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A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

BY

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University of Manchester*

VOLUME I

(THE ISLANDS AND THE FIRST EMPIRE)

PART III

IMPERIUM ET LIBERTAS

(A.D. 1660—1763)

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BOOK V

CONSTITUTIONAL SETTLEMENT AND IMPERIAL DEVELOPMENT

(A.D. 1660-1714)

INTRODUCTION

THE second half of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth form a period of the utmost moment in the development of the British Commonwealth and of its distinctive institutions.

In the first place it was during this period that the system of government by the control of Parliament over the executive was definitely established, and that the means by which the control of Parliament could be exercised—the cabinet system and the party system—began to be wrought out. The struggle for a system of national self-government in the first half of the century had brought about civil war, and had ended in a *cul de sac* : no solution was to be found along the lines pursued by the Puritan republic, and the result was that the islands returned, at the Restoration, to the old system of monarchical control of the executive government. In Scotland, and to a less degree in Ireland, the Restoration practically brought about the establishment of absolute monarchy. But in England the traditional powers of Parliament made this impossible, even in the ardour of loyalism which followed his return, Charles II. found it impossible to exercise the powers which his father had wielded, and still less to reign as an unchecked despot, like his cousin Louis XIV. During his reign two things of great importance happened : the ministers of state began to act together as a Cabinet, and Parliament began to be divided into two more or less clearly defined parties, with the consequence that to some extent the king found it necessary to choose his ministers in such a way as to command the support of Parliament. At the end of the reign he obtained for a time the upper hand, and freed himself from parliamentary restraints ; and during the short reign of James II. there seemed to be a real danger of the establishment of absolutism in England. This danger was removed by the Revolution of 1688, which finally and unmistakably established the supremacy of Parliament; and during the reigns of William III. and Anne the unceasing conflicts of the two political parties compelled the gradual adoption of

a system whereby the ministers of State were increasingly drawn from the party possessing a parliamentary majority. The great achievement of the age was the development, for the first time in history, of the machinery which made self-government on a national scale practicable.

In the second place, this period saw a clearer definition of the relations between the various nations of the islands. Scotland, awakened by the Revolution to an active political life, and tending to pursue under her own Parliament a dangerously independent policy, was united with England on very generous terms, which opened for her, as a full partner in the British Commonwealth, an era of growing prosperity. On the other hand, Ireland, always the Cinderella of the island family, was brought by the events of the Revolution into a worse instead of a better position. The antipathy between the Catholic and the Protestant elements in her population was intensified. The majority of the population were deprived of all political rights, and subjected to a pitiless penal code. The country as a whole was treated as a subject dominion, and deprived of the right of freely developing its own resources by severe trade restrictions imposed by the British Parliament. And the suggestion of a political union, which might at this stage have helped to remove old sores in Ireland as in Scotland, was not even considered. The treatment of Ireland after the Revolution is the darkest stain on the history of the whole Commonwealth.

In the third place this period saw the first systematic attempt to define an imperial policy, and it also saw great activity in the creation and organisation of new colonies, especially during the reign of Charles II. The new imperial policy was marked by two outstanding features. The first was that all the colonies were endowed with the full machinery for local self-government, with institutions modelled on those of the homeland, and with complete religious toleration. In these respects the British imperial system was far ahead of any other in the world. To the mother country was reserved the control of foreign policy and of trade relations. The second feature of the system was that an attempt was made to organise the empire as an economic unit, in which the mother country was to be the central market and distributing centre. The danger of this was that it tended to subordinate the economic interests of the colonies to those of the mother country, and thus to engender strife between them: this tendency was increased

in an unfortunate degree after the Revolution, owing to the greater influence which the British trading classes then obtained in government.

In the fourth place the period was marked by two Dutch wars, arising largely out of the old commercial rivalries of the two maritime powers, and—far more important—by a desperate struggle against France, which is almost as important in the history of the Commonwealth as the struggle with Spain a century earlier. Long postponed by the fact that Charles II. and James II. consented to be pensioners of France, this conflict broke out with the Revolution, and filled the remainder of the period. It was a many-sided struggle, and had momentous results. It was a struggle to prevent the domination of Europe by a single overweening power, and in this aspect the islands found themselves at first the partners and then the leaders of a united Europe. It was a struggle also for commercial, naval, and colonial supremacy, though this aspect of the conflict was not predominant in the minds of contemporaries, and therefore the struggle was renewed and fought to a finish in the next era. Perhaps the main outcome of the conflict from the point of view of the Commonwealth as a whole was that it definitely established British naval supremacy—the foundation upon which the splendid achievements of the next age were to rest.

But the core and centre of the story of these years is to be found in the half-blind striving after national self-government which distinguishes it. Carried on as it was in a series of often sordid conflicts of parties, its full significance is apt to be lost unless the reader keeps always in mind the fact that the parties and politicians of the period were the unworthy instruments of a great historical development of momentous importance not only to the British Commonwealth but to the whole world.

CHAPTER I

THE RESTORATION

§ i. *The Ideas of the Restoration and the Character of Charles II*

THE theory of the Restoration was that there was to be a return to the old system which had existed before the civil war. This was impossible in practice, for what had been done during the previous eighteen years in all the British realms could not be simply wiped out. During all that time men had been engaged in discussing the problems of government in State and Church; they had been making the most varied experiments, and it was impossible to restore the old habit of submitting to and taking for granted traditional authorities. In any case the old system had to be re-defined ; and even among those who were most anxious to restore it there was room for difference as to what it really had been. Moreover social and political changes had taken place which were bound to have a great effect. The steady growth of English trade had made the trading class wealthier and more important than it had ever been. The relations between the islands and the continent had become closer than ever before, partly by reason of the growth of trade, partly because of Cromwell's active foreign policy, and partly because so many royalists had lived for years in exile on the continent. Foreign affairs were to have in the future a far deeper influence on British politics than they had had in the past, and since it was becoming plain that everybody's interests were affected by them, it was impossible that they should any longer be regarded as the peculiar concern of the king and his little group of advisers alone. The colonies had become factors of importance in the life of many Englishmen, and it was inevitable that their ideas and their ways of life should exercise some influence in England, though not yet in the other parts of the islands. Above all, during the long discussions of the last years, rival theories of politics and of Church government had been developed with a sharpness never known before ; their

adherents were tending to group themselves into more or less organised parties, and the emergence of organised parties, which is one of the main features of the next generation, was bound to affect the whole system. A mere restoration of the old ways was therefore impossible : ' a restoration is always a revolution³ as a great historian has said.

The statesmen of the restored regime had in their hands, if they had liked to use it, the possibility of working out an intelligent system of relations for all the British lands. But the theory of mere restoration and the antipathies which had been aroused by the forced union under Cromwell forbade that ; the problems of settlement were quite separately dealt with in England, in Scotland, in Ireland, and in the colonies. The only common link was provided by the king and by his character and aims.

Charles II., who had the chance of making a fresh start for the monarchy of the British realms, was in every way unfitted for so great a task. He was a witty, good-humoured, easy-going young libertine of thirty, who had no principles, no beliefs, and no sense of honour. He had known long exile and penury, and he now intended to have a pleasant life and to avoid all risk of ' going on his travels again/ The flagrant and shameless immorality of his life and of those whom he chose as his friends shocked even a generation which was ready to throw off the restraints that the Puritans had imposed. Puritan ideals of life still influenced very large elements of the population both in England and in Scotland ; and while Charles was personally popular and therefore able to exercise a very vicious influence in English life, his behaviour and the character of his court certainly helped to undermine the monarchy in both countries. Charles' best feature was a certain kindness, which made him dislike unnecessary persecution and encouraged him to favour a policy which in any case seemed to suit his private aims.

In politics he had little of the lofty belief in royal authority as a divinely imposed responsibility which had possessed and ruined his father. He had too keen a sense of humour to take himself seriously as the Lord's anointed, nor was he prepared to run risks for such a cause. But he envied the unrestrained power and the command over all the resources of the State which were enjoyed by his brilliant cousin, Louis XIV. of France ; and, though he was not ready to fight for it openly, he was willing to sacrifice his own honour and his country's if, at so cheap a rate, and in an underhand way, he could gain freedom from the parliamentary control which

he found so irksome. Religion meant Uttle or nothing to him, but he was inclined to think that Roman Catholicism was the most convenient religion for a prince; and, if he could, he would have made all the islands Roman Catholic. He was too lazy and pleasure-loving to worry about the details of government, and so left the actual work to ministers, who became relatively more important in this period than they had been. But he was shrewd, clever, and unhampered by scruples ; he rather enjoyed playing the game of political intrigue and outwitting opponents, at which he could be very skilful. And in this way he was far more formidable than his father, for he never lost his temper, he understood the baser part of men, and he had an easy and winning charm of manner which gave him a great advantage in dealing with men. He profited by contrast with his brother and destined successor, James Duke of York, whom everybody disliked because he was anarrow-minded and unforgiving egoist and a born tyrant, capable of both cruelty and treachery. Yet James, unlike Charles, had beliefs for which he was prepared to take risks and to suffer, and was not lacking in patriotism.

One of the reasons why Scotland and Ireland were separately dealt with was that in those countries it seemed more possible to establish a royal absolutism than in England. For in spite of the enthusiasm with which he was welcomed back and the prevalence of talk about the divine right of kings and the duty of passive obedience, Charles was shrewd enough to know that the English Parliament would not be easy to deal with. The whole history of his reign justified this view. It was a period of steady growth in parliamentary power, and the attempt to overthrow this power, which was made during Charles' last years and under his successor, and which for a time seemed to be successful, only ended in the Revolution which finally bitted and bridled the English monarchy, and established the supremacy of Parliament not only in England but throughout the islands.

§ 2. *England: Limited Monarchy and Religious Intolerance.*

The Declaration of Breda, issued before his return to England, had pledged Charles n. to support a policy of religious toleration and political reconciliation, but had left the chief points at issue to be decided by a free Parliament. The first earnest that the king intended to follow this course was his inclusion in the Privy Council not only of a large

number of royalists, but of many who had taken the parliamentary side in the civil war or even served under Cromwell, like Monk (now made Duke of Albemarle) or Anthony Ashley Cooper (later Lord Ashley and Earl of Shaftesbury). The result was that the Privy Council became too big and too heterogeneous to be the active working centre of government, as it had been under the Tudors and early Stuarts. The actual conduct of affairs largely passed to Committees of the Council, nominated by the king, which generally worked with great industry and intelligence. But there also came into being a small informal group of leading men, who discussed with the king broad questions of policy, and co-ordinated the work of the Committees. This group included the principal ministers, the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Treasurer and the two Secretaries of State, with such others as the king might choose. The rise of this informal and rather indefinite body was something of a new departure in government; in a sense it may be described as the beginning of the Cabinet system. During the first years of the reign this rudimentary Cabinet was dominated by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Clarendon, who had been a member of the Long Parliament and later Charles i.'s chief minister during the war, and Charles ii.'s during the exile. Clarendon was a high churchman in religion; in politics he adhered to the work of the first session of the Long Parliament, in which he had taken part. The Restoration settlement was in fact mainly Clarendon's work; but as he had to carry Parliament with him, it is not fair to blame him for all the excesses of Parliament.

At first he had to deal with the Convention which had brought about the king's return, and in which there was a Presbyterian majority. An Act of indemnity and oblivion was passed, so generous in its terms that angry cavaliers said it gave indemnity to the king's enemies and oblivion to his friends. Only fourteen persons were put to death in England, largely from among the 'regicides' who had condemned Charles i. Clarendon deserves the credit of having resisted an attempt in the House of Lords to demand greater severity. The difficult question of rights to land which had been alienated by royalists during the troubles was settled by confirming existing arrangements, except in the case of Crown or Church lands, or lands which had been confiscated by the usurping government. This also was a grievance to discontented cavaliers, and made them less ready to be

subservient to the king and the minister, who had in their view 'betrayed' them. The Convention also carried out an old plan of James i. by abolishing feudal tenures and granting to the Crown in their place a permanent revenue from the excise duties, first imposed during the civil war. This meant that the land-owning aristocracy escaped the last relics of its old feudal obligations, at the expense of the nation.

But the main immediate problem was that of religious conciliation. The Convention could not settle this ; it had to be left to a properly elected Parliament. But a conference held at Clarendon's house between leading Anglicans and Presbyterians held out hopes of a settlement on moderate Episcopal lines which would have reconciled the great majority of the Presbyterians. The discussions were resumed in what is known as the Savoy Conference, presided over by the Bishop of London. But before any definite conclusion had been reached the new Parliament had been elected (May 1661), and it took the matter into its own hands.

Elected in the first enthusiasm of the Restoration, this Parliament, which was to last for eighteen years—nearly as long as the Long Parliament—contained an overwhelming majority of staunch royalists or cavaliers, determined to exact vengeance for all their sufferings; and they soon swept away all hope of compromise. They at once repealed the Act of 1642 which had excluded the bishops from the House of Lords. Then, because the Puritans were strongest in the towns, they passed a *Corporation Act* (1661), imposing upon all members of municipal corporations a declaration against resistance to the Crown and a formal repudiation of the Solemn League and Covenant. Next they passed an *Act of Uniformity* (1662) making the Prayer-book compulsory, and requiring the acceptance of episcopal ordination and of all the doctrines and ceremonies of the Prayer-book from all incumbents of livings and all teachers in universities, schools, or even private houses, before St. Bartholomew's Day. To this was added a *Licensing Act* (1662), aimed at the printing and sale of 'heretical, schismatical, and seditious* books and pamphlets, and re-establishing the censorship of the press : the judges were to approve all legal writings, the secretaries of state all historical and political writings, the bishops all religious, philosophical and scientific writings. The Act was only for two years, but it was regularly renewed until 1679. Later, alarmed by signs of a desire for toleration on the part of the king, Parliament not only threw out an attempted Toleration Bill (1663), but went on to pass two

ferocious Acts against the Puritans: a *Conventicle Act* (1664), which prohibited under severe penalties attendance at any meeting of more than four persons assembled for worship other than that of the Church of England; and what is known as the *Five Mile Act* (1665), which prohibited under severe penalties any of the displaced Puritan ministers from coming within five miles of a corporate town or a parish in which they had previously taught or preached, unless they swore to the Act of Uniformity, took an oath against resistance under any pretext, and swore not to endeavour any change whatsoever in Church or State. The occasion of this infamous measure was that the plague was raging in London, and many Puritan ministers had returned to help their flocks: Parliament, safe at Oxford, was alarmed at the prospect that the ministers might regain their old ascendancy.

y In theory these measures ought to have crushed the Puritan sects out of existence. More than 1200 clergy left their homes and their churches on St. Bartholomew's Day 1662 rather than take the oaths of uniformity, and these included some of the noblest of the Puritan divines, like Richard Baxter, Edmund Calamy, William Bates, and the two grandfathers of John Wesley. They went into penury; their followers could not help them. But their example at once ennobled and maintained the Puritan tradition. Some of the noblest expressions of the Puritan spirit belong to these years. Milton, blind, poor and obscure, wrote in these years the great epic of Puritanism, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*; John Bunyan, the tinker-preacher, imprisoned under the Conventicle Act, reflected the loftiest and the tenderest aspects of Puritanism in *The Pilgrim's Progress*; and these two not only helped to keep the spirit of the Puritans alive as a powerful factor in the life and thought of England, they stood supreme among the writers of their age. The bulk of the ordinary Puritans quietly conformed, as their fathers had done under Laud, but remained still Puritan in sympathy; and this defeated the aims of the Corporation Act, for it meant that the towns still remained Puritan. There was a substantial minority of Puritan sympathisers even in the Cavalier Parliament. How many Puritans refused to conform throughout the country we have no means of knowing. Algernon Sidney, twenty years later, estimated them at one million, which must be a great exaggeration, seeing that the total population of the country was only about five millions. But the Non-

conformists were certainly numerous, and were henceforward a factor in the life of the nation that could not be disregarded.

While the Cavalier Parliament was unbending in its hostility to the Puritans and in its aversion from the idea of religious freedom, it was by no means inclined to increase the power of the Crown in the political sphere. It did not dream of restoring the ' prerogatives ' which the Tudors and the early Stewarts had exercised : the constitution of 1640-1 was what it accepted and re-defined. The abolition of the old prerogative courts, Star Chamber, High Commission Court and the rest, was confirmed in 1661 : the ordinary process of law must suffice for the maintenance of governmental authority. The Triennial Act of 1641 was repealed, it is true, but only because its terms were offensive : its main provision, that Parliament must meet at least every three years, was re-enacted in the Triennial Act of 1664. By the Militia Acts (1661-1663) Parliament restored to the CrOwh supreme control over the forces by land and sea, but this had only been withdrawn by the Long Parliament on the eve of war, and the Militia Acts implied that the old-fashioned militia under the lords-lieutenant of the counties ought to be sufficient for defence. The idea of a standing professional army was as abhorrent to the royalists as to anybody else ; it was abhorrent precisely because it was regarded as a danger to political liberty.

There was, indeed, little fear that Charles II. would be able to shake himself free from dependence on the English Parliament. For, in spite of the large revenue granted to him for life, he was in debt, and was never able to escape from it. He had brought with him from exile £3,000,000 of debt; he found the finances of the country dislocated by the anarchy of the last two years, and his own gross extravagance added to his troubles. Though the abounding prosperity of the country increased the revenue from customs duties by leaps and bounds, he could never make both ends meet without assistance. The control of Parliament over taxation was now so complete that he could not venture upon any of the irregular devices employed by his father. If he did not accept his dependence upon Parliament, the only alternative was to become a pensionary of some foreign power, and when he resorted to this device he raised fresh trouble with Parliament. Assuredly the restoration did not mean anything like the establishment of absolute monarchy in England.

§ 3. *Scotland : Absolutism and Religious Persecution.*

In Scotland it was very different. Here Charles might hope to establish, and did very nearly establish, absolute power: only the dour resistance of the more extreme Presbyterians checked him. His main agent in the subjugation of Scotland was the Earl (later Duke) of Lauderdale, who as Secretary for Scotland spent most of his time at the court in London, and ruled Scotland through agents: Lauderdale retained his position through all the changes of court factions for nearly twenty years. He had been a Presbyterian, and had played a prominent part in the Scottish troubles: he had persuaded Charles II. to accept the Covenant in 1650; now he was ready to lend himself to be the agent of the destruction of the system, to which the king had then sworn. But on the whole his policy was one of moderate toleration for the Presbyterians, at any rate during the first part of his tenure of power, combined with a re-establishment of the Episcopal system of Church government, and the enforcement of an efficient control by the Crown in all matters of State.

Even fewer victims marked the beginning of the new regime in Scotland than in England. Four men only suffered death. One of these was the Earl of Argyll; another James Guthrie, the most fanatical of the extreme school of Presbyterians. In 1661 a Scottish Parliament met: 'never/ said one of its members, 'was Parliament so obsequious.' The main reason was that the nobles were sick of the tyranny of the ministers, which they had endured since 1638, and that the old alliance between them and the Crown, which Charles I. had broken, was restored. A large revenue was voted to the king, which enabled him to maintain an army such as none of his predecessors had possessed.

As in the days of James I., the Lords of the Articles (who drafted all the business of Parliament) were practically nominated by Lauderdale on behalf of the Crown. All the Acts of all the parliaments since 1633, including that of 1641 at which Charles I. had been present, were rescinded. This meant that at one blow the whole of the results of the Scottish revolution since 1638 were undone, and Charles II. became as absolute as James I. had been. All political power was once more wielded by a small Privy Council, whose members were all nominated by Lauderdale.

In the sphere of religion the submissive Scottish Parlia-

ment passed an Act declaring that ' the disposal of the external government of the Church doth properly belong to His Majesty as an inherent right of the Crown': a declaration hateful to sound Presbyterians, who claimed for the Church complete freedom from State control. The covenants were declared unlawful, and a repudiation of them and of all resistance to the Crown was imposed upon all office-holders. But Lauderdale was too shrewd a man to press these immense claims unduly far, though some of the royalists were ready to go to any extreme. Though the bishops were restored, they were not given great powers, and if the General Assembly was never summoned lest it should try to organise national resistance, the kirk sessions, presbyteries and diocesan synods continued their work. Nor was any attempt made to impose the Anglican liturgy upon the recalcitrant Scots.

On the whole this compromise was accepted in the greater part of the country. But in the south-west—Lanark, Ayrshire and Galloway—there was a different temper. In this district, which had always been the stronghold of the extremists, 300 ministers declined to forswear the Covenants or to recognise Episcopacy. They were extruded from their parishes, but their parishioners followed them, despite all prohibitions of 'conventicles'; and the ministrations of the ' curates ' who replaced them were deserted. This was the beginning of the Covenanters, the dour Westland Whigs, whom none could tame. Soldiers were sent to deal with them: absentees from church were fined, and had soldiers billeted upon them. This persecution went on steadily until in 1666 it led to a rising. But rebellion was hopeless in face of the forces which the Crown controlled. The Pentland Rising (so called because it was defeated in the Pentland Hills, though it began in Galloway) failed to raise the country, and was crushed at Rullion Green. Forty men were killed in the fight; as many more, taken prisoners, were hanged for refusing to renounce the Covenants; ministers and other leaders were tortured with the boot and the thumbscrew to make them betray accomplices; more troops than ever, under the cruel Dalziel of Binns, were sent into Galloway. But only a moderate degree of success followed this ferocity.

The persecution which had gone on from 1663 to 1667 was in the main due to the members of the Privy Council in Scotland. Lauderdale determined to try the effects of greater moderation. The troops were recalled, and in 1669

an 'indulgence' was issued whereby extruded ministers were allowed to return to their parishes, if they had behaved themselves peacefully, without taking the oaths. Some forty of them accepted these terms. But this only increased the courage and bitterness of those who refused to sacrifice their principles 'for a mess of pottage': the population of the south-west, relieved of the presence of the soldiers, resorted once more to the conventicles.

Thereupon Lauderdale fell back upon severity. In 1670 he passed through Parliament a ferocious Act against conventicles, far more severe than the corresponding English Act. Preachers and those who listened to them were liable to fines and imprisonment: preachers out of doors were to be put to death. But even this Act—too severe to be literally enforced—did not work a cure. The south-west was irreconcilable, and before long seething discontent was to break into open revolt.

The full enforcement of this ferocious measure against conventicles was postponed until 1674. Troops were again sent into the disaffected districts. All landholders were required to give bonds for themselves and all their tenants and dependents that they would neither go to conventicles nor help any preacher or frequenter of them. When they protested that they could not assume such responsibility, 10,000 men, including 6000 Highlanders, were sent into the West and empowered to quarter themselves without payment on any house not specially exempted. After a few months, the Highlanders went home laden with plunder.

Such measures could have only one end—revolt. In 1679 some desperate men murdered Archbishop Sharp, once a Presbyterian minister, now Lauderdale's right hand, at Magus Muir, near St. Andrews. The murderers fled for refuge to the west country, which rose in arms to support them. A large conventicle, worshipping with enthusiasm among the moors at Drumclog, was attacked by troopers under the notorious persecutor, John Graham of Claverhouse, and drove them off with loss. This raised the West; an army of 1500 men, under the Duke of Monmouth, had to be sent to deal with the rebels. At Bothwell Bridge the regular forces won an easy victory, killed 400 men, and took 1200 prisoners. Then began the ugly period known in the annals of Scotland as 'the killing time,' when the unhappy Covenanters were hunted down like wild animals among the southern moorlands, without mercy or pity; shot like dogs at their own thresholds; tortured with boot and thumb-

screw. The chief ruler of Scotland during these years was James, Duke of York. When in 1685 he succeeded to the throne, the 'killing time' still went on. It only stopped with the Revolution, and it left an indelible mark in Scottish history.

This is what the Restoration brought to Scotland: political absolutism ; an army ready to be used if need be elsewhere ; and, for the more rigid Presbyterians of the south-west, a fierce persecution such as no part of Britain had ever endured before in all its history. Only one part of the country suffered directly from this persecution ; but the rest looked on with bitter sympathy.

Meanwhile, throughout this period, Scotland was having brought home to her some of the disadvantages of being treated as a separate country by her powerful neighbour. England (as we shall see later) was now entering upon a policy of high protection for the development of her trade, and Scotland found herself treated as a foreign country, excluded both from English and from colonial markets. At the same time, she could have no independent foreign policy : her policy was controlled by the English government of her king. Denied freedom for her Church, subject to a practical absolutism in political affairs, she was in her poverty suffering all the defects of separation from a thriving and prosperous neighbour, while she enjoyed none of the advantages of independence.

§ 4. *Ireland : Absolutism and partial Reconciliation.*

In Ireland the statesmen of the Restoration were faced by a problem in itself more difficult than that presented by Scotland ; for the evils and injustices which had been perpetrated during the Irish rebellion and the rule of the Puritans were far more difficult to cure. Yet it may fairly be said that the results in Ireland were more satisfactory than anywhere else, and this for two reasons. In the first place the dominant influence in the settlement was that of the Duke of Ormond, himself an Irishman who had a good deal of sympathy for the Irish Catholics, but who was at the same time resolute to maintain the English ascendancy. In the second place Charles II. and his royalist advisers felt some tenderness for the Catholics; but at the same time they dared not wholly alienate the recent English settlers. Hence the new regime in Ireland was less brutal and less

one-sided than it showed itself in Scotland, and there was even a beginning of prosperity and contentment. It was a sign of real advance when the Lord-Lieutenant received an address from a number of Catholic clergy and gentry protesting their loyalty to the Crown, and disclaiming all foreign power, 'papal or princely, spiritual or temporal/ This Loyal Remonstrance did not indeed represent the general opinion of Irish Catholics, but it marked what might have been the beginning of an era of reconciliation.

The main difficulty was the problem of dealing with the lands which, under the Puritan Republic, had been forcibly taken from Catholic proprietors and transferred to English settlers. The grants could not be wholly resumed, but an attempt was made to do justice at least to those of the Irish Catholics who could prove that they had not actively waged war against the Crown, and the Protestant owners were •compelled to disgorge part of their spoils. The discussion of this difficult problem took five years. It was provisionally determined by an Act of Settlement (1662), which was amended in 1665. It did only rough justice. Its result was that, of the total area of the 'plantations' (excluding Connaught), about one-third was restored to dispossessed Irish proprietors, about one-third went to the earlier English planters from the time of Elizabeth onwards, and about one-third was kept by settlers of the Cromwellian period. This cannot be called a just apportionment, but it was better than the gross spoliation of Cromwell. Yet there were many who were left impoverished and without redress, and large numbers of these took to the wilds and became mere robbers and Ishmaels. 1 hey were known as Tories.

Ireland, like Scotland, suffered by being treated as a foreign country under the new English protective policy. She found all her live stock—her chief produce—excluded from importation to England by an Act of 1666. But for all that she enjoyed during this period a real and growing prosperity. Instead of cattle, she sold to England beef and butter, tallow and hides. She also bred sheep on a very great scale, and for a time exported large quantities of wool to the English market. When this export in its turn was stopped, she began to develop a considerable woollen manufacture of her own, while her linen industry also thrived. She was excluded by the protective system from colonial markets, but she opened up a prosperous trade with the continent. And in general she enjoyed an unexampled prosperity during the twenty years following the Restoration.

This prosperity helped to reduce the bitterness of racial and religious feeling, though this bitterness had by no means yet died out, and the fact that Ormond in general followed a policy of tolerance, avoided harrying the Catholics, and sensibly made no attempt to enforce the exclusion of Catholics from corporate towns which had been part of the Puritan policy, contributed still more to the rise of better feeling. One result was that the Irish Parliament, on the rare occasions of its meeting, gave little trouble, voted the king a substantial revenue, and thus provided him with the means for maintaining an army.

The influence of the Restoration upon the colonies was even more important than its influence upon Scotland and Ireland ; for here the new regime brought about the initiation of an imperial policy of a new type which is so important, in its bearings upon the future development of the British Commonwealth that it must be specially and separately dealt with.

Yet to the colonies themselves, and to England also, the aims and character of Restoration policy in Scotland and in Ireland, where the king had a free hand, were of the utmost importance. In Scotland absolutism, holding the country firmly in hand, bitterly persecuting the more extreme Presbyterians—and maintaining a considerable army: in Ireland also a practical absolutism, showing an unwonted forbearance to the hard-used Catholics, drawing a substantial revenue from the growing prosperity of the country—and maintaining a considerable army : these were factors which might have had, and very nearly did have, a momentous bearing upon the final conflict between Crown and Parliament which events were bringing gradually nearer in England.

We have carried the analysis of the Restoration settlement in the two lesser countries considerably beyond the date to which we have carried it in England, because it is necessary to keep in mind what was happening in these countries while the great struggle was fought out in England. And it is equally necessary to keep in mind the course of events in Europe, and the development of English trading and colonial policy, because these also had a more intimate bearing upon the development of the constitutional struggle than ever they had had before. Not the islands alone, but the British Commonwealth as a whole, and the whole world

of Western civilisation, were in fact involved in the coming controversy ; and their fortunes were to be deeply affected by its course and by its issue.

[R. Lodge, *England from the Restoration to the Death of William III.* is the best modern summary of the period ; Ranke's *History of England principally in the Seventeenth Century* ; Hallam's *Constitutional History* ; Robertson's *Statutes and Documents* ; Airy's *Charles II.* Clarendon's *Autobiography* is a first-hand authority for the period covered by this chapter ; so is Burnet's *History of His Own Time*, which is valuable for Scotland ; for which see also Hume Brown's or Lang's *History of Scotland*. Airy's *The Restoration* (Epochs of Modern History) is a useful short book, both for England and for Europe.]

CHAPTER II

EUROPE IN THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV.

(A.D. 1661-1688)

§ 1. *The Age of Enlightenment.*

THE middle of the seventeenth century was the beginning of anew era in the history of Western civilisation as a whole, as well as in the history of the islands. The wars of religion, which had lasted nearly a century, were over. Henceforth, though religious conflicts within States were still bitter, the relations between States were no longer to be governed by religious differences. In the political sphere the outstanding feature of the new age was the triumph of absolute monarchy everywhere save in the British realms, the United Provinces and Switzerland: absolute monarchy alone seemed to ensure the efficiency, and the vigour and consistency of policy, which made for national strength and greatness. It was in France under Louis xiv. that absolute monarchy appeared to have won its most brilliant successes. The pre-eminence which France enjoyed in this period, in the arts and in manners as well as in politics, was greater than any State had hitherto enjoyed; and it seemed to be due, in no small degree, to the intelligent autocracy which controlled and developed all the resources of the nation.

Another marked feature of the age was that all the more progressive States now paid greater attention than ever before to the systematic development of industry and commerce as the main sources of national wealth. Men began to discuss the principles of the science of wealth-making, and the causes of national prosperity: the rudiments of political economy began to be defined. Because of the immense importance now attached to foreign trade, the greater States became more eager than ever to get control of oversea possessions, and to organise these possessions in such a way as to produce the maximum benefit for the mother country; and out of this came the beginnings of a keen competition for colonial empire, far

more systematic than in the previous age; with this we shall have to deal in the next chapter.

But to us, looking back from the vantage-ground of the present, these features of the period, important as they were, must seem less significant than another characteristic of the age to which contemporaries attached relatively little weight. It is not an exaggeration to say that this age saw the birth of organised science; and when we consider how scientific investigation was to give to man a command over the forces of nature such as he had never possessed, how it was to transform the material conditions of human life, and how profoundly it was to affect all men's thinking about themselves and the world, and all their religious and political ideas, the birth of organised science must appear to be the supreme achievement of the age. In the epoch-making series of discoveries which distinguished the period Englishmen took their share, and more than their share; it may fairly be claimed that England—the land where freedom of thought was more fully established than anywhere else—took the lead in the scientific movement which was the greatest glory of this age.

Great progress had, indeed, already been made in many fields of science during the first half of the century. The great Englishman Bacon and the great Frenchman Descartes had wrought out the principles of a new philosophy and of a new scientific method of observation and experiment. The great Italian Galileo had laid the foundations of modern physical science, and had revolutionised men's views as to the place of the Earth among the heavenly bodies. The great Englishman Harvey, by demonstrating the circulation of the blood, had begun modern physiology. And many lesser workers in all spheres, more especially in mathematics and astronomy, but also in physics, in botany and in zoology, had helped to make a break with the unscientific methods and traditions of the Middle Ages. But it was in the second half of the century, when the intensity of religious passions had abated, and when theological problems no longer dominated the ablest minds, that the new spirit and methods of inquiry began to reap their harvest, and that the co-operation of a multitude of patient workers in all countries began to build up the temple of science. For scientific investigation depends upon the co-operation of all who are engaged in it, and upon the free and constant discussion of their results. It knows no frontiers and no nationalities. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the new age was that

it made this co-operation possible by giving to the men of science centres for discussion and the comparison of results, and by affording them public recognition and support. In England the Royal Society was founded in 1662 ; in France the Academy of Sciences dates from 1666 ; and parallel bodies in other countries were soon to follow. The supreme name of this period in scientific investigation is that of the Englishman, Isaac Newton, whose work was as great a glory to the British people, and as great a contribution on their behalf to the common stock of the world's civilisation, as, in another field, the work of Shakespeare had earlier been. Newton's *Principia*, published in 1687, laid the sure foundations of modern science over an extraordinarily wide range. With Newton may be named the great German Leibniz; and there was a whole army of lesser investigators, most numerous in England and in France, but spread over all the countries of the West.

It would be beyond our province to analyse the significance of the new knowledge made available for man by the eager workers of this period. But one main outcome of their work ought to be noted. They displayed the universe as governed by fixed and unchanging laws, capable of being discovered and applied by patient and reverent observation and experiment ; all their work was based upon this assumption, and was meaningless apart from it. And when this idea was once implanted in men's minds, the effect upon every field of thought could not but be very great. Already this spirit of patient search for the laws which govern the life of the world was showing itself in the beginnings of inquiry into the principles of political economy, and in the attempt to find a scientific basis for political theories. Even in precedent-loving England the mere fact that such and such a course had been followed by our ancestors was no longer felt to be a sufficient argument, and, in place of the more purely historical and legal arguments which had satisfied the last generation, closely reasoned political theories like those of Hobbes and Locke, to which we shall have to refer elsewhere, began to influence opinion. Political speculation was more active in England than in other countries, because political problems were more urgent there than elsewhere. But in a greater or less degree the same characteristics are to be found among the intellectual leaders in all countries. The Age of Reason was dawning, in succession to the Age of Dogma.

But these new forces as yet affected only a few. The

fortunes of the world were in the future to be deeply influenced by the patient work of the men of science ; but in the meanwhile the determining factors were still the ambitions of powerful princes and the pride of rival nations.

§2. *The Ascendency of France.*

In the political history of Europe during this period three distinct threads of interest can be traced. One was the rivalry of the northern powers, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and the little German State of Brandenburg; its most striking results were to be the decline of Sweden after her brief period of greatness, and the rapid rise of Brandenburg, soon to become the kingdom of Prussia, to a position of influence. A second thread is provided by the threatening growth of the power of the Turks, and its later collapse, giving rise to what came to be known as the Eastern question. With these two groups of problems the island peoples were not at the moment very directly concerned ; but since their later development was to be of very great importance in British history, we shall have to consider them briefly.

But it was the third thread of interest which immediately affected the fortunes of all the British realms. This was the dazzling strength and greatness of France under Louis xiv., which for a time threatened to lead to a French dominance over the whole of European affairs, and which was in the end to draw the islands into a conflict only less important to themselves than the conflict with Spain in the sixteenth century. Not only for the islanders, but for all Europe, the formidable power and the aggressive policy of France constituted the supreme political fact of the age.

France had suffered, during the second half of the sixteenth century, from the long agony of the religious wars. Her revival in the first half of the seventeenth century had been interrupted by civil strife, due to the last struggles of the nobles, and of other elements in the nation, to resist the growing power of the Crown. In spite of that, France had played a great part, and acquired large accessions of territory and prestige, in the Thirty Years' War, and in the war with Spain which grew out of it. Now that her internal troubles were over, the nation welcomed the establishment of a strong government able to prevent them from breaking out again. When King Louis xiv.,¹ after a long minority, himself **under-**

¹ **There** is a life of Louis xiv., by A. Hassall, in the **Heroes of the Nations Series.**

took the conduct of government in 1661, there was no power in the nation capable or desirous of resisting the royal authority. Louis had no Parliament to deal with, like his English cousin : the States General, the nearest French parallel, had long since ceased to meet, and were not to be summoned again until 1789. The king was above the law; he was the sole maker of law. He levied taxes at his will. All the officers of State in all parts of the country were his salaried nominees. The nobles had become a nobility of the court, seeking for royal favours. A fine army of veterans, the best in Europe, led by famous generals, supported the king's authority. But it scarcely needed such support, since the whole nation accepted it with fervent loyalty.

Already in 1661 (and this was to become more marked as time went on) the court of Versailles displayed a splendour such as the modern world had never seen. It set the fashion in manners and in dress for all Europe, and every petty prince strove to imitate it. This in itself gave to the *Grand Monarque* a prestige which had great political value. France set the fashion also in letters and the arts : the ascendancy of French critics and poets and playwrights was greater than those of any nation have ever enjoyed before or since; and French became the language of culture, as well as of diplomacy and of polite society. And, through academies maintained under royal patronage, letters and the arts also were harnessed to the glittering chariot of the monarchy. Under an able foreign minister the French diplomatic service had been so skilfully organised that in every capital the French representative—helped by his country's prestige—was a political factor of the highest importance. Above all, under a very able and very industrious finance minister, Colbert, the resources of France were developed to the highest point that any country had yet reached. Agriculture was in every possible way encouraged and assisted. The manufacturing industries were reorganised under government direction. Magnificent roads, the finest in Europe or the world, were constructed, as well as canals such as no other State possessed. The mercantile marine of France was developed until it was able to compete with those of England and Holland. And, realising the importance of sea-power, Colbert built up a navy so powerful that in 1690, as we shall see, it was able to defeat the combined fleets of England and Holland. Finally France entered with zeal into the field of oversea colonisation and trade : we shall see more of this in the next chapter. All

this vigorous and successful work of organisation was going on during the first twenty years of the reign. Its result was to make France, beyond all competition or rivalry, the greatest and most splendid State in the world, and to win for her people a remarkable increase of prosperity. Well might it appear that absolute monarchy, well served, formed the best means of securing national welfare.

Louis xiv. seemed to have a choice, at the opening of this brilliant period, between two alternative courses—two ways of using the power and wealth of the country whose fortunes lay absolutely in his hands : it was almost the same alternative that lay before Germany nearly two centuries later. On the one hand, content with the unquestioned ascendancy which his government possessed in European affairs, he might have peacefully dominated Europe, and at the same time developed to a still higher point the industry and trade of the country, secured for France maritime supremacy, and created a great empire overseas. If he and his successors had chosen this course, French civilisation, and the methods and ideas of absolute monarchy, might very well have dominated the world. But on the other hand he was inevitably tempted by the vision of mastery in Europe. In particular, the crumbling Spanish empire seemed to be at his mercy; he could at the expense of Spain round off the frontiers of France; he might perhaps gain possession of the riches of Spanish America. His irresistible army would make conquest easy, and there seemed to be no fear of serious opposition. Spain herself could offer no effective resistance. The Emperor, whose Austrian lands were poverty-stricken and ill-organised, was threatened by grave danger from the reviving power of the Turks. Germany was exhausted by the Thirty Years¹ War. The northern powers were at one another's throats. The Dutch had overthrown the House of Orange and placed their affairs in the hands of peace-loving merchants led by John de Witt; and, being jealous of the loyalty of the army to the excluded House of Orange, they had reduced their army to the lowest point. Only England might be dangerous. But the English were consumed with jealousy of the Dutch, and Louis could encourage them to destroy one another. And the new English king, Charles II., was Louis' cousin and admirer, and might, in his eagerness to free himself from Parliament, readily be bought over either to take the French king's side, or at least to remain neutral. The prospects of success in the career of European conquest were very

promising. They were too promising to be resisted ; and so the tremendous power of reorganised France was gradually turned into a danger to the peace and liberty of Europe. The progress of Louis' ambitions was of such importance not only to Europe, but to the islands and to the whole British Commonwealth, that we must follow them in outline.

§ 3. *The Wars of Louis XIV. (to 1688).*

During the first six years of his personal rule (1661-1666) Louis remained at peace, using his splendid army only as a means of giving magnanimous help to the Emperor in his desperate struggle with the Turks, to which we shall refer later. England under her new king was friendly in spite of colonial rivalry. In 1662 Charles sold to Louis the port of Dunkirk, which Cromwell had acquired in 1658. It was a wise act on Charles' part, though his chief motive was the desire for money, but it began to arouse English jealousy of France. Louis also brought about the marriage of Charles to a Portuguese princess (1661) : this was the beginning of the long unbroken alliance between England and Portugal. Portugal (annexed by Philip II. in 1580) had revolted against Spain in 1640, and the revolt had only been kept going by French help ; but the peace between France and Spain in 1659 had made it difficult for Louis to go on helping Portugal. The task of helping Portugal, and thus weakening Spain, was handed over to England, which received in payment the Mediterranean fortress of Tangier and the Indian island of Bombay.

The determining factor in the relations of the western powers during these years was their trade rivalry; especially in the tropical seas. Louis watched with satisfaction the revival of the old acute jealousy between the English and the Dutch, from which he hoped to draw profit. When, in 1665, this jealousy flamed out into a great naval war, it seemed at first as if the English would win. For the English navy showed in the first two years of the war that its fighting power was as great as ever ; and that, though Blake was gone, his old comrade in arms, Monk, was a worthy successor. There were fierce battles off Lowestoft in 1665, in the Downs in 1666, and in both of these the English were victorious. An English victory, however, would not have suited France. Louis therefore entered the conflict on the Dutch side. There was hard fighting between the English and the French in the West Indies during 1666-7; and

though the English held their own, the prosperity of the English Leeward Islands received a grave set-back. From this moment the trading interests in England began to look askance at France, and to fear her even more than they feared the Dutch. In the later stages of the war bad luck pursued the English. The Great Plague which broke out in 1665, and which affected part of the fleet, led to a terrible disorganisation of supply, and the Great Fire of London in 1666 completed this dislocation. The fleet had to be laid up in the winter of 1666; and in 1667 the Dutch seized their opportunity, sailed up the Medway, captured one vessel and burnt three others, and were with difficulty prevented from attacking defenceless London. Under these circumstances the English government was glad to end the war by the Peace of Breda in 1667; all the more so since the Dutch were so eager for peace as to be willing to leave in English hands the recently conquered Dutch American colony of New Netherlands, henceforward to be known as New York.¹

The English government's readiness for peace had undoubtedly been encouraged by the alarm produced by the French intervention. And it was the fear aroused by French ambitions in another sphere which led the Dutch to make an unfavourable peace at a moment when things were going very well for them. For, while the two maritime powers were at one another's throats, Louis xiv. had at last and suddenly begun to put into operation his plans of European conquest. On the flimsy pretext that his Spanish queen, whose father (Philip iv.) had died in 1665, was entitled to inherit the Spanish Netherlands under the local law of succession to land, he sent an army into Flanders. The Spanish forces were quite unable to resist him. Europe was startled by the evidence both of the French king's overwhelming strength and of his unscrupulousness. But the Dutch were especially alarmed; the Spanish Netherlands were their only bulwark against this formidable power. They eagerly opened negotiations for alliances to check the conqueror; and in 1668 a Triple Alliance was formed by Holland, England and Sweden. It was the first sign that Europe would resist any attempt to establish an overwhelming dominion. Louis as yet preferred to avoid a war on so large a scale; and in 1668 ended what is known as the War of Devolution by the

¹ See below, Chap. iii. p. 536.

peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which gave to him a substantial part of Flanders.¹

But the lesson was lost upon the proud king. Instead of abstaining from European aggressions, he determined to punish the Dutch. The next four years were devoted to preparations, and especially to detaching from the Dutch the allies in whom they trusted. In 1670 Louis concluded with Charles II. the secret treaty of Dover, whereby the English king undertook, in return for a large subsidy, not only to desert the Triple Alliance, but to attack the Dutch once more, and to endeavour to turn England into a Roman Catholic State.² It was the longing to be free from parliamentary control which led Charles to take this dishonourable course. In 1672 the Swedes also were bribed to desert the Alliance, and the Dutch stood alone. Meanwhile John de Witt, at the head of the Dutch government, was doing nothing to prepare for the coming storm. It burst suddenly in 1672, when two superb armies under the two greatest captains of the age, Conde and Turenne, poured down the Meuse and the Rhine into the Dutch territories. Frenzied with terror, and believing that they had been betrayed, the Dutch murdered John de Witt and his brother the admiral. They turned for help to the young Prince William of Orange, the frail, silent, inflexible representative of the founder of Dutch liberty, whom de Witt had kept in the background. Under desperate conditions William took up the struggle with the French king which was to occupy all his strength for the rest of his life. Once more, as in the desperate days of the struggle with Spain, the dykes were opened, and the ocean was called in to defend the land which had been won from it. And meanwhile the English fleet, in conjunction with the French, was attacking the Dutch by sea (1672-1674). There were hard-fought fights, as always, between these old foes. But the Dutch held their own, in spite of their inferiority of numbers, thanks to the brilliant leadership of their great admiral, Ruyter: the two battles of the war, off Southwold Bay (1672) and off the Texel (1673), were both drawn fights. Meanwhile in England public feeling, despite the long and bitter rivalry with the Dutch, was turning strongly against the war; Parliament expressed this hostility all the more vigorously because the knowledge of the iniquitous secret treaty of Dover was beginning to leak out; and in 1674

¹ See the map of the Netherlands, Atlas, Plate 20.

² See below, Chap. iv. p. 545.

this shameful attack upon a recent ally was brought to an end. Many Englishmen felt that their country ought to have been ranged on the side of the Dutch instead of against them, and under the influence of the new fear of France the long-standing jealousy of the Dutch began to diminish. But though Charles II. was forced to make peace, Louis was still able to count upon his purchased neutrality.

The Dutch had weathered the first and severest crisis of the war ; and now other powers, alarmed at the menace of a French domination of Europe, came to their aid—the Emperor, and Spain, and the Elector of Brandenburg. The insolent attack upon the Dutch had led to a general European war, in which France stood practically alone. The war continued to rage for four more years ; the brilliance of the French commanders and the valour of their troops won many victories; but they could gain no decision, and the wealth and prosperity which Colbert had built up was being wasted to no avail. At length, in 1678, peace was made at Nimwegen. Louis acquired from Spain the French-speaking district of Franche Comte, but this was the only result of the mighty effort which had strained his resources.¹ Externally Nimwegen marks the highest point of Louis' career; in reality it was the first step in his decline. For he had made a deliberate bid for supremacy in Europe, and he had failed.

Louis himself regarded Nimwegen, as he had regarded Aix-la-Chapelle, only as a check in his career of conquest. During the next ten years, indeed (1678-88), he maintained peace. But his insolence never reached a higher point than in these years : it was the blind insolence that causes and precedes a tenible fall. Though he claimed to be the most orthodox of Catholics, he quarrelled irremediably with the Pope, because he claimed a supremacy over the Church in France which the Pope would not yield. At the same time, to prove his orthodoxy, he instituted a pitiless persecution of the French Protestants, culminating, in 1685, in the withdrawal of the Edict of Nantes which had protected them for nearly a hundred years : the absolute monarch could not permit his subjects to differ from himself. But the Huguenots, who were chiefly to be found in towns, included a large proportion of the most industrious and prosperous of French traders and manufacturers. Driven in thousands from their own country, they carried their knowledge and skill to

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 15 (c).

England and to other lands; and the loss which was thus inflicted upon France was even more serious than that which was caused by the wars. The splendid prosperity of the early years of the reign was already disappearing. Finally, counting on the facts that the Dutch were tired of war, that the Emperor was engaged in a death grapple with the Turks, and that England under Charles II. could be bribed into quiescence, Louis undertook a series of the most shameless aggressions under legal forms. The treaty of Nimwegen had given him certain lands 'with their dependencies/ French tribunals were set up to determine what these dependencies were: they gave the decisions which were required of them, and large territories in Alsace were annexed on this pretext. The most important of these annexations was the great city of Strasbourg (1681).

Europe looked on with anxiety and alarm. There was even a brief, futile attempt at resistance by Spain and the Emperor in 1683; it only served to illustrate the greatness of French power, and to encourage Louis' self-confidence. But one man, checked and hampered at every turn, was grimly resolved that the Great King should pay for his insolence. This was William of Orange, a morose, unsympathetic and heartless man, who was raised to the point of greatness only by the undying resolution and the undying hate with which he watched his superb rival, and waited for the chance to take vengeance upon him. In the meanwhile, since his authority even in Holland was very insecure, he was powerless; and it seemed during these ten years as if, when he chose, Louis XIV. might have his will in Europe.

Whether this was to be so or not depended above all upon Britain. If her weight were to be thrown into the scale against Louis, he could never succeed, as time was to show. Louis partly realised this. Hitherto he had got his way with Britain easily enough, thanks to the shameless dishonour of Charles II.; and if Charles should show signs of restiveness, Louis had the whip-hand of him, because he could always turn loose upon him the angry and watchful Parliament by disclosing the secrets of Charles' dealings with himself. Louis kept up relations, through his very skilful ambassadors, with parliamentary leaders as well as with the king and the courtiers.

But Louis was not alone in watching English politics with close attention. William of Orange, whose supreme desire it was to bring England into the fray against France, was

also watching them anxiously. His connexions with the country were close ; his mother was a daughter of Charles 1., and he would be the heir to the Stewart thrones if Charles 11. and his brother James were to die without heirs. In 1677 William strengthened his position by marrying James' eldest daughter Mary. When an agitation sprang up in England for the exclusion of James, as a Catholic, from the succession, William was deeply concerned. But his position was a very delicate one; he could only watch and wait, and keep up his relations with English political leaders.

Thus the great issues of European political history influenced the course of events in the islands; and, on the other hand, the destinies of Europe seemed to depend upon the results of the party strife which was raging in England. The English Revolution, when it suddenly came about in 1688, was almost as momentous for Europe as it was for the islands, and from 1688 onwards it is no longer possible to deal with the European story apart from the story of the islands.

§ 4. *Northern Europe : the Rise of the Hohenzollerns.*

But before we turn to the long political controversy upon which so much depended, it is necessary to say something about other aspects of European affairs which were in the future to be of great importance to the British Commonwealth, though at the moment they seemed of no concern to it.

In Northern Europe the Thirty Years' War had led to a confused series of wars in which all the northern powers were engaged ; they had been brought to an end in 1660, just at the opening of our period. We need not trace these complex struggles, but it is worth while to note their general results. The most important of these, in the eyes of contemporaries, was that Sweden, which had suddenly sprung into the first rank of European States under Gustavus Adolphus, seemed to be established as the greatest of the northern powers.¹ Her armies were of the first quality. She had conquered territories which Denmark had long held on the Scandinavian mainland. She had acquired possession of Western Pomerania and the mouth of the Oder on the Baltic coast of Germany, and controlled all the shores of the Gulf of Finland, besides Finland itself. She held Bremen and Verden in North-Western Germany, and with

¹ See the maps, Atlas, Plates 9 and 26 (a).

them the mouths of the Elbe and Weser. No power had profited so much by the ruin of Germany. But she was exhausted by the long strain of war; she had brought upon herself many enemies, and the days of her greatness were not to last much longer, in spite of the brilliant fighting qualities shown by one after another of her kings.

Far more important, though less impressive to contemporaries, was the rise of the little State of Brandenburg, later to become the kingdom of Prussia.¹ Brandenburg owed her rise to the skill and patient labours of the first of the great Hohenzollerns, Frederick William, known as the Great Elector. When the Great Elector succeeded to his throne in 1640, during the Thirty Years' War, his lands were thinly peopled, divided and desolated by war. They fell into three distinct blocks: the electorate proper in the middle, with Berlin as its capital; some small patches of richer land on the Rhine; and the duchy of East Prussia, which was held under the suzerainty of the still large and powerful kingdom of Poland, and was separated from Brandenburg by the purely Polish district of West Prussia. In each of these separate blocks there were diets which checked and limited the power of the ruler. By the treaty of Westphalia (1648) the Great Elector had succeeded in acquiring valuable accessions of territory, which practically doubled the area of Brandenburg proper. Notably he had obtained the eastern part of Pomerania, the western and more valuable part of which fell to Sweden. But he claimed the whole of Pomerania, and henceforth regarded Sweden as his mortal foe.

In the wars of the northern States which followed the peace of Westphalia, both Sweden and Poland were engaged. The Great Elector made skilful use of the struggle. By playing the traitor alternately to Sweden and Poland he succeeded in freeing his duchy of East Prussia from Polish suzerainty. During the years of peace which followed 1660 he devoted himself to strengthening his power within his scattered dominions. He fought the diets, and practically turned his government into an absolute monarchy. He gave assiduous attention to the economic development of his poverty-stricken dominions, in order to increase their resources for maintaining an efficient army. And he created an army out of all proportion larger than the size or wealth of his

¹ There is a map showing the growth of Brandenburg-Prussia in Atlas, Plate 24 (a).

dominions warranted. Already the characteristic lines of Hohenzollern policy were laid down: a high degree of centralisation in government; a systematic development of the material resources of the State; and the use of these resources for the purpose of maintaining the greatest possible military power, with a view to further conquests.

When Louis xiv. attacked the Dutch, the bitter rivalry of Sweden and Brandenburg flared out again. Sweden was Louis' ally: Brandenburg therefore took the other side, and one of the most important events of the war was the battle of Fehrbellin, 1675, in which the Great Elector, to the astonishment of Europe, defeated the military might of Sweden. This battle marked the beginning of the downfall of Sweden; but it marked also the emergence of the Hohenzollern realm as a factor of importance in European affairs. The steady, unscrupulous progress by force and fraud which was to bring the Hohenzollerns in the far future to the triumphs of Sadowa and Sedan, and to the disasters of 1918, had fairly begun.

§ 5. *The Problem of the Turkish Empire.*

The changes which this period brought about in South-Eastern Europe were not less important than those in the north. The outstanding factor was a recrudescence of danger from the Turks, followed by the beginning of the collapse of Turkish power. The Turks, as we have seen,¹ had attained their greatest power in the time of the Sultan Solyman the Magnificent, the contemporary of Charles v. and of Henry vin., who had conquered the greater part of Hungary, had threatened for a time to break into Germany, then distracted by the Reformation, and had only been beaten back with difficulty before the walls of Vienna. At that time the Turkish peril had been real and great. In all the lands which they have conquered the Turks have never shown any capacity for good government, or given any encouragement to the growth of civilisation; their power over the Christian peoples of the Balkan peninsula and (so long as it lasted) over Hungary was a mere disaster, unbalanced by any compensations; and any further extension of their dominions would have brought nothing but ill.

Fortunately, after the death of Solyman (1566), there had followed a long period when the Turkish power fell into the weakness and disorganisation which are apt to overtake a mere military ascendancy. Europe had been unable to

¹ Above, Bk. iu. chap. iii. p. 234. See also the map, Atlas, Plate 26 (a).

take advantage of this, because she was distracted by religious wars; on the other hand, because of their own difficulties, the Turks also had been unable to turn the troubles of Europe to their profit. But the Turks^x remained in direct control of the central part of Hungary; Eastern Hungary and Transylvania recognised their suzerainty: even the narrow strip of Western Hungary which was ruled by the Emperor had to pay tribute to them; and they controlled all the south coast of the Black Sea, and all modern Rumania. In this region they had the kingdom of Poland as their neighbour. But Poland was a disorganised realm, whose elected kings had little power, being checked by a Diet of nobles who would take no action unless they were unanimous, and claimed that any one of them could veto the proceedings. The weak and divided territories of the Habsburg Emperors on the one hand, exhausted by the Thirty Years' War, and the great but unorganised kingdom of Poland on the other, formed very ineffective barriers against any serious Turkish attack, should the old militant spirit of the Turks revive.

Soon after the close of the Thirty Years' War a remarkable revival began among the Turks. It was guided and inspired by a succession of vigorous Viziers (or chief ministers) drawn from an Albanian family who had entered Turkish service. In 1663 a great attack was launched against Austrian Hungary and Moravia: it was only driven back by the aid of 30,000 French troops lent by Louis xiv. to the Emperor. Next the island of Crete, which the Venetians had long maintained for Christendom, was attacked and conquered. A vigorous war with Poland followed (1672-1676): it stirred the patriotism of the Polish knighthood, and a national hero, John Sobieski, was able by dint of unflagging valour and military skill to beat back the invaders, though they gained a good part of the Ukraine. Finally, in 1682, while Louis xiv. was quarrelling with the Emperor over the annexation of Strasbourg, and no help from France could be expected, a new attack was directed against the Austrian lands. Vienna itself was besieged (1683). It was only saved by the valour of the Poles under Sobieski, who came to its relief. Thus, twice over, the Poles had saved Christendom from a grave danger.

But the gravity of the peril roused the Christian neighbours of the Turks to united action. The Emperor, the

¹ See the maps, Atlas, Plates 9 and 26 (a).

Poles and the Republic of Venice formed an alliance in 1684. The Poles under John Sobieski and the imperial forces under the Duke of Lorraine struck blow after blow against the Turks. All Hungary was rapidly reconquered; and, with a sort of poetic justice, the crowning victory was won in 1687 on the very field of Mohacz, where, a hundred and sixty years before, Solyman the Magnificent had shattered the Hungarian army and made himself master of the country.

It is not surprising that, with so great an enterprise on his hands, the Emperor was unable to check the aggression of Louis xiv. during the decade 1678-1688. But by 1688 the Turkish danger was no longer serious; and thus, just at the moment when the Revolution in England deprived Louis xiv. of security on that side, the overthrow of the Turks released another enemy, the Emperor, to attack him. The war against Turkey still went on, alongside of the greater war in Western Europe. Indeed it is possible that the western war, by distracting the Emperor, saved the Turkish power from annihilation, and sentenced the Christian peoples of the Balkans to a continuance of the blighting Turkish rule. Even as it was, the peace of Carlowitz, in 1699, by which the Turkish-Austrian war was ended, confined the Turks to the south of the Danube. Henceforth theirs was a decaying power, and the problem of what was to happen to it became one of the most vexed questions of European politics.

§ 6. *The Prevalence of Absolute Monarchy in Europe.*

It was thus a period of unceasing and complicated warfare which was occupying the attention of Europe while in Britain the problems of constitutional government were being argued out afresh. And in all the experience of the European States during these troubles one lesson seemed, to contemporary observers, to stand forth clearly. This lesson was, that those States alone achieved success and security which possessed strong centralised governments, unhampered by the interferences of ignorant and meddling parliaments or diets. France under Louis xiv. was the greatest of European States: was not her greatness due to the strength of her government? The Emperor had begun to overthrow the local liberties of his dominions: might it not appear that his increased authority was the source of his victories over the Turks? Brandenburg was rising into prominence and

growing in prosperity : her elector would have claimed that it was the establishment of his own power at the expense of the provincial diets which had made this possible. Sweden was losing her prestige, largely because she had fallen under the rule of an oligarchy of nobles : she began to revive again when her king Charles xi. made the royal authority absolute by a *coup d'etat*. Poland was prevented by her anarchic constitution from playing the part which her greatness should have made possible : it was only when the personal authority of a great man, Sobieski, gave to her a temporary unity of purpose that she was able to achieve great things. The Dutch, when they were threatened by disaster, had only been saved by falling back upon the personal leadership of William of Orange. And might it not fairly be contended that the wavering and humiliating policy of Britain was mainly due to the unceasing friction between Crown and Parliament ?

It was thus the all but unanimous opinion of Europe, supported to all appearance by the facts of history, that absolute monarchy, or some near approach to it, was the only means whereby order, strength and safety could be assured to any State. And the almost universal acceptance of this belief is a fact which ought not to be forgotten when we turn again to examine the new struggles of the English to establish national self-government on an ampler scale.

[Wakeman's *Ascendancy of France* gives a clear and vigorous account of this period. See also Seeley's *Growth of British Policy*, Abbott's *Expansion of Europe* and Airy's *Restoration* (Epochs of Modern History). The best account of the court and government of Louis xiv. is by E. Lavissee, which forms part of Lavissee's *Histoire de France*. See also Voltaire's *Siicle de Louis XIV.*, Grant's *French Monarchy*, and Hassall's *Louis XIV.* (Heroes of the Nations); Marriott and Robertson's *Growth of Prussia*; Pontalis' *de Witt* Nisbet Bain's *Scandinavia*; Lane-Poole's *Turkey* (Story of the Nations).]

CHAPTER III

RIVAL COLONIAL EMPIRES

§ i. *International Rivalry Overseas.*

THE colonial and trading ventures of the first half of the seventeenth century, and above all those of the Dutch, had shown to the world how much wealth and strength could be drawn from systematically conducted enterprise oversea. The Dutch, though but a small people, counted as one of the greatest powers of the world, and certainly the most prosperous; and it was obvious that their strength rested almost wholly upon their oversea trade and their mercantile and naval power. Therefore, as soon as the wars of religion were over, the western European States began to take up colonial enterprise with a systematic thoroughness which none save the Dutch had earlier displayed.¹ Even the Danes strove to get a foothold in Indian trade, and acquired the island of St. Thomas in the West Indies. Even the Elector of Brandenburg built a fort and trading station in West Africa. The Dutch still enjoyed great prosperity in this period, and were still regarded by the English as their most dangerous rivals. But in fact the mercantile power of the Dutch was relatively, though not absolutely, beginning to decline. The Portuguese, having freed themselves from Spain and reconquered Brazil from the Dutch, entered upon a period of revived prosperity. But they no longer counted for much in the East: it was the growing riches of Brazil, and its valuable plantations of sugar, which now formed their main resource, and they made no new acquisitions. The Spanish empire in America was still, in extent and potential wealth, the greatest of all the over-sea empires. But the Spanish dominions lived a life apart, and counted for little in the great rivalry of the age. The two powers which threw themselves with the greatest zeal and energy into the task of building up and organising colonial enterprise were France and England. Now began

¹ For a general view of colonial enterprise during the period see the map, Atlas, Plate 48.

their keen rivalry, which was to last for a century and a half; now also the two countries began to work out systematic colonial policies, guided by their respective traditions and methods of government at home. The contrast between the principles and methods of the two powers as it was worked out in this age is as instructive as it is sharp and clear.

§ 2. *The French Colonial Empire and the Development of Canada.*

When Louis xiv. and his industrious minister Colbert assumed control of the government of France in 1661, they had almost to begin from the beginning the creation of a colonial empire. The French settlements in Canada had but a precarious existence, with a population of only about 2000, and the maritime province of Acadia had recently been annexed by Cromwell; the French West Indian settlements were little more than buccaneering headquarters, and the attempt to get a share for France of the trade of India had hitherto led to no useful results. In twenty years Colbert brought about an extraordinary change, and if his policy had not been interrupted by Louis xiv.'s great continental wars it is possible that maritime and colonial supremacy would have fallen to France.

Colbert naturally imitated the Dutch, whose methods were generally regarded as the most successful: like them he founded two great trading companies, one for the East and one for the West (1664). He also formed a body of practical business men to advise him on trade policy. But from the first the two trading companies were mainly supported by nobles and courtiers, not by the trading classes, and they were wholly dependent upon the support of the Crown. The Company of the West, which was to deal with North and South America, the West Indies and West Africa, soon broke down, and the direction of all trading and colonial ventures in these regions passed under the immediate control of government. The East India Company had a longer life, but not as yet a very prosperous one. Its first efforts were largely wasted in an attempt to establish a settlement at Madagascar, which was for some time the headquarters of French enterprise in the East. And though trading stations were started on the mainland of India at Pondicherry (near Madras) and at Chandernagore (near Calcutta), the French were never able in this period to compete with either the Dutch or the English companies in the East.

It was in North America, the West Indies and West Africa that the main French efforts were expended; and here striking results were obtained. In the West Indies, under the fostering care of Colbert, the sugar islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe began to thrive, and the French also got a foothold in the western half of the great island of Hispaniola, the oldest centre of the Spanish American power. Spain was compelled in 1678 to recognise French sovereignty over this region, which was known as St. Dominique; and thus France got a possession which balanced the English ownership of Jamaica. The value attached to West Indian possessions was shown by the fierceness of the fighting in the Leeward Islands during the short Anglo-French war of 1666-7; from that time the comradeship which had been maintained by French and English adventurers in these waters came to an end, and was replaced by keen rivalry and mutual suspicion. The West Indian Islands depended wholly upon slave labour, and to secure a supply of negro slaves France established her control over Senegal, on the West African coast; just as the Dutch, the English and the Portuguese had set up stations in other parts of the coast.¹ One of the results of the French attack upon the Dutch in 1672 was that the Dutch were compelled to cede to France the West African island of Goree. There were also struggling French settlements in Guiana, on the north coast of South America. But the development of trade and settlement in all this region was gravely hampered by the prevalence of buccaneering. The period from 1660 to 1675 was the very heyday of the buccaneers, among whom the French were by far the most active, though Dutchmen and Englishmen shared in the ugly game. The buccaneers were often guilty of the wildest deeds: this was the time when Morgan, Coxon and Davis won their notoriety among the English, Grammont and Ducasse among the French. Not until these evil traditions were got rid of could the riches of the West Indies be fully developed; and it was not until 1698 that the European powers agreed to take common action to crush them out.

The main efforts of Colbert and his master were, however, devoted to the development of Canada. They sent a little army of regulars to check the ravages of the fierce Iroquois,²

¹ See the map of West Africa, Atlas, Plate 64 (c).

² See above, Bk. iv. chap. ii. p. 380.

and persuaded officers and men to settle down in the danger zone by giving them grants of land ; and the curbing of the Iroquois removed the chief obstacle to the development of Canada. They despatched carefully selected parties of emigrants, and provided dowries for women who would go out to marry colonists. They sent out farm implements and live stock for the use of the settlers, established fisheries, started shipbuilding, and carried out surveys for minerals. In about ten years the population of the colony was multiplied fourfold. All this was done at the king's expense : unlike the English colonies, French Canada never during this period paid its own expenses, but was always a burden on the mother country.

Because Canada was thus wholly dependent upon the king, and also because the government of Louis xiv. in France was the very model of an absolute monarchy, there was no consultation whatsoever of the colonists in the management of the colony's affairs. When the greatest French colonial statesman of the period, Count Frontenac, summoned in 1672 a meeting of ' estates ' in Canada, he was sharply pulled up, and told that no such assembly could be permitted. All authority rested with the Governor or military head and the Intendant or financial and legal head, both of whom were appointed by the king ; and their frequent differences were always referred to France for settlement. All land in Canada was held from the king by feudal tenure, whereas in the English colonies it was held in full freehold. Every male inhabitant between the ages of 14 and 70 was under the obligation of military service, and had to submit to frequent drill. It was this centralisation of all power, and this strict military discipline, which alone enabled French Canada to hold its own against its far more populous English neighbours.

No emigrant might enter Canada without the king's approval. Since Louis was resolved to keep New France strictly orthodox, he refused to admit any Huguenots, and thus sacrificed an element that might have been of the highest value in the development of the new lands : there is a marked contrast between this policy and the general religious toleration allowed in the English colonies. When systematic persecution, culminating in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), began to drive the Huguenots out of France, they went to the English colonies and to the Dutch settlements at the Cape of Good Hope, and thus were lost to France for ever. Finally, all the trade of Canada was

strictly confined to the mother country and closely regulated by government.

Although Canada thrived and grew under the fostering care of the government, it did not thrive so greatly or grow so rapidly as the English colonies, where there was very little government control, but a great deal of freedom. In particular not all the insistence of Colbert and the king could turn Canada into a self-supporting country: the colonists would almost have starved if they had not been largely supported from France. One main reason for this was that the settlers, unlike their English neighbours, were loth to fix themselves down to the humdrum work of cultivation: they preferred the glorious and often lucrative adventures of fur-trapping and exploration, and the most distinctive element in the population consisted of the *coureurs-de-bois*, who spent their lives in the wilds. There was no real parallel to this class in the English colonies.

Geographical facts largely accounted for this marked feature of Canadian life.¹ The soil was not rich and fertile, like that of the English colonies, and therefore gave poor rewards to the farmer. On the other hand, while the English were shut off from the interior by the numerous wooded ranges of the Alleghany Mountains, running parallel with the coast, the mighty river St. Lawrence led the French settlers naturally and easily into the vast interior. Hence, in spite of their small numbers, it was the French and not the English who explored the vast central plain of America and the waters of the great lakes. Missionary zeal, in which the French far surpassed the English, accentuated this tendency; and moreover the French showed on the whole a far greater skill and tact in getting into friendly relations with the Indian tribes.

