

Sheffield and Birmingham were already in existence, and it was noticed that in the later Stuart reigns industry was not only largely increased, but was also more and more concentrated in a few great centres.¹ The prosperity of the country was very seriously retarded by the war that followed the Revolution, but it resumed its progressive march after the Peace of Ryswick, and was accelerated by the foundation of the Bank of England, which greatly assisted credit; by the renovation of the coin, which gave a new stimulus to every branch of industry; and, perhaps, also by the partial abolition of two considerable trade monopolies. The African trade, though it had been largely pursued by interlopers, was from the early Stuart reigns legally a monopoly; but in 1698 all English subjects were allowed to trade, without restriction, in negroes, gold, and silver; and the other branches of the African trade were also opened to them, provided they paid to the Company a duty of five per cent. on redwood, and of ten per cent. on other goods. The Russian trade had been accorded to some London adventurers, who, in the reign of Mary, when seeking for a north-west passage to China, had discovered Archangel, and it had been confirmed to their successors by an Act of Elizabeth. The Company, however, proved too limited and feeble to contend with the rivalry of the Dutch, and it was accordingly enacted, in 1699, that all English subjects might belong to it on the payment of 5*l*.² At the close of the reign of William, a return of the mercantile navy of England was drawn up by the Commissioners of Customs, from which it appears that the number of vessels belonging to all the English ports was then 3,281, measuring 261,222 tons, and employing 27,196 men. Of these vessels 560 belonged to London, 165 to Bristol, and 143 to Yarmouth.³ The costly wars of Anne, though they for a time depressed, did not permanently injure, industry. The lowest point in this reign appears to have been in 1705, when the value of the exports was only 5,308,966*l*.; but in 1713, 1714, and 1715, the three years which immediately followed the peace, the average value

¹ Baines' *Hist. of Liverpool*, 253-259.

² Macpherson.

³ Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, ii. 719.

was 7,696,573*l.*, which exceeded by nearly a million sterling the amount in the preceding peace.¹

Many of these figures can, of course, only pretend to an approximate accuracy. All of them appear very small when compared with the gigantic dimensions of modern commerce, but they are sufficient to show that the condition of England was a healthy and a progressive one, and that the commercial classes were steadily rising in importance. One result of this increasing prosperity must, indeed, be looked upon with very mingled feelings. I mean the rapidly accelerated disappearance of the yeomanry class. The main causes of the destruction of this most useful element of English country life are very evident. The system of primogeniture, settlements, and entails, as well as the maze of expensive intricacies with which English law has encumbered the transfer of land, by diminishing greatly the amount which is brought to market, have given it an unnatural and monopoly price, which is still further increased by the social distinction its possession confers, and by the country tastes which make its acquisition an object of great desire to the rich. Under such circumstances the continued existence of a large class of small proprietors was impossible. Men of narrow means could not afford to purchase land. Small land-owners had the strongest inducement to sell. But the impulse was greatly strengthened when the development of commercial and manufacturing industry multiplied the paths to wealth. On the one hand, the number of large fortunes competing in the land market was increased. On the other hand, numerous additional facilities were furnished for investing small capitals in more lucrative employments than agriculture. The enclosure of common land, rendering the position of the small yeoman more difficult, aggravated the tendency, and the result was a very considerable transfer of energy from the country to the towns. The feebler members of the yeomanry sank gradually into tenants or labourers, while the more ambitious and enterprising were rapidly absorbed in industrial life.²

Of the population of the great manufacturing and trading

¹ Craik's *Hist. of Commerce*, ii. 163.

² On this subject much valuable

evidence has lately been collected in Thornton's *Over Population*, Cliff

towns, we are, unfortunately, unable to speak with much precision. No official census of the population of England was made till 1801, and the computations that were based on the returns of births and deaths, and of the hearth-money, though far from valueless, are too vague and too conflicting to be positively relied on. According to the estimates we possess, the population of England at the beginning of the eighteenth century appears to have been somewhat under 6,000,000,¹ of whom about a tenth part were concentrated in London. Next to London, but next at a great interval, was Bristol, which retained its position as the second city in England till after the middle of the eighteenth century, and owed its wealth chiefly to its large trade with the American colonies. Its population under Charles II. is said to have been 29,000, and in the middle of the eighteenth century rather more than 90,000.² Norwich, which was an old resort of Flemish refugees, and was famous during many generations for its manufacture of worsted and other woollen works, as well as for its supply of fuller's earth, long ranked third among English cities. Its population in 1693 was between 28,000 and 29,000, and it was believed to have nearly or quite doubled by 1760.³ Manchester had been the seat of a woollen manufacture under the Tudors, and a book published in 1641 mentions that cotton was also worked there, which appears to be the earliest record of that industry in England. It is said to have contained at the end of the seventeenth century less than 6,000 inhabitants, but if so it must have increased with extraordinary rapidity in the first years of the eighteenth century, for Defoe, in his 'Tour through Great

Leslie's *Land Systems of Ireland, England, and the Continent*, Nasse's *Essay on Land Tenures*, and in some of the papers published by the Cobden Club.

¹ The estimates, as might be expected, are very various. Chief-Justice Hale in 1670 computed the population of England at at least 6,000,000. In 1689 another authority, who reckoned the large number of six persons for every house, fixed the population at 7,380,000. Davenant, adopting the same basis of calculation, estimated it in 1695 at not quite 8,000,000. Gregory King com-

puted it in 1690 at nearly 5,500,000, and Mr. Finlaison, who investigated the subject very minutely in the present century, concluded that at the close of the seventeenth century the population of England was a little under 5,200,000. See the different estimates collected in Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, ii. 68, 634, 674, iii. 134, and in Macaulay's *Hist.* ch. iii.

² Macpherson, iii. 322-323.

³ Macaulay, ch. iii. Macpherson, iii. 323. Blomefield's *Hist. of Norfolk*, vol. ii.

Britain,' which was published in 1727, estimates the population of the city and suburbs at not less than 50,000. According to another estimate, the town alone contained from 40,000 to 45,000 persons in 1760,¹ at which date the population of Birmingham was believed to have been about 30,000, and that of Newcastle, including the suburbs, about 40,000.² Liverpool was somewhat slower in emerging into greatness. It was a village of much antiquity, consisted in 1565 of 138 houses or cabins, derived some importance from the fire and the plague, which induced many merchants to abandon London, and gradually became a centre of commerce for the new colonies in the West Indies and for America. It was assisted also by the reclamation of great tracts of waste lands, which stimulated the corn trade, and by the growth of Manchester and other manufacturing towns in its neighbourhood. It is curious, however, to notice that it was only in 1699 that it was thought sufficiently important to form a parish to itself, and that its first dock was not built before 1709. Its population in 1700 is believed to have been slightly under 6,000, but to have increased in the course of the next half-century to about 30,000. Liverpool had by this time become indisputably the third port in the kingdom, and it was soon prominent beyond all others in the slave trade.³ The whole population of Lancashire was estimated at 166,200 in 1700, and at 297,400 in 1750.⁴ At the time of the census of 1871 it exceeded 2,800,000.

In addition to the other causes which united the industrial classes with the Whigs we must reckon the funded system and the creation of the great mercantile companies established after the Revolution. The national debt, which at the accession of William had been very inconsiderable, had increased during his reign and during the reign of his successor with a portentous

¹ Curry's *Hist. of Lancashire*, i. 276. Macpherson, iii. 136, 323. Baines' *Hist. of the Cotton Trade*, pp. 99-100. Defoe's *Tour*, iii. 210. Whittaker's *Hist. of Manchester*.

² Macpherson, iii. 324-325.

³ Baines' *Hist. of Liverpool*. Picton's *Memorials of Liverpool*. Curry's *Hist. of Lancashire*. Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, iii. 135. Derrick's *Letters from Liverpool*. See too

the voyage of Gonzales (a Portuguese) to England and Scotland, in 1730, Pinkerton's *Voyages*, ii. 39. It appears from the petition of the Liverpool corporation in 1699 for making a new church there, that they already claimed for Liverpool the position of the third port of the trade of England. See Picton, i. 145-146.

⁴ Curry's *Hist. of Lancashire*, i. 265.



rapidity. Incurred as it was in a struggle against the Power that was in alliance with the Pretender, it was more than doubtful whether the interest of the debt would be paid if the Government of the Revolution were overthrown, and thus an immense proportion of the capitalists had the strongest personal reasons for supporting the Government. In this manner the national debt, which was in some respects very injurious to the country, was eminently advantageous to the Whigs. Very similar considerations apply to the Bank of England and to the new East India Company. These great corporations exercised an influence which extended to every city in the kingdom, and affected, directly or indirectly, almost every great mercantile fortune. Both of them were created by the Whig Government. Both of them obtained their privileges by the loan of large sums to that Government, and both of them depended for their very existence on the regular payment of the interest.

In this manner a great Whig interest was artificially created, which was attached by the closest ties to the Government of the Revolution and to the House of Brunswick. In 1707, at the news of the intended invasion by the Pretender, the price of stocks at once fell fourteen or fifteen per cent.¹ In 1710, when the Queen resolved to dismiss the Whig ministry of Godolphin, the Bank of England sent a formal deputation to her to deprecate the change.² The accession of the Harley ministry, though it promised a return of peace, was at once followed by a depreciation of the funds, which continued till Harley, following in the steps of his predecessors, created the South Sea Company, on the same principle as the great Whig corporations, by granting important mercantile privileges to a portion of the national creditors.³ As long as Harley retained his ascendancy the national credit was not seriously imperilled, but when Bolingbroke succeeded in displacing him, when the reins of power seemed passing into Jacobite hands, a panic immediately ensued. The funds, as we have seen, rose when the illness of the Queen was followed by a report of her death; they fell at a false

¹ Francis' *Hist. of the Bank of England*, i. 85.

² *Parl. Hist.* vi. 906-907.

³ Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, iii. 17-21. Somers' *Tracts*, xiii. 35.

rumour of her recovery; they rose again when her sudden death disconcerted the Jacobite intrigues.¹ The Jacobites, on the other hand, looked forward to the ruin of the Bank as the most probable of all means of accomplishing their designs.² Had Bolingbroke continued in power, it is possible that the funds would have been taxed, and probable that measures would have been taken seriously to restrict the powers of the great mercantile companies, and there were great fears that they might be wholly subverted.³ The country gentry looked with feelings of the keenest jealousy on the new political power which was arising, and contrasted bitterly the exemption of the fundholder from taxation with the burdens imposed upon land. 'The proprietor of the land,' it was said, 'and the merchant who brought riches home by the returns of foreign trade, had during two wars borne the whole immense load of the national expenses; while the lender of money, who added nothing to the common stock, throve by the public calamity, and contributed not a mite to the public charge.'⁴ Nor was this all. It was a fundamental maxim of the Tory party that 'Law in a free country is or ought to be the determination of the majority of those who have property in land;' ⁵ that 'the right strength of this kingdom depends upon the land, which is infinitely superior and ought much more to be regarded than our concerns in trade.'⁶ The Landed Property Qualification Act of 1712 was intended to assert this principle, and it was elicited by the manifest fact that in the latter days of William, and still more in the reign of Anne, the moneyed was, in a great measure, superseding the landed interest. 'Power,' said Swift, 'which, according to an old maxim, was used to follow land, is now gone over to money.'⁷ Individual capitalists, and still more

¹ Calamy's *Life*, ii. 292.

² See Macpherson's *Original Papers*, ii. 211-212.

³ See a remarkable passage in Bolingbroke's *Letter to Windham*.

⁴ Bolingbroke's *Letter to Windham*.

⁵ Swift.

⁶ Davenant, iii. 328. Thus, too, Defoe said that in case of the dissolution of the Government, power devolves on the freeholders, 'who are the proper owners of the country.'—Wilson's *Life of Defoe*, i. 425.

⁷ *Examiner*, No. xiii. In one of

his private letters (Jan. 1721), he says, 'I have ever abominated that scheme of politics, now about thirty years old, of setting up a moneyed interest in opposition to the landed—for I conceived there could not be a truer maxim in our Government than this: that the possessors of the soil are the best judges of what is for the advantage of the kingdom. If others had thought the same way, funds of credit and South Sea projects would neither have been felt nor heard of.'

the two great corporations, descended into the political arena, wrested boroughs, by sheer corruption, from the landlords who had for generations controlled them, and strained every nerve to acquire the political influence which was essential to the security of their property. In 1701 there had been grave inquiries in Parliament about the lavish sums which the East India Company expended among the Members,¹ and the increasing corruption at elections was universally recognised. 'It is said,' wrote one high authority, 'that several persons, utter strangers in the counties to which they went, have made a progress throughout England, endeavouring, by very large sums, to get themselves elected.... It is said that there are known brokers who have tried to stock-job elections upon the Exchange, and that for many boroughs there was a stated price.... Some persons, having considerable stocks in the Bank of England and in the new East India Company, are more particularly charged with these facts.'² 'The mischievous consequence,' wrote Bolingbroke, 'which had been foreseen and foretold too at the establishment of these corporations, appeared visibly. The country gentlemen were vexed, put to great expenses, and even baffled by them at their elections; and among the Members of every Parliament numbers were immediately or indirectly under their influence.'³ 'Boroughs,' said a third writer, 'are rated in the Royal Exchange like stocks and tallies; the price of a vote is as well known as of an acre of land, and it is no secret who are the moneyed men, and consequently the best customers.'⁴

Under all these circumstances the political influence of the industrial and moneyed classes was greatly increased by the Revolution. They have been the steady supporters of English liberty, the steady advocates of religious toleration within the limits of the Protestant creed. To them, more than to any other class, may be ascribed the tempered energy, the dislike to abstractions and theories, the eminently practical spirit so

¹ Burnet's *Own Times*, ii. 258-259.

² Davenant on the *Balance of Power*.

³ *Letter to Windham*.

⁴ See the very brilliant pamphlet called 'English Advice to the Free-

holders of England.'—Somers' *Tracts*, vol. xiii. See, too, Bolingbroke on the *Study of History*, Letter ii. *The History of the Last Four Years of Queen Anne*, ascribed to Swift. Wilson's *Life of Defoe*, i. 340-341.

characteristic of English political life; and their influence has been especially useful in moderating the love of adventure and extravagance common to pure aristocracies. On the other hand, the mercantile theory, which governed commercial legislation till after the writings of Hume, planted a new and powerful principle of international jealousy in European politics. The narrow spirit of commercial monopoly crushed the rising industry of Ireland, and trammelled the industry of the colonies; and the desire of the moneyed classes to acquire political power at the expense of the country gentlemen was the first and one of the chief causes of that political corruption which soon overspread the whole system of parliamentary government.

The Protestant Nonconformists formed the third considerable branch of the Whig party; but the reaction which followed the Restoration, the persecuting laws of the Stuarts, and the gradual diminution of the yeomanry had reduced both their numbers and their influence. In a very imperfect return made to the Government in 1689 those in England and Wales were estimated at about 110,000,¹ and, according to a paper in the possession of William, among the freeholders of the kingdom the proportion of Protestant Nonconformists and Catholics united was not quite 1 to 22.² The strength of the Dissenters lay among the tradesmen of the towns and among seafaring men;³ they reckoned among their number many rich merchants and capitalists, and some of them, as we have seen, attained the highest municipal dignity. They could also boast of a very considerable intellectual eminence. Baxter, Howe, Calamy, and Bunyan would have done honour to any Church. The writings of Matthew Henry are even now the favourite Scripture commentaries of thousands; and Defoe, if not quite the greatest, was certainly the most versatile and prolific of that brilliant group of political writers who have made the reign of Anne so remarkable in literature. The Catholics, Unitarians, Socinians, and all who, without joining these bodies,

¹ See Skeats' *Hist. of the Free Churches of England*, p. 151. This return reckons the whole population of England and Wales as only 2,600,000, which is certainly far

below the truth.

² Dalrymple's *Memoirs*, part ii. book i. append.

³ Davenant's *Works*, iv. 411.

spoke against the doctrine of the Trinity, or against the supernatural origin of Christianity, continued after the Revolution subject to penal laws which, if they had been strictly enforced, would have amounted to absolute proscription; but other Dissenters were exempted, on certain conditions, from their provisions by the Toleration Act. They were allowed to attend their own places of worship, and were protected by law from all disturbance, provided they took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy and subscribed the declaration against transubstantiation, provided their congregations were duly registered in the Court of the Bishop or Archdeacon or at the County Sessions, and provided also the doors of their meeting-houses remained unlocked and unbarred. Their ministers, however, were compelled to subscribe the doctrinal portion of the Anglican Articles, with the exception of the Baptists, who were exempted from the article relating to infant baptism. The Quakers, who objected to all oaths, and to all subscriptions to human formularies, were only required to affirm their adhesion to the Government, to abjure transubstantiation, and to profess their belief in the Trinity and in the inspiration of the Bible.

This measure undoubtedly conferred a great practical advantage upon the Nonconformists, though it is hardly, I think, deserving of the enthusiasm that has been bestowed on it. It is, indeed, extremely doubtful whether the cause of religious liberty in England owes anything to the Revolution; for James, stupid and bigoted as he was, had at least quite sufficient intelligence to perceive that he could only relieve the small Catholic minority by associating their cause with that of the much larger body of Protestant dissidents, while those who opposed the royal designs would have been almost inevitably driven to compete by large concessions for the alliance of the Dissenters. As we have already seen, the Act of William was technically described only as 'an Act of Indulgence,' suspending in certain cases the operation of laws which still remained upon the Statute Book, and thus leaving the Dissenters, more or less, under the stigma of the law. They were still excluded from the universities, they could be married only according to the Anglican ceremony, and the Corporation and Test Acts prevented

them from entering corporations and public offices without receiving the Sacrament according to the Anglican rite. William earnestly desired complete religious toleration, if not equality, among Protestants; but such a policy, when the fear of a Catholic sovereign was removed, was impossible. Measures to abolish the sacramental test, or to make the reception of the Sacrament in any Protestant form a sufficient test, were introduced and defeated. Another measure, which the King was very anxious to carry, was the Comprehension Bill, the object of which was, by slight alterations in the Anglican Liturgy, by making optional the surplice, the practice of kneeling at one Sacrament, the intervention of sponsors and the employment of the sign of the cross in the other, and by substituting for subscription to the Articles a general declaration that the Anglican worship and doctrine contain all things necessary to salvation, to remove the objections of the great majority of the Dissenters, and to reunite them to the Church. According to the first cast of this Bill, Presbyterian ordination was recognised as valid, but only after the imposition of the bishop's hands; and by this restriction the Romish or sacerdotal element which runs through the English Church would have been preserved. Sectarian spirit, however, on both sides was opposed to the measure. Politicians of all shades saw that an alteration in the forms and Liturgy of the Church would give an increased importance to the Nonjuror schism. The great majority of the clergy were violently opposed to all overtures to the Dissenters. Many of the Dissenters dreaded a Bill which, while it would certainly not extinguish Dissent, would as certainly divide and dislocate the Nonconformist body, impoverish many of its ministers, and lower the position of almost all; while many Whigs feared that the transfer of a large portion of the descendants of the Puritans to the Established Church would incline the balance of power still more to the side of despotism. The opposition grew stronger and stronger, and the Bill was at last referred to Convocation and speedily crushed.

One other measure had been carried in this reign which was of considerable importance, as securing the position of the Quakers. This eccentric, but, in many respects, most admir-

able sect will always be remembered in history for its noble services to the causes of religious tolerance and of the abolition of slavery; and its members, in these latter days, have been chiefly distinguished for their singular benevolence, for the quaint, quiet decorum of their manners, and for their systematic but very harmless defiance, in many small matters of conduct and of belief, of what appear to the outer world to be the dictates of common sense. In spite of much atrocious persecution, they had multiplied greatly in the closing years of the Stuarts, and as soon as the Toleration Act was passed England was studded with their meeting-houses. Between 1688 and 1690, licences were taken out for 131 new temporary and 108 new permanent places of worship for the society, 64 being in Lancashire.¹ The fanaticism which had led some of the first apostles of the sect to walk naked, or almost naked, through the streets, to interrupt the services in the churches, and to rebuke the judges and magistrates in the courts, had gradually subsided. An austere morality, and a tone of manners which rendered impossible most of the forms of wasteful, luxurious, and ostentatious expenditure, speedily raised the society to wealth. It had produced a great statesman in Penn, a great writer in Barclay, a considerable scholar in George Keith, and it was now a large and well-organised body. Many of the peculiarities of the Quakers were of a kind which gave little or no trouble to the legislators. Such were their refusal to recognise the gods Tuesco or Woden by speaking of Tuesday or Wednesday, to flatter a single individual by addressing him with a plural pronoun, to take off their hats in salutation, to use the ordinary phrases of deference or courtesy, or to abandon on any occasion their peculiar attire; and such, too, in a country where there were few soldiers, and where there was no conscription, was their objection to bear arms. Their refusal, however, to take oaths, to pay tithes, and to subscribe articles, rendered necessary a considerable amount of special legislation. The first great step, as we have seen, was taken by the Toleration Act. The second was the measure, carried in 1695, which, enacting that the solemn affirmation of a Quaker

¹ Skeats' *Hist. of Free Churches*, p. 153.

‘in presence of Almighty God’ should in legal cases be accepted as equivalent to an oath, gave the sect for the first time a power of protecting their property against fraud, and saved them from a vast amount of petty persecution and annoyance. It was only enacted for a period of seven years, and to the end of the following session. It was then renewed for eleven years, but in the Tory ascendancy in the last days of Queen Anne, it was greatly imperilled. Early in the session of 1713 the Quakers petitioned the House of Commons for a continuance of the Act, but the House would not even permit the petition to be brought up. They then applied to the Lords, who passed a Bill in their favour, but the Commons refused even to give it a first reading.¹ Fortunately, however, for the sect, the Tory power was speedily destroyed, and the new Government made the Act of William perpetual. In the matter of tithes the Quakers had also obtained some relief in the reign of William. They were not relieved from the obligation of paying them, but an inexpensive method was provided, under which tithes not exceeding 10*l.* might be levied before two justices of the peace, thus saving the long, expensive, and oppressive proceedings of the Ecclesiastical or Exchequer Courts. This Bill was first enacted only for three years, but it was afterwards renewed, was extended, in the case of Quakers, to all tithes, and was at last made perpetual.

Such was the position acquired by the Nonconformists at the Revolution. We have seen how seriously it was imperilled in the reign of Anne, and how entirely the legislation against them was the work of the Tory party. It was natural that it should be so, as the Established Church was the especial stronghold of Toryism; but it is not the less true that a certain change had passed over the attitude of parties since James had made overtures to the Dissenting leaders, and, by the promise of toleration, had drawn some of them for a time to his side. The Jacobitism of the reign of Anne was violently hostile to the Dissenters, and it was chiefly the Jacobite wing of the Tories, led by Bolingbroke and Atterbury, which forced the hand of Oxford and carried the Schism Act. As a natural consequence

¹ See the *Hist. of the Last Four Years of Queen Anne*.

the whole body of Protestant Dissenters were passionately devoted to the Hanoverian succession.¹ Their numbers appear by this time to have considerably increased. It appears, by a report drawn up by Neal, the well-known historian of Puritanism, in 1715 and 1716, that at that date there were 1,107 Dissenting congregations in England and 43 in Wales. The Presbyterians were by far the most numerous, and they about equalled the Independents and Baptists united.² The position of the Nonconformists in the last few months of the reign of Anne was extremely perilous, and they had everything to fear from the ministry of Bolingbroke; but the Queen, by a remarkable coincidence, died on the very day on which the Schism Act was to have come into operation. It is related that on that morning Burnet met Bradbury, the minister of the great Independent Chapel in Fetter Lane, walking through Smithfield with slow steps, and with an absent and dejected air. 'I was thinking,' he said, in reply to the greeting of the Bishop, 'whether I shall have the constancy and resolution of the martyrs who suffered in this spot, for I most assuredly expect to see similar times of violence and persecution.' The Bishop consoled him by the intelligence that the Queen was dying, and promised, as soon as the event occurred, to send a messenger to inform him, or, if it was the hour of public worship, to drop a handkerchief from the gallery of his chapel. A few hours later, while London was still wholly ignorant of what had happened, the signal was given. Bradbury concluded his sermon with a fervent thanksgiving to God, who had blasted the hopes and designs of wicked men. He announced to his startled hearers the accession of George I., and having implored the Divine blessing on the King and on his family, minister and congregation joined in a psalm³ of triumph, describing the chosen prince, raised up by the Almighty Hand to save His people from their enemies. Some time later the same minister, accompanied by several other leading Nonconformists, was

¹ Burgess, the most popular Dissenting minister in London in the reigns of William and Anne, is said to have once explained from the pulpit that the descendants of Jacob were called Israelites 'because God

did not wish his people to be called Jacobites.'—Bogue and Bennett.

² Bogue and Bennett, *Hist. of the Dissenters*, i. 357–359.

³ The eighty-ninth Psalm.

deputed to present an address of congratulation to the new sovereign. In the vestibule of the palace they met Bolingbroke, who asked them sarcastically, as he pointed to their dark robes, which contrasted strangely with the pageantry about them, 'Is this a funeral?' 'No, my Lord,' was the answer, 'not a funeral, but a resurrection!'¹

These were the chief elements that composed the Whig party which the accession of George I. raised to power. But although a singular combination of skill and good fortune had secured its success, although a dynasty which was once on the throne, and was supported by the army, was able, for a time at least, to command the allegiance of the classes who always rally around order, yet the permanence of the Government seemed more than doubtful. The strongest sympathies and enthusiasms of the nation took other directions, and the balance of classes was decidedly against it. The Whigs directed everything to their own advantage, and entirely discarded the policy of endeavouring to conciliate their opponents. The systematic exclusion of all Tories from the Government; the censure by both Houses of a peace which had been approved by two successive Parliaments; the report of the Secret Committee in which the whole conduct of the late ministers in negotiating the peace was minutely investigated and painted in the blackest colours; and finally the impeachment of Bolingbroke, Oxford, Ormond, and Stafford were sufficient to drive almost the whole party into the arms of Jacobitism. It is remarkable, however, that, even in this season of party violence and party triumph, the Whig leaders shrank from a repetition of the Sacheverell agitation, and abstained very prudently, though very illogically, from impeaching the Bishop of Bristol, who had been one of the plenipotentiaries in negotiating the peace, though they impeached his colleague, Lord Strafford. The violence shown on this occasion was a natural consequence of the measures of the last administration, but few will now question that it was excessive. No conclusive evidence of the Jacobite intrigues of the late Government was at that period accessible to the ministers.

¹ Or according to another version, 'The funeral of the Schism Act—the resurrection of liberty.'—Compare

Bogue and Bennett's *Hist. of Dissenters*, ii. pp. 78-79, and Wilson's *Hist. of Dissenting Churches*, iii. 513-514.

The 'restraining orders' furnished a ground for impeachment which was unquestionably valid, but they could affect neither Ormond, whose duty as a soldier was simply to obey orders, nor Strafford, who was negotiating in Holland. However inadequate, and even criminal, might have been the terms of the peace, the approbation of the preceding Parliaments should have sheltered its authors from criminal proceedings. The aspect of English politics was now rapidly changed by the disappearance of many leading figures from the scene. Bolingbroke fled to France, and, in a moment of anger or miscalculation, threw himself openly into the service of the Pretender, and thus exposed himself to an Act of Attainder and irretrievably ruined his future career. Ormond, soon after, took the same course, with a similar result; but after a short time he abandoned politics and lived quietly in France. Oxford awaited the storm with his usual calm courage, and he was flung into the Tower, where he remained untried for two years. In 1715 the Whigs lost Wharton, the most skilful and unscrupulous of their party managers, Halifax, the greatest of their financiers, and Burnet, the most brilliant of their churchmen. Somers lingered till 1716, but he was now a helpless paralytic, and, though a few fitful flashes of his old intelligence were occasionally discerned, his mind for many months before his death was profoundly impaired. Marlborough soon experienced the same fate. Though appointed Captain-General and Master of the Ordnance by the new Government, he received no confidence and exercised scarcely any influence, and he viewed with bitter displeasure the course of events. The death of two daughters, in 1714, threw a deep shadow over his life. In 1716 he was reduced by two successive strokes of paralysis to almost complete impotence, and he remained a pitiable wreck till his death in 1722.

In the country the surprised acquiescence and the sense of relief from impending danger, which had greeted the accession of George I. were soon replaced by a general discontent. The University of Oxford testified its sentiments by conferring, on the very day of the King's coronation, an honorary degree on Sir Constantine Phipps, who had just been removed from the Government of Ireland on suspicion of Jacobitism.

On the same day violent riots broke out at Birmingham, Bristol, Chippenham, Norwich, and Reading. Similar scenes soon occurred in almost every considerable town in the kingdom. The birthdays of Anne and of Ormond and the imprisonment of Oxford were the occasions of violent and threatening disturbances. The House of Lords in 1716 strongly censured the University authorities of Oxford for having refused to take any measures for celebrating the birthday of the Prince of Wales. On the other hand, those who attempted to celebrate the King's birthday in London with the usual festivities were insulted by the populace; and on the following day, which happened to be the anniversary of the Restoration, bonfires were lit, the streets were illuminated, a picture of King William was burnt in Smithfield, great crowds patrolled the city, shouting 'Ormond and High Church for ever!' and several persons were injured. The Dissenters, in 1714 and 1715, were exposed to violence very similar to that which they had experienced after the impeachment of Sacheverell. In London several of their ministers were burnt in effigy. At Oxford a Quaker meeting-house was utterly destroyed, and in most of the towns of Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Cheshire the Nonconformist chapels were wrecked.¹ The Nonjurors now very generally attended the ordinary church service, but they took great pains to show that their antipathy to the Revolution was unabated. Some of them, when the names of the King and royal family were mentioned in the prayers, stood up and faced the congregation. Others less demonstratively glided down on their hassocks, and remained sitting till the prayers were over. Others tried the gravity of the congregation by ostentatiously rustling the pages of their prayer-books in order that they might not hear the obnoxious names.² A fashion became common of drinking disloyal toasts in disguised forms, such as 'Kit,' or King James III.; 'Job,' or James, Ormond, and Bolingbroke; 'three pounds fourteen and fivepence,' or James III., Lewis XIV., and Philip V. Innu-

¹ See Wright's *England under the House of Hanover*, Tindals' *History*, Wilson's *Life of Defoe*, Rogers' *Protests of the House of Lords*, i. 234-236.

² Kennett's *Life*, pp. 161-162. Perry's *Hist. of the Church of England*, iii. 71.

merable ballads and pamphlets circulated through the country, sustaining and representing the prevailing discontent.

The situation was, undoubtedly, very critical. The ministers had secured a large Whig majority in the Parliament, but there was every probability that if a dissolution occurred in three years, the verdict would have been reversed, and another of those great revulsions of power which of late years had been so frequent would have taken place.¹ The utter ignorance of the King of the language of his people, and his awkward retiring manners, disgusted the nation all the more because it was the habit of the Whig party to throw many imputations upon the late Queen. It was remarked with bitterness that one of the very first acts of the new Government in foreign policy was to embroil England with a Northern Power in the interests of Hanover. Bremen and Verden, which had been ceded to Sweden by the treaty of Westphalia, had, on account of their situation between Hanover and the sea, been long an object of desire to the Princes of the House of Brunswick. In 1712 these provinces, together with Schleswig and Holstein, had been conquered by Denmark; but the King of Denmark, foreseeing that he would be unable to resist the arms of Sweden, on the return of Charles XII. from Turkey, resolved, by the sacrifice of a portion of his new dominions, to endeavour to secure the remainder. He accordingly sold Bremen and Verden to George, as Elector of Hanover, for 150,000*l.*, on the further condition that Hanover should join in the war against Sweden. No sooner had this step been taken than a British fleet was despatched to the Baltic, ostensibly for the purpose of protecting British trade, really for the purpose of intimidating Sweden into concession. The Whig ministers supported this policy, on the ground that these provinces, which command the navigation of the Elbe and of the Weser, the only inlets from the British seas into Germany, are of essential importance in case of war, as protecting or interrupting the

¹ Marshal Berwick, the truest and most moderate of the Jacobite leaders, declared at this time that five out of six of the English nation were on the side of King James, not, indeed, so much on account of his incontestable right, as from hatred to the House of Hanover, and to prevent the ruin

of the Church and of the liberties of the kingdom; and he added that many persons of the greatest consideration, many noblemen, clergy, and gentlemen, had given assurances of their good intentions.—*Mémoires du Maréchal de Berwick*, ii. 139-140.

British commerce with Hamburg, and it was therefore a great British interest that they should be in possession of a power which was necessarily friendly to Great Britain. It was answered that a serious risk of war was incurred for the attainment of an old object of Hanoverian ambition, that George would never have entered into the enterprise had it not been for the power he possessed as a British sovereign, and that the English ministers would never have acquiesced in it had they not been anxious by every means to monopolise the favour of the King. A similar disposition, both on the part of the sovereign and his ministers, was shown in the speedy repeal of that clause of the Act of Settlement which prohibited the King from going abroad without the consent of his Parliament. While the tide of discontent in England rose higher and higher, alarming news was reported from Scotland. On September 6, 1715, Lord Mar set up the Jacobite banner at Braemar, and in a few weeks 10,000 men were gathered around it.

The measures of the Government were marked with great energy, promptitude, and severity. The hawkers who cried Tory pamphlets and broadsides through the streets were at once sent to the House of Correction. A reward of 1,000*l.* was offered for the discovery of the author, a reward of 500*l.* for that of the printer, of the 'English Advice to the Freeholders of England,' the most brilliant and popular of the Tory pamphlets. A schoolmaster named Bournois, who asserted that the King had no right to the British throne, was condemned to be scourged through the city, and the sentence was executed with such ferocity that he died in a few days. The disturbances in the great towns were met by a permanent Act, still in force, providing that any assembly of more than twelve persons who, having been enjoined to disperse by a Justice of the Peace, and having heard the proclamation against riots read, did not separate within an hour, should be esteemed guilty of felony. A royal order was issued strictly forbidding the clergy to introduce any political allusions into their sermons; but when the rebellion broke out, all the bishops except Atterbury and Smalridge signed a joint paper condemning it. On the first news of that event the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended. A reward of 100,000*l.* was offered for the apprehension of the Pretender, alive or dead. The contingent

of 6,000 men, which the Dutch had bound themselves by treaty to furnish whenever the Protestant succession was in danger, was claimed, and orders were given for raising in England thirteen regiments of dragoons and eight of infantry ; for keeping the trained bands in readiness to suppress tumults ; for dismissing suspected Jacobites from their posts in the army, and even for arresting, with the consent of the House, some Jacobite Members of Parliament.

The rebellion was from the first almost hopeless. Berwick stated, indeed, with much plausibility, that if supported by a body of regular troops it must have succeeded ;¹ but everything at this time seemed to conspire against the Stuarts. Between the inception and the execution of the project, Lewis XIV. died, the Regent who succeeded to power leaned towards the English alliance, and thus, while the reigning King could receive succours both from Germany and from Holland, all chance of French assistance to the Jacobites was lost. Hardly less calamitous had been the flight of Ormond. His character, his position, and his great liberality, had made him one of the most popular men in England. Had he been in it when the insurrection broke out, he would have been universally recognised as its chief, and as he had commanded the British army, he had at least some military knowledge, and would probably have drawn a portion of the regular troops to his side. An attempt was made to induce the King of Sweden to join in the enterprise, but it was unsuccessful, and the whole project was undertaken with a recklessness and a fatuity almost incredible. No single step was taken to produce a rebellion in Ireland, and the Government was therefore able to despatch several regiments from that country to crush the Scotch Jacobites. Even in England no general rising appears to have been prepared. The rebellion in Scotland was hurried on by the orders of the Pretender, without the knowledge either of Bolingbroke or of Berwick,² and there was scarcely a single man of ordinary military knowledge connected with it. Mar, though in other fields he showed considerable ability, was in this respect conspicuously deficient, and he was also wholly without the decision and

¹ *Mémoires de Berwick*, ii. 148.

² *Ibid.* ii. 142.

daring needed for the enterprise. The Jacobites were almost without arms and without organisation. Their secret intelligence was interrupted ; their plans were discovered ; several of their leaders, before they had time to take arms, were thrown into prison ; and, although a large proportion of the nation undoubtedly sympathised with their cause, few men were prepared to risk their lives and properties in an enterprise at once so hazardous and so mismanaged.

A plan for surprising Edinburgh Castle was defeated by the secret information of a woman. The Highland chiefs were summoned by the Government to Edinburgh ; and though few of them obeyed, Argyle and Sutherland, who were, perhaps, the most powerful, were on the Hanoverian side, and many of the leading Jacobites in Scotland were put under arrest. Mar, with the bulk of the insurgents, seized on Perth ; but he remained there inactive and undecided, waiting, apparently, for an insurrection in England during the critical time that elapsed before the Government could organise its forces. In England the energy of the ministers completely paralysed the rebellion. Oxford, which was a special centre of Jacobitism, was occupied by a large body of cavalry. Ormond, after a very unwise delay, attempted a descent upon Devonshire, and as the western counties were intensely Tory, he expected a general rising, but his plans were betrayed by a Jacobite agent named M'Lean. Windham, Lord Lansdowne, and other prominent gentlemen who were to have organised the movement, were arrested ; the garrison of Plymouth was changed, Bristol was defended by a body of infantry, and the success of these measures was so complete that Ormond, finding no prospect of support, returned to France without even landing. In Northumberland a body of Jacobites took up arms under Mr. Forster, one of the Members for the county, supported by Lord Derwentwater and some other leading gentry. They were joined by a small body of Scotch insurgents under Lord Kenmure and the Earls of Carnwath, Nithsdale, and Wintoun, who had taken arms in the south-west of Scotland, and soon after by a brigade of about 2,000 Highlanders under the command of an officer named Mackintosh, who had been despatched by Mar. This officer, who was one of the few men who gained some laurels in the contest, had previously

succeeded in crossing the Frith of Forth in the face of three English men-of-war, had taken possession of Leith, and would probably have captured Edinburgh itself had not the royal army under Argyle marched to its assistance. He then succeeded in effecting his retreat unmolested, and joined the Northumberland army, when, however, many of his Highlanders deserted. Instead of marching northwards to attack Argyle in the rear, the insurgents made an unsuccessful attempt upon Newcastle, marched into Lancashire, where they were joined by many of the Roman Catholics who were so numerous in that county, and occupied Preston; but they were soon attacked by General Wills, and, after a short siege, compelled to surrender. On the same day the first considerable encounter in Scotland took place. Mar, after a long delay, having been joined by the northern clans under Lord Seaforth, and by those of the west under General Gordon, marched towards Stirling in hopes of joining the insurgents in the south, and was encountered by Argyle at Sheriffmuir. The battle was indecisive, or, to speak more accurately, the left wing of the army of Argyle was totally defeated by the Highlanders, while the right wing was as completely victorious. Each party claimed the victory, and each party drew off at last without molestation. Nearly at the same time the cause of the Pretender received a fatal blow in the capture of Inverness by Lord Lovat. This sagacious and unprincipled man had now for a short time deserted, through a personal motive, the Jacobite cause, to which he had formerly belonged, and for which he afterwards died, and he rendered an eminent service to the Government. Lord Seaforth and Lord Huntly were compelled to return to defend their own country, where they soon after laid down their arms, and the army of Mar was rapidly disintegrated by desertions and divisions. At last, towards the close of December, the Pretender himself came over to Scotland. He made a public entry into Dundee, reviewed the remnant of his army at Perth, and tried to rekindle its waning spirit. It was, however, too late. The Dutch auxiliaries had already arrived. The Jacobites were almost destitute of money, forage, ammunition, and provisions, and nothing remained but a precipitate retreat. It was effected through the deep snow of a Scotch winter. The Pretender, with Lord Mar and a few other

persons of distinction, embarked in a small French vessel from Montrose, and having first sailed to Norway, they succeeded, by a circuitous route, in evading the English cruisers, and arriving in safety at the French coast, while their army rapidly dispersed. Of the prisoners, great numbers were brought to trial. Two peers and thirty-four commoners were executed. Lords Nithsdale and Wintoun, who were reserved for the same fate, succeeded in escaping, and many Jacobites were sentenced by the law courts to less severe punishments, or were deprived of their titles and possessions by Acts of Attainder.

So ended the Rebellion of 1715, which reflected very little credit on any of those concerned in it. How little confidence the most acute observers felt in the stability of the dynasty is curiously illustrated by the fact, which has recently been discovered, that Shrewsbury, who in 1714 had, of all men, done most to bring it on the throne, was deeply engaged in 1715 in Jacobite intrigues, while Marlborough had actually furnished money for the enterprise of the Pretender.¹ Had that enterprise ever worn a hopeful aspect, large classes would probably have rallied around it; but in England, at least, scarcely anyone was prepared to make serious sacrifices, or to encounter serious dangers for its success. Dislike to the foreign dynasty was general, but the conflict between the passion of loyalty and the hatred of Catholicism had lowered the English character. The natural political enthusiasm of the time was driven inwards and repressed. Divided sentiments produced weak resolutions, and a material and selfish spirit was creeping over politics. In this, as in the preceding reign, the Whigs showed themselves incomparably superior to their opponents in organisation, in energy, and in skill; but how little they counted upon the national gratitude or support was shown by the fact that one of their first cares, on the termination of the rebellion, was to pass the Septennial Act, in order to adjourn for several years a general election. Much was, indeed, said of the demoralisation of the country, and of the ruin of the country gentry, re-

¹ This very remarkable fact is established by two letters from Bolingbroke to the Pretender, dated respectively Aug. 20, and Sept. 25,

1715, extracted from the Stuart Papers, and given in the appendix to the 1st vol. of Lord Stanhope's *Hist. of England*.

sulting from triennial elections; of the animosities planted in constituencies which had no time to subside; of the instability of a foreign policy depending on a constantly fluctuating legislature; but the real and governing motive of the change was the conviction that an election in 1717 would be probably fatal to the ministry and, very possibly, to the dynasty. The Bill, though it related specially to the constitution of the Lower House, was first introduced in the House of Lords, and as it was passed without a dissolution, Parliament not only determined the natural duration of future legislatures, but also prolonged the tenure of the existing House of Commons for four years beyond the time for which it was elected.

It was on this side that the great dangers of the dynasty lay. If the character of Parliament continued to fluctuate as rapidly as it had done in the first decade of the century; if the Church and the landed gentry continued to look on the reigning family with hostility or with a sullen indifference, it was inevitable that the normal action of parliamentary government should soon bring the enemies of the dynasty into power. If the House of Brunswick was to continue on the throne, it was absolutely necessary that something should be done to clog the parliamentary machine, to prevent it from responding instantaneously to every breath of popular passion, to strengthen the influence of the executive both over the House and over the constituencies. The first great step towards this end was the Septennial Act, but it would, probably, have proved less successful had not a long series of causes been in action which lowered still more the Tory sentiment in England, and gradually and almost insensibly produced a condition of thought and government very favourable to the policy of the Whigs.

In the first place, it was inevitable that the monarchical sentiment should be materially diminished by the mere fact that the title to the crown was disputed. In this respect the position of England resembled that of a very large part of Europe, for the great multitude of disputed titles forms one of the most remarkable political characteristics of the early years of the eighteenth century. The throne of England was disputed between the House of Hanover and the House of Stuart. The Spanish throne was disputed between Philip V.

and the Emperor. In Italy the Houses of Medici and of Farnese became extinct, and the successions of Tuscany and Parma were disputed by the Emperor and the Spanish Queen. In Poland the rival claims of Stanislaus, who was supported by Charles XII., and of Augustus, who was supported by Peter the Great, were during many years contested by arms. In France the title of the young King was, indeed, undisputed, but his fragile constitution made men look forward to his speedy death, and parties were already forming in support of the rival claims of the Regent and of the King of Spain. Among the causes which were lowering the position of monarchy in Europe in the eighteenth century, the multiplication of these disputed titles deserves a prominent place. They shook the reverence for the throne; they destroyed the mystic sanctity that surrounded it; they brought the supreme authority of the nation into the arena of controversy.

In England, since the period of the Restoration, the doctrine of the Divine right of kings and of the absolute criminality of all rebellion, was, as we have seen, a fundamental tenet, not only of the Tory party, but also of the Established Church. But from the accession of George I. it began rapidly to decline. The enthronement of the new dynasty had, for a time at least, solved the doubtful question of the succession according to the principles of the Revolution. The chief offices in the Church were reserved for divines who accepted those principles. The inconsistencies of the clergy during the three preceding reigns had weakened their authority and broken the force of the Anglican tradition; and in the rapid disappearance of doctrinal teaching, and the silent conversion of Christianity into a mere system of elevated morality, a theory of government which based authority upon a religious dogma appeared peculiarly incongruous. The tendency was assisted by the religious scepticism of the most brilliant of the Tory chiefs. The theory of 'the Patriot King,' as far as it can be discerned through the cloud of vague though eloquent verbiage in which it is enveloped, is, that the power and prerogative of the sovereign should be greatly enlarged as the only efficient check upon the corruption of Parliaments; but in this, as in other of his later writings, Bolingbroke spoke of the theological doctrine which had once been the rallying cry

of his party with unmitigated contempt.¹ It was, of course, impossible that such a tone should have been employed by the Tory leader in the more active portion of his career; but his religious sentiments were, probably, very generally surmised, and there is, I believe, no evidence that he ever employed or countenanced the language of Sacheverell and his school.

There was another consideration which had a very powerful influence in the same direction. The undoubted benefits which England obtained from the events of the Revolution were purchased not only by the evil of a disputed succession, but also by that of a party king. The very politicians who would naturally have been most inclined to magnify the royal authority learned to look upon the reigning sovereign as the head of their opponents, and to make it a main object of their policy to abridge his power. This change had been already foreshadowed in the severe restrictions the Act of Settlement imposed upon the Sovereign, and there were few subjects on which Tory pamphleteers dilated with more indignant eloquence than the facility with which the Whigs afterwards consented to relax its limitations.² Windham denounced in the strongest terms the unconstitutional conduct of the new king in endeavouring by a proclamation to influence the elections of 1715. The most jealous critics of the civil list were to be found in the Tory ranks. In 1722, when the House of Commons voted an address to the King, promising to enable him to suppress all remaining spirit of rebellion, it was the Tory Shippen who moved that the clause should be added 'with due regard to the liberty of the subject, the constitution in Church and State, and the laws now in force.'³ Whatever may have been the private sentiments of its leaders, the party which assumed this attitude publicly disclaimed the imputation of Jacobitism. Its members, indeed,

¹ 'As kings have found the great effects wrought in government by the empire which priests obtain over the consciences of mankind, so priests have been taught by experience that the best way to preserve their own rank, dignity, wealth, and power, all raised upon a supposed Divine right, is to communicate the same pretension to kings, and, by a fallacy common to both, impose their usurpations on a silly world. This they

have done: and in the State as in the Church, these pretensions to a Divine right have been carried highest by those who have had the least pretension to the Divine favour.'—*The Idea of a Patriot King*. See also the *Dissertation on Parties*, letters vi., viii., xiv.

² See, for example, Atterbury's 'English Advice to the Freeholders of England.'—*Somers' Tracts*, vol. xiii.

³ *Parl. Hist.*, viii. 37.

well knew that that imputation was the main obstacle to their political success, but at the same time they regarded the royal power with constant jealousy, and their public language was in glaring opposition to that which had so long been the very shibboleth of their school.¹

By a similar inversion, the deep English feeling of respect for law and for all duly constituted authority, was now turned against high monarchical views. English political opinion has usually been pre-eminently distinguished for its moderation, and this characteristic has been very largely due to two great events in English history. Democratic excesses had been completely discredited by the Commonwealth, while the Revolution had discredited extreme monarchical doctrines, by associating them with Jacobitism, and therefore with conspiracy against the law.

The influences that were at work, altering the position of the sovereign, were, it is true, not all in the same direction. The large standing armies that were maintained after the Revolution, the Riot Act, the increase of patronage resulting from extended establishments and from the National Debt, and lastly the prolongation of the duration of Parliaments, were all favourable to his power or his influence. Great institutions, however, cannot rest solely upon a material basis, and the causes that were at work lowering the English monarchy were such as no extension of patronage or even of prerogative could compensate. Divested of the moral and imaginative associations that encircled the legitimate line, deprived of the religious doctrine on which it had once been based, and alienated from the party who are the natural exponents of monarchical enthusiasm, it sank at once into a lower plane. The King could lay no claim to a Divine right.² His title was exclusively parliamentary, and there was nothing either in his person or his surroundings to appeal to the popular imagination. A profound revolution, it was noticed, took place in the etiquette of the Court. The pomp

¹ 'The Tories have been so long obliged to talk in the republican style that they seem to have made converts of themselves by their hypocrisy, and to have embraced the sentiments as well as the language of their adversaries.'—Hume's *Essay*

on Parties.

² As Bolingbroke said, 'A notion was entertained by many that the worse title a man had, the better king he was likely to make.'—*Dissertation on Parties*, letter vi.

and pageantry of royalty, which had long been dear to Englishmen, and which had reflected, and in some degree sustained, the popular reverence for the King, had almost disappeared.¹ George I. brought to England the simple habits of a German Court. His wife was a prisoner in Germany. His favourites were coarse and avaricious German mistresses. He spoke no English; he was in his fifty-fifth year, and he had no grace of manner and no love of display. Under these circumstances his Court assumed a particularly simple and unimposing character, which the parsimony and the tastes of his two successors led them to maintain.

