I know how it will end;" and giving vent to other ejaculations of a similarly un-seaman like character.

He wrote to the Lords of the Admiralty, announcing the certainty of his making a mess of it; and in speaking of the refusal of troops at Gibraltar, he in vulgar but forcible language “gave it the governor.” Having made up his mind to a failure, it was not very difficult to accomplish the object, and having gone to look at Fort St. Philip, he merely played, as it were, a game at stare-cap with the sentinel on the look-out, but did not perform a single operation with a view to its protection. In due course the French fleet hove in sight, and it was expected that a brilliant action would have taken place, for both squadrons immediately began manoeuvring most beautifully until each had got into the line of battle. A little harmless cannonading had commenced by way of overture to the anticipated work, when the French slowly retired, and the English slowly following, they disappeared together in the most harmless and indeed almost friendly manner, to the astonishment of poor old Blakeney, who watched them as long as the strength of his glasses would allow of his doing so. Nothing could have been more orderly than the retreat on both sides; and indeed it has been suggested by an old offender, who very naturally refuses to give his name—”That if the affair we have described deserves to be called a battle at all, the Battle of Co-runner”—mark the deceptive spelling in the last syllable—”would be a good name for it.”

The rage of the English, whose boast it had been to rule the waves, and never, never, never to be slaves, may be conceived at the arrival of the intelligence of Byng’s bungle. The Government was the first object of the popular fury; but the ministers were adroit enough to turn the indignation of the people against the unfortunate admiral. Byng was, no doubt, bad enough, though he was not the only guilty party; but his fellow-culprits, taking a lesson from the pickpockets, who were the first to raise after their accomplice the cry of “Stop thief!” began to denounce the nautical delinquent with excessive vehemence. They recalled him from his command, ordered him to Greenwich, and instead

of allowing him to partake in the amusements of the place, they imprisoned him with the intimation that "None but the brave deserved the fair." The next step was to bring him before a court-martial on a charge of cowardice and disobedience to orders, when, being found guilty, he was condemned to be shot, and underwent at Portsmouth, on the 14th of March, 1757, this rather redundant punishment. We are anxious to do what we can in the way of sympathy for poor Byng, particularly after the little we find that can be of any use to him in the pages of preceding historians. They seem disposed to join in the cruel shout of "Sarve him right!" which a vulgar and unthinking posterity has raised to hoot the memory of this unfortunate officer.

We are induced to look at him as a gentleman who merely was unfit for the profession he had chosen, and as his was not an uncommon case, we think it hard to look upon it with uncommon severity.

It is perhaps an odd coincidence, that an officer more eager for the fray than Byng had urged the latter to enter into the action with the French, when the dry observation "I'll be shot if I do," was the only reply of the admiral. It cannot fail to strike the philosophic observer at this distance of time, that Byng, when saying "I'll be shot if I do"—that is, if he ever said as much—might have been profitably given to understand that he would be shot if he didn't. It has been put forth as a consolatory reflection that the naval service in general profited by this melancholy execution of poor Byng; but though as a general rule, what is desirable for the goose is equally advantageous to the gander, we cannot in this instance agree that what was good for the men was at the same time good for the admiral.

The treatment of poor Byng presents a very humiliating picture of the want of firmness shown by the court-martial that tried, the ministers that abandoned, and the king that would not pardon him. Everybody affected a strong desire to see him saved, but nobody had the resolution to take the responsibility of saving him.

His sometimes merciless majesty, the mob, formed in reality the executioners of poor Byng, for the authorities were all afraid of risking their popularity by being instrumental to his pardon. The members of the court-martial, by their verdict, expressly implored the Lords of the Admiralty to recommend him to the mercy of the crown, but there was a general feeling of "It's no business of mine," and to this heartless apathy poor Byng was eventually sacrificed. Never was there a better illustration of the hare with many friends, though not even a hair-breadth escape was permitted to the unfortunate admiral. Never was a gentleman killed under such an accumulation of kindness as Byng, and indeed he was, figuratively speaking, bowed out of existence with so many complimentary and sympathetic expressions, that but for the stubborn reality of the leaden bullets he might have fancied that the guns discharged at him were intended rather in the nature of a salute than as a capital punishment.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

GEORGE THE SECOND (CONCLUDED).

DISCOMFITURE still attended the English in America, and though fresh troops with fresh leaders were sent off to wipe out the disgrace, they only got wiped out themselves in a most unceremonious manner. On the continent of Europe, too, poor Britannia was at a sad discount; for Austria, Saxony, Sweden and Russia had all thrown themselves into the arms of France, for the purpose of counteracting the influence of the arms of England. It was only in Indian ink that the creditable part of our country's annals belonging to this period should be written, for in India alone were any of our achievements entitled to some of those epithets we are so fond of bestowing on our own actions. The British Lion had, in fact, retired from the Continent to the Himalaya mountains, where he remained on

the majestic prow as the protector of British interests. There was a natural jealousy between England and France on the subject of their relative influence in that country, whose native princes were honoured by the protection of both, and who were always mulcted of a slice of their dominions by way of costs, for the expense incurred in the alleged support of their interests.