The period with which we are dealing was in fact the great age of North American exploration, and it was wholly to the bold explorers of French Canada that the world owed the knowledge of the great central plain and its mighty rivers and lakes. Many travellers mapped out the Great Lakes; others found their way through the vast forests to Hudson's Bay. But still more remarkable were two great river journeys of this time.² In 1673 a Jesuit missionary, P^{re}re Marquette, and a trader named Jollet made their way from Lake Huron to the Wisconsin river, and thence down the Mississippi as far as the Arkansas river. In 1681-2 a still greater explorer, the gallant Sieur de La Salle, made his way

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 55.

² *Ibid.*

from the bottom of Lake Michigan down the Illinois river and thence all the way to the mouth of the Mississippi in the Gulf of Mexico, where he set up a pillar proclaiming the sovereignty of Louis le Grand.¹ La Salle wished to plant a new colony here. The project was not carried out until 1717, after his death and that of the Great King. But he had opened up for France the vast central plain and prepared the way for far-reaching imperial claims which, had they been made effective, would have shut in the populous and thriving English colonies to a narrow strip of coast-land. Manifestly these were claims which the English settlers could not allow to go by default; and thus, even before the English Revolution, it had become apparent that the French were likely to be more dangerous rivals than the Dutch had ever been. They would have been still more formidable if Louis xiv.'s costly and wasteful foreign wars had not, in the last period of his reign, largely undone all the brilliant work of Colbert. Under the strain of foreign war the king even felt himself compelled to stop emigration to Canada, lest it should weaken the man-power of France.

§ 3. *A New Era in British Colonial Policy.*

If Louis xiv. and Colbert showed vigour and enterprise in developing the French colonial empire and defining the principles on which it was to be administered, the government of Charles ii. was not less active and was even more far-seeing. Indeed, the twenty years following the Restoration form one of the most vitally important periods in the history of the British Commonwealth; for not only was the number of English settlements increased, but the main principles of English colonial policy, which were to be followed down to the time of the American Revolution, were defined and worked out with the utmost clearness.

All the leading statesmen of the Restoration showed a real and intelligent interest in colonial problems. The king himself was interested, in his idle way; still more his brother the Duke of York, and his cousin the gallant Prince Rupert. Clarendon, who was all-powerful in the first years of the reign, claimed later that he had 'used all the endeavours that he could to bring His Majesty to have a great esteem for his plantations, and to encourage the improvement of them.' The claim was a just one; Clarendon's was the dominant

¹ A vivid account of these adventures is to be found in Parkman's *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West*.

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influence in colonial policy during the first seven years after the Restoration, when the new policy was mainly defined. Bennet, afterwards Lord Arlington, made a good second. Monk represented the keen imperialism of Cromwell. Ashley, the famous Lord Shaftesbury,¹ also a Cromwellian, gave close attention to colonial questions, and his political action was largely determined by this interest. He brought into the service of the colonies his friend the philosopher John Locke. At the very opening of the reign a new body was set up, known as the Council of Trade and Plantations, of which Locke later became Secretary ; and though it was soon abolished, it was replaced by special Committees of the Privy Council. The members of these bodies paid the closest attention to their work, as their records show; they did their best to work out an imperial policy, and to provide an efficient administrative centre for the common affairs of all the members of the empire. Whatever criticism may be made of the government of Charles II., it deserves the credit of having shown a keener and more intelligent interest in colonial problems than any of its predecessors, or than any of its successors down to the nineteenth century.

The most important aspect of the work of this period was the attempt to define the principles of colonial policy, and to fix the relations between the colonies and the mother country. The principal aims of the new policy were to ensure that English trade and industry should profit by the expansion of the colonies, and that the empire as a whole should be bound together by the bonds of trade. England was to become the central market and workshop as well as the administrative capital of the whole empire ; and the empire's trade policy was to be fixed by the government and Parliament of England. The idea that the colonies should be consulted in defining the lines of this policy did not enter anybody's mind: indeed such an idea would, at this date, have been wholly impracticable. There were good reasons why England should claim to make some profit out of the trade of the colonies. She had to bear the whole cost of their defence. Weak and scattered as they were, they would have lain at the mercy of the other colonial powers if they had not been able to count upon the protection of the mother country, and if the navy had not held the seas. The customs duties levied in England on goods going from or to the colonies formed the only means by which the

¹ There is a good short life of Shaftesbury by H. D. Traill.

colonies were asked to contribute to the cost of their common defence.

From these trade advantages Scotland was strictly excluded; Ireland, though at first admitted to the privileges of colonial trade, was later shut out from them. Scotland and Ireland were, indeed, treated as foreign countries under the protective system of the Restoration, and many of their products were excluded not only from the colonies but from England itself. It is futile to condemn this policy. It was the inevitable and logical result of the protectionist theory which all men accepted as obviously true, not only in England but in all other countries.

The new policy was outlined in the Navigation Act of 1660, which was one of the first Acts of the Restoration; and four more Acts strengthening its provisions followed during the next twelve years. The Navigation Acts not only re-enacted the chief provision of the Act of 1651, whereby inter-imperial trade was to be carried on only in English or colonial ships; they added the very important provision that certain 'enumerated articles' of colonial produce, the chief of which were sugar, tobacco, cotton and dye-stuffs, should not be shipped to any country save England or another colony, so that foreign countries desiring colonial goods would in the main have to purchase them in England. In 1664 the trade system was completed by the provision that all foreign goods destined for the colonies should first be landed in England; thus England would become the central emporium of the whole empire. These provisions were much criticised from the first, and they were evaded on a large scale, especially by the New England colonies. But they did in a large degree contribute to determine the lines of colonial trade. Thus the theory that imperial unity could be based upon trade regulations and restrictions was given a full trial; it lasted for a century, and ended in the American Revolution.

Yet it would not be fair to blame the statesmen of the Restoration for the ultimate failure of their plans. According to the ideas of the age, they were setting about the unification of the British realms on a solid economic basis. Their policy did much to stimulate the growth of the mercantile marine both in England and in the colonies, and to strengthen the foundations of naval power. And it should be remembered that even in matters of trade their policy was far less restrictive than that of any other colonising power, since they left the colonies free to trade directly with

the whole world in non-enumerated goods, while Spain and France and the Dutch maintained a complete monopoly for themselves of all colonial trade.

And in other than trade concerns the new imperial policy was immeasurably more enlightened than that of any other country. In the first place, it was assumed as a matter of course that every colonial settlement should have a representative assembly alongside of the governor and council appointed by the Crown or the Crown's representatives. This feature of local self-government was indeed the most distinctive and peculiar characteristic of the English system. Every English colony enjoyed it; no colony founded by any other nation obtained it. One of the objects of colonial policy during the period seems to have been that of ensuring that the government of the colonies was carried on upon a uniform system, with a governor and council and a representative assembly. And these assemblies were left with full power to make laws not inconsistent with the laws of England, and to impose taxes for their own needs. No attempt was ever made to impose direct taxes upon the colonies by the authority of the English Parliament or government; while as for legislation, it was generally assumed that, except in the sphere of trade, the colonial assemblies should alone legislate on colonial issues, the imperial Parliament dealing only with matters of common concern. In that respect also the English colonies stand alone among the European settlements of this age. In brief, the new imperial system contemplated that England should be responsible for the common defence of the whole empire, and that her government should direct its foreign policy and its trade policy; but that in all other respects the colonies should be self-supporting and self-governing.

The readiness of the Restoration government to encourage self-government in the colonies was shown not only in the constitutions granted to new settlements made during the period, but in the issue of charters to some of the earlier colonies. Thus in 1661 Jamaica, conquered by Cromwell six years before, was given a representative system of the formal pattern; while the charters granted to Connecticut in 1662 and to Rhode Island in 1663 were still more striking. Neither of these colonies had yet obtained a formal charter, though both had set up governments of their own. Charles II. had no reason to love the New Englanders, and the two settlements were at his mercy. Yet their new charters recognised the system they had set up for themselves, and

authorised them not merely to elect representative assemblies but actually to appoint their own governors.

One further feature of the new imperial system w^Thich presents a sharp contrast with the policy of France deserves special emphasis. There was to be complete liberty of conscience in religious matters. The credit for laying down this principle probably belongs mainly to Shaftesbury and his friend John Locke. Shaftesbury deeply cared about the ideal of religious toleration, which he had learnt from Cromwell; and his policy at home, as well as in the colonies, was largely influenced by this aim. In an advertisement intended to attract settlers to the new colony of Carolina the first place was given to the statement that 'there is full and free liberty of conscience granted/ Even James Duke of York instructed the Governor of New York that he must permit 'all persons of all religion soever quietly to inhabit . . . without giving them any disturbance whatsoever.' One of the principal grounds of the standing quarrel with Massachusetts which went on throughout the period was the demand of the English government that religious toleration should be allowed in that colony, and that the franchise should not be restricted to church members. In view of the persecution of Dissenters and Roman Catholics which was going on in England, this insistence upon toleration may seem difficult to explain. But the persecution in England was mainly the work of the Cavalier Parliament, and, as we shall see, government struggled in vain against it.

§ 4. *The Establishment of New Colonies.*

The work of this remarkable period in the expansion of English trade and in the creation of new English settlements abroad was as important as its work in the definition of imperial policy.

The East India Company entered upon a period of great prosperity, thanks largely to government encouragement. It had long since been turned into a regular joint stock company with a large capital. In 1661 the company obtained a new charter empowering it to coin money, to raise garrisons, and to exercise jurisdiction over the inhabitants of its settlements. And in 1668 the king handed over to the company the island of Bombay, which had come to him as part of the dowry of his Portuguese wife. Bombay was the first territorial possession held by the company in full sovereignty.

India in this period was beginning to fall into turmoil. The Mogul Emperor Aurangzib was trying to establish his direct rule over Southern India, where his predecessors had never established their supremacy,¹ and in the course of his campaigns he had roused against him the redoubtable bands of the Mahrattas in the hill country behind Bombay. Under their daring chief Sivaji they were raiding vast areas of territory, and already the downfall of the Mogul empire was beginning to loom ahead. In this state of things the Company had to be prepared to defend itself. That was why it needed garrisons. Its agents showed that they were well able to hold their own, and even a dim notion of the possibility of making territorial acquisitions began to be entertained, in the later part of the period, by some of its leaders. But in spite of these troubles—the Company was at open war with the Mogul empire in 1686—its trade was so active that its shares sold at a premium of 500 per cent.

Again, an attempt was made to organise the African trade, under a company formed by royal charter in 1662 and reconstructed in 1672. Its main business was the iniquitous supply of slaves; it monopolised the supply of slaves to all the English colonies, and for that purpose maintained trading ports on the Gambia and on the Gold Coast.² No one had yet begun to feel any sense of shame about this iniquitous trade, in which all nations shared: without a supply of slave labour the sugar, cotton and tobacco plantations of the West Indies and of North America could scarcely have been carried on, and men still cozened themselves into the belief that it was a boon to the negroes to be brought under civilising influences.

In the West Indies the development of the English islands received constant attention from the Privy Council; and in spite of the damage done in the French war of 1666-7, this was a period of steady development. The Leeward Islands were given a distinct government; and the Bahama Islands were colonised. Towards the buccaneers the English government followed a wavering policy. The traditions of Drake seemed in some degree to protect them, and the notorious Morgan was for a time actually appointed Governor of Jamaica. But on the whole the tendency was to repudiate them. Their nefarious activities were in fact interfering with the growth of the valuable trade of the islands, which

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 59.

* See the map of West Africa, Atlas, Plate 64 (c).

was to become in the next century the most lucrative traffic in the world.

But it was to the continent of North America that the energy of the English government, as of the French, was mainly turned; and this period saw the sporadic and disconnected settlements of the first half of the century transformed into a continuous line of thriving and populous States.¹ In 1663 a patent was issued to Clarendon, Shaftesbury, Monk and others empowering them to found a colony to the south of Virginia, under the name of Carolina. The plan of the colony was drawn up with the utmost care, and John Locke, the greatest political philosopher of the age, was asked to devise its constitution. This constitution was far too elaborate to be carried into effect in detail; but the fact that Locke was asked to draw it up showed how seriously the work of colonisation was regarded. Carolina soon broke into two distinct settlements, of which the southern (with its capital at Charleston) became the most orderly and prosperous. Both depended upon slave labour; and both had the universal system of an elected assembly with a governor and council.

In the next year, 1664, an attack was directed against the Dutch settlement of the New Netherlands;² and, as the Dutch had earlier conquered the Swedish settlements on the Delaware, their overthrow meant that the whole coastline between New England and Virginia passed into English hands. This attack was one of the immediate causes of Charles n.'s first Dutch war, which was essentially the outcome of the intense commercial rivalry of the two nations; and when peace was made (1667) the whole of this valuable area became permanently an English possession. The importance of this acquisition can scarcely be exaggerated. Not only did it unite the northern with the southern colonies, but it gave control over the all-important line of the Hudson river,³ a deep cleft through the hills, which formed the main line of communication with French Canada, as it still is to-day; while the tributary valley of the Mohawk, coming in from the west, afforded the only clear passage through the mountain belt south of the St. Lawrence, and therefore gave access to the Great Lakes and the central plain. The French had long since realised the importance of this great

¹ For what follows see the general map of the colonisation of North America, Atlas, Plate 54 (a).

² See the map of the Middle Colonies. Atlas, Plate 54 (c).

³ See the special map of the Hudson Valley, Atlas, 56 (a).

waterway. They already possessed the northern part of it, as far as Lake Champlain, and had dreamed of acquiring the rest, and so splitting the English colonies into two blocks. Some of the fiercest fighting of the next century took place along this line. What is more, the possession of the Hudson Valley brought the English into contact with the Iroquois, the best organised as well as the fiercest of the Indian tribes, whose chief centres were along the line of the Mohawk river. Friendly relations were early established with the Iroquois, who formed a useful check to the French; and the headquarters for negotiations with the Indian tribes came to be the Dutch trading post of Orange, near the junction of the Mohawk and the Hudson, which was now renamed Albany.

The area conquered from the Dutch was granted to the Duke of York, from whom came the name of the State of New York. At New York itself (formerly New Amsterdam) and in the Hudson Valley were settled a mixture of many European peoples, among whom, of course, the Dutch predominated; but English settlers, mostly immigrants from New England, were almost as numerous as the Dutch, and this largely accounted for the ease with which the colony was conquered, and the readiness with which it accommodated itself to the new regime. It is noteworthy that this settlement was the first in which the British system had to deal with conquered subjects of European stock. Perhaps this was the reason why the establishment of representative institutions was delayed until 1683. But local self-government was set up immediately; and the Dutch found that their own usages were not interfered with, and that no attempt was made to force them into an English mould. Within twenty years they had obtained a system of self-government such as the Dutch company had never allowed to them, and the colony, freed from friction with its neighbour, entered upon an era of great prosperity.

In the area which extended from the Hudson to Delaware Bay the Duke of York made large grants to Sir George Carteret and others, who established here a new colony to which they gave the name of New Jersey: it was at first divided into two. Into this colony large numbers of Quakers were admitted—they still form a substantial element of the population of parts of this country—and here they enjoyed complete religious toleration and the usual self-governing rights.

On the other side of Delaware Bay lay the land in which

the Swedes had principally settled, though they had never been numerous. This region, for a time, the Duke of York retained under his own control; it was later to be attached for a time to Pennsylvania, but was ultimately to become the little colony of Delaware. In all these new areas the English found themselves faced by the task of governing European settlers of different races from their own. No serious difficulty was felt: the practice of local self-government made the task easy.

Behind New Jersey lay a rich and fertile region on the far side of the river Delaware. Here, in 1681, William Penn, the Quaker, got a huge grant of land from Charles II. in payment of a debt due to Penn's father, the admiral who had conquered Jamaica. Penn had already been concerned in the settlement of Quakers in the neighbouring region of New Jersey. He now set himself to organise a new settlement, freely open to all comers, which, under his benevolent guidance, came very soon to be known as the freest and most liberal of all the colonies, and attracted so great a stream of immigrants that, though it was the latest of the series, it soon began to take rank with Massachusetts and Virginia, the oldest and strongest of them all. Penn's colony, to which he gave the name of Pennsylvania, was distinguished by its honourable and generous treatment of the Indian tribes with which it had to deal, and by its unwillingness to take part in any warlike enterprises. Its capital, Philadelphia ('brotherly love'), on the banks of the Delaware, was the first town in the modern world to be laid out on a systematic and orderly plan.

The completion of the settlement and organisation of the American coast from Maine to South Carolina did not exhaust the activity of this enterprising age. In 1670 two daring French *conreurs-de-bois*, having quarrelled with the Governor of French Canada, suggested the foundation of a company to develop a fur trade in the wild country north of the French colonies, approachable from Hudson's Bay. A charter was granted to a new Hudson's Bay Company with Prince Rupert as its governor, and from that time onwards there was always a trade going on in the vast region which came to be known as Prince Rupert's Land, though the French claimed that this trade was illegitimate. Here was appearing another ground of quarrel with the French.

The result of the systematic and strenuous work of the five and twenty years following the Restoration was that the English lands in North America were consolidated and

organised, and were far better able to resist attack or to undertake further expansion than they had been when Charles II. came to the throne. Not only was their trade expanding, but they had become the natural place of refuge for men desiring a new home, whether they came from England or from other lands. Persecuted French Huguenots, Germans driven out by the severities of the Archbishop of Salzburg or by the ruin and devastation of the Palatinate which was one of the results of Louis XIV.'s wars, naturally turned to these free lands of the New World, where a religious toleration existed such as was known nowhere else, and where free men had a unique opportunity of sharing in the control of their own destinies. Already the British Commonwealth was a family of free States, like nothing else that had ever existed in the world.

§ 5. *A Period of Friction.*

During the first twenty years of Charles II. a great transformation had thus taken place in the English empire. The Atlantic seaboard from Maine to South Carolina was continuously English. A clearly defined economic policy for the empire as a whole had been laid down. The system of local self-government and religious toleration had become generally characteristic of the English colonies, both on the mainland and in the West Indies. And, at headquarters, the Committees of the Privy Council (especially as re-organised in 1675) had provided something like a central machinery of government, issuing instructions to governors in all the colonies.

But there were manifest defects in the system. In the first place, the governors could not always be trusted to act as agents for the central power; and this was especially true in New England, where the governors were appointed by the colonists themselves. In the second place, the new economic system was widely disregarded, and the restrictions of the Navigation Acts were openly defied. This also was especially the case in New England: reports submitted by a very able agent, Edward Randolph, who was sent across to study the situation, drew a gloomy picture of New England's defiant attitude. Finally, there was no common organisation for the colonies as a whole, and no provision for the common defence. This was especially serious in the northern colonies, where men were already beginning to be perturbed by the possibility of a French

attack : the French were claiming ownership of the Iroquois country, which would have brought them into dangerous proximity to New England and New York. Influenced by these considerations, Charles II. and James II. proposed (largely on the advice of Randolph) to undertake a policy of increased centralisation in L.America.

There was much to be said in favour of such a policy, if it could be effected without an invasion of colonial liberties. But the date at which the new policy was undertaken was ominous. In 1681, as we shall see, Charles II. had practically established absolute power in England ; and he was busily engaged in revising borough charters in order to get control over Parliament. The same high-handed methods were adopted with the colonies. Massachusetts was required, on a plea of *quo warranto*, to show cause why its charter should not be annulled, and after a judicial inquiry, the charter was cancelled. The charters of the other New England colonies and of New Jersey were likewise threatened. Even Massachusetts submitted with extraordinary mildness. James II. next proceeded to set up a single general government for the whole region from the Delaware to Maine, under a single governor, Sir Edmund Andros, whose task was to unify the colonies and organise the enforcement of the trade laws.

How this policy would have been worked out in detail, and what relation would have been established between the individual colonies and the new central authority, was never displayed ; for before Andros was well in the saddle, before a new charter had been granted to Massachusetts, and before the old charters of the other colonies had even been cancelled, the proceedings were interrupted by the Revolution of 1688. But, judging by his other actions, it is safe to assume that the methods of James II. would have been high-handed and tyrannical, and that the liberties of the colonies would have been gravely impaired. Certainly the proceedings of James II. and of Andros went far beyond anything that was ever dreamt of by George II. and his advisers. This makes the submissiveness of the colonies all the more surprising : it is, indeed, only explicable on the assumption that the need for some co-ordination of colonial government was widely felt.

The Revolution put a stop to this. But in doing so it almost certainly prevented a breach in that tradition of self-government which had hitherto been the most distinctive feature of the English colonial system. Indeed,

the events of this last period in the great colonial age of the Restoration showed that the Revolution itself, and the constitutional struggle which led up to it, were as important to the colonies as they were to the islands. They showed that the political liberties in which the colonies rejoiced, and in which they were almost unique among the States of the world, were ultimately dependent upon the maintenance and extension of free institutions in the mother country.

They were dependent also upon something else. The absolutist policy of James in England and in the colonies rested upon the support of Louis xiv. of France: in the direction of Louis' absolutism was already triumphant in Canada, whence it threatened the divided colonies. That danger had to be averted : not only the triumph of political liberty in England, but the defeat of absolutism in the New World, was necessary if the character of freedom which the British Commonwealth had already achieved was to be made permanent. On every ground the Revolution of 1688 was an event of moment to the whole Commonwealth.

[Payne's *European Colonies*; C. M. Andrews' *The Colonial Period*; Grant's *History of Canada*; Abbott's *Expansion of Europe* ; Egerton's *British Colonial Policy*; Lucas' *Historical Geography of the British Colonies*; Parkman's *La Salle, The Old Regime in Canada, and Count Frontenac* ; Doyle's *English in America*; G. L. Beer's *Old Colonial System* ; Hertz's *Old Colonial System*; Christie's *Life of Shaftesbury*; Channing's *History of the United States*; Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America* ; Hunter's *British India*. Marian's *Influence of Sea-power on History* begins at the Restoration, and is very important for colonial history.]

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN ENGLAND

(A.D. 1660-1688)

§ 1. *The First Rudiments of a Cabinet and of Political Parties : Clarendon, 1660-7.*

THE reign of Charles II. is sometimes regarded as a period of political reaction, when monarchy regained much of its old prestige and power, and when the doctrines of Divine Right and Passive Obedience were not only accepted in theory but acted upon. That is a very misleading view. Only at the end of the reign, and during the short reign of James II., was there a serious attempt at absolute government. The greater part of the reign of Charles II. was a period of real constitutional progress, in which Parliament, strongly royalist though it was in sentiment, added greatly to its own powers, and made good its claim to a decisive voice in the main questions of national policy.

The period also saw a real, though unconscious, advance towards the creation of the machinery by which the control of Parliament over the government could be made effective. In the long run this machinery was to consist of the conduct of affairs by a small cabinet of responsible ministers, drawn from the party which had a majority in the House of Commons. But before that could happen, there had to be a coherent group of ministers forming a cabinet and acting together; there had to be organised political parties; and it had to be recognised that Parliament must be consulted not only about legislation and taxation, but about all important questions of national policy. In all these respects the reign of Charles II. saw a great advance. The nature of the advance can best be observed by tracing the successive periods into which the reign falls.

The first period, 1660-1667, was the period during which Clarendon was the dominant figure. But he was not the only minister. There was a little group whom the king specially consulted, since the Privy Council was now too

big and too varied in character to deal with confidential business ; but, as there was no real agreement among the members of this group, some of whom were perpetually intriguing against Clarendon, they can at most be described as the rudiments or outline of a ' Cabinet/

Clarendon's attitude, both in politics and religion, was closely in accord with that of the majority in Parliament. Yet even he would probably not have wished to go so far as Parliament in persecuting the Puritans (or, as they should henceforward be called, the Dissenters) ; and the king himself, who was pledged to a policy of toleration, and would have liked to deal leniently with the Catholics, as well as some of his lesser advisers like Buckingham and Ashley, who had Dissenting sympathies, would certainly have followed a different policy had they been free to do so. The policy of religious persecution, whatever we may think of it, was due to Parliament and showed that Parliament intended to have the deciding voice upon religious questions, which the Tudors and the early Stewarts had always held to be specially within the sphere of the Crown. At the end of 1662 and in 1663 the king tried to get an Act passed allowing him to dispense with the Act of Uniformity and other Acts. Not only was it thrown out, but Parliament adopted its severest measures against the Dissenters—the Conventicle Act and the Five Mile Act—as if in direct reply to the king's attempt.

Again, foreign policy had always been held to belong peculiarly to the king and his ministers, and Clarendon shared this view. But Parliament insisted upon being consulted ; and throughout the whole period foreign affairs continually influenced domestic politics. Parliament was indignant at the sale of Dunkirk to France in 1662—in itself a wise act. While it did not at first oppose the first Dutch war, it attached an ' appropriation clause ' to its money grants, as a means of making sure that the money was spent for the purposes for which it was voted ; and this device, which greatly increased the power of Parliament, became a regular practice. When the Dutch war began to go wrong, and stories of mismanagement leaked out, the Cavalier Parliament was as bold in its attack upon Clarendon as the early Parliaments of Charles 1. had been in their attacks upon Buckingham, and it was far more successful. It impeached Clarendon (1667)—only seven years after the Restoration—and forced him to go into banishment ; and though Charles **was not sorry to be rid of the stiff and formal minister**

whose upright industry was a perpetual rebuke to himself, the blow to the royal power was none the less severe.

Finally, even when Clarendon had fallen, Parliament still insisted upon inquiring into the way in which its large grants had been spent. Nor would it vote enough to clear the spendthrift king from his financial embarrassments ; though he was deep in debt to the London bankers, and had to spend a large part of his revenue in interest on his loans. There had indeed grown up during the Clarendon period a definite opposition. It was known as the Country Party, and it had its own recognised leaders, notably Sir W. Coventry, whose father had been one of Charles i.'s most faithful servants. The steady supporters of government were known as the Court Party. Thus the rudiments of organised parties were appearing.

§ 2. *The Cabal: Religious Toleration, Secret Dealings with France, and Parliamentary Opposition, 1667-73.*

In the next period (1667-1673), sick of the High Church Cavaliers, who had proved so much less submissive than he had hoped, Charles entrusted the main conduct of affairs to a group of men of quite a different character : the change was so great as almost to resemble a modern change of ministry. By a curious coincidence, the initials of the five chief members of this group spelt the word ' Cabal/ for which reason the name has always been specially attached to this ministry. All five were alike in favouring a policy of religious toleration : Clifford and Arlington (to whom Charles gave his fullest confidence), because they were secretly Catholics; Buckingham, Ashley, and Lauderdale because they had connexions with the Dissenters. Ashley (afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury),¹ who was much the ablest of the group, was an old Cromwellian, and a genuine believer in toleration, for its own sake ; and he had given his ardent support to the king's attempt to relax the penal laws in 1662-3.

At first the new government won popularity by joining with the Dutch and the Swedes in the Triple Alliance, which helped to persuade Louis xiv. to stop his aggressions in the Netherlands.² But soon their foreign policy began to veer round. Louis xiv. was eager to break up the Triple Alliance in order to wreak vengeance on the Dutch, and wanted to

* There is a short life of Shaftesbury by H. D. Traill.

* See above, Chap. ii. p. 509.

buy England over. Charles, tired of his money difficulties with Parliament, was very ready to be bought. He was ready even to attempt the introduction of Roman Catholicism into England, with the aid of France, since he regarded the Roman faith as favourable to monarchical power.

On this basis secret negotiations were opened with France in 1669, and they led to the secret treaty of Dover in 1670, whereby, in return for large French subsidies, Charles promised to join Louis in attacking the Dutch, and to declare himself a Catholic at a suitable moment. This monstrous and dishonourable conspiracy could not safely be communicated to the Protestant members of the Cabal; it was known only to Clifford and Arlington, who alone signed the secret treaty. But as the alliance with France and the receipt of French subsidies would have to be explained, a second and sham treaty was started, in which Buckingham and Ashley were led to believe that they were fully consulted. Ashley, deeply interested in trade and colonies, was not unwilling to profit by the ruin of the Dutch, and as he desired to grant a toleration to the Nonconformists, to which Parliament would never agree, he was ready to accept French subsidies towards the cost of the war and thus free the Crown to suspend the persecuting laws. So the sham treaty was solemnly signed by the whole Cabal in 1671, and it was agreed to attack the Dutch in 1672. But as a policy of this kind could not succeed without some public support, Charles conceived the idea of winning over the Dissenters by granting them toleration by an exercise of the royal authority, in defiance of Parliament. Ashley and those who thought with him were not unwilling to admit of this extension of royal authority as the only means of obtaining toleration. Protestantism and English political liberty were thus simultaneously endangered ; and the Dissenters and their friends were to be used as tools for their overthrow.

Two events prepared the way for the sudden change of policy which had thus been prepared. One was what is called the Stop of the Exchequer (January 1672), whereby Charles suddenly suspended the repayment of his loans from the London bankers, though he still paid interest. Ashley vainly protested against this dishonest folly, which made it impossible for the bankers to meet their obligations to those who had deposited money with them, drove many of them into bankruptcy, dislocated the trade of London for a time, and made the new policy highly unpopular. The second preparatory act was the issue by proclamation of

a Declaration of Indulgence, whereby the king, in virtue of his 'supreme power in ecclesiastical matters/ suspended all the penal laws. During the next year a multitude of Dissenting places of worship were licensed, and both Roman Catholics and Protestant Dissenters enjoyed a brief interval of freedom. But it was freedom bought by the disregard of the laws: the laws might be unjust, but they were still LAWS. It remained to be seen whether by such means it would be possible to win for the royal power the support of men who had executed a king for less daring disregard of the laws of the land.

At first the Dissenters seemed to be willing to profit by the Indulgence ; and so far the conspiracy was going well. But everything depended on the success of the war, which was to win popularity for the new policy, and fill the Treasury with the plunder of Dutch commerce. And from the first the war went badly.¹ The Dutch (who, though they knew it not, were fighting for the political liberties of England as well as for their own) fought with such desperate heroism on sea, while Louis' armies threatened their very existence on land, that they held the English fleet at bay far more successfully than in either of the previous Dutch wars. The plunder that was to be got from Dutch commerce was not forthcoming. Within a year the king was financially as much embarrassed as ever, in spite of French subsidies ; nor was it easy to borrow money after the Stop of the Exchequer. There was no help for it : Parliament had to be summoned (1673).

It was still the same Parliament which had been elected in 1661, in the first flush of enthusiasm over the restoration of the monarchy. But its spirit in 1673 was very different from that of 1661. The members met in high indignation. They acutely resented the Dutch war, all the more because it was unsuccessful. They feared France, and suspected that the king was unduly subservient to that power. But above all they were indignant at the Declaration of Indulgence. Not only was it a repudiation of their deliberate policy against the Dissenters. Far more serious, they began to suspect that its real purpose was to favour Roman Catholicism. Whispers of the secret treaty of Dover began to leak out. Ashley (now Earl of Shaftesbury) heard how he had been duped, and, being dismissed from office, threw his great ability on to the side of the opposition, vowing vengeance against the king. Most serious of all, the Declaration of Indulgence implied the assertion that the king was

¹ See above, Chap. ii. p. 514.

above the laws, and need only carry into effect such as pleased him. If that were so, if the Crown really possessed such a suspending power, of what value was the legislative function of Parliament? It is noteworthy that the friends of the Dissenters in Parliament (and there were a good many) were quite as resolute as the Cavaliers in their resistance to these unconstitutional claims as well as in their fears of Roman Catholicism. This led to a certain reconciliation; and a bill for the relief of the Protestant Dissenters was actually earned through the House of Commons, though the Bishops secured its rejection in the House of Lords. By taking up a truly constitutional attitude, the persecuted Dissenters were preparing for a real toleration, a toleration based upon consent and not merely upon authority.

Charles saw before him, if he resisted, the possibility of having 'to go on his travels again.' He yielded completely. He withdrew the Declaration. He gave his consent to a Test Act, whose purpose was to exclude Roman Catholics from all public offices by requiring officials to take the Anglican sacrament and repudiate the doctrine of Transubstantiation. The Duke of York and Sir Thomas Clifford both retired rather than take the Test, and so confessed themselves Catholics and intensified men's fears. The fears were further increased when, during the actual session of Parliament, James married as his second wife a Roman Catholic princess, Mary of Modena. His first wife, a daughter of Clarendon, had been a Protestant. But she had borne him only daughters. If he should now have a son, the prospect of an indefinite succession of Catholic kings opened before the nation. In that case, could the royal authority safely be allowed to retain its present strength? Even staunch Cavaliers began to doubt.

§ 3. *Danby and the Organisation of Political Parties, 1673-78.*

The storm of 1673 had swept away the Cabal, and for the time being wrecked the great conspiracy. Charles recognised that he must bring his government into accord with the sentiments of Parliament, and therefore took as his chief minister a sound Cavalier churchman, Sir Thomas Osborne, soon to become Earl of Danby. That in itself was a significant thing: it was a recognition that no minister could safely be employed who could not command the confidence of Parliament. But distrust was now so deeply rooted that even Danby had unceasing trouble with Parliament.

The third period of the reign was occupied by Danby's skilful attempt to re-establish the royal authority by building up once more what may be called the 'Church-and-King' party. The Dutch war was brought to an end (1674) ; and in order to show that the king's foreign policy was not unduly subservient to France, the Princess Mary, heir-presumptive to the Crown, was married to William of Orange, Louis' bitterest enemy (1677). Danby would have been glad to break free from France altogether. But Charles would not permit him to do so, and forced him in 1675 to sign a new secret treaty whereby he promised to preserve English neutrality in return for subsidies. With the fear of Parliament before his eyes, Danby noted on the treaty that he signed it only by the King's express command.

It was a sign of the importance of Parliament, and of the impossibility of carrying on government without its approval, that Danby should have found it necessary to organise a body of steady supporters in the House of Commons to vote for government measures. In doing so he may be described as the first party organiser, and the party which he organised was that to which the nickname of 'Tory' was soon to be applied. But he was not alone in doing this. On the other side the astute and subtle Shaftesbury was busy on the same task—creating an opposition party, whose members took counsel together as to the line they should follow in public affairs. This was the beginning of what was soon to be known as the 'Whig' party.

The ideas for which the two parties stood were made clearer by the very fact of their opposition. They became steadily more definite during the course of the fierce and exciting struggle that was soon to begin. Danby's party stood for Church and King, for the maintenance of authority as of divine ordinance, for the duty of obedience as the first duty of all good citizens ; but their difficulty was that (as recent events had already shown, and future events were still more clearly to show) their twin loyalties, to Church and to King, could not always be reconciled. Shaftesbury's party on the whole stood for the supremacy of Law over all authority, including that of the king, and of Parliament as the maker of the law, and the direct mouthpiece of the nation. They paid no special veneration to the royal office as such ; they tended to regard the king as only the first official of the nation. Some of them were, in private, republicans in principle, though they dared not say so openly. In religious matters they professed no desire to alter the position or

constitution of the Church ; but they wished to keep it in subordination to the State, and they were in favour of toleration for the Dissenters. They were already beginning to develop a theory of government as the expression of their views, and John Locke, the friend of Shaftesbury, was to be the philosopher of limited or constitutional monarchy. But as yet they made no open profession of these doctrines. They were content to play upon the fear of Rome and the distrust of the Catholic Duke of York, which even Danby and his followers shared.

The growing opposition of the two parties broke into violent hostility in 1678, when a number of circumstances combined to raise the political temperature. In the first place the infamous Titus Oates turned up from the continent during the summer recess of Parliament with a story of a Jesuit plot to murder the king in order that the Duke of York might succeed to the throne. The duke had been an avowed Catholic for two years, and Oates charged his confessor with being a party to the plot. The story of the plot got abroad. It was eagerly believed by the heated imaginations of the time. The whole nation went mad; juries were prepared to hang the most innocent Catholics on the most flimsy evidence, and Oates was soon reinforced by other perjurers, ready to swear to anything. It was a cowardly panic, of which the nation had reason to be ashamed, and which responsible men should have done their best to allay. But when Parliament met, the temptation to Shaftesbury and his friends to make use of the Popish Plot in their attack on the Duke of York and the government was too strong to be resisted.

Another series of events helped to produce a storm. William of Orange had come over for his marriage in 1677, and there had been talk of an alliance between England and the Dutch. Danby was in favour of it; the king was not unwilling to let Louis xiv. see that he was not an absolute captive. Louis on his side resolved that Charles must be taught not to play fast-and-loose with his patron, and, to give him a fright, Louis let Shaftesbury and his friends know of the secret treaty of 1675.

Here was a magnificent ground of attack. These revelations, together with the universal excitement created by the stories of the Popish Plot, cut the ground from under Danby's feet. He was formally impeached. When he defended himself by stating that he had signed the French treaty by the king's express command, Parliament replied **that** this **did**

not exonerate him. That is to say, in certain circumstances it was the duty of a minister to disobey the express commands of the king ! The State in which such a rule holds is anything but an absolute monarchy. Charles only saved Danby by first proroguing and then dissolving Parliament (January 1679). Thus ended, in furious opposition to the Crown, the Parliament which had been elected in a paroxysm of loyalty in 1661.

§ 4. *Violent Party Conflict, 1679-81.*

With the dissolution of the Long Parliament of the Restoration began the fourth period of the reign, nearly three years of furious party strife, during which the country seemed to be on the verge of civil war. The supreme subject of controversy was the Exclusion Bill, a proposal to exclude the Duke of York from the throne, which was the outcome of the excitement created by the stories of the Popish Plot. No less than three general elections (1679, 1680, 1681) were held during these three years, and the three Parliaments were so busy with controversy that they were only able to achieve one measure of permanent value—the *Habeas Corpus Act* of 1679, which prohibited delays in the issue of the ancient writ of *Habeas Corpus*, and thus strengthened the safeguards against imprisonment without trial which Magna Carta had begun and the Petition of Right had improved. But there was no new principle involved in the Act; and apart from it the record of these years is a record of barren strife, ending in a violent reaction which brought English political liberties for a time into grave peril. The main lesson of this period was that violent and overbearing partisanship on the part of a majority is in the end self-defeating. The opponents of the monarchy so alienated public opinion by their rancour that for a time they ruined themselves and the cause for which they fought.

It is needless to follow this fierce conflict in detail. But certain aspects of it deserve our attention. One of them was the attempt to find a new way of carrying on the government in concert with Parliament. The Parliament of 1679 insisted upon driving Danby out of power, and he was actually imprisoned in the Tower for five years. Then a new experiment was tried on the suggestion of Sir W. Temple. The secret Cabinet, or conclave of a group of ministers, was to be done away with; some men attributed to this method all sorts of evil results. The Privy

Council was to be made once more the active centre of government; but it was to be reduced in size, and composed of fifteen king's men and fifteen parliamentary leaders. This was at least an attempt to bring government into relation with Parliament. But it was a total failure. Government can only be carried on by a group of men who understand and trust one another, who have principles in common and the habit of acting together : that is the real justification for filling governments with men of the same political views. A body consisting of men violently hostile to one another could not possibly work.

The second feature of the struggle was the mischievous results which followed from the fact that all the attention of Parliament was concentrated upon one issue, so that it could spare no attention for any other. This was a period of great importance in foreign affairs : Louis xiv. was beginning his high-handed annexations of territory under legal forms which are known as the Reunions.¹ Even Charles II. was disturbed, and was ready to make an alliance with the Dutch, the Emperor and Spain to check these aggressions, provided that Parliament would give him enough money to free him from dependence upon Louis xiv. Had such an alliance been made, it is possible that the long wars which followed might have been avoided. But Parliament refused to vote a penny unless and until the king accepted the Exclusion Bill. It refused even to vote money for the defence of Tangier, which was hard-pressed and had to be evacuated in 1683.

Nothing was to be considered but the Exclusion Bill, which was introduced in each of the three Parliaments, and led in turn to the dissolution of each. No other means of dealing with the problem would even be considered. The Earl of Halifax, who was no friend of the Duke of York and was almost a republican in sentiment, but who knew that exclusion would probably mean civil war, advocated a policy of stringently limiting the royal authority during the tenure of the throne by a Roman Catholic. But Shaftesbury and his friends would have none of this. And when, in the Parliament of 1680, Halifax's eloquence persuaded the Lords to reject the Exclusion Bill, the Commons, wild with anger, demanded that he should be removed from the king's councils for ever. In 1681 Charles even offered to agree that, provided his brother were allowed to succeed to the royal title, all his powers should be exercised by a regent. That

¹ See above, Book v. chap. ii. p. 518.

device also was scouted : the majority in the Commons would have their own way in every detail. By this insistence they put themselves in the wrong in the eyes of moderate men.

They put themselves still further in the wrong by putting forward the Duke of Monmouth, an illegitimate son of Charles II., as their candidate for the succession. If James were to be excluded, the next heir in the right line would be his daughter Mary, the wife of William of Orange, who was a sound Protestant and the bitterest foe of Louis XIV. Why did Shaftesbury and his friends advocate a course which involved the exclusion of William of Orange ? Partly because they did not want England to be ruled by a foreigner, and feared the subordination of English trade interests to those of the Dutch, and partly because they distrusted William as a friend of Danby ; but their main reason was the hope that Monmouth, just because of the weakness of his title, would be the more easily controlled : ' the weaker the title, the better the king/ as one of their pamphleteers said. They wanted no more of inherited Divine Right. But in taking this line they undoubtedly outraged a great body of opinion. Monmouth's succession would inevitably have led to civil war. He was, it is true, popular with the crowds, for he was a good-looking young man. But the notion of the succession of a bastard outraged the belief, which was unquestionably held by a great part of the nation, that a sort of divine power passed from king to king by hereditary succession. That belief may seem unintelligible to us, but it was real, and it was one of the factors which impatient reformers had to take into account. It showed itself in a striking way in the all but universal belief that the king could cure certain diseases by touching the sufferers. All the Stewarts ' touched for the king's evil/ and it is significant that Queen Anne, the last in the direct line, was the last to follow the time-honoured practice. A sentiment so irrational but so deep was not to be lightly disregarded ; it could not be disposed of by faked-up stories, which few believed, about Charles II.'s secret marriage to Monmouth's mother.

The Exclusionists put themselves still further in the wrong by the rancour and violence with which they pursued their cause, and especially by the use they made of the Popish Plot. The nation had for a time gone mad about the plot. But it came to its senses after a while, not without shame, and those who had hounded it on lost its confidence. The last victim to lose his life was an old and frail Catholic

peer, Lord Stafford. His sentence was due, not to an ordinary trial, but to an impeachment by the House of Commons of 1680, the most rancorous of all these Parliaments. His execution in December 1680 marked the end of the shameful fever, and Charles II. was shrewd enough to see that the tide was turning.

But the outstanding feature of the period was the fierceness of the controversy about exclusion, not only in Parliament, where such violence of language was used as to make all men feel that civil war was coming, but also at the repeated elections all over the country, and in the press. The Licensing Act^x had expired in 1679; Parliament did not renew it, and this rendered possible an extraordinary outburst of pamphleteering. Only one of the products of the period is still read and still worth reading : Dryden's great satire, *Absalom and Achitophel*, the most brilliant of all English satires, which scarified Shaftesbury and his colleagues with venomous point. It was very widely read, and helped greatly to forward the reaction. It came at the end of the struggle ; until then the most vigorous writing had been on the other side. In this feverish controversy the rival parties were sharply defined, and what is almost as important, they got names, labels that stuck. Fervid exclusionists tried to ruin their opponents by calling them Tories, after the Roman Catholic Irish outlaws and highway robbers. Royalists responded by nicknaming the exclusionists Whigs, after the bitter Covenanters of Scotland who were up in arms against all constituted authority in Church and State. These nicknames were to become names of pride. It is a queer thing that the names of the historic English political parties came respectively from Ireland and from Scotland.

But as soon as men began to recover from the wild fever of the Popish Plot, it was inevitable that their acrimonies should be sobered by the reflection that civil war was actually in sight. The last civil war was too recent and too well within men's memories for its lessons to be so soon forgotten ; and as this nightmare became more vivid, and obscured the other and less real nightmare of the Popish Plot, many men who had been carried off their feet began to reflect that the maintenance of peace and order was the first of all national needs, and that for this purpose a strong government was essential. Hence the reaction towards a royalist view was rapid. It was not, indeed, reflected in Parliament; mainly

¹ See above, Chap. i. p. 498.

because four-fifths of the members of the House of Commons were elected by the boroughs, where Puritan sentiment was strongest. But it was none the less real. It affected moderate minds like Halifax, who called himself a 'Trimmer' between the frenzies on either side, but who was ready to support the king now, as the only safeguard against civil war. And Charles, knowing by instinct how the current of opinion was going, seized his chance, dissolved the Parliament of 1681, and summoned no other during the four years which remained of his life and reign.

In doing this he was deliberately flouting the Triennial Act, which provided that Parliament should meet every three years at least. But it shows the danger of extreme violence that this aroused little resentment: Parliament was beginning to be regarded as a dangerous body. Nor did public opinion very strongly object when Charles went on to take vengeance against the Whig leaders. Most of the more prominent among them took flight to Holland, including Shaftesbury (who died there) and Monmouth. A knot of the more desperate actually formed a plot (the Ryehouse Plot) to seize the king and the Duke of York. The real leaders of the party had no knowledge of these desperate devices, though they had undoubtedly held meetings at which they had discussed the possibility of resistance. But the plot was used as an excuse for the trial of some of the best of them for high treason, and Lord Russell, a son of the Earl of Bedford and a very honest man, and Algernon Sidney, an old Republican of the Cromwellian time, were both executed. They came to be regarded as the stainless martyrs of Whiggism; and a cause that can count martyrs is thereby ennobled and strengthened.

§ 5. *Triumphant Reaction and the Disregard of Laws,* 1681-88.

In the last years of his life Charles was indeed—thanks to the extravagant violence of his opponents—very nearly an absolute monarch, though he still had to depend upon Louis xiv. for funds, and dared not raise taxes by unparliamentary means. He was strong enough to make preparations for summoning a new Parliament that would be more amenable, by calling in the charters of most of the boroughs, which had returned the bulk of his opponents, and revising them in such a way as to ensure that his own partisans would control their government and the election of their represen-

tatives. This was a very high-handed, but also a very effectual, mode of dealing with parliamentary opposition at the roots. It was not completed in time for Charles himself to meet a doctored Parliament, for he died in 1685, having triumphantly avoided the necessity of going on his travels again, and having even undone much of the progress which Parliament had made during his reign. His success was due quite as much to the partisan violence of his opponents as to his own patience, resourcefulness, and astuteness. It is impossible not to admire the rogne.

His successor, James II., whose chance of succeeding to the unimpaired authority of the Crown had seemed five years earlier to be exceedingly remote, actually began his reign with a more secure and unchallenged power than any sovereign since James I. Parliament, successfully doctored by the revision of the charters, and still under the influence of the lessons of 1680 and 1681, was called immediately after his accession. It voted him for life a revenue of unparalleled magnitude, and showed itself in almost all ways amenable ; yet even this Parliament refused to repeal the Test Act against Catholics when its Catholic sovereign asked it, and had to be dissolved after two sessions. Not only the general submissiveness of Parliament, but every other factor in the political situation seemed to be favourable to a restoration of royal absolutism. The Bishops and clergy of the Anglican Church had been more firmly convinced by the events of the last few years of the duty of Passive Obedience. They were preaching this doctrine to all their flocks ; no ruler could have desired a more powerful support for his authority. Yet even the highest of High Church clergy owed allegiance to their Church as well as to the Crown. Again, James had in England a substantial regular army of some 16,000 men which had been gradually built up by Charles II.—the oldest of the still existing regiments belong to this date ; and this force, a force such as none of his predecessors had ever possessed, ought to be able to overawe discontented subjects. Scotland was wholly cowed by long persecutions, and there was an army in Scotland too. Ireland might well be enthusiastic at the succession of a Roman Catholic sovereign, and Ireland also could supply an army. Moreover the most powerful monarch in the world, Louis XIV. of France, was the king's close ally, ready to support him in establishing his own power and in restoring Catholicism

How complete was James' apparent mastery of the country was shown by the pitiful failure of two risings which the Whig exiles in Holland tried to stir up at the opening of the reign : one led by the Earl of Argyll in Scotland, the other by James' nephew, the Duke of Monmouth, in England. Argyll's attempt was wholly futile, and he was captured and executed (1685). Monmouth drew to his standard a number of peasants and yeomen in the west country when he landed at Torbay (1685). But he had not from the first the faintest chance of success, and was easily crushed at Sedgemoor. He himself was executed; that was the fortune of war. His unhappy followers were harried with a ruthless brutality to which there is happily no parallel in the modern history of England. The Bloody Assizes in which Judge Jeffreys wreaked vengeance on the rebels have left their mark in tradition. Apart from the brutal slaughter which followed Sedgemoor, more than 300 were put to death, and more than 800 were sent as slaves to the West Indies. Terror was to prevent any future risings.

Yet within four years of his accession, the king whose power seemed so firmly established was an exile and a fugitive, and the foundations of autocracy which he and his brother had striven to lay were swept away for ever. The cause of this was simply that with incredible folly James deliberately broke the alliance with the English Church and the Tory party upon which his power rested ; convinced everybody beyond a shadow of doubt that both Protestantism and the political liberties of England were more gravely endangered than they had ever been since the Reformation ; and thus gave a chance to the Whigs to redeem the opportunity which their own violence had lost in 1681.

Though the High Commission Court had been formally abolished in 1641, and its abolition had been confirmed in 1661, James revived it as a means of getting personal control over the Church. He appointed Roman Catholic officers to the army, in defiance of the Test Act, claiming that he had the right to dispense with any law in any particular case. He appointed Roman Catholics to the Privy Council. He actually filled the Deanery of Christ Church, Oxford, with an avowed Roman Catholic (1686), and deprived the fellows of Magdalen of their right of electing their own head, in order to force a Roman Catholic upon them (1687). That Oxford, the centre of High Church loyalism and of the doctrine of Passive Obedience, should be thus treated was a more terrible challenge to that doctrine than almost any

other **that** could be imagined. It struck horror into every country parsonage in England.

James was deliberately cutting away the main pillar on which his throne rested. The most devoted and thorough-going royalists in England were Rochester and Clarendon, the two Hydes, sons of the old Earl of Clarendon, and the king's own brothers-in-law. Both were prepared to go far in the direction of absolutism. James dismissed them both, the one from the Treasurership and the other from the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, because they would not become Roman Catholics. To govern Ireland James sent a Roman Catholic, Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnel. The appointment of a Roman Catholic Lord-Lieutenant might in itself have been a good thing. But Tyrconnel, a reckless loose-liver, was sent for the purpose not of doing justice to Irish Catholics, but of destroying Protestantism. He deliberately weeded out Protestants from the Irish army ; he remodelled all the corporations of the Irish boroughs so that the power was wholly in Catholic hands. Irish Protestants looked forward with trembling to what was coming. Englishmen dreaded what use was to be made of the Irish army.

In Scotland, again, where the royal authority was now perhaps more complete than in any other part of the islands, James pursued a similar policy. Complete toleration was granted to Roman Catholics ; Presbyterians were allowed only the most modest concessions. The towns were simply ordered to accept royal nominees to their offices. The Privy Council was filled with Roman Catholics, who held nearly all the most important offices of State.

A few years of this, and from Scotland and Ireland James might be able to hope to crush any resistance that might arise in England. Meanwhile, since he had declared war against the English Church, he had to look for support in England from some other quarter. The only and obvious quarter was the Protestant Dissenters, to whom Charles had also appealed in 1672. In 1687, disregarding the declared illegality of the Declaration of 1672, James issued anew Declaration of Indulgence far more sweeping in its terms than that of 1672. It not only granted complete freedom of worship, it announced that no tests would be required for admission to any office. If the Dissenters could be bribed, this ought to bribe them. In the hope that it would do so, James began to fill town councils with Dissenting members, in preparation for a new Parliament which was to repeal all the penal Acts. But to

his chagrin he found that even the Dissenters (though they sent a few addresses of thanks) were not to be counted upon to vote for the candidates he desired. The freedom of the nation was more to them than their own ; their desire for toleration was discounted by their dread of Popery. The king professed toleration now. But was not his ally Louis xiv. dragooning all Protestants out of France ? The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) could not have come at a more inopportune time for James, for England was full of Huguenot exiles bemoaning the cruelty of a Catholic king.

Disappointed with the result of the first Declaration, James issued a second in 1688, and ordered that it should be read on two consecutive Sundays in every church in the kingdom. This was to make the clergy the means of their own destruction. The Archbishop of Canterbury and six of his colleagues presented a petition in which they begged the king to withdraw the obnoxious order. It contained a phrase questioning the king's power to dispense with laws. On that ground the bishops were charged with having uttered a seditious libel, and committed to the Tower. The bishops were tried. The jury gave a verdict of Not Guilty. And the crowds of London cheered as at the news of a great victory : the Dissenters joined in the jubilation : even the soldiers whom the king had encamped on Hounslow Heath cheered as loudly as any when they heard the news. That ought to have made the king realise what a storm was preparing. The Declaration of Indulgence had proved the steadfastness of the Dissenters to the cause of Law : it had finally overstrained the capacity for loyalty of the Anglican clergy ; ' it hath brought all Protestants together/ said Halifax, ' and bound them up into a knot that cannot easily be untied/

And while the trial of the seven bishops was proceeding, James was rejoicing because a son had at last been born to him. This meant that the nation might look forward to an indefinite continuance of the sort of policy James had pursued ; there was now no hope of relief by the succession of a Protestant sovereign. Men were so loth to believe the news that they invented the story that the infant was a changeling, brought into the queen's bed in a warming-pan. The birth of this ill-fated child made revolution inevitable.

On June 30th, the very day on which the crowds were celebrating the acquittal of the bishops, seven leading men met and signed a letter to William of Orange begging him

to come over with an adequate force to save the kingdom. Four of them were peers, among them Charles II.'s minister Danby ; one of them was the Bishop of London ; the other two were commoners of great Whig houses. The letter was taken by Admiral Herbert, disguised as a common sailor, and by him delivered to William in.

Violence had destroyed the formidable power whose establishment had been clue to a reaction against violence.

[The best modern summary of the period is Lodge's *History of England from the Restoration to the Death of William III.* ; see also Trevelyan's *England under the Stewarts* ; Macanlay's *History of England* covers the reign of James II. in detail, but gives only one chapter to a survey of the reign of Charles II. ; Hallam's *Constitutional History* ; both Macaulay and Hallam are unduly biased in favour of the Whigs ; Ranke's *History of England* gives a more detached view. See also Airy's *Restoration* (Epochs of Modern History) and his *Charles II.* ; Christie's *Life of Shaftesbury* ; Foxcroft's *Life of Halifax* ; Burnet's *History of His Own Times* ; Pepys' *Diary*. Lord Acton has a lecture on ' The Rise of the Whigs ' in his *Lectures on Modern History*.]

CHAPTER V

THE REVOLUTION

(A.D. 1688-1692)

§ 1. *The European Situation and the Downfall of James II.*

THE Revolution of 1688, which was begun by the invitation despatched to William of Orange, took place in England so quietly, and led to such important constitutional changes, that it is usual to concentrate attention upon these aspects of the great event. In reality the struggle for the establishment of the new regime lasted for four years, and the Revolution was always in danger during that period. The absence of fighting in England was largely a matter of luck. There was fighting in Scotland, and still more serious fighting in Ireland. There was naval fighting in the Narrow Seas, upon which the issue of the Revolution largely depended. And there was fighting on a vast scale upon the continent of Europe, the consequence of which was of the most vital importance for the islands ; for if the course of events on the Continent had gone a little differently, the whole future of the islands and of the Commonwealth would have been altered. To get a sound view of the Revolution it is necessary to remember that it was a turning-point in European as well as in British history, and for that reason the events that led to its success must be regarded in the light of contemporary European history. William of Orange did not come to England merely in order to stop the unconstitutional actions of James II. He did not come even to win a crown for himself. He came because the fate of Europe depended upon how, and by whom, the fortunes of the islands were directed during these years; and by him the whole struggle of these four years was regarded mainly in the light of the European situation.

We must try to see it in that light too, and realise how intimately the fate of the islands was linked with that of Europe. For that reason we shall do well to survey the four years' struggle first, before we deal with the constitutional adjustments which were going on while it took place,

but which would have had no permanence had its result been different.

We have seen (Chapter in.) how dominant was the position of Louis xiv. in Europe during the years 1678-1688, and how insolently he had used his power. His aims were vaulting. He hoped to secure control over the whole or the greater part of the vast Spanish Empire, to which he had a claim by inheritance; the Spanish king was a fragile invalid, not expected to live long. Louis seems also to have hoped to secure for himself or his son the title of Emperor, which his strength would enable him to turn into a reality : armed with the imperial claims, he might have made himself master of divided Germany. Had these dreams been realised, he would have been master also of the world, more fully than ever Napoleon was. So menacing was his power, and so domineering and unscrupulous had he shown himself in action, that in 1686 the threatened States had formed a secret league, known as the League of Augsburg : it included the Emperor, Spain, the Dutch, Sweden, and the chief North German States, and in the next year it was joined by Bavaria, the princes of Italy and the Pope.

Formidable as this combination was on paper, it could have offered little resistance if Louis (who knew of its existence) had struck immediately, while the Emperor was in the throes of his struggle with the Turks, and James n. was securely seated on the British throne. But he delayed for two years, and in the meanwhile the Turkish power was broken, and the Emperor was relatively free ; Belgrad was captured in June 1688. June 1688, the moment at which the invitation from England was sent to William of Orange, was indeed the critical moment in the European situation. The Prince-Bishop of Cologne, whose lands controlled the lower Rhine and threatened the Dutch, and who had been a close ally of Louis, died in that month; and in order to maintain his mastery on the lower Rhine Louis resolved to install by force his own candidate for the archbishopric against the nominee of the Emperor and the Pope. This was really the beginning of a great war, which lasted for ten years. In September of the same year, before William of Orange had set sail for England, Louis invaded Germany and captured the fortress of Philippsburg on the upper Rhine : it fell on October 29th—just before William set sail.

This was the situation which William of Orange had to

consider when the English invitation reached him. **The** opening moves had already taken place in a vast struggle for the mastery of Europe by Louis, or for its freedom. The Dutch provinces themselves were threatened by the French forces in Cologne. Was it safe for William, and would his Dutch subjects allow him, to choose this moment for embarking upon a very risky adventure, which might involve the use of the Dutch fleet and of a part of the Dutch army? William and the Dutch felt that the risk, great as it was, was worth taking for the purpose of detaching the British lands from the French alliance and transferring them to the other side. The decision turned out to be the right one. It altered the whole complexion of the war. But if the enterprise had not been attended by the most amazing good luck, it might have been an unqualified disaster for the European allies. That is what Louis xiv. hoped it would be.

When we reflect upon the supreme importance to Louis of being able to count upon the neutrality, if not the active help, of England and her fleet, it seems incredible that he should have allowed the invasion to take place without interference. Why was not Holland attacked? If it had been, William dared not have moved. Why did not the French fleet come out to resist the sailing of the expedition? Why were not French troops sent to help James? The main reason was that James had been showing a certain restiveness under Louis' yoke. In September, before starting his German campaign, Louis had warned the Dutch not to attack James n.; for William's preparations for an over-sea expedition were notorious, and indeed could not be concealed. James had resented this, as a suggestion that he was not capable of defending himself; whereupon Louis had left him to his own resources. Louis calculated, indeed, that James would be quite strong enough, if not to defeat William at once, at any rate to tie him up in England, and to drain away troops from Holland; and as he felt that he could not fully trust James, who had actually talked of allying himself with Spain, the Dutch expedition seemed an admirable way of keeping him busy and at the same time getting William of Orange out of the way. In effect, Louis deliberately allowed the expedition to sail.

But if Louis did not stop the enterprise, why did not James, who was perfectly aware that it was being prepared? The English navy, in which James had always taken a keen interest, was stationed off the mouth of the Thames. It was not sent to watch the Dutch coast; though **for** an

anxious month a westerly wind—'a Papist wind/ William's friends called it—kept the ships of the expedition penned into Dutch harbours, and might have carried the English fleet across to the Dutch coast. When at last a 'Protestant wind' sprang up on November 1st, William was allowed to sail out undisturbed and to traverse the whole length of the English Channel unimpeded, till he reached his landing-place at Tor bay in Devon.

Meanwhile James had been organising his forces for resistance. He had about 20,000 regular troops in England. He brought more than as many more from the armies of Scotland and Ireland, which had been built up in preparation for just such an event. His forces were far superior to the invaders, and they were posted to defend the approach to London. When William found, during the fortnight after his landing, that there was no such national uprising in his favour as he had been led to expect, the situation looked black indeed for him. Yet within a few weeks, without any fighting, William had occupied London and James was a fugitive and an exile. Resistance had simply collapsed. James' chief supporters deserted him, at first by ones and twos, later in droves—his own daughter Anne among them. Finally James himself lost his nerve and ran away. To the acute annoyance of William his flight was intercepted by some fishermen, and he had to return to London. But he obligingly ran away a second time, and thus solved every difficulty.

No such safe journey and no such easy victory could reasonably have been anticipated by William and his supporters when the expedition set sail. For the bloodlessness of the Revolution in England the chief credit belongs to the cowardice of James, and his sudden loss of nerve. He could certainly have made a stand if he had chosen. Or, if he had been willing to make concessions and to put himself in the hands of the High Tories, who were eager for compromise, he could have robbed William of the spoils of victory, or at least have made the invader's position intolerably difficult—especially as, in view of the European situation, William could not afford long delays. James' flight saved the situation, and played into William's hands. It is the greatest tribute to the magnanimity of Louis xiv. that he welcomed the ignominious fugitive without reproaches, and treated him and his son for long years as honoured guests.

The control of the new government over England was

absolutely unchallenged by any resistance from the moment of the king's flight. It found no difficulty in carrying out the elections of a new Parliament—called the 'Convention,' because it could not be summoned by royal writs in the regular way ; and this Convention, which contained a Whig majority, was able to set about the discussion of vexed constitutional problems without disturbance. Yet the position was by no means secure. Even in England the number of devoted royalists was very large, and at almost any time during the next few years James could have regained the crown almost as easily as William had won it, if he would have consented to promise security for the English Church. From the first William was never popular, and had to go very warily : Englishmen did not like foreign rulers, and the Dutch had been enemies in three recent wars. So uncertain was the position felt to be that many of the leading English politicians, Whigs as well as Tories, including some of those upon whom William chiefly relied, were at pains to safeguard themselves by keeping in relations with the exiled king. If anything had gone seriously wrong with the war in Scotland and Ireland or on the Continent, or if Louis had been free and willing to throw his strength into the regaining of England, the Revolution might easily have been overthrown. Its fortunes depended upon how the struggle went elsewhere.

§ 2. *The War of the Revolution, in Scotland, in Ireland and on the Seas.*

William realised that the success of the Revolution depended upon the course of the war far more clearly than his English advisers, none of whom he fully trusted ; and one of his first acts was to expel the French Ambassador and to commit England to the continental war. In May 1689 England became a member of the Grand Alliance. British troops and the English navy were engaged in the vast struggle, which was now a struggle for the security of the Revolution settlement as well as for the defeat of Louis xiv.'s aggressive aims.

During 1689, however, the main interest, for the islanders, lay not on the Continent but in Scotland and Ireland, where the supporters of the fallen king endeavoured to make head by force of arms. In Scotland the news of James' flight brought about a sudden and complete collapse of the whole structure of despotism which had been raised since 1660.

The Roman Catholic ministers fled. Everywhere the Presbyterians began to take the upper hand, and in the south-west, where the persecution had been bitterest, the unpopular clergy were 'rabbled' and driven from church, manse and glebe. In March 1689 a Scottish Convention met. It might have been tempted to repudiate the connexion with England, which had certainly brought few benefits hitherto; but it offered the crown to William and Mary, whose authority was fully accepted throughout the Lowlands. Only in the wild Highlands was there resistance to the new regime. There Graham of Claverhouse,¹ now Viscount Dundee, who had been famous as the hammer of the Covenanters, raised a Highland host to fight for the exiled king. He won a brilliant victory at Killiecrankie (July 1689) over a small force of Scottish regulars under General Mackay; but Dundee himself was killed—by a silver bullet, men said, since the Evil One protected him against lead—and when its leader was gone the host melted away.

It took two years more to pacify the Highlands. In 1691 an indemnity was offered to all who would take the oath before the end of the year, and every chief save one did so. The one was the hapless Macdonald of Glencoe, who had put off submission till the last moment from motives of pride, but actually took the oath on January 7th. On the advice of the ablest of his Scottish ministers, the Master of Stair, William in. decided to make an example of the delinquent, as a lesson to the Highlands for the future. The hideous and cold-blooded massacre of Glencoe (February 1, 1692) was the result. Though it seems clear that he did not know Macdonald had actually taken the oath, William in. cannot be exonerated from the guilt of this ugly crime. Terrorism always brings its own punishment in the long run; and the long-lasting opposition of the Highlands to the new regime, which caused so much trouble during the eighteenth century, was certainly stimulated by the Massacre of Glencoe. Nevertheless Scotland was quiet; the Lowlands were actively loyal, the Highlands at any rate submissive, and no further danger was to be feared from this quarter.

Far more serious was the trouble in Ireland, where fierce fighting went on for three years. In Ireland the whole organisation of government, under the Lord-Lieutenant Tyrconnel, was arrayed on James' side, and the preparations which had been made in the steady Romanising of the army and the administration had their effects. Tyrconnel's army

* There is a life of Graham of Claverhouse, by C. S. Terry.

had, however, been weakened by the forces sent across to England to resist William ; and the consequence was that the Protestants of the north were able to organise themselves, especially in Londonderry and Enniskillen, during the autumn of 1688. Everywhere else in Ireland the cause of James was triumphant; and when, two months after his arrival in France, he crossed over to Ireland (March 1689), bringing with him some 1200 troops, he found an almost united nation ready to greet him, and a Parliament, almost wholly composed of Catholics, ready to carry out a revolution. James regarded Ireland merely as a stepping-stone to England. Tyrconnel and many of his followers cared primarily for establishing Irish independence, and this introduced difficulties from the first.

But on the necessity of reducing the resistance of the Protestants in the north all were agreed, and during the spring of 1689 Londonderry was strictly besieged. If, it fell, Enniskillen must also fall. It was so ill provided that its governor, Lundy, was for surrendering. But the inhabitants insisted upon resisting, and did so with the utmost gallantry for fifteen weeks. They were all but exhausted when a relieving force from England arrived at the end of July and forced the Catholics to raise the siege. Three days later the garrison of Enniskillen won a brilliant victory at Newtown Butler, which secured the Protestant control of Ulster. A little later an army under William of Orange's friend, the French Huguenot Schomberg, landed at Belfast to undertake the reconquest of Ireland, but was able to do little in face of James' superior forces, except to establish a hold over Ulster. Yet the recovery of Ireland was indispensable for the safety of the Revolution in England and Scotland : indispensable also, therefore, for success in the continental war against Louis. For that reason William of Orange, eager as he was to take part in the continental war, determined himself to lead the main army in the next year. Had Louis realised as clearly as William the importance of the Irish campaign, he would have sent across large forces, and the issue of the war might have been different.

Louis might have sent what forces he liked in this year ; for at this critical moment the English navy failed in its duty. It had been strangely idle, and had fallen into bad organisation and indiscipline. On the other hand, the French fleet, to whose creation Colbert had devoted so much pains, was at its strongest. In July 1690 it sallied

forth under the command of Admiral Tourville, found the combined English and Dutch fleets off Beachy Head, and inflicted upon them the most complete defeat yet recorded in British naval annals; only the stubborn valour of the Dutch saved the allies from an irremediable disaster. The victory gave to the French command of the English Channel. In England there was panic at the thought that a French invasion by an army which lay ready at Dunkirk might be effected while the king and the best available troops were in Ireland—a panic all the greater because the allies had just suffered a severe defeat at Fleurus in Flanders. The summer of 1690 was an anxious moment for the friends of the Revolution. But the French made no use of their naval success. It was in any case too late to stop William's expedition to Ireland, which had landed safely in June; but the French fleet did not even attempt to cut his communications.

To the Irish Protestants, who had been living in dread of they knew not what, and in the certainty of a confiscation of all their property if James were victorious, William of Orange came as a deliverer; and the battle of the Boyne, in which on July 1st, 1690, he broke the Irish army, was henceforth, for them, the greatest of events, to be annually commemorated by those who took pride to call themselves Orangemen. Yet it was by no means a decisive victory: in effect it gave to William only Dublin and the province of Leinster. An able leader on the Irish side could still have restored the position, especially as all the ports of the south and west were open for French reinforcements. James gave it up for lost, and ran away, back to France, in the moment of crisis, as he had run away from England.