With the Divine right, the ascription of a miraculous power naturally passed away. The service for the miracle of the royal touch was, indeed, reprinted in the first Prayer-book of George I.²; but the power was never exercised or claimed by the Hanoverian dynasty, and thus one great source of the popular reverence for the monarchy disappeared. For some time, however, we may trace the faint glimmerings of a supernatural aureole in the exiled line. James II., having lost his crown mainly on account of his religion, and having shown in his latter years a deep and touching piety,³ was naturally regarded with great reverence by the more devoted of his co-religionists, and on his death there were some attempts to invest him with the reputation of a Saint. Worshippers flocked in multitudes to the church where his body was laid, to ask favour by his intercession. A curious letter is still preserved, written by the Bishop of Autun, in the

¹ A very intelligent traveller who described England about 1720, writes: 'No prince in the world lives in the state and grandeur of the King and Queen of England . . . Yet in my own private opinion it savours too much of superstition, being a respect that religion allows only to the King of kings. King George, since his accession to the throne, hath entirely altered this superstitious way of being served on the knee at table. King Charles II., King James, King William, and Queen Anne, whenever they dined in public, received wine upon the knee from a man of the first quality, who was Lord of the Bedchamber in waiting; and even

when they washed their hands that lord on the knee held the bason. But King George hath entirely altered that method; he dines at St. James's privately, served by his domestics, and often sups abroad with his nobility.'—*A Journey through England* (by Macky), 4th ed. 1724, vol. i. pp. 198–199.

² Lathbury's *Hist. of Convocation*, p. 437.

³ The more amiable aspects of the latter days of James—which Macaulay has completely slurred over—are well given by Ranke in his *Hist. of England* (Eng. trans.), v. 274–5.

December of 1701, to the widow of James, describing in much detail what the writer believed to have been a miraculous cure, of which he had himself been the object. For more than forty years, he said, he had been afflicted with a tumour beneath the right eye, which, when pressed, emitted matter. In the beginning of the preceding April the fluxion ceased, the tumour rapidly grew larger than a nut, and it became so painful that the patient had not a moment of repose. A surgeon lanced it, and from this time the fluxion re-commenced with such abundance that it was necessary to dress the sore eight or ten times in the twenty-four hours. The bishop came to Paris and consulted several leading physicians, but they told him that there was no remedy, and that he must bear the inconvenience for the remainder of his life. On September 19 and 20, two or three days after the death of James, two nuns, in two different convents, independently announced to him their persuasion that the first miracle of the deceased King would be in his favour, and promised to pray God, by the intercession of James, to effect a cure. A few days after, as the bishop was celebrating mass, in the nunnery of Chaillot, for the soul of the King, his tumour ceased to flow, and all traces of the malady disappeared. Another story was circulated, concerning a young man of Auvergne, who had been afflicted with fits, which were believed to be of a paralytic nature, had lost all use of his limbs, and had tried in vain many remedies, both medical and spiritual. Immediately upon the death of James, a friend, who had a great veneration for that prince, recommended the sufferer to seek help through the intercession of the saintly King. He did so, and vowed, if he recovered, to make a pilgrimage to his tomb. From that day he began to amend. On the ninth day he was completely recovered, and a deposition was drawn up by the priest of his parish, and signed by himself, attesting the miraculous nature of the cure.¹ Several other cases were narrated of miracles worked by the intercession of the King, and there is not much doubt that if the Stuarts had been restored, and had continued Catholics, he would have been canonised.² Occasional rumours

¹ These documents are preserved among the papers of the Cardinal Gualterio. British Museum. Add. MSS. 20311.

² See the very curious extracts from the Nairne Papers, in Macpherson's *Original Papers*, i. 595-599. Bolingbroke noticed in 1717 how

of cures of scrofula, effected by the touch of the Pretender, in Paris or in Rome, were long circulated in England,¹ and the old ceremony was revived at Edinburgh in 1745.² The credit that once attached to it, however, had almost passed, though the superstition long lingered, and is, perhaps, even now hardly extinct in some remote districts. In France, the ceremony was performed as recently as the coronation of Charles X., who touched, on that occasion, 121 sick persons.³ As late as 1838, a minister of the Shetland Isles, where scrofulous diseases are very prevalent, tells us that no cure was there believed to be so efficacious as the royal touch; and that, as a substitute for the actual living finger of royalty, a few crowns and half-crowns, bearing the effigy of Charles I., were carefully handed down from generation to generation, and employed as a remedy for the evil.⁴

Another very important cause of the decline of the power of royalty was the increased development of party government. The formation of a ministry, or homogeneous body of ruling statesmen of the same politics, deliberating in common, and in which each member is responsible to the others, has been justly described by Lord Macaulay as one of the most momentous and least noticed consequences of the Revolution. It was essential to the working of parliamentary government, and it was scarcely less important as abridging the influence of the Crown. As long as the ministers were selected by the sovereign from the most opposite parties, as long as each was responsible only for his own department, and was perfectly free to vote, speak, or intrigue against his colleagues, it is obvious that the chief efficient power must have resided with the sovereign. When,

James 'passes already for a saint and reports are encouraged of miracles which they suppose to be wrought at his tomb.'—*Letter to Windham*.

¹ Thus the Nonjuror historian Carte relates the case of a young man from Bristol named Christopher Lovel, known to himself, who was cured by the Pretender at Paris in 1716 (Carte's *Hist. of England*, i. 291–292). This anecdote is said to have seriously impaired the success of Carte's history. See, too, a tract called *A Letter from a Gentleman in Rome*

giving an account of some surprising Cures of the King's Evil by the touch, lately effected in the neighbourhood of that city (1721).

² Chambers' *Hist. of the Rebellion of 1745*, p. 125.

³ *Annuaire Historique*, 1825, p. 275.

⁴ *New Statistical Account of Scotland*, xv. p. 85. A seventh son was also believed to have the power of curing scrofula by his touch. See a case in Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, xiv. 210. See too Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, art. *Miranda*.

however, the conduct of affairs was placed in the hands of a body forming a coherent whole, bound together by principle and by honour, and chosen out of the leaders of the dominant party in Parliament, the chief efficient power naturally passed to this body, and to the party it represented. Although, in the reign of William, the advice of Sunderland and the exigencies of public affairs had induced William to fall back upon government by a single party, yet he never renounced his preference for a mixed ministry, composed of moderate Whigs and moderate Tories; during almost the whole of his reign he succeeded, in some degree, in attaining it, and he always held in his own hands the chief direction of foreign affairs. His successor, in this respect at least, steadily pursued the same end, and the moderate and temporising policy, as well as the love of power, of Godolphin and Harley assisted in perpetuating the old system. The first ministry of Anne, to almost the close of its existence, was a chequered one, and although at last the Whig element became completely predominant, the introduction of the Whig junto was distasteful to Godolphin, and bitterly resented by the Queen. Her letters to Godolphin, when the accession of Sunderland to the ministry had become inevitable, express her sentiments on the subject in the strongest and clearest light. She urged that the appointment would be equivalent to throwing herself entirely into the hands of a party; that it was the object of her life to retain the faculty of appointing to her service honourable and useful men on either side; that if she placed the direction of affairs exclusively in the hands either of Whigs or Tories, she would be entirely their slave, the quiet of her life would be at an end, and her sovereignty would be no more than a name.¹ On the overthrow of Godolphin, it was the earnest desire both of Harley and of the Queen that a coalition ministry should be formed, in which, though the Tories predominated, they should not possess a monopoly of power. Overtures were made to Somers and Halifax; and Cowper was urgently and repeatedly pressed by the Queen to retain the Great Seal.² The refusal of the Whig leaders made the Government essentially Tory, but, as

¹ Coxe's *Marlborough*, ch. li., lii.

Lives of the Chancellors (5th ed.), v. 274-277.

² See Onslow's note to Burnet's *Own Times*, ii. 553-554. Campbell's

we have already seen, it was a bitter complaint of the October Club that several of the less prominent Whigs were retained in office, and the habit of balancing between the parties still continued. 'I'll tell you one great state secret,' wrote Swift to Stella, as early as February 1710-11, 'the Queen, sensible how much she was governed by the late ministry, runs a little into t'other extreme, and is jealous in that point, even of those who got her out of the other's hands.' 'Her plan,' said a well-informed writer, 'was not to suffer the Tory interest to grow too strong, but to keep such a number of Whigs still in office as should be a constant check upon her ministers.'¹ Harley, who dreaded the extreme Tories, fully shared her view; he was always open to overtures from the Whigs, and it was this policy which at last produced the ministerial crisis that was cut short by the death of the Queen.

With the new reign all was changed. In the first anxious month after the accession of George I., it was doubtful whether he would throw himself entirely into the hands of the Whigs, or whether, by bestowing some offices on the Tories, he would make an effort at once to conciliate his opponents, and to retain in his own hands a substantial part of the direction of affairs. Every step in his policy, however, showed that he was resolved to adopt the former alternative, and the Tories soon learnt to realise the pathetic truth of the words which Bolingbroke wrote, on the occasion of his own contemptuous dismissal: 'The grief of my soul is this: I see plainly that the Tory party is gone.' Halifax appears to have urged the appointment of Sir Thomas Hanmer, Bromley, and some other Tories, to high office under the Crown;² but Townshend and Cowper, with a zeal that was not purely disinterested, pressed upon the King the impossibility of distributing his favours equally between the

¹ Sheridan's *Life of Swift*, pp. 124-125. In a tract called *An Enquiry into the behaviour of the Queen's last Ministers*, Swift says: 'She had entertained the notion of forming a moderate or comprehensive scheme, which she maintained with great firmness, nor would ever depart from, until about half a year before her death.'

² Coxe's *Life of Walpole*, vol. i. p.

60 (ed. 1798). It appears that offices, but apparently sinecures, were offered to and refused by Hanmer and Bromley. See some interesting letters on this subject in Sir H. Bunbury's *Life of Hanmer*, pp. 53-56, 60-61. Lord Anglesey, who, though a Tory, had followed Sir Thomas Hanmer in opposing the Tory ministry, received a place in the Irish treasury.

parties,¹ and, with the exception of Nottingham, who, during the latter days of Queen Anne, had completely identified himself with the Whigs, and who was for a short time President of the Council, all Tories were excluded from the management of affairs. It was urged that, in the very critical moment of accession, it was indispensable that the King should be served only by statesmen on whom he could perfectly rely; that the leaders of the Tory party had in the last reign been deeply implicated in Jacobite intrigues; that it was difficult or impossible to say how far Jacobitism had spread among them; that a division of offices would be sure to create jealousy and disloyalty in the weaker party, and to enfeeble, in a period of great danger, the policy of the Government; that, in the very probable event of the Pretender becoming Protestant, the House of Brunswick could count on no one but the most decided Whigs. On the other hand, it is certain that a very large part of the Stuart sympathies of the Tories was simply due to a fear that the new Government would not recognise the legitimate claims of the party to a fair share of political power, and it is equally certain that the landed gentry and the clergy in England were strongly attached to that party and were bitterly exasperated by its proscription. It was not forgotten that the Act of Settlement, by virtue of which the King sat on the throne, was brought in by a Tory statesman, that the Peace of Utrecht, which was the great measure of the Tory ministry, contained a clause compelling the French sovereign to recognise the Protestant succession, and to expel the Pretender from France, and that one section of the party, under the guidance of Sir Thomas Hanmer, had never wavered in its attachment to the Act of Settlement. On the death of the Queen, they had all, at least passively, accepted the change of dynasty, and there is no reason to question the substantial truth of the assertion of Bolingbroke, that the proscription of the Tories by George I. for the first time made the party entirely Jacobite.² But,

¹ Campbell's *Chancellors*, v. 293. It is said that, among his German advisers, Gortz recommended some favour to the Tories, but Bernsdorf was wholly in favour of the Whigs. See a letter of Horace Walpole in Coxe's *Walpole*, ii. 48.

² *Letter to Windham*. This is strongly corroborated by a letter of Iberville to the French King, written on Oct. 24, 1714 (N.S.). He says, 'Votre Majesté a vu par mes précédentes dépêches que plusieurs des Tories qu'on appelle rigides, c'est à dire

whatever may have been its effect on the stability of the dynasty, there can be no doubt of the effect of the Whig monopoly of office on the authority of the sovereign. He was no longer the moderating power, holding the balance in a heterogeneous and divided Cabinet, able to dismiss a statesman of one policy and to employ a statesman of another, and thus in a great measure to determine the tendency of the Government. He could govern only through a political body which, in its complete union and in its command of the majority in Parliament, was usually able, by the threat of joint resignation, which would make government impossible, to dictate its own terms. The peculiarity of his position added to his dependence. His throne was exceedingly insecure. He enjoyed no popularity, and he was almost wholly ignorant of the language, the customs, and the domestic policy of his people. His predecessors always presided at the deliberations of the Cabinet, but George I., on account of his ignorance of the language, was never present, and his example was in this respect followed by his successors.

In this manner, by the force of events, much more than by any express restrictive legislation, a profound change had passed over the position of the monarchy in England. The chief power fell into the hands of the Whig statesmen. Nottingham, who was the only partial exception, having exerted himself in favour of clemency towards the noblemen who were condemned during the rebellion, was dismissed in the beginning of 1716,¹ and the triumphant party made it their main task to consolidate their ascendancy. They did this chiefly in two ways. They steadily laboured to identify the Tory party with Jacobitism, and thus to persuade both the sovereign and the people that a Tory Government meant a subversion of the dynasty. As there was absolutely no enthusiasm for the reigning sovereign, the prospect might not in itself appear very alarming, but it was

zélés à l'outrance pour l'Eglise Anglicane et pour le gouvernement monarchique, sont devenus Jacobites, ne voyant d'autre moyen d'empêcher l'entière ruine de leur party que d'appeler le Prétendant; et que la guerre avec V. M. leur paroissoit absolument nécessaire pour y réussir. J'ai vu clairement que ce sentiment

devenoit chaque jour plus commun parmy'eux et qu'il y a toute apparence que les Tories modérés y entreront aussi par pur zèle de party mais avec plus de retenue.' *Bunbury's Life of Sir T. Hanmer*, pp. 60-61.

¹ See, on this dismissal, Robert Walpole to Horace Walpole, March 6, 1715-16.—Coxe's *Walpole*, ii. 51.

clearly understood that the downfall of the dynasty meant civil war, revolution, and perhaps national bankruptcy. They also began systematically to build up a vast system of parliamentary influence. The wealth of the great Whig houses, the multitude of small and venal boroughs, the increase of Government patronage, and the Septennial Act, which, by prolonging the duration of Parliament, made it more than ever amenable to ministerial influence, enabled them to carry out their policy with a singular completeness.

The condition of European politics greatly assisted them. The chief external danger to the dynasty lay in the hostility of France, but this hostility was now for a long period removed. The Regent from the first had leaned somewhat towards the English alliance, and after the suppression of the rebellion of 1715 he took decided steps in this direction. He had, indeed, the strongest personal interest in doing so. The young prince, who was his ward, and who was the undoubted heir to the throne, was so weak and sickly that his death might at any time be expected. In that case the crown, according to the provisions of the Peace of Utrecht, devolved upon the Regent, but it was extremely probable that Philip of Spain would claim it, in spite of the act by which he had renounced his title. The succession of the Regent would then be in the utmost danger. It was possible that Philip, inspired by the daring genius of Alberoni, who was now rising rapidly to ascendancy in his councils, would endeavour to unite under one sceptre the dominions both of France and of Spain. In that case a European war was inevitable, but it would be a war in which the whole national sentiment of France would be opposed to the Regent, who was personally unpopular, and who would be an obstacle to the most cherished dream of French ambition. It was possible also, and perhaps more probable, that Philip would endeavour merely to exchange the throne of Spain for that of France. If he abdicated in favour of a prince who was acceptable to the Powers who had been allied in the last war, the great object of the Whig party in the reign of Anne would be realised; and it was therefore by no means improbable that the allied Powers would favour his attempt. If England could be induced unequivocally to guarantee the succession of the House of Orleans,

if the Whig Government of George I. would in this respect at least cordially adopt the policy of the Tory ministry which negotiated the Peace of Utrecht, it was clear that the prospects of the Regent would be immensely improved. On the other hand, the reasons inducing the English Government to seek a French alliance were at least equally strong. France could do more than all other Powers combined to shake the dynasty, and as long as the Jacobite party could look forward to her support it would never cease to be powerful. Besides this, an English guarantee might so strengthen the House of Orleans as to prevent another European war, and avert the danger of the union of the two crowns. Hanoverian politics had also begun to colour all English negotiations, and a great coldness which had sprung up between the Emperor and the Hanoverian Government, on account of the claims of the latter to Bremen and Verden, helped to incline George towards a French rather than an Austrian alliance. There was also a dangerous question pending between England and France, which it might be possible amicably to arrange. The Peace of Utrecht had stipulated that the harbour of Dunkirk should be destroyed, and the injury that had been done to British commerce by the privateers which issued from that harbour was so great that scarcely any provision in the treaty was equally popular. It had been in a great degree fulfilled, but the French had proceeded to nullify it by constructing a new canal on the same coast at Mardyke. The destruction of this incipient harbour became in consequence one of the strongest desires of the English.

These various considerations drew together the Powers which had so long been deadly enemies. The negotiation was chiefly conducted at Hanover by Stanhope on the side of England, and by Dubois on that of France, and it resulted in a treaty which gave an entirely new turn to the foreign policy of England. By this treaty the Regent agreed to break altogether with the Pretender, to compel him to reside beyond the Alps, and to destroy the new port at Mardyke, while both Powers confirmed and guaranteed the Peace of Utrecht and particularly the order of the succession to the crowns of England and France which it established. Thus, by a singular vicissitude of politics, it was the Whig party which was now the most anxious to ally itself

with France in the interest of that Protestant succession which Lewis XIV. had so bitterly opposed. The States-General somewhat reluctantly acceded to the treaty, which was finally concluded in January 1716-17.

It would be difficult to overrate the value of this alliance to the new dynasty and to the Whig party. It paralysed the efforts of the Jacobites, and it was especially important as the aspect of Europe was still in many respects disquieting. The Emperor, as we have seen, had prolonged the war unsuccessfully for some months after the Peace of Utrecht, and though hostilities were terminated by the peace which was negotiated at Rastadt, and finally ratified at Baden in September 1714, there were still serious questions to be settled. One of the most important results of the war was the transfer of the Spanish Netherlands to the Emperor. It was a measure which William had regarded as of transcendent importance in securing Holland from the aggression of France, and it was accordingly given a prominent place among the objects of the great treaty of alliance of 1701.¹ It was, however, the determination both of the Dutch and of the English that this cession should be conditional upon the Dutch retaining the right of garrisoning a line of border fortresses in Spanish Flanders, and this privilege was very displeasing to the Emperor. The barrier treaty of 1709 had been negotiated between England and Holland without his assent. The Peace of Utrecht had, indeed, restored to France some towns which the earlier treaty had reserved for the Dutch barrier, but, to the great indignation of the Emperor, it provided that such a barrier should be secured. As the war was still going on, France, in accordance with the treaty, surrendered the Spanish Netherlands provisionally to Holland, to be transferred by her to Austria, as soon as peace should have been restored and the conditions and limits of the barrier arranged. A long, tedious, and irritating negotiation ensued between the Dutch and the Emperor, but it was at last, chiefly through English mediation, concluded in November 1715. The treaty which was then signed, and confirmed by England, gave Holland the exclusive right of garrisoning Namur, Tournay, Menin, Furnes, Warneton, Ypres, and the fort of Knocke. The garrison of Dendermonde was to

¹ Art v.

be a joint one. A sum of 500,000 crowns, levied on what were now the Austrian Netherlands, was to be annually paid by the Emperor to the Dutch for the support of the Dutch garrisons in the barrier towns, and several provisions were made regulating the number of the troops to be maintained, the municipal arrangements, and the religious liberty to be conceded. To the Emperor, who claimed an absolute right over the whole Spanish dominions, this arrangement was very irksome, and there was a strong ill-feeling between the Austrians and the Dutch, which by no means subsided on the conclusion of the treaty. A divided sovereignty almost necessarily led to constant difficulties. One of the Powers was despotic, the other was rather notoriously minute and punctilious in its exactions. There were violent disputes between the inhabitants of the newly annexed territory and the Dutch on the question of commercial privileges. There were disputes about the frontiers. There were bitter complaints of the subsidy to the Dutch, and it was found necessary for the three Powers to make another convention, which was executed in December 1718, and which in several small details modified the treaty of 1715.

Another and a much more serious danger arose from the relations between Austria and Spain. We have seen that when the Emperor at the time of the Peace of Utrecht resolved to continue the war, he determined, if possible, to contract its limits to the Rhine; and he accordingly concluded with England and France a treaty of neutrality for Spain, Italy, and the Low Countries, and withdrew the Austrian troops from Catalonia and the islands of Majorca and Ivica. The short war that ensued was a war with France, and the Peace of Baden was negotiated between the Emperor and the French King, but no formal peace had ever been established between the Emperor and the King of Spain. The Emperor still refused to recognise the title of Philip to the Spanish throne. Philip still maintained his claims to the kingdom of Naples, the Milanese, and the Spanish Netherlands, which the Peace of Utrecht had transferred to Austria. War might at any time break out, and the chief pledge of peace lay in the exhaustion of both belligerent parties, in the difficulties in which the Emperor was involved with the Turks, and in the guarantees which England, France,



and Holland had given for the maintenance of the chief arrangements of the peace. In May 1716 when the relations between England and France were still uncertain, a defensive alliance had been contracted between England and the Emperor, by which each Power guaranteed the dominions of the other in case of an attack by any Power except the Turks, and, by an additional and secret article subsequently signed, each Power agreed to expel from its territory the rebel subjects of the other. Of the arrangements of the Peace of Utrecht, one of the most obnoxious to the Emperor was that which made the Duke of Savoy King of Sicily, with reversion of the kingdom of Spain in the event of a failure of male issue of Philip. The Austrian statesmen maintained that the kingdom of Naples never would be secure so long as Sicily was in the hands of a foreign and perhaps a hostile Power; and they soon engaged in secret negotiations with England and France to induce or compel the Duke of Savoy to exchange Sicily for Sardinia. The project became known, and both the Duke of Savoy and the King of Spain were determined to resist it. On the other hand, a strange transformation had passed over the spirit and tendency of the Spanish Government. The first wife of Philip, who was a daughter of the Duke of Savoy, died in February 1714-15, and, a few months after, the King married Elizabeth Farnese, the young Princess of Parma—a bold and aspiring woman, who was bitterly hostile to the Austrian dominion in Italy, and who had some claims to the succession of Parma, Placentia, and Tuscany. The sovereignty of the first two Duchies had no son. The Queen of Spain was his niece, and she claimed the succession as a family inheritance, but her title was disputed by both the Emperor and the Pope. The Grand Duke of Tuscany had a son, but this son was without issue, and was separated from his wife, and the succession was claimed by Elizabeth Farnese, by the Emperor, and by the wife of the Elector Palatine. The anxiety of the Spanish Queen to claim this inheritance was greatly intensified by the birth of a son. She soon obtained an absolute dominion over the mind of the King, and her own policy was completely governed by an Italian priest, who, probably, only needed somewhat more favourable circumstances to have played a part in the world in no degree inferior to that of Richelieu or Chatham.

Cardinal Alberoni is one of the most striking of the many examples of the great value of the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical organisation in forming a ladder by which men of genius can climb from the lowest positions to great dignity and influence. The son of a very poor and very illiterate gardener at Placentia, he was born in 1664, was taught to read and write by the charity of a parish priest, and having entered the order of the Barnabites and passed through the lowest forms of ecclesiastical drudgery, he was at length, with considerable difficulty, raised to the priesthood, and became in time chaplain to the bishop of his diocese, and canon in its cathedral. By the friendship of another bishop he was brought to the Court of the reigning Duke of Parma, where he was introduced in 1702 to the Duke of Vendome, who was then commanding the French army in Italy, and whose warm attachment laid the foundation of his future success. Few men without any advantage either of birth or fortune have ever risen to great political eminence without drinking deeply of the cup of moral humiliation ; and St. Simon, whose aristocratic leanings made him regard the low-born adventurer with peculiar malevolence, assures us, probably with some truth, that Alberoni first won the favour of Vendome by gross sycophancy and buffoonery. His small round figure, surmounted by a head of wholly disproportioned size, gave him at first sight a burlesque appearance. His language and habits were very coarse, and he possessed to the highest degree the supple and insinuating manners, the astute judgment, the patient, flexible, and intriguing temperament of his country and of his profession. But with these qualities he combined others of a very different order. He was the most skilful, laborious, and devoted of servants. His imagination teemed with grand and daring projects, and in energy of action and genius of organisation very few statesmen have equalled him. For a time everything seemed to smile upon him. He was employed by the Duke of Parma in negotiations with the Emperor. He was presented by Vendome to Lewis XIV. He obtained a French pension ; he accompanied Vendome in his brilliant Spanish campaign ; he became the envoy of the Duke of Parma at the Spanish Court, and having taken a leading part in negotiating the second marriage of the

King, he acquired a complete ascendancy over the Queen and directed Spanish policy for some time before he became ostensibly Prime Minister of Spain. His whole soul was filled with a passionate desire to free his native country from Austrian thralldom, to raise Spain from the chronic decrepitude and debility into which she had sunk, and to make her, once more, the Spain of Isabella and of Charles V. The task was a Herculean one, for the national spirit had been for generations steadily declining. The finances were all but ruined, and corruption, maladministration, and superstition had corroded all the energies of the State. The firm hand of a great statesman was, however, soon felt in every department. Amid a storm of unpopularity, corrupt and ostentatious expenditure was rigidly cut down. The nobles and clergy were compelled to contribute their share to taxation; the army was completely reorganised; a new and powerful navy was created. Pampeluna, Barcelona, Cadiz, Ferrol, and several minor strongholds were strengthened. The numerous internal custom-houses, which restricted inland trade, were, with some violence to local customs and to provincial privileges, summarily abolished. The lucrative monopoly of tobacco, which had been alienated from the State, and grossly abused, was resumed. Great pains were taken to revive agriculture and extend manufactures; in spite of the national hostility to heretics, Dutch manufacturers, and even English dyers, were brought over to Spain; and the improvement effected was so rapid that Alberoni boasted, with much reason, that five years of peace would be sufficient to raise Spain to an equality with the greatest nations of the earth.

At first he was very favourable to the English alliance, and through his influence an advantageous commercial treaty was negotiated between England and Spain in 1715. Soon, however, the two Governments rapidly diverged. The treaty of mutual defence, made between the Emperor and England in 1716, was a great blow to Spanish policy, and the Triple Alliance in the following year was a still greater one. An attempt to expel the Austrians from Italy without the assistance of France, and in the face of the hostility of England, appeared hopeless. Alberoni would have at least postponed the enterprise, but his hand was forced. He was surrounded with ene-

mies, and could only maintain his position by constant address and audacity. The Queen, on whom he mainly depended, wished for war. The proceedings of the Emperor about Sicily, and the arrest of the Grand Inquisitor of Spain on his journey through Milan, exasperated the Spanish Court; and the Turkish war, which had recently broken out, seemed to furnish a favourable opportunity. In 1715 the Turks, on the most frivolous pretexts, had broken the Peace of Carlowitz, had declared war with the Venetians, had conquered the Morea, and laid siege to Corfu, and the Emperor, having drawn the sword in defence of his ally, the war was now raging in Hungary. The position of Alberoni at this time became a very difficult one. The Pope was summoning all Catholic Powers to the defence of Christendom, and threatened severe spiritual penalties against all who attacked the Emperor while engaged in the holy war. Alberoni was himself a priest, and he was at the head of a nation which was passionately superstitious, and beyond all others the hereditary enemy of the Mohammedan. He accordingly professed himself ready to assist in the defence of the Christian interests, made great naval preparations ostensibly for that purpose, and obtained his Cardinal's hat chiefly by a show of zeal in the cause, but at the same time there is little doubt that he was secretly both encouraging and aiding Turkish invasion. His hopes, however, were in a great degree disappointed. Schulenburg, one of the ablest of the military adventurers who in the eighteenth century lent their services in succession to many different nations, commanded the Venetians at Corfu, and after a terrible siege, and in spite of prodigies of undisciplined valour,¹ the Turks were obliged to abandon their enterprise with the loss of about 17,000 men, of 56 cannon, of all their magazines and tents. Nearly at the same time, Eugene, at the head of an army far inferior in numbers to that of the enemy, completely routed them in the great battle of Peterwardein, drove them beyond the frontier of Hungary, secured the possession of the Banat, and laid siege to Belgrade. The Austrian forces were, however, for a considerable time arrested, and at the time

¹ 'Il ne manque à ces gens-là que l'ordre et la discipline militaire et ils nous battroient tous.'—Schulenberg

to Leibnitz. *Kemble's State Papers*, p. 540.



when the Spaniards began their contest, a considerable proportion of them were employed in that quarter. Alberoni at the same time was indefatigable in efforts to raise up allies, or to paralyse the Powers which were hostile to him. He obtained a promise of assistance from the Duke of Savoy by offering him the Milanese instead of Sicily. He intrigued alike with the discontented party in Hungary, in Naples, and in the Cevennes. He met the hostility of the Regent by reviving the claims of Philip to the eventual succession of the French crown, and supporting the party of the Duke of Maine, who was opposed to the Regent and to the English alliance, and who desired to follow the policy of Lewis XIV. He endeavoured to intimidate England into neutrality by suspending the commercial privileges that had been granted her, and by threatening to support the Jacobite cause with a Spanish army.

Another and still more gigantic project, if it was not originated, was at least warmly supported by him. The North of Europe had long been convulsed by the contest between Charles XII. of Sweden and Peter the Great, the two most ambitious monarchs of the age. Goertz, the minister of the former—a bold, adventurous, and unscrupulous man—now conceived the idea of negotiating a peace and an alliance between these two sovereigns, and of making them the arbiters of the North. In order to make this peace it was necessary for Charles to relinquish to Russia the Baltic provinces which had so long been in dispute, but he could obtain compensations on the side of Denmark, Norway, and Germany, and he could gratify his long-continued resentment against the King of Poland and the Elector of Hanover. His animosity against the latter dates from the time when George, without provocation, had joined the confederation against him, and had annexed to his German dominions Bremen and Verden. On other grounds the Czar fully shared his hatred of the English King. George had watched with great and unconcealed jealousy the incursions of the Czar into Germany, and his growing power on the Baltic. He had prevented, by the threat of war, a Russian expedition against Mecklenburg in 1716, and he had refused to permit a canal, from which the Czar expected great commercial advantages, to pass through a small part of his German dominions. Through combined

motives of policy and resentment, the Czar lent a willing ear to the project of the Swedish minister, while Charles threw himself into it with characteristic ardour. His plan was to wrest from Denmark and Hanover the conquests they had made, to ruin the Hanoverian power, to replace Augustus by Stanislaus on the throne of Poland, to invade England or Scotland in person with a Swedish army transported in Russian ships, and to change the whole tenour of English policy by a restoration of the Stuarts. It was a scheme well fitted to fascinate that wild imagination, and it was full of danger to England. A very small army of disciplined soldiers would probably have turned the scale against the Government in 1715, and Charles was a great master of the art of war, and he was free from the taint of Catholicism, which in general so fatally weakened the Jacobite cause. The great difficulty lay in the poverty of the two sovereigns; but Alberoni, whose influence was actively employed in promoting the alliance, strained every nerve to supply the funds. Peter, in a journey to France, tried to induce France to join against England, but the Regent was steadily loyal to the English alliance, and it is said to have been through his spies that the English ministers were first informed of the plot that was preparing. Letters were intercepted, which disclosed the design. The Government promptly arrested Gyllenborg, the Swedish ambassador at St. James's, while, at the instigation of England, the Dutch arrested Goertz, who was in Holland concocting the plans of the future expedition. The Spanish ambassador protested against these proceedings as a violation of the laws of nations, but the letters found in the possession of Gyllenborg furnished such decisive evidence that no other Power joined him. The Czar, who was not implicated in the correspondence, protested his friendship to England. The King of Sweden took refuge in a haughty silence, but retaliated by throwing the English envoy into prison. The disclosure of the plot rendered its execution more difficult, but by no means averted the danger which, partly through the intrigues of Alberoni, hung over the fortunes of England.

The arrest of the Swedish ambassador took place on January 29, 1716-17. In the following summer a Spanish fleet sailed from Barcelona. Though its destination was uncertain, it was

most generally believed that it was intended to act against the Turks, and all Europe was startled to hear that on August 22 (N.S.) it had swept down upon Sardinia, that a large body of Spanish troops had landed and invested Cagliari, and that they were advancing rapidly in the conquest of the island. After about two months of hard fighting the conquest was achieved, and the Austrian flag had everywhere disappeared. The perplexity of the Great Powers was very serious. Though no peace had been made between the Emperor and the Spanish King, hostilities had been dormant and the act of Alberoni kindled a new war. The Pope strongly denounced the conduct of a statesman who attacked a Christian Power while engaged in wars with Mohammedans. England had guaranteed the Austrian dominions in Italy, and, supported by France and Holland, she laboured earnestly to bring about a definite peace between the Empire and Spain. Alberoni consented to negotiate, but at the same time he actively armed. Statesmen who had looked upon the Spanish power as almost effete, saw with bewilderment the new forces that seemed to start into life, as beneath the enchanter's wand. A fleet such as Spain had hardly equalled since the destruction of the Armada was equipped. Catalonia had been hitherto bitterly hostile to the Bourbon dynasty, but Alberoni boldly threw himself upon the patriotism and the martial ardour of its people, summoned them around the Spanish flag, and formed six new regiments of the Catalonian mountaineers. Many years later the elder Pitt dealt in a precisely similar way with the Jacobite clans in the Highlands of Scotland, and the success of this measure is justly regarded as one of the great proofs of the high quality of his statesmanship. By a skilful and strictly honest management of the finances, by a rigid economy in all the branches of unnecessary expenditure, it was found possible to make the most formidable preparations without imposing any very serious additional burden upon the people, while at the same time Spanish diplomacy was active and powerful from Stockholm to Constantinople.

Hitherto fortune had for the most part favoured Alberoni, but the scale now turned, and a long succession of calamities blasted his prospects. His design was to pass at once from Sardinia into the kingdom of Naples in conjunction with the

new sovereign of Sicily ; but, within a few days of the landing of the Spaniards in Sardinia, Eugene had completely defeated the Turks in a great battle at Belgrade, and the capture of that town enabled the Emperor to secure Naples by a powerful reinforcement. The defection of the King of Sicily speedily followed. The whole career of Victor Amadeus had been one of sagacious treachery, and, without decisively abandoning the Spaniards or committing himself to the Austrians, he was now secretly negotiating with the Emperor. Alberoni knew or suspected the change, and met it with equal art and with superior energy. He still professed a warm friendship for the Savoy prince. A Spanish fleet of 22 ships of the line with more than 300 transports, and carrying no less than 33,000 men, was now afloat in the Mediterranean; and, at a time when Victor Amadeus imagined it was about to descend upon Naples, it unexpectedly attacked Sicily, which was left almost undefended, and a Spanish army under the command of the Marquis of Ledé, captured Palermo, and speedily overran almost the whole island. This, however, was the last gleam of success. In July 1718, the very month in which the Spaniards landed in Sicily, the war between the Austrians and the Turks was concluded, chiefly through English mediation, by the Peace of Passarowitz; the Austrian frontier was extended far into Serbia and Wallachia, and the whole Austrian forces were liberated. England had long been negotiating in order to obtain peace in Italy, or, failing in this end, to form an alliance which would overpower the aggressor, and she succeeded in at least attaining the latter end by inducing Austria and France to join her in what, under the expectation of the accession of the Dutch, was called the Quadruple Alliance, for the purpose of maintaining the Peace of Utrecht, and guaranteeing the tranquillity of Europe. It was concluded in the beginning of July but not signed till the beginning of August. By this most important measure, the Emperor at last reluctantly agreed to renounce his pretensions to the kingdom of Spain, and to all other parts of the Spanish dominions recognised as such by the Peace of Utrecht. Tuscany, Parma, and Placentia were acknowledged to be male fiefs of the Empire, but the Emperor engaged that their sovereignty, on the death of the reigning princes, should pass to Don Carlos, the son of the Spanish Queen and to his successors, subject to the reservation of

Leghorn as a free port, and also to the condition that the crowns of these Duchies should never pass to the sovereign of Spain. To secure the succession of Don Carlos, Swiss garrisons, paid by the three contracting or mediating Powers, were to be placed in the chief towns. On the other hand, Philip was to be compelled to renounce his pretensions to the Netherlands, to the two Sicilies, and to the Duchy of Milan; Victor Amadeus was to cede Sicily to the Emperor in exchange for Sardinia, while, as a compensation for the sacrifice thus made, the Emperor acknowledged the succession of the House of Savoy to the Spanish throne, in the event of the failure of the issue of Philip. The contracting Powers agreed by separate and secret articles that if in three months the sovereigns of Spain and Sicily did not notify their assent to these conditions, the whole force of the allied potentates was to be employed against them, and that even within this interval they would support the Emperor if any attack was made on his Italian dominions.

The very favourable terms which were offered by this alliance to the Spanish Government show how formidable the situation had become. The English Government, at the advice of Stanhope, even went so far, in their anxiety for peace, as secretly to offer Spain the restoration of Gibraltar. The refusal of these terms was the master error of Alberoni, and the sacrifice of such considerable positive advantages, in pursuit of a policy which could only succeed by a concurrence of many favourable circumstances, showed more the spirit of a daring gambler than of a great statesman. The blame has been thrown exclusively upon Alberoni, though it is probable that part, at least, should fall on those upon whose favour he depended. At the time when the terms were first offered, the expedition against Sicily was prepared, the Spaniards were sanguine of being able to organise such a fleet as would give them the command of the Mediterranean, and there was some reasonable prospect of re-establishing the Spanish dominion in Italy. The Pope was at this time violently hostile to Spain, and the combination of forces against it secured by the Quadruple Alliance appeared at first sight irresistible, but there were many considerations which served to weaken it. Holland was only desirous of peace, and as long as the war was confined to the Mediterranean it was

very improbable that she would take any active part in it. The alliance of France with England against the grandson of Lewis XIV. was utterly opposed to French traditions and to French feeling. The health of the young King was very precarious. His death would probably be followed by a disputed succession, and during his lifetime there was a strong party opposed to the Regent. If, as there was some reason to anticipate, this party triumphed, France would immediately disappear from the alliance, and her weight would pass into the Spanish scale. England had taken the most energetic part in the negotiation, and she looked with great jealousy on the formidable navy which had arisen in the Spanish waters; but in this case also everything depended on the continuance of a tottering dynasty, and if the great Northern alliance burst upon her, her resources would be abundantly occupied at home. Such were probably the calculations of the Spanish Court, and the successes in Sicily, and the safe arrival of a fleet of galleons bringing a large supply of gold from the colonies strengthened its determination. The result was the utter ruin of the reviving greatness of Spain. On August 22 the British fleet, commanded by Admiral Byng, attacked, and, after a desperate encounter, almost annihilated, the Spanish fleet off Cape Passaro, in the neighbourhood of Syracuse. The Spaniards complained bitterly that this step had been taken without a declaration of war, when the three months allowed by the Quadruple Alliance had but just begun; but it was answered with reason that the invasion of Sicily clearly endangered the territorial arrangements that had been made by the allied powers, and that Stanhope had fully warned Alberoni that no such act would be permitted by England. In the beginning of November, Victor Amadeus acceded to the Quadruple Alliance, and all hope of assistance in that quarter was at an end. In December a ball fired from the obscure Norwegian fortress of Frederikshall cut down Charles XII., in the very flower of his age, when he was just about to organise his expedition against England. No more terrible blow could have fallen on the Spanish statesman. The Government which followed, at once reversed the policy of Charles. Goertz was brought to the scaffold. The Czar made no attempt to execute the project which his rival had begun, and in the following

year a treaty was made between Hanover and Sweden, by which, in consideration of a money payment, the cession of Bremen and Verden to the former was fully recognised.

Nor was this all. Alberoni, with characteristic daring, endeavoured, even after the death of Charles, to strike down the hostile Governments both in France and England. The strong party in France which was opposed to the English alliance had formed the bold design of seizing the person of the Regent, carrying him prisoner into Spain, and conferring the regency upon Philip, who was content that the power should be actually exercised by the Duke of Maine. The Duke, or rather the Duchess, was at the head of the conspiracy, which comprised several men of great importance and influence. The most conspicuous were the Cardinal de Polignac, the well-known author of the 'Anti-Lucrèce,' who had received a Cardinal's hat through the influence of the Pretender, and had represented France in the conferences of Gertruydenberg and of Utrecht; the young Duke of Richelieu, famous alike for his courage and his intrigues, who promised to place Bayonne, where he was garrisoned, in the hands of the Spaniards, and to head a rising in the South; the Comte de Laval, a man of great energy and influence, who was devotedly attached to the Duchess of Maine; and the Marquis of Pompadour, who was a passionate worshipper of the memory and the policy of the late King. All the more ardent followers of Lewis XIV. had seen with great indignation the accession of France to the Quadruple Alliance negotiated by England against Spain. The complete reversal of French policy was, undoubtedly, distasteful to the whole nation, and the Regent was personally unpopular, both with the nobles and with the people. His authority was of very doubtful legitimacy, for he had completely disregarded the restrictions on the regency imposed by the will of the late King, and had also deprived the Duke of Maine of the position of guardian to the young sovereign, which Lewis had assigned him. He was accused, though, no doubt, untruly, of having poisoned the late Dauphin, and of meditating the death of the feeble boy who stood between him and the throne; and, with much more justice, of having in foreign affairs sacrificed to his own personal interest the national and traditional policy of France. The

ascendency of Dubois, and the growing influence of Law, excited many jealousies. Brittany had been brought by fiscal oppression to the verge of revolt, and, if the plot succeeded, there was no doubt that the Parliament of Paris would gladly pronounce the renunciation of Philip to be invalid, and declare him to be the next heir to the French throne. Alberoni threw himself ardently into the conspiracy, and the Spanish ambassador and a Spanish priest named Portocarrero, a relative of the famous cardinal, minister of Charles II., took a leading part in organising it. It was, however, soon discovered. Intercepted letters revealed its nature and extent. The Duke and Duchess of Maine and the other leading conspirators were imprisoned or exiled. A violent rupture had just at this time taken place between the Spanish minister and the French ambassador at Madrid, and the latter had hastily left the capital, and with great difficulty reached the frontier. The Spanish ambassador at Paris was arrested, and papers of the most compromising description having been found in his possession he was conducted speedily under escort to Blois. The revolt in Brittany, which suddenly broke out, was extinguished before the Spanish fleet sent to its assistance could be of any avail, and the Regent and the King of England almost simultaneously declared war against Spain.

The Cardinal was equally unfortunate in his measures against England. The death of Charles XII. seemed to have blasted every hope of, at this time, overthrowing the Hanoverian dynasty; but Alberoni still presented a bold front to his enemies, and his courage only rose the higher as the tempest darkened around his path. Despairing of assistance from the North, he resolved to place himself at the head of English Jacobitism, and to make one more effort to paralyse his most formidable opponent. He invited the Pretender to Madrid. With an energy really wonderful after the events in the Mediterranean, he collected a small fleet of men-of-war, with some twenty transports, at Cadiz, embarked about 5,000 men, and despatched them, with arms for 30,000 more, to raise the Jacobites in Scotland. Ormond was to join the expedition, as commander, at Corunna. But French spies discovered the plan. The French Government sent speedy information to

that of England, and the ministers took precautions that showed their sense of the magnitude of the danger. Fearing the inadequacy of their own resources, they invited over Austrian and Dutch troops from the Netherlands for the protection of England. The fleet was hastily equipped, and a reward of 10,000*l.* was offered for the apprehension of Ormond. But the danger had already passed. A great storm in the Bay of Biscay scattered and ruined the Spanish fleet, and the captains deemed themselves only too happy if they could conduct their dismantled and disabled vessels back to some Spanish port. Two ships, containing 300 Spanish soldiers and a few Scotch nobles, outrode the tempest, and reached Scotland in safety, where they were joined by about 2,000 Highlanders. For a time they evaded pursuit, and even notice, in the mountain fastnesses, but on June 10 they were attacked in the valley of Glen-shiel and easily crushed.

All hope was now over : Spain had not an ally in the world ; her navy was annihilated ; three of the greatest European Powers were combined against her ; her best army was penned up in Sicily, and she could not enroll more than 15,000 men for her own defence when a French army of 40,000 men, under the command of Berwick, had penetrated into her territory. Berwick, by the great victory of Almanza, had formerly contributed largely to place the sceptre in the hand of Philip. He was the illegitimate son of James II., and, therefore, the brother of the prince whom Philip was now endeavouring to place upon the throne of England, and one of his own sons had entered into the Spanish service, and had been rewarded by a Spanish dukedom. He was, however, beyond all things a soldier, and an almost stoical sentiment of military duty subdued every natural affection. He accepted without hesitation the command which had been refused by Villars, invaded Navarre, subdued the whole province of Guipuscoa, burnt the arsenal and the ships of war that were building at Passages, and afterwards attacked Catalonia. The arsenal of Santona was destroyed ; an English squadron harrassed the Spanish coast, and a detachment of English soldiers stormed and captured Vigo. The Austrian army drove the now isolated army in Sicily, after a brave, and in one instance, successful, resistance, from all its

posts. Nothing remained but submission, and there was one sacrifice which would make it comparatively easy. All classes now turned their resentment against Alberoni. The jealousy of the nobles, the anger of the provinces at his violent reforms and his neglect of provincial privileges, the arrogance which power and overstrained nerves had produced, the patriotic indignation springing from the disasters he had brought upon Spain had made him bitterly unpopular, and numerous intrigues were hastening his inevitable downfall. The influence of the Regent and of Dubois, the influence of Peterborough, who was then in close communication with the Duke of Parma, the influence of the King's confessor, and the influence of the Queen's nurse, were all made use of, and they soon succeeded. On December 5, 1719, he received an order dismissing him from all his employments, and banishing him from the Spanish soil. Many of the Spanish nobles showed him in this hour of his disgrace a rare consideration, but the King and Queen refused even to see him, and a letter which he wrote remained wholly unnoticed. On his way to the frontier he was arrested, and some important papers which he had appropriated were taken back to Madrid. He was conducted through France, and sailed from thence to Italy, exclaiming bitterly against the ingratitude of the sovereigns he had so long and so faithfully served.

He intended to proceed to Rome, but Pope Clement XI., whom he had deeply offended, forbade him to enter it, and for some time he lived in complete concealment. A copy of the *Imitation of St. Thomas à Kempis*, which shows by its marginal notes that it was at this time his constant companion, was long preserved in the Ducal Library of Parma. The hostility of the Spanish Court pursued him, and there were even some steps taken towards depriving him of his cardinal's hat. On the death, however, of Clement XI. he was invited to assist at the conclave, and, after a short period of seclusion in a monastery, he was admitted into warm favour by Innocent XIII. On the death of that Pope he received ten votes in the conclave. He quarrelled with Benedict XIII., and was obliged during his pontificate to leave Rome, but he returned to high favour under Clement XII.; was appointed legate at Ravenna, where he distinguished himself by his great works of

drainage, and also by a furious quarrel with the little State of San Marino, and was afterwards removed to the legation of Bologna. He at last retired from affairs, and died in 1752 at the great age of eighty-eight, bequeathing the bulk of his fortune to the foundation of a large institution near Placentia for the education of his needy fellow citizens.¹

So ended a career which was certainly one of the most remarkable of the eighteenth century. Had there been more of moral principle and less of the recklessness of a gambler in the nature of Alberoni he would have deserved to rank among the greatest of statesmen. He was, however, singularly unfortunate in the latter part of his public life, and his fall was, with good reason, a matter of rejoicing throughout Europe. Perhaps no part of his history is more curiously significant than its close. We can hardly have a more striking illustration of the decline of the theological spirit in Europe than the fact that the Pope was unable to restrain a Christian nation from attacking the Emperor when engaged in the defence of Christendom against the Turks; that the nation which perpetrated this, which a few generations before would have been deemed the most inexpiable of all crimes, was Spain, under the guidance of a cardinal of the Church, and that that cardinal lived to be the favourite and the legate of the Pope.