If the aggressor of one of the Indian rulers happened to succeed, he took at once what he had been fighting for; while if a defender of some unhappy rajah or nabob was victorious, the native prince was made to pay all the same for the protection afforded him.

By this sort of assistance rendered to the Indians, the English and French had succeeded in helping themselves to a good share of territory, and while the former had already obtained possession of Calcutta and Madras, the latter had got at Pondicherry, a very respectable establishment under Monsieur Duplex, whose duplicity was, of course, remarkable.

By espousing the causes of a set of quarrelsome nabobs, Soubahdars, and other small fry, who had taken advantage of the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk to raise a contest for the throne of the Deccan, the English and the French had found plenty of excuses for quarreling, and we are compelled to confess that in this part of the world the Gallic cock had good reason for crowing over the British bull-dog.

Things might have continued in this unsatisfactory condition, had not Captain Clive, a civilian in the Company's service, exchanged a pen for a sword—a piece of barter that turned out extremely fortunate for English interests. With a small body of troops he took the Citadel of Arcot, nabbed the nabob, and prevented Duplex from setting up a creature of his own—a disagreeable Indian creature—in that capacity. After this achievement, Clive had gone home for his health, and was drinking every morning a quantity of Clive's tea, when in 1755 he accepted a colonelcy, and returned to the scene of his for-

mer glories Here he was rendered very angry by a pirate of the name of Angria, whom however he quickly subdued; and he had heard from Madras that a mad-rascal named Suraja Dowlar was in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, and was threatening to settle the settlement.

This news came like a thunder-clap on Clive, who determined on giving Dowlar such a dose as he would not easily forget; and he commenced by conveying secretly to one of his officers, Meer Jaffier—a mere nobody—an offer of the throne. The scheme completely succeeded, and Meer Jaffier became the tool, or rather the spade, for giving a dig at poor Dowlar, who fell to the ground very speedily.

Matters had now happily taken a favourable turn, and in America Wolfe distinguished himself, but unfortunately extinguished himself also at the siege of Quebec; for he died at the moment of victory.

Things were mending very perceptibly in all directions, and English honour, which had been for some time at an unusual discount, was once more looking up, when the king, who had been speculating on the rise, was suddenly deprived of all chance of sharing in its advantages. He had made his usual hearty breakfast of chocolate, new-laid eggs, devilled kidneys, tea-cake, red herrings, and milk from the cow, when, as he was preparing to take a walk in Kensington Gardens, he suddenly expired, on the 25th of October, 1760. George the Second was in his seventy-seventh year, and the thirty-fourth of his reign, during the whole of which he had been a Hanoverian at heart, and he had nothing English about him, except the money.

His manners were rather impatient and overbearing, for he had not a courteous style of speaking; and it was said at the time, that “no one could accuse him of being mealy-mouthed; for though he was not civil spoken, he was temperate in his living, and thus the term mealy-mouthed could in no sense be applied to him.”

In forming an estimate of the characters of the sovereigns who have come before us for review, we have found ourselves fortunate in possessing an independent judgment of our own; for if we had been guided by precedent, we should have been puzzled to know what to think of the different kings and queens, all of whom have had witnesses on both sides, to censure and to praise with a want of unanimity that is really wonderful.

George the Second has furnished a subject for this division of opinion, and his eulogist has complimented him rather oddly on his old age, a compliment that might as well be paid to an old hat, an ancient pun, a venerable bead, or any other article that has arrived at a condition of antiquity. The reasons given by his panegyrist for praising him are few and insignificant on the whole, though his severer critic finds his strictures on a tolerably substantial basis. We learn from this authority that George the Second was ignorant, stingy, stupid, ill-tempered, and obstinate.

His predilection for Hanover has, we think, been unjustly censured; for there is nothing very discreditable, after all, in a love for one's own birth-place, though it may be what is termed a beggarly hole in the strong language of detraction.

The native of Lambeth has been known to pine with a sort of *mal du pays* after the cherished sheds and shambles of the New Cut, and we have heard the plaintive accents of "Home, sweet Home," issuing from the lips of the exiled sons and daughters of Houndsditch. If George the Second was still faithful in his love for Hanover, in spite of the superior attractions of England, we may question his taste, but we must admire his constancy; which presents an honourable contrast to young Love's notorious desertion of the coal and potato shed, when Poverty, in the shape of a man in possession, stepped over the doorway.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH. ON THE CONSTITUTION, GOVERNMENT AND LAWS, NATIONAL INDUSTRY, LITERATURE, SCIENCE, FINE ARTS, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

WE feel that the length of the above heading to this, the concluding chapter of the volume, will be sufficient to provoke the legal reader into making a charge for “perusing title and examining same,” but we promise to make our clauses as pertinent as the magnet to the loadstone. Having already, in the course of preceding chapters, touched upon most of the subjects noticed in the abstract of title to which we allude, it will be unnecessary to hold the reader very long by the button; but perceiving him getting ready to run away, as the curtain falls upon George the Second, we cannot help exclaiming, “Stop a minute or two, we’ve got just half a dozen more words to say to you!”