But though they were deserted by their king and soon afterwards by the French troops, the Irish still put up a good fight in Munster and Connaught, a better fight now than in the time of their success. Their chief centre of resistance was Limerick, where the gallant Patrick Sarsfield held out with admirable courage, even capturing William's siege guns when he advanced to besiege the city; and the siege had to be raised. When the campaign of 1690 ended, the west, with Limerick and Galway, had still to be conquered.

Louis now recognised the great importance, for his own purposes, of keeping the struggle alive in Ireland; and having still command of the sea, in 1691 he sent across a new French **army under** experienced generals to defend the west. Against

them William despatched a well-equipped force under the Dutch general Ginkel, who captured Athlone (the key to Connaught), and in the hard-fought battle of Aghrim broke the Franco-Irish force. Galway and Connaught fell into his hands as a result of this victory, and only Limerick remained. As successful resistance was held to be impossible, Sarsfield surrendered on very favourable terms, just a fortnight before the arrival of French reinforcements. He and many of his followers were left free to go abroad and serve against England in the Continental wars. But he had (as he supposed) secured by the terms of his surrender that Irish Catholics should at least be allowed the same freedom of worship which they had enjoyed under Charles II. The shameful breach of this formal agreement will have to be recorded in another place, when we examine the Revolution settlement in Ireland.

By the end of 1691 all the islands had thus been brought into obedience, and no supporters of James remained in arms. But so long as the seas were commanded by the French, new disturbances in Ireland or the Highlands of Scotland were always to be feared; nor could the islands freely play their part in the great continental struggle. To win this final assurance for the Revolution, and to give a death-blow to James' hopes, was the task of the navy, which had now been strengthened and reorganised and was under the command of Edward Russell, of the great Whig house of Bedford.

Whig as he was—he had actually been one of the signatories to the invitation to William—Russell was secretly intriguing with the exiled court at St. Germain. For 1692 James had planned an invasion of England, and Louis had promised that the French fleet should clear the Channel and transport a French army, with the exiled king, to form a nucleus for an English revolt. An elaborate manifesto was drafted, and James went down to the coast of Normandy to be ready for embarkation. Russell had under his command a combined English and Dutch fleet watching for the French to sail. Had he played the traitor, as at one time he seems to have meant to do, the worst might have happened. But when the French fleet came out, the pride of the navy got the upper hand with him. He fought like a Trojan, and in the great battle of La Hogue the proud French fleet which had for a time controlled the seas was shattered in a hard fight and had to flee. Twelve of its best ships were burnt by Sir George Rooke in the very harbour of La

Hogue and under the very eyes of the unhappy James, whose hopes vanished in the smoke of the burning.

The battle of La Hogue finally ensured the triumph of the Revolution. More than that, it gave to the English and their Dutch allies complete command of the seas in the long wars that were to follow, and enabled them to do infinite damage to French foreign trade, and to transport British troops in safety to the continental fields of fighting. Once more, the navy had determined the issue.

[General works on the Revolution period will be noted at the end of the next chapter. Mahan's *Influence of Sea-power on History* is important for the naval struggle; for military events, Fortescue's *History of the British Army*.]

CHAPTER VI

THE REVOLUTION SETTLEMENT

(A.D. 1689-1707)

§ 1. *The General Character of the Settlement.*

LIKE the settlement at the Restoration, the settlement which followed the Revolution was separately dealt with in England and Wales, in Scotland, in Ireland, and in the colonies, and there was no attempt to work out a coherent plan for the relations of the Commonwealth as a whole. But England was very clearly the predominant partner in the loose confederacy of States, and in various ways her decisions affected all the rest, partly by imitation, and partly because (at all events in the cases of Ireland and the colonies) the English Parliament did not hesitate to legislate for what it regarded as dependent States. It was, in fact, the form which the settlement took in England which mainly determined the character of the political development of the whole Commonwealth for a very long time to come. For the Revolution in England established a constitutional system which became the model not only for the rest of the Commonwealth but for a great part of the world.

This new system was not due to the wisdom of any single man ; and it would be the greatest of blunders to attribute it to William ill.¹ The personal character and ideas of the king counted for very little in the settlement in any of the British realms. Great man as he was, his chief interest was in the struggle against Louis xiv. ; so long as the islands were brought on to the right side in that struggle, and so long as he was given the power to direct their foreign policy and to use their military resources, he was content that the problems of government should be settled as the nations themselves desired. He was a reticent and self-centred man. He never understood his British subjects, or cared very much about the questions in which they were chiefly interested. He never fully trusted any of the leading Englishmen with

¹ There is a short life of William in. by H. D. Traill in the Twelve English Statesmen Series,

whom he **had** to work, or any Scotsman, except William Carstairs, who was his confidential adviser on Scottish affairs ; his only real confidants were Dutch nobles whom he brought over with him, especially Bentinck, who became Earl of Portland, and Keppel, whom he made Earl of Albemarle ; and the favour shown to these foreigners was deeply resented. His queen, as an Englishwoman, was more popular ; all William's worst troubles came after her death in 1694. But his most important contribution to the settlement was that by refusing to take the position of being merely the queen's husband, and stating that if he were not offered the crown he would return to Holland, he put a stop to arguments about the hereditary succession, and made it inevitable that Parliament should simply assume the power of disposing of the crown. Apart from this, he made no personal contribution to the settlement. He merely accepted it.

§ 2. *Tories and Whigs : rival Conceptions of Government.*

The outstanding feature of the situation in England was that as the Revolution was not the result of war, but had in fact been shared in by Whigs and Tories, Anglicans and Dissenters, the settlement was not imposed by force in accordance with the views of any one party, but was the result of discussion and compromise. And this was what made its results so lasting, in spite of their manifest imperfection : it was founded upon 'consent.' A system of government arrived at by peaceful agreement after discussion was a new thing in the history of the world, and the agreement was all the more remarkable because it was made between men who had sharply conflicting theories about government.

The Tories still clung to the idea that monarchy was of divine ordinance, and that the strength of the State must depend upon the existence of a strong sovereign power, supported by the belief and the habitual obedience of the people. They still clung, also, to the idea that uniformity in religion was essential to the health of the State. They could not bring themselves to accept any settlement which would weaken the idea of hereditary succession, or do anything to encourage the notion that violent resistance to authority was not one of the greatest of crimes. Their views were almost certainly the views of the great mass of Englishmen at that date ; for the dread of the evils that might follow from

any light-hearted repudiation of established authority had been driven into men's minds not only by the civil wars through which their fathers had lived, but by corresponding troubles in other countries. The Tories were right in the stress which they laid upon the value of the sentiment of loyalty and the habit of obedience in holding the State together; they were right in feeling that the dislocation of all order which is apt to result from any loosening of the foundations of confidence in the power that holds the State together may bring the most appalling evils in its train.

The most cogent exposition of the Tory view that a very strong central power is necessary for the well-being of the State is to be found in *Leviathan*, by Thomas Hobbes, which was published in 1651, when the civil wars had shown how easily a settled order might lapse into anarchy. Hobbes argued that if society is to be held together, there must be in it a central power with unlimited authority. Civilisation, he believed, depended upon the existence of such a power. In his view, when men became members of an organised society or State, they must be regarded as having made a contract with one another to set up a government over them as a means of escaping from the state of nature, in which every man was free to knock his neighbour on the head, and human life was 'nasty, brutish and short'; once men began to revolt against the authority they had set up, they broke their contract with one another, and anarchy followed. Hobbes* argument, as he recognised, did not exclude the possibility of this absolute sovereign power being wielded by a Parliament; but he doubted whether it could be effectively exercised by a wrangling and divided body. But Hobbes was distrusted by most Tories as a free thinker; he made very little of the mystical and religious side of monarchy. The ordinary Tory view was better expressed in Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, in which he tried to prove that hereditary monarchy was God's chosen device for the government of the world, and endeavoured to establish his case by a multitude of scriptural examples.

The Whigs, on the other hand, had no exaggerated respect for monarchy as such. Many of them were republicans in theory; and though they admitted that the traditional veneration for kings made it desirable to retain monarchy as an institution, they thought of a king only as the first official of the nation, liable to be replaced if he was false to his duties. They believed that the ultimate deciding voice ought to lie with the nation as a whole, or with the politically

active part of the nation, speaking through its representatives in Parliament. They believed quite genuinely in liberty, by which they meant the right of every man to order his life as he thought best, so long as he did not hurt his neighbours. And they believed that the supreme guarantee of liberty was to be found in a fixed system of Law, not capable of being disregarded or altered by any arbitrary decision of any power whatsoever, save only the nation speaking through its representatives in Parliament. Liberty resting on and protected by Law : that is the heart of the Whig doctrine, and the best part of it. And because they held that the laws ought to be generally understood and universally accepted, the Whigs did not believe in frequent or detailed alteration of the laws ; they would make only the minimum changes necessary.

But perhaps the most distinctive part of the Whigs' creed was the strength of their belief in Property as an institution; which went so far that the defence of property seemed to them to be the main purpose of law. The acquisition of property was in their view one of the main distinctions between man and the beasts ; they held that civilisation had mainly arisen out of the endeavours of men to acquire property, and that therefore the best state is that in which property is best protected. And because taxation is essentially a seizing of part of every man's property by the State, they held that all taxation must be approved by Parliament, because no man's property ought to be taken from him without the consent of his representatives. Thus the essentially Whig doctrine of 'no taxation without representation' was a sort of corollary from the doctrine of the sanctity of property. In religious matters the Whigs strongly believed in freedom of belief and of worship. Many of them were, in fact, free-thinkers, or (in the language of the day) Latitudinarians. But they believed in the necessity of a national Church, to which they were ready to allow large privileges ; they held, however, that because of its influence over men's thought and actions it must be closely controlled by the State—by Parliament, not by the Crown.

The Whigs were right in the value they attached to the will of the nation as a whole, and to the importance of giving it a mode of expression and the deciding voice in all great matters of public policy. They were right in the stress they laid upon 'civil and religious liberty,' and in their view that liberty is essentially dependent upon law. They were right

in seeing the vital importance of an effective public control over taxation, though the grounds upon which they based the principle were questionable. It is easy to see the limitations of their political theory ; but it was on the whole the sanest and the most enlightened that had yet been adopted by a large and powerful body of men in any State, and it made for progress and the increase of human liberty.

The most effective exposition of the Whig creed is to be found in the *Essay on Government* by John Locke, which was published in 1689, and became almost the Bible of Whiggism. Like Hobbes, Locke assumed that the people in a State must be regarded as bound together by an implicit 'contract/ But he argued that besides the contract whereby the people agree to organise a State and set up a government, a second contract must be assumed to have been made between the people and their government; and this contract might be broken by misconduct on the part of the government, and justify the setting up of a new form of government. All this talk about 'social contracts ' has a certain unreality for us, because we know that historically no such agreements ever took place, and that the State has in fact grown, not been formally manufactured. But the various arguments based upon the idea of a contract had such profound influence upon men's minds, both at the time of the British Revolution and for more than a century afterwards, that we should be disregarding a vitally important element in the building up of political liberty if we did not keep it in mind.

Between men holding such different views, compromise was not easy. Even on the question of the offer of the crown to William and Mary there were long and difficult discussions. The Tories did not want to suggest that Parliament or the people had the power to depose a king, or to admit that the line of succession had been deliberately broken. The Whigs would have liked formally to declare that James had been deposed for breaking the laws. That was, in fact, what had happened ; and the unhappy Tories could not get over it—they had helped to bring it about. But a verbal compromise partly saved the situation: it was voted that James had abdicated the throne by his flight, and that it was therefore vacant; and William and Mary were invited to occupy it. In actual fact, though it was wrapped up in careful words, a king had been dethroned and a new king had been elected. That is the bottom fact of the Revolution, and there was no getting away from it.

§ 3. *The Constitutional Settlement in England.*

The new settlement of the system of government was carried out in a series of Acts, the most important of which was the Bill of Rights (1689), based upon an earlier Declaration of Rights, the drafting of which had been one of the first tasks of the Convention. But even this great document did not lay down any general principles, or try to define a new system of government. It was content to set forth the abuses of which James II. had been guilty, and to declare them illegal. The most important of these clauses were those which declared illegal the power of suspending laws (as by the Declaration of Indulgence), the maintenance of a standing army within the kingdom without the consent of Parliament, and all interference with the free election of members of Parliament, or with freedom of speech and debate in Parliament.

But a general declaration of the illegality of various kinds of action is of little avail unless the means of preventing them in future are effective. Parliament found the means not only of preventing future illegalities, but of establishing its own supremacy, in its control over finance. It voted a fixed grant to the Crown for the ' Civil List/ that is, for the ordinary expenses of civil government. But this money was only to be spent for the purposes for which it was allotted, and by assigning particular taxes to particular purposes Parliament ensured that this was done. The Crown had henceforth no large general revenue of which it could dispose as it thought fit. And this applied especially to the money for the upkeep of armies, over which Parliament kept a very jealous watch, voting it only from year to year. As the military needs of the State under William II. were very great, this meant that Parliament had to be summoned every year, and that no policy could be pursued of which it disapproved. A further device for the same end was found in the enactment of a Mutiny Act for the period of only one year. If the discipline of the army was to be maintained, Parliament must be asked to renew this Act every year. These measures (which seem so modest in themselves) were so effective that from 1689 to this day the government of England has always been dependent upon the will of Parliament.

The changes thought necessary in the political system were subsequently completed by the enactment of a Triennial Act (1694). This did not replace the Triennial Act of 1664,

which had provided that Parliament should meet at least once in three years, but had placed no limitation upon the time for which a given Parliament should sit. Financial needs and the Mutiny Act ensured that henceforth Parliament must meet not merely once in three years, but every year. The purpose of the new Triennial Act was to ensure that there should be no more long parliaments, but that a general election should take place every three years, so as to ensure that Parliament kept in touch with the constituencies.

What must strike the student about these provisions is their extraordinary modesty. There was no elaborate drawing up of a brand new constitution, with sweeping assertions of political principles. The minimum changes were made, and in form they were very slight. But they were sufficient for their purpose: they established the supremacy of Parliament.

In religious matters the changes were equally slight. There was some talk (as there had been at the Restoration) of a measure of comprehension to bring back the Dissenters into the national Church. But the gulf was now too wide; and the High Churchmen, whom it was important to reconcile, would have made great difficulties. As it was, a considerable number of them, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the saintly Bishop Ken, and some hundreds of parish clergy, could not reconcile it with their consciences to take the oath of allegiance to the new sovereigns, and left their livings. They were known as the Non-jurors. Very many even of those who took the oath were determinedly hostile to the new regime; and, lest these men should be driven into open enmity, little was done for the Dissenters. A Toleration Act was passed (1689), which allowed freedom of worship to all persons who accepted the doctrine of the Trinity, provided they took, if required by a magistrate, an oath of allegiance to the king and queen and denied that any 'foreign prince or prelate' had jurisdiction within the realm. This in theory excluded the Roman Catholics, but in practice they were not interfered with: if they behaved themselves, the oaths were not tendered to them. But neither the Corporation Act nor the Test Act was repealed, and these in theory excluded Dissenters, as well as Roman Catholics, from all civil and military offices, since they required office-holders to take the Anglican sacrament. In practice, however, these prohibitions were largely disregarded. Many Dissenters took

the sacrament merely to qualify for office; and from 1727 onwards an Act of Indemnity was annually passed for those who had failed to observe the provisions of these Acts. It was but a lame and halting toleration that was thus granted, much less than James II. had offered in his Declaration of Indulgence. But it was effective, and it rested on 'consent'. Even the High Churchmen accepted toleration, though they did not like it. They liked still less the habitual evasion of the Test Act, as they showed when, getting the upper hand during Queen Anne's reign, they repeatedly proposed, and eventually passed, an act to prevent occasional conformity.

Yet another change, if possible even more momentous, was carried out not by enactment but simply by the omission to enact. The Licensing Act* was not renewed, even in a modified form; and the result was that the censorship of the press disappeared altogether. There is nothing more essential to political liberty than a free press, and nothing more certain to create in a nation an active interest in political problems. The Revolution saw a revival of that eager and unflagging discussion of public questions in pamphlets and newspapers which had existed for a time under the Puritan republic, and for another interval during the heated discussions on the Exclusion Bill. It was never to die down again. Henceforward political action was to be influenced, and the mind of the nation was to be formed, almost as much by writers outside of Parliament as by speeches within its walls. And in this regard England and the other members of the British Commonwealth were a century and more ahead of nearly all the great States of Europe.

The constitutional changes which were carried out in 1689 and the following years received a tardy extension in the Act of Settlement (1701), which was passed primarily to determine the order of succession after Queen Anne and to fix it upon the Hanoverian line, the descendants of James I.'s daughter Elizabeth; but the occasion was also used to establish certain other principles which form a sort of appendix to the main Revolution settlement. It is worth noting that the Act of Settlement was passed by a Tory Parliament which was strongly opposed to William II. Many of its provisions were scarcely veiled attacks upon the king, such as the clause which provided that future kings should not leave the country without the permission of Par-

¹ See above, Chap. i. p. 498.

liament. But it was a new thing to find the Tories striving to limit royal power.

Two clauses of the Act of Settlement especially deserve to be noted. One provided that henceforth the judges should hold their positions for life, unless removed after an address by both Houses of Parliament. This secured the independence of the judicial bench, and prohibited the practice of dismissing judges who gave decisions distasteful to the Crown, which had been common under the Stewarts. It was a reform of vital importance. The other clause was aimed at preventing the extension of royal influence over the House of Commons by the appointment of members of Parliament to profitable offices. It simply provided that after the death of Queen Anne holders of offices under the Crown should be incompetent to sit in Parliament. If this clause had become effective, it would have prevented the presence of ministers in Parliament and would in the long run have greatly reduced the power of Parliament. But it was repealed in 1707, before the Act of Settlement came into effect; and the Place Act of 1707 has been of very great importance in the development of the British system of government. It provided that all persons appointed to offices should vacate their seats.¹ But holders of offices created before 1705 were permitted to be re-elected without giving up their offices; holders of offices created after 1705 were not to be members of Parliament at all. Thus a rough distinction was drawn between the offices which might and those which might not be held by members of Parliament. And this was the first step towards our modern practice, under which the heads of the great departments of State are always members of Parliament and subject to its criticism, while minor officials are excluded from Parliament.

§ 4. *The Relations between Government and Parliament.*

The clause against placemen in the Act of Settlement shows that the legislators of the Revolution had not conceived anything like the modern system of cabinet government, the essence of which is that the chief ministers are members of Parliament and responsible to it. That system

¹ Incidentally this Act for the first time made it possible for a member of Parliament to resign his seat! This had earlier been illegal. Now a member could apply for an office of profit under the Crown, and so vacate his seat. That is why members who wish to resign have to apply for the office of Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds (or a similar post), which, of course, they give up as soon as it has served its purpose.

was made possible by the Act of 1707. But it grew up slowly and by custom ; it was never created by law. It is characteristic of British institutions that they grow and change by the half-unconscious operation of custom ; and the unwritten part of the system is far more important than the written part. What has already been said about the Revolution settlement illustrates this : the legal changes which it made were very slight in form ; but the real changes were of immense importance. They amounted to no less than the establishment of the sovereignty of Parliament, though not a word to this effect appears in any of the Acts.

One great change was already gradually coming about in William m.'s reign. Because it was essential that the government should be on good terms with Parliament, and because Parliament was now divided into clearly marked parties, the king—though nominally free to choose any ministers he liked—was in practice being compelled by force of circumstances to choose his ministers from the party that commanded a majority in the House of Commons. William 111. started, quite naturally, by trying to bring the best men of both parties into his government. But he found that this did not work well, because it meant that his ministers could not co-operate easily. As his first two Parliaments had a Whig majority, he found it necessary to replace his Tory ministers by Whigs ; and by 1696 the chief ministers were so exclusively Whig that they were known as ' the Whig junto/ But when the Tories got a majority, as they did in 1698 and the following years, and when therefore Parliament began to spend its time in vicious attacks upon the Whig ministers, William found it necessary to replace Whigs by Tories. More and more, governments were inevitably coming to reflect the character and opinions of the House of Commons for the time being ; a faint anticipation of the future party-cabinet system was beginning to emerge, though it was yet far from complete.

This jioes not mean that the group of ministers formed a responsible government, always acting together, like those to which we are accustomed, though the tendency was in that direction. Nor does it mean that the king had ceased to be the deciding factor. The case was very much the reverse under William in. In the sphere of foreign policy especially he acted quite independently, and commonly did not even consult his ministers, not to speak of Parliament. A striking demonstration of this was afforded when, after

negotiating with France the First Partition Treaty for the division of the Spanish dominions, he simply informed his ministers in outline of what he had done, and required them to send a blank commission duly sealed with the Great Seal authorising unknown persons to sign an unknown treaty. For agreeing to this Somers, the greatest of the Whig leaders, and two of his colleagues, were impeached by the Tory Parliament in 1701. Over foreign policy, at any rate, Parliament had not yet obtained any effective control, except through its power of refusing funds for a policy of which it disapproved ; and this was not enough, since the honour of the country might easily be committed by a treaty which would never have been signed had its terms been discussed beforehand.

The powers of the Crown under the Revolution settlement were thus still very great. And William in., though he accepted loyally enough the formal limitations imposed upon him, chafed sorely under the restrictions upon his authority. More than once, especially when the Tories viciously attacked his Dutch friends in 1698 and 1699, he threatened to leave the country and go back to Holland. And he would have done so if he had not been able to play a free hand in foreign affairs, of which he had a thorough knowledge, and of which practically none of the English politicians, whether Whigs or Tories, had any real grasp. He was a lonely soul, never popular in England, especially after the death of his wife ; he was distrusted as a Dutchman and a foreigner, and half the provisions of the Act of Settlement were covert sneers at him and his policy. He was never fully happy except in Holland ; he never gave his full confidence to any Englishman ; and, great man as he was, perhaps this lack of sympathy with his new subjects was among his chief contributions to English liberty, since it kept Tories even more than Whigs perpetually watchful to resent and prevent any enlargement of the royal power.

§ 5. *The Revolution Settlement in Scotland and its Effects upon Anglo-Scottish Relations.*

In the struggle against Charles 1. Scotland had played at first the most active part ; and it is possible that but for her action the system of Charles and Strafford might have triumphed. In the struggle against James II. Scotland took no direct part, because she was cowed by the despotic system established since 1660, and by the fierce persecution which

it carried out. But the moment the news of James' flight arrived, the whole system collapsed; and while the Edinburgh mob sacked the chapel at Holyrood, and the peasants of the south-west 'rabbed' the Episcopal clergy, an assembly of nobles and gentry invited William to assume the government, and a 'Convention' was summoned, which met in March 1689.

This Convention has been described as the most important legislative assembly in Scottish history. Its 'Jacobite' members soon found themselves helpless, and many of them went home. Then a 'Claim of Right' was drawn up, corresponding to the English Declaration of Rights, which condemned the acts of James as illegal, and without any of the evasions of the English Convention declared that he had forfeited the crown, and offered it to William and Mary. The Convention also condemned Episcopacy and—most notable change of all—the practice of appointing Lords of the Articles to draw up parliamentary business, by means of which all the Stewart kings had turned Parliament into their implement. It was practically on condition of his accepting this new system that the Crown was offered to William in.

In a later session the Convention (now turned into a regular Parliament) began an active political life, such as had never before been known in the history of the Scottish Parliament, criticising government with freedom. National self-government was becoming for the first time a reality in Scotland. The main subject of discussion was the reorganisation of the Church, which was at last settled by an Act of 1690, re-establishing the full Presbyterian order.

Thus Scotland was endowed not only with a democratically governed Church, such as she had been allowed to enjoy for only brief intervals before, but also, and for the first time, with a free and independent Parliament, to which government had to pay continuous deference and attention, and which showed itself capable (as in the discussion on the Massacre of Glencoe) of showing as bold and independent a front as the English Parliament.

But this development had one aspect which might lead to important results. So long as the Scottish Parliament was under the absolute control of the English king, as it had been since 1660, there was no danger that Scottish policy would come into conflict with English policy. But the danger became real when Scotland became an effectively independent realm, capable of following a policy of its own. And this

danger was not long in showing itself. It became so serious as to threaten the bond which had for so long united the two sister nations.

What brought the danger to its height was trade rivalry. And this is important, because questions of trade privileges were in fact to be always the most dangerous to the fellowship of the peoples within the British Commonwealth. As a separate kingdom, with its own trade laws, Scotland was treated by the English Parliament as if she was a foreign State. She had never enjoyed since the Restoration the freedom of trade in England which had been the chief compensation for the forced union under the Puritan republic; and she was excluded also from trade with the colonies, and from the benefits of the Navigation Acts. But Scotland, like other nations, was eager to have a share in the rich traffic of the South Seas; she looked to this traffic to relieve her poverty. In 1695 a Scottish company, to which a good deal of English capital was subscribed, was formed to trade with the tropics. At first it turned its attention to the East Indies; but the jealousy aroused among the friends of the English East India Company was so great that this had to be abandoned. Then a scheme was formed for establishing a Scottish colony at Darien, on the Isthmus of Panama. Scanty Scottish savings were lavishly invested, and two parties of settlers were sent out in 1698. They were (as might have been foreseen) attacked by a Spanish force and overwhelmed. The colony was a failure, and all the money invested in it was lost. And it was made a bitter grievance that no support of any kind was given by William, Scotland's elected king.

The Darien Expedition was ill-conceived, and doomed to failure from the first: the Isthmus of Panama was the very centre of the Spanish empire, and it was unthinkable that Spain would allow any settlement to be planted there. Moreover the expedition came at the most unfortunate moment, when it was highly important that Spain (which had been a member of the Grand Alliance in the last war) should be most considerately dealt with, in view of the necessity of deciding the future of the Spanish dominions, which the powers were then discussing. Nothing could have been more embarrassing to the king than this expedition, which he had no means of controlling, and which was at the very least a gross breach of international courtesy. It provided a striking illustration of the danger and inconvenience that was always liable to arise when two countries, linked to-

gether under the same crown, were free to pursue inconsistent policies.

On the other hand, to the Scots it inevitably appeared that their eager attempt to get a share of the wealth arising from tropical trade had been baffled by the greed of the partner nation which was already drawing great profits from that trade. The link with England seemed to present only drawbacks and no advantages ; and, looking back over the century, it might plausibly be argued that half the evils from which Scotland had suffered had been due to the fact that the Scottish king was also king of England, and could use English resources to the detriment of the smaller realm. In fact, the existing connexion could not remain unaltered.

§ 6. *The Union of England and Scotland.*

' William in. deserves the credit of having fully recognised that a radical readjustment of the relations between the two countries had now become necessary in the interests of both. In his first message to the Scottish Convention he had commended the idea of a union with England ; in his last message to the English Parliament he urged it to take steps to bring a union about. At the end of William's reign, indeed, the question had become urgent. Scotland, like England, had at the Revolution fixed the line of succession first on William and Mary jointly, then on their children, then on the Princess Anne and her children (Anne had married Prince George of Denmark), and then on William's children should he marry a second time. But William and Mary had no children ; William had not married again ; and all Anne's children had died in infancy. It had therefore become necessary to decide who should succeed Anne, and the English Act of Settlement (1701), fixing the succession on the Hanoverian line, had been passed. But the Scots had adopted no corresponding Act. They were free to make a quite different settlement. They might even bring back the exiled Stewarts. In their restive state of mind, they might take some irremediable step. It was urgently necessary that this danger should be dealt with.

Accordingly, in 1702, the English government and Parliament decided to treat for a union as the most satisfactory solution of the question ; and commissioners were appointed from both sides. But in Scotland there were two elements hostile to the idea of union. One consisted of the Jacobites, who wanted to restore the Stewarts, the other of the extreme

Presbyterians, who feared the effect of union upon the Scottish Church system. These two mutually hostile elements controlled a majority in the Scottish Parliament of 1703 ; and behind them was a large body of popular opinion, keenly nationalist in sentiment, which feared that union would mean that Scotland would be simply swallowed up by England.

The result was that the union negotiations came to nothing for the time being. The opposition in the Scottish Parliament passed an Act, known as the Act of Security, which provided that, on the death of Anne, Parliament should appoint her successor, but that this successor should not be the same as in England unless ' there be such conditions of government settled and enacted as may secure the freedom, frequency and power of Parliaments, the religion, liberty and trade of the nation, from the English, or any foreign influence/ Another Act provided that after the death of Anne the sovereign should be debarred from declaring war without the consent of Parliament. To both Acts the royal assent had to be given, because the temper of Scotland was dangerous. Both Acts were threats. They did not exclude a settlement, or even a union. But they showed that an early solution was of vital importance. Still more alarming was an Act providing for the general arming of the Scottish nation—and this at a time when England was engaged in the great war against France. The English government replied by calling out the militia of the northern counties; while the English Parliament passed resolutions threatening that Scotland should in all respects (and especially in trade) be treated as a foreign state ' until a union be had, or the succession settled as in England/

There was thus for a short period a real possibility of war between the sister nations, unless they found a way to live together amicably. The situation needed very careful handling. But there was one powerful factor favourable to union. The Scots longed for a share in colonial trade ; and union would give it to them. It was ultimately the advantage of being a full partner in the Commonwealth which overcame the difficulties felt by the Scots.

Commissioners were again appointed on both sides. The Scots first proposed a federal union. To this the English would not agree : they would only concede equality of trade if Scotland and England became parts of a single unified State, under a single Parliament. The Scottish commissioners gave in, subject to a fair financial adjustment, and to the

condition that the Scottish religious system and the Scottish system of law (which was, and still is, widely different from that of England) should still be maintained. On that basis the draft of a treaty of union was agreed to in 1706. The greatest generosity was shown by the English side both in fixing the representation, and in dividing the future financial burdens, of the united States. While Scotland was to have sixteen peers and forty-five members of the House of Commons, or one-eleventh of the whole, she was to pay only one-fortieth of the common revenue, and she was to receive nearly £400,000 to pay out the shareholders of the bankrupt Scottish African Company, and for other purposes. Her Church system and her legal system were to remain unchanged.

But this admirably just settlement had still to be adopted by both Parliaments. It naturally met with most opposition in the Scottish Parliament, which it sentenced to death. The discussions were carried on amid wild demonstrations of hostility by the Edinburgh mob and in many parts of the country. There is no doubt that if a plebiscite of the nation had been taken at this moment, there would have been a large majority against the union. Nevertheless it was passed by a majority of forty in the Scottish Parliament, in January 1707 ; and by March it had gone through all its stages in the English Parliament. On May 1, 1707, the separate kingdoms of England and Scotland ceased to exist, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain took their place.

This was the second of the long series of political unions which have marked the history of the British Commonwealth, the first having been the union of England and Wales in 1536. It is possible that a federal solution might have been in some ways better, because it would have given fuller expression to the distinctive characteristics of Scotland. Yet, thanks to the admirably moderate spirit in which the union was carried out, many of the real advantages of a federal solution were secured without the complexity which it involves. No attempt was made, either at the time of the union or later, to interfere with the distinctive usages of the lesser nation. She preserved her own educational system, her own system of law, and above all her own mode of Church organisation—that democratic system which had given to her people their main training in the art of self-government, and which had nurtured their eager love of knowledge. There can be no kind of doubt that the close and lasting partnership thus sealed was an infinite source of strength

to both nations in the great period of expanding opportunities which was about to open before them. But the partner who profited most was Scotland. She gained, from full participation in the Commonwealth, infinitely more than she lost by the sacrifice of her independent existence ; and she at once began to enter upon a period of rapidly growing prosperity.

§ 7. *The Revolution Settlement in Ireland, and the Penal Code.*

In England and in Scotland the coming of William III. and the flight of James II. enabled changes to be made which the nations desired. In Ireland it was the coming of James II. as a fugitive, dependent upon the support of his Irish subjects, which enabled the will of the majority of the nation to be carried into effect, though only for a moment; and the subsequent victory of William III. brought not peace and national content, but the culmination of all those evils from which Ireland had suffered during the whole of the seventeenth century. Nothing could be more pointed or more tragic than the contrast between the effects of the Revolution in the two islands.

When James II. went to Ireland in the spring of 1689 the Irish Catholics saw their chance, under a Catholic king, of undoing all the injustices from which they had suffered ; for the moment the Protestants were a helpless minority, cooped up in Derry and Enniskillen. A Parliament (to which practically only Catholic members were elected) passed a series of no less than thirty-five Acts, by which it cancelled the land settlement of Charles II., restored the lands which had been confiscated from the rebels of 1641, secured not merely tolerance but practically supremacy for the Roman Catholic Church, abolished Poynings' Acts and the subordination of the Irish Parliament to the English and Irish Privy Councils which they embodied, and shook off all the English restrictions on Irish trade. Had the settlement thus outlined been permanent, Ireland would have become in effect an independent country. James II. recognised this with alarm : he knew that the action of the Irish Parliament was destroying his chances of regaining the English throne. And indeed the very boldness of what may be called the Catholic Revolution in Ireland made it a matter of life and death to the English to reconquer the country, if Ireland was not to become an instrument in the

hands of Louis xiv. for the ruin of England and the establishment of French dominance in Europe. It was the tragic misfortune of Ireland that the redress of her own grievances should seem to be dependent upon the victory of a power which was undoubtedly a menace to the liberties of Europe as a whole, as well as of England and Scotland.

After the battle of the Boyne and the flight of James II. the Irish Catholics realised that victory was impossible. It would probably at this moment have been possible for William III. to win peace by a generous amnesty and the re-establishment of the conditions which had existed under Charles II. But the Irish Protestants, having just shaken off a nightmare of terror, were bent upon vengeance and upon securing their own ascendancy beyond challenge. The chance was lost, and the war dragged on its weary course till the surrender of Limerick. The terms promised by the treaty of Limerick might still have been made the basis of peace and reconciliation, if they had been generously interpreted. But they were not even carried out in the letter. The blame for the era of merciless repression which now opened must be divided between the English Parliament, which was determined to enforce the supremacy of England over Ireland, and the Irish Protestants, who were resolved to reduce the Catholics once and for all to a position of helplessness.

The first step was taken by the English Parliament. In 1692, disregarding the rights of the Irish Parliament, it passed an Act requiring that all officials and all members of Parliament in Ireland should take the oath of supremacy and make a declaration against transubstantiation, which of course excluded all Catholics. The most remarkable feature of this Act was that it calmly assumed the power of legislating for Ireland over the head of the Irish Parliament—a power never hitherto claimed. Even Irish Protestants later protested with vigour against this claim. But on this occasion they made no objection, and thus weakened their position for the future. The reason was that the Act for the first time in history excluded Catholics from the Irish Parliament, and thus put all political power into the hands of the Protestant minority.

They used their power unflinchingly to set on foot a system of persecution which, though not as severe as Louis xiv. was enforcing upon the French Huguenots, was quite unparalleled, inasmuch as it was imposed by a minority upon the great majority of the nation. Though there were sessions

of Parliament in 1692 and 1695, it was not until 1697 that Parliament undertook the confirmation of the treaty of Limerick. The delay was in itself significant. Still more significant was the fact that when the confirmation came it was expressly limited to those articles which were * consistent with the safety and welfare of their Majesties' subjects in Ireland/ What this meant had already been shown by earlier legislation. In effect, the treaty of Limerick was treated as a scrap of paper; and the Revolution settlement in Ireland was vitiated by the fact that it rested upon a gross breach of faith. Nothing can excuse this ; it was as unwise politically as it was morally unjustifiable.

Meanwhile the foundations of the hideous Penal Code had been laid in the earlier session of 1695. Of course all the enactments of James II.'s Parliament in 1689 were cancelled : the very records of that Parliament were ordered to be destroyed. New laws provided that no Catholics should be allowed to teach in schools or even in private houses ; no children might be sent oversea to be educated as Catholics, under penalty of the forfeiture of lands and goods—half the proceeds to go to the informer. Even the abominable encouragement of informers could not secure the complete enforcement of provisions so drastic ; ordinary decency forbade ; and Irish Catholic children of the well-to-do classes continued to be educated in the faith of their fathers. But in so far as this enactment was operative—and it was largely operative—it sentenced the Irish Catholic population to ignorance, and to the dangerous degradation and brutalisation which compulsory ignorance may engender. Again, to prevent any future Catholic rising, Catholics were forbidden to have arms, or even to possess a horse of the value of more than five pounds : any Protestant who offered five guineas for a horse belonging to a Catholic was legally entitled to take it.

In 1697 the Penal Code was still further developed. All Roman Catholic bishops and priests were banished from the kingdom and severe penalties were imposed upon those who should harbour them. This was intended to kill Irish Catholicism. It did not do so. The priests soon returned. But it put every Irish Catholic family at the mercy of informers. Again, marriage between Catholics and Protestants was strictly prohibited. If a Protestant heiress married a Catholic, her lands were to pass to the nearest Protestant relative. Finally the coping-stone was put upon the long series of confiscations of lands held by Catholics. All lands

belonging to 'rebels' except those who were covered by the treaty of Limerick, were declared confiscated to the Crown, with this proviso, that Protestant heirs (but not Roman Catholic heirs) might succeed to the estates of 'rebels'. Two years later the English Parliament stepped in to seize the booty. The lands were sold, and the proceeds went into the English Treasury. The only excuse for this was that the war in Ireland had thrown heavy burdens upon the English Treasury.

No words of condemnation can be too strong for the injustice and the unwisdom of these provisions. They destroyed any hope that there might have been of a reconciliation between the sister islands. They show the spirit of domination and the brutal misuse of power at their worst. No Englishman or Scotsman can to-day read even the baldest records of these Acts without shame for the iniquity by which the whole Commonwealth was defiled.

But the spirit of ascendancy did not show itself only in relation to the Roman Catholics. Of the Protestant minority at least half were Dissenters, and their numbers were steadily increased by immigration from Scotland. The English Toleration Act did not apply to Ireland; and in 1704 the Tory government of Queen Anne actually inserted in an Irish Act a clause providing that no one in Ireland could hold any public office, or be a magistrate in a municipality, unless he received the Anglican sacrament. Thus the Protestant Dissenters also were excluded from all political privileges.

Finally even the Anglican minority were not permitted to enjoy any real freedom of development. The Irish Parliament was made ineffective partly by Poynings' Acts, which placed its proceedings under the control of the English and Irish Privy Councils, and still more by the recently asserted claim of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland over the head of the Irish Parliament—a claim which had never been suggested in the case of Scotland. This power the English Parliament continued to exercise. It used it especially for the purpose of carrying into effect the policy of protecting English industries. Under Charles II. the export of sheep from Ireland to England had been prohibited. This had led to the growth of a considerable Irish trade in wool and to the rise of woollen manufactures. But as they might compete with the English woollen trade, the English Parliament, in 1699, prohibited the export of Irish wool or woollens to any country save England, where it was

already practically prevented by very high import duties. This arbitrary dictation of one country's economic policy in the interests of another was as short-sighted as it was unjust. It practically destroyed the Irish woollen trade, though some export to France was still carried on in defiance of the restrictions. And it destroyed the chance of finding, in this trade, a mode of relief for that part of the population which had been impoverished by the confiscations of land.

Even the small Anglican minority who held the monopoly of power in Ireland resented these invasions of the authority of the Irish Parliament, and this deliberate ruin of Irish trade. As a mode of escaping from these ills, and at the same time securing English ascendancy, they proposed on several occasions that Ireland, like Scotland, should be completely united with England. The Union could have been quietly and easily carried out at any time during the reign of Queen Anne. And a union effected at this date would probably have gone far to reconcile the two countries, as it reconciled Scotland and England. It is true, the oppression of the Irish Catholics would not have come to an end. But the Whigs in England had no such extreme bitterness against the Irish Catholics as the Protestant garrison in Ireland, and union would probably have led to a gradual relaxation of the Penal Code. In any case, the full freedom of trade with all parts of Great Britain, and the share of the privileges of trade with the colonies, which would have been a consequence of the union, would have done much to stimulate industry and prosperity in Ireland, and to relieve the hideous penury of the peasantry which was one of the worst results of the existing system. But the opportunity was lost. Ireland was denied full membership of the Commonwealth, and remained a dependent State at the mercy of its greater neighbour. Postponed for a century, the Union came only when it was too late to effect any reconciliation.

The treatment of the Irish problem at the Revolution was not only the most unhappy part of that settlement, it was the darkest blot in the whole history of the British Commonwealth. Elsewhere membership of the Commonwealth meant freedom, not perfect indeed, but more generous than was to be found anywhere in the world. In Ireland it meant tyranny; it showed the spirit of mere domination at its worst. Political crimes of this order bring in due course their own punishment. Unhappily the punishment does **not** fall upon those who committed the crime.

§ 8. *The Revolution in the Colonies.*

The results of the Revolution in England were on the whole quietly accepted, both in the West Indies and in the North American colonies, and William and Mary were everywhere proclaimed. New York, where James II.'s personal authority had been most strongly established, was the only colony in which the Jacobite party made any attempt to retain its power. The grandiose scheme of unification which James II. had begun came to an unlamented end, and its agent, Andros, found himself suddenly powerless. The government of the Revolution had before it the opportunity of considering afresh the whole problem of colonial administration.

Although it was inevitable and right that the autocratic projects of James II., which had gravely threatened the liberties of the colonies, should be wholly abandoned, it would have been a good thing if the opportunity had been seized to work out some less objectionable mode of unification as a means of ensuring that the common interests of the whole group of colonies should be considered. During the eighty years which had passed since the first settlement was made in Virginia, the colonies had developed into a group of well-established states. Their total population amounted to some 200,000, including 50,000 in Massachusetts and 60,000 in Virginia. There were sharp distinctions of type and character among them, and they were all proud of their local independence. Yet they had many features and many interests in common. They were threatened by the same dangers from France and from the Indians, though in varying degrees. They were subject to the same economic system, which they could take no part in defining so long as they remained distinct and separate states. Their local traditions were not yet so deeply rooted as to make organised co-operation between them very difficult, and in 1689, when the struggle against the formidable power of Louis XIV. was just beginning, they were for the most part very conscious of their weakness. This had prevented the northern colonies from offering any violent opposition to the projects of James II. It would probably have led them to concur in a reasonable scheme of federation, such as was attempted in vain sixty-five years later. Had the government of the Revolution endeavoured to work out any such system, it could probably have

achieved success; and the success might have made it possible to solve the problem of the relations between the mother country and the daughter states, which was to become progressively more acute during the next period. But no suggestion of this kind was put forward, perhaps because it was thought that the authority of the Crown could be more easily imposed on twelve small and disunited states than on a single great organised federation. A fine opportunity for constructive statesmanship was thus lost. Had the statesmen of the Revolution organised the continental colonies, and those of the West Indies, into two federated groups, the whole subsequent history of the British Commonwealth, and probably of the world, would have been different.

In the absence of any centralised or federal organisation among the colonies themselves, the only common legislative and executive authorities for the whole empire must be the British government and the Parliament which now controlled it. Upon them must necessarily fall not only the responsibility for devising and maintaining the imperial trade system, but the whole responsibility and cost of imperial defence. To fulfil these functions a better organisation than had hitherto existed was required; and in 1696 a new Board of Trade and Plantations was set up, distinct from the Privy Council, and with a special office and staff of its own. Among the most active members at first were John Locke, and the very competent secretary of the Board, William Blathwayt, who must be regarded as the principal author of the colonial policy of the Revolution. Unfortunately the Board was much understaffed for the exacting work it had to do; while, what was even more serious, it had no independent executive power, but had to obtain confirmation for all its acts from the Secretaries of State or other ministers. This was the system by which colonial policy was controlled down to the year 1768, when for the first time a minister with real power was appointed to deal with colonial questions. By that time the revolt of the American colonies had almost become inevitable.

But the Revolution brought about another profound change which deeply affected the colonies. Hitherto the colonies had been in the main concerned only with the king and his Privy Council, from whom they derived their charters, and from whom their governors received instructions. Except in regard to the main principles of imperial trade, they had not been regarded as being subject to the

legislative authority of Parliament. They were subject to English Common Law, and to such statute law as had existed before their legislative assemblies came into existence. But, in their own view, the colonial legislative bodies had a concurrent or parallel authority to that of the British Parliament. This doctrine had, indeed, never been definitely formulated, and was not to be formulated for a long time to come ; but it represented, roughly, the practice of the past, and the working theory of the colonial system. The link which held the empire together had been the Crown, and the independent executive authority which it wielded. But the essence of the Revolution of 1689 was that the Crown passed under the control of Parliament, to which ministers became steadily more clearly responsible. And this undeniably altered in a material way the relations of the colonial governments to the government of the home country. This consequence of the Revolution was not yet grasped on either side ; but it was to have portentous results.

Meanwhile a readjustment of the colonial system was being carried out. The new policy was nowhere clearly defined, but expressed itself in practical policy. It had two main aspects, economic and political. On the economic side it was governed by theories which will be more fully discussed in a later chapter.¹ The main theory was, that it was the duty of government and Parliament to use all their powers for the purpose of stimulating the productive industries of England. This involved a further development of the protective policy laid down in the Navigation Acts of the Restoration ; and a new Navigation Act in 1696 substantially strengthened the system. It involved also an attempt to secure the proper enforcement of the trade regulations in the colonies, where (especially in New England) they had been largely disregarded. For this purpose it seemed to be important that the home government should have control of the colonial governors, in order to be sure that they loyally carried out the instructions issued to them. For that reason the Board of Trade and Plantations preferred the 'royal' type of colony, like Virginia, in which the governor was directly appointed by the Crown, to the 'proprietary' type, in which, though subject to Crown approval, the governor was appointed by the proprietor, or the 'charter' type, in which the governor was appointed by the colonists. The great majority of the colonies were of the

¹ Book v. chap. iii. below.

'proprietary' type ; the Board of Trade therefore set itself, on every opportunity, to get rid of the authority of the proprietor, or, where that was not possible, to bring it under effective supervision ; during the next generation this policy was successful in a majority of cases, and the 'royal' type became the normal type. Thus economic policy influenced the political policy of the new regime.

Apart from this, one of the main aims of the colonial policy of the Revolution was to bring about an assimilation of the methods of government of the various colonies, and in a large degree this was successfully achieved. The fact that the charter of Massachusetts had been formally cancelled offered an opportunity of revising the system of government of this very important colony. A new charter was issued to Massachusetts in 1691, under which the old forms of the trading company were at last abandoned. The Crown obtained, for the first time, the right of appointing the governor ; but in place of the old anomalous franchise limited to church members a democratic franchise, with a small property qualification, was laid down ; and the legislative assembly, besides enjoying full powers of legislation and taxation, was given the unusual right of nominating the 'assistants,' or members of the governor's Council. It may fairly be said that the Massachusetts charter of 1691 was a statesmanlike piece of work : it put an end to the religious intolerance which had long marked the great Puritan State, and in a real degree it democratised the constitution of the colony. Incidentally this charter merged the old colony of Plymouth with Massachusetts. Connecticut and Rhode Island, whose charters, though threatened by James II., had not actually been suppressed, were left undisturbed in the possession of their old system. They remained the only colonies in which the governors were popularly elected. In general, indeed, it may be said that the Revolution statesmen showed no jealousy of popular government in the colonies, though they were naturally anxious to secure that the governors should everywhere be appointed or controlled by the Crown, as the only means whereby the maintenance of a common policy, under the direction of the central government, could possibly be ensured.

The principle of colonial autonomy in legislation and taxation was in truth fully accepted by the system of the Revolution. It was recognised as one of the essential characteristics of the British system that local representative bodies should alone make new laws or levy taxes on

the colonies, in every sphere save the sphere of imperial trade. The executive government, on the other hand, was held to belong properly to the Crown, in the colonies as in England. On the political side the main result of the Revolution settlement was that the variations of the earlier period largely disappeared, and that a certain uniformity of method was established. Everywhere, save Connecticut and Rhode Island, the head of the executive was directly or indirectly controlled by the Crown. Everywhere he was assisted by a small Council, corresponding to the English Privy Council, and usually (though not in Massachusetts) nominated by the governor. Everywhere he had to work with a representative law-making and taxing body, with powers which, within the limits of the colony, corresponded to the theoretical powers of the English Parliament.

As nearly as might be, this system was, and was meant to be, a reproduction of the English system as it was understood at that date. But we have seen that in England Parliament was inevitably led to use its financial powers as a means of controlling government. The whole long struggle of the seventeenth century had mainly turned upon this; and it had ended by establishing parliamentary supremacy. It was inevitable that similar conditions should in the colonies lead to similar results. There was bound to be a conflict for supremacy between the assemblies and the governors: it was already beginning in the years immediately following the Revolution. But there was this difference between the constitutional struggle in the colonies and that in England. Behind the governor was the king who appointed him; and the king himself was now dependent upon the British Parliament. Hence the struggle for ascendancy between governors and assemblies almost necessarily involved a conflict between the colonies and the mother country, unless some means of avoiding this result could be found. The need for such a solution was not yet realised by anybody. It might well appear that the colonies were treated with the utmost generosity when they were given institutions modelled on those of the home country, which were the most liberal in the world. Yet the plain fact was that, just because the colonies were politically free, they were bound to aim at the enlargement of their freedom; for it is of the essence of liberty that it strives for its own fulfilment.

This inevitable tendency was, however, modified and partly obscured by two important factors, one of which

tended to intensify the colonial desire for greater independence, while the other tended to check it. The first was the commercial policy followed by the mother country, a policy of protection for English trade interests, certain aspects of which were resented by many of the colonies. The other factor was the danger from France, which had now become very real. For the Revolution coincided with the opening of the direct conflict between the French and the British colonies in America, which was to last for more than seventy years, and was only to end with the destruction of the French American empire. During all that period the colonies, disunited as they were, and without military organisation, could not fail to realise that their security depended absolutely upon the protection of the mother country, and especially upon the navy, the main defence against French attacks. So long as this danger lasted, the constitutional struggle could never be allowed to go very far.

[The books by Lodge, Trevelyan, Ranke, Hallam, already referred to ; Macaulay's *History* ; C. G. Robertson's *Statutes and Documents* ; Acton's lecture on 'The English Revolution' (*Lectures on Modern History*) ; Maitland's *Constitutional History of England* (Period IV. : Public law at the death of William in.) ; Hume Brown's and Lang's *Histories of Scotland* ; Mackinnon's *Union of England and Scotland* ; Lecky's *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. ; Channing's *History of the United States* ; Lucas' *Historical Geography of the West Indies*.]

CHAPTER VII

THE DOWNFALL OF LOUIS XIV.

(A.D. 1689-1713)

§ i. *The War of the League of Augsburg, and the British share in it.*

THE two wars against Louis xiv., of which the first may almost be said to have begun with the landing of William of Orange in England, together constituted the second of the four great ordeals by battle through which the British Commonwealth has had to pass during the course of modern history ; and in this struggle, as in each of the others, the Commonwealth found itself called upon to defend not only its own liberties, but at the same time the freedom of Europe from the dominance of a single power. We have already seen in an earlier chapter (Chapter v.) that the security and even the possibility of the Revolution settlement depended upon the course of the first of these two wars ; and we have also seen that if the islands had not been ranged on the side of the banded peoples of Europe and against the great French king, Louis' triumph would have been all but certain. The freedom of the islands did not indeed seem to be so directly imperilled in this struggle as in the Elizabethan war against Spain. Yet the expanding liberty of the British constitutional system would assuredly have been endangered if Louis xiv. had been successful; and the stability of the European system was even more directly endangered than in the earlier war.

By 1692, as we saw in Chapter v., all serious danger to the islands and their new system of government had been removed; and as this meant that they were able to devote their strength to the continental struggle, it may be said that by the same date the possibility of victory for Louis vanished also. The war raged still for another five years; but only on one occasion—in 1696—was there any serious threat of an invasion of Britain, and that came to nothing.

We need not follow the course of the fighting on the continent. Its main feature was that though the French

armies won victories they were never able to turn them to advantage ; because France was ringed about by such a circle of enemies that she could never throw her whole strength upon one point. The main fighting was in the Netherlands ; and here, in the cockpit of Europe, regular English armies for the first time played their part alongside of the armies of the allies. Each year William in. went across to lead the campaign. Year after year he was beaten in the field, notably at the battles of Steenkerke (1692) and Landen or Neerwinden (1693) ; but always he was able to prevent these defeats from leading to disastrous consequences. His only considerable victory was the recapture of the great fortress of Namur (1695), which the French had taken in 1692, and which commanded the line of the river Meuse, the most direct line of advance against the Dutch. The campaigns in the Netherlands consisted, indeed, very largely of elaborate manoeuvres round great fortified places ; for the art of fortification had been brought to a very high pitch of perfection by the French engineer Vauban and the Dutch engineer Cohorn.¹ Meanwhile there was constant fighting, not so fierce but equally indecisive, in Germany, on the frontiers of Savoy between France and Italy, and in the north of Spain, where from 1694 onwards Louis xiv. was conducting an invasion.

The part played by England in the continental war was far greater than it had ever been in any previous continental war of modern times, and this ordeal formed and tested the traditions of the English regular army : the battles of this war are the earliest enrolled on the standards of some of the oldest English regiments. But, important as it was, the contribution of the army was less important than the contribution of the navy. In the naval operations of this war the old rivals, English and Dutch, acted in co-operation. But the Dutch played a more and more subsidiary part as the war went on. Their resources were strained by the land-fighting ; and from this time onwards naval supremacy unmistakably belonged to England.

No great naval battle was fought after the battle of La Hogue in 1692, and therefore the naval side of the struggle attracted little attention. But that was because the French fleets dared not come out to fight. It is characteristic of naval warfare that there is apt to be least fighting when the

¹ The predominance of the art of fortification in this and the following wars is reflected in the fortress-games played by My Uncle Toby and forporal Trim in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*.

silent pressure of naval might is doing its work most efficiently, and thus its importance is liable to be overlooked ; and although the best ways of using naval power were not yet fully understood, its influence was decisive. After the battle of La Hogue British troops could be shipped freely to any part of the continent where they were needed, while there was no real chance that French troops could be landed in any large numbers in the islands. That was one great result of naval superiority. But it also exercised a more direct influence on the course of the struggle by land, as was strikingly shown when a French attack was directed against Spain in 1694. A strong attack, pressed home, would have forced Spain out of the war, and released French forces which might have sufficed for a decisive victory in the Netherlands. But an effective attack could not be carried out if all supplies had to be sent through the passes of the Pyrenees. At first the French were able to use the short sea route from Toulon. But when an English fleet appeared in the Mediterranean in 1694 and 1695, its mere presence was enough to cut the sea-communications of the French, and to ensure the failure of the Spanish campaign. Thus a decisive victory was won by the navy, without any fighting—a victory more important than many battles in Flanders. In 1696 the English fleet was recalled from the Mediterranean, because there was a threat of a French invasion of England. The result was that the attack on Spain was renewed, and that the Duke of Savoy was forced to make peace with France. Nothing could have shown more clearly the importance of naval strength.

Another result of the naval supremacy of the allies was that French commerce, which had been so laboriously built up by Colbert, almost disappeared from the seas, and France had to do without the strength she could derive from this source. Her sailors revenged themselves by privateering at the expense of English and Dutch commerce, and the losses caused to the English and Dutch mercantile marine were on a very large scale. They were larger than they need have been, had naval power been rightly used, and they caused great outcries of alarm at home ; they were indeed immeasurably greater than the corresponding losses of the French. But this was because there were extremely few French ships exposed to capture, whereas, in spite of losses, the number of English ships plying the seas grew rapidly during the war. The losses which were due to privateering were in fact of very small importance in comparison with

the total ruin of French oversea trade ; and at the end of the war English foreign trade was stronger than it had **ever** been.

Finally the war inevitably extended to the colonies, and the fierce colonial rivalry of England and France, which lasted, with intervals, until 1763, began during these years. In 1690 the French in Canada planned a triple attack upon the divided English colonies. Though the population of French Canada amounted to only about 20,000, against some 200,000 in the English colonies, they had the advantage (for warlike purposes) of being controlled by a single despotic government, while the English colonies had twelve distinct governments, often at cross-purposes with one another, and each weakened by the conflict of authority between the governor and the Assembly. The French plan was to win the Hudson valley, and so cut off New England from the southern colonies: this remained the principal French objective throughout the long struggle down to 1760. But the attack had little success, though the town of Schenectady on the Hudson was sacked, and its people massacred. To this the New Englanders replied by a vigorous attack on Canada, led by Sir William Phipps, Governor of Massachusetts. Port Royal and Acadia (Nova Scotia) were captured and held throughout the war. Quebec also was attacked. It might have been captured had the mother country been free to send ships and men to share in the expedition ; for no help on any large scale could be expected from France. But the navy was fully occupied in home waters. There was intermittent fighting also in the West Indies, and on the coast of West Africa. But this sporadic warfare was only a foretaste of what was to come in later wars, when the struggle between France and England flamed out in every part of the world, and on all seas. So far as the colonies were concerned, the main result of the war was that it taught the colonists that they stood in danger from the French, and therefore strengthened their loyalty to the British connexion. For it was already obvious that, but for the shield of the navy, far distant as it was, the colonies would have been exposed to a much more formidable attack by French veteran troops.

§ 2. *The Problem of the Spanish Inheritance.*

In 1697 the dreary War of the League of Augsburg came to an end with the Peace of Ryswick, which

marks the first stage in the downfall of Louis xiv. For the first time in his reign he ended a war without making any gains ; indeed he had to restore all he had seized since 1678 with the exception of Strasbourg. France was loaded with debt, and the prosperity which Colbert had built up had almost vanished. Above all, the power on the seas which, thanks to Colbert's work, had seemed within the grasp of France in 1689, was now definitely lost, never to be regained. Most of the allies were not less eager than France to welcome the restoration of peace. The Dutch had suffered terribly from the strain of war ; they had seen the commercial leadership which they had so long held pass into the hands of their English rivals. The English, who had gained more from the war than any other power, scarcely yet realised the value of what they had won, and were keenly aware of the burdens of war, and of the hardships it inflicted. Eager above all for peace, now that the danger of French dominion seemed to be removed, the Tory majority in Parliament insisted upon reducing the army to the lowest possible limits, though the king believed that the maintenance of an adequate force would be the best safeguard against future dangers, and was convinced that a new struggle was bound to come before long.

Indeed a complex and dangerous problem, which had loomed before the minds of European statesmen for more than thirty years, was becoming urgent : it was in order to be free to deal with this problem that Louis xiv. had been eager to end the last war, even on unfavourable terms. This problem was nothing less than the question what was to become of the vast dominions of Spain. Charles 11. of Spain, the last descendant of Philip i. in the direct male line, had been an ailing weakling ever since his accession in 1665 ; he had no children, and his death might be expected at any moment. He had two sisters, who would with their heirs come next in the strict order of succession. The eldest had married Louis xiv. of France ; by the marriage treaty she had renounced her rights of succession, in consideration of the payment of a large dowry by Spain ; but the dowry had never been paid. The second had married the Emperor Leopold 1. She had died after giving birth to a daughter, who had married the Elector of Bavaria and borne a son known as the Electoral Prince of Bavaria ; but she also, on her marriage, had renounced her rights to the Spanish crown. If these renunciations were both held to be valid, the succession would go to the representatives of the previous

generation. But Charles II.'s father had also had only two sisters ; one of whom had married Louis XIII. of France, and was Louis xiv.'s mother, while the other had married the Emperor Ferdinand n., and was Leopold i.'s mother. Thus in both generations intermarriage had given a claim of almost equal weight to France and to the Austrian branch of the Habsburgs. Neither of these powers would ever consent that the whole Spanish inheritance should pass to the other. None of the other European powers could feel safe if either of the two great continental States were thus enriched, and enabled possibly to dominate the world. Above all, the prospect that the whole of the vast empire of Spain should pass under the control of France was a mere nightmare to European statesmen, who had found it extremely difficult to resist the strength of France alone.

Here, then, was the prospect of a more gigantic and terrible war than any that had gone before, and the only possibility of averting it was by coming to an agreed solution of the problem beforehand. Louis xiv., who had at last learned how dangerous it was to have to deal with the united opposition of Europe, was willing for a compromise ; and he therefore entered into negotiations with William in., as the leading statesman of the Grand Alliance. It has been held that in thus undertaking by ' secret diplomacy ' to arrange for the partition of the Spanish dominions these two princes were committing a crime against Europe. They were, in fact, adopting the only possible means of avoiding war. A public discussion of the question, by a congress consisting of representatives of absolute princes all thinking of their own interests alone, would have led to no result at all. It was absurd that questions so vital to Europe, and to every European country, should be determined by the mere accidents of dynastic inheritance. The Spanish dominions did not constitute a national State whose fortunes concerned only the Spanish people. They included some of the most important parts of Italy. They included the Netherlands (Belgium), which formed an essential defence of the Dutch against France. Above all they included the immense and misused empire in the New World, with all its neglected opportunities of trade and settlement. And the disposition of these dominions, scattered over the world, must certainly involve the issues of peace and war. If Louis xiv. and William in. could arrive at a compromise which would avert war, they would be benefactors of humanity.

After long discussions, in which Louis xiv. showed an

admirable and quite unexpected moderation, a settlement was reached in what was known as the First Partition Treaty (1698), whereby Spain, the Netherlands and the Indies were to go to the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, while the Spanish lands in Italy were to be divided between Austria and France. Even this solution raised a storm when its terms were announced ; the pride of Spain would not consent to the loss of any of the Spanish dominions ; the Emperor was unwilling to abandon any part of his claims. These difficulties might have been overcome. But the practicability of this solution was shattered when in 1699 the young Electoral Prince died of smallpox ; the problem had to be tackled afresh.

Knowing that the indignation of the Spaniards might lead them more readily to accept a French king than to see their empire divided, Louis xiv. had to choose between this alluring prospect and a renewal of his policy of compromise. But it was not certain that the Spaniards might not choose an Austrian in preference to a French king ; and in either event a long and dreadful war seemed likely. So Louis reconciled himself to a new partition-compromise, and showed himself yet more moderate than before. In the Second Partition Treaty (1699), also arranged with William in., he agreed to allow Spain and the Netherlands and all the Indies to go to the Emperor's second son, provided that he undertook never to unite the Spanish and Austrian crowns. France was to be compensated by the acquisition of Lorraine, whose duke was given the Italian-Spanish duchy of Milan. These were amazing concessions, and they show how sincere was Louis' desire to avoid war.

But the new arrangement, though it was agreed to by most of the powers of Europe, did not win the assent of the parties most immediately concerned. The Emperor would not accept it: he was not willing to renounce one jot or tittle of his claim to the whole inheritance. Above all, Spain would not accept it: even in her weakness her pride refused to submit to the sacrifice of any part of her dominions. The aim of her statesmen was to keep the empire together by securing for it the strongest possible protection ; and with this aim in view, after long palace intrigues, Charles II. signed in October 1700 a will bequeathing the whole of his dominions to the second grandson of Louis xiv. Should he refuse to accept, the will provided that the whole inheritance should go to the second son of the Emperor.,

Three weeks later Charles n. died; and the terms of his will were formally communicated to France.

What was Louis to do ? If he refused the Spanish crown on behalf of his grandson, the claim under the will would pass to the Habsburgs, who would certainly accept it. In that event, would England and Holland support France in insisting that the partition treaty should be carried out ? It was practically certain that they would not: in both countries the peace party had the upper hand, and in England, whose voice would be decisive, the Tories, vehemently opposed to William in., had reduced the army to negligible numbers, and were in declared hostility to the partition treaty. They were, in fact, inclined to be friendly with France, especially those among them who were Jacobite in sentiment. If Louis held by the partition treaty and refused the Spanish inheritance, he must either look on while the Habsburg house, the traditional enemy of France, was restored to the overwhelming power it had enjoyed in Charles v.'s time, or he must fight, single-handed, to prevent this. The acceptance of the will, even if it involved war to defend the rights of his grandson (and it was not certain that war would be inevitable)—a war in which all the resources of Spain would be added to those of France—seemed to him, not unnaturally, to be preferable to a single-handed war in which he would fight under every disadvantage. He decided to accept the will; and under all the circumstances (and especially in view of the attitude of the English Tories) he cannot be blamed for accepting it. William in. naturally regarded his action as a breach of faith; but it is fair to remember that the partition treaty was of little value unless it was accepted by the Emperor and by Spain, neither of whom would have anything to do with it.

Louis cannot fairly be blamed, if he is judged by any standard of seventeenth-century statecraft. But the situation created by the combination of France and Spain under practically the same controlling will was indeed alarming for Europe, and above all for the maritime powers. Yet so strong was the desire for peace that during 1701 both England and the Dutch tardily and reluctantly recognised Louis' grandson, Philip v., as King of Spain. The Emperor, indeed, refused to consent; and began war against the Spanish dominions in Northern Italy, now garrisoned by French troops. But the Emperor alone could do nothing. He was almost penniless, and he had on his hands a dangerous

revolt in Hungary, which broke out in this year. If Louis could use his position moderately, he might still secure a peaceful victory more brilliant than his armies had ever been able to win for him.

But the intoxication of triumph made him forget the moderation he had so painfully learnt. Already the trading classes in England and Holland were alarmed by the prospect of being excluded from trade with Spain, which had been very lucrative to both countries. It was a sign of what was coming when Louis obtained from his grandson the *Asiento*, or monopoly of the import of negroes into Spanish America, for French merchants. But far more serious things were to come. Louis declared that his grandson could not renounce his right of succession to the French crown—the only thing that would have placated the alarms of other powers. He displaced the Dutch garrisons which had guarded the great fortresses of Belgium, and replaced them with French troops. These places were known as the 'barrier' fortresses, because they formed the only protection for the Dutch against the menace of French conquest: that 'barrier' had now gone, and the Dutch felt profoundly apprehensive. Finally, on the death of James II. (1701) Louis formally recognised his son as James II., King of England, Scotland and Ireland. This was the very year in which the Tory Parliament had passed the Act of Settlement, definitely excluding James from the throne. This action, which seemed like dictation to England, and threatened the restoration of a Catholic king by the united strength of France and Spain, aroused even the Tories to indignation and to a sense of national peril. War fever rose to the highest pitch in England. It rose high among the Dutch also. And William III. found himself for the first time supported by national feeling in both countries when he set to work to recreate the Grand Alliance of the last war. In the new and more gigantic struggle upon which the islands were entering, there would be no such division and uncertainty of purpose as there had been in the last war.

But William III. had no sooner completed the preparations than death came to him. He was not permitted to see the final issue of the long conflict upon which his whole life and strength had been spent. His successor, the placid and rather stupid Queen Anne, had none of his profound knowledge of diplomacy and war. But she was entirely under the influence of John Churchill, Earl of Marlborough, whom William III. had designated as his

successor in the command; and Marlborough was to show himself as great a diplomat as William, and an infinitely greater general.

§ 3. *The Military Problem and the Greatness of Marlborough.*

In the War of the Spanish Succession Louis xiv. was far more favourably placed than he had been in the war of the League of Augsburg. Then he had had to depend upon the resources of France alone. Now all the men and resources of the Spanish empire, which could be turned to great effect by French organisation, were at his disposal. He held all the fortresses of the Spanish Netherlands, which had baffled his attacks in the previous war, and thus he gravely threatened the Dutch. He was freed from all anxiety on his southern frontier. He held the keys of the Mediterranean, where the allied fleets had no base of operations. At the same time he had helpers in Europe whose aid might be of the highest value. The Hungarians were in revolt against the Emperor. The Elector of Bavaria, Austria's nearest neighbour on the west, joined the French side, and there was good hope that, taken between these two fires, and threatened also from the Spanish dominions in Italy, the Emperor might be crushed, and the keystone of the Grand Alliance knocked out. If in 1702 Louis had commanded resources equal to those which he had wielded in 1689, his complete victory would have been assured, and he would have been master of Europe. Even after the exhaustion of the last war, France was still able to put in the field armies which were slightly more numerous than those of the Grand Alliance, and they had the supreme advantage of real unity of command ; moreover they fought on interior lines, while their enemies were both politically and geographically divided.

At the opening of the war all the advantages thus seemed to lie on the side of France : all save one, whose importance few realised. France had lost the command of the sea, which she had possessed in 1689. Her fleets were never strong enough to meet those of the maritime powers on anything like equal terms. And that proved to be the determining factor. This was to be the first great war in which the weight and power of naval superiority were to be clearly displayed; and this in spite of the fact that only **one** pitched battle was fought at sea, a battle in itself in-

decisive and ill-managed. In the long run sea-power won the war for the allies, though of course it would have been almost helpless without the land forces. But sea-power united the allies, it linked all the scattered operations into a single great campaign, and it opened to the allies and largely denied to Louis the resources of the outer world.