With the dismissal of Alberoni the troubles of Europe gradually subsided. Philip, after a short negotiation, acceded to the Quadruple Alliance, and Sicily and Sardinia were speedily evacuated. Many difficulties of detail, however, and many hesitations remained, and the negotiations still dragged slowly on for some years. A congress was held at Cambray in 1724, and several new treaties of alliance were made confirming or elucidating the Quadruple Alliance. The singular good fortune of the Whig ministry during the struggle I have described

¹ See the *Hist. du Cardinal Alberoni* (1719) by J. Rousset; the notices of Alberoni in the *Memoirs* of St. Simon and Duclos, and in the *Letters of the President de Brognes*; his own apologies printed in the *Nouvelle Biographie Generale* (art. 'Alberoni'); the Stanhope correspondence, in the appendix to the second volume of Lord Stanhope's *History of England*;

Voltaire's *Hist. de Charles XII.*, and especially the admirable history of Alberoni in Coxe's *Memoirs* of the Spanish Kings of the House of Bourbon, vol. ii. In private life Alberoni seems to have been irreproachable, and many of the charges St. Simon and others have brought against him have been successfully refuted.

is very evident. The Hanoverian policy of the King on the question of Bremen and Verden had exposed England to a danger of the most serious kind; and, but for the premature death of Charles XII., and the steady, unwavering loyalty of the French Regent to an alliance which was entirely opposed to the traditions of French policy, it might easily have proved fatal to the dynasty. The general result of the foreign policy of England was undoubtedly very favourable to the Whig cause. The Whig party completed the work which the Peace of Utrecht had left unfulfilled; the commanding position which England occupied in the course of the struggles that have been related, and the very large amount of success she achieved, added to the reputation of the country; the pacification of Europe, and especially the alliance with France, withdrew from the Jacobites all immediate prospect of foreign assistance, and without such assistance it was not likely that Jacobite insurgents could successfully encounter disciplined armies. Several clouds, it is true, still hung upon the horizon. In the North the storm of war raged for some time after it was appeased in the South. An alliance had been made between Sweden and England. By the mediation of the latter, Sweden made in turn treaties of peace with Hanover, Prussia, Denmark, and Poland; but the war with the Czar continued, and the coast, in spite of the presence of a British fleet, was fearfully devastated. Peace was at last made in this quarter at Nystadt in September 1721, on terms extremely favourable to Russia and extremely disastrous to Sweden. A bitter jealousy had arisen between the Empire and the maritime Powers on account of the Ostend Company, established by the former, to trade with the East Indies. The question of the cession of Gibraltar to Spain, which had been imprudently raised during the late war, continued in a very unsatisfactory state. The obscure and secret negotiation which had at that time been carried on, partly through the intervention of the French Regent, led, as might have been expected, to grave misunderstanding. The English Government maintained that the offer had been made only in order to avert war with Spain, and that the hostilities which followed annulled it. The Spanish Government treated the offer as unconditional, and declared that as soon as peace was restored England

was bound to cede the fortress. The French Regent, through whose hands some of the negotiations passed, on the whole, supported the Spanish demand. Much negotiation on the subject took place. Propositions were made for an exchange of Gibraltar for Florida, but they found no favour with the Spanish Court. Stanhope, though apparently willing to cede Gibraltar, soon perceived that the English Parliament would never consent, and there was much agitation in the country at the suspicions that such a project had been entertained. But George I., who appears to have been perfectly indifferent to Gibraltar, wrote a letter to the King of Spain in June 1721, which afterwards gave rise to very grave complications. Having spoken of the prospect of a cordial union between the two nations, he added, 'I do no longer balance to assure your Majesty of my readiness to satisfy you with regard to your demand touching the restitution of Gibraltar, promising you to make use of the first favourable opportunity to regulate this article with the assent of my Parliament.' This letter, which was for some years kept secret, was very naturally regarded as a full admission of the claims of the Spanish King, and, as we shall see, it hereafter led to serious dangers.¹ The temporary abdication of Philip in favour of his son in 1724 gave rise to some new and dangerous complications; and in the same year Ripperda greatly modified the foreign policy of Spain, and brought matters to the verge of a general war. Still for some years the world enjoyed a real though a precarious peace, and the firm alliance between England and France, which gave security to Western Europe, enabled the Whig party in England to consolidate its power, and the Hanoverian dynasty to strike its roots somewhat deeper in the English soil.

The violent hostility of the Church party to the Government was at the same time slowly subsiding, and the influence of the Church itself was diminished. The persistent Catholicism of the Pretender, the Latitudinarian or Low Church appointments of the Government and the great increase of religious scepticism modified the state of Church feeling. The causes of the religious

¹ See on this negotiation Coxe's *Life of Walpole*, i. 304-309; Ralph's *Use and Abuse of Parliaments*, 362-365; Lord Stanhope's *Hist. of England*, i. 306, 310. In 1727 a motion to produce this letter was

negatived in the Commons (Jan. 23), but in March, 1729, when George II. was on the throne, it was laid before Parliament. See *Parl. Hist.* viii. 547, 695.

scepticism of the eighteenth century I shall hereafter examine, but it may here be noticed how very different at different times are the effects of scepticism upon the spirit of Churches. When it is not very violent, aggressive, or dogmatic, and when it produces no serious convulsion in society, its usual tendency is to lower enthusiasm and to diminish superstition. Men become half-believers. Strong religious passions of all kinds die away. The more superstitious elements of religious systems are toned down, unrealised, and silently dropped, and there is a tendency to dwell exclusively upon the moral aspects of the faith. On the other hand, when religious scepticism has advanced much farther, has assumed a much more radical and uncompromising form, and governs a much larger proportion of the strongest minds, it frequently, for a time at least, intensifies both the superstition and the fanaticism of Churches. Sensitive and religious natures scared by destructive criticism which threatens the very foundations of their belief, throw themselves, by a natural reaction, into the arms of superstition, and ecclesiastical influence in Churches predominates just in proportion as the more masculine lay intellects cease to take any interest in their concerns. Thus in the present day we find that over a great portion of the Continent the lay intellect is almost divorced from Catholicism. The class of mind that once followed Bossuet or Pascal now follows Voltaire or Comte, and the withdrawal from Church questions of the moderating and qualifying element has been one great cause of the Ultramontane type which Catholicism has generally assumed. Even in England it is, probably, no chance coincidence that, at a time when a religious scepticism far more searching and formidable than any of the eighteenth century is advancing rapidly through the fields of literature, history, and science, a large proportion of the intelligence of the religious teachers of the nation is expended in magnifying the thaumaturgic powers of Episcopalian clergymen and in discussing the clothes which they should wear.

The effect of the scepticism of the eighteenth century was chiefly of the former kind, and the evanescence of dogmatic zeal was very favourable to the Whig party. They were also, probably, assisted by the great Trinitarian controversy which had arisen under Anne and which continued far into the eigh-

teenth century. The problem of defining and defending a doctrine of the Trinity which should neither fall into Tritheism on the one side, or into Sabellianism on the other, occupied the attention of ecclesiastics, and contributed with other causes to divert them from speculations about the foundations of government. The writings of Hoadly, however, soon gave a new bent to their energies. This very able man, who possessed all the moral and intellectual qualities of a consummate controversialist, had for some years been rapidly acquiring the position which Burnet had before held in the Low Church ranks. His latitudinarianism, however, was of a more extreme and emphatic character, and he greatly surpassed Burnet in the incisive brilliancy of his controversial writing, though he was far inferior to him in learning and versatility, in depth and beauty of character, and in the discharge of his episcopal duties. He was first brought forward by Sherlock, who afterwards became one of his leading opponents. He had acquired some notoriety during the Sacheverell trial by the power and clearness with which he denounced the doctrine of passive obedience, and he became noted as a trenchant writer against the Tory party. The new Government, in the first year of its accession, promoted him to the bishopric of Bangor; and soon afterwards, in reply to some papers of the Nonjuror Hickes, he published his 'Preservative against the Principles and Practices of the Nonjurors in Church and State,' in which he argued that all political power proceeded from the people, denied both the doctrine of Apostolical Succession and the necessity of being in connection with any particular Church, and asserted that sincerity is the one necessary requirement for the Christian profession. In March 1717 he preached before the King his famous sermon 'On the Kingdom of Christ,' in which he enunciated with great clearness and force doctrines subversive of the whole theory of the High Church party. Christ himself, he maintained, is the sole judge and lawgiver of the Christian Church. No human power has a right to impose spiritual tests or spiritual punishments. The true Church of Christ is not a visible organisation, but the sum of all, whether dispersed or united, who trust in Him; and all attempts by temporal rewards or punishments to induce men to believe or discard particular religious opinions are essentially repugnant to the Christian religion.

Probably no other sermon ever produced so voluminous a controversy, or excited in clerical circles so prolonged an agitation, but it is a significant fact that the movement appears to have been purely literary, and it was followed by no recurrence of the Sacheverell riots. The opinions of Hoadly were steadily growing among the educated classes, and Church fanaticism was somewhat subsiding throughout the country. The Government acted with a high hand and with undisguised partiality. Four royal chaplains who had written against Hoadly were deprived of their positions. The Lower House of Convocation, having drawn up a severe and elaborate remonstrance against the sermon of Hoadly, was prorogued, and though it still continued to be formally assembled with every Parliament, it obtained no royal licence enabling it to transact business for more than a century.

A great centre of opposition and a great seedplot of religious intolerance thus passed away. The sympathies of the lower clergy were in violent hostility to both the civil Government and the bishops, and their power over the country districts and over the universities rendered them most formidable. The course of events, however, had been flowing steadily against them. Public opinion was exasperated by the large proportion of Scotch Episcopalians who were concerned in the rebellion of 1715,¹ and by the appearance of more than one English Nonjuror clergyman upon the scaffold. The divisions of the clergy and the secularising tendencies of the time had done their work, and the suspension of the synodical action of the Church hardly created a murmur of agitation. Few representative bodies have ever fallen more unhonoured and unlamented. Atterbury, the most brilliant tribune, orator, and pamphleteer of the High Church party was deeply immersed in Jacobite conspiracies and was thrown into prison in 1722. Great efforts were made to raise a storm of enthusiasm in his favour. Pathetic pictures were exposed to view representing him looking through the bars of his prison. The London clergy showed their sympathies by having prayers for him in most of the churches, on the pretext that he was suffering from the gout. He lay for several months in prison,

¹ See the letters which Bishop Nicholson wrote from Carlisle to Archbishop Wake, describing the state of the prisoners collected there.

Among them was a son of the Bishop of Edinburgh. — British Museum, Add. MSS. 6116.

and was then, by the violent measure of a bill of pains and penalties, deprived of his spiritual dignities and sent into exile. Twice before, within the memory of men who were still living, had English Governments attempted to strike down popular representatives of the Church, and on each occasion the blow had recoiled upon themselves. The prosecution of the seven bishops contributed more than any other single cause to shatter the dynasty of the Stuarts, and the impeachment of Sacheverell to ruin the great ministry of Godolphin. Under any circumstances a bill of pains and penalties, by which Parliament assumes the functions of a court of justice and condemns men against whom no sufficient legal evidence can be adduced, is an extreme, unconstitutional, and justly unpopular measure. So rapidly, however, had the ecclesiastical sentiment throughout England declined that the Whig ministry of George I. was able, without serious difficulty, by such a measure to deprive of his dignities and to banish from the country the most brilliant and popular bishop in the English Church.

This contrast is very marked, and it is all the more significant because the arrest and exile of Atterbury took place at a time when England seemed peculiarly ripe for agitation. The ruin, the poverty, the indignation which the failure of the South Sea Company had spread through every part of the kingdom had the natural effect of everywhere reviving political discontent. The birth of the Young Pretender in 1720 had rekindled the hopes of the Jacobites. It was noticed that when a gentleman named Stuart was chosen in 1721 Lord Mayor of London, the streets were filled on Lord Mayor's day by enthusiastic crowds shouting 'High Church and Stuart!' Soon after, information received from the French Regent, and corroborated by intercepted letters, revealed the existence of a most formidable Jacobite plot. An expedition was to have invaded England under the Duke of Ormond. A plan was made for seizing the Bank and the Tower. The design appeared so serious to the Government that the most stringent measures were taken. A camp was formed in Hyde Park, all military officers were ordered to repair at once to their commands, troops were brought over from Ireland, the King postponed his intended visit to Hanover, the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended for a year. Among those

who were arrested, in addition to Atterbury, on suspicion of high treason, were the Duke of Norfolk, the first peer of the realm, Lord North and Grey, Lord Orrery, and Dr. Friend the famous physician, who was also a Member of the House of Commons. A gentleman named Layer, who was tried and found guilty of enlisting soldiers for the Pretender, was hung and quartered; and bills of pains and penalties were carried, though not without much opposition, through both Houses, condemning a Jesuit named Plunket and a Nonjuror clergyman named Kelly to perpetual imprisonment and the forfeiture of their goods.¹ It was in this critical and anxious moment that the Government, by a similar method, struck down the prelate who was the special representative of the High Church party, and did so with a perfect impunity.²

These facts are sufficient to show the great change which, in less than a generation, had passed over ecclesiastical sentiment in England, and also, I hope, the means by which that change was effected. We may next proceed to examine the manner in which the dominant Whig party availed themselves of their opportunity to legislate on the subject of religious liberty; and, in order to do so with the greatest clearness, I propose to abandon for the present the strictly chronological order of events, and, adjourning the consideration of all other incidents, to devote the next few pages to exhibiting in a single picture the whole religious legislation in England during the reigns of the first two princes of the House of Brunswick. The class whose claims were most keenly felt by the Whig party were, of course, the ordinary Protestant Nonconformists. They had been, as we have seen, excluded by the Corporation Act of 1661, and by the Test Act of 1673, from all corporations and from all public offices, while the Occasional Conformity Act increased the stringency of the earlier legislation by excluding those moderate Dissenters who, while habitually adhering to the Nonconformist worship, had no scruple in occasionally communicating according to the Anglican rite.

¹ Tindal. The insertion of the forfeiture of goods into the bill against Plunket was believed to be done merely in order to form a precedent, as Plunket had no property. — See the protests of the Lords, in

Rogers, i. 334-340.

² Tindal, Smollett, Coxe's *Walpole*, *Parl. Hist.* vol. viii. The guilt of Atterbury which was doubted by some has been fully proved by the publication of the Stuart papers.

There can be no doubt that the sacramental test, besides its political results, had a very serious influence in lowering the religious sentiment of England. In most great Churches, and especially in Churches which are established by law, and in which liturgical forms are employed, the language of public worship is of a kind which can at most be appropriate to a very small fraction of those who use it. The customs of society draw within the Church men of all grades of piety and of faith. The selfish, the frivolous, the sceptical, the worldly, the indifferent, or at least men whose convictions are but half formed, whose zeal is very languid, and whose religious thoughts are very few, form the bulk of every congregation, and they are taught to employ language expressing the very ecstasy of devotion. The words that pass mechanically from their lips convey in turn the fervour of a martyr, the self-abasement or the rapture of a saint, a passionate confidence in the reality of unseen things, a passionate longing to pass beyond the veil. The effect of this contrast between the habitual language of devotion and the habitual dispositions of the devotees, between the energy of religious expression and the languor of religious conviction, is in some respects extremely deleterious. The sense of truth is dulled. Men come to regard it as a natural and scarcely censurable thing to attune their language on the highest of all subjects to a key wholly different from their genuine feelings and beliefs, and that which ought to be the truest of human occupations becomes in fact the most unreal and the most conventional.

In this manner a moral atmosphere is formed which is peculiarly fatal to sincerity and veracity of character, and which is in time so widely diffused that those who live in it are hardly conscious of its existence. But its influence on the religious sentiment would have been much more fatal had there not been an inner circle of devotion, a sanctuary of faith, which is comparatively intact. The reception of the Sacrament has, fortunately, never been, to any great extent, one of the requirements of the social code, and a rite which of all Christian institutions is the most admirable in its touching solemnity, has for the most part been left to sincere and earnest believers. Something of the fervour, something of the deep sincerity of the early

Christians may even now be seen around the sacred table, and prayers instinct with the deepest and most solemn emotion may be employed without appearing almost blasphemous by their contrast with the tone and the demeanour of the worshippers. This is not the place to relate how what was originally the simplest and most beautiful of commemorative rites was transformed, in the interests of sacerdotal pretensions, into the most grotesque and monstrous of superstitions, or how an institution intended to be the special symbol of Christian unity and affection was dragged into the arena of politics and controversy, was made the badge of parties, the occasion or the pretext of countless judicial murders. It is sufficient here to notice that the chief barrier against religious formalism in England was removed when the most sacred rite of the Christian religion was degraded into 'an office key, the picklock to a place,'¹ when the libertine, the placehunter, and the worldling were invited to partake in it for purposes wholly unconnected with religion. That this profanation should have been for a long period ardently defended by the clergy, and especially by that section of them whose principles led them to take the most exalted view of the nature of the Sacrament, is one of the most singular illustrations on record of the extent to which, in ecclesiastical bodies, the corporate interest of the Church may sometimes, even with good men, override the interests of religion. One of the most ardent advocates of the test was Swift, and in his 'Journal to Stella' he has given a vivid sketch of its practical working. 'I was early,' he writes, 'with the Secretary [Bolingbroke] but he was gone to his devotions and to receive the Sacrament. Several rakes did the same. It was not for piety but employment, according to Act of Parliament.'² It even became the general custom in the Church, for the minister, before celebrating the Communion, to desire the legal communicants, if there were any, to separate and divide themselves from those who were come there purely for the sake of devotion.³

¹ 'Hast thou by statute shov'd from its design
 The Saviour's feast, his own blest bread and wine,
 And made the symbols of atoning grace
 An office key, a picklock to a place,
 That infidels may make their title good
 By an oath dipped in sacramental blood?'—*Comper*.

² *Journal to Stella*.

³ *Hist. of Parliament from the*

In this respect the history of the sacramental test has a very melancholy interest. Nor is it less remarkable when we consider its origin. The Corporation Act, indeed, was directed against Protestant Dissenters, but the Test Act, as is well known, was aimed exclusively against Catholics. It was enacted in 1673, at a time when the dread of Popery had almost reached its height. The King was gravely suspected. The heir to the throne had recently proclaimed himself a Catholic. The Government had combined with Lewis XIV. in war with Holland, the chief Protestant Power of the Continent. Charles II., by a bold and unconstitutional exercise of authority, had issued a declaration of indulgence suspending all penal laws against Nonconformists and against recusants, and it was clearly understood that the declaration was intended not only to enlarge the sphere of the royal prerogative, but also, and even more signally, to protect the Catholics. This disposition of the sovereign and of the heir to the throne, combined with the aggressive attitude of Catholicism on the Continent, and with several attempts that had been made to tamper with or overawe the constitutional guardians at home, had excited the keenest alarm, and the Test Act was introduced, in order to maintain the exclusion of Catholics from office by imposing a test which they would never take. That this was the object appears not only from the debate, but also from the very title of the Bill, which was described as 'an Act for preventing Dangers which may happen from Popish Recusants.' The Dissenters who sat in Parliament exhibited on this occasion a rare and magnanimous disinterestedness. It was observed that the Act would operate against them as well as against the Catholics; but Alderman Love, who was one of their leading representatives, begged the House not to hesitate, through any considerations of this kind, to pass a measure which he believed to be essential to the maintenance of English liberty; and, trusting that special legislation would speedily relieve them from their disabilities, all the Dissenters in the House of Commons voted for the Bill.¹ The patriotism of the course which they

Death of Queen Anne to the Death of George II., p. 257. It is not surprising that the Speaker Onslow should have written, 'The sacramental test is made a sad and profane use of by others

and many more, I fear, than the Dissenters. It is become a great scandal' (Note to Burnet, ii. 364).

¹ Burnet's *Own Times*, i, 347-348.

pursued was then fully recognised, and some attempts were made at the time to relieve them from a part of the burdens to which they were liable, but they were frustrated by the lateness of the session and by certain difficulties which had arisen in the House of Lords.

Such were the circumstances under which the Test Act was carried. That such a law, carried in such a manner, should have continued when the Revolution was firmly established, that it should have survived a period of forty-five years of unbroken Whig ascendancy, that it should have outlived the elder and have been defended by the younger Pitt, and that it should have been reserved for Lord John Russell to procure its repeal, is surely one of the most striking instances of national ingratitude in history. William, in whose reign, as Swift bitterly complained, the maxim had come into fashion 'that no man ought to be denied the liberty of serving his country upon account of a different belief in matters of speculative opinion,' had done everything in his power to procure the abolition of the test, but great majorities in Parliament defeated his intention. Stanhope had entertained the same desire, and such a measure actually formed part of a Bill which was carried through its second reading in 1718, but the opposition was so strong that the clauses referring to the Test and Corporation Acts were struck out in Committee; and the premature death of Stanhope prevented their speedy revival. The Dissenters were now organising rapidly with a view to obtaining relief; and Hoadly, Kennett, and several others of the more liberal Anglicans, seconded them; but Walpole, though he was personally favourable to the measure, and though the Dissenters had steadily supported him, shrank to the last from provoking a new ebullition of Church fanaticism. They at last lost patience, and had a measure for the repeal brought forward in 1736; but Walpole, in a very moderate and conciliatory speech, while expressing much sympathy for the Dissenters, pronounced the motion ill-timed, and, through the opposition of the Whig Government, it was thrown out by 251 to 123. The measure was again brought forward in 1739, at a time which seemed peculiarly favourable, for the Tory party had lately seceded from Parliament, leaving the conduct of affairs wholly in the hands of the Whigs. But the Government was still inflexible, and the

measure was defeated in an exclusively Whig House by 188 to 89. It was, probably, about this time that a deputation of Non-conformists, headed by Dr. Chandler, had an interview with Walpole, and remonstrated with him on the course he was pursuing in spite of his repeated assurances of good-will and his repeated intimations that he would some day assist in procuring the repeal. The minister, as usual, answered the deputation that, whatever were his private inclinations, the time had not arrived. 'You have so often returned this answer,' said Dr. Chandler, 'that I trust you will give me leave to ask when the time will come?' 'If you require a specific answer,' replied Walpole, with a somewhat imprudent candour, 'I will give it you in a word—never.'¹

But although the dread of an ebullition of Church feeling like that which destroyed the great ministry of Godolphin induced the Whigs to maintain the Test Act, yet something was done to remove the reproach of intolerance from the English name. The Schism Act, which restricted the education of the Dissenters, and the Occasional Conformity Act, which was intended to restrict their political power, were both repealed in 1718; but, in order to prevent a repetition of the scandal which had been given by Sir Humphrey Edwin in the preceding reign, a clause was at the same time enacted providing that no mayor or bailiff or other magistrate should attend a meeting-house with the ensigns of office, under pain of being disqualified from holding any public office.² In the debates on this occasion Hoadly and Kennett were conspicuous in their advocacy of the Dissenters, but the Archbishops of Canterbury and York were both opposed to the repeal of the Acts of Anne. The Government silently favoured the Nonconformist interests by its steady promotion, both in Church and State, of Latitudinarians and Whigs. It secured the Protestant Dissenters in Ireland a Toleration Act considerably more liberal than that of England. It endeavoured, though without success, to free the Irish Dissenters from the Test Act, and it gradually relaxed the administration of the English Act to such a degree that it became almost nugatory. The original Act of Charles II. en-

¹ Coxe's *Walpole*, i. 608. See too Doddridge's *Diary*, iii. 365-6.
² 5 George I. c. 4.

joined that every official should receive the Anglican Sacrament within three months after his admission into office, but the time of grace was extended under George I. to six months. Soon after, the policy was adopted of passing annual bills of indemnity in favour of those who had accepted office but had not taken the Sacrament within the required time. There is something in this device which is curiously characteristic of the course of English legislation, and especially of the policy of Walpole. The broad rule, that no one should hold office under the Crown without taking the Anglican Sacrament within six months of his accession, remained. The stigma upon the Dissenters was unremoved. The Indemnity Acts, on the face of them, had no reference to conscientious scruples, for they purported only to relieve those who 'through ignorance of the law, absence, or unavoidable accident' had omitted to qualify, and it was only by a very liberal interpretation that the relief was extended to those who abstained from conscientious motives. The Acts applied only to those who were actually in office or in corporations, and in elections to corporate offices where previous conformity was required it was still open to any individual to object to a Dissenting candidate, and such an objection rendered invalid all votes that were given to him.¹ A few scrupulous Nonconformists considered it wrong to avail themselves of the permission of the Legislature to break the law, or to be guilty of what Lord North pronounced to be 'a mental fraud' by sheltering their conscientious scruples under a law which professed only to give relief to the careless, the ignorant, or the absent. Many instances were cited in which Dissenting candidates were excluded from corporations, because previous to the election, notice had been given that they had not fulfilled the requirement of the law by receiving the sacrament in an Anglican Church within the preceding year, and those who obtained office enjoyed only a precarious liberty, depending upon the annual vote of Parliament.² But when all these qualifications have been made, the fact remains that through the opera-

¹ See *Parl. Hist.* (New Series) xviii. 689, 726.

² The fullest information I have met with about the practical operation

of the Test Act is in a collection called *The Test Act Reporter* (3rd ed. 1829).

tion of the Indemnity Acts a great number of the Dissenters were admitted to offices and corporations, and were admitted without exciting any ferment in the community. The first Indemnity Act was passed in 1727, and, with a few exceptions, a similar Act was passed every year till the Test Act was repealed in 1828.

Another branch of the religious policy of the Whigs was intended to meet the scruples of the Quakers. When the temporary Act making their solemn affirmation equivalent, in all civil cases, to an oath, was made perpetual in 1715, an amendment was introduced by the Lords, and accepted by the Commons, extending the Act to Scotland and, for a limited period, to the colonies.¹ An opinion, however, soon grew up among the Quakers that to affirm 'in the presence of Almighty God' was not less sinful than to swear, and a Bill was accordingly introduced by the Government in 1721, providing a new form of affirmation, from which the obnoxious words were omitted.² A portion of the London clergy petitioned against the Bill, and the two Archbishops opposed it, but it was carried by a large majority. Another measure was less successful. The Acts providing a cheap method of levying tithes were not compulsory, and it was still in the power of the clergy to carry their tithe cases before the Exchequer or Ecclesiastical Courts, and thus to inflict on the Quakers heavy costs and imprisonment. That this course was actually adopted to a very considerable extent appears from the petitions of the Quakers, who stated that not less than 1,180 of their number had, since the passing of the Relief Acts, been prosecuted for tithes in the Exchequer, Ecclesiastical, or other Courts in England and Wales; that 302 of them had been committed to prison, and that nine had died prisoners. They added that 'these prosecutions, though frequently commenced for trivial sums, from 4s. to 5s., and the greater part of them for sums not exceeding 40s., have been attended with such heavy costs and rigorous exactions that above 800*l.* have been taken from ten persons when the original demands upon all of them collectively did not amount to 15*l.*'³ Walpole, who, in his elections, had been brought in much con-

¹ 1 George I. ii. 6. Gough's *Hist. of the Quakers*, iv. 161.
² 8 George I. c. 6.

³ Bogue and Bennett's *Hist. of Dissenters*, ii. 128. Gough's *Hist. of Quakers*, iv. 279-302.

tact with Quakers, warmly supported their demand that the simplest method of levying tithes should be the only method, and a Bill embodying this principle passed easily through the House of Commons. A great agitation, however, then arose among the clergy. They contended that the security of tithes would be diminished, and that it was necessary to deter those who refused to pay them, by the infliction of heavy fines, and it was suggested with whimsical ingenuity that there might be persons who, believing tithes to be of Divine origin, would think it wrong to enforce their claims before any but an Ecclesiastical Court, and would in consequence be persecuted if they were obliged to resort to the magistrates.¹ The Bishop of London led the opposition; fourteen other bishops voted against the Bill, and the Chancellor having taken the same side, the measure, to the great indignation of Walpole, was rejected in the Lords.

The next class of questions bearing in some degree upon religious liberty were those relating to the naturalisation of foreign Protestants and of Jews. The proposal to naturalise foreign Protestants upon their taking the oaths and receiving the Sacrament in any Protestant church, which had been carried in 1709, and repealed in 1712, was brought forward by Mr. Nugent in 1745, and again in 1751. An alarm which had at this time been spread about an alleged decrease of population through excessive drinking greatly favoured it,² and on the latter occasion it was warmly supported by Pelham, who was then at the head of the Government, and it was carried successfully through its earlier stages. It soon, however, appeared that a powerful combination of influences was opposed to it. The City of London, fearing a dangerous rivalry in trade, led the opposition, and although petitions from Liverpool and Bristol, and from some London merchants, were presented in its favour, the balance of mercantile opinion seems to have been against it. The Church dreaded an accession to the forces of Dissent, and the strong popular antipathy to foreigners was speedily aroused. The death of the Prince of Wales led to a slight postponement of the Bill, and the petitions against it were so

¹ *Parl. Hist.* ix, 1165-1219.

² See Walpole's *George II.* i. 44-45.

numerous and so urgent that the minister thought it advisable silently to drop it.

A more remarkable history is the attempt of the Pelhams in 1753 to legalise the naturalisation of Jews. The Jews, as is well known, had been completely banished from England by a Statute of Edward I., and they did not attempt to return till the Commonwealth, and were not formally authorised to establish themselves in England till after the Restoration.¹ The first synagogue in London was erected in 1662. It is possible that occasional physicians or merchants may have secretly come over before,² but their number must have been very few, and it is more than probable that Shakespeare, when he drew his immortal picture of Shylock, had himself never seen a Jew. The hatred, indeed, of that unhappy race in England was peculiarly tenacious and intense. The old calumny that the Jews were accustomed on Good Friday to crucify a Christian boy, which was sedulously circulated on the Continent, and which even now forms the subject of one of the great frescoes around the Cathedral of Toledo, was firmly believed, and the legend of the crucifixion of young Hew of Lincoln sank deeply into the popular imagination. The story was told by Matthew Paris; it was embodied in an early ballad; it was revived, many years after the expulsion of the Jews, by Chaucer, who made the Jewish murder of a Christian child the subject of one of his most graphic tales;³ and in the same spirit Marlowe, towards the close of the sixteenth century, painted his 'Jew of Malta' in the darkest colours. There does not appear, however, to have been any legal obstacle to the sovereign and Parliament naturalising a Jew till a law, enacted under James I., and directed against the Catholics, made the sacramental test an essential preliminary to naturalisation. Two subsequent enactments exempted from this necessity all foreigners who were engaged in the hemp and flax manufacture, and all Jews and Protestant foreigners who had lived for seven continuous years in the American plan-

¹ Blunt's *Hist. of the Jews in England*, p. 72.

² The Jews were specially famous for their knowledge of medicine, and a Jewish doctor named Lopez, was one of the physicians of Queen Elizabeth,

and was executed for an attempt to poison her. See Hume's *Hist. of England*, ch. xliii. See too Picciotto's *Anglo-Jewish Hist.* p. 24.

³ *The Prioress's Tale*.

tations.¹ In the reign of James II. the Jews were relieved from the payment of the alien duty, but it is a significant fact that it was reimposed after the Revolution at the petition of the London merchants.² In the reign of Anne some of them are said to have privately negotiated with Godolphin for permission to purchase the town of Brentford, and to settle there with full privileges of trade; but the minister, fearing to arouse the spirit of religious intolerance and of commercial jealousy, refused the application.³ The great development of industrial enterprise which followed the long and prosperous administration of Walpole naturally attracted Jews, who were then as now pre-eminent in commercial matters, and many of them appear at this time to have settled in England; among others a young Venetian Jew, whose son obtained an honourable place in English literature, and whose grandson has been twice Prime Minister of England. The object of the Pelhams was not to naturalise all resident Jews, but simply to enable Parliament to pass special Bills to naturalise those who applied to it, although they had not lived in the colonies or been engaged in the hemp or flax manufacture.

As the principle of naturalisation had been fully conceded by these two Acts, which had been passed without any difficulty, and had continued in operation without exciting any murmur, as the Bill could only apply to a few rich men who were prepared to undertake the expensive process of a parliamentary application, as Jews might be naturalised in any other country in Europe except Spain and Portugal,⁴ and as they were among the most harmless, industrious, and useful members of the community, it might have been imagined that a Bill of this nature could scarcely offend the most sensitive ecclesiastical conscience. When it was brought forward, however, a general election was not far distant, the opponents of the ministry raised the cry that the Bill was an unchristian one, and England was thrown

¹ *Parl. Hist.* xiv. 1373-1374.

² Blunt's *Hist. of the Jews in England*, p. 72.

³ Spence's *Anecdotes*.

⁴ This at least was stated in the debate. *Parl. Hist.* xiv. 1400. One of the pamphleteers against the measure stated that Sweden, Russia,

the Republic of Genoa, and a score of the German States also refused to receive Jews. *An Answer to a Pamphlet entitled 'Considerations for Permitting Persons Professing the Jewish Religion to be Naturalised,'* p. 40.

into paroxysms of excitement scarcely less intense than those which followed the impeachment of Sacheverell. There is no page in the history of the eighteenth century that shows more decisively how low was the intellectual and political condition of English public opinion. According to its opponents, the Jewish Naturalisation Bill sold the birthright of Englishmen for nothing, it was a distinct abandonment of Christianity, it would draw down upon England all the curses which Providence had attached to the Jews. The commercial classes complained that it would fill England with usurers. The landed classes feared that ultimately the greater part of the land of England would pass into the hands of the Jews, who would avail themselves of their power to destroy the Church. One Member of Parliament urged that to give the Jews a resting-place in England would invalidate prophecy and destroy one of the principal reasons for believing in the Christian religion. Another reminded the ministers that after 430 years the Jews in Egypt had mustered 600,000 armed men, and that, according to the 'Book of Esther,' they had once, when they got the upper hand in the land where they were living, 'put to death in two days 76,000 of those whom they were pleased to call their enemies, without either judge or jury.' The time might come, it was suggested, when, through another Esther, they might govern the destinies of England, or when they might even take their seats as Members of Parliament. It was stated that when Cromwell first extended his protection to the race some Asiatic Jews imagined him to be the promised Messiah, and even sent over deputies to make private inquiries in Huntingdonshire, in order, if possible, to establish his Jewish extraction, and it was argued that through a similar persuasion the Jews would probably support another Cromwell in his attacks upon the Constitution. The Mayor and Corporation of London petitioned against the Bill. The clergy all over England denounced it. The old story of the crucifixion of Christian children by Jews was revived, and the bishops who had voted for the Bill were libelled, and insulted in the streets. The measure had first been introduced into the House of Lords, and was carried through without difficulty, and with the acquiescence of most of the bishops. It passed, after a fierce opposition, through the Commons, and

received the royal assent; but as the tide of popular indignation rose higher and higher, the ministers in the next year brought forward and carried its repeal. Had they not done so, it is probable that the election, which was then imminent, would have proved disastrous to their power, and they argued plausibly, and perhaps justly, that in the excited state of popular feeling the Jews could not, if the Act continued in force, live safely in England. An attempt was made by the Church party to carry their victory further and repeal the Act which naturalised dissenters from the Anglican creed who had resided for seven years in the Plantations, in so far as it related to the Jews, but the Government resisted, and succeeded in defeating the attempt.¹

The agitation which was excited by this very moderate measure of the Pelham ministry goes far to justify the Whig party for not having done more in the cause of religious liberty during the long period of their ascendancy. The feelings of the country would not allow it, and in spite of the incontestable decline of the theological spirit, there was still no other question on which public opinion was so sensitive. Nor was this intolerance confined to England, or to the Church of England, or to the High Church section of the clergy. In Scotland the hatred of religious liberty ran still higher. The Scotch preachers denounced it with untiring vehemence, and the General Assembly, in 1702, presented a solemn address to the Lord High Commissioner urging that no motion 'of any legal toleration of those of the prelatial principle might be entertained by the Parliament,' and declaring that such a toleration would be 'to establish iniquity by law.'² In 1697 a deputation of English Dissenting ministers waited upon the King to urge him to interdict the printing of any work advocating Socinian opinions.³ In 1702 a Dissenter named Emlyn, being accused by some Irish Non-conformists, but with the encouragement of the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin, was sentenced to pay a fine of 1,000*l.* and to lie in gaol till it was paid, because he had written against the

¹ See the very curious discussions on this Bill. *Parl. Hist.* xiv. 1366-1430; xv. 92-163; Coxe's *Life of Pelham*, ii. 245-253, 290-298.

² Lathbury's *Hist. of the Nonjurors*, pp. 441-451.

³ Skeat's *Hist. of Free Churches*, p. 184.

Trinity.¹ Among the clergy of the Church of England one of the most active in fanning the absurd agitation on the Jewish question was Romaine, who was one of the earliest and most prominent leaders of the Evangelical party.²

One very important step, however, was taken without provoking any agitation or opposition. The belief in witchcraft, which has furnished one of the most singular and tragical pages in the history of superstition, had almost disappeared in England among the educated classes at the time of the Revolution, though it was still active in Scotland and the colonies. The law, however, condemning witches to death still remained on the Statute Book, and it was not altogether a dead letter. Three witches had been hung at Exeter in 1682,³ and even after the Revolution there had been occasional trials. Addison—whose judgment was afterwards echoed by Blackstone—speaks on the subject with a curious hesitation. ‘I believe in general,’ he says, ‘that there is and has been such a thing as witchcraft, but at the same time can give no credit to any particular instance of it.’⁴ The great clerical agitation which followed the Sacheverell impeachment is said to have produced a temporary recrudescence of the superstition,⁵ and it was observed about this time that there was scarcely a village in England which did not contain a reputed witch.⁶ At the same time those who were in authority steadily discouraged the superstition. A woman named Jane Wenham having been found guilty of the offence in 1712 received a free pardon at the instance of the judge, in spite of the urgent protest of some of the clergy of the county,⁷

¹ As Hoadly very sarcastically said, ‘The nonconformists accused him, the conformists condemned him, the secular power was called in, and the cause ended in an imprisonment and a very great fine, two methods of conviction about which the Gospel is silent.’—See Hunt’s *Religious Thought in England*, ii. p. 326.

² Kyle’s *Christian Leaders of the Last Century*. Cadogan’s *Life of Romaine*.

³ Hutchinson’s *Historical Essay on Witchcraft*, p. 68. Hutchinson says that these were the last judicially executed in England, but Dr. Parr speaks of two having suffered at Northampton in 1705, and five others

at the same place in 1722.—Parr’s *Works*, iv. 182 (1828).

⁴ *Spectator*, No. 117. See too the remarks of Blackstone.—*Commentaries*, book iv. c. 4.

⁵ ‘Since the reign of Dr. Sacheverell, when the clamours against freethinking began to be loudest, the devil has again resumed his empire and appears in the shape of cats, and enters into confederacy with old women; and several have been tried, and many are accused through all parts of the kingdom for being witches.’—Collin’s *Discourse on Freethinking*, p. 30.

⁶ *Spectator*, No. 117.

⁷ Hutchinson, 163–171.

and in the same year the death of a suspected witch who had been thrown into the water in order to ascertain whether she would sink or swim, and who had perished during the trial, was pronounced by Chief Justice Parker to be murder.¹ It is one of the great glories of the early Hanoverian period that it witnessed the abrogation of the sanguinary enactment by which so many innocent victims had perished. Chief Justice Holt did good service to humanity in exposing the imposture which lay at the root of some cases he was obliged to try,² and in 1736 the law making witchcraft punishable by death was repealed. The superstition long smouldered among the poorer classes; there were several instances of the murder of suspected witches; and Methodism did something to strengthen the belief, but as it had no longer the sanction of the law, and as diseased imaginations were no longer excited by the executions, it sank speedily into insignificance. It is a curious fact that the Irish law against witchcraft, though long wholly obsolete, remained on the Statute Book till 1818.

Another measure of a very different kind, but also in some degree dependent upon the theological temperature, belonging to the period I am considering, was the reform of the calendar. The New Style, as is well known, had been first brought into use by Pope Gregory XIII., in 1582, and had gradually been adopted by all the Continental nations, except Russia and Sweden, but England, partly from natural conservatism, and partly from antipathy to the Pope, still resisted, and had at last got eleven days wrong. The change was carried on the motion of Lord Chesterfield, and with the assistance of the eminent mathematicians, Lord Macclesfield and Mr. Bradley, under the Pelham Ministry in 1751. The year was henceforth to begin on January 1 instead of on March 25; and in order to rectify the errors of the old calendar it was ordered that the day following September 2, 1752, should be denominated the 14th. The old Duke of Newcastle, whose timid and time-serving nature dreaded beyond all things an explosion of popular feeling, entreated Chesterfield not to 'stir matters

¹ Ibid. pp. 175, 176. Hutchinson, who wrote in 1718, says, 'Our country people are still as fond of this custom of swimming as they are of baiting a

bear or a bull.'

² Campbell's *Chief Justices*—Life of Holt.

that had long been quiet,' or to meddle with 'new-fangled things,' and although the reform was ultimately carried without difficulty, these apprehensions were not wholly groundless. A widespread irritation was for a time aroused. Much was said about the profanity of altering saint-days and immovable feasts. At the next election one of the most popular cries against Lord Macclesfield's son was, 'Give us back our eleven days!' When, many years later, Mr. Bradley died of a lingering disease, his sufferings were supposed by the populace to be a judgment due to the part he had taken in the transaction; and the feelings of many were probably expressed in a saying that was quoted during the debate on the naturalisation of the Jews, 'It is no wonder he should be for naturalising the devil who was one of those that banished old Christmas.'¹

There were, however, still two classes of laws upon the Statute Book, which were grossly persecuting, and which, during the early Hanoverian period, were entirely unmitigated. I mean, of course, those against the Catholics and the disbelievers in the Trinity. The measures against the former class may no doubt derive a very considerable palliation from the atrocious persecutions of which Catholicism had been guilty in almost every country in which she triumphed, from the incessant plots against the life and power of Elizabeth, and from the intimate connection, both before and after the Revolution, between the Catholicism of the Stuarts and their political conduct and prospects. Catholicism, indeed, never can be looked upon merely as a religion. It is a great and highly organised kingdom, recognising no geographical frontiers, governed by a foreign sovereign, pervading temporal politics with its manifold influence, and attracting to itself much of the enthusiasm which would otherwise flow in national channels. The intimate correspondence between its priests in many lands, the disciplined unity of their political action, the almost absolute authority they exercise over large classes, and their usually almost complete detachment from purely national and patriotic interests

¹ *Parl. Hist.* xv. 136. So, too, a ballad against the Jew Bill begins—

In seventeen hundred and fifty three
The style it was changed to Popery.
—*Political Ballads*, ii. 311.

See, on this subject, Lord Stanhope's *Hist. of England*, iii. 340; Maty's *Life of Chesterfield*, pp. 320-323; Coxe's *Pelham*, ii. 178-179; and Hogarth's picture of an Election.

have often in critical times proved a most serious political danger, and they have sometimes pursued a temporal policy eminently aggressive, sanguinary, unscrupulous, and ambitious. Nor should it be forgotten that, in the closing years of the seventeenth and in the first half of the eighteenth century, the spirit of Romish persecution, though gradually subsiding, was still far from extinct. Thus we find Stanhope writing from Majorca in 1691: 'Tuesday last there were burnt here twenty-seven Jews and heretics, and to-morrow I shall see executed above twenty more, and Tuesday next, if I stay here so long, is to be another *fiesta*, for so they entitle a day dedicated to so execrable an act.'¹ In 1706 Wilcox, who was afterwards Bishop of Rochester, but who was at this time minister of the English factory at Lisbon, wrote a letter to Burnet describing an *auto-da-fé* in that city, in which four persons were burnt in the presence of the King, and of these one woman remained alive for half-an-hour, and one man for more than an hour in the flames, vainly imploring their executioners to heap fresh fagots on the fire in order to terminate their agony.² Every considerable town in England, Holland, and Protestant Germany, contained a colony of Frenchmen, who, after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, had been driven from their homes by a persecution of extreme ferocity; a long course of the most atrocious cruelties had kindled the flame of rebellion in the Cevennes, and at the time of the Peace of Utrecht 188 French Protestants were released by English intercession from the galleys.³ In 1717, an assembly of seventy-four Protestants being surprised at Andure, the men were sent to the galleys and the women to prison.⁴ In 1724, in the corrupt and generally sceptical period of the Regency, a new law was made against the Protestants of France which aggravated even the atrocious enactments of Lewis XIV. By one clause all who assembled for the exercise of the Protestant worship, even in their own homes, became liable to lifelong servitude in the galleys, and to the confiscation of all their goods. Another condemned to death any Protestant

¹ Lord Stanhope's *Hist. of England*, i. 107.

² See this letter in full in Chandler's *Hist. of Persecution* (1736), p. 287. See too some curious particu-

lars on persecutions in Portugal in Geddes' tracts, i. 385-443.

³ Bolingbroke's *Letters*, iv. 121. See, too, Burnet's *Own Times*, ii. 484.

⁴ Taine's *Ancien Régime*, p. 80.

minister exercising any religious function whatever, and to the galleys any witness who failed to denounce him. A third enjoined all physicians to inform the priest of the condition of every dying patient, in order that, whether he desired it or not, a Catholic priest should be present at his deathbed. A fourth, with a rare refinement of ingenious malice, rendered any Protestant who, by his religious exhortations, strengthened a dying relative in his faith, liable to the galleys and to the confiscation of his goods.¹ A Protestant pastor was hung at Montpellier in 1728; another would have suffered the same fate in 1732 had he not succeeded in escaping from his prison;² and 277 Protestants in Dauphiny were condemned to the galleys in 1745 and 1746.³ As late as the Peace of Paris, a Protestant minister at Nismes wrote to the Duke of Bedford imploring the intercession of the English Government in favour of thirty-three men, who were in the galleys of Toulon, and of sixteen women, who were imprisoned in Languedoc, for no other offence than that of having attended Protestant assemblies. Many of them, he added, had remained in captivity for more than thirty years.⁴

Similar complaints came from Hungary, where the interference of the Emperor with the religious liberty of the Protestants contributed largely to the insurrection of Rákóczy; from Silesia, where the same interference prepared the way for the ultimate severance of the province from the Austrian rule; from Poland, where the persecution fomented in 1724 by the Jesuits at Thorn aroused the indignation of all Protestant Europe, and where the complete exclusion of religious dissidents from political power in 1733 was sowing dissensions that were the sure precursors of the approaching ruin. In the course of 1732 and the two following years about 17,000 German Protestants were compelled by the persecution of the Archbishop of Salzburg to abandon their homes, and to seek a refuge in Prussia or in Georgia. Ten persons were burnt for their religious opinions in Spain between 1746 and 1759. Two persons were executed, and many others condemned to less severe penalties by the Inquisition in Portugal in 1756.⁵

¹ Sismondi's *Hist. des Français*, xix. 241-244.

² *Ibid.* p. 302.

³ Taine's *Ancien Régime*, p. 80.

⁴ *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 155.

⁵ See Buckle's *Hist.* ii. 109.

These things will not be forgotten by a candid judge in estimating the policy of the English Government towards Catholics. On the other hand, he will remember that the English Catholics were so few and so inconsiderable that it was absurd to regard them as a serious danger to the State; that they had in general shown themselves under the most trying circumstances eminently moderate and loyal, and that although the Catholic priests, whenever they were in the ascendant, were then, as ever, a persecuting body, Catholicism, as a whole, had ceased, since the Peace of Westphalia, to divide the interests of Europe. In Switzerland, it is true, a war that was essentially religious broke out between the Protestant and Catholic cantons as late as 1712, but in general theology had very little influence upon the politics of Christendom. They turned mainly on the rivalry between the Catholic Emperor and the Catholic King of France. The Popes, who, as spiritual heads of Christendom, had employed all their temporal and spiritual weapons against Elizabeth, had never acted in this manner against her successors. During the struggle of the Revolution a great part of Catholic Europe was on the side of William, and, as we have seen, the Pope himself was in his favour. It may be added, too, that the persecution of religious opinion and the suppression of any form of religious worship must always appear peculiarly culpable in Protestants, whose whole theory of religion is based upon the assertion of the right of private judgment, and also that religious liberty, though still rare and struggling in Europe, was by no means unknown. In France, it is true, it had been destroyed by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, but in Germany it existed to a considerable extent since the Peace of Westphalia, which placed the Catholic and Protestant States in a position of perfect equality, terminated the long contest for the possession of the ecclesiastical benefices, and in many cases restrained, though it by no means generally annulled, the power of the sovereign to coerce his dissident subjects.¹ In Prussia, which

Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*, bk. ix. ch. 3, and the curious collection of lists of Portuguese *autos-da-fé* in the eighteenth century, in the British Museum. The disturbances at Thorn were made the subject of a speci-

article in the treaty of Hanover between England and Prussia in 1725.

¹ The rather complicated provisions of the treaty on this subject are explained at length by Coxe's *House of Austria*, i. 955-957.

was rapidly becoming the most important Protestant Power of Germany, the Elector, Frederick William, who died in 1688, even contributed money for the building of Catholic churches, and under his successor the Catholics had almost every privilege they could have possessed under a ruler of their own creed.¹ In Holland a system of absolute religious freedom was established, and its complete success was generally recognised. So perfectly were the different religions in that country blended into a common nationality that it was asserted, though probably with some exaggeration, that there were no less than 4,000 Catholics in the army with which William came over to defend the Protestantism of England.² Even in Ireland, though the Catholic majority were subject to gross oppression as a conquered race, they were in practice allowed during the latter Stuart reigns full liberty of worship, and no religious disqualification excluded them from the municipalities, from the elective franchise, from the magistracy, or from the Parliament.

In England public opinion made such a policy impossible. The laws of Elizabeth against the Catholics remained, though they were but partially enforced, and these laws, among many other provisions, compelled every Catholic to attend the Anglican service, suppressed absolutely, and under crushing penalties, the celebration of the mass, proscribed the whole Catholic priesthood, and made it high treason for any English priest from beyond the sea to come to England, for any Catholic graduate to refuse for the third time the oath of supremacy, for any Protestant to become a Catholic, or for any Catholic to convert a Protestant. Had such laws been rigorously enforced they must have led to a general Catholic emigration or have dyed every scaffold with Popish blood; and, as it was, many Catholics perished in England, to whom it is the merest sophistry to deny the title of martyrs for their faith. The conspiracy of Guy Faux to blow up the Parliament, the fable of the Popish plot which led to the effusion of torrents of innocent blood, and, perhaps, still more, the baseless calumny which attributed the Fire of London to the Papists, sustained the anti-Catholic fanaticism. This last calamity had, in the words of Clarendon,

¹ Ranke's *Hist. of Prussia* (Eng. trans.), ii. 57.

² Reresby's *Memoirs* (Ed. 1875), p. 437.