The constitution is the first topic on which we have still to touch, and that is a theme which every true patriot loves to dwell upon. We have no hesitation in saying that our beloved country must have the constitution of a horse, to have gone through one-half the severe trials it has experienced. It is apparently peculiar to the soil; for, though the prescription for making it up has been given to other nations, and has been accurately prepared by some of the ablest political druggists, it has never been swallowed abroad, or, if rammed down the throats of rulers or people, it does not seem to have agreed very well with either one or the other. The British constitution is a thing *sui generis*, like the delicious bun of Chelsea, the acknowledged brick of Bath,

and the recognised toffy of Everton.

It is vain for other nations to hope that they may have their own materials made up into the pattern they so much admire; for the attempt would be quite as abortive, and almost as unwise, as the effort to make a genuine Romford stove away from Romford, Epsom salts half a mile out of Epsom, Windsor Soap beyond the walls of Windsor, and the genuine Brighton rock anywhere in the world but in the very heart of Brighton. The British constitution must be like home-brewed beer, and even more than that, it must be enjoyed where it is brewed; or, in other words—to draw off one more figure from the cask—it must be “drunk on the premises.”

The most eloquent of foreign nations cannot come and fetch it, as it were, in their own jugs, however they may foam and froth about it in their own mugs when they carry it in their mouths by making it the subject of their speeches.

The durability of the British constitution, its fitness for wear and tear, has been exemplified in the wonderful manner in which it has survived the rubs that from the hands of party it has experienced. This reflection naturally brings into our mind the terms Whig and Tory, into which politicians were divided, until modern statesmanship introduced us to a new class of principles, that may be called, concisely and comprehensively, the Conservative-Whig-Radical.

The words Whig and Tory came into use, and into abuse also, about the year 1679, and their own origin has been traced with wonderful ingenuity, for the derivation has nothing to do with the derivative, according to these ingenious speculations; and if we may trust Roger North—a little too far north for us, by-the-bye—Tory is allied to Tantivy, without the smallest apparent reason for the relationship. It would, perhaps, save a great deal of trouble to keep a register of philological next-of-kin; and we are sure that if something a little nearer than Tantivy could come forward to claim affinity with Tory, the noun, verb, or any other part of speech it might chance to be, would “hear

of something to its advantage” The word Whig seems to be utterly without orthographical heirs-at-law, for no attempt has been made to get at its pedigree.

National Industry advanced materially during the period we have just described, and among other things, the glass, which had been hitherto imported chiefly from France, began to be seen through by the English manufacturer.

Literature and the Arts flourished in the reigns we have lately gone through; and Architecture took very high ground, or indeed any ground it could get, for the execution of its projects. Periodical Literature rose in great brilliancy at about the time we have described, and the union of such writers as Steele, Addison, and Swift, in one little paper, must have formed a combination that should have been kept back until the days of advertising vans and gigantic posting-bills, enabling the parties interested to make the most of the “concentration of talent,” which might have been the cry of every dead wall in the metropolis.

The manners and customs of the period were not particularly attractive, being, under the two Georges at least, far more German than Germane to our English notions of refinement. In dress, there was somewhat of an approach to the costume of our own days; and the scarcity of hair on the head began to be supplied by that friend of man, the horse, from whom the Barrister had since prayed a tales to furnish the wig, which is considered essential to his forensic dignity.

The military costume of the time of George the Second is chiefly remarkable for the hats worn by the soldiers, which were something in appearance between the fool’s cap and the bishop’s mitre, as we find from one of Hogarth’s drawings.

The condition of the people was not very enviable in the seventeenth or even the eighteenth centuries; and indeed all classes were very ill-conditioned; for morality was lax,

education was limited, poverty was abundant, extravagance was very common, and wealth extremely insolent.

Such being the state of the people and the country at this period, we cannot be sorry to get out of their company, though it is not without some regret that we bid farewell for a time to our History. In the course of this work we have rowed in the same galley with Cæsar, stood up to our ankles in sea-water with Canute, run after the Mussulman's daughter with Gilbert à Beckett, wielded a battle-axe with Richard on the field of Bosworth, smoked a pipe and eaten a potato with Sir Walter Raleigh, danced with Sir Christopher Hatton on Clerkenwell Green, and sailed round the bay that bears his name with honest Bill Baffin: all these adventures have we enjoyed in imagination, that beau ideal of a railway, with nothing to pay and no fear of accidents.

We have at length arrived at a station, where we stop for the purpose of refreshment; but we hope to resume our journey, and proceed in the ordinary train, touching by the way at all stations, high and low, to the terminus we have set our eye upon.

THE END.