In William III.'S war England had been only one of the partners in the war. In the War of the Spanish Succession (the first which was fought by the United Kingdom of Great Britain) the islands played the dominating and controlling part. It is true that their armies formed but a small part of the total forces engaged, though they often had to undertake the most dangerous operations. But British wealth (and in a less degree Dutch wealth) paid in subsidies a large part of the upkeep of the armies of the allies ; without this aid they could not have taken the field in sufficient numbers. The allied fleet was the main pillar of the whole alliance ; and in the allied fleet the British contingents now completely outnumbered those of the Dutch. And, finally and most important, the strategy of the war was in the main directed by the genius of a great English soldier. At the critical moment England produced, in John Churchill, Earl (and later Duke) of Marlborough,¹ one of the greatest generals in history, and certainly the greatest in her own history ; a man equally remarkable in all the gifts of military leadership, in strategy or the planning of campaigns, in tactics or the fighting of battles, and in the diplomatic gifts so necessary when a body of heterogeneous allies had to be kept together and persuaded to play their parts in subordination to a general plan.

Marlborough had already shown something of his remarkable military gifts during the previous war, both on the continent and in Ireland. But he had never been given a command worthy of his abilities, because William in. had never been able to trust him. In an age of treacherous politicians, he had been the most treacherous of all ; his desertion of James II., and his influence with the Princess Anne which had led her also to desert her father, had been among the decisive factors of the Revolution of 1688 ; yet throughout the reign of William II. he had been in constant communication with the exiled king. A devouring personal ambition was perhaps the main reason for this lack of principle ; and with it was linked an extraordinary meanness and greed in money matters. But whatever may be thought

¹ There is a short life of Marlborough by Sir W. Butler.

of the morality of this great man, in intellectual and practical power, in courage, in resourcefulness, and in the capacity for taking broad views without losing sight of details, he towered above all his contemporaries. William in. had recognised some of his qualities, and had named him as his successor in the military command. When the chief responsibility for the war rested upon his shoulders, he rose superbly to a great opportunity ; and, in spite of all his faults, won his place among the greatest leaders of men whom the British Commonwealth has produced.

For eight years he wielded a degree of power such as few Englishmen have ever enjoyed. Through his wife, a very able and domineering woman to whom he was devoted, he exercised for some years a complete ascendancy over the mind of the Queen. In close conjunction with his most intimate colleague, Godolphin the Lord Treasurer, he directed English policy and played a principal part in the political intrigues of the time, always with an eye primarily to the needs of the war. His was the diplomacy which held the alliance together ; and it demanded the highest qualities of patience and insight, in addition to the personal charm which Marlborough always knew how to exercise, to bring the touchy and consequential German princelings and the obstinate and fussy Dutch merchants to co-operate in schemes which were often so bold and far-reaching as to be wholly beyond their grasp. He was the designer of English war policy as a whole ; his was the brain which planned the various parts of the attack upon France and Spain in such a way that each should help the others ; and he showed a grasp of the relations of land and sea power and of the way in which they might be used to supplement one another, such as none of his contemporaries and but few of his successors have displayed. In addition to all this, he was the commander-in-chief of the allied armies in the Netherlands ; and though he never knew what it was to have a free hand to make the best use of the available forces, and was inconceivably hampered, especially by the Dutch agents who accompanied the army, his plans of campaign show a boldness and originality which few generals have surpassed. In the execution of his plans he showed that mastery of detail which the greatest men are the least ready to despise ; and the unerring skill with which he seized upon the critical position and the critical moment in battle made him as great a tactician as he was a strategist. Though he led a composite army, hampered by all kinds of jealousies,

and was nearly always outnumbered by the enemy, he achieved a complete mastery in the field. To his greatness it was due that the slow manoeuvring about fortified towns which had marked the last war was replaced by bold strategic moves which left the enemy gasping. Only one among the generals on either side deserved to be named in the same breath with Marlborough; and this was the imperial commander, Prince Eugene, between whom and Marlborough there was always the most cordial confidence. Yet even Eugene was unable always to rise to the height of Marlborough's conceptions. It is hard to say of Marlborough whether he was greatest as a diplomatist, as an organiser, or as a leader in the field. Had he ever enjoyed the freedom of action which fell to Napoleon, his fame would be yet higher than it is. Yet the skill and patience with which he moulded refractory material, and gave cohesion to the disconnected and jealous groups with which he had to deal, form not the least marvellous of his achievements.

§ 4. *The War of the Spanish Succession.*

In the first two campaigns of the war Marlborough's largeness of vision had little opportunity of showing itself. The war seemed to fall into three distinct and apparently unrelated spheres, whose possible connexion with one another perhaps only Marlborough perceived. In the Netherlands, where the French held all the fortresses from Antwerp to the Rhine, and could fall back if necessary from one strongly fortified line to another, Marlborough began by skilfully mastering the fortresses of the Meuse, from the Dutch frontier to Liege.¹ That was the work of 1702; and it was just the kind of war of fortresses to which the Dutch were accustomed. In 1703 Marlborough made himself master of the lower Rhine, as far as Bonn, with the direct object of getting into touch with the forces of the Emperor in Southern Germany; the Dutch were meanwhile to attack Antwerp, but, checked by a sharp defeat, they gave up the attack, and Marlborough had to come to their aid. But he found it impossible to persuade the Dutch to join him in a vigorous forward move against the French lines, and the campaign ended disappointingly.

Meanwhile the Emperor had fallen into dire straits. Prince Eugene, after winning some successes in Northern

¹ See the map of the Netherlands, Atlas, Plate 20.

Italy, had been compelled to fall back before a French attack. The Hungarians were in open revolt; the Elector of Bavaria was threatening Vienna, and a big French army had crossed the upper Rhine, and made a junction with the Elector. It looked, in 1703, as if the destruction of the Emperor was inevitable; only the delays of his enemy saved him in that year; and in the next the threat was bound to be yet more formidable.

The third sphere of the war was on the coast of Spain, and was at first mainly naval. Here the primary need of the allies was for a permanent base, from which they could command the seas and also attack Spain. But an attempt to seize Cadiz (1702), made by an Anglo-Dutch fleet under Sir George Rooke, was a fiasco. It was ill-compensated by Rooke's seizure of the Spanish treasure-fleet, and the destruction of the French squadron which convoyed it; though this was acclaimed as a great victory by the Tories, who strove to set up Rooke as a rival hero to Marlborough. But the presence of the fleet in southern waters had one important consequence. It persuaded Portugal to join in the war on the side of the allies (1703), and thus opened a chance for a peninsular campaign, which would, it was hoped, distract the efforts of France. At the same time as the treaty of alliance, a commercial treaty between Britain and Portugal was signed, whereby Portuguese wines were given an advantage in the British market over French wines; and the English began to be a port-drinking people.

Thus the first two years had led to nothing decisive, and the three fields of fighting seemed to be quite unconnected. But Marlborough's far-seeing imagination had already connected them. From the Rhine he was to help the Emperor; from Italy (where the Duke of Savoy had joined the allies) an attack supported by the fleet was to be made on Toulon, and aid was to be given, if possible, to the French Protestants of the Cevennes, who were in open revolt against the persecution of Louis xiv.; from Portugal, and perhaps also (thanks to sea-power) from the eastern coast of Spain, a further attack was to be directed against the Franco-Spanish power. Thus Louis xiv. was to be exposed to a converging attack on all sides. Only great military genius could plan a scheme so far-reaching. Only naval supremacy could make it possible.

The year 1704 saw the first steps in the execution of this magnificent conception. First of all the Emperor had to be saved- For this purpose Marlborough designed a daring

march through Germany from his base on the Rhine.¹ But he dared not let his plans be known. The Dutch would have been terror-struck at the notion of being left to defend themselves against the French; nor was it safe to let the French army in the Netherlands get an inkling of his design. He therefore feigned an attack on Eastern France by way of the Moselle valley. But this was only meant to divert attention and to give him an excuse for massing his troops at a convenient point. The campaigning season had scarcely opened before he was marching swiftly across Germany, and by June he had made a junction with the principal allied army in South Germany. The jealousy of its slow-moving and pedantic commander forced him to be content with the absurd arrangement that they should hold the supreme command on alternate days. But Marlborough used his own days with such skill that on one of them he won the dazzling victory of Blenheim (August). The result of this brilliantly conducted battle was that the combined French and Bavarian army, rather larger than that of the allies, was completely broken, with a loss of 14,000 casualties and 11,000 prisoners, including the French commander, Marshal Tallard. It was the first great defeat in the field that the French had suffered during Louis* reign. The Emperor was saved. Bavaria was reduced to impotence. The French had to withdraw west of the Rhine, followed by an allied army. The whole situation was reversed, and from this time onwards the advantage was always on the side of the allies.

During the progress of the Blenheim campaign nothing of importance had been done in the Netherlands. But the great Mediterranean scheme had been well begun. A combined English and Dutch force, under the Earl of Galway, had been landed in Portugal to co-operate with the Portuguese in an invasion of Spain from the west. Admiral Rooke had seized the inadequately garrisoned Rock of Gibraltar (August 1704) to serve as a base for the allied fleet in the Mediterranean; and when a French fleet sallied out from Toulon to try to relieve it, he had beaten it off in a naval battle off Malaga—the only pitched battle on sea during the war. It was not a decisive victory; but as the French fleet never again challenged the allies to battle in this war, it had the effects of a complete success. The loss of Gibraltar was so serious a matter to Spain (since it gave to the allies the control of the entrance to the Mediterranean) that the fortress was fiercely attacked both by sea and land

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 23 (c).

during the winter; but the siege was raised by a British fleet in March, and henceforth Gibraltar, the key of the Mediterranean, remained securely in British hands.

In 1705 the campaign in Spain was begun in earnest. While Galway, with a mixed British, Dutch and Portuguese force, advanced into Spain from Portugal, the fleet under Sir Cloudesley Shovell carried round a small force to the east coast, under a daring, reckless, irresponsible hero of romance, Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough.¹ Peterborough landed on the coast of Catalonia, where the people were violently anti-French in sympathy, and readily took up the cause of the Archduke Charles of Austria. Catalonia and Valencia were rapidly won; and the support of the fleet made it easy for these provinces to be held.² In the next year, 1706, an even more dazzling success was won, when Galway, advancing from Portugal, succeeded for a moment in occupying Madrid itself; and, though he had to evacuate the city and fall back to make a junction with Peterborough, the mere fact that enemy forces had been in Madrid, the very heart of Spain, where no hostile army had been seen since the expulsion of the Moors, made a profound impression upon the imagination of Europe,

1706 was an even more brilliant year for the allies than 1704. In the Netherlands³ Marlborough had in 1705 broken through the strong fortified line, curving from Antwerp to Namur, which the French had been preparing for three years, and which was held by larger numbers than Marlborough commanded. In May 1706 he followed up this success by the most brilliant of all his victories, that of Ramillies, in which he broke the northern French army, inflicting losses nearly five times as great as he suffered. The result of this tremendous victory was that nearly all the fortified towns of the Netherlands surrendered; and the way seemed almost to be open for a march on Paris.

Nor was this the end of the tale of victories; for Prince Eugene was at the same time driving the French pell-mell out of Northern Italy, and had won a crushing victory at Turin. Never in the course of modern history had such a series of disasters been inflicted upon any power as the hitherto unconquerable French armies had been compelled to endure during the years 1704-6. Louis was forced

¹ There is a short life of Peterborough, by W. Stebbing, in the English Men of Action Series.

² See the map, Atlas, Plate 19.

* See the map, Atlas, Plate 20.

to ask for peace. He was willing to let the Archduke Charles have Spain, and to leave to the Dutch a barrier of fortresses in the Netherlands. Peace might well have been made on these terms. But neither the Emperor nor the British government would agree to the terms proposed ; and the hammer-blows which were beating down the pride of the Great King went on.

It would have been well if peace had been made after the victories of 1706 ; for the terms then obtainable were as good as those by which the war was ended seven years later ; and the campaign of 1707 saw a series of grave disappointments for the allies. The romantic adventurer and military genius, Charles xn. of Sweden, of whom we shall have something to say later,¹ appeared in Germany and threatened to attack the Emperor ; the German princes in alarm withdrew some of their troops ; Marlborough had to spend his time in journeying to see Charles xn. and win him round ; and so nothing was done in the Netherlands. In Southern Germany the imperialist forces suffered a severe defeat from the French, which seemed for a moment to imperil Vienna once more, as in 1704. An attack upon Toulon, delivered by Prince Eugene with the support of Sir Cloudesley Shovell's fleet, was a fiasco ; its only fortunate result being that the French burnt the best ships of their Mediterranean fleet to prevent their capture by Shovell, and so abandoned any pretence of holding their own by sea in the Mediterranean. Finally in Spain the allied forces (who found that everywhere except in Catalonia popular feeling was against them), attempting a new attack on Madrid, were disastrously defeated at Almanza by the Duke of Berwick, a natural son of James II. and one of the ablest generals in the service of France ; and thenceforth the allies were able to do no more in Spain than to cling to Catalonia with the support of the fleet. The position in Spain being now very insecure, it was necessary to have a base safe from attack, and near the eastern Spanish coast. The naval supremacy of the allies made this possible. In 1708 a British force captured the island of Minorca,² whose magnificent harbour of Port Mahon gave them a safe place in which to winter and refit their ships.

But the set-backs of 1707 were only temporary. In 1708, though Louis xiv. made a desperate attempt to turn the successes of 1707 to advantage, and for a moment regained most

¹ Book vi. chap. ii. p. 667.

² See the map, Atlas, Plate 19.

of the towns of Western Flanders, Marlborough won a brilliant victory at Oudenarde, which regained most of what had been lost, and broke the main French army defending Paris on the north. If Marlborough could have had his way, he would have marched straight on Paris, and dictated peace in the French capital. But even Prince Eugene, who had come with a large imperial force to co-operate in what had now become the main field of battle, thought this too daring. Nevertheless the all-important city-fortress of Lille was captured; and, for the first time for two generations, victorious hostile armies were encamped upon the soil of France.

Once more Louis offered peace. He was willing to make immense concessions ; willing that his grandson should give up the whole Spanish inheritance save only Naples and Sicily ; willing to surrender all the Belgian fortresses as a ' barrier' for the Dutch, and even to give up Strasbourg and Franche Comte\ The allies demanded that he should, in effect, himself undertake to expel his grandson by force from Spain should the Spaniards refuse to accept the Archduke for their king ; and on this demand the negotiations broke down. Marlborough was not directly to blame for this failure ; indeed, he sympathised with Louis¹ refusal to submit to such an indignity. But whoever was to blame, the obduracy of the allies enabled Louis to appeal to the patriotism of France, and not in vain, for a final effort.

Yet even so, the tide of disasters continued.¹ Though the French fought with desperate courage, they were overwhelmed in the bloody battle of Malplaquet (1709) ; and during 1710 and 1711 Douai was captured, Cambrai was threatened, the allied forces were deep in France, and there seemed nothing to prevent Marlborough from attaining his ambition of capturing Paris and dictating peace amid Louis' own splendours at Versailles. The misery and impoverishment of France can scarcely be exaggerated. This was the awful retribution for the high-handed insolence of Louis' early days ; his people paid the price in ruin.

§ 5. *The Peace of Utrecht.*

From the final degradation Louis was only saved by a change of ministry in England. As the war had progressed, Marlborough and Godolphin had been driven to throw themselves more and more upon the support of the Whigs,

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 20.

who were ready to pursue the war to the bitter end, because they saw in Louis the encourager of all the evil deeds of Charles II. and James II., the protector of the exiled Stuarts, the tyrant of Europe. The Tories, on the other hand, had gradually drifted back to a sentiment of friendship towards France. The Jacobite elements in the Tory party were getting the upper hand ; they were beginning to dislike the idea of a Hanoverian succession and more foreign rulers ; and on all grounds they were eager for peace. In 1710 the ministry of Godolphin and Marlborough, which had carried on the war throughout, fell from power, and was replaced by a Tory ministry under Harley and St. John.¹

That the Tories should desire peace was natural and healthy : the war had already lasted five years too long.² But the methods they adopted were indecent in their haste, and open to the charge of treachery. They opened secret negotiations with France, without consulting their allies. They recalled Marlborough in disgrace ; and gave instructions to his successor, the Duke of Ormond, which practically required him to leave his allies in the lurch. And when the negotiations began, they made no attempt to find any safeguard for the interests of the unfortunate Catalans in Spain, who had been encouraged to revolt by the promise of English help.

With Marlborough no longer in command, and the British forces practically withdrawn, there was no advantage to be gained by the allies from a further prolongation of the war. But the issues to be settled were so complex and widespread that there had to be a prolonged congress at Utrecht before the terms of peace were concluded among the western powers (1713) ; and it was not until a year later that the Emperor could bring himself to accept the inevitable and to abandon hopes of the Spanish crown. The main features of the peace settlement³ were that Louis XIV.'s grandson was allowed to retain the crown of Spain and the Indies, but only on condition that the French and Spanish crowns should never be united. All the outlying Spanish dominions in Europe passed from Spanish control. The Belgian Netherlands were given to Austria, but burdened with the condition that the Dutch should have the right of garrisoning a line of eight 'barrier' towns as a defence against France, and that in the interests of Dutch trade the river Scheldt

¹ See below, Chap. ix. p. 635.

² Swift's pamphlet, *The Conduct of the Allies*, gives a brilliant argument for the Tory view. • See the map, Atlas, Plate 10.

should be closed to traffic. This meant the ruin of the great port of Antwerp. In the eyes of Europe Belgium was only of importance as a defence against possible French aggression ; and under Austrian rule, and hampered by Dutch jealousy, Belgium was in practice denied every opportunity of prosperous development. The duchy of Milan in Northern Italy, the kingdom of Naples in the south, and the island of Sardinia were also given to Austria, which thus became the dominating Italian power ; a position that was to prove disastrous to herself as well as to Italy. The Duke of Savoy was rewarded for his faithfulness to the allies by the grant of the island of Sicily, with the title of King. He was later compelled to exchange Sicily for the poorer island of Sardinia. This new royal house was in the long run to unify the whole of Italy under its rule. By a curious coincidence, the same group of treaties contained the formal recognition by Europe of the assumption of the title of King of Prussia by the Elector of Brandenburg ; and just as the kings of Sardinia were in the distant future to become the rulers of a united Italy, so the kings of Prussia were to become the masters of a united Germany.

But the most important aspect of the settlement of 1713 was the position which it gave to Britain, the power which had been, above all, responsible for the overthrow of Louis xiv. In Europe Britain acquired the rock of Gibraltar, and the island of Minorca with its fine harbour. These acquisitions meant that a secure foundation was provided **for** British naval power in the Mediterranean. They were the formal recognition of British supremacy on the seas.

Even more important was the effect of the treaty upon the colonial rivalry of France and Britain. During the course of the war there had been little lighting in the colonial field, for the fierce struggle in Europe engrossed all attention and all available resources. The French in Canada, hopeless of effective aid, did not venture on any attack such as they had attempted in 1690 ; and though there were border raids, there was no formal war until in 1710 a joint British and New England expedition was sent against Acadia (Nova Scotia). It conquered the colony, and, in honour of the Queen, gave the name of Annapolis to its chief settlement, hitherto known as Port Royal. **In 1711 a more** elaborate naval and military expedition was planned **against** Quebec. But it was badly conducted, and failed completely. **The** treaty of Utrecht^x ceded Acadia, **henceforth**

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 54.

known as Nova Scotia, to Britain ; but it made no attempt to define the boundaries clearly, and this gave rise to much controversy in the future. Newfoundland also, where there had been both French and British settlements, was recognised as a definitely British colony, subject to certain fishing rights which were reserved for the French. And this meant that the two sides of the mouth of the St. Lawrence were now in British control, and that the existence of the French settlements in Canada proper was endangered. Engrossed by the strenuous conflict in Europe, the European States had latterly paid comparatively little attention to colonial questions. But the treaty of Utrecht may be taken as marking the establishment of British supremacy in the colonial field, as well as in naval and mercantile matters. Finally the treaty of Utrecht was accompanied by an Asiento Treaty with Spain, whereby the monopoly of the import of negro slaves into Spanish America, enjoyed since 1702 by France, was transferred to Britain, which obtained also the right of sending one annual shipload of goods to the Spanish colonies.

The treaty of Utrecht is a landmark in the history of the British Commonwealth, which emerged from the second great ordeal of its modern history as the greatest naval, mercantile and colonial power in the world, enjoying a prestige in the world's affairs such as it had never known before. There were still to be strenuous struggles before supremacy was won ; but the British power entered upon the next era, an extremely important one in colonial history, with every advantage on its side. The first round in the long conflict with France had been definitely won. Fifty years before it had seemed an uneven conflict; for France was then not only the greatest power in the world, and the most intelligently governed, but her population outnumbered that of the islands by nearly two to one—fifteen millions against eight. Now the reign of the Great King which had opened in such splendour, and with such superb hopes, was closing in gloom ; and all the promise of the future seemed to rest with Britain.

[I. S. Leadam's *History of England from the Death of William III. to the death of George II.* is the best modern summary of the period. Mahan's *Influence of Sea-Power in History* and Corbett's *England in the Mediterranean* for the naval struggle; Fortescue's *History of the British Army* and Stanhope's *War of the Spanish Succession* for the military side ; Acton's lectures on 'Lewis XIV.' and on 'The War of the Spanish Succession' (*Lectures on Modern History*) ; Seeley's *Growth of British Policy* ; Morris's *Age of Queen Anne* (*Epochs of Modern History*).

CHAPTER VIII

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

(A.D. 1660-1714)

§ 1. *The Causes of the Growing Wealth of Britain.*

ONE of the most striking aspects of the struggle against Louis xiv. was the immensity of the financial burden which it imposed upon Britain, and the ease with which this burden was borne. In the first half of the seventeenth century Charles 1. had found it quite impossible to pay the relatively small subsidies which he had promised to the Protestant powers engaged in the Thirty Years' War, and had been compelled to withdraw from the conflict. But in the two great wars against France between 1688 and 1713 Britain maintained a navy incomparably stronger than the England of Charles 1. had ever possessed, even after the levy of ship-money; she maintained efficient armies of regular troops in the Netherlands and in Spain; she paid, in subsidies, a large part of the cost of maintaining the armies of her allies; she suffered immense losses of her mercantile marine; and at the end she emerged as the wealthiest of the European States, with a financial credit equal to her military prestige. How is this startling contrast to be explained?

In part, no doubt, it was due to the fact that Parliament gave its support to the French wars, and therefore taxation could be legally levied on a scale which was never possible to Charles 1. In part it was due to the fact that the cumbersome and unproductive methods of assessing taxes practised under Charles 1. had been drastically altered by the Puritan republic, whose changes had in the main been made permanent: the traditional customs duties on foreign imports were revised, an excise was levied on various home produce, and a system of direct taxation on land, which under the name of the land-tax provided a substantial proportion of post-revolution revenue, had been worked out.

But these explanations are insufficient. Whatever system of taxation had been adopted, the burdens borne by the generation following the Revolution would have crushed

the England of Charles 1. or of Cromwell. The real explanation is twofold. In the first place, Britain had become an immensely richer country than she had been in the time of Charles 1., prosperous as she then was. In the second place, she had learned how to organise her wealth for national purposes.

Her new wealth arose primarily from foreign trade, on which the strength of the Dutch also mainly depended, and from the profits of her rapidly increasing mercantile marine. One of the chief foundations of her foreign trade was her growing colonial empire, the bulk of whose most valuable produce gave employment to her shipping and was distributed from her harbours to the principal European countries. But trade with non-British territories was even more lucrative than colonial trade. England had, indeed, since the Restoration, definitely wrested the leading place among the trading nations of the world from Holland. This was, no doubt, in part due to the Navigation Acts and the great development of English shipping which they encouraged ; in part to the heavy strain which wars had imposed upon the Dutch ; and in part to the fact that the colonial and tropical produce of which England had the handling found a ready market in the European countries, and made it easy to open up trade with them.

But the development of her home industries also gave a stimulus to the growth of her foreign trade, and was in its turn stimulated by the demand of goods for export. New industries, notably the manufacture of silk, were taking root and thriving ; and this was in no small degree due to the fact that England offered a safe refuge to exiles driven forth by religious persecution, notably the French Huguenots, who came over in considerable numbers during the ten years before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), and in yet greater numbers after that event.

The new industries from the first were mainly organised and conducted by capitalist employers—men of substantial means who devoted themselves largely to studying the needs of home and foreign markets, and who paid the workpeople to produce the kinds of goods most in demand. The older industries also were more and more falling under the direction of capitalists—a process which, as we have seen,¹ had begun long before. Capitalist control of industry tended to leave the workpeople too much at the mercy of their masters, unless government stepped in to

¹ See above. Book III. chap. x, p. 344.

protect them ; and government did very little in this period for the protection of the workpeople, because the capitalist employer was regarded as the mainspring of industrial development. This led to some unhappy results : the wage-earning classes certainly did not obtain their fair share of the growing prosperity of the country, though as yet it cannot be said that they suffered from such grave evils as came with the great industrial changes of the next century. But unquestionably the capitalist system, though as yet it was in its infancy, did help to bring about a great increase in the country's total wealth by encouraging initiative and experiment. And there was one consequence of the system which had a definite political importance, as we shall see. The capitalist system required that the employer class should have at their disposal considerable amounts of easily realisable wealth wherewith to carry on their operations ; and a part of this wealth could be made available for national needs.

Already, then, when the great wars with France began, Britain was becoming the wealthiest country in Europe. She was on the way to become at once the chief market of Europe for colonial and tropical goods, the chief carrier of the world's trade, and one of the chief producers of manufactured goods ; and, because of this, wealth was beginning to flow into her coffers from all sides.

British trade with Spain provides a striking illustration of the way in which this happened. Spain depended largely upon the vast quantities of the precious metals which she extracted from her American empire. She had done little or nothing to develop the productive activity of these lands in any other sphere than that of the extraction of gold and silver. She jealously excluded British merchants from direct trade with these dominions ; and although a considerable smuggling trade was carried on with them, the wealth which they produced did not in any large degree go directly into British hands. But there was a large sale for British woollen goods and other manufactures in Spain ; and since Spain did not produce much that could be exchanged for these commodities, they had to be paid for in gold and silver. Hence a large proportion of the bullion which came from Spanish America indirectly found its way to Britain : Spain was always on the verge of bankruptcy, Britain grew richer year by year. The reason for this contrast was that Spain identified wealth with gold and silver, and thought that her economic welfare was ensured

by the stream of gold and silver which came to her from America; under the influence of this fallacy she failed to develop the industry of her people in the production of the most valuable forms of wealth—the things which gold and silver can buy, and which can only be produced by hard work. Britain, on the other hand, being fortunately without any gold mines, had learnt to make wealth in the only possible way, by making the things that men need, or making them available for men's use by bringing them to the places where they were wanted. It was the work and the enterprise of her manufacturers, her shipbuilders, her sailors and her merchants which were making her rich; the gold and silver of the Spanish mines naturally came to them in exchange for the goods they had to sell, whether these goods were actually made in Britain itself, or whether they were brought by British enterprise from the countries which produced them, *to be sold at a profit in the countries which needed them.

The immense growth of British foreign trade and of British shipping directly contributed to the cost of the war, because every cargo of goods brought into British harbours paid customs duties; and in this way the colonies also contributed, since all their principal products were by law required to be sent to England before being distributed over the world. But in another way, more indirectly, foreign trade contributed; because those who conducted it had control of large amounts of wealth which could be easily realised—unlike the wealth of the landowning class, which (being sunk in the land) could not be easily realised. And this easily realisable wealth could be lent to government in large blocks, to enable it to meet the expenses of war or other heavy charges. Hence the second reason why Britain was able to bear the burden of the wars was that she could command the ready money to finance them.

Merchants engaged in foreign trade, and even manufacturers at home, had long since acquired the habit of depositing their money, until it was needed, in some safe place—commonly in the strong rooms of goldsmiths. The goldsmiths were paid for this service largely by being able to lend out at interest the funds in their hands; that is to say, by acting as bankers. It was in the second half of the seventeenth century that the business of banking began to be seriously developed in London, and some of the oldest English private banks trace their origin to this period. As the bankers always held, at any given moment, very

large deposits, they could lend to those who wanted temporary advances without at all interfering with the trading activities of their depositors, so long as they kept in hand a sufficient margin to meet all probable demands, and got back their loans reasonably soon. Governments had long been in the habit of borrowing in this way, paying back as soon as the taxes came in. But it was in the time of Charles II. that this practice became a regular one, because Charles II. was always in debt; he was always borrowing from the goldsmiths, and paying back when the taxes or the French subsidies came in : his government could not have gone on without this convenience. But of course the loans had to be repaid, at the agreed dates ; otherwise the goldsmiths could not keep faith with the merchants whose funds they held. When Charles announced in the famous Stop of the Exchequer (1672) that he was not going to repay his loans at the agreed dates, but was only going to continue paying the interest, the result was a very serious dislocation in the trading activities of the London merchants.

Now this sort of arrangement, of borrowing in advance of the taxes and repaying when the taxes came in, could only go on if the annual income of government was not very far short of its annual expenditure, so as to make sure of regular repayment. When the great wars with France began, it became impossible to raise by taxation a revenue equal to the total expenses. Government therefore found itself getting into deeper and deeper financial difficulties. The only way out of them was that it should be able to borrow *without the necessity of early repayment*. The ordinary private bankers could not lend what was needed on these terms, because they had to be ready to repay their depositors when called upon, and could therefore only make short-term loans. The adoption of a device for getting permanent loans was the main means which enabled Britain to meet the cost of the war. And the device was the foundation of the Bank of England, which was carried out in 1694 by Charles Montague, the Whig Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the suggestion of a Scotsman, William Paterson, who was also responsible for the almost simultaneous establishment of the Bank of Scotland.

The arrangement which led to the establishment of the Bank of England was that in return for a large loan *not* repayable at a fixed date, government not only undertook to guarantee the interest by allotting certain taxes for the

purpose, but also, in order to compensate the lenders for foregoing the future use of their money in profitable mercantile enterprises, granted them a charter whereby they were enabled, with the support of public credit, to carry on the business of bankers on a very large scale, lending money at interest either to government or to private traders and receiving deposits of money from merchants, just as the goldsmiths or private bankers had done, but doing so with far greater security than any private banker could do, just because the power and credit of the State were behind them, and because they carried on the business on a much larger scale than any private banker could do. The bank thus established commanded from the first the confidence of the whole commercial community, because its subscribers and directors included the greatest merchants. It transacted the government's financial business, and the funds thus passing through its hands, as well as the private deposits of merchants and the annual interest paid by government on the original loan, could be used in making temporary advances to merchants and others at good rates of interest. It raised fresh permanent loans for government as they were needed. It induced men who had funds for which they had no immediate use to deposit them with it instead of leaving them idle in a cash-box or a strong room, and thus made a larger proportion of the wealth of the country immediately productive.

Some people feared, in the first years of the bank, that the lending of large sums permanently to government would result in withdrawing wealth from commercial uses, and would therefore lead to a restriction of trading and commercial activities. But this fear was not realised. It was not realised for two reasons. The first reason was that government spent most of the borrowed money in the country, so that it came back into circulation. The second reason was that the confidence which the bank inspired persuaded men to trust it with their idle money, and thus drew out the buried wealth of the country, and kept it in active and productive employment. That is, in truth, the main function which a bank performs : it keeps wealth continually active in the production of fresh wealth. When a farmer has his barns full of corn, he has that much wealth, but as long as the corn lies in the barns it is unproductive. If he could sow it afresh as fast as he reaped it, and so get half-a-dozen crops instead of one in a year, his wealth would be many times more productive. What the bank did was that, by keeping the available wealth

continually active, by lending it to merchants who needed it for profitable enterprises and getting it back again with interest to be used again immediately, it enabled the wealth entrusted to it to reap three or four harvests in a given time instead of one. And therefore the new banking system, while providing government with the means for carrying on the war, also supplied British enterprise with the means for extending its influence more and more widely, and for producing more wealth even faster than it was destroyed by the operations of war.

§ 2, *The Influence of the 'Moneyed Interest' and its Effects upon National Policy.*

The establishment of the Bank of England immediately increased the political influence and importance of the merchants and 'moneyed men' because it gave to them a definite and important place in the national system. Since they now obviously provided the essential means for carrying on national enterprises, they could not safely be disregarded, and consequently their influence began to be felt in determining national policy, especially in matters of trade, to a degree never before known. But most of the merchants and 'moneyed men' were Whigs; and they became all the more resolute in their Whiggism because they feared that a restored Stewart monarchy might repudiate the debt owing to them. The investors of money in the new National Debt which the Bank of England administered were in fact, or felt themselves to be, committed to the maintenance of the Revolution settlement, and this came to be one of its strongest bulwarks.

But because the Bank of England was regarded as a Whig institution, the Tories regarded it with hostility. It seemed to them that the upstart 'moneyed interest' was getting an improper degree of influence, and was ousting the 'landed interest' from its proper leadership in the nation. In the hope of balancing the power of the Bank of England, they started, in 1696, the idea of a Land Bank, which was to lend money to landowners, on the security of their land. But the difficulty was that wealth in the form of land was not easily realisable. The scheme of a Land Bank came to nothing; and the Bank of England and the 'moneyed interest' held the field, and wielded an ever increasing power.

The problems of trade and industry, and of the best ways of organising and encouraging them, had thus become in

this period a matter of deep concern not only to the trading classes, but to politicians and political thinkers. During the generation preceding the Revolution there had therefore been a far greater activity in speculation, discussion and writing on economic subjects than had ever been known before, and this discussion was probably more active in England than in any other country. It is not too much to say that the writings of such men as John Locke, Sir William Petty and Sir Josiah Child on these subjects constituted the beginnings of modern economic science. These writers thought of political economy mainly as a branch of the art of government : they were eager to discover how national welfare and national wealth were likely to be affected by the policy of the State, by its taxation, its trade regulations and its relations with other States ; they asked themselves on what principles public policy could most profitably be directed towards these ends, and what forms of trade or industry ought to be encouraged or discouraged as advantageous or disadvantageous to the nation as a whole. Though, of course, they differed on many points, in the main lines of their thought they were generally in agreement. They had risen above the crude blunder of identifying wealth with gold and silver : they realised how Spain had suffered by basing her national policy on that fallacy. They saw that the real wealth of a country depends upon the amount and the quality of what it produces by the industry and intelligence of its inhabitants. And the object of their thinking was very largely to determine by what means government could most readily increase the production of the country. External trade they valued chiefly in so far as it led to a demand for British products ; and for this reason they attached immense importance to what they called the Balance of Trade—to ensuring that the exports of home produce should at least balance the imports of foreign produce. They looked with great suspicion upon any line of trade which did not show a ' favourable balance '—which did not produce a large demand for British goods ; and they distrusted all lines of trade that brought into Britain goods which competed with British products.

These ideas of the economists naturally dominated the minds of the trading and ' moneyed ' interests ; and because these interests had now a very great influence upon national policy, especially when the Whigs were in power, national policy after the Revolution was mainly governed

by a distinctive theory as to what the trade interests of the nation demanded—a theory which profoundly influenced not only the foreign but the colonial and the Irish policy of the period. The ruling idea of the Whigs was that the trade policy not only of Britain itself but of the whole Commonwealth ought to be conducted principally with a view to encouraging and developing industry (including agriculture) in Britain. They held that those branches of external trade should be helped and stimulated which seemed to increase the demand for British products, while those which did not seem to do so should be repressed. This idea led to the adoption of a strictly protective policy for British industry, enforced not only by means of tariffs, but in every other possible way, and in particular by the use of whatever power the British Parliament was able to exercise over the other members of the Commonwealth ; the supreme aim being to make Britain the manufacturing centre, as well as the market, of the whole Commonwealth, and also the purveyor of manufactured goods and colonial produce, on as large a scale as possible, to all other countries.

The effect of these ideas upon foreign policy was very apparent. Because France was a great manufacturing country, and largely exported manufactured goods, it was held that trade with France was undesirable. It was actually prohibited as early as 1678 ; the prohibition was naturally strictly enforced during the wars ; and it was in effect as nearly as possible maintained by high duties on French goods in the period following the war. The men of that generation could not see that France could not send goods to Britain without (directly or indirectly) taking British goods in exchange ; they thought of France as a rival shopkeeper, whose trade must be checked in every possible way. On the other hand, trade with Portugal did not compete with British manufactures. Portugal bought British woollens and other goods, in exchange for her wines and the products of her Brazilian colonies. Trade with Portugal was therefore to be encouraged ; and the Methuen Treaty of 1703, which tried to encourage Portuguese at the expense of French trade, was regarded as one of the greatest achievements of British statesmanship in the economic sphere.

Again, the effect of these ideas was seen in the attitude adopted regarding the East India Company. English woollens were not suitable for the Indian climate ; the goods brought by the company from India therefore had to be largely paid for with silver and gold, and there were

constant complaints that, instead of encouraging British industries, the Indian trade only drained away the bullion which was acquired by trade with Spain. So long as the imports of the company from India consisted largely of spices and other tropical produce, which did not compete with British products, these complaints were not much heard. But in the second half of the seventeenth century the company began to import large quantities of Indian woven stuffs, especially cotton goods ; and in order to improve this market they began to direct the work of the Indian weavers so as to enable them to meet the needs of the western market, and thus increased the prosperity of the Indian weavers. But this was held to be destructive to the British cloth-making industries, both linen and woollen (there was as yet practically no pure cotton manufacture in England). So heavy duties were levied against these goods, and an attempt was even made in 1700 to prohibit their sale in England. This was an extremely short-sighted view. The import of Indian stuffs not only increased the wealth of India ; it increased the wealth of Britain by giving her people a greater variety of materials, and her merchants a wider choice of goods for export to other markets. As a matter of fact, the attempt to check the trade had only a very partial success. Woven stuffs continued to form the bulk of the imports from India, and the Indian weaving industry continued to be developed by the operations of the East India Company, down to the time when the introduction of machinery enabled British operatives to outdo the products of the Indian looms. In so far as this policy succeeded, its only result was to check the growth of trade with India ; which was indeed, at this date and for a long time to come, far less important than the trade* with the West Indies.

It was partly this belief that trade with India was unprofitable, and partly the fact that the directors of the East India Company were largely Tories, which led the Whigs to encourage the ' interlopers/ or private traders who tried to break down the Company's monopoly. The Whig Parliament of 1693 passed a resolution ' that all the subjects of England have an equal right to trade to the East Indies unless prohibited by Act of Parliament' : and in 1698 a rival company was founded by Act of Parliament and given (in return for a loan of £2,000,000) the exclusive right of trade with India, the old Company being allowed three years to wind up its business. All individual subscribers were to be allowed to carry on private trade; **and** it was

hoped that the members of the new company would export British goods to India on a larger scale than their predecessors. The old company ingeniously met the difficulty by subscribing to the new one, and thus obtaining the right to continue its trade. But the situation created by the rivalry of the two companies was so unfortunate, and had such bad effects in India, that in 1708 they were united after an arbitration by Lord Godolphin, and the old monopoly and the old methods of trading were re-established. Had the strife continued much longer, the Indian trade, and the future development of British influence in India, might have been imperilled ; for as things were, only a monopolist company could afford the cost of keeping up the necessary permanent establishments in India.

The influence of Whig commercial ideas was still more disastrously seen in Ireland, where the power assumed by the British Parliament was used to crush out every industry that threatened to compete with the British staple trades. We have seen something already of the unhappy political results of this policy.¹ Its economic results were equally unfortunate. By impoverishing Ireland it not only alienated her, it made her less able to spend money on British goods ; and it also reduced the amount and variety of the commodities which British merchants could take to foreign markets, to exchange for the goods they wanted there.

The same policy was pursued in the colonies. Here the object was twofold : to ensure, in accordance with the principles of the Navigation Acts, that the chief colonial products were sent to England, and that inter-imperial traffic was carried on wholly in British or colonial ships ; and to ensure that the colonial market was reserved for British manufactures. The first object was aimed at in a new Navigation Act (1696), which tried to strengthen the provisions for enforcing the acts ; and in an Act of 1706, which added rice and naval stores to the list of enumerated articles which could only be exported to England. The second object made the Whigs anxious to discourage the rise in the colonies of any industries competing with those of the home country. There was even talk of prohibiting the manufacture of woollen goods in the colonies ; and a report of the Board of Trade in 1706 complained that some of the colonies had wrongfully encouraged the woollen and other industries instead of ' applying their endeavours to the production of such commodities as are fit to be encour-

¹ See above, Bk. v. chap. i. p. 505, unci Chap. vi. p. 589.

aged in those parts, according to the true design and intention of those plantations/ It is true that no direct attempts to enforce such foolish restrictions were attempted in the period with which we are now concerned ; that was to come in the next period. And, as yet, the policy of subordinating all other considerations to the development of the home industries had not yet done any such harm in the colonies as it had done in Ireland, because the colonies naturally devoted themselves to producing commodities which did not compete with those of the home country.

But it is evident that the attempt to found an empire upon an economic basis, which had been begun systematically by the statesmen of Charles II., was taking an unfortunate turn, such as must make it appear that the interests of the mother country were hostile to those of the daughter communities in the economic sphere, and that she was using her power as the head of the Commonwealth solely 'with a view to her own interests. That belief was, in the long run, when the French danger was removed, to lead to the tragedy of a disruption in the Commonwealth. It undid the good that was done when these young communities were made partners in the institutions of self-government. Trade interests were to prove themselves but a poor foundation for imperial unity. Yet it would be unfair to blame¹ the statesmen of this age for taking a view which they shared with the statesmen of every other colonising country. All held that colonies existed primarily to enrich the mother country, and that their trade ought to be controlled for that purpose. Britain alone added to this doctrine the further doctrine that the colonies should in all local affairs be permitted to govern themselves. But political liberty combined ill with economic restrictions.

[Meredith, *Economic History of England* ; Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*; Hewins, *English Trade and Finance in the 17th Century*; Rogers, *Bank of England*; Tiaill, *Social England*; Beer, *Old Colonial System*; Mgerton, *British Colonial Policy*. Of the economic writings of the period probably the most important were Petty's *Political Arithmetic* and Child's *Discourse on Trade*.]

CHAPTER IX

PARTY CONFLICTS IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE (A.D. 1702-1714)

§ 1. *The Whigs and the Tories.*

WHEN Queen Anne came to the throne the very names of Whig and Tory were less than thirty years old, but already the two parties divided the whole kingdom between them, and their conflicts not only engrossed the attention of Parliament, but constituted the most important factor in the conduct of government. In the House of Commons the strength of the two parties was on the whole well balanced; the pendulum had already acquired the habit of swaying from one side to the other at each election; though in each of the five general elections of the reign, except that of 1708, the Tories had a larger or smaller majority. And this seems to indicate, what is probably true, that in the country as a whole the preponderance was on their side, though the Whigs were strongest in the most progressive and enlightened regions, notably in London and the bigger towns.

On the other hand, the Whigs now possessed a standing majority, though not a big one, in the House of Lords: in 1712 twelve Tory peers had to be created to ensure the passage of the treaty of Utrecht—the only instance of the use of the royal prerogative of creating peers to enforce the acceptance of a particular measure. The fact that the majority of the peers had now become Whigs is of great significance. It means that the greatest magnates of the realm were the least influenced by superstitious veneration for the Crown, and the most ready to thrust aside the royal authority and to replace it with their own; the conviction that this was their aim largely accounted for the revival of Toryism. The Whig party was, in fact, always and essentially an aristocratic party, though it had the support of the mercantile classes and the Dissenters. It was becoming, as we shall see,¹ a highly organised group of

¹ See below, Bk. vi. chap. i.

aristocrats, and was getting ready for that period of oligarchical rule which we shall have to review in the next Book.

The conflict of parties has never been more acute than it was during this reign. It extended even to fashions of dress ; it divided society. And the strife mastered also the men of letters. All the best writers of the period lent their pens to one side or the other, and the keenness of the public interest in politics was by nothing more clearly shown than by the fact that politics dominated the literature of the age. Addison and Steele were Whig journalists as well as social satirists, and Addison became a Minister of State. On the Tory side the formidable pen of Swift was enlisted, and few pieces of political writing can ever have exercised a greater immediate effect than his brilliant pamphlet *The Conduct of the Allies*, in which he defended the peace policy of his friends Harley and St. John. Both of these Tory politicians were men of literary tastes, and the friends of men of letters ; especially St. John, afterwards Lord Bolingbroke, who was himself a writer of great clarity and force. At no period of English history have men of letters been more influential in the political sphere, or played a bigger part in the governing society. One of the greatest of the group, indeed, Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, was never (like Addison or Swift) admitted to the friendship of the party leaders: he was only a struggling hack-writer, hired alternately by either side. Nevertheless he wrote some of the most effective pamphleteering work of the time, and his *Short Way with Dissenters* has never been surpassed for bitter irony. The political topics with which these writers dealt are for us as dead as Queen Anne herself, though the skill with which they were handled makes them still interesting. But the all-important thing was that the British peoples were being taught to think politically by having both sides in great political controversies presented to them in a vivid and interesting form. The process had begun during the Civil War ; it had been revived in the eager discussions over the Exclusion Act ; it had never died down since the Revolution ; but it was in Queen Anne's time that the best literary power of the age began to devote itself to political subjects.

In considering the nature of the conflict between parties it is necessary to beware of identifying the ideas of the Whigs and Tories of Queen Anne's reign with those of the modern parties which are historically descended from them. To show the danger of such an assumption it is enough to

say that the Tories might plausibly be described as a party of pacifists, little Englanders, and free-traders; the Whigs as a party of militarists, imperialists, and high protectionists. That would be an exaggerated and misleading statement, but it would have an element of truth in it.

The root-belief of the Whigs was the fear of monarchy; **and** it was because Louis xiv. was the very type of absolute monarchy, quite as much as because he was the friend of the exiled Stewarts and the enemy of the Revolution settlement, that the Whigs were prepared to oppose him to the last, with implacable hostility. Their commercial doctrines, and their belief that France was the most dangerous rival of Britain in trade and industry, added to the vigour of their anti-French sentiments. They were also the inheritors of the continental policy of William in. The great nobles who formed the strength of the Whig party had a far deeper interest in and knowledge of continental politics than the Tories, who drew their strength mainly from the less educated country squires.

The very reasons which made the Whigs hostile to France made the Tories generally ready to be friendly with her. Many of them were Jacobites, open or concealed: the group known as the Hanoverian Tories were probably a minority of the party. As the reign wore on, and the memory of James II.'S misgovernment grew fainter, their fears for the Church diminished; and towards the end of the reign many of them were prepared to overturn the Act of Settlement, largely because they feared that the Hanoverian succession would mean the triumph of the Whigs. For they regarded the Whigs as a dangerous clique of great nobles who aimed at reducing the Crown to a nullity and putting their own power in its place, using the trading classes as their instruments. The Tories had none of the Whigs' enthusiasm for commercial and industrial development: they thought the 'moneyed men' were already getting too great an advantage over the 'landed interest' and in 1712 they tried to strengthen the position of the landed interest by a monstrous Act which provided that no person not possessed of landed estate to the value of at least £200 per annum should be eligible as a member of the House of Commons. Nor did they take much interest in European politics. They would have liked to see England hold aloof from European wars and politics: if wars must be fought, they would have preferred to limit the fighting on the British side as far as possible to the sea. They hated the memory

of William III., and lost no opportunity of casting reflections upon him.

In the sphere of domestic politics the conflict between Whigs and Tories was keenest on the question of religion. The bulk of the Tories were staunch High Churchmen; they hated the Dissenters and the Toleration Act, all the more because the Dissenters were associated with the detested 'moneyed men' of the towns. The Whigs, on the other hand, were largely latitudinarian in religious belief; they were anxious to keep the Church under State control, all the more because so many of the Anglican clergy were Jacobite in sentiment; they did not wish to see the Church dominating politics, and they genuinely believed in toleration.

Thus the political aims of the two parties were sharply contrasted at nearly every point; and during this reign both sides were active in organising their resources. The Whigs had the advantage that they possessed in the ' Junto ' a recognised group of leaders of great influence, who were in the habit of acting together and of planning beforehand the policy to be followed by the party. Somers, Montague, Orford, Wharton and Sunderland, who formed this group, were an exceedingly able body of men. They were learning how to make the utmost use of the prestige of the great territorial houses in influencing elections to Parliament; and under their leadership the Whig majority in the House of Lords and the solid Whig body of members of the Lower House commonly presented a united front. The Tories were more divided. There was a good deal of distrust between the extreme High Church leaders like Rochester and Nottingham, and the more moderate and intellectual younger Tories like Harley and St. John (Bolingbroke); there was friction also between the Jacobites and the Hanoverian Tories. The bulk of the country squires would have been content to follow the High Church leaders, but the group who may be described as the Young Tories had the brains of the party. The High Church party found their centre in a club which they had started in William III.'s time, and which was known, from the October ale its members loved, as the October Club.

§ 2. *The War Government of Marlborough and the Ascendency of the Whigs.*

At the beginning of the reign Marlborough and Godolphin dominated the ministry and were all-powerful with the

queen. They counted as Tories, though they were pursuing the continental policy of William in. which most Tories distrusted. Through Marlborough's influence over the queen, they controlled the power of the Crown. And for a time they carried even the extreme High Church Tories with them. To do so they had to give their support in 1702 to the Occasional Conformity Bill, which aimed at putting an end to the practice whereby many Dissenters got round the Test and Corporation Acts by taking the Anglican sacrament now and again in order to qualify for office. But the Whigs could be trusted to throw out this Bill in the House of Lords.

As time went on, however, and the war became more exacting, Marlborough and Godolphin found that they could not count upon whole-hearted support for their war policy from the high Tories. They gradually weeded out the High Church Tories from the government and more and more tended to throw themselves upon the support of the Whigs. They were able to do this in spite of the fact that the Whigs were in a minority in Parliament, partly because they still kept the support of the Young Tories, led by Harley and St. John ; and partly because there was in the House of Commons a solid block of about one hundred government votes, mainly consisting of placemen, kept loyal by fear of losing their places, who were able, in conjunction with the Whigs, to outvote the Tories : in the Parliament of 1705, for example, it was calculated that there were 190 Tories, 150 Whigs, and 100 placemen. Ever since the Revolution the importance of the House of Commons had made the art of keeping a majority together—the art of parliamentary management—one of the chief preoccupations of governments. It could only be done—at any rate it was done—largely by means of corruption ; and the methods of parliamentary corruption, begun by Danby in Charles ii.'s reign, had been continued under William in. and were consistently practised by Godolphin. These methods seemed to provide the only means by which a steady and consistent policy could be pursued under a parliamentary system ; they seemed to be the price that had to be paid for parliamentary government.

In 1708 Harley and St. John broke away from the ministry, which became wholly Whig, much to the distaste of Queen Anne, who was herself a Tory. The Whigs, having got the upper hand, and having, in the new Parliament of 1708, a clear majority in the House of Commons, could not

resist the temptation to strike a blow against the High Church party, which in their view was consistently undermining the principles of the Revolution. An intemperate cleric, Dr. Sacheverell, gave them their opportunity by publishing sermons in which he had preached the old Tory doctrines of divine right and passive obedience—doctrines which were obviously hostile to the ideas of the Revolution. The Whigs gave Sacheverell and his doctrines a gratuitous advertisement by impeaching him (1710) before the House of Lords, which found him guilty and sentenced him to suspension from the right of preaching for three years. The sentence was so light that it was popularly regarded as an acquittal. Sacheverell had got a cheap martyrdom. In the most extraordinary way he became a popular hero, as the defender of the Church against oppression, and he was feted wherever he passed on his journey to his country parish.

The Sacheverell case was only important because it showed how strong a hold the High Church party and its out-of-date political ideas still exercised over a large part of the nation. It convinced Harley and St. John that the High Church line represented the best route to power; though Harley had close connexions with the Dissenters, and St. John was notoriously a religious sceptic. Already these leaders of the new Toryism were at work endeavouring to prepare for the overthrow of Marlborough and the Whigs. They were using with skill the methods of the back-stairs as well as the cry of 'the Church in danger/ Marlborough's position largely rested upon the influence which his wife wielded over the queen. But Anne was beginning to be tired of the tantrums of the domineering duchess; she had always hated the Whigs, and as a High Churchwoman she sided with Dr. Sacheverell. Harley was able to influence her through his cousin, Mrs. Masham, whom he got installed as a Lady of the Bedchamber. At a critical point in the war, when Louis' overtures for peace had been refused, and the last desperate phase of the war was about to begin, Marlborough and the Whigs thus saw the very foundations of their power shaking.

In 1710 the blow was struck. The queen was persuaded to dismiss Godolphin and his chief Whig colleagues, and Harley became Earl of Oxford and in effect Prime Minister—though the term had scarcely yet come into use. Marlborough was still allowed to retain his command for another campaign; but he was hampered in every possible way, and at the end of 1711 he was dismissed from all his

offices. The Young Tories had triumphed, and the field was clear for the development of their political ideas.

§ 3. *Bolingbroke and the New Toryism.*

Their first work was to open negotiations for peace, with almost indecent haste, and without any proper consultation with the allies. The negotiations were begun before Marlborough was recalled ; the preliminaries were agreed to in September 1711 ; a group of twelve new peers were created to override the Whig majority in the House of Lords ; and though there were considerable delays, the final terms were signed in April 1713. Here was the first note of the new policy. There must be a break with the traditions of William III. There must be an end to implacable war against the protector of the exiled Stewarts.

If St. John (now Viscount Bolingbroke), who was much the more energetic of the two leaders, could have had his way, the peace would have been followed by friendship with France. He strove to secure a commercial treaty which would have given France the rights of ' the most favoured nation/ and done away with the preference on Portuguese wines which was due to the Methuen Treaty of 1703. This would have been a substantial step towards freedom of trade, in which Bolingbroke believed. But the commercial classes were clamorous against such a policy ; and though Defoe was told off to write up the question, the bulk of the ordinary Tories were not ready for so great a departure. The commercial treaty had to be dropped. Undismayed, Bolingbroke started negotiations for an alliance between Britain, France, Spain and Savoy, which was to be the foundation of the new Tory foreign policy.

Meanwhile the commercial policy of the Young Tories had expressed itself in another way. To strike a blow at the financial supremacy of the Bank of England, that stronghold of the Whig interest, they had started in 1711 a new body, known as the South Sea Company, which was to take over nearly £10,000,000 of the National Debt, and in return was to be granted a monopoly of trade with South America and most of the South Atlantic, using the interest payable on the debt for its trading operations. This, it was hoped, would supply a Tory balance to the Bank of England. We shall hear more of the South Sea Company. The foundation of these hopes was the expectation that large profits would

result from the commercial concessions which Spain was to grant as part of the terms of peace, and which were embodied in the Asiento Treaty.

It was all very well to strike a blow at the Bank of England ; but the foundation of a new trading company with large privileges was hardly a good method of striking at the predominance of the ' moneyed men ' whom the Tory squires hated. Oxford and Bolingbroke found a more certain mode of reassuring them in the Act restricting membership of the House of Commons to landed proprietors (1710). But what the mass of ordinary Tories wanted was to attack the Dissenters. Such an attack did not come with good grace from Oxford, who was notoriously in sympathy with the Dissenters, **and** had obtained a good deal of support from them.

To the religious sceptic Bolingbroke the religious **motive** for attacking Dissent made no appeal. But he was very ready to strike at a class who were known to be, in general, supporters of the Whigs and enemies of the Stewarts. Accordingly the Occasional Conformity Act was at last passed in 1711 ; good Churchmen might rejoice that Dissenters were now effectively prevented from becoming members of corporations or holding any public office, and good Tories that the influence of the Whigs in borough constituencies was undermined. And in 1714 another Act followed, for which Bolingbroke was primarily responsible. Excluded from the universities and from all the public schools, the Dissenters had created a series of educational institutions of their own. Bolingbroke's Schism Act aimed at destroying these institutions, and ultimately killing dissent at the root, by prohibiting any person not licensed by a bishop from teaching in any school; thus all young Dissenters would have to receive a Church education, or none. This monstrous piece of persecution was carried by the Tory House of Commons by nearly two to one. It passed through the Lords on the narrowest of margins, and a protest was placed on the records of the House by a number of Whig peers, including, to their honour, five bishops.

The attack on the Dissenters was accompanied by an attack upon some of the chief Whig leaders. Sir Robert Walpole, the ablest Whig debater in the House of Commons, was charged with malversation of public funds, and, though his defence was complete, was sentenced to expulsion from the House and imprisonment in the Tower as guilty of 'notorious corruption.'¹ The Duke of Marlborough was charged with having received a commission of two and a **half**

per cent, on British subsidies to the Allies; and though it was proved that these deductions had been authorised by William in. to provide a secret service fund, a prosecution was started against him, to avoid which he had to take refuge on the continent.

Behind this venomous vendetta against the leading Whigs and the Dissenters lay a still more dangerous design. The Tory leaders were preparing to overturn the Act of Settlement and to bring back the exiled Stewarts; and most of their followers were prepared to support them in this policy, if the Pretender would only renounce Roman Catholicism, or even give an adequate guarantee for the security of the Anglican Church; a substantial number of them were ready to act even without such guarantees. Oxford and Bolingbroke knew that there was no chance of a continuance of their power if the Hanoverians succeeded to the British throne; and they disliked the idea of placing the islands, under a foreign king, whose continental possessions would embroil British policy in all the complications of European affairs. In 1713 they opened secret communications with the Pretender; while the Jacobite Duke of Ormond, who had taken Marlborough's place at the head of the army, was also negotiating with the Pretender's agents. Ormond was appointed Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, in order that the gateway into England might be in safe hands.

Oxford and Bolingbroke seem at first to have taken it for granted that the Pretender would readily renounce his religion as the price of regaining the crown: to the sceptic Bolingbroke it seemed ridiculous that he should hesitate. But to his honour James flatly declined even to discuss the matter when Oxford sent him a draft declaration. More serious, he would not pledge himself to give more than 'reasonable security' for Protestantism. This made Oxford hesitate. Bolingbroke, who cared nothing for religion, was prepared to go on. More and more his restless energy tended to oust Oxford from the leadership. By posing as a stalwart High Churchman, and as the author of the Schism Act, he had won the confidence of the queen: she was weak and ailing, and, as the end of her life drew near, her natural affections made her more friendly to the cause of her exiled brother; she hated her Hanoverian successors, whom she would never allow to visit the kingdom; she hated the Whigs, whom their succession would bring into power. On **July 27, 1714**, she gave way to Bolingbroke's eagerness, and dismissed the vacillating Oxford.

Bolingbroke was now, for the moment, master of the destinies of England. He was able to use all the machinery of government, and a working majority in Parliament, to facilitate a second Stewart restoration; and he looked forward to being the all-powerful minister under the new regime. Meanwhile the Whigs, in grave alarm, saw all the work of the Revolution endangered. During these anxious months they were preparing for resistance. They had collected arms, enlisted troops, and made plans to seize the principal fortresses. Had Bolingbroke's schemes succeeded, it is certain that they would have led to civil war, in which a considerable section of the Tories would have been ranged on the Whig side.

Civil war was averted by the sudden death of the queen before Bolingbroke had had time to make any preparations. She died on the first of August, only four days after Bolingbroke's triumph over Oxford, and before Oxford's place had even been filled. Two days before her death, when it was already certain, a meeting of the Cabinet was called at the royal palace at Kensington. Two Whig Dukes, Argyll and Somerset, who were members of the Privy Council but not of the Cabinet, presented themselves and insisted upon their right to take part in the deliberations as Privy Councillors; for the Cabinet was still an unrecognised institution, though it had practically been the centre of government ever since the Restoration. The presence of these Whigs amid the wavering and frightened ministers turned the scale. Other leading Whigs joined the Council. The fleet was ordered out. Troops were recalled from Flanders. The lords-lieutenant of the counties were ordered to disarm papists and non-jurors. A special envoy was sent off post-haste to summon the Elector of Hanover. Bolingbroke found himself suddenly powerless to do anything. Power had suddenly slipped from his hands, thanks to the resolute action of the Whig leaders. He gave in with the best grace he could muster. The new king was proclaimed, and everywhere the proclamation was quietly received.

On the 18th of September George 1. landed at Greenwich. His first act was to give the chief offices of State to leading Whigs. Then the election of a new Parliament was ordered; and under the influence of the discredit which Bolingbroke's Jacobite intrigues had brought upon the Tories, the Tory majority disappeared, and the Whigs found themselves with a clear majority of 150 in the House of Commons. They

were careful, as we shall see,¹ to use every possible means of ensuring that they should not lose it again. The first act of the new Parliament (March 1715) was to move for the impeachment of Oxford and Bolingbroke. Oxford was fairly safe : nothing very definite could be proved against him. Bolingbroke's situation was far different. To avoid a worse fate, he fled to France, where he became for a time Secretary of State to the Pretender. In 1723, having realised the hopelessness of the Pretender's cause, he accepted a pardon under the great seal, and returned to England to play an even greater though less public part in national affairs.

It was a happy thing for the islands and for the Commonwealth at large that the conspiracy of 1713 and 1714 was baffled ; for its defeat was in a very real sense the consummation of the Revolution. Though the Whigs would have fought for their ideas, it is by no means certain that they would have won, had Bolingbroke been given time to repeal the Act of Settlement, and had the Pretender given (as in the end he doubtless would have given) satisfactory assurances regarding the security of the Anglican Church. A restoration at this stage would unquestionably have meant a great triumph for the theory of divine-right monarchy, and would have involved a serious set-back in the development of the institutions of political liberty. It would also have meant the abandonment of that policy of religious toleration, the establishment of which, half-hearted as it was, had been one of the greatest triumphs of the Revolution.

Nevertheless, though Bolingbroke had played a mischievous and dangerous part in these intrigues, and though we are bound to recognise that his chief motive was a devouring personal ambition, it must be recognised that he was a man of very great power and insight, and that he stood for certain political ideas of real interest and value. This brilliant and dissolute sceptic and man of the world was very far indeed from sharing the traditions and prejudices of the dull country squires whom he led. Like his distant successor Disraeli, who admired him profoundly and was deeply influenced by his ideas, he had set himself to turn Toryism into an intellectual and progressive creed. Though himself the most virulent of partisans, he proclaimed himself the enemy of government by party. He held that the Whig clique of great nobles, backed by the Dissenters and the moneyed men, were striving to obtain a complete control, for their

¹ Bk. vi. chap. i. p. 653 ff.

own purposes, over the whole system of government, and he objected to the Hanoverian succession largely because the Hanoverian kings were likely to become the creatures of the Whig Junto. He held that the monarchy had an essential part to play in the British system of government, especially in preventing the ascendancy of any such oligarchy, and in standing above parties and enlisting the services of the best leaders of national life. He held that the natural leaders of the nation were the landed gentry, and he aimed at ensuring their dominance. In foreign affairs he desired to see Britain pursuing a purely national policy, holding aloof from European complications and wars, and relying mainly on her fleet. In the economic sphere he was feeling his way towards a policy of free trade : he did not believe in carrying the hostilities of politics into the sphere of commerce, and he saw no reason why friendship, encouraged by commercial interchange, should not be established between Britain and her old rivals, France and Spain. These ideas were denied and largely falsified by Bolingbroke's personal ambitions and by his unscrupulous methods. But they were tenable and defensible ideas, and they were to have a great influence in the future.

[Leadam's *England from 1702 to 1760*; Stanhope's *Reign of Queen Anne*; Lecky's *England, in the Eighteenth Century*) Sichel's *Life of Bolingbroke* ; Hutton's *English Church from 1625 to 1714*, Roscoe's *Life of Harley*; Morris' *Age of Queen Anne* (Epochs of Modern History).

BOOK VI
THE WHIG OLIGARCHY; AND THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF MARITIME AND COLONIAL SUPREMACY
(A.D. 1714-1763)

INTRODUCTION

THE fifty years between 1714 and 1763 fall superficially into two almost equal parts. The first, extending from 1714 to 1739, was a period of quiescence, almost of stagnation, in which no changes or developments of great importance to the Commonwealth appeared to be taking place. The second, extending from 1739 to 1763, was filled with almost continuous war in Europe, on the seas, in America and in India, and ended with a series of dazzling successes which seemed to leave the British Commonwealth securely established as the greatest power in the world, mistress of the seas and of the destinies of the lands beyond the seas, to east and west.

Yet in spite of the sharp contrast between the first and the second halves of the period, a real unity links them together. The great conflict which fills the second half was slowly ripening during the first half, when under the shelter of peace the rivalry of France and Britain in oversea trade and in colonies was becoming more acute. Moreover the period as a whole has a distinctive character, because during its whole course the life of the islands and their policy towards the daughter communities in the New World and towards the other States of Europe, were dominated by the ideas of a powerful oligarchy, the land-owning Whig aristocracy, which had secured for itself an extraordinary control over all the machinery of government. For good and for ill the ideas and policy of the Whig oligarchy were to exercise a profound and lasting influence upon the development of the Commonwealth.

The ascendancy of this oligarchy was perhaps a necessary stage in the growth of ordered political freedom in the British realms. It destroyed the possibility of the establishment of a system of absolute monarchy such as was almost universally prevalent in Europe. It turned the British realms into a sort of crowned republic, and showed (for the first time in history) that a large national State could be held together without the existence of a strong central power, independent of public control. It worked out the

machinery of cabinet government dependent upon Parliament. This system, which almost the whole world has borrowed from Britain, could never have been deliberately invented, and could perhaps only have grown up as the organ of a compact oligarchy. It is true that the Parliament upon which the new system was dependent was an unrepresentative body, largely controlled by the oligarchy, which did not hesitate to employ the methods of corruption. But it is probably also true that the machinery of cabinet government could scarcely have grown up under other conditions ; and it is almost certainly true that had the Parliament been entirely free it would have fallen (in the circumstances of the period) into confusion ; and the result of this might have been a restoration of the exiled Stewart kings, and possibly the establishment of a despotism. However that may be, the Whig oligarchy, for its own purposes, devised a scheme of government which proved in the long run to be capable of being used as the implement of a democracy, and which is the only machinery yet invented whereby the control of a large representative body over the conduct of government can be made effective. In another way also the oligarchy rendered real service to the growth of political liberty. It securely established freedom of speech and writing and thought, as part of the daily life of the community ; and it secured that the administration of law should be independent of the will of government.

On the other hand the Whig oligarchy, inspired, as all oligarchies are apt to be, by the spirit of ascendancy, pursued a far from enlightened policy in relation with the subordinate States of the Commonwealth. It perpetuated and even intensified the iniquitous oppression of Ireland. It failed to deal intelligently with the problems of government arising in the high-spirited and prosperous American colonies ; it even emphasised the defects of the old colonial policy which were to lead to conflict and disruption in the next age ; and a large part of the blame for the great schism in the Commonwealth which was to result from the revolt of the thirteen colonies must be laid at the door of those who controlled British policy in the first half of the eighteenth century. Finally, it failed to take any notice of, or to provide any safeguard against, the social ills which were already beginning to result from the rapid increase of British trade and industry.

Both by its achievements and by its failures the work of this period was thus of momentous importance for the future

of the Commonwealth; and when the period closed in a blaze of glory, leaving the British peoples supreme on the seas, supreme in the New World, supreme in trade, and in possession of the beginnings of an amazing empire in the East, it left them also faced by an array of problems such as had never faced any people before—an array of problems whose variety, complexity and difficulty were scarcely at all realised by the generation which had to solve them.

CHAPTER 1

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WHIG OLIGARCHY: THE JACOBITE RISINGS

George I., 1714 : George II., 1727.

§ i. *The Insecurity of the New Regime, and the Jacobite Rising of 1715.*

ALTHOUGH Bolingbroke's plans for the restoration of the Stewarts had been easily defeated, thanks to the suddenness of Queen Anne's death, he always contended that if he had had only six weeks for preparation, instead of four days, he would have been successful. And it is not impossible that he was right. Probably a majority of the people of England would have preferred to call James III. king rather than the German, George I. ; and when the new sovereign made his appearance his total ignorance of the English language and of English ways, and his lack of the arts of popularity, increased the disfavour with which he was regarded. Nobody felt, or could feel, any sentiment of personal devotion for George I. On the other hand, a multitude of the English country gentlemen had a sentimental loyalty for the exiled house, and this feeling was shared even by the London crowd. It would have been stronger and more dangerous if the Pretender had been a Protestant. But in any case the wide existence of this feeling was a grave source of weakness to the new dynasty. As George I. very well knew, it was only from the Whigs that he could expect whole-hearted support. From the first, therefore, he had to put himself wholly in their hands ; the wealth, the territorial influence and the energy of the great Whig nobles, backed by the support of the * moneyed men/ formed the bulwarks of his throne. But the Whigs did not support the new- ruling house from any sense of personal loyalty. They supported it because its weakness and its foreignness gave them the chance of giving effect to the Whig theory of government; and they used their opportunity with such unflinching consistency that they

turned the monarchy, for half a century, into the mere instrument of their own oligarchical power. The fact that George 1. was completely in the hands of the Whigs naturally increased the dissatisfaction of the Tories, which might have been very dangerous if the exiled prince had known how to use it.