‘kindled another fire in the breasts of men almost as dangerous as that within their houses.’ Panic-stricken by the rapid progress of the flames, half-maddened by terror and by despair, the people at once attributed it to deliberate incendiarism. The Dutch and French were the first objects of their suspicion, but soon after, the Papists were included, and were dragged in multitudes to prison. A Portuguese who, according to the custom of his country, picked up a piece of bread that was lying on the ground, and laid it on the ledge projecting from the nearest house, was seized on the charge of throwing in fire-balls. Among the crowd of terrified prisoners was a poor Frenchman, whose brain appears to have been turned by the terror and excitement of the scene, and who confessed himself the author of the fire. He appears to have been simply a monomaniac, and the judges openly declared their utter disbelief in his disjointed and unsupported story; but in the temper in which men then were he was condemned, and the King did not dare to arrest his execution. Nor was the panic suffered to pass away. Although a Parliamentary committee, after the strictest enquiry, could find nothing whatever implicating the Catholics (who, indeed, could have gained nothing by the crime), it was determined, in the most solemn and authoritative manner, to brand them as its perpetrators. The Monument, erected in memorial of the catastrophe in one of the most crowded thoroughfares of London, bore two Latin inscriptions, commemorating the rebuilding of the city, and the mayors by whose care the Monument was erected. The third inscription was in English, that all might read it, and it was to the effect that ‘This pillar was set up in perpetual remembrance of the most dreadful burning of this ancient city, begun and carried on by the treachery and malice of the Popish faction in the beginning of September, in the year of our Lord 1666, in order to the carrying on their horrid plot for extirpating the Protestant religion and old English liberty, and introducing Popery and slavery.’ In the reign of James II. this scandalous inscription was taken away, but it was restored at the Revolution, and it was not finally removed till 1831. Another and very similar inscription was placed in Pudding Lane, on the spot where the fire began, and

remained there till the middle of the last century, when it was removed on account of the crowds who gathered to read it.¹

It would be difficult to conceive a more effectual device for arousing the passions of the people. In the struggle of the Revolution a direct question between Protestantism and Catholicism was at issue, and it is not surprising that considerable attention should have been paid to the legislation on the subject. During the whole period of the Stuarts the sovereigns had been favourable, and the Parliaments bitterly hostile, to the Catholics. The former were actuated partly by the belief that while Puritanism is naturally hostile to the royal prerogative, Catholicism is naturally congenial to it, and partly also by religious sympathy, by Catholic relationships, and by Continental alliances. James I. for a time suspended the laws against recusants, and opened negotiations with the Pope; and, but for the violent spirit then dominating in the Vatican, and the very natural indignation aroused by the Gunpowder Plot, his reign would probably have witnessed considerable mitigations of the penal code. Charles I., when Prince of Wales, had made a secret engagement with France, on the occasion of his French marriage, to obtain toleration for the Catholics, and the non-enforcement of the laws against them was almost the first question that brought him into collision with his Parliament. The attempt of Charles II. to exercise a dispensing power in favour of the Catholics, for the first time aroused the Parliament of the Restoration into opposition; while the ill-timed, ill-directed, and exaggerated efforts of James to remove the disabilities of his co-religionists were the main cause of his downfall. From William also the Catholics had something to hope. He came to England, it is true, as the special representative of Protestantism, but he came from a country where religious liberty was established, and he was himself entirely free from the stain of intolerance. In the negotiations that preceded his expedition he had given the Emperor a distinct assurance that he would do his utmost to procure for the English

¹ Jesse's *London*, ii. 227, 311.
Seymour's *Survey of London*, bk. ii.
ch. 10. Continuation of the *Life of*

Clarendon. Pope's couplet on the Monument is well known:—
Where London's column, pointing to the skies,
Like a tall bully, lifts its head, and lies.



Catholics a repeal of the penal laws¹; and the declaration which he issued upon his arrival in England promised freedom of conscience to all who would live peaceably. There can be no doubt that these sentiments expressed his real desire, and friend and foe have admitted that in the early part of his reign his influence was employed to prevent the enforcement of persecuting laws against Catholics.² It was, however, probably not in his power to induce the Parliament to repeal the penal laws, or to prevent it from passing new laws, and he at least never chose to risk the unpopularity of refusing his assent to the persecuting laws which were enacted during his reign. These laws were maintained and were extended during the first two reigns of the Hanoverian period, and they form, perhaps, the darkest blot upon the history of the Revolution. Thus, to omit minor details, an Act was passed in 1699, by which any Catholic priest convicted of celebrating mass, or discharging any sacerdotal function, in England (except in the house of an ambassador) was made liable to perpetual imprisonment; and, in order that this law might not become a dead letter, a reward of 100*l.* was offered for conviction. Perpetual imprisonment was likewise the punishment to which any Papist became liable who was found guilty of keeping a school, or otherwise undertaking the education of the young. No parent might send a child abroad to be educated in the Catholic faith, under penalty of a fine of 100*l.*, which was bestowed upon the informer. All persons who did not, within six months of attaining the age of eighteen, take the Oath, not only of Allegiance, but also of Supremacy, and subscribe the declaration against transubstantiation, became incapable of either inheriting or purchasing land, and the property they would otherwise have inherited passed to the next Protestant heir. By a law which was enacted in the first year of George I. all persons in any civil or military office, all members of colleges, teachers, preachers, and lawyers of every grade were compelled to take the Oath of Supremacy, which was distinctly anti-Catholic, as well as the Oath of Allegiance and the declaration against the Stuarts. By the same law any two

¹ See Ranke's *Hist. of England*, iv. 437.

² See the remarks of Burnet in his *Hist. of his Own Times*, ii. 12, and the

remarkable note of Lord Dartmouth, ii. 229. Butler's *Historical Memoirs of the English Catholics*, ii. pp. 52-53.

justices of the peace might at any time tender to any Catholic the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy if they regarded him as disaffected. They might do this without any previous complaint or any evidence of his disaffection, and if he refused to take them he was liable to all the penalties of recusancy, which reduced him to a condition of absolute servitude. A Popish recusant was debarred from appearing at court, or even coming within ten miles of London, from holding any office or employment, from keeping arms in his house, from travelling more than five miles from home, unless by licence, under pain of forfeiting all his goods, and from bringing any action at law, or suit in equity. A married woman recusant forfeited two-thirds of her jointure or dower, was disabled from being executor or administratrix to her husband, or obtaining any part of his goods, and was liable to imprisonment unless her husband redeemed her by a ruinous fine. All Popish recusants within three months of conviction, might be called upon by four justices of the peace to renounce their errors or to abandon the kingdom; and if they did not depart, or if they returned without the King's licence, they were liable to the penalty of death. By this Act the position of the Catholics became one of perpetual insecurity. It furnished a ready handle to private malevolence, and often restrained the Catholics from exercising even their legal rights. Catholics who succeeded in keeping their land were compelled to register their estates, and all future conveyances and wills relating to them. They were subjected by an annual law to a double land-tax, and in 1722 a special tax was levied upon their property.¹

A legislation animated by the same spirit extended to other portions of the empire. In the English colonies in North America there existed, in the latter half of the seventeenth century, an amount of religious liberty considerably greater than had yet been established in Europe. The Virginian Episcopalians, it is true, proscribed the Puritans and Catholics, and the New England Puritans proscribed and persecuted the Episcopalians and the Quakers; but the constitutions of the Quaker

¹ Blackstone, bk. iv. ch. 4. Butler's *Hist. Memoirs of the English Catholics*, ch. xxxiv. The chief laws were, 11

and 12 Wm. III. c. 4; 1 Geo. I. Stat. 2. c. 13; 1 Geo. I. Stat. 2. c. 55; 3 Geo. I. c. 18.

States, and the constitution of Rhode Island, which was founded by Roger Williams in 1662, laid down, in the most emphatic and unqualified terms, the doctrine of complete religious liberty. It is, however, a remarkable fact that Maryland, which was founded by the Catholic Lord Baltimore, as early as 1632, and which contained a large proportion of Catholics among its earliest colonists, preceded them in this path. It accorded perfect freedom to all Protestant sects, welcomed alike the persecuted Puritans of Virginia and the persecuted Episcopalians of Massachusetts, granted them every privilege which was possessed by the Catholics, and exhibited, for the first time since the Reformation, the spectacle of a Government acting with perfect toleration and a steady and unflinching impartiality towards all sects of Trinitarian Christians. Something, no doubt, has been said with truth to qualify its merit. The measure was a defensive one. The toleration was only extended to the believers in the Trinity. The terms of the charter would have made the suppression of the Anglican worship illegal; but still the fact remains, that, so far as Trinitarian Christians were concerned, the legislators of Maryland, who were in a great measure Catholic, undertook to try the experiment, not only of complete religious toleration, but also of complete religious equality; and that, at a time and in a country where they were almost entirely uncontrolled, they fulfilled their promise with perfect fidelity. In 1649, when the Legislature contained both Protestants and Catholics, a law was made, solemnly enacting that 'no person within this province, professing to believe in Jesus Christ, shall be in any way troubled, molested, or discountenanced for his or her religion, or in the free exercise thereof;' and by the Catholics, at least, the promise of this law was never broken. The shameful sequel is soon told. The Protestants speedily multiplied in the province. They outnumbered the Catholics, and they enslaved them. The aristocratic constitution of the State, which produced a strong democratic opposition to Lord Baltimore, assisted them, and the Revolution in England gave the signal for the complete destruction of religious liberty in Maryland. The Catholics were excluded from all prominent offices in the State which a Catholic had founded. Anglicanism was made

an Established Church, and in 1704 the mass was forbidden, the priesthood were proscribed, and no Catholic was any longer permitted to educate the young. Laws of a very similar character were enacted in New York, and in other American States; and even Rhode Island, which had been still more tolerant than Maryland—for it extended its protection to disbelievers in the Trinity—appears to have followed the example.¹

In Ireland also the Revolution was speedily followed by the penal code. The Catholic population had naturally remained faithful to their sovereign, whose too zealous Catholicism was in the eyes of the English his greatest fault; and the triumph of William, which brought many benefits to England, consigned Ireland to the most hopeless and the most degrading servitude. For the third time an immense proportion of the soil was torn from its native owners, and bestowed upon foreigners and enemies, and nearly all the talent, the energy, the ambition of the nation was driven to the Continent. One hope, however, remained. At a time when the war was going decidedly against the Catholics, but was still by no means terminated, when Limerick was still far from captured, when the approach of winter, the prospect of pestilence arising from the heavy floods, the news of succours on the way from France, and the dangers of another insurrection at home made the situation of the besiegers very grave, the Irish generals agreed to surrender the city, and thus terminate the war, if by doing so they could secure for their people religious liberty. The consideration they offered was a very valuable one, for the prolongation of the war till another spring would have been full of danger to the unsettled government of William, and the stipulations of the Irish in favour of religious liberty were given the very first place in the treaty that was signed. The period since the Reformation in which the Irish Catholics were most unmolested in their worship was the reign of Charles II.; and the first article of the Treaty of Limerick stipulated that 'the Roman Catholics of this kingdom shall enjoy such privileges in the exercise of their religion as are consistent with the laws of Ireland, or as they

¹ Bancroft's *Hist. of the United States*, ch. vii., xix. Recent investigations show that the original tolerance of Maryland was less exclusively the work of Catholics than

has been asserted, and that the majority in the Legislature of 1649 which passed the Toleration Act was Protestant.

did enjoy in the reign of Charles II.; and their Majesties, as soon as their affairs will permit them to summon a Parliament in this kingdom, will endeavour to procure the said Roman Catholics such further security as may preserve them from any disturbance upon the account of their said religion.' The ninth article determined that 'the oath to be administered to such Roman Catholics as submit to their Majesties' government shall be the oath of allegiance, and no other.' These articles were signed by the Lords Justices of Ireland, and ratified by their Majesties under the Great Seal of England.

Such a treaty was very reasonably regarded as a solemn charter guaranteeing the Irish Catholics against any further penalties or molestation on account of their religion. It is true that the laws of Elizabeth against Catholicism remained unrepealed, but they had become almost wholly obsolete, and as they were not enforced during the reign of Charles II., it was assumed that they could not be enforced after the Treaty of Limerick. It is true also that the sanction of Parliament was required for the legal validity of the treaty, but that sanction could not, without a grave breach of faith, be withheld from an engagement so solemnly entered into by the Government, at a time when Parliament was not sitting, and in order to obtain a great military advantage. The imposition upon the Irish Catholics, without any fresh provocation, of a mass of new and penal legislation intended to restrict or extinguish their worship, to banish their prelates, and to afflict them with every kind of disqualification, disability, and deprivation on account of their religion, was a direct violation of the plain meaning of the treaty. Those who signed it undertook that the Catholics should not be in a worse position, in respect to the exercise of their religion, than they had been in during the reign of Charles II., and they also undertook that the influence of the Government should be promptly exerted to obtain such an amelioration of their condition as would secure them from the possibility of disturbance. Construed in its plain and natural sense, interpreted as every treaty should be by men of honour, the Treaty of Limerick amounted to no less than this.¹ The public faith was pledged to its observance,

¹ I may here quote the opinion of Burke. Having quoted the first and ninth articles, which I have noticed above, he proceeds: 'Compare this

and the well-known sentiments of William appeared an additional guarantee. William was, indeed, a cold and somewhat selfish man, and the admirable courage and tenacity which he invariably displayed when his own designs and ambition were in question were seldom or never manifested in any disinterested cause, but he was at least eminently tolerant and enlightened, and he had actually before the battle of Aghrim offered the Irish Catholics the free exercise of their religion, half the churches in the kingdom, and the moiety of their ancient possessions.¹ Such an offer is alone sufficient to stamp him as a great statesman, and should have saved his memory from many eulogies which are in truth the worst of calumnies. It must be observed, however, that William, who repeatedly refused his assent to English Acts which he regarded as inimical to his authority, never offered any serious or determined opposition to the anti-Catholic laws which began in his reign. It must be observed also that the penal code, which began under William, which derived its worst features under Anne, and which was largely extended under George I. and George II., was entirely unprovoked by any active disloyalty on the part of the Catholics. To describe the Irish Catholics as having manifested an incurably rebellious and ungrateful disposition because, in the contest of the Revolution, they took the part of the legitimate and hereditary sovereign, to whom all classes had sworn allegiance, and whose title when they took up arms had not been disputed by any act of the Irish Parliament, is a calumny so grotesque and so transparent that it could only have been resorted to by those advocates of persecution who would stoop to any quibble in their cause.² And, at

latter article with the penal laws as they are stated in the second chapter, and judge whether they seem to be the public acts of the same powers, and observe whether other oaths are tendered to them, and under what penalties. Compare the former with the same laws from the beginning to the end, and judge whether the Roman Catholics have been preserved agreeably to the sense of the article "from any disturbance on account of their religion," or rather whether on that account there is a single right of nature or benefit of society which has

not been either totally taken away or considerably impaired.'—*Tracts on the Popery Laws*.

¹ See a letter of Sir Charles Wogan (nephew of Tyrconnel, to whom the proposition was made) to Swift. Swift's *Works* (Scott's ed.), xviii., p. 13.

² 'The peculiar situation of that country' [Ireland], says Macpherson, 'seems to have been overlooked in the contest. The desertion upon which the deprivation of James had been founded in England had not existed in Ireland. The Lord-Lieutenancy had

all events, after the Treaty of Limerick had been signed, during the long agony of the penal laws no rebellion took place. About 14,000 Irish soldiers had at once passed into the French service, and a steady stream of emigration soon carried off all the Catholic energy from the country. Deprived of their natural leaders, sunk for the most part in the most brutal ignorance and in the most abject poverty, the Irish Catholics at home remained perfectly passive, while both England and Scotland were convulsed by Jacobitism. It is a memorable fact that the ferocious law of 1703, which first reduced the Irish Catholics to a condition of hopeless servitude, does not allege as the reason for its provisions any political crime. It was called 'An Act to prevent the further growth of Popery.' It was justified in its preamble on the ground that the Papists still continued in their gross and dangerous errors, that some Protestants had been perverted to Popery, and that some Papists had refused to make provision for their Protestant children. A considerable military force was, indeed, kept in Ireland, but this was chiefly because the ministers desired to keep under arms a more numerous standing army than Parliament would tolerate in England, and also to throw upon the Irish revenue a great part of the burden; and whenever serious danger arose, a large proportion was at once withdrawn. The evidence we possess on this subject is curiously complete. In the great rebellion of 1715 not a single overt act of treason was proved against the Catholics in Ireland, and at a time when civil war was raging both in England and Scotland the country remained so profoundly tranquil that the Government sent over several regiments to Scotland to subdue the Jacobites.¹ In 1719, when the alarm of an invasion of England was very great, the Duke of Bolton, who was then Lord Lieutenant, wrote to the Government that if they did not fear a foreign invasion of Ireland they might safely withdraw the greater part of the army for other services; and he only urged that the nation, on account of its extreme poverty, might be relieved from the necessity of paying the troops during their

retained its allegiance. The Government was uniformly continued under the name of the Prince from whom the servants of the Crown had derived their commissions. James himself

had for more than seventeen months exercised the royal function in Ireland. He was certainly *de facto*, if not *de jure*, king.—*Hist. of Great Britain*.

¹ *Mémoires de Berwick*, ii. 159.

absence. A few weeks later a leading official, writing from Dublin Castle, states that seven Irish regiments were at this time out of the kingdom, that they were still paid from the Irish revenue, and that four more were about to embark.¹ The next great Jacobite alarm was in 1722, and in the very beginning of the danger six regiments were sent from Ireland to England.² The Lord Lieutenant vainly asked that they might be paid, while in England, from the English revenue, and his request being refused he begged that they might return as soon as possible, not on account of any danger in Ireland, but because it was 'reasonable that the advantages of entertaining those regiments should accrue to that kingdom from which they received their pay.'³ In 1725, Swift, who had no sympathy with the Catholics, declared that in Ireland the Pretender's party was at an end, and that 'the Papists in general, of any substance or estates, and their priests almost universally, are what we call Whigs in the sense which by that word is generally understood.'⁴ In the great rebellion of 1745, when Scotland was for a time chiefly in the hands of the Pretender, when the Highland army had marched into the heart of England, and when the Protestant succession was very seriously endangered, there was not a ripple of agitation in Ireland; and soon after the struggle was over, Archbishop Stone, the Protestant Primate, delivered in the House of Lords the most emphatic testimony to the loyalty of the Catholics. He declared 'that in the year 1747, after that rebellion was entirely suppressed, happening to be in England, he had an opportunity of perusing all the papers of the rebels and their correspondents, which were seized in the custody of Murray, the Pretender's secretary, and that after having spent much time and taken great pains in examining

¹ See the letters of the Duke of Bolton of July 8 and July 25, and that of Mr. Webster, of August 6, 1719, MSS. English Record-office.

² 'We are sending off six regiments to assist you. One would think, considering the number of Papists we have here, that our gentry are for the most part in England, and all our money goes there, that we should rather expect help from you in any distress, than send you forces to protect you. Yet this is the third time

we have done so since his Majesty's accession to the throne, and withal preserved the kingdom from any insurrection or rebellion, which is more than can be said for England or Scotland.' Archbishop King to the Archbishop of Canterbury (May, 1722), British Museum MSS. add. 6117.

³ The Duke of Grafton to the Lords Justices, November 24, 1722. MS. Irish State Paper Office.

⁴ Seventh *Drapier's Letter*.

them (not without some share of the then common suspicion that there might be some private understanding and intercourse between them and the Irish Catholics), he could not discover the least trace, hint, or intimation of such intercourse or correspondence in them, or of any of the latter's favouring or abetting, or having been so much as made acquainted with, the designs or proceedings of these rebels.¹ Everything, indeed, connected with this history corroborates the assertion of Burke, that 'all the penal laws of that unparalleled code of oppression were manifestly the effects of national hatred and scorn towards a conquered people whom the victors delighted to trample upon and were not at all afraid to provoke. They were not the effect of their fears, but of their security. . . . Whilst that temper prevailed, and it prevailed in all its force to a time within our memory, every measure was pleasing and popular just in proportion as it tended to harass and ruin a set of people who were looked upon as enemies to God and man, and, indeed, as a race of savages who were a disgrace to human nature itself.'²

Almost all the great persecutions of history, those of the early Christians, of Catholics and Protestants on the Continent, and, after the Revolution, of Catholics in England, were directed against small minorities. It was the distinguishing characteristic of the Irish penal code that its victims constituted at least three-fourths of the nation, and that it was deliberately intended to demoralise as well as degrade. Its enactments may be divided into different groups. One group was intended to deprive the Catholics of all civil life. By an Act of the English Parliament they were forbidden to sit in that of Ireland.³ They were afterwards deprived of the elective suffrage, excluded from the corporations, from the magistracy, from the bar, from the bench, from the grand juries, and from the vestries. They could not be sheriffs or solicitors, or even gamekeepers or constables. They were forbidden to possess any arms; and any two justices, or mayor, or sheriff, might at any time issue a search warrant to break into their houses and ransack

¹ Curry's *State of the Irish Catholics*, ii. p. 261. See also, on the profound tranquillity of Ireland, Horace Walpole, *Memoirs of George III.* p. 278.

² Burke's *Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe*.

³ 3 William and Mary, ch. 2. English. The other measures of the code were enacted by the Irish parliament and will be found in the Irish Statutes.

them for arms, and if a fowling-piece or a flask of powder was discovered they were liable either to fine or imprisonment or to whipping and the pillory. They were, of course, excluded on the same grounds from the army and navy. They could not even possess a horse of the value of more than 5*l.*, and any Protestant on tendering that sum could appropriate the hunter or the carriage horse of his Catholic neighbour.¹ In his own country the Catholic was only recognised by the law, 'for repression and punishment.' The Lord Chancellor Bowes and the Chief Justice Robinson both distinctly laid down from the bench 'that the law does not suppose any such person to exist as an Irish Roman Catholic.'²

The effect of these measures was to offer the strongest inducements to all men of ability and enterprise to conform outwardly to the dominant creed. If they did not, every path of ambition and almost all means of livelihood were closed to them, and they were at the same time exposed to the most constant, galling, and humiliating tyranny. The events of the Revolution had divided the people into opposing sections bitterly hostile to each other. The most numerous section had no rights, while the whole tendency of the law was to produce in the dominant minority, already flushed with the pride of conquest and with recent confiscations, all the vices of the most insolent aristocracy. Religious animosity, private quarrels, simple rapacity, or that mere love of the tyrannical exercise of despotic power which is so active a principle in human affairs, continually led to acts of the most odious oppression which it was dangerous to resent and impossible to resist. The law gave the Protestant the power of inflicting on the Catholic intolerable annoyance. To avoid it, he readily submitted to illegal tyranny, and even under the most extreme wrong it was hopeless for him to look for legal redress. All the influence of property and office was against him, and every tribunal to which he could appeal was occupied by his enemies. The Parliament and the Government, the corporation which disposed of his city property, the vestry which taxed him, the magistrate before whom he carried his complaint,

¹ 7 William III. c. 5; 10 William III. c. 8 and 13; 2 Anne, c. 6; 6 Anne, c. 6; 8 Anne, c. 3; 2 George I. c. 10; 6 George I. c. 10; 1 George

II. c. 9; 9 George II. c. 3; 15 and 16 George III. c. 21.

² Scully on the *Penal Laws*, p. 344.

the solicitor who drew up his case, the barrister who pleaded it, the judge who tried it, the jury who decided it, were all Protestants. Of all tyrannies, a class tyranny has been justly described as the most intolerable, for it is ubiquitous in its operation, and weighs, perhaps, most heavily on those whose obscurity or distance would withdraw them from the notice of a single despot ; and of all class tyrannies, perhaps the most odious is that which rests upon religious distinctions and is envenomed by religious animosities.¹ To create such a tyranny in Ireland was the first object of the penal laws, and the effect upon the Catholics was what might have been expected. Great numbers, by dishonest and hypocritical compliances, endeavoured to free themselves from a position that was intolerable. The mass of the people gradually acquired the vices of slaves. They were educated through long generations of oppression into an inveterate hostility to the law, and were taught to look for redress in illegal violence or secret combinations.

A second object of the penal laws was to reduce the Catholics to a condition of the most extreme and brutal ignorance. As Burke has justly said : ‘ To render men patient under such a deprivation of all the rights of human nature, everything which would give them a knowledge or feeling of those rights was rationally forbidden.’² The legislation on the subject of Catholic education may be briefly described, for it amounted

¹ We have a curious illustration of the operation of the religious distinctions in the humblest spheres, in the following notice in the Commons Journals. ‘ A petition of one Edward Spragg and others in behalf of themselves and other Protestant porters in and about the city of Dublin, complaining that one Darby Ryan, a captain under the late King James, and a Papist, buys up whole cargoes of coals and employs porters of his own persuasion to carry the same to customers, by which the petitioners are hindered from their small trade and gains.’ The petition was referred to the Committee of Grievances to report upon it to the House. — *Commons Journals*, v. 2, p. 699.

Of the effect of the laws on the higher classes we may judge from the testimony of Burke. ‘ Sure I am that

there have been thousands in Ireland who have never conversed with a Roman Catholic in their whole lives, unless they happened to talk to their gardeners’ workmen, or to ask their way when they had lost it in their sports ; or, at best, who had known them only as footmen or other domestics of the second and third order ; and so averse were they some time ago to have them near their persons, that they would not employ even those who could never find their way beyond the stable. I well remember a great, and in many respects a good man, who advertised for a blacksmith, but at the same time added, “ he must be a Protestant.”’ — *Letter to Sir H. Langrishe*.

² *Letter to a Peer of Ireland on the Penal Laws*.

simply to universal, unqualified, and unlimited proscription. The Catholic was excluded from the University. He was not permitted to be the guardian of a child. It was made penal for him to keep a school, to act as usher or private tutor, or to send his children to be educated abroad; and a reward of 10*l.* was offered for the discovery of a Popish schoolmaster.¹ In 1733, it is true, charter schools were established by Primate Boulter, for the benefit of the Catholics; but these schools—which were supported by public funds—were avowedly intended, by bringing up the young as Protestants, to extirpate the religion of their parents. The alternative offered by law to the Catholics was that of absolute and compulsory ignorance or of an education directly subversive of their faith.

The operation of these laws alone might have been safely trusted to reduce the Catholic population to complete degradation; but there were many other provisions, intended to check any rising spirit of enterprise that might appear among them, and to prevent any ray of hope from animating their lot. In the acquisition of personal property, it is true, there is but little in the way of restriction to be added. By the laws I have described, the immense majority of the Irish people were excluded, in their own country, from almost every profession, and from every Government office, from the highest to the lowest, and they were placed under conditions that made the growth of industrial virtues and the formation of an enterprising and aspiring character wholly impossible. They were excluded from a great part of the benefit of the taxes they paid. They were at the same time compelled to pay double to the militia, and in case of war with a Catholic power, to reimburse the damage done by the enemies' privateers. They could not obtain the freedom of any town corporate, and were only suffered to carry on their trades in their native cities, on condition of paying special and vexatious impositions known by the name of quarterage. They were forbidden, after a certain date, to take up their abodes in the important cities of Limerick and Galway, or to purchase property within their walls; and their progress in many industrial careers was effectually trammelled by the law already referred to, prevent-

¹ 7 William III. c. 4; 2 Anne, c. 6; 8 Anne, c. 3.

ing them from possessing any horse of the value of more than 5*l*.¹ The chief branches of Irish commerce and industry had, as we shall see, been deliberately crushed by law in the interests of English manufacturers; but the Catholics were not specially disabled from participating in them, and the legislator contented himself with assigning strict limits to their success by providing that, except in the linen trade, no Catholic could have more than two apprentices.²

In the case of landed property, however, the laws were more severe, for it was the third great object of the penal code to dissociate the Catholics as much as possible from the soil. Of this policy it may be truly said, that unless it was inspired by unmixed malevolence, and intended to make the nation permanently incapable of self-government, it was one of the most infatuated that could be conceived. Land being an irremovable property, subject to Government control, has always proved the best pledge of the loyalty of its possessor, and its acquisition never fails to diffuse through a disaffected class conservative and orderly habits. One of the first objects of every wise legislator, and, indeed, of every good man, should be to soften the division of classes; and no social condition can be more clearly dangerous or diseased than that in which these divisions coincide with, and are intensified by differences of creed. To make the landlord class almost exclusively Protestant, while the tenant class were almost exclusively Catholic, was to plant in Ireland the seeds of the most permanent and menacing divisions. On the other hand, a class of Catholic landlords connected with one portion of the people by property and with another portion by religion could not fail to soften at once the animosities of class and of creed. They would have become the natural political leaders

¹ 7 William III. c. 5; 2 Anne, c. 6; 2 George I. c. 9; 9 George II. c. 6. See too Burke's *Tracts on the Popery Laws*. The law about horses was found so detrimental to the breed that it was afterwards enacted in Ireland, (8 Anne, c. 3) that Papists might possess 'stud mares and stallions, and the breed or produce thereof under the age of five years' of a greater value than 5*l*. A law similar to the Irish

one was enacted against the English Catholics. It is frequently alluded to in the correspondence of Pope. See, too, the Prologue to Dryden's *Don Sebastian*.

Horses by Papists are not to be ridden, But sure the muse's horse was ne'er forbidden, For in no rate-book it was ever found That Pegasus was valued at five pound.

² 8 Anne, c. 3.

of their co-religionists, and it is to the absence of such a class that both the revolutionary and sacerdotal extravagances of Irish Catholic politics are mainly to be attributed.

The great confiscations under James I., Cromwell, and William had done much to make the proprietary of Ireland exclusively Protestants. The penal laws continued the work. No Catholic was suffered to buy land, or inherit or receive it as a gift from Protestants, or to hold life annuities, or leases for more than thirty-one years, or any lease on such terms that the profits of the lands exceeded one-third of the rent. If a Catholic leaseholder, by his skill or industry, so increased his profits that they exceeded this proportion, and did not immediately make a corresponding increase in his rent, his farm passed to the first Protestant who made the discovery. If a Catholic secretly purchased either his own forfeited estate, or any other land in the possession of a Protestant, the first Protestant who informed against him became the proprietor. The whole country was soon filled with spies, endeavouring to appropriate the property of Catholics; and Popish discoveries became a main business of the law courts. The few Catholic landlords who remained after the confiscations, were deprived of the liberty of testament, which was possessed by all other subjects of the Crown. Their estates, upon their death, were divided equally among their sons, unless the eldest became a Protestant; in which case the whole was settled upon him.¹ In this manner Catholic landlords were gradually but surely impoverished. Their land passed almost universally into the hands of Protestants, and the few who succeeded in retaining large estates did so only by compliances which destroyed the wholesome moral influence that would naturally have attached to their position. The penal code, as it was actually carried out, was inspired much less by fanaticism than by rapacity, and was directed less against the Catholic religion than against the property and industry of its professors. It was intended to make them poor and to keep them poor, to crush in them every germ of enterprise, to degrade them into a servile caste who could never hope to rise to the level of their oppressors. The division of classes was made as deep as possible, and every precaution was

¹ 2 Anne, c. 6; 8 Anne, c. 3.

taken to perpetuate and to embitter it. Any Protestant who married a Catholic, or who suffered his children to be educated as Catholics, was exposed to all the disabilities of the code. Any Protestant woman who was a landowner, if she married a Catholic, was at once deprived of her inheritance, which passed to the nearest Protestant heir. A later law provided that every marriage celebrated by a Catholic priest between a Catholic and a Protestant should be null, and that the priest who officiated should be hung.¹

The creation by law of a gigantic system of bribery intended to induce the Catholics to abandon or disguise their creed, and of an army of spies and informers intended to prey upon their property, had naturally a profoundly demoralising influence, but hardly so much so as the enactments which were designed to sow discord and insubordination in their homes. These measures, which may be looked upon as the fourth branch of the penal code, appear to have rankled more than any others in the minds of the Catholics, and they produced the bitterest and most pathetic complaints. The law I have cited, by which the eldest son of a Catholic, upon apostatising, became the heir-at-law to the whole estate of his father, reduced his father to the position of a mere life tenant, and prevented him from selling, mortgaging, or otherwise disposing of it, is a typical measure of this class. In like manner a wife who apostatised was immediately freed from her husband's control, and the Chancellor was empowered to assign to her a certain proportion of her husband's property. If any child, however young, professed to be a Protestant, it was at once taken from its father's care. The Chancellor, or the child itself, if an adult, might compel the father to produce the title-deeds of his estate, and declare on oath the value of his property; and such a proportion as the Chancellor determined was given to the child.² Children were thus set against their parents, and wives against their husbands, and jealousies, suspicions, and heart-burnings were introduced into the Catholic home. The undutiful wife, the rebellious and unnatural son, had only to add to their other

¹ 9 William III. c. 3; 7 George II. c. 5 and 6; 13 George II. c. 6. ² 9 George II. c. 13; 23 George II. c. 10. 2 Anne, c. 6; 8 Anne, c. 3.

crimes the guilt of a feigned conversion, in order to secure both impunity and reward, and to deprive those whom they had injured of the management and disposal of their property. The influence of the code appeared, indeed, omnipresent. It blasted the prospects of the Catholic in all the struggles of active life. It cast its shadow over the inmost recesses of his home. It darkened the very last hour of his existence. No Catholic, as I have said, could be guardian to a child; so the dying parent knew that his children must pass under the tutelage of Protestants.

This last provision, indeed, from its influence on property and especially on domestic happiness, was of pre-eminent importance. A Catholic landlord who in those evil days clung to his religion was probably actuated by a deep and fervent conviction. But if he happened to be seized with a mortal illness while his children were minors, he had the inexpressible misery of knowing that he could not leave them to the care of his wife, or of any Catholic friend, but that the Chancellor was bound to provide them with a Protestant guardian, whose first duty was to bring them up in the Protestant creed.¹ It would be difficult to conceive an enactment calculated to inflict a keener pang, and it is not surprising that great efforts were made to evade it. It sometimes happened that a Protestant friend of the dying man consented to accept the legal obligation of guardian on the secret understanding that he would leave the actual education of the children in the hands of any Catholic the family might select. The family would then petition that this Protestant

¹ This provision seems so atrociously cruel that it may be well to give the exact words of the law. 'That care may be taken for the education of children in the communion of the Church of Ireland as by law established; be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that no person of the Popish religion shall or may be guardian unto, or have the tuition or custody of any orphan, child, or children, under the age of twenty-one years; but that the same, where the person having or entitled to the guardianship of such orphan, child, or children, is or shall be a Papist, shall be disposed of by the High Court of Chancery to some near relation of such orphan, child, or

children, being a Protestant, and conforming himself to the Church of Ireland as by law established, to whom the estate cannot descend, in case there shall be any such Protestant relation fit to have the education of such child; otherwise to some other Protestant conforming himself as aforesaid, who is hereby required to use his utmost care to educate and bring up such child or minor in the Protestant religion until the age of twenty-one years.'—2 Anne, c. 6, sec. 4. Any Papist who took upon himself the guardianship of a child was by the same Act made liable to a fine of 500*l.*, to be given to the Bluecoat Hospital in Dublin.

might be appointed guardian, and it was probable that their request would be acceded to. A case of this kind came under the cognisance of the Irish House of Commons in 1707. A Catholic gentleman, named Sir John Cotter, died, leaving an estate, in the county of Cork, and three minor children, the eldest being about fifteen years old. The very day of his funeral the eldest son was sent privately to London, with a Catholic gentleman named Galway, to be educated in his own faith. The Protestants at once called the attention of the Chancellor to the evasion, and he appointed a certain Alderman Chartres guardian to the minors, and compelled Galway to surrender the infant. Great efforts were then made to change the guardian, and at last a petition, alleging, it is said, falsely, that the minors were destitute of a guardian, and begging that a Protestant gentleman named Netterville might be appointed, was successful. Netterville became guardian, and he left the actual care of the children in the hands of Galway. The House, however, determined to prevent, if possible, the repetition of such an evasion. It resolved 'that any Protestant guardian that permits a Papist to educate or dispose of his ward does thereby betray the trust reposed in him, evade the law, and propagate Popery;' 'that any Papist who shall take upon him to manage and dispose of the substance and person of any infant committed to a Protestant guardian is guilty of a notorious breach of the law;' and 'that it is the indispensable duty of Protestant guardians to take the persons of their wards out of the custody of their Papist relations.' Netterville was summoned before the House, censured, and bound over to educate the minors as Protestants, and Galway was ordered into custody.¹ It is probable that no small amount of property passed in this manner into Protestant hands.²

As regards the celebration of the Catholic worship, the laws, if

¹ *Irish Commons Journals*, iii. 444-447, 454-455.

² We have an example of this in the old family of Cavanagh of Borris on the Barrow. The Catholic owner of the property died when his son was a minor, and two English tourists, who visited that part of the country in the middle of the eighteenth century, describe the result. 'The

minor of a Roman Catholic, left so by the death of his father, is accounted the heir of the Crown, and the Lord Chancellor for the time being, is appointed his guardian, in order to bring him up as a Protestant; and this young gentleman is now in Westminster school for that purpose.'—*A Tour through Ireland by Two English Gentlemen* (1748), p. 225.

equally prohibitory, were at least less severely enforced. A law of Elizabeth, prohibiting the Catholic worship, and another law compelling all persons to attend the Anglican service, were unrepealed, and as a matter of fact the Catholic chapels in Ireland were closed during the Scotch rebellion of 1715. In general, however, the hopeless task of preventing some three-fourths of the nation from celebrating the rites which they believed essential to their eternal salvation was not attempted. The conditions of the Catholic worship were determined by the law of 1703, which compelled every Catholic priest, under the penalties of imprisonment and banishment, and of death if he returned, to register his name and parish, and other particulars essential to his identification,¹ and these registered priests might celebrate mass without molestation. 1,080 availed themselves of the privilege. It need hardly be said that they derived from the Government no pay, no favour of any description, except the barest toleration, but yet the Government undertook to regulate in the severest manner the conditions of their ministry. The parish priest alone could celebrate mass, and that only in his own parish. He was not permitted to keep a curate. No chapel might have bells or steeple, and no cross might be publicly erected. Pilgrimages to the holy wells were forbidden, and it is a characteristic trait that the penalty in default of the payment of a fine was the degrading one of whipping. If any Catholic induced a Protestant to join his faith, he was liable to the penalties of *præmunire*. If any priest became a Protestant he became entitled to an annuity, which was at first 20*l.* but was afterwards raised to 30*l.*, to be levied on the district where he resided.²

But soon another, and a far more serious measure was taken. In the reign of Anne large classes, both in England and in Ireland, who were perfectly innocent of any treasonable designs against the Government, and perfectly prepared to take the oath of allegiance which bound them to obey the existing ruler, and to abstain from all conspiracies against him, considered it distinctly sinful to take the oath of abjuration, which asserted that the son of James II. had 'no right or title whatsoever' to the Crown, and pledged the swearer to perpetual

¹ 2 Anne, c. 7; 4 Anne, c. 2.

² 2 Anne, c. 6 and 7; 8 Anne, c. 3.

loyalty to the Protestant line. The distinction between the King *de jure* and the King *de facto* was here of vital importance. It was scarcely conceivable that any sincere and zealous Catholic could look upon the Revolution as a righteous movement, or could believe that James had justly forfeited his crown. The doctrine of passive obedience was not, it is true, taught in the Catholic Church, except among the Gallican divines, as emphatically as among Anglicans, but the belief in a Divine hereditary right of kings was universal, and no Catholic could seriously suppose that as a matter of right, James had forfeited his authority. The Catholics well knew that he had lost his crown mainly on account of his Catholicism, that the last great unconstitutional act with which he was reproached was an attempt to suspend the penal laws against themselves, that the object of the Act of Settlement was to secure that no Catholic should again sit upon the throne. At the same time they were perfectly ready to recognise the result of the war, to take the oath of allegiance to the existing Government, and to abstain from any conspiracy against it. When the priests registered themselves in 1704 no oath was required except the oath of allegiance; and it may be added, —though, indeed, after the recent legislation this consideration could have but little weight,—that it was expressly stipulated in the Treaty of Limerick that the oath of allegiance and ‘no other’ should be imposed upon the Irish Catholics. Yet in the face of these circumstances, and at a time when not a single act of treason or turbulence was proved against the Catholic priests, the Irish Parliament enacted in 1709 that by the March of the following year all the registered priests must take the oath of abjuration, under the penalty of banishment for life, and if they returned, of death.¹ At the same time any two magistrates were authorised to summon before them any Irish layman, to tender to him the same oath and to imprison him if he refused to take it. If the oath was tendered three times and he still refused to take it, he was guilty of *præmunire* and liable to perpetual imprisonment and the confiscation of all his property.² The clergy of the Church of England, as we have seen, accepted this oath; but, at the same time, it is not easy to see how any man could honestly take it who believed that doctrine of Divine hereditary right

¹ 8 Anne, c. 3.

² Ibid.

which was equally taught by the Church of Rome and by the Church of England. The Episcopalians in Scotland resolutely refused it, and from the very first the Roman Catholic authorities declared it to be sinful, and imposed penances on those who yielded. A very powerful memorial on the subject, drawn up in 1724 by Dr. Nary, who was probably the ablest Catholic priest then living in Ireland, clearly states their reasons.¹ The writer declares his full approval of the oath of allegiance. That oath binds all who take it to have no hand in any plot or conspiracy against the existing Government, and to do all in their power to suppress sedition, and every Catholic may with a perfect good conscience unreservedly take it. The oath of abjuration, on the contrary, contains three clauses which, in the opinion of the writer, must necessarily offend a Catholic conscience. It asserts that the late Prince of Wales, who was now the Pretender, had no right or title whatever to the Crown of England, and thus passes a judgment on the Revolution which cannot be accepted by anyone who believes in the Divine right of hereditary monarchy, and who denies that the measures of James in favour of Catholicism invalidated his title to the throne. It restricts the allegiance of the swearer to the Protestant line, and therefore implies that if the existing sovereign were converted to Catholicism, the Catholic, on that ground alone, would be bound to withdraw his allegiance from him. It contains the assertion that the oath was taken 'heartily, freely, and willingly,' which in the case of a sincere Roman Catholic would certainly be untrue.

It is said that not more than thirty-three of the registered priests actually took this oath,² and its chief result was that the whole system of registration fell rapidly into disuse.

¹ This very able paper, called 'The case of the Catholics of Ireland,' is printed in Hugh Reilly's *Genuine Hist. of Ireland*. In one of Chesterfield's letters to the Bishop of Waterford, he says: 'I would only require the priests to take the oath of allegiance simply, and not the subsequent oaths, which in my opinion no real Papist can take; the consequence of which would be that the least conscientious priests would be registered, and the most conscientious

ones excluded' (Jan. 29, 1755). *Miscellaneous Works*, iv. 253. Archbishop Syngé stated in 1722 that a large proportion of the Catholics were quite willing to take the oath if only the clause relating to the Divine right of the Pretender were omitted. See his *Letters to Archbishop Wake*, *British Museum Add. MSS.*, 6117, pp. 147-153.

² Nary. According to another account, thirty-seven. O'Connor's *Hist. of the Irish Catholics*, p. 179.

Such was the legislation in the case of registered priests who were supposed to enjoy the benefit of toleration. It is, however, obviously absurd to speak of the Catholic religion as tolerated in a country where its bishops were proscribed. In Ireland, all Catholic archbishops, bishops, deans, and vicars-general were ordered by a certain day to leave the country. If after that date they were found in it they were to be first imprisoned and then banished, and if they returned they were pronounced guilty of high treason and were liable to be hung, disembowelled, and quartered. Nor were these idle words. The law of 1709 offered a reward of 50*l.* to anyone who secured the conviction of any Catholic archbishop, bishop, dean, or vicar-general. In their own dioceses, in the midst of a purely Catholic country, in the performance of religious duties which were absolutely essential to the maintenance of their religion, the Catholic bishops were compelled to live in obscure hovels and under feigned names, moving continually from place to place, meeting their flocks under the shadow of the night, not unfrequently taking refuge from their pursuers in caverns or among the mountains. The position of all friars and unregistered priests was very similar. It was evident that if any strong religious feeling was to be maintained there must be many of them in Ireland. A Government which avowedly made the repression of the Catholic religion one of its main ends would never authorise a sufficient number of priests to maintain any high standard of devotion. The priests were looked upon as necessary evils, to be reduced to the lowest possible numbers. It was not certain that when the existing generation of registered priests died out the Government would suffer them to be replaced, and no licences were to be granted to those who refused the abjuration oath which the Catholic Church pronounced to be unlawful. Very naturally, therefore, numerous unregistered priests and friars laboured among the people. Like the bishops they were liable to banishment if they were discovered, and to death if they returned. It was idle for the prisoner to allege that no political action of any kind was proved against him, that he was employed solely in carrying spiritual consolations to a population who were reduced to a condition of the extremest spiritual as well as temporal destitution. Strenuous measures were taken to enforce the law. It was enacted that every mayor

or justice of the peace who neglected to execute its provisions should be liable to a fine of 100*l.*, half of which was to go to the informer, and should also on conviction be disabled from serving as justice of the peace during the remainder of his life. A reward of 20*l.*, offered for the detection of each friar or unregistered priest, called a regular race of priest-hunters into existence. To facilitate their task the law enabled any two justices of the peace at any time to compel any Catholic of eighteen or upwards to declare when and where he last heard mass, who officiated, and who was present, and if he refused to give evidence he might be imprisoned for twelve months, or until he paid a fine of 20*l.* Anyone who harboured ecclesiastics from beyond the sea was liable to fines which amounted, for the third offence, to the confiscation of all his goods.¹ The Irish House of Commons urged the magistrates on, to greater activity in enforcing the law, and it resolved 'that the saying or hearing of mass by persons who had not taken the oath of abjuration tended to advance the interests of the Pretender,' and again, 'that the prosecuting and informing against Papists was an honourable service to the Government.'² But perhaps the most curious illustration of the ferocious spirit of the time was furnished by the Irish Privy Council in 1719. In that year an elaborate Bill against Papists was carried, apparently without opposition, through the Irish House of Commons, and among its clauses was one sentencing all unregistered priests who were found in Ireland to be branded with a red-hot iron upon the cheek. The Irish Privy Council, however, actually changed the penalty of branding into that of castration,³ and

¹ 9 William III. c. 1; 2 Anne, c. 3; 4 Anne, c. 2; 8 Anne, c. 3. For the whole subject of the penal laws, I would refer to the most admirable 'Introduction historique' to the work of Gustave de Beaumont, *L'Irlande politique, sociale, et religieuse*. Very few writers have ever studied Irish history so accurately or so minutely as M. de Beaumont, and he brought to it the impartiality of a foreigner, and the political insight and skill which might be expected from the intimate friend and the faithful disciple of De Tocqueville.

² Parnell *On the Penal Laws*, p. 60. See, too, *Commons' Journal*, iv. 25.

³ They write, 'The common Irish will never become Protestants or well affected to the Crown while they are supplied with priests, friars, &c., who are the fomenters of all rebellions and disturbances here. So that some more effectual remedy to prevent priests and friars coming into this kingdom is perfectly necessary. The Commons proposed the marking of every person who should be convicted of being an unregistered priest, friar, &c., and of remaining in this kingdom after May

sent the Bill with this atrocious recommendation to England for ratification. The English ministers unanimously restored the penalty of branding. By the constitution of Ireland a Bill which had been returned from England might be finally rejected but could not be amended by the Irish Parliament; and the Irish House of Lords, objecting to a retrospective clause which invalidated certain leases which Papists had been suffered to make, threw out the Bill.¹ It is, however, a memorable fact in the moral history of Europe that as late as 1719 this penalty was seriously proposed by the responsible Government of Ireland. It may be added that a law imposing it upon Jesuits was actually in force in Sweden in the beginning of the century, and that a paper was circulated in 1700 advocating the adoption of a similar atrocity in England.²

One more illustration may be given of the ferocity of the persecuting spirit which at this time prevailed in Ireland, both in the native Legislature and in the English Government. In 1723, when the alarm caused by Atterbury's plot was at its height, the Irish House of Commons, at the express invitation of the Lord Lieutenant, proceeded to pass a new Bill against

1, 1720, with a large P to be made with a red-hot iron on his cheek. The Council generally disliked that punishment, and have altered it to that of castration, which they are persuaded will be the most effectual method that can be found out, to clear this nation of those disturbers of the peace and quiet of the kingdom, and would have been very well pleased to have found out any other punishment which might in their opinion have remedied the evil. If your Excellencies shall not be of the same sentiments, they submit to your consideration whether the punishment of castration may not be altered to that proposed by the Commons, or to some other effectual one which may occur to your Lordships. Signed—Bolton, Middleton, Jo. Meath, John Clogher, Santry, St. George, Newton, Oliver St. George, E. Webster, R. Tighe. *Lords-Lieutenant and Lords-Justices' Letters*, Dublin State Paper Office (Aug. 17, 1719).

¹ A very erroneous and exaggerated version of this story, based, I believe,

on an anonymous *Essai sur l'Histoire de l'Irlande* (see O'Connor's *Hist. of the Irish Catholics*, p. 190), published about the middle of the last century, has been repeated by Curry, Plowden, and other writers. Mr. Froude (*English in Ireland*, i. pp. 546-557) has correctly stated the facts, and has devoted some characteristic pages to their apology. I have examined the original letters on the subject in the Record Office. One of these, written by Webster (a leading Government clerk) from Dublin Castle, is dated August 26, 1719. The reply by Craggs is dated September 22, 1719.