In Ireland the great majority of the people would undoubtedly have welcomed a Stewart restoration. But the majority were effectively held down by the system of repression established after the Revolution, and the minority who ruled the country, and who alone had arms and resources, were the staunchest friends of the new line. Nevertheless Ireland always provided recruits for any attempt to restore the Stewarts, however desperate, though it was never proposed to make Ireland itself the scene of any of these attempts.

Finally, in Scotland the Jacobites were extremely strong; and they were reinforced by the resentment against the Union, which had not yet had time to die down : in 1713 there had been a serious demand for the repeal of the Union. The bulk of the Presbyterian ministers in the Lowlands were indeed, as was natural, hostile to the Stewarts, and they carried most of their flocks with them. But even among the Presbyterians a small section of extremists, angry because a rigid Presbyterian system had not been universally enforced, were ready to join the Pretender, and endeavoured to do so in 1715. A very large proportion of the nobles and the smaller landed proprietors in the Lowlands had strong Jacobite sympathies. And in the Highlands, where the clans still lived their own wild life apart, and were always ready for war, many of them were willing to repeat the adventures of Montrose and Claverhouse. They were not moved solely by the sense of traditional loyalty, though this was strong among them : a raid into the Lowlands always had its attractiveness, and the mere fact that the hated clan Campbell and its chief the Duke of Argyll were associated with the Whig side was enough to rouse many of them. In the main it was the clans hostile to the Campbells which joined most readily in the Jacobite insurrections.

It was to be expected that the exiled prince would seize the opportunity of George i.'s accession to strike a blow for his throne. The Whigs were perfectly aware that an attempt was going to be made, for they were brilliantly served by the secret service organisation maintained by Lord Stair, who was sent as ambassador to Paris, and every move of **the**

Pretender and his friends was quickly known to them. The Jacobite plans included a rising in the west of England. It was to be organised and led by the Duke of Ormond, who intended to seize Bristol and other ports, and to raise the Jacobite gentry in Wales as well as Western England. This was to have been the main attempt; and it was hoped that Louis xiv. would give it the support of French troops. But these plans came to nothing. The Whig leaders, fully warned, had the principal points garrisoned; Ormond had to flee from England to escape arrest; and the navy made any landing in force impossible. It was a serious blow to the cause when Louis xiv. died in 1715; for the Regent Orleans, who ruled France in the name of the infant Louis xv., was determined to maintain friendship with Britain. When the ill-fated attempt in Scotland was actually made the Regent not only gave it no help whatever, but on the request of the British ambassador he seized supplies which the Jacobites had put on board ship. Worst of all, the Pretender himself was obstinate and impracticable. He would not be persuaded that it was indispensable that he should disarm the fears of a Catholic revolution which formed the chief obstacle to success both in England and in Scotland. When Bolingbroke drafted proclamations promising security for Protestantism, James altered them with his own hand; and he actually appealed for support to the Pope and others on the express ground that his restoration would mean the triumph of the Catholic faith.

Everything therefore combined to put difficulties in the way of a successful Jacobite rising. No foreign help was to be got, even in money and arms. The rising in England, which was essential for success, was crushed before it started. The Protestant Jacobites were uneasy and alarmed. Well might Bolingbroke say that utter failure was certain. And when a rising was started, in the autumn of 1715, it was carried out in a very inefficient way. The main attempt, in the Highlands of Scotland, was led by the Earl of Mar, a Scottish noble whose unsteadiness of character was expressed in his popular nickname of 'Bobbing John'. He had been a Whig; he had at first welcomed George 1., and only deserted him because he was disappointed of a post; and he was a man of no vigour, courage, or military capacity. Yet even so his insurrection caused grave alarm for a time; for the army had been so much reduced since the Peace of Utrecht that there was at first no sufficient force to deal

vigorously with him, the available troops being needed to guard against the danger of a landing by Ormond in the south.

Mar raised his standard in his own county of Aberdeenshire in September 1715. He was promptly joined by many of the clans, and by October he had occupied Perth and controlled all the central Highlands. Only the Duke of Argyll, with a very small force at Stirling, barred his way southwards. Mar's one hope lay in striking swiftly, yet he lay idle and did nothing. Meanwhile a few Jacobites in Northumberland had risen under Forster, one of the members for the county, and Lord Derwentwater; and a group of lords and gentlemen of the western Scottish border country had joined them with a few hundred men. Reinforced by a small contingent of Mar's army, this handful tried to make its way into Lancashire, where the Jacobites were supposed to be strong; but they were surrounded and forced to surrender at Preston on November 13. On the same day Mar had at last ventured to challenge a battle with Argyll, at Sheriffmuir near Dunblane, hoping to force a way south. It was a straggling, indecisive fight, though the Jacobites largely outnumbered their opponents. But after the battle Mar thought it necessary to fall back again on Perth, and with this retreat all hope of success vanished. In December the Pretender landed in Scotland. But he only arrived in time to see Mar's discouraged force withdraw northwards; his appearance and conduct chilled and disappointed his followers; and before a month was out he had deserted his adherents and fled to France. He could not, by remaining longer, have helped his cause. But his flight completed its discredit. A narrow-minded and obstinate man like his father, and at the same time sensual and faithless to his friends, the Pretender was an impossible leader for a losing cause, or even for a winning one. The remnants of Mar's army melted away, and the rebellion came to an ignominious end. On the whole the rebels were lightly punished, according to the standards of the time. Some eighty of the minor offenders were put to death, some hundreds transported to the colonies. Most of the leaders escaped; but seven nobles were impeached and found guilty, of whom four were reprieved and two, Lords Derwentwater and Kenmore, were beheaded. The seventh, Lord Nithsdale, made a romantic escape in woman's dress with the aid of his wife.

The ignominious failure of the rising of 1715 did not end

the hopes of the Jacobites. In 1718-19 they were all agog with the expectation of help on a large scale from Spain and Sweden. But the warlike King Charles xn. of Sweden, on whom their hopes were fixed, died at the critical moment (1718). A Spanish fleet fitted out to land a force in Britain was scattered by a storm before it could be seen whether the Navy would let it pass ; and only two frigates with a handful of Spanish soldiers reached the mouth of Loch Duich on the wild West Highland coast (1719). A few hundred Highlanders rose to help them. But they were scattered in a fight in Glen Shiel; the Spaniards were compelled to surrender; and one more was added to the list of Jacobite fiascos. Yet another occurred in 1722, when an elaborate plot to seize the King and the Prince of Wales was discovered in London, and Atterbury, the High Church Bishop of Rochester, was banished for his share in it. Another was projected in 1727, when George 1. died, but it came to less than nothing.

Thus all the Jacobite plots failed in turn. Meanwhile the unhappy Pretender had been expelled from France, and had taken refuge first at Avignon and then at Rome, where he lived on a charitable allowance from the Pope. His life was so scandalous that it forced his wife, the proud and beautiful Polish Princess Clementina Sobieski, to take refuge in a nunnery; and he sank into contempt even among his sentimental followers in England. Not until a worthier representative of the Stewart line should appear was there now any danger from this source to the Whig rule in Britain ; and even so the only hope of any vigorous action was among the bold, romantic clansmen of the Scottish Highlands.

Aware of this, the Whig government gave much thought, in the years following 1725, to trying to tame the wild Highlands. They built forts at strategic points, notably Fort William and Fort Augustus, to bridle the clans. They garrisoned them with English troops, and with regiments enlisted among the more loyal Highlanders. More important, they sent General Wade to drive roads through the barren wastes, so as to make them accessible to armies ; and though, as time was to show, this did not avail to prevent a further and more formidable rising in 1745, it was the beginning of the introduction of law and order into the only region in the islands where the primitive usages and the ancient loyalties of tribal society still survived.

§ 2. *The Organisation of the Whig Oligarchy.*

Once the first danger in 1715 had been overcome, it may fairly be said that the constant alarms of Jacobite conspiracies strengthened rather than weakened the ascendancy of the Whigs, by seeming to justify their monopoly of power, and by discrediting the Tories. Not until Jacobitism was dead and buried could Toryism as a political creed again have a serious chance in the islands ; and it is partly to the Jacobites that the long dominance of the Whig oligarchy must be attributed. Thus the rising of 1715 gave to the Whigs the excuse for passing the Septennial Act in 1716, which prolonged the duration of Parliaments from three to seven years, and incidentally extended the life of the overwhelmingly Whig Parliament which had been elected in the first year of George 1. It has often been contended that it was 'unconstitutional' for a Parliament to prolong its own life. The precedent was never imitated until the German war of 1914-18, during which the then sitting Parliament repeatedly prolonged its own life on the ground of national necessity. That argument could equally be used in 1716. The nation needed time to settle down. And the interval gave the Whigs time to organise their own power. They made full and skilful use of the opportunity, bringing all the organs of government effectively under their control, and thus establishing what Disraeli has described as a 'Venetian oligarchy/

In the first place they obtained control of nearly all the powers of the Crown, which were still very large. Practically the king ceased to play any important part in the direction of policy, except in foreign affairs, where his position as Elector of Hanover had an influence. Unable to speak a word of English, he ceased to attend the meetings of the cabinet; and thus established a precedent which no subsequent king has ventured to break, apart from one or two doubtful occasions in the reign of George III. The king's place as president in the cabinet was taken by one of the ministers, who became, in effect, Prime Minister and the responsible head of government. Again, the king never ventured to veto an Act passed by both Houses of Parliament ; and thus the royal veto, which had been freely exercised by William III. and occasionally by Anne, passed into disuse. This represented a permanent change in the British constitution.

In strict law all public offices were filled on the king's nomination. All this vast patronage now fell to his ministers, and it formed the main foundation of their power. Not only the posts that involved administrative work, but an immense number of sinecures and pensions, were henceforth filled by the ministers. They were all given to sound Whigs ; and as many of these posts could be held by members of Parliament, this ensured to every ministry a solid block of trustworthy votes—usually about 120, or nearly one-fourth of the House of Commons. Again, all the minor posts in the customs, the excise, the admiralty dockyards, and so forth, were ultimately at their disposal. In some constituencies the holders of these posts formed so large a proportion of the electorate that, by the simple device of making it clear that those who did not vote for government candidates would lose their billets, it was possible always to ensure the return of the government nominee. These boroughs were known as Treasury boroughs and Admiralty boroughs.

But the use of Crown patronage had even more important aspects. All officers in the navy and the army were appointed by the Crown, and government made sure that they were good Whigs, loyal to the Hanoverian establishment. The bishops and deans of the Established Church were all appointed by the Crown, as well as many holders of lesser benefices. This enabled the Whigs to ensure that the Church, which had been the bulwark of the Tories, should be gradually brought under Whig influence. At first it resulted in a sharp cleavage between the higher ranks of the clergy and the majority of the parochial clergy ; but the fact that all high promotion was difficult if not impossible for men of obtrusively Tory views gradually influenced the mass of the clergy, and the process was assisted by the decay of religious ardour and the spreading of rationalist opinions which was characteristic of this period not only in England but throughout Europe. In the immensely important profession of law the same forces were at work. Every young lawyer knew that his chances of promotion to the bench or to any high legal office would be very small unless he was a sound Whig. Thus the exercise of Crown patronage was the principal foundation upon which the Whig oligarchy rested ; and the distribution of this patronage formed one of the principal cares of ministers. When George III. later set himself to overthrow the oligarchy, his chief mode of attack was the resumption of Crown patronage into his own hand.

The use of the powers of the Crown also gave to the Whigs the means of getting control over local government. At the head of the local administration in each county was the lord-lieutenant of the county, nominated by the Crown. He was practically always a great Whig noble. And as he was charged with the duty of drawing up annually the list of persons suitable to be commissioned as justices of the peace, it followed that the justices also, who carried on in detail all the business of local administration, were mainly, though not wholly, Whigs.

In the House of Lords the Whigs had a standing majority even in Queen Anne's reign. It had been temporarily overthrown by the creation of twelve Tory peers in 1712. But many Tory peers quietly drifted into Whiggism after the accession of George 1. ; every new peer was a Whig ; and the result was that the Whig ascendancy in the House of Lords became absolutely secure. In order to make it safe from any possibility of attack, one group of Whigs proposed in 1719 to restrict the royal prerogative of creating new peers by what was known as the Peerage Bill. If this Bill had been passed it would have gone far to establish a close aristocracy which could only have been overthrown by violence. Fortunately it was thrown out by the wisdom of Sir Robert Walpole and the jealousy of the country gentlemen in the House of Commons, who not only valued the powers of their own House, but saw no reason why they as individuals should allow themselves to be debarred from promotion to the peerage.

The Peerage Bill, indeed, was not necessary as a means of strengthening the Whig control over the House of Lords, which was complete, or of emphasising the power and prestige of the members of that House. There was never a time when aristocratic dignity stood higher in England. Every ministry was mainly composed of peers. A very large proportion of the House of Commons was, as we shall see, composed of the nominees of peers, often their sons and cousins. For that reason the peers had no ground for objecting to the practice whereby the actual business of government was mainly carried on in the Lower House, or to the control over finance which that House jealously claimed. In effect Britain and the British Empire were governed during this period by a group of great families, some seventy in number, who were linked together by intermarriage, and who regarded themselves as having a right to the controlling voice in public affairs. To the

doctrine of the divine right of kings had succeeded the doctrine of the divine right of the great families. It is our business, in this Book, to see how that system worked; and we may say in advance that, on the whole, it did not work badly; that it contributed some ideas and traditions to British government which have been of high value; and that, though it obviously could not last very long and was bound to be overthrown, it was in many ways a useful stage in the advance towards full national self-government.

§ 3. *The House of Commons under the Whigs.*

But since the House of Commons had become the main scene of party conflict, and since its powers, especially over finance, now made it the driving wheel of the British system of government, the Whigs had to ensure their control over this house before their mastery could be effective. The mode in which the elections were managed made this not very difficult. The most independent element in the house consisted of the representatives of the English counties, two for each, who were elected by all owners of land of the value of 40s. per annum and upwards. In quiet times it was easy for a few leading magnates of the county to get their nominees returned; for a long time, it was said, the real choice of the members for Yorkshire was made in the Marquis of Rockingham's drawing-room, and so long as the nation was peaceful and prosperous the county electors were ready enough to accept such nominees. In times of excitement or crisis it was different.

But the boroughs supplied a very large majority of the members, and here it was possible to get a more direct control. The power of the Whigs very largely depended upon the assiduity with which individual Whig magnates devoted themselves to getting control over borough elections. The methods of election, being determined by local custom, varied very widely, but there were few boroughs which could not be influenced by a magnate who would take pains. Some of the boroughs had practically no population: the right of voting belonged to the owners or tenants of the land on which a borough had once existed; and in these cases it was easy to buy up the land. In other cases the franchise belonged to the occupiers of 'burgages' that is to say, **the** original building plots which had been marked out when the mediaeval borough was founded. If a rich man bought up the burgages, regardless of price, as the Duke of Bedford

did at Tavistock, he could usually make his tenants vote for his candidates. In other boroughs the right of voting belonged to the 'freemen/ who were admitted to the privileges of the borough for life by the corporation. These boroughs were apt to be more independent. But some of them were little places, easily influenced by the wishes of a great neighbour who troubled to pay some attention to them. The borough of Bedford, for example, had the friendly habit of asking the duke to approve lists of new freemen, and an obliging corporation might choose a batch of new freemen of the right complexion on the eve of an election. But since a freeman once appointed could not be ousted, these boroughs needed continuous attention, and were apt to be insecure at exciting elections. In other boroughs the corporation elected the members, and some corporations were not difficult to handle: for a round sum they were often prepared to accept nominations. A rich man could establish an influence by public munificence—for example, by providing a water-supply or a park for the borough at his own expense. In a few boroughs every ratepayer or every resident had a right to vote, and these were sometimes troublesome places, where bribery had to be freely employed. In all these ways the Whig magnates were able to get control over a large number of seats in the House of Commons, though they could only do so by constant attention and large expenditure.

Naturally a magnate who had eight or ten seats at his disposal expected to wield a corresponding degree of power: in return for the support he could promise to government, he looked to get offices and posts for himself and his friends. Hence there tended to grow up little groups or interests within the general body of the party, who were constantly busy in intrigues against one another, and in the later part of the period this became very marked. The owners of groups of seats were also usually anxious that their members should do them credit. They were therefore (and this was the best aspect of the system) constantly on the look-out for young men of promise, and when they found them they frequently allowed to them a surprising freedom of action. The remarkable political capacity shown by a long succession of statesmen produced during this period and the next was very largely due to this hunt for men of promise. Nearly all the great names of English politics, from the Elder Pitt to Gladstone, got their first chance of distinguishing them-

selves in this way, and were thus enabled to devote themselves to a political career while still young, without waiting till their names were made and their habits of thought fixed by the practice of other professions. The system of nomination, with all its obvious defects, did not produce bad governing assemblies, it produced unexpectedly good ones.

Nor must it be supposed that the House of Commons elected in this way was entirely venal and corrupt. Far from it. Many a man bought a pocket-borough as the best way of entering the service of his country. Many patrons of boroughs used their power with a high sense of public obligation, and with a determination to see that the best men available were brought into the service of the country. It is not at all unlikely that nomination, under the conditions of the time, produced on the whole better rulers than would have been produced by the free exercise of choice by bodies of electors who had next to no knowledge of public affairs, and very little opportunity of obtaining it. Moreover, in times of real crisis, when the mind of the nation was genuinely stirred, the power of the magnates to control elections largely disappeared, as the elections in the second half of the century were to show. Even at the height of the Whig oligarchy there was always a large body of independent members of the House of Commons not in any way tied down to support government.

We may roughly picture a Whig House of Commons as consisting of three sections. There was a body of placemen and members for government seats, approximately numbering about 120, who could nearly always be counted on to vote for the government in power for the time being, but who sometimes broke away from government control. There was a body of 'independent' members, often spoken of as 'the country gentlemen' and largely consisting of the representatives of the counties and the larger boroughs; they were mostly Whigs, but included some Tories; they held it to be generally their duty to support the king's government, but they were always free to vote against it if they thought it was going wrong. And finally there was a body of 'nominated' members, representing 'rotten' or 'pocket' boroughs, who were nearly all Whigs, but were divided into groups supporting particular cliques among the Whig leaders and particular views of public policy.

Thus while the Whigs dominated the House of Commons, and the very name of Tory almost disappeared during the next half-century, this did not mean that the House of

Commons was robbed of all independence or freedom of action. It meant, on the contrary, that while the main Whig doctrines as to the sovereignty of Parliament and the danger of monarchical power were triumphant, every successive government continued to be in a real sense dependent upon Parliament, and could not hold its place if its views as to national policy did not recommend themselves to Parliament. And, as we shall see in a later chapter, (Chapter ix.) the parliaments of this period were far more genuinely representative of the real mind and will of the nation than the manner in which they were elected would lead us to suppose.

§ 4. *The Young Chevalier, and the Last Great Effort of the Jacobites.*

. The power of the Whigs was thus rooted in a way which made it very difficult to overthrow. But the Jacobites were still to make one last effort to overturn the Whig system of government. This was the desperate and gallant rising of 1745, which was conducted with a spirit of daring that would have commanded victory had it been shown in 1715. In 1745 it was hopeless. The Whigs had enjoyed an interval of thirty years in which to establish the foundations of their power; and these had been, in the main, years of steady peace, and of such general prosperity that both England and Scotland were well content.

Two things suggested the attempt. One was that after thirty years France was once more at war with England, and French help might be hoped for. The other was that Charles Edward, the Young Chevalier,¹ son of the obstinate trifler of 1715, had grown to manhood, and was a debonair and gallant young prince of twenty-live, ready for desperate adventures and made to inspire loyal affection. The house of Stewart, which had suffered so many strange vicissitudes, played a part in so many tragedies, and inspired so much romantic devotion, was not to come to an end in mere contempt, but was to end its long story with one last heroic adventure,² led by a brave youth whose memory could be cherished as that of a not unworthy successor to the moving, romantic figures of Mary Queen of Scots and Charles 1.

The hope of French aid came to nothing : a proposed

¹ *There is a life of Prince Charles by Andrew Lang.*

² *Scott's Waverley* gives a moving account of the rising of 1745.

French invasion of England, planned for 1744, was baffled by the strength and readiness of the navy. And it was best so : the romantic adventure which was to end the Stewart story in glorious disaster was in any case doomed to fail, and it would have lost its appeal to the imagination had it taken the form of a French invasion. The young prince set forth to conquer the islands in a little brig which he had pledged all his credit to buy and to load with muskets and broadswords and a few small field-pieces. Narrowly escaping capture by an English man-of-war, he landed at Moidart in the West Highlands, and unfurled his silken standard in Gleniinnan on August 19, 1745. Stewarts, Camerons and Macdonalds flocked to join him ; and they found him a prince after their own heart. Tall, graceful and athletic, with a charm of manner that never lacked princely dignity, he wore with a gallant air the Highland dress, slept on the bare ground wrapped in his plaid, and shared all the hardships to which the men of the hills were inured. With a swiftness which compared brilliantly with the sluggishness of 1715, he marched through the Highlands by Perth straight to Edinburgh, and the bells of the Scottish capital were sounding the alarm in less than a month from his landing on the shore of Moidart. On September 17 he rode into Edinburgh ; and the sheer romance of his coming, and the gallant aspect of the young prince, swept the citizens off their feet. That night there was a ball at Holyrood, the ancient palace of the Scottish kings : old Scottish ladies in the nineteenth century still remembered it with a thrill: the princely youth, heir of a hundred kings and of as many tragedies woven into the very life of Scotland, captured all hearts.

Meanwhile Sir John Cope, commander of the forces in Scotland, who had marched into the Highlands to crush the prince only to hear that he was sweeping down into the Lowlands, had hurriedly shipped his troops from Aberdeen to Dunbar and was advancing towards the capital. The Young Chevalier and his Highlanders swept down upon him at Prestonpans, four days after the ball, and, coming on him like an avalanche in the morning mist, sent him and his men flying headlong. Only 200 of 2000 escaped. Prince Charles forbade slaughter, and saw to the succour of the wounded.

This brilliant success made the desperate adventure appear to have a real chance of success. France began to think of sending a force to the prince's aid—provided that the English Jacobites would rise. But the English Jacobites would do nothing unless the prince himself came to them.

So the Highland host had to set off into England. They captured Carlisle in November. They marched down through Preston and Wigan to Manchester, where bells rang and bonfires blazed, and some two hundred volunteers joined the force. But already it was evident that there was going to be no general rising. Even Jacobite Lancashire (apart from Manchester) remained uncomfortably quiet. It was one thing to talk romantic conspiracies and drink to the health of 'the king over the water'; quite another to risk life and lands on a desperate forlorn hope. Not a single Englishman of note had joined. And meanwhile, even in Scotland, the Lowland towns, recovering from their first shock, were arming for the defence of the Protestant succession; and if Manchester was carried off its feet, Liverpool was raising troops—far more than two hundred—to fight for King George. Moreover the royal army under the king's second son, the Duke of Cumberland, was coming dangerously near. And the Highlanders were unhappy so far away from home, and were deserting in groups. The little force struggled on as far as Derby, which they reached on December 6. This was only 130 miles from London; and the news caused a veritable panic in the capital: 'Black Friday' when there was a run on the Bank of England which could only be checked by paying out in sixpences, was long remembered.

But London had no need for alarm. The gallant effort was spent. Since there was no response from the English Jacobites, and the little Highland host was melting away, there was nothing to be done but to retreat, back to the Highlands, where alone men seemed willing to risk all for a forlorn hope. The retreat began; and the dispirited army lost its discipline, began to plunder, and found itself harassed by the country folk. Even Manchester, which had cheered the advancing army, stoned its rearguard on the retreat. On December 20 Charles was across the border again; and six days later he was in Glasgow, where Highland reinforcements began to reach him. In January a brilliant victory was won at Falkirk over a superior force of royal troops under General Hawley. But the Duke of Cumberland was coming up, and in spite of the prince's bitter expostulations, the retreat had to be continued into the fastnesses of the Highlands. Nothing but disaster lay before them; and the leaders of the retreating army added to its miseries by quarrels. On April 15, 1746, the agony was at last ended in a bitter fight at Culloden Moor, near

Nairn ; where, amid rain and snow, the hopes of the Stewart house were finally extinguished, and the last scene was enacted in the long wild drama of Highland war.

Culloden was followed by a slaughter, lasting for days after the battle, which earned for Cumberland the name of the Butcher. All the chiefs who had taken part in the rebellion were proscribed. Some of them escaped to France, some remained, hunted fugitives, among their native mountains. The prince himself spent six months in hiding, wandering with a price on his head from place to place, passing through hairbreadth escapes, trusting his life continually to peasants for whom the reward of betrayal would have meant riches, and to heroic women like Flora Macdonald, ere he succeeded in getting away in a small French vessel from the same spot where he had landed.

It was the end of a long and moving story. For the Highlands it was the end of an era; and when, in the tender beauty of the ballads in which the memory of these deeds was enshrined, the singers lamented the brave young prince and longed for his return, it was the whole dead past that they bemoaned, and the wild romantic life of the clans, now at an end for ever. For Culloden was almost necessarily followed by the abolition of clan-government, the enforcement of ordinary law, and the repression, in some respects needlessly severe, of Highland usages and even of Highland dress. The abolition of 'heritable jurisdictions' by an Act of 1747 was the beginning of a new era in Scottish history. In one aspect the '45 has been described as the last struggle of barbarism against civilisation : at all events it was the last struggle of the tribal system against the wider unity of the nation. For in spite of all their touching loyalty to the person of the Young Chevalier, it was for the maintenance of the old ways against the pressure of new ideas that the clansmen really if unconsciously fought, and not for a particular theory of national government. Sooner than might have been hoped, a new loyalty began to replace the old ; and, if the wild strife of the clans was gone for ever, the valour of their sons was ere long to find a new vent. Enlisted by the genius of Pitt, Highland regiments recruited from the Jacobite clans were to win at Ticonderoga, scarcely a dozen years after the ruin of Culloden, that fame of valour which they have since established in every part of the world, by deeds as gallant as ever they did under Montrose or the Young Chevalier, and of far greater value.

As for the prince, he drifted back into exile ; he became a wastrel and a drunkard. What was there for him to live for ? At least his degradation, unlike his father's, was always ennobled by the memory of what he had been. Nor did he wholly lose his courage or his hopes : once at least, and perhaps more often, he visited England in secret, striving to revive the lost cause which alone gave meaning to his life.¹ But there was no more to be done. The tale of the Stewarts was over, like an old song; and it was something that it had ended with deeds of gallantry that men can remember with kindling warmth.

[For the Whig system of government see Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, Robertson's *England under the Hanoverians*, Porritt's *Unreformed House of Commons*, Acton's lecture on 'The Hanoverian Settlement' in *Lectures on Modern History*; for the Jacobite risings, Terry's *The Young Pretender*, Lang's *History of Scotland* (vol. iv.), *Prince Charles Edward*, and *Pickle the Spy*.]

¹ There is a touching picture of Charles Edward as a middle-aged man revisiting the land of his ancestors in Scott's *Redgauntlet*, perhaps the finest of his novels.

CHAPTER II

BALANCE OF POWER

(A.D. 1714-1739)

§ i. *Characteristics of the Period,*

THE twenty years following the treaties of Utrecht and Rastadt, when the Whigs were establishing their power in the islands, were a time of great complexity and confusion in the affairs of Europe. There was no central dominating interest in European history during this period, such as the wars of religion, and later the greatness and ambition of France, had earlier provided. All the innumerable despots of Europe, great and small, were each following their separate interests, and the shifts and veers of their alliances and intrigues are extremely bewildering. Into this spider's web Britain was drawn to an extent never before known, partly because she had become, as a result of the overthrow of Louis xiv., the greatest of the European powers, and partly because the position of her king as also Elector of Hanover inevitably involved her in the politics of Germany and of Northern Europe, which were the most complicated part of the web. For a time foreign politics became the chief pre-occupation of British statesmen, and it may fairly be said that their principal aim was the maintenance of peace, an aim in which they were for a long time successful. It is not necessary for us to follow in any detail the tangled tale of these years. But some aspects of it are important, for new factors were emerging in this period which were in the future to be of great significance both to Europe at large and to the Commonwealth as a whole.

In the first place the political geography of Eastern and Northern Europe was being recast. The formidable Turkish empire, which had at one time seemed to threaten the civilisation of the West, was falling into decay, and giving rise to the thorny problem known as the Eastern Question ; the once great monarchy of Poland had become manifestly impotent, and its destruction at the hands of its greedy

neighbours was already foreshadowed; the brief period of Swedish greatness was being brought to an end; and, rising on the ruins of these three powers, the gigantic empire of Russia was beginning to loom above the horizon of European politics.

In the second place, while no great changes took place in Western Europe, its complex politics were marked by two features of interest. On the one hand, the aspiration after some organised method of preserving peace received open expression and was widely discussed; on the other, the co-operation of the old rivals, Britain and France, the beginning of international arbitration by these powers and the holding of frequent congresses to remove causes of controversy by discussion, not only gave to Europe a long interval of peace, but showed that the maintenance of peace by international co-operation was not wholly impracticable.

§ 2. *The Decay of Turkey, Poland and Sweden, and the Rise of Russia.*

During the years when Western Europe had been wholly engrossed by the struggle against Louis xiv. (1688-1714), highly significant changes had been taking place in Eastern Europe, and the influence of these changes made itself seriously felt in the general European situation after 1714, and has made itself felt ever since.

The first of these was the decay of the power of the Turks, the beginning of which we have already noted (Book v. Chapter 11.). The war against the Turkish power in Hungary had been ended by the treaty of Carlowitz in 1699, which drove the Turks beyond the Danube. They renewed the struggle in 1715, hoping to find the Habsburgs exhausted by the war against Louis xiv.; but they only lost still further territory. After the treaty of Passarowitz in 1718 the Turks were never again able seriously to threaten any of the Christian powers in Europe, and the time was soon to come when the chief importance of Turkey would arise from her weakness, and from the rivalry of her great neighbours, eager to succeed to the control of her decaying empire.

The second great change which confronted European statesmen in 1714 was that Poland, hitherto accounted one of the great States of Europe, had fallen into helpless weakness. We have seen (Book v. Chapter 11.) how gallant a part the Poles had played, under John Sobieski, in stemming the Turkish peril and saving Vienna itself from capture

(1683). But already in Sobieski's time and before it Poland had been terribly weakened by her absurd system of government. Her kings were elected; and this meant that they had no firmly established authority; their powers and their resources diminished with every successive election. This would not have mattered had there been other effective organs of government. But the Polish Diet or Parliament (which consisted entirely of nobles) was the most preposterously ineffective body that has ever claimed to rule a country. Its decisions had to be unanimous; and a single obstinate member could render all its proceedings futile. Besides this, the country was deeply divided between Catholics and Protestants, and hampered by the jealousies of rival noble houses. When the great Sobieski died in 1696 these jealousies prevented the election of his son, or of any Polish noble, as king. A foreigner, Augustus the Elector of Saxony, was chosen as king. During his reign (which lasted until 1733) the unhappy country was dragged into a miserable war to which we shall have to allude later; a rival king, Stanislas Lcsczinski, was set up (1704) by the formidable Swedish conqueror, Charles xii. of Sweden; and the country became the helpless prey of foreign armies and domestic factions, from which it seemed to be quite unable to defend itself. Henceforth, though still one of the biggest States of Europe on the map, Poland was regarded with mere contempt by its neighbours, and only their mutual jealousies delayed its destruction, which was to be brought about before the end of the century.

While Poland decayed, a new great power had suddenly emerged in the East: the Russian Empire, which had hitherto counted for nothing in the life of Europe. The appearance of Russia as a European power of importance dates from the accession of the vigorous, brutal and masterful barbarian, Peter the Great (1689-1725). While the war between William iii. and Louis xiv. was raging in the West Peter was violently forcing his unwilling subjects to adopt Western methods, was organising an army and the beginnings of a navy, was visiting the West *incognito* in order to learn the secrets of its civilisation, and working with his own hands in the dockyards at Deptford and in Holland, and was bringing in Western advisers of all kinds (mostly Germans) to aid him in dragging Russia out of barbarism and forcing her to turn her eyes westwards. Keenly interested in naval matters, Peter realised that Russia could never become a great power till she had access to

more open waters than the ice-bound White Sea.¹ But the Turks held all the northern shores of the Black Sea; the Swedes held Finland and the lands known as the Baltic Provinces (Ingria, Esthonia, Livonia); the Poles held Courland, while the vast area of Poland was interposed between Russia and Central Europe. If Russia was to be brought into living contact with Europe, it seemed that she must advance at the expense of these powers—Turkey, Sweden and Poland.

Peter's first attack was directed against the Turks, and in 1696 he gained a brilliant if temporary success by the capture of Azof on the sea of that name; this was the beginning of the age-long conflict between Russia and Turkey. But an outlet on the Baltic would be far more valuable than an outlet on the Black Sea, the mouth of which was barred by Constantinople. In 1699, therefore, Peter eagerly became a party to an alliance which included Denmark and Poland, the ancient foes of Sweden, with the object of seizing the chance of destroying the Swedish power which seemed to be presented by the accession of a boy-king, Charles xn.² But the allies found they had no easy task before them; for Charles xn.—only seventeen when the war began—showed himself to be one of the most superb, daring and romantic fighting leaders in all history; and the war thus lightly and greedily started was to last for twenty-one years.

We cannot attempt to follow its extraordinary course, or to narrate Charles xii.'s incredible achievements. He crushed Denmark with a single blow (1700); he routed Peter the Great's host of 60,000 at Narva with one-eighth of their numbers (1700); he overran and conquered all Poland and set up a king of his own, a Polish noble, Stanislas Lesczinski (1704); he invaded Russia and Saxony in turn, and the Duke of Marlborough himself had to travel into Saxony to secure the neutrality of this marvellous youth of twenty-five in the war against Louis xiv. He had raised Sweden to a higher position than she had ever held; and if he had been content to make peace at this moment, the history of Europe might have been different, for (to name nothing else) Poland might have been saved from ruin. Unhappily Charles allowed himself to be drawn into a dangerous campaign in the heart of Russia; and there, at the

¹ See the maps, Atlas, Plates 9 and 26 (a); Plate 26 (a) is useful for all this section.

² There is a life of Charles xii., by R. Nisbet Bain, in the *Heroes of the Nations Series*,

battle of Pultawa (1709), the gallant but exhausted Swedes were overwhelmed. Charles had to take refuge in Turkey, where he stirred up the Turks to attack the Russians, with the result that they regained Azof.

The defeat at Pultawa revived at once the hostile league which Charles xii.'s early successes had broken up. During his absence in Turkey the Danes attacked Sweden, with little success; King Stanislas became helpless in Poland, and the foreign and disastrous rule of Augustus of Saxony was restored; Peter the Great conquered the Baltic Provinces, which remained unchallenged parts of the Russian Empire until 1917, and Finland, which he soon had to return. Russia had reached open water on the Baltic; and Peter began to build Petrograd, 'the eye through which Russia looks out upon Europe/

The Swedes were waging their desperate war against a ring of foes when George 1. succeeded to the British throne. And shortly before his succession George had, as Elector of Hanover, practically joined in the combination against Sweden, in order to get possession of the bishoprics of Bremen and Verden,¹ which Sweden had held since the Thirty Years' War. Thus Britain found herself indirectly involved in the northern war because of her sovereign's continental possessions, over which she had no control. And the young hero, Charles xn., who returned from his exile in Turkey to direct the defence of his native land a few weeks after George's landing in England, was naturally and inevitably turned into a supporter of the Jacobite cause, and promised his help for a landing which was perhaps only prevented by his death in 1718.

In 1715, Swedish privateers were seizing numerous British ships in the Baltic; British fleets had to be sent to safeguard trade interests in these waters, and their mere presence loaded the scales against unhappy Sweden. These episodes showed how difficult were the relations created by the link with Hanover, over whose policy the British government and Parliament could exercise no control; they seemed to justify Bolingbroke's opposition to the Hanoverian succession. It was difficult to maintain a real neutrality under such circumstances; and though the Whig ministers were resolved to avoid war with Sweden if possible, they found themselves involved in great difficulties. After Charles xn.'s death, indeed, British influence was ranged on the side of Sweden; a British fleet joined the Swedish fleet to protect Stockholm

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 9.

from the danger of a Russian attack; and there was for a moment even a possibility of war with Russia: only the fear of the British navy compelled Peter the Great to be reasonable. It was largely by British mediation that Sweden was enabled to make a series of treaties with one after another of her ring of foes, the last of them being the treaty of Nystadt (1721), whereby the Baltic Provinces were formally ceded to Russia. This treaty may be said to mark the moment when Sweden, after her brilliant century of greatness, sank to the level of a third-rate power.

The treaty of Nystadt marked the emergence of Russia as a power of the first rank, and henceforth that vast, half-barbaric State had always to be counted with as a factor of importance in European affairs. This was in itself a fact of great moment, especially in conjunction with the downfall of Sweden and the hopeless weakness and disorganisation of Poland, the two States which might have held 'Russia in check. These events were of the deepest concern to Europe and to the British Commonwealth. But at the moment what made these events important to Britain was that they showed how much she must henceforth be involved in the concerns of Europe; that they demonstrated the high value of sea-power, the mere existence of which, without any use of force, first of all checked Charles xn.'s project of helping the Jacobites, and later compelled Peter the Great to act with greater moderation than he would naturally have shown; and finally that they showed how British policy might be hampered and complicated by the connexion with Hanover.

§ 3. *The Franco-British Alliance for the Maintenance of Peace.*

Meanwhile in the west and south the political situation had been transformed by the death of Louis xiv.; and out of the settlement of Utrecht, which was to have brought peace to the world, new problems and difficulties had arisen which kept Europe constantly on the verge of war. The equilibrium of the continent was precarious; and in the judgment of the statesmen of the age peace could only be maintained by an anxious and watchful attention to the 'balance of power.' Perhaps, as things then were, they were right: in the confused and unhealthy condition of Europe, there was a strong temptation to the despots who

were the masters of almost all the States to seize opportunities for extending their power.

After the treaty of Utrecht one of the diplomats who had taken part in the Congress, the Abbe de St. Pierre, had published a *Project of a Treaty to Secure Permanent Peace*, which expressed the weariness of unending warfare felt by many of the best men. St. Pierre urged that all States should combine in a league to maintain peace, by means of a permanent congress of ambassadors who would settle all disputes by arbitration. It was a noble dream; and during the next eighty years it inspired a long discussion in which great thinkers like Leibniz, Voltaire, Rousseau and Kant speculated upon the possibility of maintaining lasting peace by agreement among the nations. But as things were it could be no more than a dream, firstly because it was futile to expect that the four hundred absolute monarchs, great and small, who controlled the destinies of Europe would ever consent to have their ambitions checked by such a body, or deal faithfully with it if it was formed; and secondly because the root principle of such a system would have to be the maintenance of the existing division of territories, and the defence of every despot against the loss of his power; and this would have been to give an unhealthy permanence to an unnatural state of things. There could be no 'League of Nations' until the divisions of States followed the natural lines of national divisions, and this was very far from being the case.

As things were, the only chance of maintaining peace seemed to lie in maintaining the 'balance of power'—that is to say, in preventing any State from imagining that it could profit by the unsettlement which wars bring. The Whig statesmen of this age were firm believers in 'the balance of power' and it is fair to say that, in pursuing it, they helped to give to Europe, or to the greater part of Europe, a longer interval of peace than she had yet enjoyed during the modern age.

On Louis xiv.'s death his successor was his infant great-grandson, Louis xv., a child so frail that he was expected to die. The next heir in the strict line of succession would be Philip v., King of Spain, whose succession was forbidden by the treaty of Utrecht, but who refused to recognise the validity of his exclusion. The real ruler of France was the Regent, the Duke of Orleans, who, being descended from a brother of Louis xiv., would have a claim to the throne **if Philip** were excluded. It was therefore to the interest of the

Regent that the treaty of Utrecht should be maintained, and for that reason he was anxious to make friends with Britain, and to join in upholding the treaty.

As soon as the failure of the Jacobite rising had made it clear that the new king was secure on his throne, the Regent therefore opened negotiations, which led to the conclusion of a Triple Alliance (January 1717) between Britain, France and the Dutch for the maintenance of the treaty of Utrecht. The friendship thus established between France and Britain formed the chief factor in European politics for twenty years, and the principal means of preserving peace. It was equally advantageous to both sides, and it assisted the remarkable development of French as well as of British trade which marked this period. Britain and France, acting in conjunction, were in fact able to check or overawe every possible disturber of the peace in Western Europe.

Yet from the first there was opposition to this policy, notably in France, where the 'Spanish' party was always able to make itself heard. In each country there were men who felt that the national interests were being subordinated to those of the nation's chief trade rival. And in France, as the boy-king outgrew his weakness, the original motive for the alliance grew weaker, and the party which wanted to revive the policy of Louis xiv. in close alliance with Spain became more influential at court. The experiment of friendly co-operation between France and Britain, useful as it was, was not likely to have a very long life.

The sources of disturbance during these years were the two powers which were dissatisfied with the settlement at Utrecht, Spain and Austria. At first Spain was the chief disturbing factor. She had undergone a real revival of vigour under the influence of the French administrators brought in by Louis xiv. Under the guidance of an able minister, Cardinal Alberoni, she was not only building up her trade and industry but creating a navy and preparing for war. Her first object was to regain her lost Italian possessions, which the settlement of 1713-14 had given to Austria. But the obstacle to Alberoni's ambitious schemes was the alliance of Britain and France to maintain the treaty settlement. He tried to stir up faction in France. He took up the cause of the English Jacobites, and prepared to send a big expedition to support a landing by Ormond. He subsidised the Turks against Austria, and stimulated a revolt in Hungary. He endeavoured to make an alliance both with Sweden and with Russia

for a joint attack upon Britain. All Europe was to be thrown into confusion, and a general war might have resulted.

The Franco-British alliance checked all these restless plans. The Triple Alliance was expanded into the Quadruple Alliance (1718) by the inclusion of Austria. British mediation helped to bring about the conclusion of the Austro-Turkish war in the treaty of Passarowitz. And when Alberoni, persisting in his schemes, proceeded to attack Sicily, a British fleet practically destroyed the infant Spanish navy in the battle of Cape Passaro, off the Sicilian coast, while a French army invaded Spain. In the end Alberoni had to be dismissed (1719); and a settlement was arrived at whereby two Italian duchies were given to the Spanish queen's son, and the Duke of Savoy was persuaded to hand over Sicily to Austria, taking Sardinia in exchange; the Habsburg claim to the Spanish crown, which had never been dropped, being finally abandoned. A general war had been averted by the Franco-British alliance, and by the naval strength of Britain, which made a Spanish attack on Italy futile.

This danger was no sooner averted than a new one arose. Both Spain and Austria were still unsatisfied. Spain was angry at the British possession of Gibraltar and Minorca. Austria was annoyed at the arrangement by which the chief 'barrier' towns of the Netherlands (Austrian since the treaty of Utrecht) were garrisoned by Dutch troops. The Emperor was also anxious to develop the foreign trade of the Netherlands, and he had founded at Ostend a trading company whose activities were jealously regarded by the English and the Dutch.

In 1725 the two restless and aggrieved States whose differences had nearly led to war and were then being laboriously adjusted at a European congress at Cambrai, suddenly made friends, in what is known as the treaty of Vienna. Spain undertook to give special facilities for trade in the Indies to the Ostend Company. Austria undertook to help in the reconquest of Gibraltar and Minorca. More than once Britain had expressed her willingness to negotiate about Gibraltar, to which little importance was then attached, but the demand for its retrocession at the pistol's mouth was not to be tolerated. Once again Spain became the centre of a coalition against Britain, and detailed plans were drawn up for a Jacobite invasion; and once again the party in France which was hostile to the British alliance

began to be active. There was feverish negotiation in all the courts of Europe during 1726 and 1727.

But the Franco-British alliance held, and it was supplemented (in the treaty of Hanover) by an agreement with Prussia (1725), which the Dutch and other powers subsequently joined. A British fleet was sent to blockade the Spanish treasure-fleet in Porto Bello : without the millions which it was bringing, no war could be waged by Spain, and the blockading squadron succeeded in preventing its sailing. Another British fleet was sent to cruise off the coast of Spain. Meanwhile the Spaniards had begun the attack on Gibraltar (February 1727)—the second siege which that fortress had undergone since its capture in 1704. But an attack from the landward side while the British fleet commanded the seas was hopeless, and after four months the siege was abandoned. The Emperor saw that a war promised no advantage, and agreed to refer his grievances to a congress, which deliberated for months at Soissons. Spain remained sulky, though in the end she came to an agreement with the allies at Seville (1729).

§ 4. *The Gradual Rupture of the Franco-British Alliance and the Question of Poland.*

Once again the Franco-British alliance and British sea-power had prevented the outbreak of what might have developed into a general war. But the alliance was beginning to be strained. It was being strained by the naval and commercial preponderance of Britain, which was also (together with the possession of Gibraltar), the chief source of Spanish unrest. Britain professed her willingness to negotiate regarding Gibraltar on the basis of an interchange : Florida had been earlier suggested as an equivalent. But the Spaniards would not hear of equivalents ; and meanwhile Gibraltar had become, thanks to the sieges, an object of pride to the British peoples : any notion of surrendering it, as Lord Townshend said in 1728, ' would be sufficient to put the whole nation in a flame/

Already there were ominous indications that the common resentment of France and Spain against the overwhelming sea-power of Britain would bring about an alliance between the two Bourbon powers. Already jealousy between Britain and France was becoming acute ; and was being stirred up by the opposition parties in both countries. The two governments were quarrelling about the demolition *pi* the

fortifications of Dunkirk, which had been promised by France in the treaty of Utrecht; they were disputing also about the persecution of Protestants which was still going on in France. More important disputes were rising about the erection of French forts in the Mississippi, about the boundaries of the province of Acadia, ceded by France in 1714, and about the ownership of West Indian islands. In 1730 the two nations agreed to settle the fate of the island of St. Lucia by arbitration—perhaps the first resort to this method of settling differences in modern history. But, as we shall see in the next chapter, the trading and colonial interests of Britain and France, as well as of Britain and Spain, were clashing at too many points to make a friendly agreement easy. The upholders of friendship and alliance, Sir Robert Walpole in Britain and Cardinal Fleury in France, were losing ground year by year; year by year the imperialist groups in each country, William Pitt and his friends in Britain, Belleisle and his group in France, were becoming more aggressive.

In 1733 an event happened which, though *it* might appear to have no relation with the affairs of the western powers, nevertheless brought these tendencies to a head. Augustus of Saxony, King of Poland, died: and the question of the succession to the Polish throne agitated Europe. This, it might have been supposed, was a question for the Poles to decide. And Polish national feeling was all in favour of the election of Stanislas Lesczinski, who had for a time held the Polish throne under the protection of Charles xii. of Sweden. The succession of Lesczinski, who was himself a Pole, might have saved Poland from ruin by reviving the national spirit of the country and rescuing it from its dependence on foreign courts; and all good Polish patriots supported him. But for this precise reason Poland's great neighbours, Russia and Austria, were opposed to his succession. They wanted to keep Poland weak and helpless; and they declared for the candidature of the son of the late king, Augustus iii., Elector of Saxony.

If the Franco-British alliance had remained firm, and had given its support to the Polish national candidate, Poland might have been saved from the ruin which subsequently befell her. But the British feeling was that British interests were not concerned in Poland, and Walpole refused to take any part in the war. 'Madam, there are fifty thousand men slain this year in Europe/ he said to the queen, who was in favour of intervening, * and not

one Englishman/ It was a legitimate boast, and represents one of the strongest arguments for a pacific policy. Yet, looking at the question from a broadly European point of view, there were strong arguments in favour of helping the resuscitation of Poland, whose final downfall was ensured by the war. And it was also clear that British abstention helped to precipitate the gradually growing cleavage between Britain and France.

For France had decided to take the part of Lesczinski, partly because Louis xv. had married his daughter, partly from a desire to establish French influence in Poland as a barrier against the House of Austria; this was indeed a traditional French policy. And, looking about for allies in an attack on Austria, France turned to Spain, who, caring nothing about Poland, was eager to seize Austrian lands in Italy. In 1733 a secret treaty was made between the two Bourbon powers, the first of three such agreements to which the name of 'Family Compacts' has been given. The two kings pledged themselves to eternal friendship, and guaranteed one another's possessions in Europe and elsewhere. They promised one another mutual trade concessions. They annulled all previous treaties affecting their relations—including the treaty of Utrecht. And France promised that Spain should have all conquests made in Italy, and undertook to help her to regain Gibraltar. But not a word about Poland. Obviously this treaty (which was broken almost as easily as it was signed) was aimed principally against Britain; and it marks the real end of the Franco-British alliance which had hitherto preserved European peace.

The terms of the Family Compact showed that France really cared little about Poland. And in fact the War of the Polish Succession was mainly fought in Italy, against Austria. No effective help was given to the unfortunate Poles, though they gathered in Dantzic, the chief Polish port, in the hope of French aid from the sea. When it came, it was too late to be of any avail. Russia and Austria placed their candidate on the Polish throne; and henceforth Russian and Austrian (especially Russian) influence was predominant in Poland, which lay a helpless victim before its future plunderers. When the war was ended, in 1735, by the mediation of Britain and the Dutch, the subordination of Poland to Russia and Austria was accepted as an established fact, and the only important provisions in the final treaty (1738) related to Italy and the West. Louis xv. got for his father-

in-law, the ex-king Stanislas, the duchy of Lorraine; so he was provided for, and dynastic interests were safeguarded while Poland was left to the wolves. When Stanislas died (as he did in 1766) Lorraine was to go to France ; so France had gained something. Austria gave up Naples and Sicily to a Spanish Bourbon prince ; so the Bourbons were provided with a third European kingdom, which they kept till Italy became an united realm. Austria got the northern Italian duchies of Parma and Piacenza for herself, and the duchy of Tuscany for the Duke of Lorraine, who was soon to marry the heiress of the Austrian dominions. More important, the Emperor, who had no male heir, and had been for years collecting signatures to a ' Pragmatic Sanction' guaranteeing the succession of his daughter Maria Theresa to all his lands, got the signatures of France and Spain, having earlier obtained those of nearly every other European power. Everybody was pleased.

But Poland's ruin was assured. And the grouping of the European allies which had hitherto preserved an uneasy peace was broken. And Spain and France were preparing to join forces in a great struggle with Britain for maritime and colonial supremacy. The era of unrestful and precarious balance of power was over ; the struggle for leadership in the non-European world was about to begin.

[The period is covered by A. Hassall, *The Balance of Power*. See also Mahan's *Influence of Sea-Power upon History* ; Chance's *George J. and the Northern War*, Nisbet Bain's *Scandinavia*, his *Charles XII.*, his *The First Romanovs*, and his *Pupils of Peter the Great*; Waliszewski's *Peter the Great* (Eng. trans.) ; Rambaud's *History of Russia* (Eng. trans.); Lane-Poole's *Turkey*; Hume's *Spain*; Muir's *Nationalism and Internationalism*; Armstrong's *Elizabeth Farnese* ; Acton's lecture on ' the Hanoverian Succession ' in *Lectures on Modern History*.]

CHAPTER III

TRADE AND COLONIAL RIVALRY

(A.D. 1714-1739)

§ 1. *Exaggerated Expectations from Tropical Trade.*

WE have seen in the last chapter that trading and colonial jealousies were bringing about an increasing friction between Britain on the one side and both Spain and France on the other ; and since these jealousies were soon to bring about a tremendous and world-wide conflict, it is needful to understand their causes and their development.

Nothing was more obvious to Europe, at the end of the struggle against Louis xiv., than that foreign trade was an inexhaustible source of wealth and strength to a nation : it seemed plain to all that the triumphant position of the maritime powers, and especially of England, was primarily due to this cause. Even more eagerly than in the previous era, the European peoples set themselves to secure the wealth which could be derived from over-sea trade, especially with the tropics. Thus the Emperor himself, as we have seen, set on foot the Ostend Company in the hope of getting some of this wealth ; and opportunities for tropical trade were some of the chief subjects of negotiation in every successive treaty, from that of Utrecht with its Asiento appendix to the treaty between Spain and Austria of 1725 and the Family Compact of 1733. It was not territory that men aimed at, but trade : practically no new colonies were established by any of the powers during this period, with the exception of the French settlement at New Orleans (1717) and the English colony of Georgia (1733).

Highly exaggerated ideas were entertained as to the amount of profit that could be earned from tropical trade ; and these ideas were fostered and encouraged by the evidence which the last generation had afforded of the way in which the organised co-operative use of capital, and the employment of national credit, could be made to produce wealth. We have already seen how the Bank of England and the great trading companies had enabled Britain to bear easily

the burden of great wars, while at the same time immensely extending her trading activities ; and the same methods had been pursued in other countries, notably in Holland. Men were discovering the power of capital and credit, and (like many people in our own days) they attributed to them a sort of magical quality, a power of making wealth by themselves ; not realising that wealth can only be increased by the expenditure of work in making desirable things available for use, and that capital and credit can only add to wealth in so far as they help in this process.

Because of these exaggerated ideas the early part of the eighteenth century was a period of wild speculation, especially in France and England ; and though the speculative madness ranged over the whole field of commerce and industry, it was most unrestrained in regard to enterprises directed towards tropical trade. In France a brilliant and sanguine Scotsman, John Law, conceived a grandiose scheme for bringing the whole of the foreign trade of France, and all her colonies, under the control of a single great company, which was to be linked with a huge national banking organisation, and the two together were to relieve the State of the whole burden of the national debt, and were to take over the collection of taxes. The expectation of immense profits from the East and West Indies, and from the new colony of Louisiana (founded in 1717) led people to invest lavishly in these schemes. But the trade could not possibly provide the profits necessary for satisfying these expectations, and though Law in carrying out his system made many useful economic reforms, greatly reduced the national burden of debt, and gave a remarkable stimulus to French trade abroad, his projects ended in an appalling financial crash in 1720.

Almost at the same moment a similar speculative mania broke out in England. It was due to a scheme far less ambitious than Law's, but resting, like his, upon a wholly fictitious idea of the profits to be made from tropical trade. The South Sea Company had been founded by the Tories in Queen Anne's reign partly to take over a large amount of floating debt, and partly to provide a makeweight to the Bank of England. In 1720 the company offered to take over the bulk of the National Debt, to accept a lower rate of interest upon it from government, and either to give to the holders of the debt South Sea stock instead, or to buy them out. This arrangement was undoubtedly advantageous to government, since it reduced very largely the burden

of interest on the debt. But the amazing thing was that everybody became wildly eager to obtain South Sea stock, partly owing to the notion that there was something magical about public credit, partly owing to the universally exaggerated idea of the profits to be made from the South Sea trade. In reality this trade could not possibly yield profits high enough even to cover the difference between the higher and the lower rate of interest on the debt, still less to pay additional profits to those debt-holders who took South Sea stock in exchange. Yet for a time South Sea stock rose to ten times its value, and the company promised dividends of fifty per cent. The speculative mania thus started extended into all sorts of other spheres, and a host of bubble companies were started, for the most preposterous purposes. There could be only one end to this : a huge crash, which came within a few months of the launching of the scheme. Thousands of people were ruined ; a few made colossal fortunes out of speculation. Parliament had to take the matter up ; and Sir Robert Walpole made his reputation by the skill in which he dealt with the problem.

The details of these schemes do not concern us. Neither Law's projects nor the South Sea Bubble had any permanent influence upon the course of trade, except, perhaps, by teaching men caution. But they show how eager this generation was to make money, and how convinced it was that vast amounts of money were to be made out of colonial and tropical trade. And the popular belief had thus much of justification, that undoubtedly the wealth made by over-sea trade in this period was beyond all comparison greater than it had ever been before.

§ 2. *The Chief Spheres of Tropical Trade : the Slave-Trade and the Great Triangle.*

In the far Eastern trade the Dutch still had the upper hand, and the other western nations did little traffic beyond the straits of Malacca. In Indian trade all the nations had their share, and this was undoubtedly a period of growing activity, though it was hampered by the political disorganisation into which India was falling. The English East India Company, in particular, had made a very advantageous arrangement (1717) with the Mogul and with the Nawab who ruled Bengal, whereby their goods for export were freed from all customs duties in Bengal ; and as a consequence their settlement at Calcutta had risen

from a village to be a thriving city of 100,000 souls—nearly all, of course, Indians. The French East India Company, reorganised after the collapse of Law's schemes, was also doing profitable business, especially in the later part of the period, though it was quite unable to rival the English company. But, prosperous as the period was, the East India trade was not yet bringing any very great stream of wealth into Britain and France. Indeed, as we have seen, it was regarded with a good deal of distrust at home, because, since there was as yet no great sale for European goods in the Indian market, the Indian goods brought to Europe had to be paid for largely in gold and silver. India was, in fact, then as always since, a sponge for the precious metals, sucking them in only to hoard or bury them, and thus making little or no use of her accumulated wealth for the creation of fresh wealth: that is one of the reasons why India was and is a poor country, in spite of her great resources.

It was not therefore in any large degree the Eastern trade which in this period was exciting Europe by dreams of wealth, but mainly what we may call the Atlantic trade. The islands of the West Indies were producing sugar in ever-increasing quantities—cotton also, and tobacco, but mainly sugar; and all Europe was eager to buy the sugar at high prices. It was purchased chiefly by the produce of the English and French manufactures. This lucrative trade was therefore largely in the hands of the French and the English, and during this period its principal feature was the remarkable success and prosperity of the French sugar islands, St. Dominique, Martinique and Guadeloupe,¹ which were rapidly distancing their English rivals. This seems to have been due to the greater efficiency of French methods. The severity of the French competition was causing a good deal of alarm in England, though the English islands were prosperous also. And one disturbing feature was that the New England colonies, which had developed a large shipping trade, were resorting to the French islands, and buying cargoes of French sugar, molasses or rum in exchange for their fish, timber and other products. As this, though not contrary to the Navigation Acts, was in conflict with the principle of inter-imperial trade which inspired the British system, an attempt was made to deal with it in 1733 by what was known as the Molasses Act, which imposed prohibitive duties on French molasses

¹ See the map of West Indies, Atlas, Plate 53.

imported into the North American colonies. This Act was of quite a different character from earlier trade Acts affecting the colonies. Its aim was to encourage the British West Indian settlements, and to make the empire economically self-sufficient; and it involved the levying of duties in New England. Though its validity was not seriously questioned, it was deeply resented in New England, because it interfered with a very profitable traffic; and the Molasses Act undoubtedly contributed to produce that irritation in New England which led in the end to the dissolution of the first British Empire.

In addition to the direct trade between the home countries and their own West India Islands, there was a large trade with Spanish America. Britain had secured, by the Asiento Treaty, a monopoly of this trade so far as it was recognised by the Spanish government, and these privileges were exercised by the South Sea Company. But they amounted to little: apart from the monopoly of the import of negro slaves, the company was only permitted to send one ship of 500 tons annually to the Spanish dominions. The capacity of the one ship was illegitimately expanded by re-loading it at sea. But even so the volume of the trade was small—far too small to satisfy the wants of the Spanish colonists. Hence a wholesale system of smuggling grew up, in which all the nations took part, though the British were probably the most active.

Smuggling was, of course, a breach of Spanish law, and the wholesale scale on which it was carried on aroused a natural resentment in Spain. But in attempting to exclude all foreign trade save what could be carried in one annual ship, the Spanish government was attempting the impossible. No other country imposed such extravagant restraints. As it was manifestly impossible to guard effectively the whole coastline of the Spanish mainland and islands, Spain attempted to check the smuggling trade by the wholly illegitimate method of sending out coastguard vessels to stop and search trading ships on the high seas. The right of search even in time of war was a doubtful one under international law; in time of peace its exercise was certainly illegitimate. From these searches British vessels especially suffered, partly because of the growing irritation of Spain against Britain. The searches were often carried out with great brutality, and lurid tales were brought home by shipmasters which aroused indignation in Britain. The

most famous of these tales was that of Captain Jenkins, whose ear had been cut off in a fray provoked by a Spanish coastguard search. He brought the severed ear home in cotton-wool; and its production in the House of Commons at a critical moment helped to precipitate the war with Spain which began in 1739. Thus between Spain and Britain there was acute and growing friction, and irritation on both sides—a state of things which was almost bound to lead to war.

Closely linked both with the trade of the West Indian islands and with the trade of Spanish America was the negro trade of the West African coast, for all these lands depended upon this iniquitous traffic for their labour supply. Every trading country took part in it : the French, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes, even the Prussians. But the most active were the English slave-traders, among whom a large number of New England traders were included : the New Englanders carried many of the slaves required for the southern British colonies, Virginia and the Carolinas.

The whole coast of West Africa, from Cape Blanco to Angola, was dotted with European slaving-stations.¹ There was no attempt to settle or administer territory in West Africa. The slaves were supplied by tribal chiefs on the coast, who made their livelihood by organising slave-raids into the interior to meet the demands of the European traders ; and it is impossible to exaggerate the amount of misery inflicted by this hideous system upon large areas of the African hinterland. Yet no one felt any qualms about this traffic. All the nations regarded it as perfectly legitimate, and as absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the American plantations. The British African Company was described as ' the most beneficial to this island of all the companies that ever were formed by our merchants/ It may serve as an illustration of the total absence of misgivings about the legitimacy of the slave-trade that John Newton, the evangelical divine, the friend of Cowper and the author of ' How sweet the name of Jesus sounds ' and many other favourite hymns, was for some years after his religious conversion the captain of a slave-ship.

Down to 1698 the British slave-trade had been centred in London. In the early part of the eighteenth century the predominance passed to Bristol. But from about 1730 onwards the rising port of Liverpool rapidly got the upper

¹ See the map of West Africa, Atlas, Plate 64 (c),

hand, and by the middle of the century its merchants were the most active slave-traders in the world. This change was important. It meant that the growing industry of the Lancashire towns was finding a new market. A great part of the wealth which went to build up the immense prosperity of Lancashire in the second half of the century, and to make the Industrial Revolution possible, was derived from the slave-trade and the trade with the West Indies which was linked with it.

There has probably never been a more lucrative line of trade in the world, on any large scale, than the 'Great Triangle' followed by the European merchants engaged in this traffic. In swift clippers specially built for the trade, they took out cargoes of cheap and gaudy cloths, beads, muskets and gin to West Africa; they exchanged them, at an immense profit, for cargoes of negroes; they sold these in the West Indian or American markets at very high prices; and they returned with their ships' holds full of sugar, tobacco and cotton, which were always sure of a good market at home. It was this traffic which made the South Sea trade appear to promise profits of unimaginable dimensions; and all the European trading nations strove to get as large a share in it as possible.

§ 3. *North American Trade, and Franco-British Rivalry.*

The total volume of the trade between Europe and the West Indies and West Africa was very much greater than that between Europe and the North American continent. But in the American trade British traders had an immeasurable advantage over all competitors. By the middle of the century there were about a million and a half of settlers in the thirteen British colonies, all engaged mainly in producing raw materials—timber, tar, and other naval stores as well as agricultural produce in New England and the Middle Colonies; furs bought from the Indians in New York; tobacco in Virginia and Maryland; rice in South Carolina. The most valuable of these commodities, under the Navigation Acts, could be exported only to Britain, and although the Acts were evaded, undoubtedly the bulk of colonial produce followed the line which they laid down. Moreover all these numerous and prosperous settlers bought nearly all the manufactured goods they wanted from Britain, for their own manufactures were as yet on the smallest scale.

Compared with this great volume of trade, the French North American colonies yielded very little. Canada had practically nothing to offer save furs, and her small and poor population provided but little market for French manufactures. The colony of Louisiana, founded in 1717—its capital, New Orleans, got its name from the French regent—had aroused glowing hopes at the time of Law's gigantic schemes. But its population was not more than some 5000 ; and though the French were, with immense energy, planting little forts and trading stations during this period up the line of the Mississippi, these isolated posts, hundreds of miles apart, in an almost unpeopled land, could support little trade of value.

But during this period, though they drew little profit from North America, the French were showing very great activity in marking out a great future of imperial development. They held the two chief natural lines of communication which open up the heart of the American continent, the line of the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, running roughly east and west, and the line of the Mississippi and Missouri, running roughly north and south;¹ and these two lines practically made a junction by way of Lake Michigan and the river Illinois. They enclosed within a huge triangle the whole of the British colonies, which hugged the coast, nowhere extended more than about one hundred miles in depth, and were shut in by the confused and wooded hill country of the Alleghanies. If the French could get control also of the valley of the Ohio, which runs close behind the Alleghany chain, and links up the lower lakes, Erie and Ontario, with the Mississippi, the British colonies would be deprived of all possibility of expansion.

The French, thanks to the daring of their explorers, had grasped this vast geographical conception ; neither the British government at home nor the British colonists had yet visualised it. But it was impossible that a small, poor and thinly scattered body of Frenchmen should be able permanently to exclude from these immense areas the prosperous and enterprising settlers in the British colonies, who outnumbered them now by at least twenty to one. Once the British settlers began to find their way over the Alleghanies—and they were beginning to do so in this period—a clash was inevitable. It was not to be evaded by any treaties or bargainings such as could stave off a war in Europe.

¹ See the map, *Atlas*, Plate 55.

And there was one marked weakness in the French position, a legacy of the treaty of Utiecht. The very entrance to their main line of communication, the St. Lawrence river, was flanked by British possessions on both sides.¹ Newfoundland, long a subject of dispute, was now recognised as definitely British. On the opposite side, Acadia had been ceded to Britain by the treaty. But the limits of Acadia had never been determined. The British view was that it included the area later occupied by the colony of New Brunswick, and extended over the trackless forests which reached as far as the St. Lawrence ; and undoubtedly the French had been in the habit of giving the name to a large part of this area. The British view would have made Acadia extend as far as the river St. Croix, where New England began. The French, on the other hand, were for limiting Acadia to the peninsula of Nova Scotia. Over this there was endless disputation.

Meanwhile the French were labouring in two ways to amend the strategic difficulty created by the British possession of Newfoundland and Acadia. On Cape Breton Island, which had not been included in the cession, they began, as early as 1720, to build a great fortress, known as Louisbourg. It was designed by Vauban, the greatest military engineer of his time ; it cost thirty million livres to build ; and it was beyond comparison the strongest fortress on the American continent. It was meant to secure the entrance to the St. Lawrence. Later they began to build forts on the isthmus of Nova Scotia ; and through the priests they were meanwhile doing all that they could to keep alive the feeling of French patriotism among the French inhabitants of Nova Scotia, and to persuade them that in the event of conflict their loyalty was due to the French and not to the British king.

It is fair to say that the French were far more alert than their rivals to see the probability, indeed the certainty, of the coming conflict. This conflict was every day becoming more inevitable ; and the shadow of it was largely responsible for the gulf that was slowly widening between France and Britain in European politics. Thus trade rivalry in the tropical seas, which was forcing Spain into an anti-British policy, combined with the colonial rivalry between France and Britain in North America to bring about a natural combination of the Bourbon powers, and to make a

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 54.

final tremendous conflict for both trading and colonial supremacy inevitable in the near future.

("Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce* ; Meredith's *Economic History of England*; Glynn's *John Law of Lauriston*; Egerton's *British Colonial Policy* ; G. L. Beer's *The Old Colonial System* ; Grant's *History of Canada*; Parkman's *Half-century of Conflict*; Channing's *History of the United States*; Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History*; Lucas' *Historical Geography of the British Colonies*.)

CHAPTER IV

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WHIGS

(A.D. 1714-1739)

George 1. 1714 : George II., 1727: George in., 1760.

§ 1. *The Whig Ministries.*

THE period during which the Whigs exercised unchallenged supremacy extended over two reigns ; over the reigns of two kings who felt themselves to be foreigners in Britain, occupying a very precarious throne. Because of this insecurity neither George 1. nor George II. ever ventured to interfere in the internal or colonial policy of their realms. Only in foreign affairs, where their position as Electors of Hanover modified the situation, did they directly influence British policy ; and even here they went cautiously.