² *Harleian Miscellany*, iv. 415-423. The writer says: 'Since the same was enacted into a law and practised upon a few of them, that kingdom [Sweden] hath never been infested with Popish clergy or plots.' In a 'Collection of Irish Speeches, Trials, &c., from 1711 to 1733,' in the British Museum, there is an anonymous paper, printed at Dublin in 1725, recommending the castration of ordinary criminals.

unregistered priests. It was entitled 'A Bill for Explaining and Amending the Acts to Prevent the Growth of Popery and for Strengthening the Protestant Interest in Ireland;' and the heads of the Bill, after passing through both houses, were sent over to England with the warm recommendation of the Irish Privy Council. The bill as it issued from the Commons is still preserved, and it is no exaggeration to say that it deserves to rank with the most infamous edicts in the whole history of persecution. One of its clauses provided that all unregistered priests should depart out of Ireland before March 25, 1724, and that all found after that date should be deemed guilty of high treason, except they have in the meantime taken the oath of abjuration. In this manner it was proposed to make the whole priesthood in a purely Catholic country liable to the most horrible form of death known to British law, unless they took an oath which their Church authoritatively pronounced to be sinful. By another clause it was provided that all bishops, deans, monks, and vicars-general found in the country after the same date should be liable to the same horrible fate, and in their cases the abjuration oath was not admitted as an alternative. By a third clause it was ordered that any person who was found guilty of affording shelter or protection to a Popish dignitary should suffer death as a felon without benefit of clergy. By a fourth clause a similar penalty was decreed against any Popish school-master or Popish tutor in a private house, and, in order that the law should be fully enforced, large rewards were promised to discoverers of priests, bishops, or harbourers who gave evidence leading to conviction, and these rewards were doubled if they themselves prosecuted the offender to conviction. Happily, this atrocious measure never came into effect. The alarm caused in England by the designs of the Pretender passed away. The excitement caused by Wood's halfpence was at its height, and it is probable that the humane feelings of Walpole were revolted by a law that was worthy of Alva or Torquemada. The Bill was not returned from England, and it was never revived.¹

¹ 'Heads of a Bill for Explaining and Amending the Acts to Prevent the Growth of Popery,' &c. There are several other provisions in these heads--among others, one for making

marriages between Catholics and Protestants celebrated by priests invalid. The heads of the Bill are in the Irish Record Office in Dublin. They have, as far as I know, never

A modern historian, who has displayed rare literary skill in defending many forms of oppression and of cruelty, has lately made the penal code familiar to the public. His great objection to this legislation is that it was not strenuously enforced, and with the exception of the law offering the estate of the Catholic to his eldest son, in the event of his apostacy, he has apparently discovered but little in its provisions repugnant to his sentiments either of justice or of humanity. As regards the system of direct religious repression, it is true that it became, as we shall hereafter see, gradually inoperative. It was impossible, without producing a state of chronic civil war, to enforce such enactments in the midst of a large Catholic population. Rewards were offered for the apprehension of priests, but it needed no small courage to face the hatred of the people. Savage mobs were ever ready to mark out the known priest-hunter, and unjust laws were met by illegal violence. Under the long discipline of the penal laws, the Irish Catholics learnt the lesson which, beyond all others, rulers should dread to teach. They became consummate adepts in the arts of conspiracy and of disguise. Secrets known to

been printed, though they well deserve to be. In the Irish State Paper Office at the Castle (*Lords-Lieutenant and Council's Letters*, vol. xvi), there is a letter strongly recommending the measure to the English authorities (Dec. 1723), and in Coxe's *Life of Walpole*, ii. 358, there is a letter from the Duke of Grafton recommending it. Mr. Froude, warmly supports this attempted legislation, but he has suppressed all mention of the penalties contained in the bill, and even uses language which would convey to any ordinary reader the impression that no specific penalties were determined. His assertion that the bill after passing the Commons was unaltered by the Council is doubtful. The Duke of Grafton writes, 'The House of Commons have much at heart this bill. It has been mended since it came from them, as commonly their bills want to be' (Coxe's *Walpole*, ii. 358). It is possible, however, that this may refer to alterations in the Lords. Archbishop Synge mentions in one of his letters that the bill was somewhat moderated there, though it was still left so savage that

Synge (though a very strong Protestant) was unable to support it. 'If,' he says, 'any Papist or Popish priest will not solemnly upon oath renounce the Pretender and also the Pope's power of deposing princes and absolving subjects from their allegiance, let him leave the kingdom or be dealt with as a traitor. But if such a man is ready to do all this, and farther to give security to the Government for his good and loyal behaviour, I must own that I cannot come into a law to put him to death, under the name indeed of high treason, yet in reality only for adhering to an erroneous religion and worshipping God according to it.' Archbishop Synge's *Letters British Museum Add. MSS.*, 6117, p. 169. Mr. Froude strongly (though I hope inaccurately) denies that the failure of the bill was due to the greater tolerance of the English Government. He says: 'The Wood hurricane was at this moment unfortunately at its height, and absorbed by its violence any other consideration.'—*English in Ireland*, i. 559-561.

hundreds were preserved inviolable from authority. False intelligence baffled and distracted the pursuer, and the dread of some fierce nocturnal vengeance was often sufficient to quell the cupidity of the prosecutor. Bishops came to Ireland in spite of the atrocious penalties to which they were subject, and ordained new priests. What was to be done with them? The savage sentence of the law, if duly executed, might have produced a conflagration in Ireland that would have endangered every Protestant life, and the scandal would have rung through Europe. The ambassadors of Catholic Powers in alliance with England continually remonstrated against the severity of English anti-Catholic legislation, and on the other hand the English ministers felt that the execution of priests in Ireland would indefinitely weaken their power of mitigating by their influence the persecution of Protestants on the Continent. The administration of the law was feeble in all its departments, and it was naturally peculiarly so when it was in opposition to the strongest feelings of the great majority of the people. It was difficult to obtain evidence or even juries.¹ It was soon found too that the higher Catholic clergy, if left in peace, were able and willing to render inestimable services to the Government in suppressing sedition and crime, and as it was quite evident that the bulk of the Irish Catholics would not become Protestants, they could not, in the mere interests of order, be left wholly without religious ministration. Besides, there was in reality not much religious fanaticism. Statesmen of the stamp of Walpole and Carteret were quite free from such a motive, and were certainly not disposed to push matters to extremities. The spirit of the eighteenth century was eminently adverse to dogma. The sentiment of nationality, and especially the deep resentment produced by the English restrictions on trade, gradually drew different classes of Irishmen together. The multitude of lukewarm Catholics who abandoned their creed through purely interested motives lowered the religious temperature among the Protestants, while, by removing some of the indifferent, it increased it among the Catholics, and the former

¹ Catholics were not excluded from petty juries in ordinary cases, but they were excluded (6 Anne, c.

6) in all cases relating to the Anti-Catholic laws.

grew in time very careless about theological doctrines. The system of registration broke down through the imposition of the abjuration oath, and through the extreme practical difficulty of enforcing the penalties. The policy of extinguishing Catholicism by suppressing its services and banishing its bishops was silently abandoned; before the middle of the eighteenth century the laws against Catholic worship were virtually obsolete,¹ and before the close of the eighteenth century the Parliament which in the beginning of the century had been one of the most intolerant had become one of the most tolerant in Europe.

In this respect the penal code was a failure. In others it was more successful. It was intended to degrade and to impoverish, to destroy in its victims the spring and buoyancy of enterprise, to dig a deep chasm between Catholics and Protestants. These ends it fully attained.² It formed the social condition, it regulated the disposition of property, it exercised a most enduring and pernicious influence upon the character of the people, and some of the worst features of the latter may be distinctly traced to its influence. It may be possible to find in the statute-books both of Protestant and Catholic countries laws corresponding to most parts of the Irish penal code, and in some respects surpassing its most atrocious provisions, but it is not the less true that that code, taken as a whole, has a character entirely distinctive. It was directed, not against the few, but against the many. It was not the persecution of a sect, but the

¹ As early as 1715 Archbishop King wrote to Sunderland: 'By law they [the Roman Catholics] are allowed a priest in every parish, which are registered in pursuance of an Act of Parliament made about ten years ago. All bishops, regulars, &c., and all other priests then not registered, are banished, and none allowed to come into the kingdom under severe penalties. *The design was that there should be no succession, and many of those then registered are since dead; yet for want of a due execution of the laws many are come in from foreign parts, and there are in the country Popish bishops concealed, that ordain many. Little inquiry of late has been made into these matters.*'—Mant's

Hist. of the Church of Ireland, ii. 212. See, too, a very interesting report of the House of Lords in 1731, appointed to consider the state of Popery in this kingdom. O'Connor's *Hist. of the Irish Catholics*, Append. p. xxiii.

² Arthur Young, who was in Ireland between 1776 and 1778, says: 'I have conversed on the subject with some of the most distinguished characters in the kingdom, and I cannot after all but declare that the scope, purport, and aim of the laws of discovery as executed, are not against the Catholic religion, which increases under them, but against the industry and property of whoever professes that religion.'—Arthur Young's *Tour in Ireland*, ii. 141.

degradation of a nation. It was the instrument employed by a conquering race, supported by a neighbouring Power, to crush to the dust the people among whom they were planted. And, indeed, when we remember that the greater part of it was in force for nearly a century, that the victims of its cruelties formed at least three-fourths of the nation, that its degrading and dividing influence extended to every field of social, political, professional, intellectual, and even domestic life, and that it was enacted without the provocation of any rebellion, in defiance of a treaty which distinctly guaranteed the Irish Catholics from any further oppression on account of their religion, it may be justly regarded as one of the blackest pages in the history of persecution. In the words of Burke, 'It was a complete system, full of coherence and consistency, well digested and well composed in all its parts. It was a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man.' The judgment formed of it by one of the noblest representatives of English Toryism was very similar. 'The Irish,' said Dr. Johnson, 'are in a most unnatural state, for we there see the minority prevailing over the majority. There is no instance, even in the Ten Persecutions, of such severity as that which the Protestants of Ireland have exercised against the Catholics.'¹

The penal laws against the Roman Catholics, both in England and Ireland, were the immediate consequence of the Revolution, and were mainly the work of the Whig party. In Ireland some of them were carried under William, but by far the greater number of the disabilities were comprised in what Burke has truly described as 'the ferocious Acts of Anne.' These laws were carried in 1703-4 and in 1709, and the last of them was brought forward by the Government of Wharton, one of the most conspicuous members of the party. It is somewhat re-

¹ Burke's letter to Sir H. Langrishe. Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, c. xxix. The judgment of Hallam is but little less emphatic. 'To have exterminated the Catholics by the sword or expelled them like the Moriscoes of Spain would have been little more repugnant

to justice and humanity, but incomparably more politic.'—*Hist. of England*, iii. p. 401. Mr. Gladstone describes the code as 'that system of penal laws against Roman Catholics at once pettifogging, base, and cruel.'—*The Vatican Decrees*, p. 24.

markable, however, that the Catholics were not at this time directly deprived of the elective franchise, except so far as the imposition of the oath of abjuration operated as a disqualification. Their extreme poverty, the laws relating to landed property, and their exclusion from the corporations, no doubt, reduced the number of Catholic voters to infinitesimal proportions, but the absolute and formal abolition of the class did not take place till 1727, and appears to have been due to the influence of Primate Boulter, who was also the author of severe laws against nominal converts. In England, as in Ireland, William would gladly have given toleration to the Catholics,¹ but he was not prepared to risk any serious unpopularity for their sake. The English Act of 1699 is said to have been brought forward by opponents of the Government in order to embarrass him, but it was accepted by a ministry of which Somers was the leading member, and, in spite of the promises which William, before the Revolution, had made to the Emperor, Bishop Burnet assures us that 'the Court promoted the Bill.'²

The extent and complication of the Irish penal code, and the great importance of its political consequences, has made it necessary for me to dwell upon it at considerable length, but it will appear evident from the foregoing review that, severe as were the Irish laws, they were exceeded in stringency by those which were imposed upon the English Catholics. In the latter case, however, an evasion was much easier, nor could the Catholics, except under very abnormal circumstances, become a danger to England. In numbers they were probably less than one in fifty of the population.³ Among the freeholders, according to a computation made under William, they were not quite one in 186,⁴ and the part of the population which was most Protestant was precisely that which was most active, enterprising,

¹ 'That he [William] favoured the Roman Catholics as far as he could, and that he was frequently called upon by the Emperor to do so, is most certain.'—Lord Dartmouth's note to *Burnet*, ii. 228, 229.

² Burnet's *Own Times*, ii. 228, 229. Burnet (who supported this Bill) appears to think it originated with the Jacobites, who wished to set William in opposition to the national sentiment. Lord Dartmouth in his

note says: 'He [Burnet] does the Jacobites a great deal of wrong; for it was the Whigs gave out that the King was turned Jacobite.' At all events it seems clear that the Bill originated with the Opposition and was adopted by the Government.

³ Macaulay's *Hist. of England*, c. vi.

⁴ Dalrymple's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. pt. 2, appen. to c. i. p. 40.

and influential. The Catholics abounded chiefly in Lancashire, Staffordshire, and Sussex; but, except in London, they were very rare in the trading towns.¹ Their actual condition under the laws I have described is a question of some difficulty and perplexity. Judging by the mere letter of the law we should imagine that their worship was absolutely suppressed, that their children were deprived of all ecclesiastical education, and that their estates must have speedily passed into other hands. Nor is it easy to understand how laws so recent and so explicit could be evaded. Their history, however, is somewhat like that of the anti-Christian laws in the Roman Empire. It is certain that during long periods of time the early Christians professed, taught, and propagated their religion without either concealment or molestation, though by the letter of existing laws they were subject to the most atrocious penalties. It is equally certain that during the greater part of the reigns of Anne, George I., and George II. the Catholic worship in private houses and chapels was undisturbed, that the estates of Catholics were regularly transmitted from father to son, and that they had no serious difficulty in educating their children. The Government refused to put the laws against the priests into execution, and legal evasions were employed and connived at. Most of the more active spirits of English Catholicism took refuge on the Continent, and in the beginning of the eighteenth century British or Irish seminaries, colleges, or monasteries were thickly scattered through Spain, Portugal, Flanders, France, and Italy.²

Of the condition of those at home but few notices remain. In 1700 two letters, written to a Member of Parliament, were published, complaining bitterly of their activity.³ It was stated that there were then three Popish bishops exercising their functions in England—Bishop Leyhorn in London and

¹ Chamberlayne's *Present State of Great Britain* (1710), p. 162. In an able pamphlet called *Britain's Just Complaint of her Late Measure*, ascribed to Sir J. Montgomery, it is said: 'The Catholics of Britain are not one of a hundred; they have neither heads, hearts, nor hands enough to force a national conversion. As the Protestants are the most

numerous, so the laws and constitution are upon their side.'—*Somers' Tracts*, x. 458.

² See a list of these establishments in *The Present Danger of Popery* (1703), pp. 4-6.

³ *Ibid.* See also another anonymous tract, called *Considerations of the Present State of Popery in England* (1723).

the surrounding counties, Bishop Gifford in Wales and the western counties, and Bishop Smith in the north; that nearly every Popish lord or gentleman of substance had a priest domesticated in his family; that there were but few parishes in London in which the mass was not celebrated; that Petre, the brother of the well-known councillor of James, and the head of the English Jesuits, was still living under the name of Spencer in Marylebone¹; and that many converts to Popery were made. One conversion—that of the daughter of Lord Baltimore—appears to have attracted some attention. In 1706 a remarkable petition was presented to Parliament from the gentry and clergy of South Lancashire, containing very similar complaints. The petitioners dilated especially upon the number and missionary activity of the Lancashire priests, upon the open manner in which Catholics thronged to mass, and upon the erection of a building which was believed to be an endowed Popish seminary. The House of Lords considered these statements worthy of serious attention, and presented an address to the Queen, complaining of the growing insolence of the Catholics, and requesting that the Protestant clergy in each diocese and parish should be enjoined to prepare returns stating their number, quality, estates, and places of abode.² How far these measures proved efficacious it is difficult to say, but in 1711 we find the Lower House of Convocation complaining that the Papists ‘have swarmed in our streets of late years, and have been very busy in making converts,’ and attributing to the mode in which they conducted their controversy a considerable part of the prevailing infidelity.³ The reign of Anne is the period in which the most

¹ Oliver, in his *Collections illustrating the Biography of the Scotch, English and Irish Jesuits*, states that Spencer was the name taken by Edward Petre himself (the Privy Councillor), in the earlier part of his mission in England. The chapters in Butler’s *Historical Memoirs of the English Catholics* devoted to this period are unfortunately extremely meagre.

² *Parl. Hist.* vi. 516–517. After the rebellion of 1715, when an Act was carried obliging all Catholics and Nonjurors to transmit to Commissioners appointed for the purpose a

register of their estates, it appeared that the yearly value of the estates of Lancashire recusants was 13,158*l.*—a very large sum when we consider the rude state of agriculture and the undeveloped condition of the country.—Pictou’s *Memorials of Liverpool*, pt. i. p. 165.

³ Lathbury’s *Hist. of Convocation*, p. 416. In August 1708, Nicholson, the bishop of Carlisle, writes to the Primate, ‘Popery has advanced by very long strides of late years in this country, and too many of our magistrates love to have it so. At the very

ferocious of the penal laws in Ireland were enacted, but in England the Catholics were not violently persecuted. The Government was interceding with the Emperor in favour of his persecuted Protestant subjects, and naturally shrank from measures that would impair its influence. The existence of a powerful party attached to the Popish Pretender, the semi-Catholic doctrines of some of the Nonjurors, the formal negotiation opened by Archbishop Wake with a view to a union of the Anglican and Gallican Churches, the dispositions of the Queen, which were not violently anti-Catholic, and perhaps also the fact that a Catholic poet was at the head of English literature, had all tended to improve the position of the sect. The law which determined that any Catholic over eighteen who did not take the oath of supremacy, or make a declaration of Protestantism, should be incapable of inheriting land, and that the estate he would otherwise have inherited should pass to the next Protestant heir, was evaded and made almost nugatory. It was intended to compel all Catholic landlords to sell their property, but it was determined that the burden of proof rested with the Protestant claimant, and that it was for him to prove that the Catholic had not made this declaration; and a Bill which was introduced in 1706 to remedy this defect by making it necessary for the Catholic not only to make the declaration, but also to prove that he had done so, was rejected chiefly on the ground that it would injure the negotiations of England in favour of the persecuted subjects of the Emperor.¹ The reward of 100*l.* offered for the conviction of a Catholic priest might be expected to produce numerous informers; but the judges were very severe in the evidence they required, and it was decided that those who prosecuted in order to obtain the reward must

time that the French were upon our coasts and our people daily expected the news of their being landed, the wealthier of our Papists instead of being seized were cringed to with all possible tenders of honour and respect, and those very gentlemen who were entrusted with the taking of them into custody seemed rather inclined to list themselves in their service.' British Museum Add. MSS. 6116. Shortly after this time considerable

scandal was caused by the publication of a clever but very scurrilous poem against Protestantism, called *England's Reformation from the Time of Henry VIII. to the end of Oates's Plot*, by Thomas Ward. It was written in Hudibrastic verse, and professed to be published at Hamburg in 1710.

¹ *Parl. Hist.* vi. 514-515. Burnet's *Own Times*, ii. 229, 440. A few English cases relating to property which fell under the code and were tried

do so at their own expense.¹ In the Hanoverian period, as well as in the reign of Anne, the Catholics enjoyed a considerable, though precarious, toleration. An acute observer, whose tour through England and Wales was published in 1722, tells us that 'to the north of Winchester there was a very large monastery, a handsome part of which still remained, called Hide House, inhabited by Roman Catholics, where they have a private chapel for the service of the gentlemen of that religion thereabouts, of which there are several of note, and who live very quietly and friendly with their neighbours; they have also a private seminary for their children, three miles off, where they prepare them for the colleges abroad.'² The same traveller visited the holy well of St. Winifred in Wales, and found the Catholic pilgrimages to it undiminished. The Catholic church at the well had, it is true, been converted into a Protestant school, but 'to supply the loss of this chapel the Roman Catholics have chapels erected almost in every inn for the devotion of the pilgrims that flock hither from all the Popish parts of England.'³ Three years later Defoe's well-known 'Tour through Great Britain' appeared. He mentions without comment 'Popish chapels' among the religious edifices existing in London,⁴ and, having visited Durham, he writes of it: 'The town is well-built but old, full of Roman Catholics, who live peaceably and disturb nobody and nobody them, for we, being there on a holiday, saw them going as publicly to mass as the Dissenters did on other days to their meeting-houses.'⁵ The Earl of Derwentwater, who was executed for his complicity in the rebellion of 1715, was a Catholic, and it was a popular tradition that his body, on its journey from London to its burial place in Scotland, was moved only by night, and rested every day in a place dedicated to the Catholic worship.⁶

under Anne and her two successors will be found in Bacon's *Abridgment of the Law* (7 ed.) vi. 125-132. See too Howard's *Popery Cases*, pp. 301-324.

¹ A legal opinion to this effect was given July 22, 1714. Domestic Papers, Record Office.

² *A Journey through England: Familiar Letters from a Gentleman here to his Friend abroad* [by

Macky], vol. ii. p. 26.

³ Ibid. vol. ii. p. 134. See too, on the pilgrimages to this well, Rush's *Hibernia Curiosa* (1769), p. 4. St. Winifred was the first stage from Chester to Holyhead.

⁴ Defoe's *Tour through Great Britain*, ii. 156.

⁵ Ibid. iii. 189.

⁶ Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*, c. lxxi.

As the century advanced, the complaints of the growth of Popery became very numerous. The law of England still laid down that 'when a person is reconciled to the See of Rome, or procures others to be reconciled, the offence amounts to high treason,'¹ and the sentence of perpetual imprisonment still hung over every Catholic priest; but yet it appears evident that Catholicism in certain classes was extending. It was asserted in 1735 that there was 'scarcely a petty coffee-house in London where there is not a Popish lecture read on Sunday evenings.'² Reports, which appear to have been entirely calumnious, were spread that Bishop Butler had died a Catholic.³ 'The growth of Popery,' wrote Doddridge, in 1735, 'seems to give a general and just alarm. A priest from a neighbouring gentleman's family makes frequent visits hither, and many of the Church people seem Popishly inclined.'⁴ Secker complained, in 1738, that 'the emissaries of the Romish Church . . . have begun to reap great harvests in the field.'⁵ Sherlock, in the letter which he issued on the occasion of the earthquake of 1750, mentions the 'great increase of Popery' among the crying evils of the time.⁶ Browne, in his 'Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Time,' which appeared a few years later, echoes the same complaint. 'The priests,' he writes, 'are assiduous in making proselytes, and in urging their party to make them. There is at present a gentleman in the West of England who openly gives 5*l.* to every person who becomes a proselyte to the Roman Church; and the additional bribe of a Sunday dinner for every such person that attends mass. Allurements of the same kind are known to prevail in most parts of the kingdom, and among those of the highest rank, though not so openly declared.'⁷ A fashion which had arisen among ladies of wearing Capuchin cloaks was somewhat absurdly reprehended, on the ground that it was teaching men 'to view the cowl not only with patience but complacency.'⁸ The leaders of the Dissenters were so sensible of the danger from the activity of the priests that they

¹ Blackstone.

² This was stated in the *Free Briton*, of January 1735. See a very interesting collection of passages on this subject, chiefly from old newspapers, in Miss Wedgwood's *John Wesley*, pp. 281-283.

³ Bartlett's *Life of Butler*, p. 164.

⁴ Doddridge's *Diary*, iii. p. 182.

⁵ Secker's *Charges*, Charge i. 1738.

⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1750.

⁷ Browne's *Estimate*, ii. p. 140-141.

⁸ See Wedgwood's *Wesley*, p. 283.

established in 1734 and 1735 a course of anti-Popery lectures, in Salters' Hall; and the laws against priests were so entirely in abeyance that two of these had a formal controversy with two Protestant divines.¹ In 1738 Bishop Gibson, with a view of checking the Romish propagandism, collected and republished, under the title of 'A Preservation against Popery,' the anti-Papal tracts which had appeared in England between the Restoration and the Revolution.

At the time of the rebellion of 1745, it is true, the laws were more severely enforced. A proclamation was issued, banishing all Catholics from London, and forbidding them to go more than five miles from their homes; and another proclamation offered a reward for the capture of priests and Jesuits, some of whom were actually apprehended. A mass-house was about this time destroyed by the populace, at Stokesley, in Yorkshire, and another burnt by the sailors at Sunderland.² Resident Catholic ambassadors complained of the severities of the Government against their co-religionists; but these severities do not appear to have been very serious, and they were purely exceptional events produced by the existence of a great public danger, and by the notorious sympathy of the Catholics with the invaders. In general the chief effects of the legislation against the Catholic worship appear to have been that it was carried on unostentatiously in private houses, that proselytism was difficult and somewhat dangerous, and that any Catholic who was suspected of disaffection was absolutely at the mercy of the Government. The unequal and oppressive taxation, however, and the innumerable disqualifications, bringing with them a great social stigma, still continued, and the laws against the priesthood offered such inducements to informers that their position was one of continual danger. As we shall hereafter see, they were occasionally prosecuted at a much later period than that with which we are at present concerned; and in 1729—in the reign of George II. and under the ministry of Townshend and Walpole—a Franciscan friar, named Atkinson, died in Hurst Castle, in the seventy-fourth year of his life and

¹ Wilson's *Hist. of Dissenting Churches*, ii. 368. The debate was published by both sides, and was therefore, I suppose, at least partially public. This book furnishes consider-

able evidence of the activity of the Popish controversy among the Dissenters.

² *British Chronologist*, Dec. 1745, Jan. 1746.

the thirtieth of his imprisonment, having been incarcerated in 1700, for performing the functions of a Catholic priest.¹ The only minister who appears to have had any real wish to relieve the Catholics was Stanhope, who had contemplated some mitigations of the penal code. In 1719 negotiations took place between his ministry and some leading Catholics, through the intervention of Strickland, the Bishop of Namur; but difficulties raised on the Catholic side, for a time impeded them, and the disasters of the South Sea Company brought the design to a termination.² As far as the condition of Catholics was improved under George II., it was only by a milder administration of existing laws, and by the more tolerant maxims which prevailed among the higher clergy. In the days of Cromwell and Milton it had been argued that Catholicism was idolatry, and that it ought therefore to be suppressed, by virtue of the Old Testament decree against that sin. In the teaching of the Latitudinarian divines, and of the classes who adopted the principles of Locke, this doctrine had disappeared, and the measures against Catholicism were defended solely on the ground of the hostility of that religion to the civil government.

In Scotland the Kirk ministers watched it with a fiercer animosity than the English clergy; but even in Scotland it was not extinguished. It found a powerful protector in the ducal family of Gordon. In 1699 the Duke of Gordon had been arrested for holding Popish meetings in his lodging at Edinburgh, but he was liberated after a fortnight's imprisonment. In 1722 a meeting of fifty Catholics was surprised in the house of the Dowager Duchess of Gordon, and the priest for a time imprisoned. He was soon, however, bailed, and not appearing to stand his trial, was outlawed. The Gordon family abandoned Catholicism on the death of the second Duke, in 1728, and from that time we very rarely find traces of Catholicism in the Lowlands. In the Highlands it had still its devoted adherents. A small cottage, called Scalan, at Glenlivat, one of the wildest and most untrodden spots among the mountains of Aberdeenshire, continued during most of the eighteenth century

¹ *Historical Register for 1729* (Oct. 15). Butler's *Historical Memoirs*, ii. 63.

² *Ibid.* ii. 59.

to be a seminary, where eight or ten youths were usually educating for the priesthood. Many of the old superstitions lingered side by side with the new faith, and an occasional priest, or monk, or even Jesuit, celebrated in private houses the worship of his forefathers. In the western islands, in several of the mountain valleys of Moray, and especially on the property of the Dukes of Gordon, the Catholics continued numerous, and they appear to have been but little molested. As late as 1773, when Dr. Johnson visited the Hebrides, there were two small islands, named Egg and Canna, which were still altogether inhabited by Catholics.¹

The other class excluded from the benefits of the Toleration Act, and existing only in violation of the law, consisted of all those who impugned either the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity or the supernatural character of Christianity, or the divine authority of Scripture. All such persons, by a law of William, were disabled, upon the first conviction, from holding any ecclesiastical, civil, or military office, and were deprived, upon the second conviction, of the power of suing or prosecuting in any law court, of being guardian or executor, and of receiving any legacy or deed of gift. They were also made liable to imprisonment for three years; but in case they renounced their error publicly, within four months of the first conviction, they were discharged from their disabilities.² Avowed Unitarianism has never been, and is never likely to be a very important or very aggressive sect, for the great majority of those who hold its fundamental tenet are but little disposed to attach themselves to any definite religious body, or to take any great interest in sectarian strife. The small school which followed Socinus had at first but few disciples in England, and exercised no appreciable influence in the conflict of parties. Under Edward VI., Joan Bocher and a Dutchman named Van Parris had been burnt for their heresies

¹ See Lachlan Shaw's *Hist. of Moray* (1775), p. 380; Chambers' *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, iii. 204-205, 466, 554; Martin's *Description of the Western Islands*. Johnson's *Tour in the Hebrides*, pp. 162, 196; Burton's *Hist. of Scotland*, ii. 359-361; Sinclair's

Statistical Account of Scotland, xiii. 33, and a few notices of Jesuits in Scotland, in Oliver's *Collections illustrating the Biography of Scotch, English, and Irish Members of the Society of Jesus*.

² 9 & 10 William III. c. 32.

concerning the Trinity; and two other heretics were burnt, on a similar charge, under James I. The term Unitarian, however, appears to have been first adopted by John Biddle, a teacher of some learning and of great zeal and piety, who, during the stormy days of the Commonwealth, defended the doctrines of Socinus with unwearied energy, both in the pulpit and with his pen. A law had recently been passed, making it a capital offence to impugn the received doctrine of the Trinity, and this law would probably have been applied to Biddle, had not the influence of Cromwell and the support of some powerful friends been employed to screen him. As it was, his life was a continual martyrdom. His works were burnt by the hangman, he was banished for a time to the Scilly Islands, fined, and repeatedly imprisoned, and he at last died in prison in 1662.¹ He left a small sect behind him, its most remarkable members being Emlyn, to whose long imprisonment I have already referred, and Firmin, a London merchant, of considerable wealth and influence, who was one of the foremost supporters of every leading work of charity in his time, and who was intimately acquainted with Tillotson and several other leading Anglican divines.² At his expense several anonymous tracts in defence of Socinian views were published. Less advanced heresies about the Trinity are said to have been widely diffused in the seventeenth century. Arianism may be detected in the 'Paradise Lost.' It tinged the theology of Newton, and it spread gradually through several dissenting sects. Early in the eighteenth century it rose into great prominence. Whiston, who was one of the most learned theologians of his time, and the professor of mathematics at Cambridge, openly maintained it. Lardner, who occupies so conspicuous a place among the apologists for Christianity, was at one time an Arian, though his opinion seems to have ultimately inclined to Socinianism.³ Views which were at least semi-Arian appeared timidly in the writings of Clarke; and the long Trinitarian controversy, in which Sherlock, Jane, South, Wallis, Burnet, Tillotson, and many

¹ See Wallace's *Anti-Trinitarian Biography*.

² *Life of Mr. Thomas Firmin, citizen of London*. By J. Cornish. 1780.

³ See Kippis's *Life of Lardner*,

prefixed to Lardner's Works, p. xxxii. His ultimate view is said to have been that 'Jesus was a man appointed, exalted, loved, and honoured by God beyond all other beings.'

others took part, familiarised the whole nation with the difficulties of the question. It was, however, among the Presbyterians that the defections from orthodoxy were most numerous and most grave. In 1719 two Presbyterian ministers were deprived of their pastoral charge on account of their Unitarian opinions, but soon either Arianism or Socinianism became the current sentiments of the Presbyterian seminaries, and by the middle of the eighteenth century most of the principal Presbyterian ministers and congregations had silently discarded the old doctrine of the Trinity.¹

When the intention of Whiston and Clarke to stir this question was first known, Godolphin, who was then in power, remonstrated with them, saying to the latter that 'the affairs of the public were with difficulty then kept in the hands of those that were at all for liberty; that it was therefore an unseasonable time for the publication of a book that would make a great noise and disturbance, and that therefore the ministers desired him to forbear till a surer opportunity should offer itself.'² The storm of indignation that arose in Convocation upon the appearance of the work of Whiston in some degree justified the judgment, but, on the whole, few things are more remarkable in the eighteenth century than the ease and impunity with which anti-Trinitarian views were propagated. The prosecution of Emlyn called forth an emphatic and noble protest from Hoadly, and though Whiston was deprived of his professorship, and censured by Convocation, he was not otherwise molested. Noisier controversies drew away most of the popular fanaticism, and the suppression of Convocation was eminently favourable to religious liberty. A Bill which was brought forward in 1721, supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and by some other prelates, to increase the stringency of the legislation against anti-Trinitarian writings was rejected,³ and the laws against anti-Trinitarians were silently disused. Works, however, which were directed against the Christian religion were still liable to prosecution, though the measures taken against them were not usually very severe. 'The Fable of the Bees' of Mandeville, the 'Christianity Not Mysterious'

¹ Bogue and Bennett's *Hist. of Dissenters*, ii. 300-303. See, too, Lindsey's *Historical View*.

² Whiston's *Memoirs of Clarke*, p. 25.

³ *Parl. Hist.* vii. 893-895.



of Toland, the 'Rights of the Christian Church' by Tindal, and the 'Posthumous Works' of Bolingbroke, were all presented by the Grand Jury of Middlesex. When Collins, in 1713, published his 'Discourse on Freethinking,' the outcry was so violent that the author thought it prudent to take refuge for a time in Holland. Woolston—whose mind seems to have been positively disordered—having published, in 1727 and the two following years, some violent discourses impugning the Miracles of Christ, was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, and to a fine of 1,000*l.*—a sentence against which the apologist Lardner very nobly protested, and which Clarke endeavoured to mitigate. When Toland visited Ireland his book was burnt by order of the Irish Parliament, and he only escaped arrest by a precipitate flight.¹ Towards the middle of the century, however, interest in these subjects had almost ceased. The 'Treatise on Human Nature,' by Hume, which appeared in 1739, though one of the greatest masterpieces of sceptical genius, fell still-born from the press, and the posthumous works of Bolingbroke, in spite of the noisy reputation of their author, scarcely produced a ripple of emotion.² A letter written by Montesquieu to Warburton was quoted with much applause, in which that great French thinker somewhat cynically argued that, however false might be the established religion in England, no good man should attack it, as it injured no one, was divested of its worst prejudices, and was the source of many practical advantages.³ An acute observer on the side of orthodoxy noticed that there was at this time little sceptical speculation in England, because there was but little interest in any theological question;⁴ and a great

¹ South wrote with great delight: 'Your Parliament presently sent him packing, and without the help of a faggot soon made the kingdom too hot for him.' See Disraeli's *Calamities of Authors*, ii. 133.

² Hume's *Autobiography*. Browne's *Estimate*, i. 56.

³ Referring to Bolingbroke's philosophy, he wrote, 'What motive can there be for attacking revealed religion in England? In that country it is so purged of all destructive prejudices that it can do no harm, but on the contrary is capable of producing numberless good effects.

I am sensible that in Spain or Portugal a man who is going to be burnt . . . hath very good reason to attack it. . . . But the case is very different in England, where a man that attacks revealed religion does it without the least personal motive, and where this champion if he should succeed—nay, should he be in the right too—would only deprive his country of numberless real benefits for the sake of establishing a merely speculative truth.'—*Annual Register*, 1760, p. 189.

⁴ Browne's *Estimate*, i. 52–58.

sceptic described the nation as 'settled into the most cool indifference with regard to religious matters that is to be found in any nation of the world.'¹ Latitudinarianism had spread widely, but almost silently, through all religious bodies, and dogmatic teaching was almost excluded from the pulpit. In spite of occasional outbursts of popular fanaticism, a religious languor fell over England, as it had fallen over the Continent; and if it produced much neglect of duty among clergymen, and much laxity of morals among laymen, it at least in some degree assuaged the bitterness of sectarian animosity and prepared the way for the future triumph of religious liberty.

¹ Hume's *Essay on National Characters*.

CHAPTER III.

WHILE the changes described in the last chapter were taking place, the history of parties in England continued to present a singular monotony. The stigma of Jacobitism still rested on the Tories, though Bolingbroke did everything in his power to efface it. This great Tory statesman had soon discovered that the confidence of the Pretender was never given to any but the most bigoted Catholics, and that his narrow and superstitious mind was wholly unsuited for the delicate task of reconciling the political principles of the Tory party with their religious interests and sympathies. Slighted and neglected by the master for whom he had sacrificed so much, finding his political judgment habitually treated as of less value than that of ignorant and inexperienced fanatics, he soon openly quarrelled with the Pretender, received his dismissal in 1716, and with a heart burning with resentment abjured all further connection with Jacobitism. The importance of such a secession from the Jacobite ranks was self-evident. Bolingbroke was the greatest orator and the most brilliant party leader of his time. He had been, and, in spite of recent errors, he would probably, if restored to English political life, again be, the leader of the Church and of the country party, and he could do more than any other living man to reconcile the Tory party to the new dynasty. His first object was to be restored to his country, fortune, and titles; he offered his services unreservedly to the Government, and his violent quarrel with the Jacobites was a pledge of his sincerity.

The Whig ministry were, however, in general far from desiring to accept the offer. On public grounds they probably doubted the sincerity, or at least the permanence of his conversion. 'Parties,' as Pulteney once said, 'like snakes, are moved by their tails.' It was certain that the Tory party in 1716 was



almost wholly Jacobite. There was nothing in the principles or antecedents of Bolingbroke to make it improbable that if it again suited his interests he would place himself in sympathy with his followers, and it was evident that his presence would give them an importance they would not otherwise possess. Besides this, it was the obvious party interest of the Whigs to exclude from the arena the most formidable of all their opponents, and there was no other statesman whom they regarded with such animosity. Much as they desired the maintenance of the dynasty, they had little desire to see the Tory party reconciled to it. They well knew that their monopoly of place and power depended upon the success with which they represented their opponents, both to the King and to the country, as necessarily Jacobite. As Bolingbroke himself very happily said, in the disposition of parties in England, 'the accidental passions' of the people were on one side, 'their settled habits of thinking' on the other. The natural preponderance of classes and sentiment was with the Tories, but the temporary association of Toryism with Popery and with rebellion had thrown all power into the hands of the Whigs. A Tory party thoroughly reconciled to the dynasty and guided by a statesman of great genius and experience would probably in no long time become the ruler of the State.

Such were probably the motives of the Whig leaders in rejecting the overtures of Bolingbroke. Walpole, who, no doubt, clearly saw in him the most dangerous of competitors, was especially vehement and especially resolute in maintaining his ostracism, and it was not until 1723 that Bolingbroke obtained, by the influence of the King's mistress, a pardon which enabled him to return to England. With the assent of Sir William Windham, Lord Bathurst, and Lord Gower, three of the most considerable men in the Tory party, he in that year made a formal offer of co-operation to Walpole, but that offer was absolutely declined.¹ The Act of Attainder, which was still in force, and which could only be annulled by Parliament, deprived him of his estates and of his seat in the House of Lords, and although he succeeded in 1725 in regaining the former by Act

¹ Walpole to Townshend, August 3, 1723. Coxe's *Walpole*, ii. 263-264.

of Parliament, he was still steadily excluded from the latter. The adroitness and splendid eloquence with which in his last speech in the House of Lords he had met the ministerial charges against the Peace of Utrecht were not soon forgotten, and the Whig leaders and the Whig Parliaments were fully resolved to paralyse so formidable an adversary. The career of Bolingbroke is in some respects one of the most unfortunate in English history. Gifted, by the confession of all who knew him, with abilities of the very highest order, some fatal obstacle seemed always in his path. The inveterate dilatoriness of Oxford, the death of the Queen in the most critical moment of his life, the incapacity and incurable bigotry of the Pretender, frustrated all his efforts, and he found himself in the very zenith of his transcendent powers condemned to political impotence. The first of living orators, he was shut out for ever from Parliament, which at a time when public meetings were unknown, was the only theatre for political eloquence. A devoted Tory, and at the same time a bitter enemy to the Pretender, he found his party, which was naturally the strongest in England, reduced to insignificance through the imputation of Jacobitism. His political writings continued for many years to agitate the country, and he was indefatigable in his efforts to unite the scattered fragments of opposition into a new party, taking for its principle the suppression of corruption in Parliament ; but his efforts met with little success, and a politician excluded from the Legislature could never take a foremost place in English politics. Once, indeed, after many years of weary waiting, the favour of the Prince of Wales seemed likely to break the spell of misfortune, but the sudden death of his patron again clouded his prospects and drove him in despair from public life.

The Whig party, under these circumstances was almost uncontrolled, and its strength was not seriously impaired by the great schism which broke out in 1717, when Lord Townshend was dismissed from office, when Walpole, with several less noted Whigs, resigned, and went into violent opposition, and when the chief power passed into the hands of Sunderland and Stanhope.

It is the plan of this book to avoid as much as possible discussing the personalities of history, except so far as they illustrate

the political character and tendencies of the time, and I shall therefore content myself with the most cursory reference to this schism. It was almost inevitable that divisions should have taken place. The party was in an overwhelming majority. Its leaders were very much upon a level; for Walpole, though far abler than his colleagues, was somewhat inferior to several of them in the weight of his political connections, and he had not yet attained the Parliamentary ascendancy he afterwards enjoyed. The Hanoverian ministers, and a crowd of rapacious Hanoverian favourites of the King, were perpetually endeavouring to make English politics subservient to Hanoverian interests, and to obtain places, pensions, or titles for themselves; and another serious element of complication and intrigue was introduced by the strong dislike subsisting between the King and the Prince of Wales, and the extreme jealousy which the former entertained of all statesmen who were supposed to have confidential intercourse with the latter or with his partisans. The bitter hatred, both personal and political, that subsisted between the first three Hanoverian sovereigns and their eldest sons, though it threw great scandal and discredit on the royal family and added largely to the difficulties of parliamentary government, was probably on the whole rather beneficial to the dynasty than otherwise, as it led the most prominent opponents of the existing Governments to place their chief hopes in the heir-apparent to the Crown. The Hanoverian tendencies of the sovereign were, however, an unmixed source of weakness. The whole Whig party, though they had gratified the King by supporting the acquisition of Bremen and Verden, offended him by refusing to follow the advice of his favourite Hanoverian minister, Bernsdorf, to commence immediate hostilities against the Czar when he invaded the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg in 1716. Walpole and Townshend soon became peculiarly distasteful to the German party around the King, and they were accustomed to express, in no measured terms, their indignation at the venality and the intrigues of the Hanoverian favourites. On the other hand, Sunderland was intriguing eagerly against his colleagues. The son of the able and corrupt statesman who played so great a part in the reigns of James II. and of William, and the son-in-law of Marlborough, he had for some time shared the suspicion with which his father-in-law was regarded by George I. Though his introduction into the Cabinet

during the last reign had been looked upon as one of the most important and most decisive victories of the Whig party, and though he had long been one of the most conspicuous debaters in the House of Lords, he found himself excluded, together with Marlborough, from the list of Lords Justices to whom the Government of the country was in part entrusted on the death of the Queen. He was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, which removed him from active political life; and although he afterwards succeeded Wharton as Privy Seal, he still found the influence and favour of Lord Townshend greatly superior to his own, and he showed his discontent by very rarely taking any part in the defence of the Government. At last, however, he succeeded, in the summer of 1716, during a brief residence in Hanover, in obtaining the complete favour and confidence of the King. Stanhope, who was Secretary of State, and who had been appointed to that office by Townshend, threw himself into the measures of Sunderland. Some alleged delays of Townshend in negotiating the treaty with France, some alleged relations between him and the party of the Prince of Wales, furnished pretexts, and, after passing through more than one phase which it is not here necessary to chronicle, the disagreement deepened into an open breach. In the new Government Sunderland and Addison were joint Secretaries of State, while Stanhope was First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. The conduct of Stanhope in this transaction is extremely questionable, but he appears to have been in general a high-minded as well as brave and liberal man, well skilled in military matters and in foreign policy, and of that frank and straightforward character which often succeeds better in public life, and especially in English public life, than the most refined cunning,¹ but without much administrative or parliamentary

¹ Lady W. Montague writes: 'Earl Stanhope used to say that during his ministry he always imposed on the foreign ministers by telling them the naked truth, which as they thought it impossible to come from the mouth of a statesman, they never failed to write information to their respective Courts directly contrary to the assurances he gave them.' *Letters* (Lord Wharncliffe's ed.) iii. 54. Compare the following account of Lord Palmerston. 'I have heard him [Lord Palmerston] say that he

occasionally found that they [foreign ministers] had been deceived by the open manner in which he told them the truth. When he had laid before them the exact state of the case, and announced his own intentions, they went away convinced that so skilful and experienced a diplomatist could not possibly be so frank as he appeared, and, imagining some deep design in his words, acted on their own idea of what he really meant, and so misled their own selves.'—*Ashley's Life of Palmerston*, ii. 301.

ability, and wholly unfit to manage the finances of the country. In the following year, as foreign affairs became more entangled, the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer was given to Aislalie. Sunderland became First Lord of the Treasury, and Stanhope, together with an earldom, assumed the office of Secretary of State, which gave him the direction of foreign policy. In home policy the ministry was chiefly distinguished by the repeal of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts, by the unsuccessful attempt to carry the mischievous peerage Bill, which I have already described, and by the privileges granted to the South Sea Company, which speedily led to the most terrible disasters. Its foreign policy was more brilliant, for it was during its term of office, and in a great degree in consequence of its measures, that the ambitious projects of Alberoni were defeated. In 1720 the schism was partly healed by the return of Walpole and Townshend to office, though not to a position in the Government at all equivalent to that of which they had been deprived. Townshend became President of the Council, and Walpole Paymaster of the Forces; and about the same time, and chiefly through the influence of Walpole, there was an outward reconciliation between the King and the Prince of Wales.

The divergence of feelings and interests between the two sections of the Cabinet was, however, by no means at an end when the disasters following the South Sea Bubble gave a complete ascendancy to the party of Walpole. The South Sea Company had, as we have seen, been established by Harley, in 1711, for the purpose of restoring the national credit, which had been shaken by the downfall of the Whigs; and although its trade in the Spanish waters was greatly limited by the provisions of the Peace of Utrecht, and greatly interrupted by the subsequent hostilities with Spain, the company possessed such important commercial privileges that it continued to be one of the most considerable and esteemed mercantile corporations in the country. The policy of gradually paying off the debt by incorporating it with the stock of flourishing companies was in high favour, and in 1717 an Act was passed permitting the proprietors of certain short annuities amounting to about 135,000*l.*, which had still twenty-three years to run, to subscribe the residue of the term into South Sea stock, at the rate

of eleven and a half years' purchase, receiving five per cent. on the principal. By this transaction, and by an additional advance of about 544,000*l.*, the capital of the company was increased to 11,746,844*l.* In 1719, however, the project was conceived of enormously enlarging its scope. The national debt consisted partly of redeemable funds, which might be paid off whenever money could be found for that purpose, and partly of irredeemable ones, usually for about ninety-nine years, which could not be paid without the consent of the proprietors. The directors of the company proposed, by purchase or subscription, to absorb both kinds of debt, and they anticipated that the advantages they could offer were such that they could make arrangements with the proprietors of the irredeemable annuities for the conversion of these latter into redeemable funds, that they could consolidate the different funds into a single stock, that at the end of seven years they could reduce the interest on the national debt from five to four per cent., and that by the profits of a company so greatly enlarged and so closely connected with the Government they could establish a large sinking fund for paying off the national debt. The prospect in the outset rested upon very erroneous notions of the value of the South Sea trade; but the competition between the company and the Bank, which looked upon the scheme with great jealousy, soon made it wholly chimerical. The South Sea directors resolved, at all costs, to obtain their ends, and they accordingly offered no less than 7,567,000*l.*, if all the debts were subscribed, and a proportionate sum for any part of them; and they also proposed to pay, for the use of the public, one year's purchase of such of the long irredeemable annuities as should not be brought into their capital. These terms were accepted by the Government, and the Bill was passed in April 1720. It was wholly impossible that it should have issued in anything but disaster; but all the devices of the Stock Exchange were employed artificially to raise the price of stock. For several years—and, indeed, ever since the Revolution—a spirit of reckless speculation had been spreading through England. Stock-jobbing had become a favourite profession. Lottery after lottery had been launched with success, and projects hardly less insane than those of the South Sea year found numerous supporters. The

scheme of Law had produced a wild enthusiasm of speculation in France, and the contagion was felt in England. The South Sea project was too complicated to be generally understood. There was no efficient organ of financial criticism. The Government warmly supported the scheme. The large sum offered by the company, which made success impossible, stimulated the imaginations of the people, who fancied that a privilege so dearly purchased must be of inestimable value, and the complication of credulity and dishonesty, of ignorance and avarice, threw England into what it is scarcely an exaggeration to term a positive frenzy. The mischief affected all classes. Landlords sold their ancestral estates; clergymen, philosophers, professors, dissenting ministers, men of fashion, poor widows, as well as the usual speculators on 'Change, flung all their possessions into the new stock. Many foreigners followed the example, and the Canton of Berne, in its corporate capacity, is said to have speculated largely in it. Among those to whom large amounts of stock had been improperly assigned were the Duchess of Kendal and the Countess of Platen the two mistresses of the King, Sunderland the prime minister, Aislabie the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Charles Stanhope the Secretary of State, and the two Craggs. Among the great crowd of honest speculators were Pope and Walpole and Gay, Bingham, the learned historian of Christian antiquities, Chandler, one of the most conspicuous of the Dissenters. Rumours of intended cessions of gold mines of Peru, in exchange for Gibraltar and Port Mahon, were industriously circulated and readily believed. Dividends were officially promised, which could never be paid. The stock rose to 1,000. Then came the inevitable reaction. The bubble burst. Bankers and goldsmiths who had lent money on it were everywhere failing. The stock fell faster than it had risen, and in a few weeks the Eldorado dreams were dispelled, and disaster and ruin were carried through all classes of the nation.¹

It is a striking instance of the good fortune which at this time attended the Whig party, that the schism of 1717 had withdrawn a certain proportion of its leaders from the Government, and consequently from all responsibility for the disaster.

¹ Sinclair's *Hist. of the Revenue*, i. 488. Tindal. Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. iii.

Had it been otherwise, the whole party might have fallen beneath the outburst of popular indignation, and a party which was now purely Jacobite might have been summoned to the helm. Walpole, however, who since his resignation had systematically opposed every measure of the ministry, had both in Parliament and by his pen severely criticised the South Sea scheme, and although he had been partially reconciled to the Government and had accepted office about three months before the final crash, public opinion very justly held him wholly innocent of the disaster, while his well-known financial ability made men turn to him in the hour of distress, as of all statesmen the most fitted to palliate it. Lord Stanhope, who, whatever his errors may have been, showed at least a perfect integrity during these transactions, died in the February of 1720-21, and was replaced as Secretary of State by Lord Townshend. Aislabie was driven ignominiously from his position of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Sunderland, the Prime Minister, though acquitted on the charge of corruption, was obliged, by the stress of public feeling, to resign his office. Walpole became both First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer; and the death of Sunderland, in April 1722, which closed the schism of the Whig party, removed the last serious obstacle from his path. In his career, more than in that of any other statesman, the character of Whig policy during the eighteenth century was reflected; and his influence, in a very great degree, determined the tone and character of parliamentary government in England.