As George III. was to show, the legal powers of the Crown were still very great, and in particular its patronage was so extensive that if the king had strong personal views he could readily make them felt. But any attempt to use these powers boldly would inevitably have brought about sharp criticism and opposition in Parliament, as it did under George III. ; and in the precarious position of their throne, neither George 1. nor George II. dared to risk this danger. In all domestic affairs they left their powers and their patronage to be wielded by ministers. In effect the royal authority was now limited to choosing which among the Whig leaders should be entrusted with these powers ; and in making this choice the king was limited to the few who could (with the help of Crown patronage) make a majority in the House of Commons. The use of Crown patronage, which the king dared not wield freely, but which he could transfer, enabled the chosen minister to dominate public affairs so long as he did nothing that was seriously unpopular.

Even the modest power of throwing the handkerchief to one or another of the few possible candidates—which was a very different thing from the free choice of ministers by the Crown—brought it about that the rather dull and sordid courts of these German kings were full of intrigue, and their unprepossessing mistresses made harvest from the

greed of rival politicians. Moreover in each reign the heir apparent, the Prince of Wales, was on the worst of terms with his father, and maintained a sort of opposition court, which became a centre for disappointed politicians, who hoped that the handkerchief would be thrown to them when the son succeeded the father. This rather unsavoury feature of the Hanoverian family had one advantageous result in the peculiar circumstances of the period. It was better that politicians in opposition should fix their hopes on the heir to the crown than that they should intrigue with the exiled line.

Because they were conscious of the insecurity of their own position, and therefore desired to avoid unsettlement, both George i. and George ii. were remarkably steady in the support they gave to the ministers they chose. Hence the period is distinguished by the length of time for which power was held by successive ministries. Practically there were only three ministries between 1714 and the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in 1756. The first of these was dominated by the personality of Stanhope, a very able soldier and diplomat of the school of Marlborough. The chief interest of his rule lies in the firmness with which the Jacobite danger was handled, and the fixing of the main lines of British foreign policy : Stanhope largely deserves the credit for the Franco-British alliance, which dominated foreign politics for nearly thirty years.

Stanhope died in the midst of the South Sea trouble (1720) ; and the skill with which the tangle was handled by Sir Robert Walpole ensured for him the succession to supreme power, which he held for an unbroken period of more than twenty years. For a moment his ascendancy was imperilled on the death of George i. The opposition who had clustered round George ii. when he was Prince of Wales hoped to take Walpole's place now that the Prince had become king ; but, guided by his very able wife, who saw Walpole's value, George ii. disappointed the hopes of his former friends, and Walpole maintained a complete monopoly of power till the outbreak of war with Spain (which he hated and conducted badly) brought about his fall (1742).

The ministry which succeeded Walpole was headed at first by Lord Wilmington ; though the direction of foreign affairs fell to a very brilliant and witty personage, Lord Carteret, who was distinguished among all his contemporaries by his intimate acquaintance with European politics, and who therefore involved Britain more deeply

than ever in the complexities of European affairs at the beginning of the War of the Austrian Succession. When Wilmington died after a year of office (1743), his place was taken, without any material change of *personnel* or policy, by Henry Pelham, whose tenure of power (shared at first with Carteret) lasted until his death in 1754 ; and Pelham in his turn was succeeded by his brother and colleague the Duke of Newcastle. This long-lived but essentially continuous ministry was supposed to represent a reaction against the policy of Walpole. In reality it adhered in the main to his methods and aims, though it included a greater variety of political groups than Walpole had ever combined : the Pelhams were essentially pupils of Walpole and continuators of his policy. Thus there is a remarkable continuity in the political history of this long period; and, despite all the intrigues and quarrels of the Whig groups, no real difference of principle is perceptible until the time when, amid the disasters which marked the beginning of the Seven Years' War, the commanding personality of William Pitt thrust aside the oligarchs and gave a new direction to British policy.

§ 2. *Walpole, the Great Whig : the Principles of his Policy.*

The long sway of Walpole¹ thus forms the heart of the period, and it illustrates very clearly at once the merits and the defects of Whig government. Walpole was in many ways a typical English country gentleman, devoted to a country life, never happier than when he could escape to his Norfolk estate, fond of good living, a Philistine in all matters of art, jovial, good-natured and full of the prejudices of his class. He was also a sound Whig, believing genuinely in liberty as the Whigs conceived it, and holding that liberty was best maintained by the preservation of the Revolution settlement and the Protestant succession with the least possible friction or disturbance. He sincerely desired the welfare of his country, and he identified this welfare with the maintenance of peace and the expansion of industry and commerce. He was a man of very great practical capacity, especially in fields which (like finance and trade) do not require the display of the higher gifts of imagination, sympathy and insight. He was a shrewd judge of men, especially of their weaknesses, and as he never lost his temper

³ Lord Morley has an excellent short life of Walpole in the *Twelve English Statesmen Series*.

he **had** a happy knack of managing men. He was wholly free from cant; but he was incapable either of being inspired by lofty ideals or of understanding those who were—he shared the contempt of his age for 'enthusiasm/ Long views, great visions, whole-hearted self-devotion to a high cause, were altogether beyond him. Religion had no meaning for him; the Church was for him (as for his rival Bolingbroke) a convenient mechanism for keeping people quiet. He was perfectly satisfied with the world he knew, and wished only to keep it secure and undisturbed. Such a man could not be a great national leader, or see far ahead into the problems of the future. But he was admirably qualified to command the confidence of 'common-sense' men; he reflected perfectly the temper of his own age and of his own class; and therefore he was able to render the great service of keeping things steady at a time when his country needed just that, when a period of fallow was required between two periods of strenuous activity.

Walpole owed his long tenure of power largely to his skill in managing the House of Commons. For that reason, and because of the virulent charges of his opponents, he is often accused of having introduced wholesale corruption into British political life. He used the patronage of the Crown to help in making a majority; he worked in close harmony with the greatest of all Whig borough-mongers, the Duke of Newcastle. But in these respects he was only using the methods habitually employed by all his predecessors since the Revolution, though he used them more skilfully and more unflinchingly. Indeed, in the conditions of the time, these methods were essential to the maintenance of a strong government. There is no definite evidence that he employed direct bribery, though in occasional instances he probably did so: at his fall his opponents laboured to make out a case against him, and wholly failed to do so. Methods of corruption were used on a far more wholesale scale by Pelham's ministry, and still more by George in., than they were ever used by Walpole. In the main his mastery of the House of Commons was due to his shrewd understanding of that body, and to the fact that he carefully avoided raising questions which were likely to be troublesome: his motto was *quieta non movere* 'let sleeping dogs lie.'

Accordingly the main feature of his long sway was the absence of all great issues in which principles were involved, and a remarkable paucity of legislation on any questions

of importance other than finance and trade. The Whigs were traditionally advocates of religious toleration, and friends of the Dissenters. Yet next to nothing was done to relieve the Dissenters from the disabilities which rested upon them. Stanhope had repealed the Occasional Conformity Act and the Schism Act; but Walpole had even opposed the repeal, probably because he did not want to rouse the High Church Tories. On several occasions proposals were made for the relief of the Dissenters; Walpole threw cold water upon them, and ensured their failure. 'Let sleeping dogs lie.' But from 1727 onwards he passed an annual Act of Indemnity for those Dissenters who chose to break the law—a pusillanimous and dangerous way of remedying injustice.

Hence his rule was a period of artificial calm. England lay quiet, and Jacobitism was being gradually suffocated by prosperity, as the rising of '45 was to show: yet the absurd outbreak of excitement over the Excise Bill of 1733 (which will be referred to later) showed how easily any serious controversy might arouse a dangerous storm. Scotland also was uneasily quiet, and was slowly taking advantage of the benefits of the Union: Walpole managed Scotland through Lord Islay, the Duke of Argyll's brother, who organised the elections and gave him the steady support of the forty-five Scottish members and of the sixteen Scottish peers. Yet the fury of the Porteous riots in 1736, which arose out of the execution of a popular smuggler, and are only remembered because nothing else was happening and because Scott chose the episode as the subject of one of his best novels,¹ showed that in Scotland also excitement could be easily aroused.

Ireland, too, under all her monstrous afflictions, was astonishingly undisturbed; but the furious outcry which was raised over the issue of a new and much-needed copper coinage (Wood's halfpence) in 1723 showed that here also storms might readily arise. The importance of the episode was that Swift used the occasion to wield his formidable pen in the *Drapier's Letters*, in which, starting from a skilful exaggeration and perversion of the facts about 'Wood's halfpence' he went on to denounce the iniquity and injustice of the system of repression by which Irish trade and industry were being destroyed. This, with other tracts of Swift's, was the beginning of effective protest against the shameful treatment of Ireland. The sleeping dogs were stirring. They must be soothed to sleep again. Walpole

¹ *The Heart of Midlothian.*

withdrew Wood's halfpence promptly. But he was content to 'paper the cracks.' He made no attempt to consider or to deal seriously with the Irish situation; he maintained unaltered the repressive system of the Revolution, and even intensified it. In 1719, before his accession to power, a Declaratory Act had been passed by the British Parliament formally asserting its power to pass measures for Ireland over the head of the Irish Parliament. Walpole had made no protest; and he used the powers thus asserted. Not for him was any large and statesmanlike policy of reconciliation and reconstruction. 'Let sleeping dogs lie' was the sum of his political wisdom in all the larger fields of statesmanship: keep things quiet, and do nothing in particular.

That was his policy also in regard to the American colonies, except—an important exception—in matters of trade. Ever since the Revolution a continuous controversy had been going on, especially in New England, over the question of the salaries of governors: the home government insisting that the governors must be paid fixed salaries, the colonial assemblies refusing to vote money for more than a year at a time, in order to keep the governors under their power; and the same question was also arising in regard to judges' salaries. It was a constitutional problem of the most fundamental importance, involving the whole question of the relations between the colonial assemblies and the central government. On the principle of avoiding controversy and 'letting sleeping dogs lie' Walpole's government in 1729 instructed the colonial governors to let the question drop, and take what they could get. Colonial questions were dealt with by the Board of Trade, but under the Whig system the Board of Trade was only an advisory body to one of the two Secretaries of State, with whom the final decision rested. The responsible Secretary of State during most of Walpole's period was the Duke of Newcastle, whose simple method of dealing with colonial troubles was—not to read the despatches. When Walpole was once advised to tax the colonies by the authority of Parliament, he answered that he had enough trouble about taxation in England without raising more in America. It was a shrewd answer, and showed his practical common sense. But he has been praised on this ground for his wise statesmanship in colonial affairs, and this praise he certainly does not deserve. For his policy was simply a policy of drift. The problem of the relations between the colonies and the mother country was a serious and difficult problem; it was, or ought to have

been, obvious that the old colonial system would no longer work. The interval of peace between the war against Louis xiv. and the inevitable coming conflict for supremacy in North America was the time when this question ought to have been seriously and quietly discussed : the colonists, aware as they were of the danger from France, felt the value of the imperial connexion, and might have been ready to join in working out a new system of relations. But Walpole shut his eyes to the coming conflict, and had no sense of the need for any change in the political relations of the members of the Commonwealth. So a great opportunity was lost: an opportunity that was never to be regained. To let sleeping dogs lie is not a sufficient maxim for statesmen in a changing world.

For the same reason Walpole's foreign policy, which consisted essentially of staving off war as long as possible by patching up each difficulty as it arose, may equally be charged with lack of foresight. He gave his country peace, indeed, during a long period when she needed it, and that was a great gift. But he showed no appreciation of the importance of the changes which were coming about in the European scene : of the significance of Poland's downfall and Russia's emergence : of the real meaning and probable results of the Franco-Spanish alliance of 1733.

In short, in all the wider fields of politics Walpole's policy was one of short views and temporary expedients. He was lacking in imagination and largeness of vision, and for that reason cannot be given a high place among statesmen, useful as were his services at the time. His deficiencies were not peculiar to himself. They were characteristic of the Whig oligarchy, of which indeed he was the best product.

§ 3. *Walpole's Constructive Work.*

In some fields, however, Walpole's work was of permanent value. In the first place he was the first leading British statesman to recognise in practice, and to do everything in his power to emphasise, the predominance of the House of Commons in the British system of government. **All** his predecessors, Montague and Somers, Harley and St. John and Stanhope, had hastened, as soon as they attained power, to accept peerages and take their places in the House of Lords. Walpole remained until his fall plain Sir Robert, and clung to the House of Commons. When, having accepted the Earldom of Orford after his **fall**, he **met** his **old**

rival Pulteney, who had hoped to succeed him and had obtained a peerage as Earl of Bath, his greeting showed what he thought of the relative importance of the two houses : ' You and I , ' he said , ' are now two as insignificant men as any in England . ' There can be no doubt that under Walpole, when the Prime Minister was always present in the House of Commons and shaped his course by its opinion, that house became the real centre of English government as it had never been before. The idea embodied in the Act of Settlement, that ministers should not be members of the House of Commons,¹ was finally killed by Walpole's practice. In a higher degree than Pitt, though in a rather different sense, he deserves to be called the ' Great Commoner/

In the second place, he was in a real sense the first British Prime Minister, controlling and dominating his cabinet, and exercising a co-ordinating power over the work of all departments. This was an essential contribution to the growth of the British system of government. Walpole attained this position by insisting that ministers who took a different line from government and publicly opposed its measures must lose their posts. By acting on this principle he drove many of the ablest men into opposition, but he increased the strength and homogeneity of his ministry. His action in this respect was generally attributed to his jealousy of power, and no doubt that had something to do with it. But he saw that a ministry must be homogeneous, and that the various departments must be in harmony with one another, if government is to be efficient. One of the chief grounds of attack against him, formally put forward in 1741, was that he had striven to make himself a Prime Minister, a thing unknown to the British constitution. That such a charge should be made shows how little the principles and working of cabinet government were yet understood. The notion that no one minister should exercise control over his colleagues, each being alike the king's representative in his own department, died hard, and was to work much mischief in the future. But the experience of two centuries has proved that Walpole's principle was the right one, and that it represents the only way in which a coherent government can be reconciled with the supremacy of Parliament.

The field of politics in which Walpole's best work was done was that of finance. He commanded the entire confidence and support of the ' moneyed men ' and the trading interests. He was able materially to reduce the burden of the National

¹ See above, Bk. v. chap. vi. p. 578.

Debt by cutting down the rate of interest and creating a sinking fund for the redemption of debt out of the savings thus made. He kept taxation low. He freed the raw materials of industry from fiscal burdens, and systematically encouraged export trade by bounties. There is no doubt that the very great prosperity of British foreign trade during this period was encouraged by his wise direction of finance, and by the confidence which it engendered. Of all his fiscal devices that which attracted most attention was the Excise Bill of 1733. Its objects were modest enough. Ever since the Civil War excise (*i.e.* duties levied on goods in England before they were sold) had yielded a large proportion of the national revenue—a considerably larger proportion than customs duties, which were levied on foreign goods at the port of import. Customs duties, especially on wine and tobacco, were largely avoided by smuggling. Walpole proposed to substitute excise duties of the same amount on those goods : they would be imported free of duty, deposited in bonded warehouses, and taxed when issued. He hoped in this way to avoid the loss on smuggling, and at the same time to encourage foreign trade, because the goods could be re-exported without paying duty. The proposal aroused a most amazing and unintelligible outcry, which was unscrupulously stimulated by the misrepresentations of Walpole's opponents. They represented it as the introduction of French methods of government and as a tyrannous invasion of the rights of free Britons ; effigies of Walpole were burnt by excited mobs, to the cry of ' No wooden shoes ! ' ; and this quite harmless and useful measure had to be withdrawn. It is characteristic of Walpole's limitations that the loss of this modest and pedestrian measure wounded him more than any other episode of his career.

Walpole's trade policy, which was nearer his heart than any other part of his work, was essentially a continuance of the economic policy of the Revolution, which aimed primarily at encouraging production in Britain, at turning her into the manufacturing centre of the whole empire, and at attracting to her market all the products of the empire. For that purpose he was even more ready than his predecessors to use the legislative power of the British Parliament ; and under his guidance the control exercised over colonial trade was considerably stiffened. Several new products were added, by enactment, to the list of 'enumerated articles ' which could only be exported to England. The Molasses Act (1733), which aroused such bitter protest in

New England, was one of Walpole's enactments. It tried to prevent the colonies from buying the cheap and excellent sugar-products of the French West Indies. But, more serious, it was under Walpole and his successors that a systematic attempt was made to prevent the rise of manufactures in the colonies by legislative prohibition. The colonies were forbidden to engage in copper-smelting (1732) ; all their copper ore must be sent to Britain to be smelted. They were forbidden to manufacture hats ; the furs of which hats were made must all be sent to Britain. These Acts did not, indeed, cause much trouble, because such colonial manufacture as existed was on the smallest scale. But the principle was clearly enough enunciated. And in 1750, under Pelham, the inheritor of Walpole's ideas, the principle was given a very dangerous application. The colonies were beginning to produce considerable quantities of iron ore, and to manufacture some of it, as yet on a small scale. The Act of 1750 prohibited all iron manufactures in the colonies, and ordained the closing of all the existing factories. This enactment, taken in conjunction with its predecessors, convinced the colonists, and especially the New Englanders, who were most active in manufacture, that the mother country was bent upon checking and hampering their development in her own interests. The whole of this legislation contributed largely to produce the alienation which eventually led to the revolt of the colonies.

At a later date, when they were in opposition to George m., the Whigs, blaming the king and his advisers for all the colonial trouble, took credit to themselves for the greater wisdom of the colonial policy pursued in the period of Whig ascendancy. It is manifest that no such credit is due. The greatest of Whig statesmen was not only blind to the need for a revision of the colonial system : he and his successors exaggerated its worst features, and prepared the coming storm. Had America been, in Walpole's time, as she was in 1763, free from the danger of a French attack, the ' sleeping dogs ' of colonial discontent would not have confined themselves to growling. Their growls could not be heard across the Atlantic—especially through a Secretary of State who never read the American despatches.

On a broad view of his policy it is thus impossible to regard Walpole as a great statesman. His one great service was that he gave the new British system of government time to get itself rooted, and contributed to define some of its most important features. But one other praise must be allowed

to this genial, limited, 'practical' man. He was extraordinarily tolerant of criticism. Though he was continuously assailed with a venom which knew no bounds, he made no attempt (unlike his predecessors of both parties) to revenge himself upon his opponents, otherwise than by excluding them from appointments in his gift. There were no impeachments under Walpole ; no attempts to restrict freedom of speech or writing. The stream of criticism went on with vigour, in the press as well as in Parliament, and the habit of public discussion of political problems continued to grow.

§ 4. *The Opposition to the Whigs : the Ideas of Bolingbroke.*

Solidly founded as Walpole's power was, it was always the object of bitter attack. Most of this hostile criticism was merely factious opposition, the work of men whose real complaint against the great minister was that he kept them out of office. 'All these men have their price/ Walpole once said; and of most of them the charge was true : when they got their turn of office imder the Pelhams, who tried to satisfy all factions by sharing the spoils widely, they showed themselves less enlightened, less far-seeing and more corrupt than Walpole had been.

But alongside of this factious and place-hunting opposition there was a more genuine opposition of principles, the centre of which was Bolingbroke. He had been allowed to return from exile in 1723, and, though he was excluded from active political life, he made his house the centre of the opposition, and tried to imbue a mixed group of Tories and discontented Whigs with his own political ideas. Among the disciples of Bolingbroke was William Pitt, who, with his cousins of the house of Grenville, was violently opposing Walpole, mainly on the ground that his foreign policy subordinated the interests of Britain to those of Hanover, and disregarded the great colonial rivalry which to him seemed to be the first of all questions for Britain. Pitt was deeply influenced by Bolingbroke's doctrines, though he later came to distrust that brilliant cynic ; and the effect of Bolingbroke's teaching was apparent in much of Pitt's later career. During the half-dozen years following 1726 Bolingbroke maintained a weekly paper, *The Craftsman*, every issue of which was filled with witty, effective and often unscrupulous denunciation of the minister. But through this unending diatribe he expounded political doctrines which were sharply in conflict with those of the Whigs, and which he hoped might

be accepted as the creed of a new and more rational Toryism. In the 'thirties Bolingbroke grew tired of the struggle, and in 1738 he retired once more to France. But before he left he had written, in 1738 (though it was not published till much later), a political essay, *The Idea of a Patriot King*, which gave a very clear and forcible exposition of his political creed, and was to wield a remarkable influence on English political thought.

The essence of Bolingbroke's political doctrine was **that** the Whigs had ruined the balance of the British constitution by enslaving both the Crown and Parliament for their own purposes ; thus setting up an oligarchy in place of a constitutional monarchy. If politics were to be brought into a healthy state rigid party organisation, which the Whigs had brought to perfection, must be destroyed ; Parliament must be freed from its dominion, and from all corrupting influences, and once more become the free mouthpiece of the nation. Above all, the Crown must be freed from its slavery to the oligarchy, and enabled to play the part designed for it by the Revolution. It must stand above parties, and disregard them. It must bring the ablest men into the service of the nation, without regard to their connexions, without considering whether they possessed ' borough influence ' or not. There must be no more ' Prime Ministers ' like Walpole, arrogating all power to themselves, reducing other ministers to ciphers, and denying all chance of rendering public service to those who differed from them ; each minister must have his full responsibility for his own office, being answerable to the king and to Parliament alone for the way in which he exercised it. Only the Crown could save the situation ; because it was by annexing Crown patronage that the group of corrupt oligarchs held their own. The one hope of the nation therefore depended upon the appearance of a Patriot King, who would overthrow the oligarchs, make himself the leader of a free nation, and call in the best men to advise him.

These ideas had a real attraction for many men. They were very attractive to Pitt, conscious of the possession of great powers, and aware that his lack of ' borough influence ' and the jealousy of the Walpoles and Newcastles excluded him from power. Bolingbroke's theories were also to have, in the future, a mighty influence upon George in., who cast himself for the part of Patriot King.

They even had some influence upon the formation of the Pelham ministry (1743), which was known as the Broad-

Bottom administration, because it tried to include all the groups, even Tories and Jacobites, and therefore to be a sort of national non-party government. Perhaps it was for that reason that (after Carteret, with his extreme 'continental' views of foreign policy, had been got rid of) William Pitt accepted a post in this ministry, first as Treasurer of the Navy, and afterwards as Paymaster-General. But he found that in these offices he could exercise no influence at all upon the course of affairs. In reality policy was still directed by men of the school of Walpole, inspired by Walpole's ideas ; and the use of patronage and corruption for the securing of control over Parliament went on more actively than ever under the management of the Pelhams, who were past masters of these arts. The only differences were that they were less competent than Walpole ; and that the mouths of critics like Pitt were now closed with the sugar-plums of office. Indeed, there is nothing memorable about this long ministry save that it carried on the War of the Austrian Succession in a way which showed that its ideas of foreign policy were still limited to Europe, and that it had no vision of the vast issues that were awaiting decision in America and India. The Pelhams lived from day to day ; they had no clear principles or aims ; their conception of the art of government seemed to be confined to bargaining and bartering with the various groups of borough-mongers ; and in the end they drifted into the most momentous colonial war in which Britain had yet been engaged without being ready for it, or realising what it involved.

The Whig oligarchy had served its purpose. It had helped Britain to pass quietly through what might have been a critical period. But it had been blind to all high ideals and lofty aims ; and, in spite of the prosperity it had brought, the period covered by its rule was the most materialistic, and the least redeemed by great ideas, of any period in the history of the Commonwealth. It left a new generation to deal with vast problems which had been accentuated by its blindness or neglect, and above all with the problems of the Commonwealth itself,—with the question whether the destinies of the New World were to be in French hands or British, and whether, therefore, these rich lands were to be ruled on the French system of absolute monarchy or the English system of self-government; and with the greater and more difficult question whether a mode could be found whereby a fellowship of free States could live together in

brotherhood and freedom. Both of these questions had been shaping themselves during the period of Whig dominance. Both of them the Whigs had disregarded.

[Robertson's *England under the Hanoverians* ; Leadam's *England from 1702 to 1760*; Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*; Sichel's *Bolingbroke* ; Coxe's *Walpole*; Williams' *Pitt*; H. Walpole's *Memoirs of George II* ; Hervey's *Memoirs* ; Anson's *Law and Custom of the Constitution*; Blauvelt's *Development of Cabinet Government*; Hallam's *Constitutional History*.]

CHAPTER V

THE WESLEYS AND THE REVIVAL OF ENTHUSIASM

§ i. *The Age of Reason.*

NOT only in Britain but in all the lands of Western civilisation the first half of the eighteenth century was an age of materialism, an age of prose, an age of 'common sense,' when men measured all human activities by their visible and tangible results, and 'enthusiasm' for spiritual or ideal ends was regarded as evidence of an unbalanced mind, because it allowed reason to be deflected by emotion. National well-being was identified with national wealth, the pursuit of which was so manifestly 'rational' that it justified many iniquities, such as the horrors of the slave-trade. Politics, which is concerned with the organisation of the co-operative action of human societies in the pursuit of justice and well-being, and which ought to be one of the noblest of human activities, became under these conditions a sordid business. There were no high conflicts of principle capable of challenging men to devotion or self-sacrifice. The religious zeal of the last two centuries had vanished, and the humanitarian zeal of the next age had not begun to make itself felt. The 'Liberty' to which the Whigs professed devotion, and to which they had rendered real services in the past, was regarded as something that had been already secured and only needed to be safeguarded, not as something that ought to be perpetually growing and that would become dead and unmeaning if it ceased to grow; the 'Loyalty' of which the Tories boasted was not strong enough to enlist real sacrifices, except among the wild and backward clans of the Highlands of Scotland. Politics became, as we have seen, a matter of intrigue among rival and corrupt groups to obtain possession of the spoils of office. Yet, next to the pursuit of wealth, politics formed the most engrossing interest of the time, not only among the politicians but among the intelligent public.

But these statements, standing by themselves, would be

unjust to the age. It was an age of enlightenment, which proclaimed the sovereignty of reason, hated cant, and strove to free itself from prejudice and to analyse fearlessly the ideas which it was asked to accept. It was therefore an age of criticism and of healthy challenge to received beliefs ; and in this way it prepared for the great age of destruction and reconstruction which was to follow. Its most characteristic writer and thinker was Voltaire, the great French critic who had to spend most of his life in exile because of the unsparing freedom of his pen. Hating all sham and unreality, and hating still more the injustices and cruelties to which they led, Voltaire was incapable of appreciating the realities that lay beneath even formalist religion, or the potency of emotion, or the limits of pure reason; but he rendered great services to his age and kind by submitting all the institutions and ideas of his time to the corrosive acid of his criticism, which burnt up a great deal of rubbish ; and although he had no glowing visions of a noble future to offer to his fellow-men, and was disdainful of the high hopes inspired by Rousseau and others, yet he is rightly regarded as one of the harbingers of the French Revolution. Indeed the whole of this great age of criticism was a preparation for the vast changes that were coming.

In Britain the activity of a critical spirit is the most marked feature of all the best writing of the time ; even in the one great poet of the age, Pope, the critical spirit overpowered the imaginative and emotional elements. The gentle and kindly social satire of Addison and Steele, the fierce and venomous satire of Swift, the irony and the minute descriptive analysis of Defoe, all are alike criticism, more or less destructive, of the social organisation in which these writers lived ; not one of them indulges in ideals or dreams for the future. Three of the greatest of British critical philosophers belonged to this age : Butler, Berkeley and David Hume. Behind them came a great army of writers on theological and philosophical subjects, now wholly forgotten ; but their abundance shows that a real fermentation of the national mind was going on. The intellectual world was in fact intensely interested in philosophical and religious discussions along rationalist lines, as was shown by the excitement aroused by the controversy which raged round Bishop Hoadly, and the whole of what was known as the Deist controversy. But it was purely an intellectual interest. One very important result of this critical spirit

was a rapid spread of religious scepticism, which affected all shades of religious belief in Britain and in Europe ; even in Scotland and New England this was a time of what was called Moderatism, and of flagging ardour. The higher clergy in the English Church were largely sceptical, and consequently took their religious duties anything but seriously ; among the parochial clergy a large proportion regarded their professional duties as more or less of a formal obligation attached to the incomes they got by patronage ; many of them were habitual absentees, especially in Ireland ; many more lived jolly and sometimes useful lives indistinguishable from those of their lay neighbours ; they spent most of their time in farming, fox-hunting, drinking, and sitting on the bench, but did not conceive themselves to have any duties to their flocks beyond the reading of the service on Sundays ; and though there were honest, kindly and hard-working parsons like Parson Adams in *Tom Jones*, even they seldom had anything to offer to their flocks beyond what the rigid Scots used to call 'a cauld and barren morality/ wholly lacking in inspiring power. The decay of fervour and the growth of scepticism were equally marked in the Dissenting communities. It was during this period that nearly all the surviving Presbyterian congregations in England became Unitarian.

Hence neither the Established nor the Dissenting Churches showed any energy in what may be called missionary work, either at home or abroad. Content to carry on the conventional exercises of religion for the respectable people who frequented them as a matter of course, they had forgotten that they existed for the purpose of insistently reminding all men that man cannot live by bread alone, and of bringing into the routine of life the inspiring conviction of the reality and the¹ supreme importance of the unseen and the spiritual. The most unhappy aspect of this deadness was that it led to a complete neglect of the new classes of labouring men and women created by the growth of British industries : the miners, the weavers, the sailors and dockyard workers crowded in the waterside slums of great ports, were wholly neglected ; they were merely a disregarded part of the machinery for creating wealth ; nothing was done to remind them that the dignity of their manhood was a greater thing than the products of their labour, and that life was more than livelihood. The idea that national well-being depended upon the quality of the nation's manhood still more than upon the volume of the nation's material

wealth was in this age strangely forgotten ; and any assertion that the cultivation of manhood rather than of wealth was the supreme interest of the community would have been regarded as mere ' enthusiasm.' ' Common sense/ indeed, has never taken kindly to such a view, which it demands uncommon sense really to believe to the point of acting upon it.

§ 2. *The Beginnings of Organised Philanthropy : the Colony of Georgia.*

Although there were not yet any such vast aggregations of human beings in industrial towns as the Industrial Revolution was to bring about, nevertheless there was a great deal of misery, ignorance and vice in London, in the big ports like Bristol and Liverpool, in the mining areas of Cornwall and Newcastle, and in some of the weaving districts. One sign of this was the craving for cheap spirits which spread like a pestilence through the country ; the ineffective attempts of Parliament to check gin-drinking in 1729 and 1733 may perhaps be described as the first attempts in the direction of social reform by legislation. But they came with a bad grace from an assembly of three-bottle men ; nor was any cure to be found in that direction. Another sign of the unhealthy state of society was the extraordinary ease with which violent agitations were stirred up about nothing in particular, as in the preposterous excitement over the Excise Bill, or the Porteous Riots in Edinburgh, or many other minor riots. Whig government gave the people little to get excited about. But the best way of avoiding unnatural and unhealthy excitements is not to give people nothing to think about : it is to give them big and worthy things to think about.

Yet there were signs that even in this rather stagnant age a new spirit was beginning to arise. One of these was the beginning of philanthropy and of that humanitarian spirit which was to attain to such remarkable heights in the next age. Charity schools were established in large numbers all over the country. A list of British charitable institutions with the dates of their foundation would show that in many spheres (notably that of hospitals) this was a period of beginnings, after a long quiescence since the later Middle Ages, A number of public hospitals supported by charity were founded during this period in various parts of England; and alongside of them were a number of institutions whose

aim was to give a chance to unfortunate children, like Captain Coram's Foundling Hospital in London, or Captain Bryan Blundell's Bluecoat Hospital for orphans in Liverpool: pity for children is: always one of the first signs of an awakening of conscience. Another sign of new life was the beginning of concern about the hideous conditions in British prisons, and especially about the treatment of debtors, who were left to pine in horrible gaols without hope of release.

The greatest enterprise for the relief of distress undertaken during this age was the foundation of the colony of Georgia in 1733. It was the only British colony founded during this period, and the last of the famous thirteen; and, unlike any of its predecessors, it was founded neither for the sake of commercial profits (despite their appeal to this generation), nor in order to forward a particular set of religious or political opinions, but solely for philanthropic reasons—to give a fresh start in life to unfortunate debtors. The founder of the colony was General James Oglethorpe, a well-known personage in the fashionable and literary life of London, who had been chairman of a parliamentary committee on the state of the prisons, and had been horrified by what he had thus learnt. The necessary funds were raised by appeals to public benevolence, and a grant of land was obtained from the Crown, though Walpole was rather contemptuously hostile to the scheme, which he regarded as a piece of 'enthusiasm'. Oglethorpe devoted himself with real unselfishness for more than ten years to the development of the colony, to which he took out two parties of debtors, supplying them with the means of making a start. He also found room for a settlement of Highland emigrants, upon whom the colony mainly depended for its defence against Spanish attacks; and he welcomed a party of persecuted Protestants from the archbishopric of Salzburg, and another of Moravians from Bohemia. The foundation of Georgia represents, on the eve of the great revolt, and in contrast with the narrow and selfish colonial policy of the Whigs, the appearance of a new spirit in colonising work, which was to have great fruits in the nineteenth century. Oglethorpe tried to restrict the import of spirits and to prevent the use of negro slaves; but both restrictions vanished when the colony was transferred to the Crown in 1752, and was therefore endowed with the ordinary system of colonial government.

§ 3. *The Religious Revival in Wales, and the Methodist Movement.*

But these signs of the birth of a new and more wholesome spirit were wholly dwarfed by the great religious revivals which began in this period. They were to exercise a continually increasing influence during the next period, and were in many ways to influence the character and development of the British Commonwealth. It is the Methodist movement, led and inspired by the Wesleys and Whitefield, which usually draws to itself most attention. But alongside of the Wesleys' work, and largely independent of it, there was an equally remarkable religious revival in Wales, which began in 1735, and attracted little attention mainly because it was chiefly carried on in the Welsh language. Nowhere was a new breath of life more necessary than in Wales, for nowhere was the deadness of the official Church more marked; and the consequence was that from 1735 onwards the Welsh people broke away more and more from the Church, and from the traditions and ideas of the governing class which the Church largely embodied; Wales began to develop for herself a distinctive and independent body of ideas, of which the 'chapel' became the hearth and centre.

In a real sense the religious revival of 1735 and the following years was the beginning of the history of modern Wales. The preaching of Griffith Jones and his fellow evangelists, who appealed to Welshmen in their neglected native tongue, aroused the most intense religious emotion, and stirred into life that Celtic *hwyl* which the ancient bards had known how to arouse. It was followed by the beginnings of a remarkable and spontaneous educational movement, carried on by travelling schools, which was necessarily crude and shallow at first, because it had no centres of learning from which to draw knowledge and wisdom. It also contributed to re-awaken the old contests of poetry and song which the bards had once maintained; and in this and other ways helped to stimulate the rise of a new national spirit in the little mountain principality. No one yet marked the significance of this development, which did not rise above the horizon of the politician and the publicist until late in the nineteenth century; but its first beginnings date from the age of reason and of materialism, which would have scoffed at the idea of attaching importance to any such obscure movements.

The Methodist movement in England, on the other hand, from a very early date attracted the puzzled attention of

the ruling classes, who did not know whether to be more disgusted or amused at this strange outburst of enthusiasm, and who never realised for a moment that what they were laughing at was enormously more important for the life of the nation than their own ministerial bargainings and balance-of-power negotiations.

John and Charles Wesley were two Oxford men of considerable academic distinction, the sons of a hard-working Lincolnshire parson ;¹ both of their grandfathers, on the mother's and the father's side, had been among the Puritan divines ejected in 1662. At Oxford they founded in 1729 a small religious society, whose members came to be known as the Methodists ; and in this body, which devoted itself amid much ridicule to private prayer, and to visiting the sick, the poor and the criminals in the gaols, they made friends with George Whitefield, who had been a waiter in an inn and was striving to earn his education as a servitor at Pembroke College. In 1735 the two Wesleys went to the new philanthropic colony of Georgia, whose object strongly appealed to them ; they were filled with missionary fervour, and hoped to convert the heathen. They returned, disappointed, in 1738. But a new field was ready for them. Whitefield had meanwhile begun to preach to the degraded and neglected colliers of Kingswood near Bristol ; and, preaching in the open fields, he had aroused the most extraordinary enthusiasm and produced the most amazing effects upon the life of his hearers. Wesley took over the torch from Whitefield, and began, in 1739, the task of preaching in the highways and hedges, wherever he could get men and women to hearken to him.

Neither the Wesleys nor Whitefield felt any hostility to the Established Church or to its forms of worship ; till his death Wesley protested that he was a member of that Church. Their aim was to supplement its work by a more direct appeal to the neglected masses than the formal reading of service could possibly make. Had they been recognised by the Church, their work would have stood in the same relation to the regular work of the Church as that of St. Francis and the friars had done in the Middle Ages : indeed there was much that was akin to the spirit of St. Francis in the life and work of the Wesleys and Whitefield and their followers. The Roman Church in the thirteenth century had been wise enough and humane enough to welcome the help of the

¹ *Hetty Wesley*, a story by ' Q., ' gives a vivid picture of the family life of the Wesleys.

friars ; the English Church of Walpole's time would have nothing to do with Wesley, whose proceedings seemed to it to be mere ' enthusiasm,' marked by an unconventional novelty of method that did not seem respectable. It was but seldom that a parson would allow this earnest Oxford scholar to preach in his church ; and all the best work of the new evangelists was done under the sky—in the streets of a town, on a bare hillside, in the yard of a gaol, from the roof of a pig-stye. And wherever they went, the crowds gathered about them and drank in their inspiring appeals as a parched soil drinks water. Often indeed riotous or drunken mobs assailed them ; they were stoned, bruised and battered ; but nothing deterred them. Their fearlessness generally awed the crowd into silence ; and the amazing power which was wielded by their impassioned sincerity would melt the crowd to tears or reduce them to hysterics. Indefatigable, they travelled over all the roads and tracks of Britain and America afoot or on horseback, each covering on an average some five thousand miles a year. Wesley habitually preached twenty times a week year after year, beginning at five o'clock in the morning ; and the audiences who listened to him sometimes numbered as many as thirty thousand at a time.

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the influence that was wielded by this unending crusade—this unflagging inspired appeal to men of all types to rise above livelihood and think of life, to consider themselves not as drudges but as sons of God. All the dumb masses in all parts of the British Commonwealth were stirred and challenged to shake off the habit of taking for granted, to change their lives, to fix their thoughts on things beyond self. The three great leaders of the movement had each his special gifts. Whitefield was the inspired orator ; he must have been one of the greatest that ever lived ; he carried away worldlings like the polished Earl of Chesterfield when curiosity brought them to listen to him ; and all his power, through all his life, was given up wholly to shaking men out of the self-complacent common sense upon which the age prided itself, and to challenging them to think of life and God and sin and the hereafter. Charles Wesley, the tenderest spirit of the three, was the poet of the movement ; he produced a whole literature of hymns, simple, direct in their appeal, vibrant with emotion ; set to ringing tunes, they had a great part in reshaping the mind and the emotion of a great part of the nation. John Wesley, besides being an unwearied

preacher of wonderful power, was the master-mind of the movement, and its supreme organiser. He gave to it a system which enabled its influence to go on working when the personal inspiration of the leaders was removed. Schools, mission-rooms, organisations for charity and for religious communion, and a huge army of lay-preachers sent out to do the work which the regular clergy of the Church neglected, all sprang into being under his untiring direction.

Wesley and the movement which he led were not suffered to remain in association with the national Church, and in the end a great new Dissenting sect, spread over every part of the British Commonwealth, was the outcome of his work ; Whitefield, who differed from Wesley upon various theological points, became the organiser of another but much smaller sect; and there were other offshoots in course of time. These developments do not belong to the period with which we are concerned, when the vast movement was only 'beginning; nor was the creation of the Methodist bodies, important as it was, the most significant aspect of the work of these great evangelists. Their supreme gift to the Commonwealth was that they stirred the stagnant pools ; that they called men to think of high issues ; that they asserted the worth of all men, even the most neglected and degraded ; that in a self-complacent and common-sense age they revived ' enthusiasm.'

Their work was only beginning when Britain found herself drawn into a world-wide conflict for maritime and colonial supremacy : 1739, the year in which Wesley was persuaded by Whitefield to preach in the fields to the colliers of Kingswood, was also the year in which Walpole was unwillingly forced into war with Spain ; and while the evangelists were still wandering over all the roads of Britain, the long and straggling war was alternately kindling and dying down in Europe, on the seas, in America and in distant India. Nearly twenty years were to pass before the struggle achieved its climax of passionate patriotism under the proud guidance of Pitt, and national ardour was once more set aflame. Pitt and Wesley : the two men, different as they were, are in a strange way linked together. They were the two Great-hearts who slew the giant Sloth.

[Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* ; Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*; Overton's, Tyerman's, or Southey's *Life of Wesley* ; Wesley's *Journal* (included in Everyman's Library); Overton and Relton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*."]

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST PHASES OF THE GREAT CONFLICT FOR MARITIME AND COLONIAL SUPREMACY

(A.D. 1739-1755)

§ 1. *The Opening of the Conflict.*

IN 1739 Walpole was reluctantly forced into declaring war against Spain by the pressure of the parliamentary opposition and the strength of national feeling outside Parliament. In an often quoted pun the peace-loving minister expressed his view of the situation. 'They are ringing their bells now/ he said, as he listened to the public rejoicings ; ' they will be wringing their hands soon/ He knew that the conflict would not long be limited to an easy maritime war against Spain. He foresaw French intervention, and the final destruction of the Franco-British alliance which had been the sheet-anchor of British foreign policy for so long, and had done so much to maintain European peace ; above all he feared the possibility of an effective Franco-Spanish combination, which had been the worst nightmare of Whig statesmen for two generations.

That was as far as his imagination carried him. He refused to admit the inevitability of the vast conflict for maritime and colonial supremacy which was now opening. Indeed neither he nor his successors at all realised the importance of the colonial issue. In their eyes America was of no moment in comparison with the Balance of Power in Europe. Dominated by the memory of the war against Louis xiv., they allowed themselves to be drawn into the purely European controversy on the Austrian Succession, upon which they expended all their strength. The ruling politicians of France and Spain were equally blind ; and the result was that the determination of the great issue was long delayed, and the fighting which began in 1739 lasted, almost without a break, for four-and-twenty years. If there was some wringing of hands as the long struggle dragged on, it was caused by the futility of

much of the fighting, not by any dubiety on the part of the British people as to the importance of the issues involved. How gigantic these issues were is shown by the fact that this was the first war in human history which was world-wide in its range : the New World and the Old, India, West Africa, the West Indies and the tribes of the American backwoods were all drawn into the conflict, until it reached the culminating fury of the years 1758-1760.

§ 2. *The Maritime War with Spain.*

The war with Spain, which began this long fever, was purely a maritime war, in which the naval supremacy of Britain ought to have given her an immediate and overwhelming advantage. But although Walpole had maintained the numbers of the navy at a pretty high level, its efficiency and moral had suffered during the long period of peace. The first action of the war was the despatch (1739) of a fleet under Admiral Vernon, with a land force, to attack Porto Bello and the isthmus of Panama—the strategic centre of the Spanish American empire. Porto Bello was easily captured. But it contained practically no plunder ; it was not held, though this would have dislocated the whole of the Spanish traffic from Peru. An attempt was next made to capture Cartagena, the chief town of the Spanish Main. Thanks to quarrels between the naval and military chiefs, the attempt was a disastrous failure, and a later attack on Santiago de Cuba was equally unsuccessful.

Meanwhile a small expedition under Anson (1740) was sent round Cape Horn to attack the west coast of Spanish South America. The original idea was that it should seize the treasure-fleets and also co-operate with Vernon, from the Pacific side, in getting control of the isthmus. But the squadron was scattered by violent tempests. When Anson had rallied the remnant at Robinson Crusoe's island of Juan Fernandez, he found himself with only three ships. With these he cruised along the South American coast, taking some prizes. He then made straight across the Pacific, hoping to capture two treasure galleons sent from Peru to Manila. By this time he was left with only one ship, but he succeeded in capturing a great galleon full of coin, and returned, like Drake, by the Cape of Good Hope. The expedition had terrified and embarrassed Spanish America. But it had no other result. It is remembered chiefly because of the courage with which all its successive misfortunes were

met and overcome.¹ That was in the best tradition of the British Navy.

These episodes were the only events of importance in the Spanish war; and although the destruction of merchant shipping went on actively on both sides, especially in West Indian waters, no attempt was made to strike a powerful blow at the almost defenceless Spanish empire. The futility and ill-success of these adventures were among the chief reasons for Walpole's fall in 1742. It is noteworthy that France had taken no part in these first stages of the conflict; the Family Compact of 1733 had in fact come to nothing. And the reason for this was that the governing politicians of France, like those of Britain, still undervalued the importance of oversea conflicts. Their eyes were fixed upon European affairs. And European affairs had come to a critical point in 1740, soon after the outbreak of the Anglo-Spanish war. These affairs were to distract the attention, not only of France, but presently also of Britain and Spain, from the main conflict beyond the seas.

§ 3. *The War of the Austrian Succession, and the Potency of Sea-Power.*

In 1740 two European sovereigns died. The first of these was Frederick William, King of Prussia. Frederick William's father, Frederick 1., the son of the great Elector of Brandenburg, had gained the royal title (1700) as the price of his participation in the war against Louis xiv. Frederick William himself had acquired a strip of West Pomerania² as part of the plunder of Sweden on the downfall of Charles XI.; but he had been in general a peaceful monarch, devoting himself to perfecting the organisation of his absolute authority in his dominions, to the development of their material prosperity, and to the maintenance and training of a highly efficient army, altogether out of proportion to the size and resources of his dominions. This army was the most efficient military force in Europe; its upkeep was the chief concern of the Prussian State, whose material prosperity was cultivated primarily in order that it might bear this burden; and it was intended to be used as a weapon for carving out new dominions for the Prussian Crown. To the control of this powerful implement, on Frederick William's death, a new master succeeded: Frederick 11., later known as Frederick

¹ *Anson's Voyage Round the World* is a stirring narrative, included in Everyman's Library.

² See the map of the growth of Prussia, Atlas, Plate 24 (a).

the Great,¹ who was to be the chief builder of the greatness of Prussia. A man of immense ability and devouring ambition, he was wholly free from inconvenient scruples; and he was eager to fish in troubled waters, or to stir them up if they were not otherwise disturbed. It was his intention to turn the small and poor State of Prussia, by force or by fraud, into one of the great States of Europe.

The desired troubling of the waters was provided by the death of Charles vi., Emperor by election, and by hereditary descent ruler of the scattered Habsburg domains, which took place soon after that of Frederick William. Charles VI. had no male heirs in the direct line, and we have seen how assiduously he had laboured to get the assent of all possible rival claimants, and of all the other European powers, to the Pragmatic Sanction, by which the undivided inheritance of his hereditary dominions was to pass to his daughter, Maria Theresa, a lady of infinite pride and courage. To the imperial crown, which the Habsburgs had held continuously since the fifteenth century, Maria Theresa, as a woman, could not succeed; it had to be disposed of by the eight electors. But Charles had hoped that his daughter's husband, Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Tuscany, would be elected. That depended upon the electors. But all that forethought could do Charles vi. had done; and if the pledged word of all the powers counted for anything, Maria Theresa would succeed to all the hereditary dominions of the Habsburg house. For all the States of Europe (save Bavaria, whose elector was one of the numerous claimants to the inheritance) had accepted the Pragmatic Sanction; notably Prussia, Spain, France, Britain, Russia and the minor states of the empire.

At first Maria Theresa succeeded quietly, Frederick of Prussia went out of his way to renew his father's pledge, and to promise himself and his army for the defence of the queen if they should be needed. But this was deliberate deception. Just before the end of the year, putting forward old claims to certain Silesian lands about which he made no attempt to negotiate, Frederick suddenly threw his army into the great and rich duchy of Silesia.² This precipitated a chaotic war. Frederick's boldness encouraged all the greedy claimants to the Habsburg inheritance to forget their pledges, and to treat the Pragmatic Sanction, as

¹ **There** is a life of **Frederick the Great** by W. F. Reddaway (*Heroes of the Nations*).

* See the maps, Atlas, Plates 10 and 24 {a}.

Frederick had done, as a mere scrap of paper. France saw a chance to ruin the Habsburg house, her old rival. She had no claims of her own, but she intervened to secure the election of the Elector of Bavaria as Emperor, and sent her armies into the field to support him. The vultures were gathered round their prey. Only one of the greater signatories to the Pragmatic Sanction—Britain—remained faithful to the bond; the Dutch were half-hearted; Russia, distracted by a change of monarch, stood aloof.

Thus Maria Theresa had to fight for mere existence, supported only by small British, Hanoverian and (later) Dutch contingents, and by the aid of British money and the British navy. British statesmen, blinded by the resemblance of this struggle to the old continental war against Louis xiv., forgot oversea interests, and devoted themselves wholly to the sordid and complicated struggle in Europe. France and Spain equally forgot the world-conflict, though in 1743 they renewed the 'Family Compact' against Britain. France devoted all her efforts at first to supporting the Bavarian attack on Austria, and later to an attempt to conquer the Austrian Netherlands on her own account; Spain hoped to make herself mistress of Italy.

It is needless to trace in detail the course of this chaotic struggle. No common purpose bound together the robber powers save the desire for plunder; and they were not even united by a formal instrument of alliance. Frederick of Prussia was twice persuaded by British mediation to make peace with Maria Theresa on condition of being left in possession of Silesia, and twice, with characteristic perfidy, broke his word when it seemed to be in his interest to do so. The proud queen was loth to come to these agreements, because, with justice, she hated and distrusted Frederick more than any other of her foes; and he not only justified her distrust but earned also the distrust of his allies by the selfishness and faithlessness of his action. France was at first not even formally at war with Austria, but fought as the ally of Bavaria; nor did she make open war against Britain until 1744, though the armies of the two powers met one another in the field, the one as an ally of Austria, the other of Bavaria. The ruin of Austria was averted by three things: first by the lack of any common purpose or combined plan of action among her foes; secondly by the gallant response made by Maria Theresa's subjects, especially the Hungarians, to her appeals for their loyalty; and

thirdly by the power of the British Navy and of British subsidies, which alone kept the Austrian armies on foot.

Upon the fortunes of the British Commonwealth this confused and aimless struggle had very little direct effect. British armies once more appeared on the Continent. At the ill-planned but gallantly fought victory of Dettingen (1743), which is noteworthy as the last action wherein a British sovereign commanded in the field, they took part in a rather futile German campaign ; after the definite opening of war with France, at the hard-fought but unsuccessful battle of Fontenoy (1745), they strove as in the old days to prevent French armies from conquering the Netherlands. Fontenoy is chiefly remembered because it was distinguished by an episode of romantic politeness which is often quoted as a proof of the sportsmanship and chivalry that marked the long series of fights between British and French troops. But there is something absurd "in the spectacle of armies, busy upon the grim business of war, reproducing the elegant manners of the drawing-room and begging one another to fire first. Set against the background of the sordid and cynical policy displayed by most of the European governments, it has the unreality of the spurious chivalry of the Black Prince, who could wait on a captive king, but could also slaughter thousands of common men in cold blood.

So far as the war in Europe is concerned, its most important feature from the point of view of British history was the evidence it afforded of the potency of sea-power, and of the gradual revival of the strength and spirit of the British navy, which had been sapped by Walpole's regime. British ascendancy upon the seas was now overwhelming, for the Dutch had fallen into the background, and both France and Spain had neglected their navies ; even in mere numbers their combined forces were surpassed by those of Britain ; and, badly as it was used, naval power markedly influenced the course of the war. Thus the mere presence of a British fleet in the Mediterranean led to results as important as great victories on land. In 1742 the Bourbon King of Naples had supplied 20,000 troops to help the Spaniards in their attack on the Austrian possessions in Northern Italy ; but a British squadron, appearing off Naples, compelled the king to withdraw this contingent, and thus, without fighting, won a victory equivalent to the total destruction of an army of 20,000 men, and saved the situation in the north. Indeed the whole Spanish campaign in

Italy was gravely hampered by the fact that troops and supplies could not be sent by sea, but had to be sent round by land, through France and the Alpine passes. France, even while she was still formally at peace with Britain, gave the protection of her harbours to the Spanish fleet: she even ordered her fleet to convoy the Spanish warships into safety, and to resist any attack upon them by the British navy. This led to the only important naval action of the first part of the war, an action off Toulon (1744) between a British fleet and the combined fleets of France and Spain. It was indecisive, owing to the failure of the British rear-squadron to join in the battle; and it was followed by a whole series of courts-martial in which several British captains were cashiered. It thus led to a reorganisation of the navy, which was carried out by Anson as First Lord of the Admiralty, and to the promotion of younger officers of ability, such as Sir Edward Hawke; and in that way it helped to prepare the navy for the glorious part it was to play in the next war. But even this indecisive fight had the valuable strategic result of penning the French and Spanish fleets into harbour, and thus enabling the pressure of naval power to be brought to bear against the continental foes of Maria Theresa.

In the later phase of the struggle (1744-8), when France was formally at war with Britain, the war was more nearly brought home to the British people by the threat of a Jacobite rising, backed by a French invasion. The original plan was that an army of 15,000 men was to be transported into England from the Low Countries. This enterprise had been fixed for 1744. It was baffled by the mere presence of the British Channel fleet, though a storm which wrecked several of the transports that were lying off Dunkirk helped to show its futility; and when the gallant attempt of the *Young Chevalier* took place in the next year,¹ France was unable to give any assistance. The navy kept Britain secure, while at the same time it helped her continental allies, inflicted grave damage upon the commerce of France and therefore upon her strength for war, and protected the still growing trade of Britain, which gave her the means of maintaining the armies of her allies by large subsidies. Without the aid of the navy, it is all but certain that Maria Theresa must have been crushed. But neither she nor any of the continental statesmen, nor even the statesmen of Britain at home, realised these facts.

§ 4. *The Beginning of Franco-British Conflict Overseas.*

The navy might have rendered yet more decisive services by making possible a crushing attack upon the French colonies and oversea trading interests. Indeed, it had quite definitely placed this opportunity in the hands of the British government, if they had been able to realise it. During the years in which France and Britain were formally at war (1744-8) the French fleet never dared to challenge a full fleet action. But on two occasions in 1747 they sent out squadrons, one of eight, the other of nine ships, to convoy large numbers of merchant ships across the danger zone, and thus to keep French trade with the Indies alive. The first squadron was destroyed by Anson; the second was overwhelmed by Hawke. Thus the highways of the ocean were controlled by Britain, and there was nothing to prevent a vigorous 'attack upon the French oversea dominions such as Pitt later directed. But the Whig government, wholly engrossed in the European conflict, upon which it spent money like water, paid no attention to these opportunities.

Yet strife had broken out openly, both in India and in America, forced on by British and French rivalry in these fields. The Indian struggle was to have such strange and momentous consequences that it must be reserved for fuller treatment in a later chapter.¹ In the first phase of the struggle the honours fell to the French, though they were the weaker side, and they conquered the town of Madras, the main centre of British influence in Southern India. This result was wholly due to the fact that the Whig government failed to make use of British supremacy at sea, and even allowed the French to establish, for a time, the command of Eastern waters. It was the local agents of the rival companies who carried on the struggle in India; the home governments, on both sides, took little or no interest in it.

In America, likewise, it was by spontaneous local effort alone that the struggle was carried on. When the news of the outbreak of war with France reached America in 1745, the spirited governor of Massachusetts, William Shirley, determined to deliver an attack against the French fortress of Louisbourg, on Cape Breton Island, which commanded the mouth of St. Lawrence. The troops for the expedition, 4000 in number, were raised wholly in the American colonies, and mainly in Massachusetts.

¹ Chapter viii. below, p. 759.

The home government was asked to do nothing save to despatch four ships from the West Indian squadron to guard the line of communications. Louisbourg was the most perfectly designed fortress in the New World, and it was garrisoned by some 2500 troops and as many able-bodied settlers. The attacking force had to be landed on a surf-beaten, rocky coast; all their guns and supplies had to be carried ashore in face of the enemy, and the ground on which they had to light was marshy. Yet after a siege of five weeks they succeeded in compelling the fortress and the whole of its garrison to surrender. It was a brilliant achievement, and, although it would not have been possible without command of the sea, it reflected the greatest credit upon the courage and martial spirit of the New England militiamen who carried it out. It was the most brilliant military achievement of any British colony before the great revolt.

But the Whig government did not share the aggressive spirit of the colonists, and no use whatsoever was made of the opportunity thus offered. An attack vigorously pushed home at this juncture would almost certainly have resulted in an easy conquest of French Canada, but no such attack was made, or even projected. As we shall see, Louisbourg was tamely restored to France in 1748, to the indignation of the men of Massachusetts, who were further alienated from the mother country by this neglect of their achievement. It had to be reconquered later, with far greater difficulty. For the chief result of the temporary loss of Louisbourg was to awaken the French government to the importance of the American issue, and to lead them to use the years of peace in preparation for a new conflict.

In 1748 the dreary Austrian succession war was ended by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. Its details need not concern us, for it was, and could be, no more than a truce. In Europe its chief result was that the perfidious Frederick of Prussia kept Silesia as the reward of his treacherous violence; but Austria submitted to this arrangement only with the deepest bitterness, and with an implacable resolve to redress the wrong on the earliest possible opportunity. Prussia and Austria had become rivals for the leadership of divided Germany, and that conflict had to be fought out afresh; during the eight years of restless peace which followed, both powers were preparing for a new struggle. That was the main result of the treaty so far as Europe was concerned; otherwise a return to the *status quo ante* was the

only outcome of these years of confused fighting. But in the other great conflict which had become entangled with the European squabble, the conflict between Britain and the two Bourbon powers for supremacy on the seas and beyond them, there was equally no decision. In spite of the sea-strength of Britain, which her Whig rulers had made no attempt to use, conquests were restored on both sides ; Madras was given back to the East India Company in exchange for Louisbourg, handed back to France.

§ 5. *The Years of Nominal Peace, 1748-1755.*

The bargains of diplomatists at Aix-la-Chapelle could not restrain the development of conflict in the remote lands of East and West. Though a joint Boundary Commission was appointed by Britain and France in 1750, and continued its sittings till 1755, its deliberations led to no practical result. It was a promising sign of the growth of willingness to settle disputes by peaceful means. But the conflict of interests was too sharp to be thus treated; and both in India and in North America the eight years of nominal peace which followed the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle were filled with the warfare of the rival nations—a warfare not dictated or guided by the governments at home, but arising almost inevitably out of the local conditions. Both in India and in America the initiative was taken by the French, whose Indian and Canadian representatives were definitely labouring during these years to lay the foundations of grandiose empires. In both lands French action drove the local representatives of British interests to take counter action, and gradually forced the reluctant home government to take up their cause. We shall have to deal with the Indian struggle in a later chapter. But it was the increasing intensity of the struggle in America which mainly forced the hands of the home governments, and brought about an open state of war, just at the time when the development of European politics had made a new conflict in Europe inevitable. Our concern in this chapter is to observe how the pressure of events, first in America, and secondly in Europe, were stultifying the futilities of the last war and the inconclusive treaty which had ended it.

The governors of French Canada during these years were quite manifestly looking forward to and preparing for a bold attempt to break the British power in America. Such a challenge might appear mere insanity, since the French

settlers were overwhelmingly outnumbered by the British settlers. But the French had many advantages. They were nearly all adventurers and trained backwoods fighting men, while the British settlers were mostly farmers and traders. They were in friendly relations with the Indian tribes, whom the British had (with the important exception of the Iroquois) generally neglected. All the resources of France in the New World were at the disposal of a single absolute government; whereas the British were divided into thirteen distinct colonies, mutually jealous and unwilling to co-operate, and in each colony the authority of the governor was generally made ineffectual by the often short-sighted policy of the representative assembly. Self-government seemed to threaten ruin to the British, by causing inefficiency, division and infirmity of purpose. The centralisation of autocracy gave to the French a chance of carrying on the struggle on more equal terms, a chance even of victory. Yet ultimately the supreme question at issue was the question whether the principles of self-government or those of autocracy were to control the destinies of the New World.

During the years following the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle the conflict became acute in two regions ; in Acadia, and in the Ohio Valley.¹ Having regained Louisbourg, the French strengthened its fortifications and increased its garrison. The British government, realising, as soon as they had abandoned it, the importance of the fortress and the threat which it offered to Acadia, in 1749 organised a new fort and naval base at Halifax on the Acadian coast, with a garrison of 3000 men. This was the first British settlement in that region, the population of which, numbering some 8000, were all French. The French peasants had been well treated ever since Acadia became a British possession in 1713 ; their religion had been undisturbed, their rights of property, their laws of inheritance, had not been meddled with; and, left to themselves, they would probably have been content enough. But just beyond the isthmus, in a region which had always before 1713 been regarded as part of Acadia, the French maintained garrisoned forts which were a perpetual reminder of the old loyalty to the French Crown. Every influence was exercised upon the Acadian peasantry to persuade them that their obedience was still due to the King of France ; above all, the powerful influence of the

¹ See the maps: for Acadia. Atlas. Plate 54 ; for the Ohio Valley, Plate 55.

priesthood was employed to impress upon them the religious obligation of loyalty to the Catholic king. They were even warned that the Red Indians who haunted the woods would be turned upon them if they took or observed the oath of allegiance to the British Crown. One of the leaders among the French missionary priests, the Abbe le Loutre, actually offered and paid bounties to the Indians, during this period of peace, for every British scalp they brought in. British soldiers' lives were unsafe on British territory a mile from the walls of their forts. Thus the small British settlement at Halifax felt itself extremely insecure, and necessarily regarded all the surrounding population as potential foes, not to be trusted. The result was that in 1755, when open war between the French and English began, the British administrators of Nova Scotia felt that they could not safely leave themselves at the mercy of a hostile population ; and, after several ineffectual warnings, some 8000 of the "French population were deported to the British colonies farther south.¹ The removal was a cruel thing; but it certainly was not without justification.

Meanwhile the French had resolved to occupy and fortify the Ohio Valley, which lay just behind the line of the Alleghany Mountains. There had hitherto been no French settlement in this region. But some of the more enterprising of the British settlers were beginning to find their way over the hills, and were opening up trade relations with the Indians: they came mainly from Virginia, finding their way by a variety of tracks through the wooded mountains. The British colonics vaguely claimed the right to extend indefinitely westwards: the French, on the strength of their exploration of the Mississippi Valley, and of the few small posts which they had planted in the wilderness, hundreds of miles to the west, claimed possession of the whole of the vast central plain. In 1749—the year after the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle—the French Governor of Canada sent an expedition to explore the Ohio Valley, and to claim it for France. At some points they buried leaden plates containing assertions of French dominion ; at others they nailed shields bearing the French arms to a few trees ; they got into relations with Indian tribes, and told them that the King of France was their father; they expelled British traders, and sent formal letters

¹ This is the episode which forms the theme of Longfellow's *Evangeline*.

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 55.

to the British governors to complain of their poaching upon French preserves.

The expelled traders and the letters of complaint ought to have shown the colonists that the French danger was a real one. Most of the colonists were apathetic. But the enterprising Scottish deputy-governor of Virginia, Robert Dinwiddie, resolved to take action. In 1753 he sent a capable young Virginian squire, George Washington, then twenty-two years old, to warn off the French in their turn as interlopers. But a warning of this kind was not likely to have the least effect, unless it were made clear to the French that it would be supported by force. Dinwiddie and other governors wrote urgent despatches to the home government begging them to realise the seriousness of the issue. The home government replied permitting the governors to repel force with force, and urging the colonies to take common action and to negotiate jointly with the Iroquois Indians to secure their co-operation in checking any French attacks. Their view was that the colonists ought to be able to defend themselves.

The result of this was twofold. In the first place, a handful of Virginians was sent to build a woodland fort at the junction of the rivers Monongahela and Alleghany, where Pittsburg stands to-day ; and this fort, the first attempt to secure British control over the Ohio Valley, was to become in the near future the centre of furious fighting.

The second result was even more important. A conference of representatives of all the colonies was summoned to meet at Albany in New York, the nearest point to the Iroquois country. The conference met in 1754. It was the first attempt at common action on the part of the colonies, and under the lead of Benjamin Franklin, who represented Pennsylvania, it was proposed that a close federation of the colonies should be organised, with a President and a Grand Council which should be empowered to demand from each colony its proper contribution in men and money towards the needs of the common defence. Had this scheme been adopted it would have anticipated, by a union under the British Crown, the union into which the colonies were later forced in opposition to the Crown, and it might have altered the whole course of the history of the Commonwealth. But the assemblies of the individual colonies were too jealous of their powers, and too unready to realise their common interests. They unanimously rejected the scheme, and thus thrust upon the home government the responsibility for

organising and directing—and incidentally for paying the cost of—the common effort.

Meanwhile the crisis of the struggle was drawing nearer. In 1753, the year in which Virginia pioneers were building their fort, the French had erected a fort at Presqu'île on Lake Erie, and cut a road through the forests to the upper waters of the Alleghany. Marching down by this route, they easily drove out the rustic levies from the rude fort at the river junction. Next year (1754), while the congress was sitting at Albany, Washington was sent with some four hundred men to regain the post. A skirmish between his force and a small body of Frenchmen, in which the French leader was killed, drew the first blood in the great conflict, and caused a great stir both in America and in Europe. It set both the French and the British governments to work, and persuaded them that they must take definite action. But before anything could be done by the home authorities, Washington's force, attacked by overwhelming numbers, was compelled to surrender. At the very moment when the colonies were refusing to take common action, the French, under the direction of their centralised government, had won the mastery of the Ohio Valley. They rebuilt and strengthened the fort at the river junction, and gave to it the name of Fort Duquesne in honour of the Governor of Canada.

The British government still hoped that the colonies would provide the bulk of the forces and the money required for their own defence. In 1755 it appointed a general of experience, General Edward Braddock, to take command of all the forces, and supplied him with two regiments of regulars—1400 men—to form a nucleus for a colonial army. But it was hoped that each of the colonies would appoint a commission to consult with him as to the contingents and supplies which each colony ought to provide, and that, even if the colonies would not accept the decisions of a common representative body, they would individually vote what was required. This hope was destined to be disappointed; the main burden, and the whole responsibility of planning and leadership, were left to the mother country; and when Braddock reached America he found that little help was forthcoming.

While the British authorities were pinning their hopes upon colonial co-operation, the French government was despatching an army of 3000 men under a practised German captain, Dieskau, to help the Canadian settlers in striking directly

at the heart of the British colonies by way of the great waterway of Lake Champlain and the Hudson river. Aware of the despatch of this force, the British government told off Admiral Boscawen to intercept it at the mouth of the St. Lawrence ; it only escaped him by the aid of a fog.

Thus in 1755, though Britain and France were still nominally at peace, and were not to declare formal war for another year, elaborate campaigns by regular troops were being planned and carried out. The war really began in '1755' ^and ^we shall take the campaigns of that year as the starting-point of the narrative of the great conflict which will occupy the next chapter.

Meanwhile the mutual fears of the European States were bringing about a new grouping of the powers which was to have a very direct effect upon the coming conflict. And in Britain the course of domestic politics was raising the question of the leadership under which the conflict was to be fought. It is necessary to survey both of these developments before we deal with the final grapple.

§ 6. *The Diplomatic Revolution of 1756.*

Just as the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was important rather as the beginning of acute colonial rivalry between France and Britain than as a solution of their differences, so on the continent of Europe also it opened a period of general nervousness and of preparation for a new struggle. The centre of unrest was Frederick the Great of Prussia, who, having benefited from the last war by the seizure of Silesia, was generally believed to be aiming at a further disturbance of the Balance of Power to his own advantage. The suspicion was justified. In a political testament which he wrote in 1752, when he believed himself to be at the point of death, he had urged upon his successor the necessity of rounding off the ill-compacted territories of Prussia by annexing West Prussia from Poland, and, still more important, by seizing the Electorate of Saxony.¹ The former aim he was to achieve by engineering the iniquitous partition of Poland in 1772; the latter he attempted at the beginning of the Seven Years' War in 1756. Naturally the suspicion of these designs increased the distrust with which his behaviour since 1740 had led him to be regarded.