Born in 1676, of a Norfolk family of great antiquity, moderate wealth, and considerable political influence, Robert Walpole was at first, as a second son, intended for the Church, was educated with this object at Eton, where he was the contemporary and rival of St. John, and had already begun, with some distinction, his career at Cambridge when the death of his elder brother induced his father to withdraw him from the University, and soon after plunged him into politics. His family possessed the control of no less than three seats, and he entered Parliament for one of them upon the death of his father, in 1700, and at once attached himself to the Whigs. He appeared from the beginning a shrewd, cautious, laborious

and ambitious man, of indomitable courage and unflagging spirits, surpassed by many in the grace and dignity of eloquence, but by no one in readiness of reply, fertility of resource, and aptitude for business. He became a member of the Council of Admiralty in 1705, Secretary of War in 1708, Treasurer of the Navy in 1709. In 1710 he was one of the managers of the Sacheverell impeachment, a measure of which he privately disapproved. On the downfall of the ministry, he took a conspicuous and brilliant part in defending the financial policy of Godolphin, who had been accused by the Tory House of Commons of gross extravagance and corruption, and he from this period obtained the reputation of 'the best master of figures of any man of his time.' In 1712, the Tories, being in power, marked their animosity against him by expelling him from Parliament, on the charge of corruption, and consigning him for a few months to the Tower; but the condemnation, which was a mere party vote, left no stigma on his name, while the species of political martyrdom he underwent only served to enhance his reputation. He soon returned to Parliament, was recognised as the most powerful supporter of the Protestant succession, rose again to office upon the accession of George I., was Chairman of the Secret Committee for investigating the circumstances of the Peace of Utrecht, became Paymaster of the Forces in 1714 and First Lord of the Treasury, and at the same time Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1715. We have just seen how the division of the party in 1717 for a time interrupted his career; how, by a singular good fortune, he was in opposition when the South Sea scheme was devised; and how the ruin of his most formidable competitors and his own financial talents brought him to the foremost place. In the midst of the panic, and exasperation both of Parliament and of the nation, he acted with great coolness, courage, and good sense. He moderated the proceedings that were taken against the guilty directors, and he gradually restored public credit by measures which met with some opposition at the time, and which, many years after, became the objects of virulent attacks,¹ but which had undoubtedly the effect of calming public opinion, and greatly mitigating the

¹ See the details of these measures in Coxe, Sinclair, and Macpherson.

The attacks upon Walpole's honesty in this matter do not appear to have

inevitable suffering. His first scheme—which was originally suggested by Jacombe, the Under-Secretary of War—was a division of the stock between the South Sea Company, the Bank, and the East India Company; but another plan was afterwards devised. It is not necessary to enter at length into its somewhat complicated details. It is sufficient to say that the whole sum of rather more than 7,000,000*l.*, which the company had engaged to pay the public, was ultimately remitted, that the confiscated estates of the directors were employed in the partial discharge of the incumbrances of the society, and that a division of stock being made among all the proprietors, it produced a dividend of 33*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per cent. From this time, for more than twenty years, the ascendancy of Walpole was complete. Carteret, who made some slight efforts to rally the party, which had been left leaderless by the deaths of Stanhope and Sunderland, or at least to maintain some real authority in the ministry, succumbed in the beginning of 1724, and went into a kind of honourable exile as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The death of the King had long been looked upon as the event which must necessarily terminate the administration of his favourite minister, for the enmity between George I. and his eldest son had never in reality ceased, and the quarrel between them broke out with renewed violence on the occasion of the birth of the Prince's second son, in 1721. The Prince desired the Duke of York to be godfather to the child. The King insisted on giving that post to the Duke of Newcastle. A strange, undignified, but most characteristic scene ensued. On the occasion of the christening, in the Princess's bedroom, and in presence of the King, the Prince, trembling with passion, strode up to the Duke of Newcastle, shaking his hand at him in menace, and shouting, in his broken English, 'You are a rascal; but I shall find you!' The King ordered his son to be put under arrest, and that night he and his wife were driven from the palace. From this time there was open and complete hostility, not only between the King and the Prince of Wales, but also between their adherents. No communication

been made till fourteen years later, and were probably quite unfounded. They will be found drawn out at

great length in Ralph's *Critical Hist. of the Administration of Walpole*.

was suffered to pass between them, and Walpole especially was made the subject of violent abuse by the heir to the throne. But the expectations of his enemies were soon disappointed. For a few days, indeed, Walpole was out of office, the King having placed the management of affairs in the hands of Sir Spencer Compton, who had been his treasurer, and who was at this time Speaker of the House of Commons, and also Paymaster of the Forces. Sir Spencer, however, was entirely incapable of occupying a foremost place. He found himself unable even to draw up a King's Speech, and in his difficulty he resorted to Walpole himself. The influence of Cardinal Fleury, who urged the danger to the French alliance of a change of Government, and the warm support of Queen Caroline, brought Walpole back to office, where he became more absolute than before. Sir Spencer Compton readily acquiesced in his own deposition, was created Earl of Wilmington in 1728, and two years later became Privy Seal, and then President of the Council in the ministry of his former rival. Townshend, who alone could in any degree maintain a balance of power, was compelled to resign in 1730, and the ascendancy of Walpole continued unbroken till 1742.

It is the fault of many historians and the misfortune of many statesmen that the latter are often judged almost exclusively by the measures they have passed, and not at all by the evils they have averted. In the case of Walpole this mode of judgment is peculiarly misleading, and it is remarkable that great practical politicians have usually estimated him far more highly than men of letters.¹ The long period of his rule was signalised by very few measures of brilliancy or enduring value. His faults both as a man and a statesman were glaring and repulsive, and he never exercised either the intellectual fascination that belongs to a great orator, or the moral fascination that belongs to a great

¹ In the present generation Walpole has been made the subject of elaborate pictures by three very eminent writers, who differ as widely as possible in their political views and in the character of their minds—by Macaulay in his *Essay on Horace Walpole's Letters*; Lord Stanhope in his *Hist. of England*; and Mr. Carlyle in his *Life*

of Frederick the Great. It is curiously instructive to compare their estimates of him with that of Burke in his *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, and that of Sir Robert Peel in a remarkable paper in the *Stanhope Miscellanies* (first series). Lord J. Russell has always estimated Walpole at least as highly as Sir R. Peel.

character. He was not a reformer, or a successful war minister, or a profound and original thinker, or even a tactician of great enterprise, and yet he possessed qualities which have justly placed him in the foremost rank of politicians. Finding England with a disputed succession and an unpopular sovereign, with a corrupt and factious Parliament, and an intolerant, ignorant, and warlike people, he succeeded in giving it twenty years of unbroken peace and uniform prosperity, in establishing on an impregnable basis a dynasty which seemed tottering to its fall, in rendering, chiefly by the force of his personal ascendancy, the House of Commons the most powerful body in the State, in moderating permanently the ferocity of political factions and the intolerance of ecclesiastical legislation. A simple country squire, with neither large fortune nor great connections, he won the highest post in politics from rivals of brilliant talent, and he maintained himself in it for a longer period than any of his predecessors. No English minister had a sounder judgment in emergencies or a greater skill in reading and in managing men. He obtained a complete ascendancy over George I., although, the King speaking no English, and his minister no French or German, their only communications were in bad Latin, and although the favourite mistress of the King was his enemy. On the death of George I., when the other leading politicians turned at once to Mrs. Howard, the mistress of the new sovereign, as the future source of political power, Walpole at once recognised the ability and unobtrusive influence of the Queen, and by her friendship he was soon absolute at Court. Though George II. came to the throne with an intense prepossession against him, and though the King was as fond of war as his minister of peace, he soon acquired the same influence over the new sovereign as he had exercised over his father. His chancellor, Lord Macclesfield, excited a storm of indignation, and at last an impeachment, by corruptly selling masterships of Chancery; but Walpole, without unfairly abandoning his colleague, met the charges against him with such consummate tact and such judicious candour that the affair rather strengthened than weakened his administration. He managed the House of Commons with an admirable mixture of shrewdness and frankness, and his facility of access, his unfailing good humour, the ease with which he

threw aside the cares of office, his loud, ringing laugh, and the keen zest with which he rode to the hounds, contributed perhaps as much as his higher qualities to win the affections of the country squires, who were still so powerful in politics. Parliamentary government, under his auspices, acquired a definite form and a regular action, and he was a great Parliamentary leader at the time when the art of Parliamentary leadership was altogether new.

As a statesman the chief object of his policy was to avoid all violent concussions of opinion. He belonged to that class of legislators who recognise fully that government is an organic thing, that all transitions to be safe should be the gradual product of public opinion, that the great end of statesmanship is to secure the nation's practical well-being, and allow its social and industrial forces to develop unimpeded, and that a wise minister will carefully avoid exciting violent passions, provoking reactions, offending large classes, and generating enduring discontents. In many periods the policy of evading or postponing dangerous questions has proved revolutionary, or has, at least, increased the elements of agitation. In the time of Walpole, and in the degree in which he practised it, it was eminently wise. England was at this time menaced by one of the greatest calamities that can befall a nation—the evil of a disputed succession. Large classes were alienated from the Government. Strong religious and political passions had been aroused against it, and there were evident signs in many quarters of a disposition to subordinate national to dynastic considerations. In an earlier period of English history causes of this nature had deluged England with blood for more than sixty years. Since the time of Walpole very similar influences have corroded the patriotism and divided the energies of the leading nation on the Continent, and have led to the most crushing catastrophe in its history. To the systematic moderation of Walpole it is in a great degree due that the revolutionary spirit took no root in England, that the many elements of disaffection gradually subsided, and that the landed gentry were firmly attached to the new dynasty. To conciliate this class was a main branch of his policy, and if this course was dictated by his own party interests, it is equally true that it was eminently in accordance with the

interests of the country. The Revolution was in a great measure a movement of the town populations in opposition to the country gentry, and had it not been for the mediatorial influence of the aristocracy, who were connected politically with the first, and socially with the second, it might have led to a most dangerous antagonism of classes. It is, however, a remarkable fact that in the very first year of the Revolution, the Legislature, while gratifying the whole people by abolishing the unpopular hearth tax, conferred a special favour upon the landlords by a law granting bounties for the export of corn when the home price had sunk to a certain level.¹ That this measure was economically erroneous will now hardly be disputed, but it probably had a real political value, and its enactment immediately after the great Whig triumph is a striking illustration of the conciliatory spirit that has usually presided over English legislation. Still the country gentry were, on the whole, hostile to the change, and the chief burden of the additional taxation was thrown upon them. The land tax of four shillings in the pound, which was carried in 1692, was extremely unequal in its operation, for it was based on a valuation furnished chiefly by the landlords themselves, but in principle the equity of the tax was generally acknowledged. By no other form of taxation could a sufficient sum be raised to meet the expenses of the war. For many generations extraordinary emergencies had been met by temporary taxes upon land. The prevailing economical notion that of all forms of industry agriculture alone is really productive helped to justify the tax, and it also contributed to redress a serious injustice which had been done to other classes under Charles II. In that reign, as is well known, the feudal obligations which still rested upon land were abolished, and, as a compensation, excise duties were imposed on beer, ale, and other liquors, and on licences, and were assigned in perpetuity to the Crown; and thus the burden which had from time immemorial been attached to one particular species of property was shifted to the whole community.²

Under these circumstances the land tax required no justification, and at first met with no serious opposition. It is not surpris-

¹ 1 William and Mary, c. 12.

² See McCulloch on *Taxation*, p. 58. Sinclair on the *Revenue*, i. 300.

ing, however, that its unprecedented magnitude, and also the necessity of continuing it in time of peace, should have aggravated the irritation with which, on other grounds, the country gentry regarded the Revolution. Their political alienation was, perhaps, the most serious danger of the new Government. It was entirely impossible that the reigning family should be firmly established, and that constitutional Parliamentary government should continue if the landed gentry were estranged from the existing order of things; and their natural sympathies were strongly Tory, while Government, in the first two Hanoverian reigns, was exclusively Whig. The hatred the ordinary country gentlemen felt towards foreigners, towards traders, and towards Dissenters was hardly less strong than that dread of Popery which had induced them reluctantly to acquiesce in the Revolution. It was impossible, however, that they should long look upon Walpole as an enemy to their order or their interests. By birth and position he belonged to their class. He was so imbued with their tastes that, as Lord Hardwicke assures us, he always opened the letters of his gamekeeper before any others, even before the letters from the King.¹ The Saturday holiday of Parliament still remains as a memorial of his country habits, for, as the Speaker Onslow informs us, it was originally instituted in order that Walpole might once a week gratify his passion for hunting. In the contest upon the Peerage Bill, which beyond most questions touched the interests of the country gentry, Walpole was their special champion. He carefully humoured their prejudices, and he steadily laboured, sometimes by means that were censurable or unpopular, to reduce the land tax, which was their greatest burden. In 1731 and 1732 it sank for the first time since the Revolution to one shilling in the pound. To abolish it was the main object of his excise scheme. To keep it down he reimposed, in 1732, the salt tax, which had been abolished two years before, and in the following year withdrew 500,000*l.* from the Sinking Fund, which had been provided for the payment of the National Debt.

I have already shown how a similar spirit of caution and conciliation pervaded his religious policy, how he abstained from adopting any course which could arouse the dormant in-

¹ *Walpoliana*.

tolerance of the people, and contented himself by a mild administration of existing laws, by Latitudinarian Church appointments, and, by passing Acts of indemnity, with securing a large amount of practical liberty. He did nothing to relieve the Catholics at home, but his Protestantism, like all his other sentiments, was devoid of fanaticism, and it did not prevent him from co-operating cordially with Cardinal Fleury, who directed affairs in France, from holding frequent unofficial communications with Rome, and from acting with his usual good-nature towards individuals of the creed. The kind alacrity with which he assisted the promotion of an English Catholic priest at Avignon, who was recommended to him by Pope, is said to have given rise to those beautiful lines in which the great Catholic poet has traced his portrait.¹

A policy such as I have described is not much fitted to strike the imagination, but it was well suited to a period of disputed succession, and to the genius of a nation which has usually preferred cautious to brilliant statesmen, and which owes to this preference no small part of its political well-being. It may be added that there have been very few ministers whose more important judgments have been so uniformly ratified by posterity. The highest English interest of his time was probably the maintenance of the Hanoverian dynasty, and of the constitutional maxims of government it represented; and to Walpole more than to any other single man that maintenance was due. The greatest party blunder made during his time was unquestionably the impeachment of Sacheverell, and the most dangerous constitutional innovation was the Peerage Bill of Stanhope, but Walpole endeavoured privately to prevent the first, and was the chief cause of the rejection of the second. One of the happiest instances of the policy of Chatham was the

¹ 'Seen him I have; but in his happier hour
 Of social pleasure ill exchanged for power;
 Seen him uncumbered with the venal tribe,
 Smile without art, and win without a bribe.
 Would he oblige me? Let me only find
 He does not think me what he thinks mankind.'

Epilogues to the Satires.

The character will appear very favourable when we remember that Pope was the most intimate friend of Walpole's bitterest enemies. See Nichols's

Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century, v. p. 650. Chesterfield's *Miscellaneous Works*, appendix p. 41.



Excellent
manner in which he allayed the disloyalty of the Scotch, by appealing to their national and military pride, and forming out of their clans national regiments; but a precisely similar policy had been proposed by Duncan Forbes, in 1738, and warmly supported by Walpole, though the opposition of his colleagues, and the outcry that was raised about standing armies, prevented its realisation.¹ The calamities of the next period of English history were mainly due to the disastrous attempt to raise a revenue by the taxation of America; but this plan had, in 1739, been suggested to Walpole, who emphatically rejected it, adding, with admirable wisdom, that it had always been the object of his administration to encourage to the highest point the commercial prosperity of the colonies, that the more that prosperity was augmented, the greater would be the demand for English products, and that it was in this manner that the colonies should be a source of wealth to the mother country.² The first slight relaxation of the commercial restraints which excluded the colonies from intercourse with all foreign countries was due to Walpole, who carried, in 1730, an Act enabling Carolina and Georgia to send their rice direct in British vessels, manned by British sailors, to any part of Europe south of Cape Finisterre; and this measure, restricted as it was, had the effect of greatly developing the colonial plantations, and making their produce a successful rival to Egyptian rice, in the chief markets of Europe?³

On three occasions Walpole may be said to have been condemned by the almost unanimous voice of the people. He had warned Parliament of some at least of the dangers of the South Sea scheme. His warning was disregarded. The whole nation rushed with a frantic excitement into speculation, and, in the fearful calamities that ensued, Walpole was called in as the one man who could in some degree remedy the evil. His scheme of excise was made the object of absurd and factious misrepresentation. The name of excise was still associated in the popular mind with the hated memory of the Long Parliament, which had borrowed the impost from the Dutch, and had first introduced it into England. The increase in the number

¹ *Culloden Papers*, p. xxxi.

² *Annual Register*, 1765, p. 25.

³ Coxe's *Walpole*, i. 326-327.

of revenue officers that would be required—which was shown to be utterly insignificant—was represented as likely to give the Crown an overwhelming influence at elections. The scheme, which was limited to two or three articles in which gross frauds in the revenue had been detected, was described as a precursor to a general system of excise—a system, it was added, which could only be maintained by the employment of innumerable spies, who would penetrate into every household, and disturb the peace of every family. Walpole yielded to the clamour, but Pitt, who was one of the bitterest and one of the most honest of his opponents, long afterwards confessed his belief that the scheme was an eminently wise one,¹ and there is now scarcely an historian who does not share the opinion. The chief proximate cause of the downfall of Walpole was his reluctance to enter into that war with Spain which was advocated by all the leaders of the Opposition, and which at last became necessary, from the popular clamour they aroused. Burke, in one of his latest works, took the occasion of expressing his deep sense both of the injustice and the impolicy of this war, and he added that it had been his lot some years after to converse with many of the principal politicians who had raised the clamour that produced it, and that ‘none of them, no not one, did in the least defend the measure, or attempt to justify their conduct, which they as freely condemned as they would have done in commenting upon any proceeding in history in which they were wholly unconcerned.’²

The special field in which the ability of Walpole was most fitted to shine, was undoubtedly finance, and there was probably no exaggeration in the eulogy of a very able contemporary writer,³ who pronounced him to be ‘the best commercial minister this country ever produced.’ I have already adverted to the singularly enlightened views he had expressed about the colonial trade, to the prescience with which he warned his countrymen of the calamities that would ensue from the South Sea scheme, and to the almost unanimous verdict of posterity in favour of his excise scheme. I may add that he succeeded in a singularly short time, and at the expense of comparatively slight

¹ See Coxe's *Walpole*, i. 748.

² *Letter on a Regicide Peace.*

³ Tucker.

loss to the country, in restoring public credit after the collapse of the South Sea Company; that he was one of the first English statesmen who took efficient measures for the reduction of the National Debt; that he laid the foundation of the free-trade policy of the present century, by abolishing in a single year the duties on 106 articles of export, and on 38 articles of import; that the system of warehousing, or admitting as a temporary deposit, foreign goods, free of duty, to await exportation, which had been largely practised by the Dutch in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and which was one of the happiest measures of Huskisson in the nineteenth century, had been part of the excise scheme of Walpole; that by an alteration in the manner of borrowing by means of Exchequer Bills he saved the country the payment of a large amount of annual interest, and that no single feature of his speeches appeared to his contemporaries so admirable as the unfailing lucidity with which he treated the most intricate questions of finance. In all matters that were not connected with the maintenance of his Parliamentary position he was conspicuously parsimonious of public money, and his fertility of financial resource extorted from George I. the emphatic declaration that 'Walpole could make gold from nothing,' that 'he never had his equal in business.' The establishments were kept low. Credit was fully restored, and under the influence of a sound and pacific policy, and in the absence of meddling commercial laws, the wealth of the country rapidly increased. The abundance of money was so great that even the three-per-cents. were in 1737 at a premium. The average price of land rose in a few years from 20 or 21 to 25, 26 or even 27 years' purchase. The tonnage of British shipping was augmented in the six years that preceded 1729 by no less than 238,000 tons. Particular taxes were appropriated to the payment of the interest of the debt, and it was provided that when they were more than sufficient for the purpose, the surplus was to be paid into a sinking fund for the liquidation of the principal. Partly by the increase of the produce of these taxes, and partly by reductions of the interest of the debt, the sum annually paid into this sinking fund for some years rapidly increased. In 1717 it amounted to 323,427*l.*, in 1724 to 653,000*l.*, in 1738 to 1,231,127*l.* The value of the imports rose between 1708 and 1730 from

4,698,663*l.* to 7,780,019*l.*, that of the exports from 6,969,089*l.* to 11,974,135*l.* A corresponding progress was shown in the growth of the manufacturing towns, in the extension of almost every prominent form of industry, in the improved condition of the poorer classes of the community. The price of wheat in the first half of the eighteenth century steadily fell. During the fifty years that preceded 1700 the average price per quarter was 3*l.* 11*s.* During the forty years that preceded 1750 it had sunk to 1*l.* 16*s.*, but at the same time the price of labour underwent no corresponding diminution, and during the latter part of that time it had considerably risen.¹ *Excellent!*

The merits of Walpole in this respect were very great, for in the eyes of most impartial observers there was much in the financial condition of the country since the Revolution that was extremely serious. The expenses of the administration had increased, and the National Debt, which at the time of the Revolution was only 648,000*l.*, amounted on the death of William to more than sixteen millions, and on the accession of George I. to more than fifty-four millions. Accustomed as we are to the far more gigantic burden of our present debt, it is perhaps difficult for us to estimate the consternation with which this phenomenon was regarded, and the National Debt is historically so closely connected with the Revolution that Whig historians have shown a strong tendency to depreciate its importance. They have urged with truth that the existence of some debt was inevitable, that Italy, Holland, France, and Spain had already taken considerable steps in the same direction, that the increased perfection of military organisation, by adding largely to the cost of war, had made it eminently advisable to spread the expense of a great struggle over several years of peace, that in 1692, when the funded system began, it would have been impossible to have raised the war taxes within the year without seriously crippling industry and shaking the Government, and that, on the other hand, the abundance of money seeking investment made a loan peculiarly advisable. They

¹ Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, iii. pp. 147, 148. Malthus, *On Population*, book iii. c. x. Chalmers' *Estimate* (ed. 1794), pp. 107, 108. Craik's *Hist. of Commerce*, ii. 201-203

Hallam's *Const. Hist.* iii. p. 302. Coxe's *Walpole*, c. xlvii. Mill's *Hist. of British India*, bk. iv. c. i. Sinclair's *Hist. of the Revenue*.

have added, too, that the evils of a national debt have been greatly exaggerated, and that its advantages are by no means inconsiderable. It is certain, notwithstanding the prognostications of innumerable economists, that the material prosperity of England has steadily advanced in spite of its debt." It is certain that although a debt which a nation owes to itself is economically an evil, it is an evil of a very different magnitude from a debt owed to a foreign nation. There is also a real and a considerable advantage in the possession of a secure and easy mode of investing money accessible to all classes, universally known, and furnishing the utmost facilities for transfer. Nor should it be forgotten that a financial system which gives a large proportion of the people a direct pecuniary interest in the stability of the Government is a great pledge of order and a firm bond of national cohesion.

But, admitting these arguments, the evils of national debts, both moral and economical, are very serious. Economically they almost invariably imply an enormous waste of capital with a proportionate injury to the working classes. The principal of the debt is usually spent unproductively by the Government as revenue, and it is drawn in a large part from capital which would have been otherwise productively employed and which forms part of the wage fund of the nation. It is a transparent though common fallacy to suppose that it reproduces itself in interest. A moment's reflection is sufficient to show that, except in the rare cases in which the borrowed money is employed in some reproductive work, no such interest accrues, and that the annual sum which the Government engages to pay to its creditors is derived from other sources, from a general taxation levied on funds part of which, at least, would otherwise have been productively employed. And the economical evil of this dissipation of capital is greatly aggravated by moral causes. Many forms of lavish unproductive expenditure, and especially the splendours and the excitements of war, are naturally so popular that any minister or sovereign whose position is insecure or whose character is ambitious is almost irresistibly tempted to resort to them if there is no strong counteracting influence. The natural restraint upon these extravagances is the necessity of raising by taxation the whole sum that is required. The sacrifice and disturbance caused by such an increase of taxation arouse a feeling



which at once checks the progress of the evil. But by the funding system this invaluable restraint is almost wholly removed. The money that is required is borrowed. The increase of taxation that is necessary to pay the mere interest appears trifling and almost imperceptible. The process which should be resorted to, only in extreme emergencies of the State, is found so easy and popular that it is constantly repeated. The nation, losing all habit of financial sacrifice, borrows in every moment of difficulty, contents itself in time of prosperity with simply paying the interest of the debt, and makes no serious effort to reduce the principal. Thus by stealthy and insidious steps the evil creeps on till the national prosperity and industry are heavily mortgaged, and the consequences of the crimes and blunders of one generation are entailed upon the remotest posterity. In ancient times, the traces of the most horrible war were soon effaced. In a few years the misery and desolation that followed it were forgotten. The waste of national wealth which might appear a more permanent calamity was so immediately and acutely felt that it at once produced an increase of energy and self-sacrifice to replace it, and thus the effects of political errors usually disappeared almost with those who perpetrated them. In modern times the chief expenditure of a war is raised by a loan, which is often drawn from the capital that would otherwise have given employment to the poor, which rarely or never produces in the community any considerable increase of economy, and which always perpetuates the calamity of war by throwing its accumulated burdens upon a distant posterity. Every English household is now suffering from the American policy of North and the French policy of Pitt, and the political errors of the Second Empire will be felt by Frenchmen as a present evil long after the children and grandchildren of those who perpetrated them are in their graves.

Nor is it true that the sinister predictions of such economists as Hume and Adam Smith, though they have been falsified by the result, rested upon any fundamental error of principle. If the National Debt before the American War did not arrest, though it undoubtedly retarded, the material progress of England, this was merely because the resources of the country were so large

and its circumstances and situation so favourable that the normal increase of wealth was considerably greater than the increase of the burden. If the debts that were contracted during the great American and French Wars did not ruin the country it was owing to a series of events which no human sagacity could have predicted. The great mechanical inventions of Hargreaves, Arkwright, Crompton, Watt, and Stephenson, followed by a peace of almost unexampled duration, and by a policy of free trade, have produced an increase of wealth that is wholly unparalleled in the history of mankind; while Californian and Australian gold, by depreciating the value of money, have considerably lightened the burden of the debt, at the cost of great loss and injury to the fundholder. It remains, however, as true as ever that European nations have never in time of peace paid off their debts with a rapidity at all corresponding to that with which they accumulated them in time of war; that the increased taxation necessitated by national debts has led, and may easily lead, to national bankruptcy; and that long before it reaches this point, it produces distress, difficulty, and privation, and seriously endangers the security of the State. It is one of the worst features of national debts that they deprive nations of the power of regulating their expenditure by their resources. A permanent taxation, which may be easily borne in time of great commercial prosperity, may become crushing if the course of commerce takes another channel, and if the income of the nation is proportionately reduced. History shows how easily this may happen. A war, a new invention, the exhaustion of some essential element of national industry, the progress of a rival, or a change in the value or conditions of labour, may speedily turn the stream of wealth, while the burden of debt remains. And, indeed, this burden itself is one of the most likely causes of such a change. When other things are equal, the least indebted nation will always have the advantage in industrial competition; for the heavy taxation necessitated by debts at once raises prices and reduces profits, and thus causes the emigration both of capital and labour.

These considerations may serve in some degree to justify the great dread with which the National Debt was regarded by the wisest political observers in the eighteenth century. Their

judgments were not formed merely by theory. France actually proclaimed herself bankrupt in 1715 and 1769. Holland had already entered into a period of commercial decadence, which was largely due to the emigration of capital resulting from the excessive taxation rendered necessary by her debt. The whole sum raised by taxation in England at the time of the Revolution but slightly exceeded two millions, and it was raised with difficulty, and in the hard years that followed that event the produce of the taxes considerably diminished.¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that the growth of the debt should have appeared bewildering in its rapidity, and that very erroneous estimates should have been formed of the capabilities of the nation. Thus Davenant, the chief commercial writer under William and Anne, predicted in 1699 that England could never flourish in trade and manufactures till the greater part of the National Debt was liquidated, and the annual taxation of the country reduced to about 2,300,000*l.* 'Unless this can be compassed,' he added, 'we shall languish and decay every year. Our gold and silver will be carried off by degrees; rents will fall, the purchase of land will decrease; wool will sink in its price; our stock of shipping will be diminished; farmhouses will go to ruin; industry will decay, and we shall have upon us all the visible marks of a declining people.'² These figures, however, were speedily passed. Carteret complained bitterly in 1738 that the estimates had now risen to no less than six millions.³ Smollett considered the sum of ten millions which was raised in 1743 'enormous.'⁴ Bolingbroke noted that the Parliamentary aids from the year 1740 exclusively, to the year 1748 inclusively, amounted to about 55½ millions, 'a sum,' he added, 'that will appear incredible to future generations.'⁵ The most acute observers imagined that the nation had now all but touched the extreme limits of her resources. As early as 1735 Lord Hervey wrote, 'I do not see how it would be possible on any exigence, or for the support of the most necessary war, for England to raise above one million a year more than it now raises.'⁶ 'The Craftsman,'

¹ See Sinclair's *Hist. of the Revenue*, i. 406-407.

² Davenant's *Works* (1771), ii. 283.

³ Smollett's *Hist. of England*, iii.

⁴ *Hist. of England*, iii. 120.

⁵ *Reflections on the Present State of the Nation*.

⁶ Hervey's *Memoirs*, i. 487.

the great organ of Bolingbroke and Pulteney, describing the condition of the country in 1736, says, 'The vast load of debt under which the nation still groans is the true source of all these calamities and gloomy prospects of which we have so much reason to complain. To this has been owing that multiplicity of burthensome taxes which have more than doubled the price of the common necessities of life within a few years past, and thereby distressed the poor labourer and manufacturer, disabled the farmer to pay his rent, and put even gentlemen of plentiful estates under the greatest difficulties to make a tolerable provision for their families.'¹ Walpole himself declared that the country could not stand under a debt exceeding a hundred millions.² Hume maintained that the ruinous effect of the debt already threatened the very existence of the nation,³ and Chesterfield, only a few months before the great ministry of Pitt, predicted that in the next year the army must be unpaid or reduced, as it would be impossible for the country a second time to raise twelve millions.⁴

By far the larger part of the existing National Debt was created by Tory Governments, and in pursuance of a Tory policy. In the time of Walpole, however, the debt was looked upon as distinctively Whig, the special creation of the Revolution. And this view, though not rigidly accurate, contained a very large measure of truth. The events of the Revolution drew England into a series of great land wars upon the Continent, which made an unprecedented military expenditure inevitable, while the position of the new Government was so insecure that it did not venture largely to increase taxation. The land tax, which was by far the most important addition made to the revenue under William III., was in a great degree merely a compensation for the abolition of the hearth tax. Besides this, the insecurity of the new establishment raised enormously the rate of interest on Government loans.⁵ It rendered necessary a considerable standing army in time of peace, and it was a

¹ No. 502.

² Horace Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.*, vol. i. p. 103.

³ *Hist. of England*, c. xxi. See, too, his essay on *Public Credit*, and the curious note appended to it.

⁴ June 1756. *Miscellaneous Works*, iv. 185.

⁵ For the extravagant terms on which loans were raised under William, see Sinclair's *Hist. of the Revenue*, i. 417-421.

temptation to Whig Governments to strengthen their position by multiplying a class of persons who were bound to the new dynasty by pecuniary ties. In the reigns of William and of Anne, money was chiefly raised by anticipating the produce of certain taxes for a limited number of years, by annuities granted on very extravagant conditions for a term of years or for lives, and also, from the great mercantile corporations in return for commercial privileges. After the accession of the Hanoverian dynasty most loans took the form of perpetual annuities. The attempts which were made to diminish the burden of the debt consisted chiefly in the reduction of its interest. This policy appears to have been first pursued in Holland. The Dutch debt bore interest of five per cent., and when in 1655 it was found possible for the State to obtain money at four per cent. the creditors were offered the alternative of the reduction of the interest or the payment of the principal. The former was readily accepted. An annual saving of 1,400,000 guilders was thus made, and it was applied to the gradual payment of the principal of the debt.¹ In 1685 Pope Innocent XI., in a similar manner, reduced the interest on the Roman debt from four to three per cent.² I have already noticed the arrangement which Godolphin made with the East India Company in 1708 for the reduction of the interest upon a large sum which the Government had borrowed from that company; but no general scheme for the reduction of the interest of the debt was devised before that which was originated by Walpole in 1716, and carried out by Stanhope in the following year. For sometime the increase of prosperity had greatly lowered the normal rate of interest. Under William the Government had borrowed money at seven and eight per cent. Under Anne it usually borrowed at five or six, and in 1714 the legal rate of interest was reduced to five per cent., though the Government funds still paid a much higher rate. Under these circumstances it was found practicable to reduce the interest of the debt to five per cent., the Bank and the South Sea Company, which were the chief creditors, not only consenting to the reduction, but also lending money to pay off the creditors who refused to acquiesce. Particular taxes had been appropriated for the payment of the interest, and as they now yielded more than was sufficient, the

¹ Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, ii, 463.

² *Ibid.* p. 622.

surplus was formed into a sinking fund accumulating for the payment of the principal of the debt.¹

In this manner a very considerable saving was made, and a step taken which was more than once repeated. The payment of the debt, however, was not pursued with any energy by Walpole. A second reduction of interest took place in 1727, and it greatly increased the sinking fund, but that sinking fund was at the disposal of the Government, and the temptation of drawing from it in every season of emergency was irresistible. It is not necessary to attribute any very high motives to Walpole in this matter, but he would probably have maintained that in the condition in which England then was, it was more important to make the people contented, and to reconcile the country gentry to the new dynasty, than to pay off the debt. Certain it is that he made the reduction of the land tax rather than the payment of the debt the end of his policy. For a few years the sinking fund was applied to the purpose for which it was intended, but in 1733 500,000*l.* were taken from it for the services of the year; in 1734 1,200,000*l.* were taken for similar purposes, and in 1735 it was all anticipated. But though no great credit can in this respect be given to Walpole, his Government was at least an economical one, and the care with which he husbanded the resources of the country, and the skill with which he developed its commerce, broke the chain of associations which connected the Whig party with a policy of debt and of extravagance.

Still more remarkable, when we consider the period in which he lived, was his deference to public opinion. Parliament was at this time no faithful representative of the public feeling, and in Parliament he was supreme. But no Court favour, no confidence in an obsequious majority, ever induced him, except in a single case to which I shall hereafter advert, to fall into that neglect of unrepresented public opinion which has been the fatal error of so many politicians and the parent of so many revolutions. In few periods of English history have libels against the Government been more virulent or more able; but, from policy or temperament, or both, Walpole treated them, for the most part, with perfect indifference. 'No Government,' he boasted in one of his speeches, 'ever punished so few libels, and

¹ See Macpherson, Chalmers, and Sinclair.

no Government ever had provocation to punish so many.' In the last reign Parliament and the tribunals had vied with each other in their persecution of the press. Defoe, Steele, Drake, Binckes, Tutchin, Sacheverell, Asgill, and a crowd of obscure printers had been fined, imprisoned, pilloried, censured, or expelled from Parliament. But under Walpole the system of repression almost ceased, and if the extreme violence and scurrility of the stage, and the success with which Gay and Fielding employed it against his administration, induced him, in 1737, to carry a law providing that no play could be publicly acted without the licence of the Chamberlain, this measure can hardly be regarded as one of excessive severity, as it remains in force to the present day. As a minister, Walpole combined an extreme and exaggerated severity of party discipline within Parliament, with the utmost deference for the public opinion beyond its walls. In his party he aspired to and attained the position of sole minister. He gradually displaced every man of eminence and character who could become his rival, avoided as much as possible calling cabinet councils, lest they should furnish the elements of an opposition, and usually matured his measures around a dinner-table with two or three colleagues who were specially conversant with the matter in question; sometimes, when the project was one of law reform, with lawyers of the Opposition.¹ Important despatches were received and answered without being communicated to his colleagues, and if they ventured to resist his decisions he treated them with the utmost despotism. 'Sir Robert,' said the old Duchess of Marlborough, with her usual shrewdness, 'never likes any but fools and such as have lost all credit.' Lord Hardwicke and Mr. Pelham were constantly employed in composing the quarrels which arose from the slights he continually inflicted on the Duke of Newcastle; and the strength of the Opposition that overwhelmed him was mainly due to the number of men of talent whom he had discarded. When the excise scheme was abandoned he peremptorily dismissed Lord Chesterfield, the Duke of Montrose, Lord Marchmont, and Lord Clinton, who had revolted against his standard, and, by an extreme and unjustifiable stretch of authority, even deprived the

¹ See Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, vi. p. 110.

Duke of Bolton and Lord Cobham of their military rank. But the minister who was so imperious in his dealings with his colleagues or subordinates rarely failed to mark and obey the first indication of a public opinion that was hostile to his projects. His withdrawal of Wood's halfpence, when they had excited the opposition of the Irish people, the uniform moderation of his religious policy, his abandonment of his project of excise, are all examples of his constant respect for the wishes of the people. Few ministers have had greater facilities for carrying out a favourite line of policy in defiance of their wishes. No minister more steadily resisted the temptation. His conduct on the excise question, as it is related by an old Member of Parliament who enjoyed his intimate friendship, is typical of his whole career. He possessed in a full degree the pride and parental affection of a statesman for the great measure of his creation, and he was keenly sensible of the humiliation of abandoning it at the dictation of an Opposition. No one knew better how irrational was the popular clamour, or how factious were the motives of those who instigated it. The Bill passed by large majorities through its earlier stages, but the minister saw that the country was deeply moved; and the evening before the final stage was reached he summoned his adherents, who had so far borne him in triumph, and he consulted with them on the course he should pursue. Without a single dissentient voice they urged him to persevere, and pledged themselves to carry the Bill. Walpole remained silent till they had all spoken, when he rose, and having stated how conscious he was of having meant well, he proceeded to say that 'in the present inflamed temper of the people the Act could not be carried into execution without an armed force; that there would be an end to the liberty of England if supplies were to be raised by the sword. If, therefore, the resolution was to go on with the Bill, he would immediately wait upon the King, and desire His Majesty's permission to resign his office, for he would not be the minister to enforce taxes at the expense of blood.'

¹ Almon's *Anecdotes of Chatham*, ii. 106. Coxe's *Walpole*, i. 403-404. The authority for this anecdote is Mr. White, the Member for Retford, who

was an intimate friend of Walpole; it is itself quite in harmony with what we know of the character of Walpole, and Archdeacon Coxe fully

English political history contains many more dazzling episodes than this. It contains very few which a constitutional statesman will regard as more worthy of his admiration.

A kindred spirit of moderation, in the later years of his life, marked his dealings with his opponents, though in this respect his merits have, I think, been much exaggerated. Among the benefits achieved by the Revolution, one of the greatest was that reform of the law of treason which placed the political opponents of the Government under efficient legal guarantees, put an end to the intolerable scandal of the Stuart State trials, and introduced a new spirit of clemency and amenity into English politics. The change was, however, only very gradually effected. The Treason Act of 1696 did not extend to the case of those who were impeached by the House of Commons, and the unhappy noblemen who suffered for the rebellions of 1715 and 1745 were compelled to defend their lives almost without legal assistance. The counsel assigned to them were not allowed to cross-examine any witness, to give the prisoner any assistance, public or private, while matter of fact only was in question, or to hold any communication with him; though if a disputed question of law arose in the course of the trial, they might speak to it. A miserable scene took place, after the former rebellion, at the trial of Lord Wintoun. He is said to have been, at best, a man of very weak intellect, and he was evidently utterly bewildered by the scene and situation in which he found himself, and utterly incapable of conducting his defence. Again and again he implored the Lord High Steward to allow counsel to examine the witnesses, and to speak in his behalf. He professed himself, with truth, entirely incapable of conducting a cross-examination, or of presenting his defence; but he was again and again told that the law refused him the legal assistance he so imperatively required.¹ Hardly less scandalous was the scene exhibited thirty years later, when Lord Lovat, an old man of eighty, almost ignorant of the very rudiments of the law, and with the grotesque manners of a half-savage Highlander, was compelled, without assistance, to defend his life against

admits it. At the same time it must be acknowledged that it is not easy to find a place for the transaction in the history of the Excise Bill as nar-

rated in Lord Hervey's *Memoirs*.

¹ Townsend's *Hist. of the House of Commons*, ii. 286-293.

an array of the most skilful lawyers in England. The injustice was so glaring that it at last shocked the public conscience, and a measure was moved and carried, without opposition, in 1747, for allowing the same privileges of counsel to prisoners in cases of impeachment as in cases of indictment.¹ For many years after the Revolution, parliamentary impeachment was looked upon as an ordinary weapon of political warfare, and the Whig party, though far less guilty than their opponents, are responsible for a few scandalous instances of tyrannical severity. The execution of Sir John Fenwick, by a Bill of Attainder, at a time when there was no sufficient legal evidence to procure his condemnation, has left a deep stain upon the Government of William. The imprisonment without trial of Bernardi and four other conspirators, who were concerned in the plot against the life of William in 1696, was continued by special Acts of Parliament to the end of the reign of William and through the whole of the reign of Anne. In the first year of George I. a petition for their release was presented to the House of Lords; but the Whig Government persuaded the House to refuse even to take it into consideration. It was rejected without a division, Lord Townshend expressing his astonishment that any member of that august assembly should speak in favour of such execrable wretches;² and Bernardi at last died, in 1736, at the age of eighty, having been imprisoned, without condemnation, for no less than forty years, by the Acts of six successive Parliaments.³ Walpole himself was a leading agent in the impeachment of the Tory ministers of Anne, for the negotiation of a peace which had received the assent of two Parliaments; and Oxford remained for two years in the Tower before his trial and acquittal. The severities of the Government against the prisoners who were implicated in the rebellion of 1715 are susceptible of more defence, but it is at least certain that the ministers by no means erred on the side of clemency; and it is worthy of notice that Walpole on this occasion uniformly advocated severity, and even induced Parliament to adjourn between the condemnation and execution

¹ 20 George ii. c. 30. Horace Walpole to Mason, May 1747.

² *Parl. Hist.* vii. 61-62.

³ Bernardi's *Autobiography*. Towns-

end's *Hist. of the House of Commons*, ii. 205-206. Johnson has made a touching allusion to this case in his *Life of Pope*.

of the rebel lords, in order to render useless, petitions for their reprieve.¹ But whatever may have been his conduct at this time, in the later part of his career he displayed a uniform generosity to opponents, even when he knew them to be implicated in Jacobite conspiracies, and when they were therefore in a great degree in his power. He made it a great aim to banish violence from English politics, and an illustrious modern critic, who was far from favourable to him, has said that 'he was the minister who gave to our Government the character of lenity, which it has generally preserved.'²

To these merits we must add his ardent love of peace, and the skill with which, during many years and under circumstances of great difficulty, he succeeded in preserving it. He served two sovereigns, the first of whom cared nothing, and the second very little, for any but Continental politics; and George II. was passionately warlike, and anxious beyond all things to distinguish himself in the field. He was at the head of a party which by tradition and principle was extremely warlike, which originally represented the reaction against the arrogant ambition of Lewis XIV. and the abject servility of Charles II., and which under William and Anne had aspired to make England the arbiter of Europe. He was embarrassed also during a great part of his career by an Opposition which never scrupled for party purposes to aggravate the difficulties of foreign policy; and the whole Continent was troubled by the restless plotting of ambitious and perfectly unscrupulous rulers. In the last years of George I. Europe was again on the verge of a general conflagration. When peace had been established between France and Spain in 1720 the Infanta, who was then only four years old, was betrothed to Lewis XV., and she was brought to France to be educated as a Frenchwoman. By thus postponing for many years the marriage of the young king, the Regent greatly strengthened the probability of his own succession to the throne; but on the death of the Regent in December 1723, the Duke of Bourbon, who succeeded to power, determined to hasten the royal marriage. He accordingly broke off the Spanish alliance, sent the Infanta back to Spain, and negotiated an almost immediate marriage be-

¹ Coxe's *Walpole*, i. 72-73.

² Macaulay.



tween the French king and the daughter of Stanislaus, the deposed King of Poland. The affront thus offered to the Spanish court, together with the influence of Ripperda, the Dutch adventurer, who now directed Spanish policy, produced or at least accelerated, a great change in the aspect of European politics. The Emperor and the King of Spain, whose rivalry had so long distracted Europe, now gravitated to one another, and a close alliance was concluded between them in April 1725.¹ The Spanish Government agreed to recognise the Pragmatic Sanction, which provided that the Austrian succession should descend to the daughter of Charles VI., and it ceded almost every point that was at issue between the Courts. Each Power agreed to recognise the right of succession of the other, and to defend the other in case of attack; and Spain gratified the maritime ambition which was one of the strongest passions of the Emperor, by recognising the Ostend Company, by placing Austrian sailors in her seaports on the footing of the most favoured nation, and by promising them special protection in all her dominions.

Of all mercantile bodies the Ostend Company was the most offensive to England and Holland. Founded soon after the cession of the Spanish Netherlands to Austria, it was intended among other objects to establish a trade by the subjects of the Emperor with India, and thus to break down the monopoly which the India companies of England and Holland had established.² Two ships had sailed from Ostend, in 1717, under the passports of the Emperor, and several others soon followed their example. The Dutch seized some of the Ostend ships as violating their monopoly. The Emperor retaliated by granting commissions of reprisal. Laws were passed in England in 1721 and 1723 strengthening the English monopoly, and authorising the English to fine any foreigners who were found infringing it, triple the sum that was embarked; but the Emperor, in 1723, gave a regular charter to the Ostend Company, and in defiance of the Dutch and English Governments it rose rapidly into prominence. Its recognition by Spain was therefore a matter of very considerable political moment. It soon, however, became known among statesmen that other objects were de-

¹ See, on this treaty, Ranke's *Hist. of Prussia*, i. 190-192.

² Mill's *Hist. of India*, bk. iv. c. 1.

signed—that Austria engaged to assist Spain in wresting Gibraltar and Minorca from England; that there was a project, by a marriage between Maria Theresa and Don Carlos, the eldest son of Philip's second wife, of placing the Imperial sceptre in the hands of a Spanish prince, and making Austria supreme in Italy by joining Parma, Piacenza, and Tuscany, which were assured to Don Carlos, to Naples and Sicily, which already belonged to Austria; that Charles VI., partly from religious fanaticism, and partly from personal resentment, was boasting of his intention to drive the Protestant line from the English throne. Russia, after the death of Peter, was governed by Catherine, who, being still irritated with England on account of the policy of Hanover, and especially anxious to obtain Sleswig for her son-in-law, the Duke of Holstein, favoured, and soon joined, the new alliance. The King and Townshend, contrary to the first wishes of Walpole, concluded a rival confederation of England, France, and Prussia,¹ at Hanover, in September 1725; but in the following year Prussia, which had acceded to the alliance only on the condition of England recognising her claims to Juliers and Berg, changed sides.² Holland, Sweden, and Denmark were afterwards ranged with England, and as the probabilities of war became more imminent, an army of about 44,000 Swedes, Danes, and Hessians was subsidised. England and France both contributed to the expense, but 12,000 Hessians were taken into the exclusive pay of England. Nearly all Europe was preparing for war. George I., as Elector of Hanover, increased his troops from 16,000 to 22,000 men, and as King of England from 18,000 to 26,000. The Spaniards, relying on the conditional promise which George I. had vainly made as an inducement to Spain to abstain from hostilities in 1715, and on the letter which he had written to the King of Spain in 1721, expressing his willingness to restore Gibraltar with the consent of Parliament, demanded the restitution of that fortress. Lord Townshend valued it little more than Stanhope² had done, but public opinion in England would make any attempt

¹ See, on Walpole's strong objection to the Treaty of Hanover, Lord Hervey's *Memoirs*, i. 110-111. This is said to have been the beginning of the difference between Walpole and

Townshend, and the first occasion in which the former meddled very actively with foreign affairs.

² In a letter to Stephen Poyntz (June 3, 1728) he said: 'What you propose in

at concession wholly impossible, and in February 1726-27 the Spaniards began hostilities by besieging Gibraltar. The Emperor prepared to invade Holland. The Russian forces, by sea and land, were rapidly organised. France massed her troops on the frontiers of Germany. An English squadron had already sailed to the Baltic. Another threatened the Spanish coast, while a third prevented the departure of the Spanish galleons from the Indies.

The Treaty of Hanover was for more than a generation bitterly assailed in England. Its justification rests upon the reality of the secret articles of the Treaty of Vienna, and although the evidence in the possession of the Government appears to have been very sufficient,¹ it was not of a kind that could be publicly produced. The existence of these articles was announced in the King's speech in January 1726-27,² but it was officially, and in very angry terms, denied by the Austrian minister. In England the Treaty of Hanover was denounced as intended only to protect the German dominions of the King, as strengthening, by our alliance, the Power on the Continent we had most reason to fear, as placing us unnecessarily in hostility to the Emperor, who was the main obstacle to French ambition. It was, however, a defensive measure elicited by a grave danger, and it was inevitable that a war with the Emperor should centre chiefly in Germany. Walpole disapproved of some of its provisions, and especially of the extravagance of the subsidy to Sweden, and he made it a main object of his policy to moderate the demands of his colleagues and of the King, and to delay, restrict, and if possible avert, the war. His conduct, however, during the tangled events that followed was not, I think, marked by much sagacity, and in his dealings with Spain, at least, he showed a want of resolution that verged

relation to Gibraltar is certainly very reasonable, and is exactly conformable to the opinion which you know I have always entertained concerning that place. But you cannot but be sensible of the violent and almost superstitious zeal which has of late prevailed among all parties in this kingdom against any scheme for the restitution of Gibraltar upon any conditions whatsoever. And I am afraid that the bare mention of a proposal which carried the most distant appearance

of laying England under any obligation of ever parting with that place would be sufficient to put the whole nation in a flame.—Coxe's *Walpole*, ii. 631.

¹ See the intercepted letters given in Coxe's *Walpole*, ii. p. 498-515, and the full account of the secret articles afterwards given by Ripperda himself. Benjamin Keene to the Duke of Newcastle. Coxe's *Walpole*, ii. 606-607.

² *Parl. Hist.* viii. 524.

upon pusillanimity. He refused with much wisdom to listen to a plan of Townshend for the conquest and partition of the Austrian Netherlands, or to allow himself to be hurried into hostilities by the very arrogant terms of a memorial in which the Austrian ambassador contradicted the assertions of the King's speech relating to the secret articles of the treaty of 1725. He sent Admiral Hosier to the West Indies to blockade the Spanish galleons in Porto Bello, though peace was still subsisting between the two countries, but he bound him by strict instructions not to attack the Spaniards unless they came out. The history of this expedition was a very tragic one. A prize of inestimable value lay within the grasp of the English sailors, who were forbidden to seize it, while the deadly fever of the country swept them away by hundreds. The fleet rotted in inaction, and the admiral is said to have died of a broken heart. His fate, commemorated in a noble ballad by Glover, afterwards moved the English people to the highest point of pity and indignation, and the subsequent conduct of Walpole in refraining from declaring war against the Spaniards when they attacked Gibraltar was very reasonably censured. His object was to prevent, if possible, a European war, and that object was accomplished. Ripperda, who had contributed so largely to the complication, had been disgraced as early as May 1726. A month later the Duke of Bourbon was replaced by Cardinal Fleury, and that eminently wise, virtuous, and pacific minister, during many years, co-operated cordially with the peace policy of Walpole. In the May of the following year the death of the Czarina withdrew Russia from the hostile league. The Emperor, finding perplexities and difficulties multiplying about him, receded from his engagements, left the Spanish forces to waste away in a hopeless enterprise against Gibraltar, and on the last day of May 1727 he signed the preliminaries of a peace with England, France, and Holland. An armistice was concluded, and the Ostend Company suspended for seven years, with the secret understanding that it was not to be revived; the chief questions at issue were referred to a future congress, and a war which threatened to be general shrank into the smallest dimensions. The Spanish position seemed hopeless, and the Spanish ambassador at Vienna accepted the preliminaries of peace, and engaged that the siege of Gibraltar should at once

be raised, and that a ship belonging to the South Sea Company which the Spaniards had captured should be restored.

Philip, however, for a time refused to ratify these preliminaries. George I. died suddenly in Germany on June 11, 1727, and some expectations appear to have been entertained at the Spanish Court of a Jacobite restoration, of a period of disturbance and impotence, or at least of a great change in English policy, arising from the violent hostility of the new King to the ministers of his father. But these expectations were disappointed. After a few days of suspense, Walpole was fully confirmed in his previous power, and the substitution of a king who at least knew the language of his country, for one who never ceased to be a complete foreigner, somewhat strengthened the new establishment without perceptibly altering its policy. The refusal of Philip, however, to ratify the preliminaries threatened a renewal of danger; the Emperor showed some signs of fresh activity, and, as a measure of precaution, a new German treaty was made in November, securing the assistance of the Duke of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel, in the event of an attack upon Hanover. At last, in March 1728, the long negotiation was brought a stage further by the signature of a convention at the Pardo; a congress was held at Soissons, which led to no definite results; but, by the combined influence of Fleury and Walpole, a treaty was concluded at Seville in March 1729, by which the Spanish Queen succeeded in avenging herself for the desertion of the Emperor and taking a new step towards the attainment of one of the favourite objects of her life. To secure the succession of her son in Tuscany and Parma, it was agreed that those provinces should be at once garrisoned, not, as the Quadruple Alliance had promised, by neutral troops, but by 6,000 Spanish soldiers. Gibraltar was not mentioned in the treaty, and this silence was regarded as a renunciation of the claims of Spain. The commercial privileges conceded to the Emperor by the Treaty of Vienna, which had been so obnoxious to England, were revoked. The commerce of the English and French with the Spanish dominions was re-established on the same footing as before 1725, injuries done to English ships or interests were to be compensated, and a close defensive alliance was established between France, Spain, and England.

The Treaty of Seville has been justly regarded as one of the great triumphs of French diplomacy. It closed the breach which had long divided the courts of France and of Spain, and at the same time it detached both England and Spain from the Emperor, and left him isolated in Europe. He resented it bitterly, protested against the introduction of Spanish troops into Italy as a violation of the Quadruple Alliance, threatened to resist it by force, and delayed the execution of this part of the treaty during the whole of 1730. In the meantime the condition of Europe had become very dangerous. Spain was much exasperated at the delay, and there was much danger that England would find herself forced, in conjunction with France and Spain, into a war which would most probably ultimately extend to the Austrian Netherlands, and might result in acquisitions by France very dangerous to England. The resignation of Townshend had by this time made Walpole more prominent in foreign affairs, and he opened a secret negotiation with the Emperor in order to avert war. England undertook to guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction, by which the Emperor was endeavouring to secure for his daughter the inheritance of his hereditary dominions, and on this condition he consented to the admission of the Spanish troops. The new Treaty of Vienna was signed without the participation or assent of France, in March 1731; the danger of a European war was again for a time averted, and on October 17, a fleet of sixteen British men-of-war escorted the Spanish troops to Italy.

The policy of England during all these tortuous negotiations was not always wise, consistent, or even strictly honourable, but its first object was the maintenance of European peace, and it shows how widely the Whig party under Walpole had in this respect departed from the traditions of William III. and of Godolphin. In the next war his firm will alone prevented England from being involved. In February 1732-33 Augustus II., King of Poland, died, and the succession was at once contested between Stanislaus and Augustus, the Elector of Saxony. The first, who had previously been placed on the Polish throne by Charles XII., but dethroned by the Russians, was now elected by the Poles; and, as he was the father of the young Queen of France, Fleury was compelled very reluctantly, by the military party

at Court, to support his claims by the sword. His competitor, who was the son of the former king, was supported by Russia, which regarded Stanislaus as a natural enemy, and he succeeded in inducing the Emperor Charles VI. to enter very gratuitously into the conflict, partly through a desire to prevent what was supposed to be an extension of French influence, and partly because Augustus offered to guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction. The war lasted till 1735,¹ but it speedily changed its character and its objects. The Polish episode sank into comparative insignificance, and the French carried their arms with brilliant success into Germany and into the Austrian territories of Italy. Spain and Sardinia joined against the Emperor. The 6,000 Spanish soldiers whom England had so recently escorted into Italy, marched in conjunction with Sardinian troops and with a body of French auxiliaries, upon the Milanese, and the result of the war was a very considerable modification of the balance of power. With the exception of the Duchies of Parma and Placentia, which were now ceded, and of a portion of the Milanese which was restored, to Austria, the Emperor lost all territory in Italy. Naples and Sicily passed to Don Carlos, and the greater part of the Milanese to the King of Sardinia. The Poles, finding themselves almost deserted by France and incapable of resisting Russia, elected Augustus, while Stanislaus was compensated in a way which greatly surprised Europe, and had a very important influence upon future policy. For several generations one of the great ends of French ambition had been the acquisition of Lorraine, which commanded one of the chief roads from Germany to France. Twice already—in the Thirty Years' War and in the War of the League of Augsburg—it had passed under French dominion, but in each case France had been compelled to restore it at the peace, though she retained a moral control over its Duke which almost amounted to sovereignty. In Italy the last of the Medici was now hastening to the tomb, and Fleury proposed that the Duke of Lorraine, who was affianced to Maria Theresa, and thus closely connected with the Austrian interest, should succeed to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany; that Stanislaus, retaining the title of king, should

¹ The preliminaries of peace were signed in 1735, but the definitive peace in 1738.

obtain possession of the Duchies of Lorraine and Bar; and that on his death those Duchies should be for ever united to France. In consideration of this arrangement, France agreed to restore her conquests in Germany, and to guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction. The terms were accepted, and thus France, under the guidance of one of the most pacific of her ministers, obtained a more real and considerable accession of power than any which had been gained by the ambition of Lewis XIV.

It was only with extreme difficulty that Walpole could induce England to remain passive during the struggle. The King was vehemently hostile to the French. As a German prince and a member of the Empire, he saw with the utmost indignation the diminution of the Imperial power, and he was full of a boyish eagerness to distinguish himself in the field. It was no slight trial for the Power which was indisputably the mistress of the sea to see a French fleet sailing unmolested to the Baltic to support the cause of Stanislaus in the north, and a Spanish fleet in the following year transporting 20,000 men to Italy to add Sicily and Spain to the dominions of the House of Bourbon. The Cabinet was divided in opinion. Statesmen had learnt that the advocacy of war was the easiest way to the royal favour, and the Opposition Members were busy inflaming the passions of the people. In spite of the French alliance, which had been begun by Dubois and continued by Fleury, the sentiment of England was strongly anti-Gallican, and there were plausible arguments for intervention. The greatest danger to England lay in the power of France, and that power for several generations had been rapidly increasing. The sagacious administration of Richelieu and Mazarin, the decadence of Spain, the policy of Cromwell, who supported the growing power of France against the declining power of Spain, and the subservience of Charles II. and his successor to Lewis XIV., had together produced a French ascendancy which seemed likely to overshadow all the liberties of Europe. The Revolution had done much to restore the balance of power, but still French influence in many quarters continued steadily to advance, though two great wars had been undertaken for the purpose of abridging it. France had obtained Alsace by the Peace of Westphalia, with the exception of ten Imperial towns, the liberty of which was solemnly

guaranteed, but she soon began to treat those towns exactly like the rest of the province. Strasburg, which was by far the most important of them, she had surprised and seized in 1681, by an act of high-handed violence in a time of perfect peace, and without a shadow of justification or excuse. The Emperor, embarrassed by a Turkish war and by Hungarian insurrection, was unable to resent the aggression, and the Peace of Ryswick, which terminated the great war of the Revolution, confirmed and sanctioned it. The wars of Marlborough for a time brought France apparently to the lowest depths of exhaustion, but the Peace of Utrecht restored to her much of what she had lost. A French prince remained upon the Spanish throne, and her military power was still so formidable that as soon as the peace had dissolved the coalition against her, she completely routed the forces of the Empire, though Eugene was at their head. On sea, it is true, she never recovered the ascendancy she lost at La Hogue, but on land no one Power could compete with her. She had brought the art of war to such perfection that in the course of a single reign no less than five generals—Condé, Turenne, Luxemburg, Vendome, and Villars—of brilliant and extraordinary ability, appeared in her armies; and it is remarkable that Marlborough, who alone eclipsed them, had passed through the same school. He had served as a young man under Turenne, and he ascribed to the lessons he then learnt, much of his later success.¹ The alienation between France and Spain which followed the death of Lewis XIV. had for a time interrupted the course of French ambition, but it had been appeased by the conciliatory policy of Fleury, and the firstfruits of the reconciliation had been the decline of Austrian influence in Italy, the elevation of a Bourbon prince to the Neapolitan throne, and the consolidation of the French territory by the reversion of Lorraine.

It is not surprising that this increase of French power should have excited deep alarm. In the interval between the first decadence of Spain and the rise of Prussia and Russia, Austria was the only serious competitor of France upon the Continent, and Austria was certainly inferior in strength to her old rival, and, except on the side of Turkey, she seemed steadily

¹ *Mémoires de Torcy*, ii. 89.

declining. The House of Austria, which had once, in the person of Charles V., almost given law to Europe, and had led a French king captive to Madrid, was now so weakened that it was defeated in almost every war, and nearly every generation seemed to mark a stage in its decline. France had succeeded in her old object of dissevering from the Empire the vast dominions of Spain. She had pushed her frontiers into Germany. She had acquired such an ascendancy over some of the Electors of the Empire that it was even likely that the House of Austria would soon be deprived of the Imperial crown. She had shaken and almost destroyed that Austrian supremacy in Italy which the Peace of Utrecht and the Quadruple Alliance had established. In modern times her power in Europe has been to a great degree paralysed by the intensity of her internal divisions, while her progress in more distant quarters has been restricted by an incurable incapacity for successful colonisation, due principally to the French passion for centralisation and over-administration. But these sources of weakness were as yet unperceived. No nation in its dealings with surrounding countries exhibited a greater unity or concentration of resources, and there appeared as yet no clear reason why, in the race of colonial enterprise, she should not become the successful rival of England. On the other hand, France already exhibited to the highest perfection that rare capacity of assimilating to herself the provinces she annexed, which has been one of the chief sources of her greatness, one of the most remarkable proofs of the high qualities of her national character. No modern nation which has annexed so much has been so little distracted by the struggles of suppressed nationalities, or has succeeded so perfectly in times of danger, difficulty, and disaster in commanding the enthusiastic devotion of the most distant and the most recently acquired of her provinces. Her military system has, no doubt, done much to give a unity of sympathy and enthusiasm to the nation. Paris, owing to causes some of which have been very mischievous, early exercised a fascination over the imaginations of great masses of men such as no other modern capital has possessed, but all this would have been insufficient had there not been an unrivalled power of attraction, sympathy, and assimilation in the French character, a power in which Englishmen are signally

deficient, and which has made French ambition peculiarly formidable.

On such grounds as these the Opposition were never tired of urging that France was rapidly advancing towards universal empire, and that unless she were speedily checked, the liberties of England must ultimately succumb. On sea England was, they admitted, still supreme, but of all forms of power this, they said, was the most precarious. An accident, a blunder, an unfavourable wind, might expose her coast to invasion, even in the zenith of her maritime greatness. The naval supremacy of Carthage had not saved her from destruction when Rome became dominant in the neighbouring continent. The naval supremacy of Spain had been irretrievably ruined by the failure of a single expedition, and the destruction of the Armada was much more due to the fury of the elements than to the fleet that was opposed to it. The naval supremacy of England had trembled very doubtfully in the balance after the battle of Beachy Head; and the battle of La Hogue, which re-established it, might have had a different issue had not the French Admiral been unexpectedly confronted with the fleet of Holland as well as the fleet of England. Besides this, it was added, if France could once place herself beyond rivalry on the Continent she might diminish her armies and devote the main energies of the State to securing the empire of the sea.

Fears of this kind have in many periods haunted speculative politicians, who have usually not fully realised the magnitude of the difficulties which any attempt to obtain universal empire must encounter, the extreme complexity of the forces on which in modern society political power depends, and also the very narrow limits within which all sound political prediction is confined. Walpole, however, was steadily in favour of peace. He felt all the antipathy of a great practical statesman to a policy which would expose the country to the imminent dangers, to the inevitable exhaustion of an European war, in order to avert dangers that were far distant, uncertain, and perhaps visionary. He maintained that a war for the succession of Poland was one in which England had no reasonable concern; that if she engaged in it the burden could not fail to produce the most dangerous discontent among the English people; that the diminution of the Imperial

influence in Italy in no degree affected English interests, especially as France obtained no territory in that country; that the system, which was becoming chronic, of involving England in every Continental, and especially in every German, complication was fatal to her security and utterly incompatible with her true interests. The French alliance had already produced the greatest benefits to England. The point upon the Continent where French ambition was most dangerous was the Dutch barrier, but Fleury had very judiciously abstained from all hostilities against the Austrian Netherlands, though they were left almost undefended, and Holland was quite resolved to persist in her neutrality. Under the influence of a long peace the country was steadily advancing in prosperity and wealth, and in all the elements of real power, and the new dynasty and the parliamentary system were beginning to take root. A foreign war would at once arrest the progress, and Walpole predicted¹—and the event fully justified his prescience—that it would inevitably lead to a new Jacobite rebellion. Besides this, a strong detestation of war was one of his most honourable characteristics. ‘It requires no great art,’ he once said, ‘in a minister to pursue such measures as might make war inevitable. I have lived long enough in the world to see how destructive the effects even of a successful war have been, and shall I, who see this, when I am admitted to the honour to bear a share in His Majesty’s councils, advise him to enter into a war when peace may be had? No, I am proud to own it, I always have been, and I always shall be the advocate of peace.’ The statesman who was continually accused by his contemporaries of sacrificing all English interests to the German policy of the Court, and who is now often described as incapable of risking for a moment his position in the interests of his country, was for a considerable time engaged in saving England from a German war in opposition to the strongest wishes both of the King and of the Queen. It is remarkable that his arguments in favour of a peace policy were chiefly conveyed to the King through the medium of the Queen, who was herself an advocate of war, and it is still more remarkable that she discharged her office with such fidelity and force that the arguments she transmitted actually convinced the King while

¹ Hervey’s *Memoirs*, i. 375.

her own judgment remained unchanged.¹ It is true, indeed, that in the latter part of his career Walpole was driven into war with Spain; but not until public excitement, aggravated by an unscrupulous Opposition, had risen to such a frenzy that no Government could resist it, not until the convention he had negotiated between England and Spain had been generally scouted. For many years, however, he succeeded, in spite of constant opposition, in keeping the country in undisturbed peace, and by doing so he conferred both upon his nation and upon his party an inestimable benefit. To the long peace of Walpole was mainly due the immense material development which contributed so largely to the success of later wars, and also most probably the firm establishment of parliamentary government and of the Hanoverian dynasty. The greatest danger to the Whig party, and the greatest danger to the country from its supremacy, lay in the traditions of its foreign policy, and those traditions Walpole resolutely cut. He has been much blamed for having taken no steps during his long ministry to break the power of the Highland chiefs, by whom the rebellion of 1745 was mainly effected. In a country where the clan feeling was still extremely strong, such steps would, it appears to me, have been the most natural means of producing an immediate revolt, and thus stirring up all the elements of discontent that were smouldering throughout the nation. On the other hand, it is scarcely doubtful that if the pacific policy which Walpole desired, had continued, the rebellion would never have broken out; and it was the direct result of the conciliatory measures of his administration that when it did break out it found no sympathy in England, and was in consequence easily suppressed.

It is worthy of notice that the long ascendancy of Walpole was in no degree owing to any extraordinary brilliancy of eloquence. He was a clear and forcible reasoner, ready in reply, and peculiarly successful in financial exposition, but he had little or nothing of the temperament or the talent of an orator. It is the custom of some writers to decry parliamentary institutions as being simply government by talking, and to assert that when they exist mere rhetorical skill will always be more valued than judgment, knowledge, or character. The enormous

¹ Hervey's *Memoirs*, i. 397.

exaggeration of such charges may be easily established. It is, no doubt, inevitable that where business is transacted chiefly by debate, the talent of a debater should be highly prized; but it is perfectly untrue that British legislatures have shown less skill than ordinary sovereigns in distinguishing solid talent from mere showy accomplishments, or that parliamentary weight has in England been usually proportioned to oratorical power. St. John was a far greater orator than Harley; Pulteney was probably a greater orator than Walpole; Stanley in mere rhetorical skill was undoubtedly the superior of Peel. Godolphin, Pelham, Castlereagh, Liverpool, Melbourne, Althorp, Wellington, Lord J. Russell, and Lord Palmerston are all examples of men who, either as statesmen or as successful leaders of the House of Commons, have taken a foremost place in English politics without any oratorical brilliancy. Sheridan, Plunket, and Brougham, though orators of almost the highest class, left no deep impression on English public life; the ascendancy of Grey and Canning was very transient, and no Opposition since the early Hanoverian period sank so low as that which was guided by Fox. The two Pitts and Mr. Gladstone are the three examples of speakers of transcendent power exercising for a considerable time a commanding influence over English politics. The younger Pitt is, I believe, a real instance of a man whose solid ability bore no kind of proportion to his oratorical skill, and who, by an almost preternatural dexterity in debate, accompanied by great decision of character, and assisted by the favour of the King, by the magic of an illustrious name, and by a great national panic, maintained an authority immensely greater than his deserts. But in this respect he stands alone. The pinnacle of glory to which the elder Pitt raised his country is a sufficient proof of the almost unequalled administrative genius which he displayed in the conduct of a war; and in the sphere of domestic policy it may be questioned whether any other English minister since the accession of the House of Brunswick has carried so many measures of magnitude and difficulty, or exhibited so perfect a mastery over the financial system of the country as the great living statesman.

The qualities of Walpole were very different, but it is impossible, I think, to consider his career with adequate attention

without recognising in him a great minister, although the merits of his administration were often rather negative than positive, and although it exhibits few of those dramatic incidents, and is but little susceptible of that rhetorical colouring, on which the reputation of statesmen largely depends. Without any remarkable originality of thought or creative genius, he possessed in a high degree one quality of a great statesman—the power of judging new and startling events in the moments of excitement or of panic as they would be judged by ordinary men when the excitement, the novelty, and the panic had passed. He was eminently true to the character of his countrymen. He discerned with a rare sagacity the lines of policy most suited to their genius and to their needs, and he had a sufficient ascendancy in English politics to form its traditions, to give a character and a bias to its institutions. The Whig party, under his guidance, retained, though with diminished energy, its old love of civil and of religious liberty, but it lost its foreign sympathies, its tendency to extravagance, its military restlessness. The landed gentry, and in a great degree the Church, were reconciled to the new dynasty. The dangerous fissures which divided the English nation were filled up. Parliamentary government lost its old violence, it entered into a period of normal and pacific action, and the habits of compromise, of moderation, and of practical good sense, which are most essential to its success, were greatly strengthened.

These were the great merits of Walpole. His faults were very manifest, and are to be attributed in part to his own character, but in a great degree to the moral atmosphere of his time. He was an honest man in the sense of desiring sincerely the welfare of his country and serving his sovereign with fidelity; but he was intensely wedded to power, exceedingly unscrupulous about the means of grasping or retaining it, and entirely destitute of that delicacy of honour which marks a high-minded man. In the opinion of most of his contemporaries, Townshend and Walpole had good reason to complain of the intrigues by which Sunderland and Stanhope obtained the supreme power in 1717; but this does not justify the factious manner in which Walpole opposed every measure the new ministry brought forward—even the Mutiny Act, which was

plainly necessary to keep the army in discipline; even the repeal of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts, though he had himself denounced those Acts as more like laws of Julian the Apostate than of a Christian Legislature. He was sincerely tolerant in his disposition, and probably did as much for the benefit of the Dissenters as could have been done without producing a violent and dangerous reaction of opinion; but he took no measure to lighten the burden of the Irish penal code, and he had no scruple in availing himself of the strong feeling against the English Catholics and Non-jurors to raise 100,000*l.* by a special tax upon their estates, or in promising the Dissenters that he would obtain the repeal of the Test Act, when he had no serious intention of doing so. He warned the country faithfully against the South Sea Scheme, but when his warning was disregarded he proceeded to speculate skilfully and successfully in it himself. He laboured long and earnestly to prevent the Spanish war, which he knew to be eminently impolitic; but when the clamours of his opponents had made it inevitable he determined that he would still remain at the helm, and he accordingly declared it himself. He governed the country mildly and wisely, but he was resolved at all hazards to secure for himself a complete monopoly of power; he steadily opposed the reconciliation of the Tories with the Hanoverian dynasty,¹ lest it should impair his ascendancy, surrounded himself with colleagues whose faculties rarely rose above the tamest mediocrity, drove from power every man of real talent who might possibly become his rival, and especially repelled young men of promise, character, and ambition, whom a provident statesman, desirous of perpetuating his policy beyond his lifetime, would especially seek to attract.

The scandal and also the evil effects of his political vices were greatly increased by that total want of decorum which Burke has justly noted as the weakest point of his character. In this respect his public and private life resembled one another. That he lived for many years in open adultery, and indulged to excess in the pleasures of the table, were facts which in the early part of the eighteenth century were in themselves not likely to excite much

¹ See the striking remarks of Speaker Onslow on Walpole's settled 'plan of having everybody to be

deemed a Jacobite who was not a professed and known Whig.'—Coxe's *Walpole*, ii. 554–557.

attention; but his boisterous revelries at Houghton exceeded even the ordinary licence of the country squires of his time, and the gross sensuality of his conversation was conspicuous in one of the coarsest periods of English history. When he did not talk of business, it was said, he talked of women; politics and obscenity were his tastes. There seldom was a Court less addicted to prudery than that of George II., but even its tolerance was somewhat strained by a minister who jested with the Queen upon the infidelity of her husband, who advised her on one occasion to bring to Court a beautiful but silly woman as a 'safe fool' for the King to fall in love with, who, on the death of the Queen, urged her daughters to summon without delay the two mistresses of the King in order to distract the mind of their father; who at the same time avowed, with a brutal frankness, as the scheme of his future policy, that though he had been for the wife against the mistress, he would be henceforth for the mistress against the daughters.¹ In society he had the weakness of wishing to be thought a man of gallantry and fashion, and his awkward addresses, rendered the more ludicrous by a singularly corpulent and ungraceful person, as well as the extreme coarseness into which he usually glided when speaking to and of women, drew down upon him much ridicule and some contempt. His estimate of political integrity was very similar to his estimate of female virtue. He governed by means of an assembly which was saturated with corruption, and he fully acquiesced in its conditions and resisted every attempt to improve it. He appears to have cordially accepted the maxim that government must be carried on by corruption or by force, and he deliberately made the former the basis of his rule. He bribed George II. by obtaining for him a civil list exceeding by more than 100,000*l.* a year that of his father. He bribed the Queen by securing for her a jointure of 100,000*l.* a year, when his rival, Sir Spencer Compton, could only venture to promise 60,000*l.* He bribed the Dissenting ministers to silence by the Regium Donum for the benefit of their widows. He employed the vast patronage of the Crown uniformly and steadily with the single view of sustaining his political position, and there can be no doubt that a large proportion of the immense expenditure of

¹ *Memoirs of Lord Hervey.*

secret service money during his administration was devoted to the direct purchase of Members of Parliament.

It is necessary to speak with much caution on this matter, remembering that no statesman can emancipate himself from the conditions of his time, and that a great injustice is done when the politician of one age is measured by the standard of another. Bribery, whether at elections or in Parliament, was no new thing. The systematic corruption of Members of Parliament is said to have begun under Charles II., in whose reign it was practised to the largest extent. It was continued under his successor, and the number of scandals rather increased than diminished after the Revolution. Sir J. Trevor—a Speaker of the House of Commons—had been voted guilty of a high crime and misdemeanour for receiving a bribe of 1,000 guineas from the City of London. A Secretary of the Treasury—Mr. Guy—had been sent to the Tower for taking a bribe to induce him to pay the arrears due to a regiment. Lord Ranelagh, a Paymaster of the Forces, had been expelled for defalcations in his office. In order to facilitate the passing of the South Sea Bill, it was proved that large amounts of fictitious stock had been created, distributed among, and accepted by, ministers of the Crown. Aislabie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was expelled, sent to the Tower, and fined. The younger Craggs, who was Secretary of State, probably only escaped by a timely death. His father, the Postmaster-General, avoided inquiry by suicide, and grave suspicion rested upon Charles Stanhope, the Secretary of the Treasury, and upon Sunderland, the Prime Minister. When such instances could be cited from among the leaders of politics, it is not surprising that among the undistinguished Members corruption was notorious. In 1698, a system of fraudulent endorsement of Exchequer bills with a view to defraud the revenue was discovered, and two Members of Parliament were sent to the Tower and expelled for being guilty of it. The expulsion of Hungerford for receiving a small sum for expediting a private Bill through Parliament, of the two Shepherds for bribery at elections, of Sir R. Sutton for having through carelessness become director of a swindling company, of Ridge for the non-observance of a contract, of Colonel Cardonell for accepting an illegal though customary gratuity, of Walpole

himself for alleged dishonesty about a contract, were probably inspired chiefly or solely by factious motives,¹ but there can at least be no reasonable doubt that parliamentary corruption does not date from the ministry of Walpole. Nor was he the first to practise largely corruption at elections. Burnet assures us that at the elections of 1701, when William was still on the throne, 'a most scandalous practice was brought in of buying votes with so little decency that the electors engaged themselves by subscription to choose a blank person before they were trusted with the name of their candidate.'² I have cited in the last chapter the explicit testimony of Davenant to the magnitude of the evil in his day, and the writings of Defoe contain ample proof of its inveteracy and of its progress. In a pamphlet published in 1701, he tells us that there was a regular set of stock-jobbers in the City who made it their business to buy and sell seats in Parliament, that the market price was 1,000 guineas, and that Parliament was thus in a fair way of coming under the management of a few individuals.³ In 1705, after adverting to some Acts which had been passed against bribery, he adds emphatically, 'Never was treating, bribery, buying of voices, freedoms and freeholds, and all the corrupt practices in the world so open and barefaced as since these severe laws were enacted.'⁴ In 1708 he declared that, having been present at many elections, he had arrived at the conclusion that 'it is not an impossible thing to debauch this nation into a choice of thieves, knaves, devils, anything, comparatively speaking, by the power of various intoxications.'⁵ The evil showed no sign of diminution. In 1716 we find bitter complaints in Parliament itself of the rapidly increasing expense of elections,⁶ and the Earl of Dorset spoke of it as a notorious fact 'that a great number of persons have no other livelihood than by being employed in bribing corporations.'⁷

And if corruption did not begin with Walpole, it is equally

¹ Townsend's *Hist. of the House of Commons*, ch. iv., v.

² Burnet's *Own Times*, ii. 258-259.

³ From 'The Freeholder's Plea against Stock-jobbing Elections of Parliament.'—Wilson's *Life of Defoe*, i. 340-341. Mr. Hallam must have somewhat strangely overlooked this passage, as well as some others which

I have cited in the last chapter, when he speaks of the purchase of seats of Parliament as first observed in the elections of 1747 and 1754.—*Const. Hist.* iii. 302.

⁴ 'Review.' See Wilson, ii. 362.

⁵ *Ibid.* Wilson, iii. 23-24.

⁶ *Parl. Hist.* vii. 335.

⁷ *Ibid.* 297.

certain that it did not end with him. His expenditure of secret service money, large as it was, never equalled in an equal space of time the expenditure of Bute; and it is to Bute, and not to Walpole, that we owe the most gigantic and most wasteful of all the forms of bribery, the custom of issuing loans on terms extravagantly advantageous to the lender, and distributing the shares among the supporters of the administration. The downfall of Walpole can scarcely be said to have produced even a temporary cessation of corruption. In 1754, Sir J. Barnard, with a view to the approaching elections, actually moved the repeal of the oath against bribery, in the interest of public morals, on the ground that it was merely the occasion of general perjury.¹ In the same year Fox declined to accept from Newcastle the lead of the House of Commons, unless he received information about the disposition of the secret service money, because, as he said, 'if he was kept in ignorance of that, he should not know how to talk to Members of Parliament, when some might have received gratifications, others not.'² Very few statesmen of the eighteenth century had less natural tendency to corruption than George Grenville. His private character was unimpeachable. His alteration of the mode of trying contested elections was a great step towards the purification of Parliament, and the expenditure of secret service money during his administration was unusually low;³ yet such was the condition of the Legislature by which he governed, that he appears to have found it necessary to offer direct money bribes even to Members of the House of Lords.⁴ If Walpole

¹ Walpole's *Memoir of George II.* i. 369.

² *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 382.

³ *Grenville Correspondence*, iii. p. 143.

⁴ The following very curious note from Lord Saye and Sele to Grenville has been preserved. The tone of the writer makes it almost certain that the transaction referred to was not regarded as either unusual or insulting:—

'London, Nov. 26, 1763.

'Honoured Sir,—I am very much obliged to you for that freedom of converse you this morning indulged me in, which I prize more than the

lucrative advantage I then received. To show the sincerity of my words (pardon, Sir, the perhaps over-niceness of my disposition) I return enclosed the bill for 300*l.* you favoured me with, as good manners would not permit my refusal of it when tendered by you. Your most obliged and most obedient servant, SAYE & SELE.

'P.S. As a free horse needs no spur, so I stand in need of no inducement or douceur to lend my small assistance to the King and his friends in the present administration.'—*Grenville Correspondence*, iii. 145–146.

was guilty of corruption, it may be fairly urged that it was scarcely possible to manage Parliament without it, and also that skilful writers, under the guidance of Bolingbroke, were studiously aggravating his faults. He was, no doubt, often misrepresented. His saying of a group of Members, 'All these men have their price,' was turned into a general assertion that 'all men have their price;' and there was probably some truth in another saying ascribed to him,—'that he was obliged to bribe Members not to vote against, but for their conscience.' Although in the case of a minister who had very few scruples, and who disposed, absolutely for many years, of immense sums of secret service money, it is impossible to speak with confidence, we may at least affirm that there is no real evidence that Walpole dishonestly appropriated public money to his own purposes, and he retired from office deeply in debt.

The real charge against him is that in a period of profound peace, when he exercised an almost unexampled ascendancy in politics, and when public opinion was strongly in favour of the diminution of corrupt influence in Parliament, he steadily and successfully resisted every attempt at reform. Other ministers may have bribed on a larger scale to gain some special object, or in moments of transition, crisis, or difficulty. It was left to Walpole to organise corruption as a system, and to make it the normal process of Parliamentary government. It was his settled policy to maintain his Parliamentary majority, not by attracting to his ministry great orators, great writers, great financiers, or great statesmen, not by effecting any combination or coalition of parties, by identifying himself with any great object of popular desire, or by winning to his side young men in whose character and ability he could trace the promise of future eminence, but simply by engrossing borough influence and extending the patronage of the Crown. Material motives were the only ones he recognised. During several successive Parliaments the majority of the counties were usually in opposition.¹ It was by the purchase of a multitude of small and perfectly venal boroughs, especially in Cornwall and Scotland, that the Government majority was maintained. Whenever

¹ See a remarkable statement of Horace Walpole. *Memoirs of George* II. i. 406.

there was a choice between a man of ability and a man possessing large borough influence, the latter was invariably preferred. Thus it was that in 1724 Carteret was displaced from the Secretaryship of War, and the claims of Pulteney were neglected in order that Walpole might attach to his fortunes the Duke of Newcastle, who was the greatest borough-owner in the kingdom, but whose weak and timid character he was the first to ridicule. Thus it was that he met and defeated every effort to reduce the pension lists, and to enquire into the corruption of Parliament. He made it, said one who knew him well, a main object at all times, and on all occasions, to prevent Parliamentary enquiries.¹ Pension Bill after Pension Bill was brought in with the strong support of public opinion. Sometimes he openly opposed them. More frequently he suffered them to pass the Commons, and employed his influence to stifle them in the Lords. Always he made it his object to discourage and defeat them. He constructed a system under which a despotic sovereign or minister might make a Parliamentary majority one of the most subservient and efficient instruments for destroying the liberties of England; and although he himself used it with signal moderation, he bequeathed it intact to his successors, and it became, under George III., the great instrument of misgovernment.

His influence upon young men appears to have been peculiarly pernicious. If we may believe Chesterfield, he was accustomed to ask them in a tone of irony upon their entrance into Parliament whether they too were going to be saints or Romans, and he employed all the weight of his position to make them regard purity and patriotism as ridiculous or unmanly.² Of the next generation of statesmen, Fox, the first Lord Holland, was the only man of remarkable ability who can be said to have been his disciple, and he was, perhaps, the most corrupt and unscrupulous of the statesmen of his age.

Specific instances of Parliamentary corruption are a class of facts little likely to pass into the domain of history. The secret nature of the act, the interests both of the giver and the recipient, and the general tone and feelings of the politicians of

¹ Lord Hervey's *Memoirs*, i. 224.

² Chesterfield's *Miscellaneous Works*

(ed. 1779), iv. append. p. 36.

the time, conspire to conceal them, and although public opinion forced on an enquiry into the acts of Walpole, and although the great majority of the commissioners were his personal enemies, no considerable results were arrived at. Nor was this surprising. The whole influence of the Crown and of the House of Lords was exerted to shield the fallen minister, and there was on the part of most leading politicians, and, indeed, of most Members of Parliament, a marked indisposition to enquire too curiously into such matters. Edgcumbe, who chiefly managed the Cornish boroughs, was made a peer expressly for the purpose of preventing the Committee from requiring his evidence.¹ The officials who distributed the secret service money positively refused to give any evidence as to the manner of its distribution, on the ground that they might otherwise criminate themselves. The Secretary of the Treasury, who could probably have thrown most light upon the subject, as the whole secret service money passed through his hands, declined to take the oath of discovery, and informed the Committee 'that he had laid his case before the King, and was authorised to say that the disposal of money issued for secret service, by the nature of it, requires the utmost secrecy, and is accountable to his Majesty alone; and therefore his Majesty could not permit him to disclose anything on the subject.'² The Committee were completely baffled. Those who distributed the secret service money refused to give any evidence, and it was hardly to be expected that those who received it would criminate themselves by confession. A Bill was brought forward to indemnify the recipients of bribes if they gave evidence against Walpole, but though it passed the Commons, it was rejected by the Lords. Under these circumstances we can hardly lay much stress upon the fact that the discoveries of the Committee were chiefly of the most trivial description. The bestowal of places on the Mayor of Weymouth and on his brother-in-law, in order to secure the nomination of a favourable returning officer at an election, the removal of a few revenue officers who failed to vote for a ministerial candidate, the distribution of some small sums for borough prosecutions and suits, the somewhat suspiciously liberal terms

¹ Walpole's *Letters*, i. p. 175.

² Coxe's *Walpole*, i. p. 712.

of a contract for the payment of British troops at Jamaica, were all matters which appeared of little moment when they were regarded as the result of a solemn enquiry into ministerial proceedings for ten years. Much more important was the discovery that in this space of time no less than 1,453,400*l.* had been expended in secret service money, and that of that sum above 50,000*l.* had been paid to writers in defence of the ministry. It has been shown, indeed, by the apologists for Walpole that the secret service money included the whole pension list, as well as the large sums necessarily expended in obtaining information at foreign Courts, and also that the comparisons instituted between the expenditure of secret service money in the last ten years of Walpole, and that in an equal portion of the reign of Anne, were in several respects fallacious;¹ but there cannot, I think, be much reasonable doubt, though the Committee were unable to obtain evidence on the subject, that much of it was expended in Parliamentary corruption. It is said that supporters of the Government frequently received at the close of the session from 500*l.* to 1,000*l.* for their services;² that Walpole himself boasted that one important division rejecting the demand of the Prince of Wales for an increased allowance cost the Government only 900*l.*,³ that more than half the members of Parliament were in the receipt of public money in the form of pensions or Government offices.⁴ It is certain that the consentient opinion of contemporaries accused

¹ See the elaborate chapter in Coxe, on the report of the Committee.

² Almon's *Anecdotes of Chatham*, vol. i. p. 137. This was written of the Pelham ministry, but that ministry only continued in a somewhat more moderate form the system of Walpole. Wraxall positively asserts that Roberts, who was Secretary of the Treasury under Pelham, assured a friend, from whom Wraxall received the story, that he, Roberts, while he remained at the Treasury regularly paid secret stipends varying from 500*l.* to 800*l.* to a number of Members at the end of each session. Their names were entered in a book which was kept in the deepest secrecy and which on the death of Pelham was burnt by the King.—See Wraxall's

Memoirs (1815), ii. 498, 500.

³ 'Sir R. Walpole and the Queen both told me separately that it [the ministerial triumph] cost the King but 900*l.*—500*l.* to one man and 400*l.* to another; and that even these two sums were only advanced to two men who were to have received them at the end of the session had this question never been moved, and who only took this opportunity to solicit prompt payment.'—Lord Hervey's *Memoirs*, ii. 280.

⁴ Some interesting facts on the fluctuations of the number of placemen in Parliament will be found in Brougham's great speech on the increasing influence of the Crown. June 24, 1822.

the ministers of gross and wholesale corruption, and that they uniformly opposed every enquiry that could vindicate their honour, and every Bill that could tend to purify the Parliament.

The complaints of the Opposition were met by Walpole in a strain of coarse and cynical banter. Patriots, saints, Spartans, and boys were the terms he continually employed. Something, no doubt, was due to the strong hatred of cant which was a prominent feature of his character, and which sometimes led him, like his great contemporary Swift, into the opposite extreme of cynicism. He knew that he was speaking the secret sentiments of the great majority of his hearers, that among the declaimers against corruption were some of the most treacherous and unprincipled politicians of the time, and that personal disappointment and baffled ambition had their full share in swelling the ranks of his opponents; but when every allowance is made for this, his language must appear grossly culpable. He profoundly lowered the moral tone of public life, and thus, as an acute observer has said, 'While he seemed to strengthen the superstructure, he weakened the foundations of our constitution.'¹ Nor is it true that the politicians of the time were universally corrupt. Godolphin and Bolingbroke had both retired from their ministerial careers poor men. Oxford was in this respect beyond all reproach. Neither Pulteney, nor Windham, nor Onslow, nor Carteret, nor Shippen, nor Barnard, nor Pitt, whatever their other faults, could be suspected of personal corruption. Above all, there was the public opinion of England which was deeply scandalised by the extent to which parliamentary corruption had arisen, and by the cynicism with which it was avowed, and on this point, though on this alone, Walpole never respected it. Like many men of low morals and of coarse and prosaic natures, he was altogether incapable of appreciating as an element of political calculation the force which moral sentiments exercise upon mankind, and this incapacity was one of the great causes of his fall. His own son has made the memorable admission that Walpole 'never was thought honest till he was out of power.'²

¹ Browne's *Estimate*, i. p. 115.

² Walpole's *Memoirs of George II.* i. 236.

Through these faults, as well as through the discontent which always follows the great prolongation of a single administration, a powerful though heterogeneous Opposition was gradually formed, and the small band of Tories were reinforced by a considerable section of discontented Whigs, who seceded under the guidance of Pulteney, Carteret, and Chesterfield, and by several young men of promise or genius. Pulteney, who usually led the phalanx, had been for many years the friend and colleague of Walpole. He had co-operated with him during the depression of the party under Queen Anne, defended him when he was expelled from the House in 1712, assumed the office of Secretary of War in the Whig ministry of 1714, taken the same side with Walpole in the Whig schism of 1717, and he appeared at one time likely to rise at least as high in the State. He was a country gentleman of good character, old family, and large property, a scholar, a writer, and a wit, and probably the most graceful and brilliant speaker in the House of Commons in the interval between the withdrawal of St. John and the appearance of Pitt. His separation from Walpole appears to have been wholly due to personal motives. Possessing abilities and parliamentary standing which entitled him, in his own opinion and in the opinion of many others, to rank as the equal of Walpole, he found that Walpole allowed his colleagues little more influence than if they were his clerks, and was always seeking, by direct or indirect means, to displace them when they became prominent. He is said to have been bitterly offended when Carteret, having in 1724 resigned the position of Secretary of State, the claims of Newcastle were preferred to his own, and the offer of a peerage, which was intended only to remove him from the centre of power, and afterwards of a very unimportant place, completed his alienation. He went into violent opposition, rejected scornfully the overtures of the minister, who when too late perceived his error, dedicated all his powers to the subversion of the administration, and became the most skilful exponent of the popular feeling about the corruption of Parliament, the subservience of Walpole to France and to Spain, and the dangers of a standing army in time of peace. He was bitterly opposed to the Gallican sympathies of Walpole, and especially to the Treaty of Hanover, and was for some time in very close and

confidential communication with the ministers of the Emperor.¹ Of all the opponents of Walpole he was probably the most formidable, for he seems to have been at least his equal as a debater; his great social talents made him popular among politicians, and he at the same time exercised a powerful influence beyond the walls of Parliament. 'The Craftsman,' which for many years contained the bitterest and ablest attacks on Walpole, was founded, inspired, and perhaps in part written² by Pulteney in conjunction with Bolingbroke. He was also the author of two or three pamphlets of more than ordinary merit, of several happy witticisms which are still remembered, and of a political song which was once among the most popular in the language.³ When accused of being actuated in his opposition by sordid motives, he incautiously pledged himself never again to accept office, and in the hour of his triumph he remembered his pledge; but he cannot be acquitted of having shaped his career through a feeling of personal rancour, he never exhibited either the business talents or the tact and prescience of statesmanship so conspicuous in his rival, and he probably contributed more than any other single man to plunge the country into the Spanish war.

A more remarkable man, but a less formidable politician, was Carteret, afterwards Lord Granville, who at the time of the downfall of Walpole led the Whig Opposition in the House of Lords. He had entered the Upper House in 1711, had joined the Sunderland section of the Whigs in 1717, had been appointed ambassador to Sweden in the following year, and had afterwards accepted several brief diplomatic missions in Germany and France. On the death of Sunderland he made some unsuccessful efforts to perpetuate the division of the party, but his opposition to Walpole was at first rather latent than avowed. He became Secretary of State in 1721, but, disagreeing with

¹ See the intercepted letters of Count Palm printed in Coxe's *Life of Walpole*.

² Horace Walpole (to H. Mann, April 27, 1753) asserts that the printer of the 'Craftsman' assured him Pulteney 'never wrote a "Craftsman" himself, only gave hints for them,' though much of his reputation was

founded upon them. As Pulteney was confessedly a skilful writer and pamphleteer, this story seems very improbable.

³ 'The Honest Jury; or, Caleb Triumphant,' written on the occasion of the acquittal of the 'Craftsman' on a charge of libel.—*Wilkins' Collection of Political Ballads*, ii. 232-236.

his colleague Lord Townshend, he was compelled to relinquish the post in 1724, when he became Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. After several differences with the ministry in England he resigned this appointment in 1730, and from that time became a leader of Opposition and a close ally of Pulteney. Of all the leading English statesmen of the eighteenth century he is, perhaps, the one of whose real merits it is most difficult to speak with confidence. Like Charles Townshend in the next generation, he was a man who had the very highest reputation for ability among his contemporaries, but whose ability we are obliged to take altogether upon trust, for, except some unpublished despatches, often full of fire and force, and a few detached sayings, he has left no monument behind him. His career was, on the whole, unsuccessful. His speeches have perished. His policy has come down to us chiefly through the representations of his opponents, and he himself appears to have taken no part in political literature. Yet Horace Walpole and Chesterfield, who disliked him, have both spoken of him as the ablest man of his time.¹ Swift and Smollett have expressed warm admiration for his genius, and Chatham, who was at one time his bitter opponent, has left on record his opinion that in the upper departments of Government he had no equal.² In the range and variety of his knowledge he was unrivalled among the politicians of his time, and the singular versatility of his intellect made him almost equally conspicuous as an orator, a linguist, a statesman, a scholar, and a wit. Having travelled much in Germany, he was probably the only English statesman intimately acquainted with its laws, manners, and internal politics; and his thorough knowledge of the language, then a very rare accomplishment in England, gave him a special influence with the Hanoverian kings. In Parliament he was placed, by the confession of all parties, in the foremost rank of debaters, but good judges complained that his eloquence was somewhat turgid and declamatory in its style, that he was more to be

¹ 'Lord Granville, they say, is dying. When he dies the ablest head in England dies too, take him for all in all.'—Chesterfield to his son, Dec. 13, 1762. See, too, his admirable portrait of Granville in his 'Characters.' Walpole pronounced

him to be a greater genius than Sir R. Walpole, Mansfield, or Chatham.'—*Memoirs of George II.* iii. 85.