On the other hand, Maria Theresa of Austria burned for vengeance against him, and longed to regain Silesia. But

¹ See the map of the Growth of Prussia, Atlas, Plate 23 (a).

to ensure success she must be safeguarded against a hostile combination such as had faced her in the last war. The most skilful of the Austrian diplomatists, Kaunitz, strongly held that the way to achieve this end was to reverse the traditions which had governed European politics for two centuries, and to make an alliance between Austria and France, while maintaining a close friendship with the new great power of Russia. So far as Russia was concerned the programme was easy ; for the Tsarina Elizabeth, who now ruled Russia, had a personal detestation for Frederick, and personal feelings of this kind counted for a great deal in the policy of despotic courts. But it was more difficult to win over France ; and from 1750 onwards Kaunitz, as ambassador at Paris, seemed to be labouring in vain, until in 1756 there came about a sudden reversal in the European situation.

' France, indeed, was a very uncertain quantity in these years. Her absolute sovereign, Louis xv., was a lazy debauchee, who would neither himself determine the lines of national policy as Louis xiv. had always done, nor trust a single minister. He was largely influenced by his mistress, Madame de Pompadour; under his and her lax and shameless regime, the government of France fell into gross incompetence and corruption, and absolute monarchy showed itself at its worst. In a vague way French ministers and politicians felt that the looming conflict with the British power ought to be the chief concern of French policy, and they did a good deal to strengthen the French navy during these years of peace. But there was an even greater lack of firm and clear foresight in France than there was in Britain ; the energy and devotion of French agents in India and even in America were wasted, because they received little support or encouragement from home. Thus in 1754 the great Dupleix, who had almost without assistance laid the foundations of a French empire in India, was ignominiously recalled. And while the French governors in Canada were encouraged to initiate an aggressive policy which could only end in war, and were even supplied with troops to carry it out, no adequate preparations were made at home to face the conflict which was thus being forced on. Spain, France's natural ally, was pursuing a pacific policy; and, far from being able to count upon Spanish help in the coming conflict, France had to witness the triumph of British diplomacy at Madrid, which reduced the Family Compact once more to a nullity. Though French statesmen realised

the probability of war, they made no clear plans as to the way in which it should be conducted. Their main idea seems to have been that of an attack upon Hanover by land, in the hope of either forcing Britain to accept French terms, or gaining a compensation for colonial losses. For an attack on Hanover an alliance with Prussia, Hanover's neighbour to the east, would be useful; and for that reason the proposed alliance with Austria was at first unattractive, since it would involve enmity with Prussia. At the same time France was by no means prepared to help Frederick in his aggressive schemes; and Frederick, who despised the nervelessness and incompetence of the French government, put no confidence in the French alliance.

Meanwhile the British government, under the fussy and incompetent Duke of Newcastle, was in a state of equally nerveless indecision. It wanted to avoid war; it showed no energy in preparing for it; yet it felt that war was almost inevitably coming, and, in accordance with the traditions of the last generation, its chief preoccupation was to secure the safety of Hanover should the war come. Hanover had to be protected against France. But it was also endangered by Prussia, its neighbour on the east, whose cynical greed everybody feared. Tradition suggested a renewal of the old alliance with Austria. Newcastle accordingly opened negotiations with Austria to secure a guarantee for Hanover. Austria was ready to give the guarantee, but only on one condition—that she should be supplied with subsidies sufficient to enable her to attack Prussia and reconquer Silesia. But that would mean that the hornet's nest would be stirred. It was security, not war, that Britain wanted on the continent: she declined to lend herself to the Austrian project, and so the long alliance with Austria came to an end.

During 1754, and still more during 1755, when actual war was already raging in America, Newcastle, all anxiety for Hanover, was desperately touting for European alliances. He tried Russia, and made an agreement whereby Russia was to attack Prussia if Prussia attacked Hanover. But, after all, the best safeguard against Prussia might be an alliance with Prussia herself, and to this idea Newcastle eventually resorted. Frederick welcomed the project. In the war which he was preparing for it would be a great gain to have his flank protected by a friendly Hanover. So in January 1756 a convention was signed at Westminster, whereby Britain and Prussia mutually guaranteed one

another's possessions. Thus, at the opening of the great conflict, the needs of Hanover once more involved Britain in European complications.

The Convention of Westminster at once brought about a change in the attitude of France. Feeling that it had been deserted by Prussia, her government listened at last to the urgency of Kaunitz; and in May 1756 a treaty was made between France and Austria, whereby France undertook to provide troops and subsidies for Austria, and so committed herself to participation in a great European war. This was the beginning of an alliance which lasted for a generation, and brought nothing but disaster to France. It was also the foundation of a great league of States which Austria gradually built up for the overthrow of the malignant trickster of Berlin. She was already sure of the friendship of Russia. Soon Sweden and the minor States of the Empire were to join in a coalition by which it might be confidently expected that Frederick would be overwhelmed. For Frederick's only ally was Britain, a power which could not put large armies in the field, and which was certain to be distracted by demands elsewhere. Thus it appeared in 1756 that, once more, the main issues of the great conflict were going to be lost sight of, both by France and by Britain.

Frederick knew his danger. The coalition against him was not yet formed, but it was forming. In August 1756 he suddenly flung his great army at Saxony, the neighbour State which he desired to annex; shut up the little Saxon army at Pirna; checked an Austrian attempt to relieve it; forced it not merely to capitulate but to take service under his own standard; and thus started the war in control of all the resources of Saxony, as he had started the previous war by the seizure of Silesia.

Newcastle had hoped to keep things quiet in Europe while the struggle with France lasted; his alliance with Prussia had been meant to safeguard Hanover, not to expose it to great dangers. But he had reckoned without his formidable ally; and now Britain found herself saddled with a European war in addition to the gigantic conflict on the seas and in America and India into which she had been drawn, and in which, as we shall see, she had as yet met with nothing but disasters. At the end of 1756, while Frederick was enjoying his Saxon triumph, Britain seemed to be involved in the most dangerous crisis of her history. And her Whig leaders were helpless to extricate her from it.

§ 7. *British Politics and the Great Conflict: Emergence of Pitt.*

The government which had directed British policy during the greater part of the War of the Austrian Succession and the first six years of the peace had been the 'Broad-bottom' ministry of Henry Pelham, which had included every faction and had been almost unopposed. Even the stormy figure of Pitt, who had thundered against the subordination of British interests to those of Hanover in Walpole's time and in Carteret's, had been content to serve under Pelham for eight years as Paymaster of the Forces, in an office which carried no political authority. In domestic politics the period was the most stagnant in British history. But though in form a national ministry, Pelham's administration had in fact been governed by the traditions of Whig foreign policy; and it was under its nerveless guidance that Britain had drifted into the crisis in which she now found herself. The 'old system' as they called it, of constant preoccupation with the Balance of Power in Europe, of alliances and subsidies mainly designed for the protection of Hanover, and of disregard of colonial needs and dangers, continued without a breach. And the dominating influences in British politics were still patronage and borough influence, the management of which was the chief concern of ministers.

In 1754 Henry Pelham died, and the 'Broad-bottom' administration, which his suavity had held together, broke up. His place was taken by his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, king of borough-mongers and past-master of the arts of political corruption; the very type of Whig oligarchy at its worst. As Secretary of State, Newcastle had long been deeply concerned in the endless web of European diplomacy; he was the greatest believer in the supreme importance of the European Balance of Power, and in the possibility of maintaining it by a constant patching up of subsidy-treaties. But 1754, the year in which this ministerial change came about, was also the year in which war flamed out in the backwoods of America, and in which Britain was forced to realise that she was face to face with a great crisis in her history. Newcastle was manifestly not the man to guide her through this crisis. He was obstinately blind to colonial problems, though he had been concerned with them for a generation. For him, more fully even than for the other politicians of his generation, politics meant nothing more than the futilities of European diplomacy, and the sordidness of parliamentary

'management.' In forming his ministry he had no thought but for the placating of interests and the enlisting of pliant tools; with the result that in a crisis of her fate Britain found herself under the most feeble and incompetent administration to which she had ever had to submit.

But happily there was not lacking an effective opposition, capable of expressing the national distrust and arousing the national spirit. William Pitt, who had long chafed at his exclusion from real political influence, found himself shut out under the new arrangement from every prospect of promotion. He passed into opposition, and once more, as in the days of the opposition to Walpole and Carteret, his trumpet-voice—the only voice in British politics that could penetrate the muffled walls of the House of Commons and make itself somehow heard by the whole nation—was thundering against the blindness and incompetence that were leading the nation to ruin. As disaster followed disaster during the dark days of 1755 and 1756, Pitt's denunciations grew more formidable; and the nation learnt to regard him as the one leader capable of saving it from what seemed utter ruin. Newcastle's feebleness and lack of courage, and the long succession of defeats which followed from them, had thus much of compensation that they broke down the barriers of oligarchic self-complacency, and brought to the service and leadership of the nation the greatest governing mind which it had produced since Cromwell.

William Pitt¹ was in 1756 forty-eight years old; and though he had devoted all his energies to political life for twenty years, he had never yet enjoyed any experience of political power. As a member of a little group of friends led by Lord Cobham, and including the ambitious Grenville brothers whose sister he married in 1754, he had first distinguished himself by the vigour and power of his opposition to Walpole from 1735 onwards. In the course of this campaign he had been deeply influenced by some of Bolingbroke's doctrines, though he learnt to mistrust the man himself. But always his main themes had been the supreme value to Britain of a right use of her naval power, the dominating importance of maritime and colonial questions, and the folly and wastefulness of allowing British foreign policy to be dictated by the needs of Hanover, and to be enmeshed in

¹ The standard life of Pitt is by Basil Williams, in two volumes; an admirable piece of work. There is a short life by Frederic Harrison in the Twelve English Statesmen Series.

the complexities of European affairs. Inspired by these ideas, he had been among the most active influences in forcing Walpole into war in 1739 ; and he had been unsparing in his invective against the way in which the war had been conducted first by Walpole and then by Carteret. The vigour and power of his eloquence had won him a remarkable position even in those early days. He had completely dominated the House of Commons ; he had become a popular hero ; he was known throughout Europe. French agents thought it worth while to write home about his speeches ; and the Prussian envoy reported to his master in 1746 that Pitt was ' the greatest orator in the House of Commons . . . a man universally beloved by the nation/ And this great position he had won solely by his eloquence and courage, since he possessed neither wealth nor great rank nor borough influence.

In 1746 Pitt had abandoned opposition to become Paymaster of the Forces under Pelham, and at first this acceptance of an office out of which eighteenth-century politicians were accustomed to make great fortunes had damaged his reputation. But Pitt, though he was a poor man, had signalised his tenure of the office by refusing to take advantage of the chances of money-making which it offered, and which all his contemporaries regarded as perfectly legitimate. He had declined to accept the usual commission on subsidies paid out of his office to foreign armies ; he had refused to earn interest by lending the large balances which remained in his hands ; he had done much to check waste and peculation. In office he had shown that he had been sincere in the denunciations of corruption which he had made when in opposition. But his supreme desire was to have the chance of exercising in the service of his country the great powers he was conscious of possessing ; and the Pelhams, though they often consulted him and sometimes followed his advice, never offered him an office of cabinet rank. He was excluded from power in part because the king could not forgive his anti-Hanoverian speeches. But that was not the only or the main reason. He was excluded because he lacked ' influence,' because he controlled no borough votes. Now he was to show that, even in the conditions of eighteenth-century politics, the man who could at a time of national crisis win the confidence and trust of the nation might with that support make head even against the entrenched power of the Whig oligarchy.

The personality of this great man, who dominated his

era and became the inspirer and the spokesman of a new imperial conception in British politics, was far indeed from being flawless. He was absurdly theatrical in his methods. He was a domineering colleague, impatient of contradiction and very difficult to work with. Even those who believed in him most fervently often found their loyalty strained by the atmosphere of Olympian mystery in which he loved to envelop himself. He had no clearly thought-out political principles, and was constantly guilty of inconsistencies. His intellectual equipment for the great task of government was in many respects defective. But no one could doubt or deny the passionate intensity of his patriotism, the boldness and courage of his imagination, or his superb confidence in the British people and in himself. ' I know that I can save my country and that no one else can/ he said ; and such was his power of inspiring confidence that in his mouth the phrase did not seem boastful. What made him different from his contemporaries, and what commanded the devotion of the nation, was that he was patently inspired by intense and sincere beliefs. He believed in his country and in the greatness of its destiny ; and he believed in liberty, without being able to define it. These two beliefs were with him fused in one ; for England was for him the mother of liberty, and her triumph the triumph of freedom. And it was the intensity of his faith, as well as his proud confidence and courage, which enabled him to inspire those whom he led, and to awaken in the nation an ardour long since forgotten. Fortunately for his country he was richly endowed with all the gifts that could enable his eager spirit to achieve the leadership it deserved. A noble presence, a hawk-like face, an eye that could scorch and terrify, a voice of silver, a marvellous command of every resource of masculine eloquence, enabled him to dominate the House of Commons as it has never been dominated before or since, and, even in those days of unreported debates, to impress upon the mind of the nation some image of his flaming power. ' England has been long in labour, but at last she has produced a Man/ said Frederick the Great. The crisis had come towards which all the long development of the nation's oversea activities had pointed ; and with it had come the Man, to awaken the nation from its lethargy. As his latest and best biographer has said, ' the Great Commoner's chief glory is not to have won an Empire, but to have united a people/ and even during the dark years of failure with which, as we shall see, the great conflict opened,

Pitt's courage and confidence, and the vigour with which he denounced the incompetence to which the failure was due, were rendering the great service of awakening and uniting the nation.

[Hassail's *Balance of Power* for a summary of European affairs; Marriott and Robertson's *Rise of Prussia*] Atkinson's *History of Germany in the Eighteenth Century*; Ward's *England and Hanover* \ Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*; Beer's *British Colonial Policy, 1754-65*; Egerton's *British Colonial Policy*; Bradley's *Conquest of Canada*; Lecky's *England in the Eighteenth Century*; Robertson's *England under the Hanoverians* ; Williams' *William Pitt*.]

CHAPTER VII

WILLIAM PITT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH MARITIME AND COLONIAL SUPREMACY

(A.D. 1755-*763)

§ I. *The Dark Days.*

IN the spring of 1755 General Edward Braddock, a brave and honest soldier, trained in the methods of continental warfare, but strange to those of the backwoods, arrived in Virginia with two regiments to take command of an expedition for the recovery of the Ohio Valley. He had expected to be joined by large colonial forces ; but only 600 irregular troops could be obtained, and these had to be paid out of the British exchequer. Even the requisite wagons and supplies could only be obtained with the greatest difficulty. Braddock has been blamed for his lack of sympathy with the colonists. His impatience is not surprising.

In June he set out with his little force across the Alleghany chain, upon a march of more than 100 miles through a trackless wilderness to Fort Duquesne.¹ The woods swarmed with Indians in the French service ; there were no Indians on the British side. Nine miles from Fort Duquesne Braddock, who had gone forward with 1400 of his best men, was ambushed in the woods by some 800 Indians and Canadians, an invisible enemy, firing from behind trees and bushy ridges upon a compact mass of well drilled men in parade formation. The doomed force stood their ground, firing wildly at their unseen foes, and were shot down as they stood. Braddock himself was killed; only a remnant of his force was extricated by the skill of young Washington. Not only was the mastery of the Ohio Valley secured to the French, but the frontiers of the British colonies lay open to their attacks, and to the bloodthirsty raids of the Indian tribes, nearly all of whom eagerly joined the winning cause. That was the first event of the great conflict. The only force of regular troops in the colonies had been obliterated. The

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 55. This map should be used throughout the present chapter.

threatened colonies themselves were doing almost nothing for their own defence.

Meanwhile, in the north, the French (who disposed of 5000 regular troops as well as the whole armed manhood of Canada) were preparing to advance down Lake Champlain and the Hudson Valley to isolate New England from the southern colonies. The New Englanders, more vigorous than their southern neighbours, raised 6000 men to meet this danger, and placed them under the command of Sir William Johnson, an active Irishman, who had great influence among the Iroquois. They too, in their turn, were ambushed by the French on Lake George, and only escaped a disaster like Braddock's because, not being held together by army discipline, and knowing the woods, *they* were able to make their escape. After re-forming, they managed to beat back a new French attack. But when the campaign ended they only held the forts at the foot of Lake George, guarding the access to the Hudson Valley. The French, based upon their great forts at Crown Point and Ticonderoga, were superior in numbers and in readiness for war, and threatened to break down the resistance in the next campaign.

The first formal campaign in America, that of 1755, had thus been disastrous to the British cause ; the victory of the French seemed to be assured ; and during the winter the frontier lands of Virginia and Pennsylvania were terrorised by Indian attacks, in which hundreds of men, women and children were slaughtered. Washington, with a mere handful of men, could not protect a frontier 400 miles long, though he did his best. Yet the colonial authorities remained for the most part lethargic, waiting for British help : the legislature of Pennsylvania refused to vote a dollar or a man for the public defence.

This was bad enough news. But soon worse was to come. At home there were threats of a French invasion : French troops were mustering in the Channel, and the dockyards of Brest were busy. The British navy was widely scattered and undermanned ; the French navy, though it was largely outnumbered, was in home ports and seemed to be all available for action. British ships had to be withdrawn from the Mediterranean to guard against the danger nearer home. That was what the French wanted. Suddenly and secretly, in April 1756, without a declaration of war, a French fleet, convoying the Duke of Richelieu in command of 15,000

¹ See the map of the Hudson Valley, Atlas, Plate 56 (a).

troops in 150 transports, was sent out from Toulon against Minorca. The surprise was complete. The Governor of Minorca, and the colonels of all the regiments in the garrison of 3000, were away on leave. Port Mahon was besieged. Its defences were breached and its fall seemed all but certain when, late in May, Admiral Byng arrived from England with a fleet practically equal in numbers to the French fleet. Had Byng been able to destroy the opposing fleet, Richelieu and his army would have been as good as lost, even if they captured Fort Mahon. Byng fought a straggling indecisive battle, in which he got slightly the worse ; and then drew off, falling back on Gibraltar, and leaving Minorca to its fate. Port Mahon fell at the end of June. In November of the same year France also got control of the island of Corsica, from the republic of Genoa. Toulon, Corsica and Minorca seemed to give her command of the Mediterranean.

The consternation which these events caused in Britain surpassed even the painful impression produced by the disasters in America. Minorca had been since 1708 the main British naval base in the Mediterranean. The great struggle had been opened with the gravest blow which had been struck at British naval power since the battle of Beachy Head in 1690. And on naval power the very existence of Britain, as well as the possibility of success in America, wholly depended. Byng was recalled, and tried by court-martial. He was found guilty, not of cowardice, but of not doing his utmost to save Minorca ; and, as the articles of war required, was condemned to death, though with a recommendation to mercy. Popular clamour, inspired by panic, demanded his execution, *pour cncoitragcr les autres*.

While the excitement over Minorca was at its height in England, both French and British were addressing themselves to the situation in America. France sent out the Marquis de Montcalm, a soldier of infinite courage and great ability, worth many regiments, to take command of the operations ; and with him 1200 fresh troops. The Duke of Newcastle sent Lord Loudoun, a respectable soldier of rank, but easily disheartened and wholly lacking in capacity and enterprise ; to add to the shattered remnants of Braddock's force, and to face the 7000 regulars whom Montcalm commanded, he was given one regiment of 900 men. He was joined by several thousand colonials, mainly raised in New England ; but they were mostly untrained men. Each colony jealously controlled its own contingents ; and there

was constant friction among the colonial leaders, as well as between them and the British officers.

It is not surprising that under these circumstances the campaign of 1756 went badly in America. The only surprising thing is that it did not end in sheer disaster. In the Ohio Valley nothing was done: Virginia and Pennsylvania would not provide any troops; all that was possible was to defend the shrunken frontiers. Further north Montcalm seized and destroyed the fort of Oswego, the only British fort on the Great Lakes. It lay in the friendly Iroquois country, and was approached by the Mohawk Valley from Albany. Its loss left the line of advance by the Mohawk open to the French. On Lake George there was deadlock. While Loudoun strengthened the British forts (Edward and William Henry) and built a flotilla of boats for use on the Lake, Montcalm was similarly engaged; and though there was a great deal of picturesque dare-devil fighting by the frontiersmen on both sides, the French still held the upper hand. There was no gleam of success for the British side in America in 1756.

Nor was it much of a consolation that our sole continental ally, Frederick of Prussia, had treacherously seized Saxony and begun the continental struggle. That only ensured that there would be desperate doings on the Continent, and that an expedition must be sent to defend Hanover; which it might seem would ensure the continued neglect of the great issue in America. And another disaster had happened in the Far East, though this was fortunately not yet known at home; the news did not reach England till June 1757. Siraj-uddaula, the Nawab of Bengal, had suddenly turned against the English, and had captured Calcutta, many of whose wretched refugees were starving on an island at the mouth of the Ganges while others had died in the Black Hole.

§ 2. *Pitt's Opportunity, and his Preparations.*

One good result was, however, produced by these disasters. The Duke of Newcastle, bowing before the storm of public reprobation which even his willingness to offer Byng as a sacrifice could not allay, resigned his office; and George II. had to call upon Pitt to form a ministry, though he feared and distrusted the Great Commoner because of his declared hostility to fighting in the interests of Hanover. This was in December 1756. Pitt managed to form a ministry independent of corrupt influence, with the respectable Duke

of Devonshire as its nominal head. In the four months that followed he worked with desperate energy, planning and preparing vigorous action to retrieve the situation. The record of his activities in these months shows not merely immense industry and vigour, but a width of outlook and a boldness of conception which had hitherto been wholly lacking in the direction of British policy. America was to be the main field of operations. Large forces were sent to Loudoun ; backed by a big fleet, he was to challenge the French by a direct attack on Louisbourg and Quebec, while the colonies were to be stimulated and assisted to find sufficient forces to hold their ground at the other threatened points. The whole naval forces of Britain were to be boldly employed, primarily to blockade the French fleets and prevent them from sending assistance, secondarily to attack the French possessions in the West Indies and in West Africa. A new Militia Act was to be passed to raise forces for home defence, thus releasing all the available regular troops for foreign service. The valour of the Highland clans which had been recently in rebellion was to be employed by the enlistment of new regular regiments among them.¹ Attacks were to be made on the coast of France to distract French forces from other fields of conflict; British forces suddenly landed from the sea would, it was hoped, keep all France in terror, since she could never know where to expect attack. Germany was not to be neglected : Prussia was in any case our ally, and an army of observation in Hanover would give occupation to the French, and thus help the main struggle in America. All these bold and many-sided but convergent plans, to which Pitt adhered throughout his conduct of the war, were already being prepared during these active months. The daemonic energy of the man, though it had not yet had time to show itself in action, soon made itself felt in all the departments of government; and the new strenuousness and activity perceptible on all sides produced its effects upon the nation, and increased its confidence in the minister. What made all this more wonderful was that throughout these strenuous months Pitt was almost crippled by the agonies of gout.

But Pitt was not yet to be allowed freedom to carry out his great designs. His ministry was a one-man ministry, and though he commanded the devoted support of the independent country gentlemen and of the city merchants,

¹ Regiments from among the loyal clans had been enlisted as early as 1739.

he had no stable majority in the House of Commons. All the groups and cliques of borough-mongers were against him. The legion of government votes which the Duke of Newcastle had long controlled was not to be trusted, and the oligarchy was only waiting till popular fury should die down to return to power. Even popular support was alienated when it became known that Pitt was insisting that Admiral Byng ought not to be shot. The king refused to pardon Byng. ' You have taught me/ he said, when Pitt urged that the House of Commons was in favour of pardon, * to look elsewhere for the sense of my people than to the House of Commons/ and the unfortunate admiral was shot amid public rejoicings. George n., indeed, had no love for Pitt, and was only anxious to be rid of this critic of Hanover politics. When the Duke of Cumberland, who was to take command of the army in Hanover, refused to serve unless Pitt was dismissed, the king thought that the public craze for the minister had weakened sufficiently to make it safe to dismiss him ; and he received his *conge* in April 1757-

Thus, at a grave crisis, the nation was deprived of the only leadership that could save it. But no one could be found who was willing to accept the responsibility of making a new ministry ; and during eleven fateful weeks (April-June, 1757) there was no organised government at all. The indignation of the whole people, or of every part of it capable of forming a judgment, was made very apparent. Any doubt as to Pitt's command over the public imagination was dispelled by a rain of petitions and addresses. No less than nineteen towns, headed by the city of London, voted him the freedom, enclosing the certificates in gold boxes : ' it rained gold boxes/ as Horace Walpole said.

In the end a coalition was made between Newcastle and Pitt. Newcastle became First Lord of the Treasury, disposed of patronage, and managed the House of Commons; Pitt became Secretary of State and directed the war. It was a division of power that fully satisfied both parties. In effect, during the following four years, Pitt was dictator of the British Commonwealth. He dominated and dictated to the cabinet. The heads of the chief executive departments had to swallow their pride and carry out his imperious orders. When Anson, for example, told Pitt that as First Lord of the Admiralty he could not produce a certain fleet in a certain time, ' in that case/ said Pitt, ' you will be impeached in the House of Commons ' : the fleet was ready in four days.

The House of Commons was completely under his spell, especially now that all the traditional methods of 'management' were arrayed on his side. During these four years no one dared to resist his will: at first the dread of national disaster, and later the intoxication of the incredible successes brought about by his resolution and his courage, ensured his ascendancy. There were many who resented his dictatorship. Their time was to come. But, in the meanwhile, he was permitted to save his country.

It was not mere magnetism and courage which enabled Pitt to carry through the herculean labours of the next four years, though without his magnetic power of inspiration and without his sublime courage they would have been impossible. The more the work of these four years is studied the more clear it becomes that Pitt added to these gifts a very remarkable power of organising the conduct of business, an assiduous devotion to detail, an astonishing mastery of 'all the complexities of foreign negotiations and of military and naval administration, a remarkable readiness to learn from all who had anything useful to tell him—for such men he could always find time in his busy day. Above all, he had a genius for the choice of men, and was ready to disregard the ordinary rules of promotion in picking out the men to do his work. He was not only a great leader and inspirer of men, he was a superlatively great administrator with an amazing power of getting work done.

Nor even Pitt, however, could in a moment conjure victory out of disaster. He had planned the campaigns of 1757; but he had had to use the resources available, and the men then in command; and the carrying out of his plans had been interrupted by the unfortunate interregnum at a critical time. The year 1757 showed, on the surface, no improvement over its predecessor; on the contrary, it seemed to have brought a culmination of woes.

In America Loudoun, supported by a large fleet, went to Halifax with his main forces, now greatly increased, intending to attack Louisbourg; but, finding the French too strong, returned ignominiously to New York when the campaigning season was over. In his absence Montcalm had thrown himself with all his strength upon the small British forces that had been left to guard the line of the Hudson river.¹ He compelled the surrender of Fort William Henry. The garrison were given a promise of safe retreat; but Montcalm's Indian allies got out of hand, and slaughtered many

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 56 (a).

of the retreating force. If Loudoun had not meanwhile returned from Halifax with the troops Pitt had sent him, Montcalm might have advanced far down the Hudson. The situation in America was graver than ever when the campaign of 1757 closed.

But it was from the continent of Europe that the worst news came in this year. Austria had handed over to her ally France the ports of the Austrian Netherlands ; and the continental coast of the Narrow Seas, for whose sake Britain had fought so many wars, was in enemy hands. Worse still, our only ally, Frederick of Prussia, rashly advancing into Bohemia, had suffered a terrible defeat at Kolin and been forced to retreat. While France had formed an army to attack him from the west, Russian hordes were advancing to attack him on the east, and the Swedes threatened him from the north. His destruction seemed inevitable.

Worst of all, the main French army had been directed against Hanover. Resisted only by a mixed force of Hanoverians and Hessians of less than half its numbers under the command of the Duke of Cumberland, the French had won a crushing victory at Hastenbeck, and all the lands west of the Elbe seemed to be lost. In September 1757 Cumberland signed the humiliating capitulation of Klosterzeven, whereby the army of observation in Hanover was disbanded. Hanover seemed to lie wholly at the mercy of France. That would complete the ruin of Frederick, by exposing his flank. The next campaign might be expected to annihilate him ; and then France and her allies would be able to turn all their strength against Britain.

A final disappointment, the news of which followed hard on the heels of Klosterzeven, completed the disillusionments of this dark year. Pitt had planned a strong blow at Rochefort on the coast of France, and had found for it a fleet under his best admiral, Hawke, and an army. The attack was delivered at the end of September. The fleet did well, capturing the fort on the isle of Aix with thirty-six guns. But Mordaunt, the general in command of the army, one of the old cautious school, simply declined to attack Rochefort; and the expedition came home again ingloriously at the beginning of October. Mordaunt, Loudoun and their teacher Cumberland had given Pitt his fill of generals of the orthodox school. Henceforward he chose his own men, without regard to official precedence.

It is not wonderful that in the summer and autumn of

1757 men should have thought the outlook almost hopeless. Even Pitt was disheartened : it was, he said, ' a gloomy scene for this distressed, disgraced country/ for whose future he felt * little less than despair'; and during the summer he even offered to surrender Gibraltar to Spain in return for help in recovering Minorca. The offer was refused. ' We are undone at home and abroad/ said the Earl of Chesterfield, a shrewd judge of public affairs. ' The French are masters to do what they please in America. We are no longer a nation. I never yet saw so dreadful a prospect/ That was the almost universal feeling. The sun of British greatness seemed to be setting after its brief splendour.

Such is the dark background which sets off the radiance of Pitt's achievements during the following years. For this was the darkest hour before the dawn. Already his work of preparation was beginning to bear fruit. The navy was blockading all the French ports, and forbidding the exit of French fleets ; but that was silent work which no one noted. The pervading gloom only intensified the great minister's resolution. He was eagerly at work upon the plans for the next year ; he had fixed upon the captains whom he could trust; he would abandon hope nowhere, not even in Germany. The capitulation of Klosterzeven, fortunately broken by the French, was promptly repudiated. A British contingent was prepared to stiffen the Hanoverian and Hessian troops ; a skilful general, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, was borrowed from Frederick the Great to take command of the combined force.

And during the winter, to which men had looked forward with shivering fear, the first pieces of good news began to come in. Frederick the Great, instead of accepting his defeat at Kolin, had in November launched a swift and brilliant attack at the southern French army which was advancing against him, and in the battle of Rossbach had inflicted a blow so crushing that French prestige never recovered from it till the time of Napoleon. Then, turning east, he had suddenly burst down upon the Austrians who had occupied Silesia, and at Leuthen had defeated vastly superior numbers and driven them out of the province. He was still faced by terrible odds. But the news of these dazzling victories—the first really good news which had come since the war opened—aroused in England the most intense enthusiasm. Frederick became a national hero, almost as in Prussia. ' The Protestant Hero ' they called

him : the name must have amused the brilliant, unscrupulous sceptic to whom it was applied.

Good news came in from the Indies also : first the news that Clive had regained Calcutta ; then the incredible tidings of the victory at Plassey, that placed all Bengal at the feet of the East India Company. These were victories in no sense prepared or organised at home. But they raised the drooping spirits of the nation and prepared it for the astonishing reversal of fortune that was to begin in the next year, and to go on swelling in magnitude as long as the war lasted. The dark days were over.

§ 3. *The Turn of the Tide* (1758).

It was in the campaign of 1758 that the genius of Pitt had its first chance of displaying its power. The campaign was to yield an intoxicating series of triumphs in every direction. They were the result of infinite forethought and care in preparation.

In the first place everything was done to stimulate the public zeal both at home and in America. The spirit of Pitt's appeals to the nation was expressed in the king's speech on the opening of Parliament—a speech written, of course, by Pitt. 'I have the firmest confidence that the spirit and bravery of this nation, so renowned in all time, and which have formerly surmounted so many difficulties, are not to be abated by some disappointments. . . In this critical juncture the eyes of all Europe are upon you.' To the American colonists similar appeals were made. They were called upon to provide 20,000 men ; the mother country undertaking to defray the whole cost of arms, equipment and rations, and to make a grant towards pay and clothing to those colonies which showed zeal. Under these conditions the objections of the colonists disappeared, and they raised nearly 23,000 men, more than twice as many as they had ever raised before.

The main campaign of the year was intended to be the campaign in America : here, as Pitt saw and Newcastle had never seen, lay the great field of conflict. But the American campaign was to be only part, though the greatest part, of a vast plan, all the parts of which closely related to one another.

In the first place, powerful blockading squadrons watched the French naval bases in the Channel and the Bay of Biscay, to prevent the French fleet from slipping out to do **any**

damage or to help Canada. The weary vigils of the blockading squadrons were the foundation of the whole fabric of success, though little was heard of them. And while their crews, afloat in all weathers, gained in seamanship and the sense of mastery, the French fleets, locked up in harbour, steadily deteriorated in quality. In the same way a squadron based on Gibraltar watched to prevent the French from slipping out of the Mediterranean : the only attempt to do so which was made by the Toulon fleet was promptly baffled.

In the second place Pitt found naval squadrons and land forces to make a series of attacks upon the French coast.³ In May there was a descent in the neighbourhood of St. Malo. In June there were demonstrations against Havre and Honfleur. In August Cherbourg was captured and its forts and shipping destroyed. In September there was a second and unfortunate attack upon St. Malo. These expeditions were much criticised at the time, and have often been criticised since, as a waste of men and money. They led to no very direct results. But they kept France in a nervous state. They caused her government to withhold or to withdraw at least 30,000 men from the German campaign. Frederick the Great did not share the popular view of their futility, but begged that they should be continued

In the third place, the German campaign was vigorously supported, and large subsidies were paid to help Prussia in her troubles. Ferdinand of Brunswick, at first with an army of German mercenaries in British pay, to whom 9000 British troops were added later in the summer, brilliantly manoeuvred against two French armies each superior to his own, won a striking victory over one of them at Crefeld, and by the end of the campaign had cleared them out of Hanover. For the first time a Hanoverian campaign was followed with breathless interest in Britain.

It was fortunate for Frederick that Pitt had changed his views about German campaigns, for Frederick was hard put to it to hold his own against his ring of enemies in this year ; the Russians were at last upon him, and though he won a costly victory over them at Zorndorf, he had to submit to defeat from the Austrians. Yet he still retained his hold over all his territories. He could not have done so had the Hanoverian army not protected his flank, and relieved him from anxiety from the French. Pitt was much taunted with his new attitude on Hanoverian

¹ See the map of the Narrow Seas, Atlas, Plate 45 (a).

campaigns. He had his retort ready. No one could suggest that he was giving all his attention to the European struggle, as his predecessors had done. But by using it to distract the efforts of France, he was helping the main campaign in America.

Not content with all these activities, Pitt found the naval and military forces for a brilliant little expedition to West Africa.¹ The French fort and trading station at Senegal were captured by April, and at the end of December the island of Goree fell to an attack by Keppel. All the French factories, and all the rich trade of the French company in gold, ivory, and above all slaves, fell into British hands.

But the main object of the year's fighting was to redress the situation in America. Here Pitt had planned no less than four converging campaigns ; and on these he had expended his best thought and his most anxious and detailed preparations.² The main attack was to be against Louisbourg ; a second big attack aimed at getting control of Lake Champlain, and advancing by that route to meet the conquerors of Louisbourg when they advanced up the St. Lawrence ; a third and minor onslaught was to be directed along the river Mohawk against the forts on the Great Lakes ; a fourth was to redeem Braddock's disaster and secure the Ohio Valley. He had chosen his men carefully for these enterprises. For the Louisbourg attack the naval command was given to one of the best of English admirals, Boscaw'en, the military command to a colonel brought back from Germany, Amherst, with a promising young soldier of thirty-two, James Wolfe, as second in command. For the Champlain command, and for that alone, he kept one of the old gang, Abercromby, but placed beside him the brilliant young soldier Howe ; for the Lakes expedition he had picked out a very successful colonial, Bradstreet, who had done well on the southern frontier in the last campaign ; for the Ohio enterprise his choice fell upon a staunch and patient old Scotsman, Forbes. All of them were provided with large and well equipped forces ; all of them knew that they would receive all the support they could ask for, warm recognition if they succeeded, disgrace only if they failed through lack of energy.

All save one of the four expeditions met with complete success. Boscawen, Amherst and Wolfe captured the great

¹ See the map of West Africa, Atlas, Plate 64 (c).

² See the map, Atlas, Plates 54, 55, and 56 (a)

fortress of Louisbourg with 4000 prisoners and 220 guns, and destroyed a French squadron of thirteen sail which lay in the harbour ; and with the fall of Louisbourg the path lay open up the St. Lawrence to Quebec. Bradstreet forced his way up the Mohawk to Lake Ontario, and not only regained Oswego, but took the important French Fort Frontenac, thus cutting communications between Canada and the Ohio, and opening the possibility of an attack down the river against Montreal and Quebec. Forbes, with one Highland regiment and a large body of colonials, cut a road through the forests with dogged patience, and reached Fort Duquesne—only to find that its garrison had fled, and that the Ohio Valley had passed for ever out of French hands. He dated the despatch announcing his success from ' Pittsburg ' ; ' I have used the freedom/ he wrote, ' of giving your name to Fort Duquesne, as I hope it was in some measure the being actuated by your spirit that now makes us masters 'of the place/ The staunch old man, who had overcome a thousand difficulties, not least his own illness, died soon afterwards at Philadelphia ; but it is possible that before he died he was cheered by the fine sentences of praise and appreciation which Pitt promptly sent to him.

Only on Lake Champlain was the record of complete success marred. Young Howe, who commanded the admiration and affection of all who met him, was unhappily killed at the opening of the campaign; and Abercromby had the folly to throw his gallant men, unsupported by guns, against a strongly fortified position which Montcalm had taken up near Ticonderoga.¹ With fruitless valour the new Highland regiments whose fathers had been rebels, and their English and colonial comrades, threw themselves against impassable obstacles which might easily have been outflanked; and after futile slaughter Abercromby fell back again upon his base.

Yet even with this check, what a record of victories 1758 had produced ! Senegal and Goree ; Crefeld and the freeing of Hanover; the French fleets reduced to impotence; Louisbourg captured; the Ohio Valley cleared; the forts on the Great Lakes occupied. It was a draught of triumph more intoxicating than the British peoples had ever drunk in any year of their history, and all the more marvellous by contrast with the gloom of the last year. But 1758 provided only the foundation for the greater triumphs of 1759.

¹ R. L. Stevenson has a ballad on Ticonderoga.

§ 4. *The Annus Mirabilis of 1759 : Quebec and Quiberon.*

The Duke of Newcastle, indeed, was eager to treat for peace, and to barter Louisbourg against Minorca ; he could not believe that such successes could be more than a flash in the pan. But even if Pitt and the British peoples had been of Newcastle's mind, peace negotiations would have been of no avail. For a new minister had come into power in France, a man of courage and resource, the Duke of Choiseul, who, realising more clearly than any of his predecessors the magnitude of the issues that were at stake, refused with fine courage to despond, or to believe that the spirit and resources of his country were exhausted, and resolved to throw all his weight into the struggle against Britain. Pitt was to have, what hitherto he had lacked, a foe worthy of his steel.

Choiseul's chief hope was that he might bring Spain into the fray, and so gain an equality, if not a preponderance, of naval force; for he saw that in this world-wide conflict everything depended upon naval power. He urged Spain to realise that the only nations which now counted in the world were those that possessed colonies, foreign trade and naval strength. Even Russia, Austria and Prussia were negligible in comparison with the maritime powers ; and among the maritime powers Holland had already fallen into the background, and unless France and Spain joined forces Britain would soon be left without a serious rival in the world—Britain, which counted a population, even including her colonies, of less than half that of France alone. But Spain was not yet prepared for his wooing, though she was to listen to it, with disastrous results to herself, two years later.

Failing to gain Spanish aid, Choiseul pinned his hopes upon the chances of a bold attack upon the very heart of the British power. He projected an invasion of England in force ; and during the winter of 1758-9 he was preparing a great army of 50,000 veterans to be ferried across the Channel, while another force of 36,000 French, Russians and Swedes were to invade Scotland under the protection of a Swedish fleet. Proclamations were actually drafted for distribution in Scotland. But though the northern expedition against Scotland came to nothing, the hoped-for allies refusing to co-operate, the plan of an invasion was persisted in ; and, like Napoleon nearly fifty years later, Choiseul prepared a host of flat-bottomed boats for the transport of

the invading armies. It was a perfectly serious project, which aroused, like its successor, grave alarm in England.

Pitt was not the man to allow his plans of campaign to be dictated by anybody else. Far from permitting the alarm of invasion to reduce his efforts overseas, as it was intended to do, his oversea enterprises planned for 1759 were, as we shall see, on a still grander scale, and still bolder in their aims, than those of 1758. But he did not neglect Choiseul's threat. Instead of keeping back troops that were needed for America or Germany, he sent more than ever to those campaigns ; and for home defence he trusted to the nation, and called out the militia, which had been reorganised by an Act of his own in 1756. In some counties the calling out of the militia produced riots. But on the whole it was responded to with splendid spirit; and the moral effect of thus calling on the people to fight for their country was wholly admirable. It welded the unity *hi* the nation ; it swept away party feeling ; it weakened class distinctions. Tory squires who had long sulked in their manor-houses joined with Dissenters and tradespeople. 'Gentlemen now associate and act together/ as one lord-lieutenant reported, ' who were very shy lately, and scarcely knew one another.' Martial ardour spread through the nation. Towns raised new regiments at their own expense, or armed and drilled their citizens ; private persons even undertook the whole cost of raising regiments. No such patriotic zeal had ever been known in Britain before, not even in the days of the Armada.

The services of the militia and the volunteers were never called upon ; because the navy, besides meeting all the demands of Pitt's distant expeditions, was quite capable of baffling Choiseul's scheme. For like Philip 11's project of 1588, and like Napoleon's later, the possibility of carrying out the invasion was dependent upon the chance of gaining command of the Channel, if only for a short time ; and even with large British squadrons scattered far afield, that could only be done if the whole French fleet could be brought together. To prevent this was the business of the navy, and very thoroughly it did its task.

Two great naval battles—the only considerable naval actions of the war—were fought to achieve this end. It was essential to Choiseul's scheme, as to Napoleon's later, that the French fleet in Toulon should get out of the Mediterranean and join forces with the Channel squadrons.¹ In August

¹ See the map of the North Atlantic, Atlas, Plate 45 (6).

1759 the attempt was made. Boscawen's Gibraltar squadron caught them as they were slipping through the straits; pursued them north-westwards to the Portuguese coast between Lagos and Cape St. Vincent; and there destroyed all but two vessels which escaped, and five which had earlier taken refuge in Cadiz.

The action of Lagos destroyed Choiseul's grand scheme. But he still persisted in his project of an invasion. To convoy the transports, which were gathered in the ports north of the Loire, the main French fleet under Conflans came out from Brest in November,¹ taking advantage of a violent westerly gale which had forced Hawke and his blockading fleet to beat back to Torbay. Conflans sailed southwards, towards Lorient and Quiberon Bay. But Hawke² was hard upon his tracks. Conflans thought he would be safe in Quiberon Bay, the entrance of which is guarded by dangerous reefs, especially as a violent gale was blowing on a very dangerous lee shore. He had calculated without Hawke; who, defying gale and reefs and lee shore, ordered his captains to set their course by the French, forced his way in, and simply annihilated the French fleet.

Quiberon Bay was one of the most brilliant and daring actions in the history of the British navy. And it was decisive. It was the Trafalgar of this war. The French navy no longer counted. The invasion of England was henceforth hopeless. No more reinforcements or supplies could be sent to America or India. The British command of the seas was made, impregably secure.

Henceforth French action by sea was limited to commerce destruction. In that sphere the French had already shown great daring, and inflicted heavy damage, which grew worse as the war proceeded. Between 1756 and 1760 more than 2500 British ships were captured, and in 1761 no less than 812. But the very numbers of the British ships captured by French privateers during the next three years was itself (paradoxical as this may appear) a proof of British sea-supremacy. For scarcely any French ships ventured out for trading purposes; the bulk of the French marine, naval and mercantile, could find no employment save in privateering. On the other hand British ships were innumerable and omnipresent; new ships were built faster than the old ones were captured; during these years the number of British

¹ See the map of the Narrow Seas, Atlas, Plate 45 (a).

* There is a life of Hawke by Montagu Burrows. A favourite toast in these years was 'The eye of a Hawke and the heart of a Wolfe.'

merchant-ships rose to about 8000, and they enjoyed an extraordinary supremacy in the world's carrying trade.

But privateering was not by any means limited to the French side. It was practised with equal vigour by British and American sailors. Every port had its privateering craft, armed and licensed to prey upon enemy shipping. The great drawback of the practice of licensing private vessels (which every nation followed until 1856) was that these vessels could not be kept under control, and readily drifted into mere piracy. The difficulty became all the greater when the French flag almost disappeared from the seas, and the carriage of goods for France was undertaken by neutral vessels. Could these goods be intercepted? Or must the free supply even of warlike stores to France be permitted? On that question controversy raged, and the neutrals became more and more hostile to British sea-power; all the more because of the way in which many of the privateers behaved. The Americans in particular ravaged the Dutch and Spanish shipping in the West Indies, while at the same time they made huge profits by selling naval stores to the French. Pitt tried to check the excesses of the privateers by an Act which he introduced and carried against considerable opposition in 1759. 'England the mistress of the ocean should not act despotically there/ he told the House of Commons. His bill did not remove all the grievances of the neutrals, which were to be put forward more vigorously in the next war. But at least he did his best to restrain the abuses of the system.

Naval supremacy had its dangers and its difficulties, and it took time to learn how to use it with restraint and justice. But in the meanwhile it ensured victory in the main campaigns; the triumphs of the navy were the essential foundations of all Pitt's victories in America, and of all the amazing triumphs in India. Beyond question Lagos and Quiberon Bay denied all chance of success for the desperate endeavour to restore the French position in India which the gallant Lally was carrying on during these years, as we shall see in the next chapter. And even in this year of threatened invasion, naval supremacy enabled Pitt to strike a vigorous blow against the prosperous French islands in the West Indies, where the rich island of Guadeloupe was captured.

In one field alone the navy could give no direct help—on the continent of Europe. Here Frederick of Prussia, fighting against impossible odds, had to submit to heavy defeats with appalling losses from the Russians and the

Austrians. Half his army was lost; his enemies, including the Swedes, were encamped upon his territory; he contemplated suicide; his only hope lay in help from Britain.

Yet the very gloom that enshrouded Frederick heightened the value of the brilliant successes which this year brought in the Hanoverian campaign. Faced by two French armies, outnumbering him by two to one, Ferdinand of Brunswick not only held his own, but won at Minden one of the most dazzling of victories, which almost enabled him to clear the French out of Western Germany. The brunt of the fighting fell upon six British regiments which still have the name of Minden on their colours. The French army was as deeply humiliated as the French navy.

But, as in 1758, the greatest campaign of 1759 was that of America. Its object was no less than the final destruction of the French power, and this it very nearly succeeded in achieving. As in 1758 a triple line of attack was planned.¹ One expedition, under Colonel Prideaux, was sent to complete the conquest of the lake region by the capture of Fort Niagara, between Lakes Erie and Ontario. It fully achieved its aim, and was ready to co-operate in an advance down the river towards Montreal. A second force, consisting of 11,000 men, half British and half colonial, was placed under Amherst, the conqueror of Louisbourg, and charged with the task of clearing the line of Lake Champlain and advancing by that route to Quebec. Its task was also achieved with some ease, for the main French forces had been withdrawn for the defence of Quebec. Amherst was a sound soldier, but somewhat deliberate in his movements. He did not advance rapidly enough to help in the attack on Quebec, which would have been greatly lightened had he approached it from the west while the main attack was being delivered from the east. His delay threw upon the third expedition of the year a very heavy, indeed it might seem an almost impossible, task.

This expedition, which aimed at the conquest of Quebec, was entrusted to a combined naval and military force, 22 men-of-war under Admiral Saunders, conveying 9000 picked troops, all British, under James Wolfe,² a young man of thirty-three, without influence, who owed his chance to Pitt's choice, and who was already known as the ablest, most thoughtful and most daring of British soldiers. The attempt

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 55.

² There is a good short life of Wolfe, by A. G. Bradley, in the English Men of Action Series.

seemed to be in the last degree venturesome. The navigation of the St. Lawrence was held to be almost impossible for a large fleet; yet Saunders accomplished it with complete success. The fortress of Quebec, which overlooked and dominated the narrowest part of the river, was held to be impregnable; it had been protected by the most elaborate fortifications, and was defended by about 15,000 French soldiers under a great captain, Montcalm, who commanded their entire loyalty. When Saunders and Wolfe arrived at the Isle of Orleans opposite Quebec, they saw before them * a high rocky bluff crowned by a fort whose guns seemed to command the river; westwards steep cliffs, two hundred feet high, seemed to make a landing impossible even if the guns of the fortress could be passed; eastwards a deep river, the St. Charles, coming down from steep high ground, protected the citadel, and beyond it, facing the British forces on the Isle of Orleans, a stretch of low land, backed by cliffs, was guarded by a continuous line of elaborate earthworks, behind which lay an army larger than Wolfe's. The nut seemed too hard to crack, unless Amherst, coming down the river from the west, should co-operate by an attack from that side. And of Amherst there was no word.

The months of July and August passed without anything achieved. Guns mounted on Point Levis, opposite the city, battered down its houses and mastered its artillery; but that did little good, except that it allowed Saunders to send four ships above the city. A joint naval and military attack on the main French position east of the town was beaten off with serious loss. September came; soon the river would begin to freeze. Wolfe wrote home to Pitt a desponding letter saying that his only hope was the desperate one of an attack above the town, for which, after leaving garrisons below, he could spare only 5000 men.

Immediately after writing this letter Wolfe embarked upon his forlorn hope. On a dark starlit night, the 12th of September, his little force set out to land at a steep and narrow path leading up the precipice to the Plains of Abraham above. French sentries saw them, but took them for an expected flotilla of boats bringing provisions for the garrison: Wolfe had counted on that. Twenty-four volunteers scrambled up the path in the starlight and overpowered the sentries above, while the clustered boat-loads below lay and waited, scarcely daring to whisper. **Then** the little army clambered up, dragging with them two guns,

¹ See the plan of Quebec, Atlas, Plate 55 (a)

and as morning dawned fell into line on the Plains of Abraham, looking across to Quebec. Montcalm, taken by surprise, brought up his men with what haste he could, and ordered a charge which should sweep the invaders over the cliff. The British troops lay still till the enemy were within forty paces. Then three withering volleys, followed by a charge, turned the French advance into a disorderly rout. Seldom has a victory so great been so quickly won. Wolfe, leading the charge, was struck by three bullets ; but he did not die, this happy warrior, till he knew that he had won one of the most momentous battles in his country's history. His gallant opponent was struck down almost at the same moment. Montcalm's successor withdrew most of his forces, and on 18th September, five days after the battle, Quebec capitulated.

This was the crowning victory of the *annus mirabilis* which had witnessed the most astonishing series of triumphs that ever was announced to an exulting nation. On June 13 London had learnt of the conquest of Guadeloupe ; on August 5 of the capture of the neighbouring island of Marie Galante : on August 6 came the intoxicating news of the victory of Minden ; before the end of August word came of the defeat of the French fleet at Lagos ; during September tidings arrived of the capture of Fort Niagara and the occupation of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, names of dread for four years past ; October heard of the glory of Quebec ; November of the culminating victory of Quiberon Bay. 'It is necessary/ wrote the quidnunc, Horace Walpole, 'to ask every morning what victory there is, for fear of missing one.' And this was only two years from the time when Chesterfield was moaning that 'we are no longer a nation/ The contrast is the measure of the genius of Pitt.

§ 5- *Negotiations for Peace : the Fall of Pitt.*

In comparison with the glories of 1759, the campaigns of 1760 and 1761 seemed to be something of an anti-climax. In 1760 it was made clear that the fall of Quebec did not mean the conquest of Canada. Wolfe's small army, after a hard winter, was attacked by the revived French forces, which greatly outnumbered it, was beaten almost on the scene of its victory, and was for a time besieged in Quebec. But the siege was raised by a fleet coming up the river and a land force advancing by Lake Champlain ; the French army fell back upon Montreal, where in September it was

forced to surrender, yielding the whole of Canada to the British Crown ; and the long war for North America was over. The same year, as we shall see, yielded a decisive triumph to British arms in India in the defeat of the French at Wandewash.

Meanwhile on the Continent the outlook was gloomy. Ferdinand of Brunswick, though the British forces under his command were now larger than they had ever been, could achieve no very definite success. The British public, accustomed to victories, were losing patience with the German war, which only victory had made popular, and which was the most costly of all Pitt's enterprises. Frederick of Prussia was all but exhausted. He was only able to make head at all by drawing troops from Ferdinand. In 1760 the Russians for a time even occupied Berlin ; and though his indomitable spirit enabled him to drive the Austrians once more out of Silesia at the battle of Liegnitz, to clear Berlin of the Russians, and to win the terribly costly victory of Torgan over the Austrians in Saxony, he was worn out. Among his opponents Austria and France were in a not much better condition.

The campaigns of 1761 were equally uneventful and indecisive. On the continent they were almost featureless, though Ferdinand of Brunswick won two successes. But Frederick was manifestly almost at the end of his tether. On the seas the only important event was the capture of the island of Belleisle, off the coast of France ; a position which, occupied by British forces, would have formed a perpetual menace to France. Pitt was planning expeditions against the remaining French possessions in the West Indies, but he had not yet launched them.

The reason for this comparative lassitude was that peace negotiations (for which everybody, even Britain, was longing) had begun. Pitt was altogether ready to make peace, but only on two conditions—the first that Britain should receive a recompense commensurate with the sacrifices she had made and the victories she had won ; and the second that Frederick of Prussia should not be left in the lurch. He had willingly entered into negotiations in 1759, but had dropped them when France had made it clear that what she wanted was a separate peace, leaving out Frederick. In 1760 he renewed them with equal willingness. But now the conditions had changed. George n. had died ; and his successor George in. was imbued with the desire to overthrow the Whig oligarchy and to restore the Crown to the

position designed for it in the Revolution settlement. In that aim Pitt, who had no love for the oligarchy, would have been his natural ally, as indeed George in. and his confidant Lord Bute did not fail to recognise. But in the king's view the first step towards a restoration of the royal authority must be a cessation of war, and the termination of the powerful ministry which had conducted it. Nor was the king alone desirous of peace. Some of the leading Whigs, like the Duke of Bedford, were frightened by the very magnitude of the British success, and feared a general coalition against British supremacy on the seas. Others, like Pitt's own brother-in-law, George Grenville, were terrified by the spectre of the mounting national debt. And there were many who would not be sorry to shake off the dominion of the terrible dictator, now that the peril was over. The growing unpopularity of the war in Germany encouraged all these feelings. And as a result of these causes, Pitt found during 1760 and 1761 that his mastery in the cabinet was gradually weakening.

In the course of the peace discussions in 1761, though the terms proposed by France were not unreasonable, Pitt was struck by a certain stiffening in the French tone, and by signs of a *rapprochement* between France and Spain. A new king, Charles m., had ascended the Spanish throne in 1759. He was decidedly French in his sympathies, unlike his predecessor, who had remained neutral throughout the war; and Choiseul had found him ready to listen to the suggestions of common action against Britain which he had already made in vain in 1758. In August 1761, while the peace negotiations were going on, a secret treaty between France and Spain, the Third Family Compact, was concluded. It was a treaty of close and perpetual alliance; and one of its clauses bound Spain to declare war on Britain unless peace was signed before May 1762. This was not known in England; but when the French negotiator in London not only insisted that Britain must give no further help to Prussia, but also produced various demands on behalf of Spain, and explained that these must be satisfied before peace could be signed, Pitt concluded that the two Bourbon powers were acting in conjunction. He broke off the negotiations, and recommended the cabinet at once to declare war upon Spain.

But the peace party in the cabinet was now in the majority. Pitt found only one supporter. His dictatorship was at an end. Declaring that he would not be responsible for meas-

ures he did not manage, he resigned his office (October 1761). The most glorious ministry in British history was over. It had found the Commonwealth divided, disheartened and apparently on the verge of ruin. After four brief years, it left it united, triumphant, and recognised as the greatest power in the world.

§ 6. *The Aftermath : the Downfall of Spain.*

It may be that, in recommending war against Spain, Pitt looked forward to renewing and redoubling the triumphs he had already won, and to making Britain the inheritor of the Spanish colonial empire, as he had already made her the inheritor of the French. That was the view of many of his critics, who pictured him as rejoicing in war and insatiable with conquest. But there is not a word to justify such a view in all his correspondence, which shows him genuinely eager for peace, provided only that the terms were reasonably good and that honourable obligations to Frederick were fulfilled. He was convinced that, with Spanish aid, France intended to try a last gambler's stroke ; the old nightmare of a Franco-Spanish alliance, which had haunted Whig statesmen ever since the time of Louis xiv., was reviving, and he thought that the quickest way to peace was to strike it down swiftly, as he knew he could do. Events were soon to prove that he was right. As soon as the annual treasure-fleet reached Spain in safety, her behaviour made war inevitable ; it was declared in January 1762, three months after Pitt's resignation.

Pitt had already made all his plans for the anticipated renewal of the war, and the campaign of 1762, against both France and Spain, was carried out in accordance with these plans. It was one of the most dazzling of the series, for the instruments of war which Pitt had sharpened were still at their finest. An expedition under Rodney which Pitt had already sent out against the French West Indies achieved the rapid capture of Martinique, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent, and all the Lesser Antilles were in British hands. A fleet and an army of 10,000 men attacked Havana, the capital of Cuba, and captured it in a few weeks, together with twelve Spanish ships of the line and vast treasures. This was a blow against the very heart of the Spanish empire. When Spain endeavoured to force Britain's old ally, Portugal, into the confederacy and invaded the country, a British fleet and an army of 8000 men were despatched to

Lisbon, and the Spaniards were ignominiously driven back over the frontier. Finally an expedition despatched from India attacked and captured Manila, and compelled the surrender of the whole group of Philippine Islands and the payment of a heavy ransom. Under these crushing blows the Spanish empire seemed to be breaking up ; and, indeed, it was clearly in the power of the British Commonwealth, had it chosen to do so, to bring down in ruin the oldest of the European colonial empires. The campaign of 1762 was even more dramatic than its predecessors in the suddenness of the ruin which it inflicted, and in the demonstration which it gave of the deadliness of the weapons which Pitt had sharpened.

§ 7. *The Peace of Paris.*

But these events made France and Spain realise that nothing was to be gained by a prolongation of the war ; and as the British government, now headed by Lord Bute, was eager for peace, terms were agreed to before the end of 1762, and confirmed at the beginning of 1763.

The treaty of Paris was the triumphant culmination of the history of the first British empire. No diplomatic instrument in history had ever disposed of regions so vast and so full of potentiality as those with which it dealt; nor had any dominion made by man shown so wide a diversity of character and opportunity as that which this treaty confirmed to the British peoples. Canada and all the territories east of the Mississippi save New Orleans became British, including the territory of Florida, which was ceded by Spain as the price of the restoration of Havana. On the North American continent France retained nothing but the unexplored territory west of the Mississippi, which she handed over to Spain, and the two tiny islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon in the St. Lawrence estuary, which she kept as a foothold for her fishermen, for whom fishing rights off Newfoundland were preserved. The destiny of the North American continent lay in British hands : self-government, not autocracy, was to shape the future development of that vast land. In the West Indies France regained her richest islands, Martinique and Guadeloupe ; but Grenada, St. Vincent, Tobago and Dominica, hitherto neutral, became British. In the Mediterranean Minorca was restored, to become once more a British naval base and a security for British supremacy in that sea. In distant India France regained her two trading stations, but only for purposes of trade, not as

military establishments ; and *in effect* she recognised the political supremacy of Britain both in Bengal and in South-Eastern India. Thus in the East as in the West and on the seas, the absolute supremacy of Britain was established.

The most striking omission of the treaty was that of any definite settlement of European problems. Frederick of Prussia was, in fact, deserted by Pitt's successors ; and but for the lucky accident which brought to the Russian throne his devoted admirer Peter III. (1762) in place of his enemy Elizabeth, the desertion would have involved his ruin. As it was, he ended the war with no addition to his exhausted and enfeebled dominions, though with enormously heightened prestige ; and because he believed himself to have been treated with a treachery which was only pardonable in himself, he was henceforth distrustful and hostile to Britain.

The failure to observe faith with Frederick is the main criticism which can be fairly made against the treaty of 1763. But it was bitterly criticised at the time, and has often been criticised since, on the ground that it gave to Britain less than she had a right to claim. It may be admitted that she could have insisted upon greater acquisitions had she chosen to do so. Had she willed it, no power could have prevented her from taking all the French West Indies and practically as much as she liked of the Spanish dominions ; she could have kept the French West African possessions ; she could have seized Louisiana ; she could have excluded France from the trade with India and from the Newfoundland fisheries ; she could have annexed the Philippines. All these things her statesmen voluntarily gave up ; partly, no doubt, because they were eager to conclude peace, but partly also because they dreaded the reaction that would follow such a use of overwhelming power. And for that reason the treaty of Paris may fairly be described as a moderate treaty.

It was a wise moderation. Britain had won an unchallengeable supremacy on the seas ; it behoved her not to use it tyrannically, and, despite the complaints which have come from neutrals as to the way in which this power has been used in war-time, it cannot fairly be said that it has ever been tyrannically employed. Britain had become the first of trading nations. Had she tried to turn her leadership into a monopoly in those tropical lands which had so long attracted the traders of the world, as Spain and Portugal had earlier done, she would have courted a doom like theirs, and she would also have stultified her own professions of

liberalism. She had made great material acquisitions—as great perhaps as she could profitably attempt to administer. But what is more important, she had assumed responsibilities of a magnitude and complexity such as no people in the world's history had yet undertaken. She had ensured the establishment of self-government throughout the continent of North America, but in doing so had necessarily raised in an acute form the problem of justly determining the relations between these self-governing communities and the mother country under whose aegis they had been planted. She had undertaken in India a task whose magnitude and complexity no human being could yet perceive. In one aspect the treaty of Paris is the culmination of a century and a half of colonising activities and of international rivalries. But after it there was immediately to open a new era of great problems and great opportunities, in the treatment of which human history had no guidance to give; since human history presented no parallel to the amazing structure of the British Commonwealth of free peoples, as the genius of Pitt had left it.

[Williams' *Life of Pitt*; Mahan's *Influence of Sea-power in History*; Corbett's *England in the Seven Years' War*; Fortescue's *History of the British Army*; Bradley's *Conquest of Canada*; Kemball's *Pitt's Despatches to Colonial Governors*; Marriott and Robertson's *Rise of Prussia*; Atkinson's *History of Germany in the Eighteenth Century*; Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* (especially the magnificent battle-pieces).]

CHAPTER VIII

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH POWER IN INDIA

§ i. *The Main Factors of Indian Politics.*

DURING the twenty years' struggle which led to the establishment of British supremacy on the seas and in the continent of North America, a still more remarkable transformation was taking place in the East: the foundations of British political power in India were being unconsciously laid. In many ways the course of events in India was deeply affected by the struggle in the West. In particular, as we shall see, British naval supremacy, as soon as it began to be skilfully wielded, exercised a decisive influence upon Indian affairs, by making it impossible for the French to send adequate reinforcements to their representatives in India. Nevertheless the struggle in India can best be treated as a separate story, all the more because its main features were due to great changes which were taking place in India itself.

During the first century of British and French trade relations with India the traders had had to deal with strong and consolidated Indian powers whose existence made the creation of territorial dominion by the European traders unthinkable.¹ The whole of Northern India, together with Afghanistan, had formed the powerful Mohammedan empire of the Moguls, with its capitals at Agra and Delhi, while in the south three substantial minor Mohammedan States divided the greater part of the peninsula between them : only in the south-east were there numerous independent Hindu principalities, known as the Polygars.

Thus almost the whole of India was under the rule of Mohammedan princes, though the Mohammedans formed a small minority of the population ; and this had been the case ever since the first Mohammedan conquests in the eleventh century. Since that date the history of India had mainly been the history of a succession of invasions from the north-west through the Afghan passes, of a succession of empires maintained by mere military force over the subject popula-

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 59 (a).

tions, and of an endless series of wars between these conquerors. For nearly seven centuries India had known no government save the military rule of foreign conquerors, separated from the mass of their subjects by profound barriers of religion.

That is a surprising fact, which has to be explained. It was mainly due to the disunited condition of the Indian peoples. They belonged to many different races, in many stages of civilisation, from the primitive and backward tribes of jungle and hill-tracts to the highly cultivated Brahmins and the proud and warlike Rajputs. They spoke a multitude of languages, more numerous than those of Europe, and differing more widely from one another. And these differences were intensified and complicated by the remarkable system of caste, which was not only far more deeply rooted than the distinctions of class in any other land in the world, but was maintained and enforced by all the sanctions of the Hindu religion. This is not the place for any discussion of the Indian caste system. But it formed, and still forms, the fundamental and dominating fact of Indian life. The castes were innumerable. In part they represented racial distinctions, in part they corresponded with trades and occupations. Each caste had and has its own peculiar usages, its own religious observances, its own rules as to food and clothing, its own caste organisation, its special occupations. Every Hindu was and is born into a caste, from which he can never escape save by ceasing to be an Hindu; and by the rules of the caste the whole of his life is in the main determined. Any intermingling of castes by intermarriage, or even by intimate social intercourse, was and is prohibited: a man who broke caste rules in these matters would become outcaste, excluded from all human relationship not only with his caste-fellows, but with the members of other castes.

This remarkable system had one great virtue: it kept the machinery of society at work, whatever wars and revolutions might sweep over the country. Invaders might come and go, empires rise and fall, but the castes continued to carry on their hereditary functions in accordance with their inherited traditions, with which no conqueror ever found it possible to meddle. That is the explanation of the extraordinary fixity of Indian life. The system also made it easy to govern the country through the great priestly caste of the Brahmins, who exercised a religious ascendancy which all the lower castes accepted and recognised, and whose

inherited aptitude for learning and skill in intrigue made them indispensable for administrative work. All the successive conquerors used the Brahmins as the agents of their authority. On the other hand the system was necessarily destructive of individual initiative, and of readiness to act otherwise than as caste usage dictated : it made the co-operation of members of different castes extremely difficult; and it therefore made India a very easy country to rule. The caste system gave to India a very stable social order, and a sort of social unity ; but it was a unity rooted in disunity. In conjunction with the chaos of languages and races which had enabled it to grow up, the caste system prevented the rise of any sentiment of national patriotism such as would have made the rule of foreign conquerors impossible. The castes had been trained not to look beyond the traditional demands of caste rules : so long as these rules were not interfered with, they were indifferent to the transference of power, over their heads, from one conqueror to another.

The Mohammedan conquests had introduced another element into the chaos of Indian racial and caste distinctions—the bitter conflict of religious beliefs. Between Hinduism and Mohammedanism there were fundamental differences, as fundamental as those between any two religions in the world. The Mohammedan believes in one God ; Hinduism includes in its pantheon thousands of divinities, and, though many Brahmin philosophers hold an exalted and rarefied monotheism, that does not affect the beliefs of the mass of ordinary Hindus. The Mohammedan regards all images not merely of gods but of men or animals as irreligious : Hindu worship largely turns on the use of innumerable images and symbols. The Mohammedan holds that all faithful believers are equal in the sight of God, and largely carries this belief into his ordinary practice ; the most essential thing in Hinduism is the caste system, and the belief that every man is born into certain obligations, and a certain status, from which he can never escape. Between two religions so opposite nothing but antipathy could exist. The conflict was restrained, as a rule, by the wise moderation of Mohammedan rulers, but it formed a powerful obstacle to the rise of any sense of unity among the Indian peoples.

Thus the Mohammedans were a ruling class, entrenched in power: everywhere save in the Punjab (which was nearest to their original homes) and in Bengal (where large numbers of low-caste Hindus had been converted to Mohammedanism)

they were in a small minority, They formed a sort of garrison for the Mohammedan ascendancy, and were deeply conscious of their own superiority. They had little of the intellectual subtlety which centuries of training had developed among the Brahmins; they drew their strength partly from the fact that they were constantly reinforced by vigorous new invaders from Central Asia, and partly from the fact that they were not divided into mutually exclusive castes, but were unified by that common zeal which Islam has always known how to create.

None of the empires and kingdoms which had successively risen and fallen in India had ever been more than mere dominions, or had ever attempted to establish a stable system of equal justice and impartial laws for its subjects. Apart from the misery which their wars inflicted, their rise and fall had made very little difference to the mass of the people. Hindus lived under Hindu law, Mohammedans under Mohammedan law; the notion of one equal law for all did not exist; and those who administered the law habitually used their power in an arbitrary way, and expected to make profit out of their authority.