² *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 1097. He added, 'I feel a pride in declaring that to his patronage, to his friendship and instruction, I owe whatever I am.'

dreaded as an opponent than to be desired as a colleague, and that he was almost equally unfitted, by his defects and by his merits, for the position of a parliamentary leader. He was of a careless, sanguine, impulsive, and desultory nature, easily and extravagantly elated and never depressed, delighting in intrigue and in strokes of sudden and brilliant daring, but apt to treat politics as a game, and almost wholly destitute of settled principles, fixity of purpose, and earnestness of character. His mind teemed with large schemes, and he could carry them out with courage and with skill, but he was not equally expert in dealing with details, and he looked with a contempt which had at least an affinity to virtue upon the arts of management, conciliation, and corruption, by which Walpole and Pelham secured their Parliamentary influence. 'What is it to me,' he once said, 'who is a judge or who a bishop? It is my business to make kings and emperors, and to maintain the balance of Europe.' His temper was naturally imperious. He was entirely indifferent to money. He drank hard. He overflowed with riotous animal spirits, scoffed and ranted at his colleagues or treated them with the most supercilious contempt; and though he could be at times the most generous and engaging of men, though no other statesman bore defeat with such unforced good humour, or showed himself so free from rancour against his opponents, he was not popular in the Cabinet and not trusted in Parliament. To the King, on the other hand, he was eminently acceptable. He succeeded in very skilfully flattering and almost winning the Queen at the very time when he was a leading counsellor in the rival party of her son. He had a strong natural leaning, intensified by education, to high monarchical views. He would gladly have based his power altogether on royal favour; he delighted in framing his measures with the King alone, and was the only English statesman who fully shared and perhaps fully understood the King's German policy. It was natural that his rare knowledge of Continental affairs should have invested them in his eyes with an interest and an attraction they did not possess in the eyes of ordinary politicians, and that he should have found in them a field peculiarly congenial to his daring and adventurous nature. 'I want to instil a nobler ambition into you,' he said to Fox in later years,

‘to make you knock the heads of the kings of Europe together, and jumble something out of it which may be of service to this country.’ As minister of a despotic sovereign he might have risen to great eminence, but he was not suited for the conditions of Parliamentary government, and he usually inclined towards unpopular opinions. Thus he was one of the most powerful opponents of the Militia Bill at a time when the creation of a great militia had almost become a national craze. He was accustomed to assert strongly the dignity of the House of Lords in opposition to the House of Commons. He ruined his political prospects by his bold advocacy of Hanoverian measures. The last public words he is recorded to have uttered were a stern rebuke to Pitt for having spoken of himself rather as the minister of the people than of the Crown, and for having thus introduced the language of the House of Commons into the discussions of the Cabinet; and his last recorded political judgment was an approbation of the unpopular Peace of Paris. His ambition, like his other qualities, was very spasmodic. He could cast aside its prizes with a frank and laughing carelessness that few could rival, but when heated with the contest he was accused of being equally capable of a policy of the most reckless daring and of the most paltry intrigue. Queen Caroline, reviewing the leaders of the Opposition, said that Bolingbroke would tell great lies, Chesterfield small ones, Carteret both kinds.¹

Of Chesterfield it is not necessary to say much, for his part in the overthrow of Walpole was much less prominent. He was naturally most fitted to shine in a drawing-room, and though a graceful and accomplished, if somewhat laboured, speaker, his political talents, like those of Sir W. Temple in the preceding generation, were more adapted for diplomacy than for parliamentary life. He was twice ambassador to Holland and discharged his duties with great ability and success. During his short viceroyalty in Ireland he showed very remarkable ad-

¹ The principal materials for describing Carteret are to be found in Horace Walpole's *Letters* and *Histories*, Lord Hervey's *Memoirs*, Chesterfield's *Characters*, Lady Hervey's *Letters*, Sir Hanbury Williams' *Songs*, and the recently published *Auto-*

biography of Shelburne. Many volumes and papers belonging to him are in the British Museum. It appears from Lord Hervey's *Memoirs* that Carteret was at one time occupied with a history of his own time, but it has unfortunately never appeared.

ministrative talents, and his letters to his illegitimate son, which were published contrary to his desire, furnish ample evidence of his delicate but fastidious taste, of his low moral principle, and of his hard, keen, and worldly wisdom. His life was darkened by much private sorrow, which he bore with great courage ; and his political prospects were blasted by the hostility of the Queen, who never forgave him for having made his court to the mistress of her husband. Lord Hervey, comparing him to Carteret, says that Carteret had the better public and Court understanding, Chesterfield the better private and social one. His hostility to Walpole dates from his dismissal from office after the Excise scheme. On the fall of that minister he pressed on the measures against him much more violently than either Pulteney or Carteret.

In addition to these older politicians, the ranks of the opponents of Walpole contained a small group of young men who did not altogether coalesce with either party, and who were much ridiculed under the name of Boy Patriots, but who reckoned in their number several men of credit and ability, and one man of the most splendid and majestic genius. The principal members of this party were Lord Cobham, Lyttleton, George Grenville, and, above all, William Pitt. This last politician had entered Parliament for Old Sarum in 1735. He was still a very young and very poor man, holding the post of cornet in a regiment of dragoons, entirely destitute of the influence which springs from rank, experience, or Parliamentary connection, but already distinguished for the lofty purity of his character and for an eloquence which, in its full maturity, has, probably, never been equalled in England and never been surpassed among mankind.

The Tory wing of the Opposition appears to have been numerically about equal to the Whig one. It consisted of about 110 members, but it was far from unanimous. One section was distinctly Jacobite, and it was the policy of Government to attribute Jacobitism to the whole ; but with many, Toryism was, probably, mainly a matter of family tradition, and consisted chiefly of attachment to the Established Church, and dislike to Hanoverian politics, to the moneyed interests, and to septennial parliaments. The party had for many years a skilful

and eloquent leader in Sir W. Windham—the son-in-law of the Duke of Somerset—who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer under Queen Anne, and who in that capacity had brought forward and carried the Schism Act. His death in 1740 was a great blow to the Opposition, and his successor, Lord Gower, afterwards abandoned the party. Among the Members who usually acted with the Tories was Sir John Barnard, a retired merchant, who had acquired great influence in the House as the only man capable of coping with Walpole on questions of finance, and the party included Shippen, the able and honest leader of the Jacobites. It consisted, for the most part, of country squires of little education and strong prejudices, but in general superior to their allies in rectitude of purpose and sincerity of conviction.

In addition to the parliamentary combatants there is another influence to be mentioned. Bolingbroke, though excluded from the parliamentary arena, had, as I have said, devoted his great experience and his brilliant pen to the service of the Opposition, and in one respect at least his policy was now the exact opposite to that which he had pursued under Anne. He had then, in opposition to Oxford, endeavoured to make the lines of party division as clear and strong as possible, to put an end to the system of divided administrations, and to expel all Whigs from the Government. Now, however, when his party was apparently hopelessly shattered, he employed all his talents in the task of effecting a union between the Tories and a large section of the Whigs. In his 'Dissertation on Parties' and in his private letters, he maintained strongly that the old demarcation of parties had lost all meaning; that the question of dynasty was virtually settled; that the Whig enthusiasm for the House of Hanover was chiefly a party pretext for monopolising all the offices of the State and excluding the Tories as enemies to the establishment; and that this monopoly and this exclusion had necessarily led to an aggrandisement of corrupt influence on the side of those in power, which was fatal to the purity and might easily prove incompatible with the existence of the constitution.¹ Corruption, he was accustomed to main-

¹ See among other letters a very remarkable one to Lord Polwarth, *Marchmont Papers*, ii. 177-191.

tain, is much more dangerous to English liberty than prerogative, because it is slow and insensible in its operation, because it arouses no feeling of opposition in the country like that which follows an unconstitutional act, and because its influence is especially felt in the very House which is the appointed guardian of the interests of the people. A warm and affectionate friendship with Windham gave Bolingbroke for a considerable time an ascendancy over those Tories who had abandoned Jacobitism, while his position as coeditor with Pulteney of the 'Craftsman,' and his confidential relations with many of the discontented Whigs gave him influence with the other section of the Opposition. Bolingbroke, however, was unpopular in the country; he was wearied of the secondary place he was compelled to occupy in party warfare, and owing to this and perhaps to other causes which we are not able to unravel, he retired to France in 1735, and did not again visit England till after the downfall of Walpole. Before his departure, however, he had obtained a great ascendancy over the mind of Frederick, Prince of Wales, who soon became the leading opponent of the Government. It is natural in a government like that of England, that a party in opposition should turn their hopes to the successor of the throne, and it is equally natural that an ambitious Prince should lean towards a course of policy which alone during his father's lifetime enables him to take an independent and a foremost place. Many private causes conspired to inflame the jealousy. The Prince desired to marry a Prussian Princess, and the King refused his request. After the marriage of the Prince with the Princess of Saxe Gotha, the King only granted him an allowance of 50,000*l.* a year, though the King himself when Prince of Wales had received an allowance of 100,000*l.* Besides this, the Prince's affable manners rendered him more popular in the country than the King, and his tastes inclined him to the brilliant literary and social circle which was in opposition to the ministry. From 1734 there was an open breach, and in 1737 the Prince took the extraordinary step of inducing the Opposition to bring forward a motion in Parliament urging the King to allow his son out of the Civil List 100,000*l.* a year. The Court was naturally furious, and Walpole succeeded with some difficulty in defeating the motion. Lord Hervey has left us a curious picture of the feelings

of the royal family at this time—the Queen a hundred times a day saying she wished her son would fall dead with apoplexy, cursing the hour of his birth, and describing him as ‘a nauseous beast,’ ‘the greatest liar that ever spoke,’ while his sister declared that she grudged him every hour he continued to breathe, and the King regarded him with a steady though somewhat calmer hatred. The Prince, on the other hand, seems to have lost no opportunity of irritating his father and his mother; and when his wife was in labour he hurried her, in the midst of her pains and at the imminent danger of her life, from Hampton Court to St. James’s, for the sole purpose of insulting the King, who had given orders that the lying-in should take place at the former palace. With the same motive he made his Court the special centre of opposition to the Government, and he exerted all his influence for the ruin of Walpole.¹

While all these elements of strength were combining against the minister, the death of the Queen² deprived him of his firmest friend. She died solemnly commending her husband to his care, and her loss was never replaced. He now stood alone, confronting all the ablest debaters in Parliament, whom his jealousy had driven into opposition, while intrigues and dissensions were undermining his position at the Court and in the Cabinet, and while a fierce storm of popular indignation was raging without. He had somewhat ostentatiously displayed his contempt for literature, and most of the ablest political writers were arrayed against him. He had ridiculed the cry of parliamentary purity and the aspirations of young politicians, and all the hope and promise of England was with his opponents. He had laboured through good report and through evil report to maintain the peace of Europe, and the Opposition leaders succeeded in arousing in the country a martial frenzy which it was impossible to resist.

The pretext was the severities of the Spaniards to English sailors. Spain, in attempting to monopolise the commerce of the most important part of the New World, and in forbidding all other European countries from holding intercourse with it, had advanced a claim which sooner or later must inevitably have

¹ Hervey's *Memoirs*. Walpole's *Reminiscences*.

² Nov. 20, 1737.

led to war. Her right, however, to regulate the traffic with her trans-Atlantic dominions had been fully recognised by England; the principle of trade monopoly was strenuously maintained by England in her own dominions, and by an article in the Treaty of Utrecht, in addition to the trade in negroes, English commerce with Spanish America had been expressly restricted to a single ship of the burden of 600 tons. This treaty was soon systematically violated. An immense illicit trade sprang up, which was for a time unmolested, but was afterwards met by a rigid exercise of the right of search on the high seas, and by the constant seizure of English ships, and it was accompanied on both sides by many acts of violence, insolence, and barbarity. A dispute had at the same time arisen between the two nations about the right of the English traders to cut logwood in the Bay of Campeachy, and to gather salt on the Island of Tortuga, and there were chronic difficulties about the frontiers of Georgia and Carolina on the one side, and of Florida on the other. For many years the ill-feeling smouldered on, and it gradually assumed very formidable proportions. The maintenance of the balance of power had been the chief cause of the wars of the century, and it was observed with truth that there was a balance by sea as well as by land. The growing preponderance of the English navy and of English commerce had long been seen with a jealous eye both in Spain and in France, and strong mutual interests drew the two countries together. The recovery of Gibraltar had since the Peace of Utrecht been a great object of Spanish policy, and Spain had lost, with her dominions in the Netherlands, her chief reason for desiring an English alliance and her chief cause of quarrel with France. In the counsels of the latter country a strong military party had appeared who protested against the pacific policy of Fleury, who maintained that French continental interests had been unduly sacrificed to England, and who desired to revive, in part at least, the policy of Lewis XIV. and to seek new combinations of power. This party was strengthened by the English treaty with the Emperor in 1731, which was regarded with some reason as the abandonment of a French for an Austrian alliance, and also by the great danger of an English declaration of war during the struggle of 1733. At the close of that year a secret treaty, called the

Family Compact, was signed by the Kings of France and Spain, with the object of guarding against the naval supremacy of England. By this treaty the French agreed, if necessary, to assist Spain in her efforts to extirpate the abuses which crept into her trade with England, and also to endeavour to procure for Spain the cession of Gibraltar; while Spain agreed, on a fitting occasion, to revoke the trade privileges of England and to admit France to a large share of her trans-Atlantic commerce.

This treaty was a profound secret, and was unknown both to Walpole and the Opposition, but there were several signs of a growing coldness between England and France. Chauvelin, who was Secretary of State for foreign affairs from 1727 to 1737, gradually acquired almost a complete empire over the mind of Fleury, and his influence was usually very hostile to the English alliance. In 1735 the English minister carried on a very secret negotiation with him, and endeavoured by the offer of a large bribe to win him to his interest; but the attempt does not appear to have been successful, and the disgrace and exile of Chauvelin, in the beginning of 1737, was regarded as a great triumph of English policy.¹ On sea France displayed a new activity, while Spain, secure in her secret alliance, grew more severe in enforcing the right of search against British sailors. The latter, who despised and hated the Spaniards as foreigners, as Papists, and as ancient enemies, appear to have continually acted with great insolence. The Spaniards in their turn retaliated by many acts of violence, which were studiously collected, aggravated, and circulated in England. One story especially produced a deep impression. An English captain named Jenkins was brought before Parliament and alleged that when sailing for Jamaica, so far back as 1731, he had been seized by Spanish sailors, tortured and deprived of his ears; and when he was asked what he thought when he found himself in the hands of such barbarians, he answered, in words which had doubtless been suggested to him, and which were soon repeated through the length and breadth of England, that 'he had recommended his soul to God and his cause to his country.'

¹ See the secret correspondence of the English Government, in Coxe's

Walpole, iii. 308-309, 316, 317, 451-457.

The truth of the story is extremely doubtful, but the end that was aimed at was attained.¹ The indignation of the people, fanned as it was by the press and by the untiring efforts of all sections of the Opposition, became uncontrollable. Every device was employed to sustain it. English sailors returned from captivity in Spain were planted at the Exchange, exhibiting to the crowds who passed by, specimens of the loathsome food they were obliged to eat in the dungeons of Spain. Literature caught up the excitement, and it was reflected in the poetry of Pope, of Glover, and of Johnson. Walpole tried bravely and ably to moderate it, but his conduct was branded as the grossest pusillanimity. The King fully shared the popular sentiment. Petitions poured into Parliament from every part of the kingdom demanding redress; while Spain, relying on the letter of the treaty and on the support of France, met every overture with suspicion or arrogance. Strong resolutions were carried through both the Commons and Lords. Letters of marque and reprisal were offered to the merchants. Admiral Haddock was despatched with a fleet of ten ships to the Mediterranean, and troops were sent to the infant colony of Georgia to protect it from an apprehended invasion.

These events took place in 1738. It is a remarkable proof of the tact and influence of Walpole that, notwithstanding the fierce and warlike spirit in the country, in the Parliament and in the palace, notwithstanding the fact that in his own Cabinet both Newcastle and Hardwicke were advocates of war, the catastrophe did not take place till the November of the following year. It is clear that in the essential points of difference England was in the wrong. A plain treaty had been grossly and continually violated by English sailors. The right of search by which Spain attempted to enforce it, though often harshly and improperly exercised, was perfectly legal, and before the war was ended some of the noisiest of those who now denounced it were compelled to acknowledge the fact. Walpole himself had no doubt on the

¹ According to Horace Walpole, when Jenkins died it was found that his ear had never been cut off at all. According to Tindal, 'Jenkins lost his ear or part of his ear on another occasion, and pretended it had been

cut off by a guarda costa.' See, for other details on this matter, Coxe's *Walpole*, i, 579-580. Burke called it 'the fable of Jenkins' ears.'—*Letters on a Regicidal Peace*.

subject, but he tried in vain to convince the country. The House of Lords passed a resolution strongly condemning the right of search, and the people, prompted by the leaders of the Opposition and now fully excited, insisted upon its unqualified relinquishment. All that could be done was to negotiate about the many instances of gross and unwarrantable violence of which Spanish captains had been guilty. The country was full of accounts of English sailors who had been seized by the Spaniards, plundered of all they possessed, laden with chains in a tropical climate, imprisoned for long periods in unhealthy dungeons, tortured or consigned to the tender mercies of the Inquisition. In these accounts there was much exaggeration and not a little deliberate falsehood, but there was also a real basis of fact. After great difficulties, and by a combination of intimidation and address, Spain was induced to sign a convention regulating the outstanding accounts between the two nations and awarding to England as compensation a balance which was ultimately settled at 95,000*l*. No mention was made in this convention of the right of search, or of the punishment of the offending captains, and Spain was only induced to sign it, by England consenting to acknowledge a doubtful claim of compensation for Spanish ships that had been captured by Byng in 1718. It was soon, however, plain that this convention could not finally settle the differences between the two countries. Walpole succeeded, though with great difficulty, in carrying it through both Houses, and the Opposition, exasperated by his success, for a time seceded. In the country, however, the outcry was fierce and loud, and the Prince of Wales put himself at the head of the malcontents. The divisions of the Cabinet became more and more serious. The attitude of France towards England grew steadily hostile, and the language of Spain proportionately haughty. She threatened immediate reprisals upon the South Sea Company on account of an old debt which was alleged to be unpaid. She remonstrated, with an arrogance an English minister could hardly brook, against the presence of a British fleet in the Mediterranean. She reasserted in the strongest language that right of search which the English nation was resolved at all hazards to resist.

The Opposition had now succeeded in their design. War

had become inevitable; and Walpole, instead of retiring, as he should have done, declared it himself. 'They are ringing their bells now,' he exclaimed, as the joy bells pealed at the announcement, 'they will be wringing their hands soon.' It was in vain, however, that he had yielded to the clamour, for the long agony of his ministry had already begun. Supporter after supporter dropped away. The Duke of Argyle, the most powerful and eloquent of the Scottish chiefs, had gone into open opposition¹; and his influence, combined with the irritation due to the repressive measures that followed the Porteous riots, produced at the next election, for the first time, a Scotch majority hostile to the minister. The Duke of Newcastle was moody, discontented, and uncertain. The authority of the minister in his Cabinet, and his majority in Parliament, steadily declined. The military organisation having fallen into decay during the long peace, the war was feebly and unsuccessfully conducted, and the commanders by land and sea were jealous and disunited. Anson plundered and burnt Paita, and captured a few Spanish prizes. Admiral Vernon took Porto Bello, but the capture was speedily relinquished; and Vernon, being a personal enemy of Walpole, his triumph rather weakened than strengthened the Government. With these exceptions, the first period of the war presented little more than a monotony of disaster. The repulse of an expedition against Carthage, the abandonment of an expedition against Cuba, the destruction of many thousands of English soldiers and sailors by tropical fever, the inactivity of the British fleet in the Mediterranean, the rapid decline of British commerce, accompanied by severe distress at home—all contributed to the discontent. In the midst of these calamities, a new series of events began, which soon plunged the greater part of Europe into war. In October 1740 the Emperor Charles VI. died, after a very short illness, at the early age of fifty-five, leaving no son. For many years the great objects of his policy had been to bequeath his whole Austrian dominions to his daughter Maria Theresa, and to obtain for her husband the Duke of

¹ In a letter to Swift, 1734-5, Pulteney had noticed the steadiness with which the bishops and Scotch peers supported the ministry, and

how formidable a body they were in the House of Lords.—Swift's *Correspondence*, iii. 120.

Tuscany, and former ruler of Lorraine, the Imperial crown. The latter object could, of course, only be attained when the vacancy occurred, and by the ordinary process of election; but in order to secure the former, Charles VI. had promulgated the law called the Pragmatic Sanction, regulating the succession, and had obtained a solemn assent to that law from the Germanic body, and from the great hereditary States of Europe. With so distinct and so recent a recognition of her title by all the great Powers of Europe, the young Archduchess, it was hoped, would have no difficulty in assuming the throne as Queen of Hungary and of the other hereditary dominions of her father, and she did so with the warm assent of her subjects. She was, however, a young and inexperienced woman, wholly unversed in public business, and at this time far advanced in pregnancy. Her dominions were threatened by the Turks from without, and corroded by serious dissensions within. Her army, exclusive of the troops in Italy and the Netherlands, amounted to only 30,000 men, and her whole treasure consisted of 100,000 florins, which were claimed by the Empress dowager.¹ All these circumstances might have moved generous natures in her favour, but they served only to stimulate the rapacity of her neighbours. The Elector of Bavaria had never signed the Pragmatic Sanction, and he laid claim to the Austrian throne on grounds which were demonstrably worthless. France had not only assented to, but even guaranteed, the Pragmatic Sanction; and Cardinal Fleury, who was at the head of affairs, would probably have kept his faith, but he was now a very old and vacillating man, and his hand was forced by Marshal Belleisle, who, at the head of a powerful body of French nobles, saw in the weakness of the young queen an opportunity of aggrandising France, and dismembering an ancient rival. Prussia also was a party to the Pragmatic Sanction; but Frederick II., who had just ascended the throne, was burdened with no scruples; he found himself at the head of an admirable army of 76,000 men, and was impatient to employ it in the plunder of his enfeebled neighbour.

The Elector of Bavaria refused to acknowledge the title of the Empress, but the first blow was struck by Frederick. That

¹ See Coxe's *House of Austria*.

he was moved to this course simply by the consciousness of his own great military strength, and of the weakness and disorganisation of the Empire; that he sought his own aggrandisement with circumstances of peculiar treachery, and with a clear knowledge that he was about to apply the spark to a powder magazine, and to involve the greater part of Europe in the horrors of war, are facts which remain intact after all the elaborate apologies that have been written in his favour. He was a man of singularly clear, vivid, and rapid judgment, admirably courageous in seizing perilous opportunities, and in encountering adversity; admirably energetic and indefatigable in raising to the highest point of efficiency all the details both of civil and military administration. Perfectly free from every tinge of religious bigotry, he was one of the most tolerant rulers of his age, and he was one of the first who, by abolishing torture in his dominions, introduced the principles of Beccaria into practical legislation. Though intensely avaricious of real power, and disposed to exercise a petty, meddling, and spiteful despotism in the smallest spheres,¹ he had nothing of the royal love for the pomp and trappings of majesty, nothing of the blind reverence for old forms and for old traditions, nothing of the childish cowardice which so often makes those who are born to the purple unable to hear unwelcome truths or to face unwelcome facts. Like Richelieu, the element of weakness in his character took the form of literary vanity, and of a feeble vein of literary sentimentality, but it never affected his active career. Unlike Napoleon, to whom in many respects he bore a striking resemblance, his faculties were always completely under his control; he was never intoxicated, either by the magnitude of his schemes or by the violence of his passions, and his shrewd, calculating intellect remained unclouded through all the vicissitudes of fortune. He was at the same time hard and selfish to the core, and without a spark of generosity or of honour. His one object was the aggrandisement of the territory over which he ruled. Of patriotism, in the higher and more disinterested sense of the word, he had little or nothing. All his natural leanings of mind and disposition were French, and few

¹ See some very curious illustrations of this in the letters of Sir Hanbury Williams from Berlin.

Walpole's *Memoirs of George II.* i. pp. 452-461.

men appear to have had less appreciation of the nobler aspects of the German character, or of the dawning splendour of the German intellect. His own words, describing the motives of his first war, have been often cited: 'Ambition, interest, the desire of making men talk about me, carried the day, and I decided for war.'

It was not difficult, in the confused and intricate field of German politics, to find pretexts for aggression, and Prussia had one real reason to complain of the conduct of the Empire. One of her most ardent desires was to obtain for herself the succession to the little Duchies of Juliers and Berg. They had passed in 1675 under the sceptre of the Neuberg branch of the Palatine Electoral family, but the reigning Elector Palatine was the last sovereign of that branch, and the succession was claimed by the Prussian sovereigns, and also by the Sulzbach branch of the Palatine family. After much secret negotiation, a compromise was arrived at. Frederick William, who was then King of Prussia, restricted his demand to the possession of Berg; and he made it a condition of the recognition of the Pragmatic Sanction that the Emperor should assist him in obtaining the succession. The treaty was made, but it was speedily broken. The Elector Palatine ardently desired the succession for the Sulzbach branch of his family; and all Catholic Germany looked upon Dusseldorf as an essential frontier fortress against Protestant aggression. It was probable that the Prussian claims could only be enforced by arms, and that France would resent any considerable aggrandisement of Prussia on the Rhine. These and other considerations of German politics threw the Emperor Charles VI. decidedly on the side of the Palatine Succession, and in conjunction with the other great European Powers, he even urged that the Duchy should be provisionally garrisoned by troops belonging to the Sulzbach branch until a European arbitration had decided the disputed succession. Whatever might be the rights of the question of succession, Frederick William considered with reason that the Emperor had broken faith with him, and he speedily opened secret negotiations with France. French statesmen seldom lost an opportunity of obtaining an ally or an influence in Germany, and a secret alliance was ultimately concluded by which they undertook to sup-

port the claims of Prussia to a portion of the Duchy, excluding, however, Dusseldorf, the capital.¹

This was a real ground of difference. The claims of Prussia to the greater part of the Austrian province of Silesia were of a much more flimsy description. The Duchy of Jägerndorf had once been in the possession of a collateral branch of the House of Brandenburg, which had been deprived of it, it was alleged unjustly, in 1623, and Frederick claimed the territory as lineal descendant, though it had remained undisturbed in Austrian hands for more than a century. It is plain that by the application of such a principle the security of Europe might be at any moment destroyed, for there is no State which has not at some distant period gained or lost territory by acts of at least disputable justice. The Duchies of Liegnitz, Brieg, and Wohlau were claimed on somewhat more complicated grounds. About 1635 a family compact had been made between Frederick, who then governed them as Duke, and the Elector Joachim II., Duke of Brandenburg, providing that in the event of the failure of the male issue of either sovereign, his territory was to pass to the descendants of the other. Ferdinand I., King of Bohemia, who was the feudal lord, refused to recognise this compact, and its validity was in consequence very doubtful; and when in 1675 the ducal house of Liegnitz became extinct, Austria took possession of the territory, and the Elector of Brandenburg was soon after induced to renounce for himself and his descendants all claim to its possession. Frederick maintained this renunciation to be invalid, and he claimed by virtue of the original compact.²

These, however, were mere pretexts for a course of conduct which was decided on very different grounds. With consummate address, and with consummate baseness, Frederick lulled the suspicions of the young Queen to rest by professions of the warmest friendship till his army was on the eve of marching. He made no alliance, but just before starting for the war he said significantly to the French ambassador, 'I am going, I believe, to play your game, and if I should throw doublets, we

¹ See the details of this negotiation in Ranke's *Hist. of Prussia*.

² The original statements of the causes of the war both on the Prussian

and Austrian side are given at length in the *Histoire de la Dernière Guerre de Bohême*, par D. M. V. L. N. (Amsterdam, 1756).

will share the stake.¹ Without making any demands, or stating any conditions, without any previous notice, or any declaration of war, he suddenly poured 30,000 soldiers into Silesia, which was plunged in the security of profound peace, and left almost wholly destitute of troops. Then, and not till then, he apprised Maria Theresa of his designs, and offered, if she would cede to him the whole Lower Duchy which he had invaded, to defend her title to the Austrian throne.² The offer was rejected as an insult, and the whole province was overrun by Prussian soldiers. Breslau and several minor towns were captured, and an army which marched from Moravia, under Marshal Neipperg, to the rescue of Silesia was defeated at the great battle of Molwitz. The signal was given, and from every side the wolves rushed upon their prey. France had at first duped the Queen of Hungary by false and treacherous assurances, but she now flung off the mask, espoused the cause of the Elector of Bavaria, and with that Power entered into the war. The Kings of Spain and of Sardinia and the Elector of Saxony laid claims to portions of the Austrian dominions, and proposed openly or secretly to dismember them. In June 1741 a treaty was signed between France and Prussia, and by the end of October the fortunes of Austria appeared desperate. Silesia was irrecoverably gone. Moravia was invaded by the Prussians. Bohemia was overrun by a united army of French and Bavarians; Vienna was seriously menaced; Linz and Passau were taken; the capture of Prague soon followed, and, before the close of the year, the Elector of Bavaria was crowned King of Bohemia.

The Queen of Hungary, however, presented an inflexible front to her enemies. Driven from Vienna she threw herself on the loyalty of her Hungarian subjects, who received her with an enthusiasm that dispelled every hesitation from her mind, and she urgently called on those Powers which had accepted the Pragmatic Sanction, guaranteeing her succession to the whole Austrian dominions, to assist her in her struggle. Of these Powers, France, Prussia, Spain, and Poland, whose sovereign was the Elector of Saxony, had combined to plunder her. Russia,

¹ Gotter, who was sent on this message, arrived at Vienna two days after the Prussians had entered

Silesia.—Frederick, *Mém. de Mon Temps*.

² Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XV.* ch. 6.

chiefly by French intrigues, was embroiled in war with Sweden. The Dutch desired above all things to avoid the conflict. In England the feeling of the King, of the people, and of Newcastle and Hardwicke, was in favour of war; but Walpole strained every nerve to maintain peace. In addition to his constitutional and very honourable hatred of war he had many special reasons. He clearly foresaw from the first, what Maria Theresa refused till the last moment to believe, that the French were secretly meditating the dismemberment of Austria, and he was therefore anxious at all costs to put an end to the war between Austria and Prussia. Besides this, England was already at war with Spain, and a French war would probably lead to a Jacobite insurrection. Walpole urgently, but vainly, laboured to induce the Queen of Hungary to propitiate Frederick by the cession of the whole or part of Silesia, to induce Frederick, through fear of the ascendancy of France, to secede from the confederation, and, having failed in both objects, he was dragged reluctantly into the war. In April 1741 the King's speech called upon Parliament to aid him in maintaining the Pragmatic Sanction, and a subsidy of 300,000*l.* to the Queen of Hungary was voted. In the following month the King, in spite of the remonstrances of Walpole, went over to Hanover to organise a mixed army of English and German troops, but a French army passed the Meuse, and marched rapidly upon Hanover, and the King, scared by the threatened invasion of his Principality, concluded, in his capacity of Elector, without consulting or even informing his English ministers, a treaty pledging Hanover to neutrality for a year. Ever since the accession of the House of Brunswick, Hanover had been a perpetual source of embarrassment and danger to England, but a German war was one of the very few contingencies in which its alliance was of some real value. The indignation excited in England by the treaty of neutrality was in consequence very violent, and nearly at the same time the news arrived that 15,000 Spanish troops, under the protection of a French squadron, had sailed from Barcelona, in spite of the neighbourhood of a British fleet, to attack the Austrian dominions in Italy.

Many of these faults and misfortunes can in no degree be

ascribed to Walpole. Many of them were, in fact, the direct consequence of the abandonment of his policy; but in the mood in which the nation then was, they all contributed to his unpopularity. He was, in fact, emphatically a peace minister, and even had it been otherwise, no minister can command the requisite national enthusiasm if he is conducting a war of which he notoriously disapproves. There are few pictures more painful or humiliating than are presented by the last few months of his power. He had lived so long in office, and he had so few other tastes, that he clung to it with a desperate tenacity. His private fortune was disordered. He knew that his fall would be followed by an impeachment, and he had none of the magnanimity of virtue that has supported some statesmen under the ingratitude of nations, and has enabled them to look forward with confidence to the verdict of posterity. Once, it is true, he placed his resignation in the hands of the King, who desired him to continue in office, and he consented too readily for his fame. He encountered the opposition within Parliament, and the obloquy without, with a courage that never flinched, but he felt that the end was drawing near, and his old buoyancy of spirits was gone. 'He who in former years,' wrote his son, 'was asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow ... now never sleeps above an hour without waking; and he who at dinner always forgot he was minister, and was more gay and thoughtless than all his company, now sits without speaking, and with his eyes fixed, for an hour together.'¹ He met a motion for his removal, which was brought forward by Sandys, with a speech of consummate power, and the secession of Shippen and his followers gave him on this occasion the victory. He tried in vain to detach the Prince of Wales from the Opposition by inducing the King to offer him the increase of his allowance which he had long desired. He tried to crush Pitt by depriving him of his commission in the army. He even tried at one time to win a few Jacobite votes by an insincere and futile overture to the Pretender.² The great frost at the close of 1739 added seriously to his difficulties by the distress and the discontent it produced. The harvest that followed

¹ To Sir H. Mann. Oct. 19, 1741.

² See the account of this very curious overture (which was made in

1739 through the medium of Carte, the historian) in Lord Stanhope's *Hist. of England*, iii. pp. 23-24.

was miserably bad. Bread rose almost to famine price. Bakers' shops were broken open, and fierce riots took place in many parts of England. The people were angry, sullen, and wretched, and quite disposed to make the minister responsible for their sufferings. At the moment when his unpopularity was at its height the period for a dissolution of Parliament arrived. The feelings of the people could not be doubted, but party connections, borough influence, and a lavish expenditure of secret-service money might still protract his rule, and all three were strained to the uttermost. An unforeseen circumstance appears to have turned the scale. An injudicious and hasty interference of some soldiers in a riot that took place at the Westminster election, though Walpole was certainly wholly unconcerned in it, was made the basis of an absurd and malignant report that the ministers were attempting to coerce the voters by military force, and the indignation thus aroused affected several elections. When Parliament met, in the beginning of December 1741, Walpole had only a bare majority, and after eight weeks of fierce and factious wrangling, being defeated on January 28 on a question relating to an election petition, he resigned.¹

He had already provided, with his usual caution, for his fall. In the course of his ministry he had bestowed upon his sons permanent offices, chiefly sinecures, amounting in all to about 15,000*l.* a-year,² and had obtained the title of Baron for his eldest son, and the Orders of the Bath and of the Garter for himself. He now procured for himself the title of Earl of Orford, and a pension of 4,000*l.* a-year, and for his illegitimate daughter the rank and precedence of an Earl's daughter. He is said, many years before, to have disarmed the animosity of Shippen by saving from punishment a Jacobite friend of that statesman; and he endeavoured in vain to avert an impeachment by inducing the King to offer Pulteney the chief place in the Government on the condition that he would save his predecessor from prosecution. The King, though he had always

¹ See the graphic account of this last struggle in H. Walpole's letters to Sir H. Mann. Glover asserts in his Memoirs that the Prince of Wales assured him that the last votes against Walpole cost the Opposition 12,000*l.*

² See the list in Coxe's *Walpole*, i. 730-731, and Horace Walpole's Memoir of his own income in *Walpole's Life and Letters* (ed. Cunningham) vol. i.

disliked the peace policy of his minister, acted towards him with a fidelity that has not been sufficiently appreciated; strained all his influence for his protection, and even burst into tears when parting with him. To the mass of the nation, however, the fall of Walpole was the signal of the wildest rejoicing. It was believed that the reign of corruption had at last ended; that triennial parliaments would be restored; that standing armies would be abolished in time of peace; that a new energy would be infused into the conduct of the war; that all pensioners would be excluded from Parliament; that the number of placemen would be strictly limited. Statesmen observed with concern the great force which the democratic element in the country had almost silently acquired during the long and pacific ministry of Walpole. The increasing numbers and wealth of the trading classes, the growth of the great towns, the steady progress of the press, and the discredit which corruption had brought upon the Parliament, had all contributed to produce a spirit beyond the walls of the Legislature such as had never before been shown, except when ecclesiastical interests were concerned. Political agitation assumed new dimensions, and doctrines about the duty of representatives subordinating their judgments to those of their electors, which had scarcely been heard in England since the Commonwealth, were freely expressed. A very able political writer, who had been an ardent opponent of Walpole, but who was much terrified at the aspect the country had assumed upon his fall, has left us a lively picture of what he termed 'the republican spirit that had so strangely arisen.' He notices as a new and curious fact the 'instructions' drawn up by some of the electors of London, of Westminster, and several other cities to their representatives, prescribing the measures that were required, and asserting or implying 'that it was the duty of every Member of Parliament to vote in every instance as his constituents should direct him in the House of Commons,' contrary to 'the constant and allowed principle of our Constitution that no man, after he is chosen, is to consider himself as a member for any particular place, but as a representative for the whole nation.' He complains that 'the views of the popular interest, inflamed, distracted, and misguided as it has been of late, are such as they

were never imagined to have been ;' that ' a party of malcontents, assuming to themselves, though very falsely, the title of the People, claim with it a pretension which no people could have a right to claim, of creating themselves into a new order in the State, affecting a superiority to the whole Legislature, insolently taking upon them to dictate to all the three estates, in which the absolute power of the Government, by all the laws of this country, has indisputably resided ever since it was a Government, and endeavouring in effect to animate the people to resume into their own hands that vague and loose authority which exists (unless in theory) in the people of no country upon earth, and the inconvenience of which is so obvious that it is the first step of mankind, when formed into society, to divest themselves of it, and to delegate it for ever from themselves.'¹

In these movements of public opinion we may clearly trace the conditions that rendered possible the career of Pitt. On the present occasion, however, they were doomed to a speedy disappointment. Petitions poured into Westminster, and for a time Pulteney was the object of a popularity such as few English politicians have ever enjoyed. But in a few days the prospect was overclouded. Statesmen of the most opposite parties had concurred for the purpose of hurling Walpole from power ; but when they succeeded, their disunion was at once apparent, and the hollowness of their pretensions to purity was exposed. Pulteney fulfilled his rash pledge of not taking office, but, by a fatal error of judgment, he accepted the earldom of Bath, as well as a seat in the Cabinet, and his influence was irrevocably destroyed.² He lost all credit with the nation for disinterestedness. He was removed from the House of Commons, which he might have led, and his attempts to exercise a controlling direction over affairs without accepting the responsibility of office utterly failed. The King, it is said, indignant at his conduct, at first shrank from giving him the peerage which in the course of his career he had already three times refused, but the old

¹ *Faction Detected by the Evidence of Facts.* This very remarkable pamphlet (which went through many editions) has been ascribed to Lord Egmont.

² His intentions appear to have been known before the fall of Wal-

pole. Sir R. Wilmot, in a letter to the Duke of Devonshire, Jan. 12, 1741-2, said: 'Pulteney's terms seem to be a peerage, and a place in the Cabinet Council, if he can get it.'—Coxe's *Walpole*, iii. 587.

minister, perceiving clearly the error of his rival, persuaded his master to yield. 'I have turned the key of the Cabinet on him,' he exclaimed, with a significant gesture, and he soon afterwards greeted him with mock gravity in the House of Lords, 'Here we are, my Lord, the two most insignificant men in the kingdom.' Pulteney, indeed, was utterly overwhelmed by the reproaches of the Tories, by the poignant satires of Sir Hanbury Williams, and by the execration of the people. For years he had discharged the easy task of criticising abuses which he was not called upon to remedy. He had made himself the great adversary of all corrupt influence, the idol of all who aspired to reform, but no sooner had the hour for action arrived than he shrank ignobly from the helm. Henceforth his political life was a wretched tissue of disappointed hopes. He tried in vain to grasp the reins of power on the death of Lord Wilmington. He tried to assist Carteret in forming an administration in 1746. He declared himself in the next reign a supporter of the Tory Bute, but he never again enjoyed either popular or royal favour. In a few years he was powerless and almost forgotten. He had always loved money too much, and under the influence of age and disappointment this failing is said to have deepened into an avarice not less sordid than that which had clouded the noble faculties of Marlborough.

Walpole also, or, to give him his new title, Orford, soon disappeared from the scene, but his influence endured to the last. For a time his life seemed in imminent danger. The cry of the people for his blood was fierce and general, and politicians of most parties had pledged themselves to impeach him. It soon, however, appeared that, with the exception of Pitt, Chesterfield, and the Duke of Argyle, no man of importance was anxious to push matters to extremity, while many and various influences favoured him. Those who had come in immediate contact with him could hardly be wholly insensible to his many great qualities and to the eminent services he had rendered to the country and the dynasty. The King and House of Lords were warmly in his favour. The Prince of Wales was reconciled to him. Newcastle, though he had often quarrelled with him, was anxious for many reasons to shield him, and negotiated with great tact to prevent the complete triumph of his ene-

mies.¹ Pulteney was alarmed at the sudden impulse given to the Jacobite party, and at the loud cry for the suppression of the standing army, which might, if it succeeded, be fatal to the dynasty, and it was impossible to form an administration without including a considerable section of the former Government. Besides this, corrupt influence had pervaded all parties. No party sincerely wished to change the system, and therefore all parties shrank from exposing it. Walpole was compelled, indeed, to relinquish his pension, which two years after he resumed, and Pulteney was reluctantly obliged to urge on his impeachment, but, as might have been expected, it was without result. Carteret himself took a leading part in the House of Lords in opposing the Bill granting indemnity to those who gave evidence against Walpole, and the blunders of the new ministers, if they did not restore the popularity of the fallen statesman, at least speedily diverted into new channels the indignation of the people.

He retained his influence with the King to the last, and he used it successfully to divide his adversaries, to perpetuate the exclusion of the Tory party, and to bring the Pelhams into the forefront. He died in 1745, after great suffering, which he bore with great courage. 'A few days before he died,' writes his biographer, 'the Duke of Cumberland, who had ineffectually remonstrated with the King against a marriage with the Princess of Denmark, who was deformed, sent his governor, Mr. Poyntz, to consult the Earl of Orford on the best methods which he could adopt to avoid the match. After a moment's reflection, Orford (who was well aware of the penurious character of the King) advised him to give his consent to the marriage on condition of receiving an ample and immediate establishment, 'and believe me,' he added, 'when I say the match will be no longer pressed.' The Duke followed the advice, and the event happened as the dying statesman had foretold.'²

The political changes which immediately followed the retirement of Walpole may be speedily dismissed. For several years they consisted chiefly of the antagonism of Carteret and Pul-

¹ Coxe's *Pelham*. Introd. sec. 3.

² Coxe's *Walpole*, i. 743. See, too, Horace Walpole's *Memoirs of George II.* vol. i. p. 105.



teney with the Pelhams. Pulteney, as I have said, though accepting a seat in the Cabinet, at first declined office, but at his desire the Earl of Wilmington, the old colleague of Walpole and a man of the most moderate intelligence, became the nominal head of the Government. He had broken away from Walpole on the question of the Spanish war, but was otherwise thoroughly identified with the former Government. Carteret obtained the Secretaryship of State for the Northern Department, which involved the direction of foreign affairs. Newcastle occupied the corresponding post in home affairs; his brother, Henry Pelham, was Paymaster of the Forces, and Lord Hardwicke continued to be Chancellor. With two or three exceptions the Tories were still excluded from office, as were also Chesterfield and Pitt, who were personally displeasing to the King, and the offices of the Government were divided in tolerably fair proportions between the followers of the great Whig leaders and the personal adherents of the Prince of Wales. In spite of all the clamour that had been raised about the abuses under Walpole, the system of home government continued essentially the same. The Septennial Act was maintained against every attack; and if there was a little more decorum in the government, there was probably quite as much corruption.

The foreign policy of the Government, however, gained considerably in energy, and the change was but one of many circumstances that favoured Maria Theresa. We have already seen that by October 1741 her fortunes had sunk to the lowest ebb, but a great revulsion speedily set in. The martial enthusiasm of the Hungarians, the subsidy from England, and the brilliant military talents of General Khevenhuller, restored her armies. Vienna was put in a state of defence, and at the same time jealousies and suspicion made their way among the confederates. The Electors of Bavaria and Saxony were already in some degree divided; and the Germans, and especially Frederick, were alarmed by the growing ascendancy, and irritated by the haughty demeanour of the French. In the moment of her extreme depression, the Queen consented to a concession which England had vainly urged upon her before, and which laid the foundation of her future success. In October 1741 she entered

into a secret convention with Frederick, by which that astute sovereign agreed to desert his allies, and desist from hostilities, on condition of ultimately obtaining Lower Silesia, with Breslau and Neisse. Every precaution was taken to ensure secrecy. It was arranged that Frederick should continue to besiege Neisse, that the town should ultimately be surrendered to him, and that his troops should then retire into winter quarters, and take no further part in the war. As the sacrifice of a few more lives was perfectly indifferent to the contracting parties, and in order that no one should suspect the treachery that was contemplated, Neisse, after the arrangement had been made for its surrender, was subjected for four days and four nights to the horrors of bombardment. Frederick at the same time talked, with his usual cynical frankness, to the English ambassador about the best way of attacking his allies the French; and observed, that if the Queen of Hungary prospered, he would perhaps support her, if not—everyone must look for himself.¹ He only assented verbally to this convention, and, no doubt, resolved to await the course of events, in order to decide which Power it was his interest finally to betray; but in the meantime the Austrians obtained a respite, which enabled them to throw their whole forces upon their other enemies. Two brilliant campaigns followed. The greater part of Bohemia was recovered by an army under the Duke of Lorraine, and the French were hemmed in at Prague; while another army, under General Khevenhuller, invaded Upper Austria, drove 10,000 French soldiers within the walls of Linz, blockaded them, defeated a body of Bohemians who were sent to the rescue, compelled the whole French army to surrender, and then, crossing the frontier, poured in a resistless torrent over Bavaria. The fairest plains of that beautiful land were desolated by hosts of irregular troops from Hungary, Croatia, and the Tyrol; and on the 12th of February the Austrians marched in triumph into Munich. On that very day the Elector of Bavaria was crowned Emperor of Germany, at Frankfort, under the title of Charles VII., and the imperial crown was thus, for the first time, for many generations, separated from the House of Austria.

The wheel again turned. Frederick witnessed with great

¹ See Carlyle's *Frederick*, book xiii. ch. 5.

alarm the rapid success of the Austrians; he concluded, probably with some reason, that if they advanced further he would never obtain the cession for which he had stipulated, and he complained also that the secret of his truce had not been strictly kept. He accordingly broke the convention, united himself again with the new Emperor, and entered Moravia. The town of Glatz was besieged and taken, and after several indecisive skirmishes and several abortive negotiations, the fortune of the war was decided by a great battle at Czaslau, or Chotusitz, in Bohemia. The Austrians were commanded by Prince Charles of Lorraine; the Prussians by Frederick in person. The result was a great Prussian victory. The Austrians were driven back, with the loss of 18 cannon and about 7,000 men.

Both parties now sincerely desired peace. Frederick foresaw the dangers of a complete French ascendancy in Germany, and his army was seriously weakened. The Austrians had retired in good order at Czaslau. The Prussian losses were but little inferior to those of the enemy, and their cavalry had been almost annihilated. On the other hand, it appeared evident that the intervention or non-intervention of Prussia decided the fortunes of the war, and it was probable that the French, unless speedily checked, would regain their ascendancy in Bohemia. These considerations, aided by the active good offices of England, led to the Peace of Breslau, by which Austria ceded to Prussia all Lower and the greater part of Upper Silesia as well as the country about Glatz, while Frederick on his part ceased from all hostility, withdrew his troops from the French army, and acknowledged the Pragmatic Sanction. The preliminaries of this peace were signed on June 11, and the definitive peace was accepted on July 28, 1742. The Elector of Saxony also acceded to it, and availed himself of the opportunity of withdrawing from the war.

The conditions of the contest were thus profoundly altered. The first consequence was the almost complete expulsion of the French from Bohemia. Suddenly deserted by their allies, outnumbered by their enemies, and wasted by sickness and by famine, they were driven from place to place, and the whole army was at last blockaded in Prague. An army sent to its relief under the command of Maillebois, was repulsed and com-

pelled to fall back on Bavaria, and the surrender of the French appeared inevitable. This fate was averted by the masterly strategy of Belleisle, who succeeded, in the midst of a dark December night, in evading the Austrians, and who conducted the bulk of his army unbroken for a twelve days' march over a waste of ice and snow and through the midst of a hostile country. They had no covering by night and no subsistence except frozen bread, and they were harassed at every step by the enemy. Hundreds died through cold and hardship. The roads were strewn with human bodies stiffening in the frost, but every cannon and banner was brought in safety to Eger, a frontier town of Bohemia, which was still in the hands of the French. Prague held out a little longer, but it soon succumbed. The French commander declared that unless he obtained honourable terms he would burn the city, and in order to save the capital of Bohemia, the French garrison of 6,000 men were suffered to march out with the honours of war, and to join their comrades at Eger. On Jan. 2, Belleisle began his homeward march, and the campaign had been so deadly that of 40,000 men who had invaded Germany only 8,000 recrossed the Rhine. Fleury, who had been dragged into a war which he had never desired and which he was unfit to conduct, had already vainly sued for peace. His overtures were spurned; and the Austrian Government, in order to sow dissension among its enemies, published the letter he had written. His long life had been for the most part upright, honourable, and useful; and if he assented in his last years to acts which were grossly criminal, history will readily forgive faults which were due to the weakness of extreme old age. He died in January in his ninetieth year. In May, 1743, Maria Theresa was crowned in Prague.

The effects of the change of government in England were felt in almost every quarter. Carteret at once sent Maria Theresa the assurance of his full support, and a new energy was infused into the war. The struggle between England and Spain had altogether merged in the great European war, and the chief efforts of the Spaniards were directed against the Austrian dominions in Italy. The kingdom of Naples, which had passed under Austrian rule during the war of the Succession, had, as we have seen, been restored to the Spanish line in the war

which ended in 1740, and Don Carlos, who ruled it was altogether subservient to Spanish policy. The Duke of Lorraine, the husband of Maria Theresa, was sovereign of Tuscany; and the Austrian possessions consisted of the Duchy of Milan, and the provinces of Mantua and Placentia. They were garrisoned at the opening of the war by only 15,000 men, and their most dangerous enemy was the King of Sardinia, who had gradually extended his dominions into Lombardy, and whose army was, probably, the largest and most efficient in Italy. 'The Milanese,' his father is reported to have said, 'is like an artichoke, to be eaten leaf by leaf,' and the skill and perseverance with which for many generations the House of Savoy pursued that policy, have in our own day had their reward. Spanish troops had landed at Naples as early as November 1741. The King of Sardinia, the Prince of Modena, and the Republic of Genoa were on the same side. Venice was completely neutral, Tuscany was compelled to declare herself so, and a French army was soon to cross the Alps. The King of Sardinia, however, at this critical moment, was alarmed by the ambitious projects openly avowed by the Spaniards, and he was induced by English influence to change sides. He obtained the promise of certain territorial concessions from Austria, and of an annual subsidy of 200,000*l.* from England; and on these conditions he suddenly marched with an army of 30,000 men to the support of the Austrians. All the plans of the confederates were disconcerted by this defection. The Spaniards went into winter quarters near Bologna in October, fought an unsuccessful battle at Campo Santo in the following February, and then retired to Rimini, leaving Lombardy in complete tranquillity. The British fleet in the Mediterranean had been largely strengthened by Carteret, and it did good service to the cause. It burnt a Spanish squadron in the French port of St. Tropez, compelled the King of Naples, by the threat of bombardment, to withdraw his troops from the Spanish army, and sign an engagement of neutrality, destroyed large provisions of corn collected by the Genoese for the Spanish army, and cut off that army from all communications by sea.

The same good fortune attended the Austrians in every field. In the north, Russia was completely victorious over the Swedes, and the war was terminated by the Peace of Abo in August 1743.