The Mogul Empire had been the best of the long series of Indian empires. It had at least organised a systematic method of collecting the revenues, taking about one-third of the gross produce of all lands; the earlier Moguls had followed a wise policy of toleration towards the Hindus; and they had tried to secure more efficient administration of their huge dominions by dividing them into large *subas* or satrapies, each under the absolute control of a Nawab (deputy), with a Diwan for financial administration. The courts of the Great Moguls were very splendid; their armies were innumerable; their power seemed irresistible. But of course all their wealth was drawn from the people; and travellers from Europe who visited India during the period of the Moguls¹ greatest splendour speak in as strong terms of the misery and poverty of the mass of the people as they do of the opulent magnificence of the court. So long as peace was maintained, and the due amount of revenue was regularly paid, the Moguls were content to leave their subjects in the provinces at the mercy of the great officers who ruled them. Even at the height of the Mogul power order was ill-maintained. The Moguls never succeeded in creating a system which would secure the impartial administration of justice. Their authority depended altogether upon the vigour and the power of the sovereign. Every

Mogul emperor in turn had to fight his way to the succession, and at every such dispute the whole fabric seemed in danger of dissolution ; for merely military dominations of this character always rest upon very precarious foundations. But for all that, the Mogul Empire succeeded for nearly two centuries in maintaining a certain degree of peace and order over the great expanse of Northern India ; and so long as this lasted it could never occur to the European traders, whose factories were dotted round the coasts, to create a political dominion for themselves.

§ 2. *The Chaos of Eighteenth-Century India : the Mahrattas and the Afghans.*

In the first half of the eighteenth century the Mogul Empire fell (as sooner or later it was bound to do) into sudden and utter ruin ; and it was the chaos which arose from this downfall that rendered possible the dramatic events with which we are immediately concerned. The Emperor Aurangzib,¹ in the second half of the seventeenth century, had entered upon a career of conquest in Southern India. He had overthrown the southern Mohammedan kingdoms, and organised the whole of this vast region as a single great *suba*, the *suba* of the Deccan. But he had been unable to make his authority real in his new conquests. In Southern India he had only produced anarchy, while the strain of his long wars, combined with his militant religious policy, had weakened his hold even in the north. Above all he had stirred into activity a hornets¹ nest among the Mahrattas of the west, whom his conquests had aroused into activity.

The Mahrattas were Hindus, mainly of low castes, who inhabited the jagged mountains which border the western Indian coast, and much of the uplands behind.² They spoke a distinctive language of their own, which gave them a certain unity ; they were skilful horsemen and formidable guerilla fighters ; and they had among them an extremely able race of Brahmins, the Chitpavan Brahmins, who have shown themselves to be possessed of even more than the average degree of Brahmin subtlety and administrative capacity. The Mahrattas had found a brilliant leader in their prince Sivaji, under whose rule they had suddenly

¹ There is a short life of Aurangzib, by S. Lane-Poole, in the *Rulers of India* series.

² See the **map, Atlas, Plate 61 (a)**,

begun to play a great part in Indian politics ; before his death in 1680 they were already a great power. Their light horsemen gravely embarrassed Aurangzib's armies ; they raided immense areas of country, gathering plunder ; and all attempts to crush them were in vain. They were the first great Hindu power that had arisen in India for many centuries, and that was part of their strength.

At the time of Aurangzib's death in 1707 the Mogul throne was already undermined. During the brief and troubled reigns of his successors it rapidly fell into complete disorganisation. The viceroys of some of the great provinces became practically independent princes, paying only a nominal allegiance to the Mogul at Delhi. The most important of these¹ were the Nawabs of Oudh and Bengal in the north, and the *subadar* of the Deccan in the south, where a very vigorous prince, the Nizam-ul-Mulk, was making Hyderabad the centre of a large hereditary dominion ; subordinate to the ruler of Hyderabad was the Nawab of the Carnatic. These potentates gave a nominal recognition to the Mogul, whose real authority was now limited to the country round Delhi ; but they obeyed him only when it suited their convenience to do so. And they were not able to enforce their authority even in their own provinces. Petty local rajas, in many parts of the country, became in effect independent princes. In the midst of the confusion adventurers found it easy to carve out dominions for themselves. Thus a band of Afghan raiders, known as the Rohillas, established themselves in the country known as Rohilkhand (near Delhi and north of Oudh) : thus the warlike Hindu sect of the Sikhs were establishing their power in the Punjab, so far as Afghan raiders from the hills would allow them to do so : thus the daring adventurer Hyder Ali a little later made himself master of Mysore in the south, and extended his power on all sides.

But the most impressive feature of the period was the rise of the power of the Mahrattas. During the first half of the eighteenth century their raids and conquests were extending over every part of India. They had won more or less direct control over a vast area in Central India, where every raja paid them tribute. Their armies of raiding horsemen were seen in every part of India ; they appeared almost simultaneously in 1740 before places so far apart as Calcutta and Madras. They claimed *chauth* (a fixed share of the public revenues paid as blackmail to secure the

¹ See the map, Atlas, Plate 61 (a).

country from devastation) even from some of the greatest princes : thus one-fourth of the revenues of the Deccan were paid over to them, for no service at all save that of abstaining from plunder. During all the period of the French and English conflict, which forms our main theme, the power of the Mahrattas was still growing, and in 1750 and for long afterwards it seemed as if they were to be the new masters of India in place of the Moguls.

But the Mahrattas showed no capacity for the development of a just and firm system of government. For them government meant simply the exaction of revenue, not the rendering of services to their subjects. They could not even create a unified government of their own dominions, such as the Moguls had been able to create. The supreme authority among the Mahrattas had now been annexed by Brahmin rulers, known as the Peshwas, who acted nominally as hereditary prime ministers for the descendants of Sivaji, kept in seclusion at Sattara, but really as the independent heads of the whole confederacy. During the period with which we are concerned—the first half of the eighteenth century—the power of the Peshwas was real, and from their capital at Poona (behind Bombay) they effectively controlled the general policy of the Mahrattas. But even in this period they were not without rivals, notably the family of Bhonsla, who ruled the greater part of the vast region now known as the Central Provinces, and whose perpetual jealousy and opposition greatly hampered the action of the Peshwa. Other chiefs also, heads of raiding bands, were rising into prominence, and tending to act independently, notably the families of Sindhia and Holkar. Even when it was most formidable, the Mahratta power was never well organised ; it was destructive rather than constructive ; and it did not at any time make any contribution towards the creation of a just and impartial system of government, primarily concerned about the welfare of its subjects.

The only serious competitors of the Mahrattas for the succession to the Mogul supremacy seemed to be the Afghans, who controlled the passes of the north-west, through which all the successive conquerors of India had come. Indeed the loss of control over these passes, which is necessary for the safeguarding of India, was one of the most marked signs of the downfall of the Moguls. When in 1739 Nadir Shah, master both of Persia and of Afghanistan, burst down into India and sacked Delhi, it seemed as if the inheritance of the Moguls was his for the taking—as if he would repeat

what the early Moguls of the sixteenth century had achieved. The sack of Delhi marks the final ruin of the Mogul Empire ; henceforth the emperors were mere puppets in the hands of one power or another. But Nadir Shah was content to plunder, and withdrew beyond the mountains, only claiming supremacy over the great province of the Punjab ; and here the Afghan supremacy was perpetually challenged by the Sikhs.

Nevertheless an Afghan incursion always seemed a possibility ; and any serious student of Indian politics in 1750 would have said that the future overlordship of India lay between the masters of Afghanistan on the one hand and the Mahrattas on the other. The Mahrattas themselves realised this ; and when Nadir Shah's empire broke up, and the Afghans, now apparently less formidable, began once more to raid the plains, the Mahrattas sent an army to occupy the Punjab and drive the invaders back to their hills. For a moment they were successful; and this date (1759), which corresponds with the most dazzling victories of Britain in the west, may be said to mark the highest point of Mahratta power. They dominated Indian affairs. Their influence was felt all over India, from the Khyber Pass to Cape Comorin. The greatest of the Mogul provinces, Bengal and Hyderabad, paid *chauth* to them ; their horsemen were known and spread terror in every part of the country. But in 1750 the Afghan ruler, Ahmad Shah, came down with all the fighting men of the hills ; and after raiding and plundering for two years fought a pitched battle with a huge Mahratta host at Panipat (1761), north of Delhi. The Mahrattas were routed with tremendous slaughter. It is a striking coincidence that it was at Panipat that Baber, the founder of the Mogul Empire, who also came from Afghanistan, had won the decisive victory which established his power in India in the sixteenth century : it looked as if a new invading dynasty from over the hills was to repeat the old cycle, and found a new empire. But Ahmad Shah, like Nadir Shah, was content to raid and plunder. He returned to Afghanistan, keeping only Kashmir and the borders of the Punjab. The field was left clear for the Mahrattas. But it took them a long time to recover from Panipat; and from this time onwards they were increasingly weakened by the quarrels of their various chieftains, who became more and more independent. They also, like the Afghans, were sacrificing their chance of supremacy; and they had already shown

that if supremacy had fallen to them it would have brought no improvement in government for the mass of the Indian peoples.

In comparison with these gigantic conflicts, and with the immense spreading power of the Mahrattas, the little squabbles of French and English traders in a corner of the country, and the petty succession-disputes of Indian princes with which they were mixed up, seemed altogether unimportant. Yet those apparently insignificant conflicts were to bring into the field a new and involuntary candidate for the supremacy of all India, the British East India Company. In 1750, or even in 1761, no one could possibly have foretold or imagined, and least of all the East India Company itself, that this body of foreign traders was ultimately to succeed in establishing a dominion far more complete and extensive not merely than that of the Mahrattas now was, but even than that of the Moguls had ever been; a dominion which was to give to India political unity, which she had never known in all her history, peace such as not even Akbar had ever been able to give, and a uniform system of impartially administered law, a boon which no Indian dominion had ever conferred. It is important to remember that the first stages in the marvellous development which has led to these results were due to the chaos resulting from the collapse of the Mogul Empire ; and that these first stages were passed through while the far more impressive growth of Mahratta power was taking place, and were overshadowed by the conflict of the Mahrattas and the Afghans. This conflict, indeed, contributed very directly to the growth of the British power. If it had not taken place, and if the Mahrattas had not suffered the crushing blow of Panipat in 1761, it is extremely unlikely that the power of the British traders would ever have been established. The background of conflict which we have tried to sketch may seem confused and bewildering, but it is essential to an understanding of the amazing story which we have now to tell.

§ 3. *French and British in the Car natte : the Projects of Dupleix.*

On the edge of the whirling chaos into which India had now been reduced lay the factories or trading stations of the European powers, Portuguese, Dutch, French and British; we need only concern ourselves with the French and British stations. British trading activities were organised under

the control of three main trading centres, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, each independently managed by a President and Council, who reported separately to the Directors at home ; each had a number of branch collecting stations in the wide area with which it dealt, but it was only at the three headquarters that there was any considerable number of British residents. The French had only two main factories, Pondicherry, some distance south of Madras, and Chandernagore, a little north of Calcutta ; but the Chandernagore factory was definitely subordinated to that of Pondicherry. Both companies had found it necessary to fortify their headquarters, in view of the disordered state of the country, and to maintain small bodies of troops—Indian sepoys who were trained to fight in the European manner under European officers. It had often been proved in the past that small forces of Indian troops thus trained and led could hold their own against the vast disorderly mobs which Indian princes brought into the field ; but the full extent of this superiority was yet to be shown. The French had one considerable advantage over their British rivals. In the island of Mauritius, near Madagascar, they had a calling station for their ships, and a possible naval base, such as the British lacked.

During the quarter of a century following the death of Louis xiv. the French had displayed an unwonted energy in the development of their trade, which, though it was far from rivalling that of the British company, was nevertheless growing so rapidly as to arouse their jealousy and alarm. They had opened new branch trading stations, notably one at Mahé on the west coast (1725). Benoit Dumas at Pondicherry (1735-1741), and François Dupleix his subordinate at Chandernagore (1730-1741), had put a new vigour into their work. Dumas, in particular, had established very friendly relations with the neighbouring princes, and had given a refuge at Pondicherry to the family of the Nawab of the Carnatic when he was slain by the Mahrattas : this connexion was to be of great importance in the future, though in 1740 this family lost its throne and was replaced by another ruler, Anwar-ud-din. Thus the French, in advance of the British, were starting the policy of building up their influence at the native courts.

From about 1740 onwards, while the War of the Austrian Succession was raging in Europe, and Britain and Spain were fighting on the seas, the traders of both nations in India were anticipating, some with alarm, others with hope, the outbreak of direct war between France and Britain. It was

long delayed ; it did not actually begin till 1744. But the intervening years were filled with preparations. Some hoped that the rival traders in India would maintain neutrality as they had done during the wars of Louis xiv. The English company would readily have welcomed this means of carrying on their rich trade without interruption. The French company at home was of the same mind. But two bold and enterprising Frenchmen had recently succeeded to the control of the two chief French posts : Mahe* de Labourdonnais, a famous and adventurous seaman, had become Governor of Mauritius in 1735 ; Francois Dupleix² had become Governor of Pondicherry in 1741 ; and both of these men, very different as they were in temper, had conceived the idea of using the opportunity to strike a blow against British trading superiority. Labourdonnais, in particular, had created a fleet at Mauritius, with which he hoped to do much damage. To guard against danger from this fleet, the British government sent out a squadron as soon as the war began. It arrived off Madras before Labourdonnais was ready, and it might have done grave mischief to the French. But the Nawab of the Carnatic, Anwar-ud-din, perhaps influenced by Dupleix, warned the British that he would not permit any fighting between the Europeans in his dominions. The fleet left the coast; and the British lost the moment of their superiority of strength.

In 1746 Labourdonnais appeared with his fleet off Pondicherry; and, though he and Dupleix quarrelled violently, they managed to direct a joint naval and military attack against Madras. The British, trusting to the protection of the Nawab, were unready and had no adequate garrison. Madras was easily captured. Dupleix had previously tried to win over the Nawab by offering to hand over the town to him. But once in possession he clung to his gain, and when Anwar-ud-din sent an army of 10,000 men to enforce his will, they were routed by a little force of 500 European-trained troops. This was a startling revelation of the capacity of such troops. It raised French prestige to the highest point. The British were left with only the little Fort St. David, a hundred miles further south, where they were hard pressed. When a large British naval squadron came out in 1748 and attacked Pondicherry without success, French prestige rose to a still greater height, and Dupleix's influence at the native courts rose in proportion. The

¹ There is a short life of Dupleix by Colonel Malleison in the *Rulers of India* Series

British seemed to be crushed; their trade in this region might be expected to fall into the hands of the French.

It was a bitter disappointment to Dupleix when the war was ended by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, before he had completed the destruction of the British power, and a still more bitter disappointment when, under the terms of the treaty, he had to hand back Madras in exchange for distant Louisbourg. But the peace did not lead him to abandon his ambitious schemes. It only changed their character. He resolved to use the immense prestige that he had acquired, and the power of his European-trained troops, to intervene in the dynastic disputes of the South Indian princes. He would become the arbiter of South Indian politics, and thus establish French influence over the native governments. Having done that, he would be able, through his princely allies, to make the position of the British intolerable, to destroy their trade, perhaps to order them out of the country. If the British remained neutral, so much the worse for them; if they intervened, he was confident of being able to deal with them. This bold project he proceeded to carry out in spite of the fact that there was formal peace between Britain and France. Unwillingly and half-heartedly the British were forced to follow suit; and thus, in India as in America, the eight years of nominal peace (1748-1756) were years of intensified strife.

Dupleix's main plan was to dethrone the existing Nawab of the Carnatic, Anwar-ud-din, and to place on his throne a French protegé, Chanda Sahib, a member of the previous ruling family whom the French had earlier befriended. Chanda was a prisoner in the hands of the Mahrattas, and Dupleix helped to obtain his release in order to put him forward, knowing that a prince thus established would feel himself dependent upon the French, as well as bound to them by gratitude. But just at the moment when this plan was maturing the old Nizam of Hyderabad died, and rival candidates appeared for the succession to this great dominion, the greatest in Southern India, of which the Carnatic itself was a dependency. Dupleix took up the cause of the weaker of the two candidates. If he should be successful in his bold schemes, all Southern India would pass under his influence, and the British would be at his mercy.

It is needless to follow the details of the campaigns*. By 1750 Dupleix was wholly successful. His candidates occupied the thrones both of Hyderabad and of the Carnatic. A large force of Sepoys with French officers, under the

command of a brilliant French soldier, the Marquis de Bussy, but paid for by the Nizam, was established at Hyderabad to protect the Nizam—and to keep him loyal. In the Carnatic Anwar-ud-din had been defeated and slain, and Chanda Sahib, the French protege, occupied his throne. Anwar-ud-din's son, Mohammed Ali, was holding out with difficulty in the fortress of Trichinopoly; but apart from this there was no effective resistance. French prestige had reached a dizzy height; Dupleix seemed to be master of Southern India. Once Trichinopoly was captured and Mohammed Ah disposed of, his ascendancy would be complete.

The British in Madras looked on at these proceedings with helpless alarm. They had dismissed most of their troops when peace was made; and, though they saw that they would be ruined if the French candidates were securely established, they were unable to give any material assistance to Mohammed Ali in Trichinopoly, who formed the only barrier to a complete French victory. In 1751 the situation at Trichinopoly seemed to be desperate: not only were the armies of Chanda Sahib and of the French besieging it, but large forces had been sent to their aid by the Nizam.

Fortunately for the British a new Governor, Thomas Saunders, had recently arrived at Madras. He understood the danger. He was a man of courage and tenacity; and he had the imagination to listen to the daring proposals of a young officer of twenty-six, and to provide him with the means for what seemed a reckless adventure. The young officer was Robert Give,¹ who had come out to Madras seven years before as a writer in the company's service, but had exchanged the pen for the sword during the recent war, and had distinguished himself at the defence of Fort St. David. His proposal was that, instead of trying to send troops to Trichinopoly, where the enemy were overwhelmingly numerous, an attempt should be made to relieve it by a bold attack on Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, which was much nearer—only about fifty miles inland from Madras. On this desperate adventure he set forth with a force consisting of 8 officers (six of whom had never seen service) and 500 men, of whom 300 were Indian sepoys. The blow was so swift and sudden that the garrison of Arcot—far outnumbering its attackers—fled in panic. The immediate result was that

¹ Macaulay's brilliant essay, though it needs correction, is still the best short account of Clive; there are also short lives by Colonel Mailes in the *Rulers of India Series*, and by Sir Charles Wilson in the *English Men of Action Series*.

Chanda Sahib had to withdraw large forces from Trichinopoly to regain his capital. Clive and his gallant 500 stood a siege of fifty days by a force of 10,000 men, including some French; and though his provisions ran out, and the mud walls of the fort were in disrepair and far too extensive to be properly held, he maintained his position, beat off an attempt to storm the place, and, when the siege was raised, sallied forth and defeated the enemy in the open.

The capture and defence of Arcot marked the turn of the tide. In a purely military sense, indeed, the exploit counted for little, except that it relieved Trichinopoly for the moment. But it was an achievement so dazzling that it instantaneously raised British prestige, which had sunk almost to zero, and so made it easier for Mohammed Ali, whom the British were helping, to get aid from various Indian powers. More important still was the brilliant relief of Trichinopoly in June 1752 by a British force under Major Lawrence and Clive, which compelled a large French force to surrender and finally raised the siege. Chanda Sahib, who had surrendered to the Raja of Tanjore, was put to death by him; and Mohammed Ali, the British protege, became Nawab of the Carnatic.

This was a grave blow to Dupleix's schemes. But he was not yet by any means defeated. Bussy's army still dominated Hyderabad, and kept that great power loyal to the French; and for two years more war swayed backwards and forwards. But the complete French ascendancy of 1751 had vanished. Dupleix was in sore difficulties for money; and the French company at home was beginning to be anxious about this ceaseless fighting, which certainly was not good for trade. In 1754 the company recalled Dupleix, and sent out a sound business man to clear up the mess he had made. The two companies agreed not to intervene in local politics any more; Dupleix's grandiose visions of an easily acquired empire were gone. He went home to disgrace and poverty. Yet he had nearly created a great French dominion; and he had shown how easily, and by what methods, a European empire in India could be created.

Even after Dupleix's recall the position of the French in Southern India was stronger than that of the British. Mohammed Ali, it is true, occupied the throne of the Carnatic, and Mohammed Ali was a British protege. But he was by no means yet under British control. On the other hand, Bussy was still at Hyderabad, and the far greater power of the Nizam was wholly under the influence of the French.

Bussy's army protected the Nizam against the Mahrattas, whom he feared ; and this bound the Nizam still more firmly to the French. In 1755, the year after Dupleix's recall, the Nizam ceded to Bussy, for the support of his army, the best parts of the extensive region known as the Northern Sarkars, which extended along the coast of the Bay of Bengal. This was a territorial possession such as the British did not yet possess, and had not yet dreamed of. Thus, on the eve of the final great struggle between France and Britain, the French seemed to have all the best of the position, in India as in America.

§ 4. *Renewed Conflict ; and the Establishment of British Influence in Bengal*

1755, the year in which the French acquired the Northern Sarkars, was also the year in which war began in the Ohio Valley. Everybody knew that formal war between Britain and France could not long be delayed. The French were preparing to send out an army to destroy the recently and insecurely established power of the British in the Camatic. Owing to the lax naval administration of the British government before Pitt's accession to power, it was allowed to sail in 1756, under the command of an Irish exile, Count Lally, though it did not reach India till 1758.

Meanwhile Robert Clive had gone home to England, where he had a great reception ; and he had urged upon the directors of the company the necessity of taking measures to counteract Bussy's influence at Hyderabad. For that purpose he was sent out with a small force and a squadron of ships under Admiral Watson. They arrived in India in 1756. Their first task was to root out a nest of Mahratta pirates who had been doing much damage to British shipping at Gheria on the west coast. Then they went on to Madras. But there was nothing for them to do there. The news of the formal declaration of war had not yet reached India, and nothing could be done against Bussy while peace lasted. But at Madras terrible news reached them from Bengal, where hitherto there had been no trouble. The prosperous British factory at Calcutta had been suddenly attacked and destroyed by the Nawab of Bengal: the situation must be restored, and Clive and Watson **had** arrived in the nick of time to restore it. The great question was, could they do what was necessary in Bengal before Lally and his army reached India and joined forces with Bussy ? For the next three years the centre of **interest**

shifts to the hitherto placid and undisturbed province of Bengal in the north.

The shrewd old Nawab of Bengal, Aliverdi Khan, had died in April 1756. He had been watching the events in Southern India ; and just before his death he is said to have advised his grandson and destined successor, Siraj-uddaula, to beware of the Europeans and especially of the British. Siraj-uddaula, a vicious, degenerate and tyrannical youth of nineteen, resolved to signalise his accession by a bold stroke. He demanded the surrender of a rich Hindu who had taken refuge in Calcutta. He ordered the British company to stop work upon the fortifications, which they were strengthening in view of the danger from France ; and his only answer to a remonstrance was to march against Calcutta with an army of 30,000 men. Calcutta was ill protected, and only had a small garrison. The President and most of the leading residents ran away and took refuge on an island in the Hooghly ; those who remained tried to defend the Fort, but were easily overpowered. After the surrender 146 captives were shut into a small guard-room known as the ' Black Hole,' where they had scarcely standing-room and no air : during an awful June night 123 of them were suffocated,¹ and the remainder were afterwards marched in chains to the Nawab's capital at Murshidabad. The thriving British trading settlement in Bengal was simply wiped out.

This was the news which brought Clive and Admiral Watson hurrying from Madras, with ten ships and a few troops. They reached the Ganges in December ; on the 2nd of January 1757 they recaptured Calcutta. The Nawab marched to attack them ; was beaten ; and signed a treaty by which he promised restitution and compensation (February 1757).

But Siraj-uddaula had no intention of carrying out the treaty. He opened negotiations both with the French governor in Chandernagore and with Bussy in the Northern Sarkars, for a combined attack upon the British. The news of the outbreak of war in Europe had now reached India. It was known that Lally was on his way with a considerable French army. Clive felt that his presence might soon be needed at Madras. The danger was great. To diminish it, Clive struck suddenly at the French station of Chanderna-

¹ An attempt has been made to discredit the story of the Black Hole. But few events in history are better authenticated. The crime was committed without Siraj-uddaula's knowledge. He expressed no regret and punished nobody.

gore, captured it, and thus for a time removed the danger of a French attack in Bengal.

But the danger from the Nawab was still great, the treaty was still in abeyance, and the Nawab was very indignant at the attack upon Chandernagore. In the meantime his capricious and greedy tyranny had alienated the chief personages at his court. Already a conspiracy was on foot to dethrone him, and to put in his place his *bakhshi* or military treasurer, Mir Jafar, an old friend of his father's. The conspirators entered into negotiations with Clive, who eagerly seized the opportunity. At one moment their plans were endangered; for an intermediary, the Hindu Omichand, threatened to tell the secret to Siraj-uddaula unless he was promised a vast sum of more than a quarter of a million. Clive overcame the difficulty by a treacherous device which stains his memory: he drew up two treaty forms, a false one to satisfy Omichand, a real one to bind Mir Jafar. It was agreed that Mir Jafar should desert the Nawab; that he should be placed upon the throne; and that he should pay for British assistance immense sums, amounting to nearly £3,000,000, nominally as compensation for the damage inflicted by Siraj-uddaula. He was also to transfer to the British company the administration of the district round Calcutta, known as the 'twenty-four parganas.'

This secret treaty was signed in May 1757. Clive now became peremptory in his demands on the Nawab; and in June he set forth with an army of 3000, one-third of which consisted of British troops, to march against the Nawab's capital, Murshidabad. On the other side Siraj-uddaula gathered an army of 50,000 men, with whom were some fifty Frenchmen. The odds seemed dangerously great, unless Mir Jafar should fulfil his promise, and turn against his master. As the armies drew near one another, doubts of Mir Jafar's staunchness began to affect Clive; and for a moment he almost decided to avoid a fight. Defeat would mean utter ruin for the British in Bengal, and perhaps ultimately also in Southern India. All the members of his council save one, Eyre Coote, were for withdrawing. But after an hour's meditation Clive decided to take the risk. He ferried his troops across the river, and advanced against the enemy host, which was encamped in a grove of flowering pilash trees, at the spot for ever famous as Plassey. The fight which followed, and which established British power in Bengal, scarcely deserves to be called a battle: it was a panic. There was scarcely any serious fighting, the Bengali troops

simply ran away. The British lost only 19 men ; the enemy not more than 500.

The rout of Plassey had portentous results. Siraj-uddaula fled, and was caught and killed by Mir Jafar's son. Mir Jafar became Nawab ; his treasury was emptied to meet the demands of his allies under the treaty. But he knew, and all Bengal knew, that henceforth the East India Company was master : it could dethrone Mir Jafar as it had dethroned Siraj-uddaula. Mir Jafar was a puppet prince in quite a different sense from Mohammed Ali in the Carnatic.

The revolution in Bengal was not completed a moment too soon. In April 1758 a French army landed at Pondicherry under the command of Count Lally, an Irish exile who had seen service in the French armies in Europe, but knew nothing of Indian conditions. He was a brave man and a skilful soldier ; but his tactless and overbearing temper made it difficult for his officers to work under him, and he alienated his Indian allies by his disregard for their usages and ideas. Bussy still dominated Hyderabad ; and the addition of his resources and the power of the Nizam to Lally's army promised victory. Lally began well by capturing Fort St. David, which had held out against all Dupleix's attacks. But his campaign was gravely hampered by the appearance of a British naval squadron, which the small French fleet on the Indian coast did not venture to resist. To strengthen himself, Lally recalled Bussy and his army from Hyderabad, and proceeded (December 1758) to attack Madras. If Madras should fall, British power in the south-east of India would come to an end. After a siege of two months, Lally was making ready to storm the town, when once again the appearance of a British squadron at sea changed the position and compelled the raising of the siege.

Meanwhile the withdrawal of Bussy from Hyderabad had had disastrous results for the French. Only a small French force remained to defend the Northern Sarkars ; and in the absence of the great captain, the Nizam's allegiance began to waver. The Sarkars could be attacked from Bengal ; and in October 1758 Clive, in spite of the insecurity of his position in Bengal, despatched Colonel Forde with every available man to drive the French out of the Sarkars. The expedition was ably conducted. The French force was defeated ; Masulipatam, the chief town of the Sarkars and the centre of a considerable French trade, was captured (April 1759). The Nizam, who had begun to

move in support of the French, changed his mind, abandoned the French alliance, and allowed the British to establish themselves in the Sarkars.

The loss of the Nizam's support was fatal to the French. It completed the downfall of their prestige in the eyes of those Indian potentates who might have helped them. Lally struggled on heroically during the years 1759 and 1760. But his troops were half-starved and inclined to be mutinous ; and no aid could be expected from France, because her fleets had been reduced to impotence : Quiberon Bay had decided the issue in India, as in the West. In January 1760 Lally fought the decisive battle of Wan de wash against an army about equal in number to his own, under Eyre Coote, one of Clive's men from Bengal. The battle was hard-fought; but it ended in a complete British victory, and the great Bussy himself was among the prisoners who fell into Coote's hands. All that remained after Wandewash was to secure the few remaining French posts. They fell one by one during 1760 ; and in January 1761 Pondicherry itself, the centre of the French power, was captured, and the dream of a French empire in India was at an end. Lally himself went as a prisoner to England ; when he got back to France he was tried and beheaded.

Beyond a doubt the final defeat of the French in the south had been due in part to British naval supremacy and in part to the strength which the recent conquest of Bengal had placed in British hands, and the prestige which this conquest brought in the eyes of all India. Give had not hesitated to send troops out of Bengal, and this bold act had determined the course of the conflict in the south. Yet his position in Bengal was by no means secure. He had to deal with several revolts against Mir Jafar : only the efficient troops of the Company could deal with them. He had to defend Bengal against an attack by the powerful neighbouring Nawab of Oudh, who brought with him the Mogul's eldest son, and claimed in his name the right of disposing of Bengal as an imperial province. The army of Oudh was defeated at Patna (1759), once more by the Company's troops. He had to deal with the hostility of the Dutch, who feared the results of British ascendancy, started intrigues with Mir Jafar, and sent a fleet of seven ships from Batavia. Clive did not hesitate to attack the Dutch factory at Chinsura by land, while a squadron of three British ships attacked and defeated the Dutch ships. Wherever Clive and the company's troops

appeared they were victorious. By 1760 the position in Bengal seemed to be secure, and Clive thought it safe to leave for England.

§ 5. *The Nature of the British Power in India in 1760.*

At this point we may break off the narrative of the amazing series of events which laid the foundations of the British Empire in India. By 1760 the East India Company had acquired a complete domination over Bengal. It had not annexed this great province, or assumed any responsibility for its government, which continued to be carried on by an Indian Nawab as before. But this prince was, and knew that he was, utterly dependent upon the Company for his very existence. Revolts against his authority had been crushed—by the Company's armies. A dangerous attack upon his dominions from without had been repelled—by the Company's armies. The Nawab dared not pursue an independent policy, or resist the demands of the Company and its agents, who enjoyed absolute power without any responsibility for securing good government. Further south the Company had acquired an ill-defined control over part of the long stretch of coastal territory known as the Northern Sarkars. This was far less important than Bengal, and for the most part the petty rajas who ruled this rather backward region were left to themselves, without interference. The importance of the Sarkars was that they linked up Bengal with the Carnatic, and prevented the French (or other seafaring rivals of the British power) from having direct dealings with the Nizam. Finally, the throne of the Carnatic was held by a Nawab who knew that he owed his position to British aid. He was by no means so completely dependent as the Nawab of Bengal. Yet British influence was preponderant at his court, and British trade covered his territories. The Nizam also had become friendly to the British power; though there was no British force dominating Hyderabad, as Bussy had dominated it from 1748 to 1758.

Such were the beginnings of British territorial power in India. It consisted of influence based upon military prestige; it had not yet begun to assert direct sovereignty anywhere. Clive, indeed, with characteristic boldness of vision, was ready to take the next step, and in 1759 he wrote a remarkable letter to Pitt urging that the British government should assume direct responsibility for the administration of Bengal. But even Pitt, though he was sympathetic, was not ready

for so great a change. And the directors of the Company at home, far from desiring any increase of responsibility, were inclined to feel, after the first excitement of victory, that the power which had fallen into their hands was by no means an unmixed advantage. The cost of maintaining armies was very great, and swallowed up more than all the profits that came from Mir Jafar's concessions. The servants of the Company in India were being diverted from their main work, which was, after all, that of trade ; they were getting out of hand, and becoming too fond of dangerous adventures, which might be advantageous to themselves but brought no profit to the Company.

For the truth is that the East India Company had drifted into the possession of an empire without desiring it, or knowing what to do with it. They had been drawn into conflict with the French in the south in sheer self-defence against Dupleix's ambitious schemes, which would have led to the destruction of their trade. They had been drawn into the business of king-making in Bengal by Siraj-uddaula's attack on Calcutta, and by the proved impossibility of trusting him. They now found themselves saddled with costly and indefinite liabilities, and they wanted no increase of such responsibilities ; they wanted only to get back to peaceful trade, leaving India to settle her own political problems.

But there was no evading the new responsibilities. Unless the Company was prepared to evacuate Bengal and Madras, and to abandon the trade which they carried on there—and this was an unthinkable alternative—the strength and prestige which had been won must bring with them political power ; and power cannot be separated from responsibility without disastrous results. How dangerous such a separation may be was, indeed, already being demonstrated by the behaviour of the Company's servants in the years following Plassey ; it was to be still more terribly demonstrated in the next decade. The Company's servants had gone out to India not for philanthropic reasons, but to make money. They were paid ridiculously low salaries, and in compensation they had always been allowed to make what money they could by private enterprise. That was all very well when they were mere traders, kept in order by powerful native governments. But now they had suddenly become the masters of the country ; and at the same time they had no responsibility for its government, or for the welfare of its people. Nobody in Bengal dared deny them what they

asked; the only authorities who could control them were seven thousand miles away. What wonder that they took advantage of their position, accepted, or even demanded, huge gifts from the Nawab or his nobles, and took unfair advantages in carrying on their private trade? What wonder that they became rich with startling rapidity, and returned to England to buy country estates and borough seats in Parliament, and to astonish English society with their lavishness and luxury? They were enjoying power without responsibility, and only exceptional men can resist such temptations. Some of them did resist: notably Warren Hastings, a young writer in the Company's service whose capacity and vigour had attracted Clive's attention. But the majority succumbed to the temptation; and during the first years of British power in Bengal, and in a less degree in the Carnatic, it appeared as if the only result of Plassey and Wandewash were to inflict upon the unhappy Indians a plague of devouring locusts. British influence—it was not yet British rule—appeared in these years to be a mere curse.

Thus the acquisition of power in India thrust upon the British peoples and their rulers a problem of unexampled difficulty, the like of which had never had to be faced by any nation in the world's history. How was this strange power, which the course of events had thrust into British hands, to be employed? Was it to be used merely for the exploitation of the subject peoples, and the enrichment of their conquerors? Or were the distant Islands of the West to find some means whereby their power should bring an increase, not a diminution, of justice and liberty? How were the habits of life and thought of a Western people to be adjusted to the social life and the political systems of a land so utterly unfamiliar as India?

These were immense and exacting problems, even more difficult than the problems created by the establishment of British supremacy in the North American Continent. But in 1760, when Clive came home to enjoy his triumph and to restore the fallen fortunes of his family, the magnitude and complexity of these problems were not yet apparent. The one obvious and outstanding fact was that the power of the old rival France had been shattered even more completely in the East than in the West, and that by a sort of miracle Britain had become the mistress of an amazing new empire. Throned on the seas, she wielded at once the sceptre of the Old World and the New. That

was enough for the men of 1760, while the great war was still raging.

[Muir's *Making of British India* ; V. A. Smith's *History of India*, Roberts' *Historical Geography of India*; Wheeler's or limes' *Short History of India*; Dodwell's *Dupleix and Clive*; Forrest's *Life of Clive*; Lyall's *Rise and Expansion of the British Power in India*; Malleson's *The French in India*; Mahan's *Influence of Sea-power upon History*; Grant Duff's *History of the Mahrattas*.]

CHAPTER IX

THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH IN THE MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE culmination of splendour and success which was attained by the British Commonwealth in 1763 was immediately to be followed by a period of great change and great problems—the period of the American Revolution, of the Agrarian and Industrial Revolutions, of the awakening of Ireland to a sense of her grievances, of the beginning of a demand for political reconstruction in England, and, finally, as the climax of all these revolutionary movements, of the French Revolution. Under the impact of these successive upheavals the old social order and the old political ideas were to be challenged and eventually overthrown ; and it is necessary, before we turn our attention to these tremendous events, that we should obtain as clear an idea as possible of the old order which was to be so profoundly transformed.

§ 1. *The Prosperity and Freedom of England,*

A historian of the period has made the large claim that except in the Roman Empire under the Antonines there has never been a country or a period in which prosperity was so widely diffused or contentment so general as in England during the first half of the eighteenth century. We shall see that though this may be true, it suggests a too rosy view of the time. Yet the statement was not without justification. Foreign observers who visited England during this period—and they were numerous, because England was widely regarded as the very model of a free, prosperous and orderly State—almost unanimously fixed upon two main themes for their praises : the general comfort of the people and the freedom which they enjoyed.

Even the poorest classes, these observers noted, did not need to go barefoot, or to wear wooden shoes, like the

peasantry of France ; they mostly ate wheat-bread, an unheard of luxury among the poorer classes on the Continent; there were few families which did not have meat at least three or four times a week ; the general impression left with the traveller was that of a well-clad and well-fed people, very different from the ragged and emaciated peasantry of France. And although a closer analysis of the conditions does not wholly bear out these assertions, it is impossible to disregard them. With the possible exception of the Dutch there was no people in the Old World among whom there was a higher standard of comfort than among the English ; they were only surpassed, in all the world, by their own daughter communities in the New World, which enjoyed the inexhaustible riches of a virgin land. There was much to deplore in their condition, as we shall see. But they were at least happier than the inhabitants of any other European country, and probably happier than their own ancestors in any period of their history.

As for their freedom, in that respect they were incomparably better off than the people of any other country save the British colonies. Serfdom had ceased altogether to exist in England. Every man might think or say or write almost what he pleased, and there was no serious restraint upon the expression of opinions. In theory at all events, if not always in practice, the law was the same for all men, rich and poor. There were no caste restrictions recognised by law, and a man of vigour and enterprise could make his way in most careers. All this was true, even if it was also true (as we shall see) that this freedom was in practice restricted in many ways. And it was further true that a very much larger proportion of the English people had the right and the opportunity to take a share in the management of common affairs than was the case in other countries. Though England was far from being a democratic country, she was in a real sense a self-governing country ; and her superiority in this respect aroused the envy and admiration of foreign observers. As we shall see, material qualifications must be made to the sweeping statements about English political liberty in which the panegyrists of the British constitution were fond of indulging. But at least it is true that the British peoples had advanced further along the painful and difficult road towards real political and social freedom than any country in the world had yet done. They were the pioneers of liberty.

§ a. *English Rural Society and its Organisation.*

Despite the rapid progress of her foreign trade and of her manufacturing industries, England was still predominantly an agricultural country, and more than three-fourths of her population lived on and by the land. The great bulk of this large number—that is to say, the main body of the English people—belonged to the class which worked with its own hands on the land: the peasantry. But there was very wide diversity among the members of this class. Some were hired servants living with their employers. Some were day-labourers, earning a wage by working on the land of others; but these in very many cases had a patch of land of their own, and in most cases could keep a few geese, or a pig, or even a cow, with the help of the village commons, which also provided them with fuel; while their wives and daughters could supplement the family income by spinning yarn for the weavers: their bare wages by no means represented their real incomes. Others had little farms of their own which occupied almost the whole of their own and their families' labour, though sometimes they might do a few days' work for a large farmer, and some of them might occasionally employ a day-labourer. There was thus a gradation among the hand-workers of agriculture; there were prospects and possibilities of advancement; and the majority of the members of this class had some interest in the land they tilled.

The class of the peasantry shaded insensibly into the next class, the cultivators of substantial farms who worked their farms by hired labour. This class included both men who owned their own farms—still a large number—and men who paid rent for them; it may be conveniently described as the Yeomanry, though strictly speaking the term should be reserved for small proprietors. Between the prosperous peasant who occasionally hired extra labour, and the small yeoman who worked hard alongside of his men, there was no sharp distinction; the one easily passed into the other. In the same way the yeoman class shaded insensibly into the class above it, that of the squirearchy, who may be described as the class which drew its livelihood from the rent of land. There was very little difference between a substantial yeoman and a small squire who farmed some of his own land. Thus the agricultural society, though it was divided into grades, was more or less homogeneous, and there

were no such sharp distinctions of classes and interests as later arose.

This homogeneity of village society was accentuated by the way in which most villages were organised. In spite of the large number of 'enclosures' which had been made during the previous centuries, probably three-fifths of the cultivated land of England was still organised on the open-field system. Under this system the arable land of the village was divided into very large fields, each having many strips held by many cultivators, all of whom had to agree to grow the same crops, and to plough, sow and reap at the same times. After the crops were cut, the big fields could be used for pasture, and there had to be agreement as to the number of beasts each villager was entitled to turn into the fields. Then every village had its meadow-land for hay; many villagers shared in the hay in agreed proportions; and the meadow-land also was used for pasture⁴ when the hay was cut. Finally almost every village had its wide expanse of common land, used by all for pasture and often for peat-cutting. This system had the great drawback that it made the introduction of new crops or improved methods very difficult, and presented serious obstacles to agricultural development. But just for that reason it protected the small man against the competition of his more enterprising neighbour. It also turned the village into a real community, in which everybody had a part; for all had their share in the annual discussions as to what crops should be grown, and when they should be sown and cut; and in the election of the numerous petty village officers whose services the system demanded.

The system could not last permanently. Indeed, it was already slowly decaying. In large parts of the country it had practically disappeared. Even where it survived, the more substantial proprietors had in many cases succeeded in getting their holdings concentrated in a single block, cut out from the common fields and 'enclosed' which they could cultivate as they thought best, without being bound by the agreements of the whole village. But over the greater part of England the system still survived in a more or less complete form, and with it survived the community-spirit which it engendered. Even where it had almost wholly broken up, the village commons still generally survived, and these were in many respects treated as common property under common management.

Moreover, alongside of the village organisation of agricul-

ture there was the parish organisation, which managed local roads and little local charities, and, above all, the administration of poor relief. The controlling body of the parish was the vestry, originally an assembly of all ratepayers which met once a year to elect parish officers, to receive the reports of the outgoing officers, and to fix rates. In many cases the open vestry had been displaced by a 'select vestry' of the leading people of the village. But in very many cases the open vestry still survived, and everybody could be present at its meetings. In practice the work was usually done by a few of the more substantial men, who took turns in serving (without pay) as overseers and churchwardens ; but the ordinary villagers knew what was going on, and had their share in it.

The life of the English peasants, who formed the majority of the nation, was no doubt a hard and laborious one. But it was not a hopeless life. It had prospects for the industrious. It had the pleasures of companionship and of common responsibility. Most of the peasants were illiterate, though village schools were growing up here and there. They knew little or nothing about what was going on in the outer world, or about the great affairs of national politics. But they had their traditional songs and folk-tales ; and Puritanism had failed to stamp out the healthy rough merry-making of village life. In the main the English village was a free society ; especially because it was a homogeneous society, in which there were no sharp or rigid barriers between classes.

But there was one respect in which this freedom was seriously qualified, especially for poor men ; and this was due to the operation of the Poor Laws. Since the Poor Laws threw upon each parish the responsibility for maintaining its own poor, every parish was anxious not to have too many poor residents 'settled' upon it. A series of Acts of Parliament, the first of which was passed soon after the Restoration (1662), had endeavoured to define what constituted a 'settlement' which would give to poor men the right to obtain relief from the parish ; and these Settlement Acts gave to the parishes, in effect, the power of refusing to a man who was likely to become a burden on the rates the right of settling in the parish. This constituted a real restriction upon the freedom of movement of poor men who could not find employment in their own parishes. The number of such poor men was steadily growing during this period, just because the old system was slowly breaking up,

Poor rates were everywhere growing. It had been found necessary in 1722 to empower groups of parishes to set up workhouses to give employment to their poor. The problem of dealing with those who were displaced by the dissolution of an old and settled order was already becoming difficult in the first half of the eighteenth century. It was not yet very serious, because the breaking up process had not yet gone very far; the vast majority of Englishmen still lived out their lives in the villages in which they were born. But the tremendous changes of the next era were to make it a very terrible problem ; and, as we shall see, the attempts to solve it were conceived in so short-sighted a way that they led to disastrous and cruel results. One of the main causes of this was that the problem of unemployment and poverty was never treated as a national problem on broad lines, but was in the main left to be dealt with by each parish or group of parishes by itself, and by the justices of the peace in each county. And as the parishes, chiefly concerned to keep down their rates, tried to do so by preventing the immigration of families who might become burdensome, the result was to draw poor men into a sort of slavery. The working of this system was a serious blot on English society in the period with which we are now concerned. It was not yet very grave, because the great majority had a more or less assured position. But the survival of this system through the next period, when the old order was breaking up in all directions with very great rapidity, inflicted a large amount of unnecessary misery, and needlessly intensified the evils which so great a change was in any case bound to produce. It is a fair ground of criticism against the timid and hand-to-mouth policy of the Whig oligarchy that they failed to make any attempt to deal broadly and generously with this problem while it was still of manageable dimensions.

§ 3. *The Ruling Classes : the Squirearchy and the Magnates : an Aristocratic Society.*

The natural leaders of this homogeneous society of land-owners and tillers of the soil were the Squires, the substantial landed proprietors or country gentlemen, who lived in the thousands of rural manor-houses scattered all over the country. And this leadership was recognised in the political powers which they exercised. They were, as they had **been** ever since the thirteenth century, the most politically active

class in the community, its representatives and its real rulers. As Justices of the Peace they carried on the whole work of local administration; and in performing this work they were scarcely at all checked or controlled by the central government. Under the Tudors and Stewarts the Privy Council had maintained a close supervision over them; they had been in the main simply the local agents of that powerful body. But under the Whig oligarchy—and, indeed, ever since the Restoration—the Privy Council had become mainly a formal body. The Cabinet, which took its place, consisted of ministers who were primarily concerned with questions of national policy; it was nobody's business to devote special attention to local government; and, accordingly, the Justices of the Peace were in the main left to their own devices, subject only to general regulations made by Parliament, whose members were nearly all themselves country gentlemen and Justices of the Peace. Sitting jointly in Quarter Sessions at the county town, the justices of each county dealt with serious offences against public order, managed county affairs, controlled the main roads and so forth; sitting in smaller groups in Petty Sessions, they dealt with minor offences; while as individuals each, in his own justice-room in his own manor-house, exercised large powers of committing persons to trial, and supervised the working of the village administration and especially the management of poor relief.

The powers which they wielded as Justices of the Peace gave to the squirearchy a very remarkable ascendancy. They were like little kings in their own villages, and if they chose to behave as petty tyrants, as they sometimes did, there was very little chance of redress. Yet, on the whole, they performed their duties, if not with great enlightenment, at any rate with a good deal of public spirit and neighbourly good feeling. The literature of the century abounds with portraits of the Justices of the Peace. But if there are many descriptions of petty tyrannies, there are as many of generous, public-spirited and large-minded performance of public duties. Over against Fielding's description of Squire Western must be set his portrait of Squire Allworthv, and Addison's of Sir Roger de Coverley. It was only when the agrarian and industrial revolutions in the second half of the century brought about a great cleavage in rural society, and destroyed the community-spirit which had held English villages together, that the Justices of the Peace came to be regarded

as enemies and oppressors of the poor. In the first half of the century they were still on the whole the accepted leaders of rural society. And if, in their enthusiasm for field-sports, they were already disproportionately severe against breaches of the Game Laws, that was not yet a very grave matter. For the Game Laws were not yet the ferocious and tyrannical things they later 'became ; the preservation of game had not yet become the chief interest of the rural gentry ; and the peasantry were not yet reduced to such a state of misery as to be driven to wholesale poaching to keep the breath in their bodies. These things were to happen later. In 1750 the squires were still the natural leaders of a homogeneous rural society, and the great powers which they wielded, though too unchecked, were on the whole reasonably and healthily employed, and represented a natural mode of organisation which ensured that common affairs should be managed in sympathy with public sentiment.

Just as the peasantry shaded into the yeomanry and the yeomanry into the squirearchy, so the squirearchy shaded into the supreme class, whom we may call the Magnates. These were, in truth, simply squires on a very great scale, often owning estates in many parts of the country, maintaining princely state in splendid mansions, and coming together annually for the season in London. This regular assemblage of the great leaders of English rural society did indeed give a unity to the whole of England, every part of which had its representatives in the intimate luxurious life of the capital during the season. It was as natural that the magnates should in the main govern the country as a whole as it was that the yeomen should in the main govern the village and the squires the county. The magnates were in a real degree in touch with the local life of England ; as Lords-Lieutenant they were the leaders of county affairs ; and their activity in electioneering business¹ had at least this advantage that it gave them an intimate knowledge of the feelings and desires of the whole country. So long as their interests were not in conflict with those of the mass of the people whom they ruled—and as yet there appeared to be no such conflict—these great rural magnates seemed to be the natural leaders and spokesmen of this homogeneous, rural society. Their immense political power, therefore, was not as unrepresentative of the national mind as it might at first sight appear to be. Until the time when the transformation

* Electioneering methods are ^escribed above, Chap. i. p. 656,

of the social system made them no longer the natural leaders of English society, they ruled the country by 'consent.'

The little group of great families who dominated British affairs during this period in many ways resembled the great senatorial families who ruled Rome during the most splendid period of the republic. They formed a very exclusive society, closely linked by intermarriage. They were on the whole a highly cultivated body of men, with a fine taste in the arts and a real delight in literature; many of them were widely read in the great literatures of Greece and Rome. They encouraged and rejoiced in the utmost freedom of thought and speculation, and many of them gave their patronage to thinkers, men of letters and artists. They travelled widely, especially in France, and many of them had an intimate knowledge of European conditions, which gave them a great advantage in dealing with questions of foreign policy. In their country palaces and in their town mansions they lived a life of great luxury and splendour, and sometimes of fantastic extravagance; and the clubs which they created in London as the centres of their social activities ensured that they were mostly on terms of intimate acquaintance with one another. Under these conditions, national politics became almost a family affair.

The magnates were full of pride, and very conscious of their own dignity. They had both the virtues and the defects that mark most oligarchies. They thought it right and natural that all power should rest in their hands, and that they and theirs should be enriched by pensions and offices at the cost of the State. But they had also a high sense of personal and national honour, and a real feeling that *noblesse oblige* to public service. With their great wealth they might easily have been content with a life of idleness; but few of them gave way to the temptation, and many of them spent laborious days in the work of Parliament and the administrative offices, or trained themselves to serve the State in arms by sea or land. Few of them were lazy triflers; and they did much to establish the tradition, which has been one of the strongest things in English public life—stronger perhaps than in any other country—that public service has a rightful claim upon the time and thought of all who are not wholly engrossed by the demands of livelihood. They had a real pride in their country and in its traditions of law-abiding freedom; and if their conception of liberty was a narrow one, it was sound so far as it went, and it was a great gain that liberty and equal laws should

be proclaimed as the supreme governing principles of the State, even if they were narrowly conceived. When all is said, the British realms were almost the only lands in the world which had emblazoned these principles upon their banner.

On the other hand the magnates were slow to understand the needs of other countries which they did not know. The self-complacency which marks all oligarchies blinded them to the grave injustices they were perpetuating in Ireland, and to the magnitude and difficulty of the problem of combining freedom with the unity of the Commonwealth in the young lands beyond the seas ; nor could this body of aristocrats understand or sympathise with the democratic society of New England. Above all, they were terribly blind to the needs and sufferings of the poor in their own country. They could not rise to the conception of the State as a great free partnership for the common weal. That is a conception slow to arise anywhere ; it did not yet exist in any of the countries of Europe ; but the self-complacency of this small, brilliant, powerful society made it impermeable to such an ideal. They thought of the whole nation as living under their shadow, secure in their protection ; they thought of the poor as owing their livelihood and their safety to the rich ; they were, as Burke put it, the great oaks which sheltered the field, and they did not see that their spreading roots often hampered the cultivation of the soil, and that their luxuriant branches often shut out the sun.

This was to become terribly apparent in the next age, when the great social transformation changed the whole texture of English society. In that age the ascendancy of the great families was to be as ruinous to the social health of the British peoples as the ascendancy of the senatorial oligarchy in the last century of the Roman republic was ruinous to that of Italy. But as yet this evil effect of oligarchic rule was not apparent, because the great landowners were the natural leaders of a nation which still consisted mainly of men interested in the land ; and it may fairly be said that the rule of the great families, despite its defects, had been of real service, by destroying the possibility of despotism, by perfecting the machinery of parliamentary government in a form which was capable of being turned to the needs of a more genuinely national co-operation in government, and by maintaining a high sense of national honour and a fine tradition of the obligation of public service,

The extraordinary ascendancy of the land-owning magnates was the chief feature of English life in the eighteenth century. It was the natural result of the predominance of the landed interest in the life of the nation. But it extended itself over almost the whole organisation of the nation's life and thought. The Established Church was treated simply as an appendix of the State. Its offices, all but the humblest, provided respectable positions for younger sons. Its bishops and deans were members or proteges of the great families, and shared in their life and ideas ; its parochial clergy belonged to the class of the squirearchy, often sat with them on the bench, and gave more attention to public than to religious duties. The function of the Church was to be decent, dignified and orderly, and to teach the people to be so—not to challenge them to live nobly, or remind them that they were sons of God.

The legal profession was even more directly incorporated with and controlled by the ruling class. All the great judicial offices were filled by members of that class, and the highest of these offices formed the most frequent mode of access to the inner sanctum of the House of Lords. The system produced some really great lawyers, for the great families had a profound respect for law, and regarded its interpretation and enforcement as the highest function of the State. But the lawyers inevitably regarded their functions in the light of the ideas of the class from which they were drawn ; they were the chief upholders of the fundamental idea that the land-owning class formed the most essential and vital element in the State.

The universities, again, had been in effect annexed by the great families. Their sons attended them with special privileges, wearing the tuft that marked the ' nobleman/ Dons and tutors looked to noble patronage for promotion, and became ' tuft-hunters ' ; the mass of undergraduates, preparing themselves for the Church or the bar or public life, either belonged to the class of the squirearchy or looked to the ruling class for their future careers ; and thus the universities became funnels through which the ability of the country was sucked into the service of the oligarchy. In **the** same way the great public schools, Eton and Winchester, Westminster and Harrow, originally founded for the education of poor scholars, had become the training grounds of an aristocracy. Here, amid Spartan conditions, the sons of the ruling class were trained to be loyal gentlemen and good sportsmen, and to know something of that

world of old Rome which their own lives were so nearly to reproduce. Through these schools, with their traditions of loyalty and self-government, and their insistence upon self-restraint and the rules of a rigid * good form/ the proud aristocracy of the eighteenth century has handed down, more completely than in any other part of English life, that which was best in their manners and ideals, and has diffused it gradually among other elements of the population.

§ 4. *The Commercial and Industrial Interests : the Growth of Capitalist Control.*

The ascendancy of the landed aristocracy, thus buttressed by the Church, the law, and the most ancient and powerful educational institutions of the country, was all the more complete because there were as yet no other economic interests which at all compared in importance with those of the land. Although it was by the development of commerce and industry that the wealth of the British realms was being increased, and their position in the world established, and although, for that reason, commercial and industrial questions occupied much of the attention of government and Parliament, the representatives of these great interests had very little direct political power; they could and did influence, but they did not directly control, national policy in these respects.

The most powerful group independent of the landed interest consisted of the great bankers and foreign merchants. A few of them sat in Parliament, as members for London and one or two of the chief ports. They were, in fact, few in number, and were mostly congregated in London, the headquarters of the greatest financial corporations, the Bank of England, the East India Company, the South Sea Company, the African Company. In the management of these great concerns they found sufficient occupation for all the thought and leisure they could spare from the conduct of their private businesses, and they were content to leave the management of national affairs in the hands of the landowning magnates. Through the bank and the other great companies, indeed, they wielded great power, especially because it was they who found the money for carrying on national wars. They were generally able to impose their own conditions in regard to industrial and commercial policy without themselves wielding political power or occupying any public office; for no government dared disregard them. Moreover

they had long been intimately linked with the governing families ; most of them were ambitious of becoming members of the landowning aristocracy, and spent much of their wealth in buying landed estates. Their influence was strong enough to ensure the triumph of their ideas as to what national interest demanded in the sphere of economic policy, and it has left its mark deeply upon the statute book. But the men who worked for them, the sailors and the clerks, had no direct spokesmen in the national government. It was nobody's business to see that they enjoyed decent conditions of life.

The development of foreign trade was the chief pride and the chief interest of England in the first half of the eighteenth century, but it had brought about also a great expansion in manufactures ; and the manufacturing system was beginning to pass through a crisis, due to the fact that the limits of expansion possible under the old methods had almost been reached.

The greatest of English industries, beyond comparison, was the woollen manufacture. It was still carried on by hand-loom. But the rate at which cloth could be produced from the looms was dependent upon the amount of yarn which could be produced by the spinners. The yarn was still spun by women, working at home on the old-fashioned spinning-wheel; and the demand for it was so great that in almost every part of the country the wives and daughters of poor folk made a substantial addition to the family income by spinning. Even so, it was often impossible to keep the weavers' looms going on full-time work; and the result was that many weavers combined work at the loom in their own cottages with the cultivation of a little land. This was especially the case in the Yorkshire woollen area, in the dales of the West Riding. Here the trade was mainly carried on by home industry; the weaver worked up on his own loom the yarn spun by his wife and daughters and by other women in the neighbourhood; took his piece of cloth to sell in Leeds market; and between-whiles tilled his allotment. Under these conditions he could afford to work for long hours in his spells at the loom without sacrifice of health. He was his own master ; he fixed his own hours.

But in other regions, and notably in the West of England area (Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset) another method of organisation, which had long been practised, had now definitely got the upper hand. The capitalist had taken the industry under his control. Substantial men, known as

' clothiers,' kept large numbers of weavers in their employment, sometimes providing them with their looms, or even bringing them together to work in a central place under supervision, and keeping them supplied with yarn bought from the spinners over a large area. Under these conditions the weavers ceased to be their own masters ; they became, in a greater or less degree, ' hands/ working for an employer at fixed wages. The system had some advantages. It economised labour. It brought about a better organisation of the various stages in the process of manufacture. It enabled styles and patterns to be more intelligently fixed in view of the needs of the home or export market. But it left the weavers very much at the mercy of the clothiers for whom they worked. It robbed them of their independence. The clothier was tempted to demand long hours of work, and to pay the lowest wage for which he could get labour.

The workman no longer had the protection of the old craft-gilds which had in the Middle Ages regulated the conditions of labour by co-operative agreement. When the craft-gilds broke down, the Tudor and Stewart governments had tried to do their work by regulating wages and (to a less extent) conditions of labour, mainly through the Justices of the Peace. But under the Whig oligarchy the attempt to work out a national system of protection for labour was abandoned, and the weavers (and in the same way the workers in other industries which were passing under the control of capitalists) were left without protection, unless they could somehow devise it for themselves. From the point of view of the governing class, it was the great clothiers who were responsible for the organisation and expansion of industry, and they must not be interfered with. And it was doubtless true that but for the better organisation which the clothiers provided, the industry could scarcely have expanded as it did. But the maintenance of a healthy and self-respecting population is an even more important national interest than the increase of wealth; and this the system disregarded. No very widespread evils had yet arisen as a result of the growth of the new system, because as yet the weaver mainly worked at home, often had a patch of land of his own, and was usually paid customary wages which bore some proportion to the cost of living. But many of them were in a very unhealthy condition, working too long hours, losing their real freedom, unable to make proper provision either for their children or for old age. Already

there was some indication of the tragic miseries which were to come when new industrial conditions were created by the great inventions of the next period.

What has been said of the woollen manufacture, the premier industry of England, is equally true of the infant cotton industry of Lancashire, which was beginning to produce considerable quantities of cloth woven from a mixture of linen and cotton, and very suitable for the tropical trade, or of the silk industry, which had found a home in Spitalfields and elsewhere. Though there were no such abject miseries as the next period produced, there was a good deal of suffering ; and but a small share of the wealth which growing trade and industry poured into England went to improve the conditions of life of the labouring poor. Thanks to the way in which it was organised, industry was not producing much, if any, betterment in the mass of the nation's manhood. But the proportion of the population engaged in industry was still so small that the significance of this was not realised.

Still more was this true of the mining industries, which almost necessarily fell under capitalist control. Mining was as yet a minor industry. The iron-fields of England were becoming less instead of more productive, because iron could only be smelted by burning wood, and the supply of timber was running out: this difficulty was especially felt in Sussex, hitherto the main source of supply of English iron. Coal was used, as yet, only for domestic fires ; it had not yet become the key of all industry, as it was rapidly to become in the next age ; and only a few mines were worked, chiefly in the Newcastle district and in the Wigan area. But wherever it was carried on, mining was the worst-treated of all industries, and miners were universally regarded as the most deprived and brutalised elements in the nation. Their needs and claims were wholly neglected, until Whitefield and the Wesleys came to give them the consolations of religion, and to remind them that they too were sons of God, as precious in the sight of Heaven as the brilliant and cultivated aristocrats who managed the affairs of the nation.

It would be unfair to blame unduly the ruling class of this period for their failure to work out an intelligent system of protection for those who were engaged in the manufacturing industries. They knew little or nothing about these industries. They were anxious that the industry and trade of the country should be developed as rapidly as possible; they believed that every increase in its volume must be to

the advantage of the workmen equally with the masters; they thought that the best way of increasing British trade was by making trade-agreements with foreign countries, by opening up new markets, and by using their power to kill competition from Ireland and the colonies. That was the universal belief of the age ; it was not merely the limited view of a small governing class. The complex and difficult problems affecting the organisation of national industry in its relation to national well-being were only beginning to be explored ; Adam Smith had yet to write his great book, which was the foundation of intelligent thinking on these problems ; and even when the most acute intelligence began to be devoted to them, the principles which at first seemed to be established appeared to justify the belief that any attempt to interfere with the processes of industry would only lead to disaster. But, without blaming anybody, we have to note that the brilliant development of British wealth and power was attended by shadows, as yet faint, but destined to become deeper and blacker.

The manufacturing and trading interests had in effect no share in the government of the country ; some of their chief centres, like Manchester, were unrepresented ; and the representation of most of the boroughs which did return members was controlled, as we have seen,¹ by the landowning interest. But they possessed in some degree their own machinery of local government. Every borough, large or small, had its town council, whose jurisdiction was singularly free from any control by the central government. It is true that these councils were not popularly elected, but almost universally filled up vacancies in their own membership as they occurred. But the total number of men who through these councils had some share in the management of public affairs was large ; and in many boroughs the presiding officers, mayors and bailiffs, were elected by the whole body of freemen.

The town councils, however, took no very large or generous view of their functions. They represented only a privileged group of burghers, and their main business was to administer the ancient inherited properties and privileges of these burghers, the town-lands, the town-dues, the town-markets. They were loth to undertake any new duties, such as those of providing paving, drainage and water-supply for the growing towns which the development of trade and industry was bringing into exist-

¹ See Chap. i. above, p. 657.

ence. To deal with these new needs new bodies were beginning to come into existence, created by private Acts of Parliament on the application of the residents in individual boroughs ; and these new bodies were as a rule popularly elected by the ratepayers, and empowered to levy rates for the special services they were established to render.

The system of urban local government in England during this period was far too complicated and variable to be described in a few sentences. It followed no system ; it varied from place to place ; it was unregulated and uncontrolled by the central government. Not even in the most powerful boroughs did there exist any single authority invested with powers sufficient to enable it to deal with all the needs of growing populations ; and those places which did not possess chartered rights descending from the Middle Ages, however large and important they might be, had to be content with the same organisation as the villages—the old feudal manorial court, and the parish vestry. This chaotic system, or absence of system, was to cause great evils in the coming time of rapid change ; and the oligarchy who ruled England in this age may well be blamed for having done nothing to provide the towns with an orderly and efficient system of government. But as yet the deficiencies of this state of things were not very apparent ; the mediaeval machinery still worked reasonably well. And it is fair to add that *in* the town councils, narrowly as they conceived their powers, in the new boards which were being created to remedy their deficiencies, in the parish vestries, which in the largest towns as in the villages managed the administration of poor relief, and in the old traditional manor-courts which had to undertake so many new^T and difficult functions, a great multitude of men were in fact practising the arts of self-government with better results than might have been anticipated. The English were still a self-governing people, though their system needed reconstruction, and was ill-adapted to meet the terrible strain that was soon to fall upon it.

§ 5. *The Growth of Prosperity in Scotland.*

The first half of the eighteenth century was for Scotland the beginning of a new era. When the century opened she was still a very poor country, full of turbulence and disorder ; the Highlands especially were in a state of tribal anarchy and barbarism ; almost the only features of hope and promise in the life of the nation were the stern discipline

of her Church and the work of her schools and poverty-stricken universities ; and in all the material aspects of civilisation she was at least three centuries behind England. Travellers in Scotland were struck, in the Lowlands as well as the Highlands, by the wretchedness and dirt of the houses, the poverty of the greater part of the people, the multitude of beggars, and the backwardness of agriculture and industry. Wheaten bread, which every peasant used in England, was in Scotland a luxury known only to the well-to-do ; oatmeal brose, sometimes enriched (in the Highlands at any rate) with blood drawn from the living cow, or peasemeal, seemed to be the almost universal fare ; and half the population seemed to go barefoot. Agriculture was hampered by outworn mediaeval restrictions and by the inadequacy of the implements and methods employed ; there were scarcely any industries of importance ; even the fisheries in the swarming seas which surrounded the country were undeveloped, and were exploited by far more Dutch than Scottish ships ; and foreign trade was almost negligible. Not only were the Highlands themselves in a condition of inconceivable rudeness and anarchy, but the Lowlands were perpetually raided by Highland robbers : the most famous of all the Highland caterans, Rob Roy Macgregor, was at the height of his activities, waging war with all his neighbours, defying outlawry and living by plunder ; he died peacefully in his bed in 1736, at the age of eighty.

From these miseries Scotland was able to rescue herself by four facts : the union with England, which gave her the chance of developing her trade and industry ; the overthrow of tribal anarchy in the Highlands after 1745, and the abolition of the powers of chieftains in the Highlands and feudal lords in the Lowlands by the destruction of ' heritable jurisdictions ' in 1747, which followed Culloden ; the cessation of religious persecution, which was the result of the Revolution ; and, finally, the development of a universal system of popular education, which had been planned by Knox, but was never fully carried out until the eighteenth century. These events did not, of course, produce an immediate result. The beneficent result of the union, for example, did not begin to be apparent until about 1730. But by the middle of the century the tide had turned : modern Scotland was coming to birth.

It was perhaps in the Highlands that the change was most marked ; and here, apart from the cessation of tribal war, the first results did not seem to be altogether happy.

The noblest thing in Highland life had been the romantic and chivalrous devotion of the clansman to his chieftain : in the hard years following 1746, when many chiefs were outlawed and their lands confiscated, this devotion had displayed itself in a wonderful way by the contribution, out of grinding poverty, of large sums for the upkeep of the exiles, or by the beautiful loyalty with which the hiding-places of those who remained in the country were concealed.¹ Yet in many cases this loyalty was ill-rewarded. Under the Heritable Jurisdiction Act those chiefs who had not been outlawed became landlords of the clan lands instead of chieftains. Many of them, eager to make the maximum amount of money, turned the glens into sheep-runs, and pitilessly evicted their clansmen, now become their tenants. As a result thousands of them had to emigrate, though emigration was peculiarly painful to the Highlander, speaking a tongue uncomprehended beyond his native hills. Thousands more enlisted in the army : the Highlands were beyond comparison the best recruiting grounds of the British army during the next two generations, and the kilt won deathless glory in the fields of Spain and the Netherlands, India and America. Many of those who remained won but a bare and precarious living as crofters and fishers. Yet, though romance might lament the disappearance of the wild old life, the new conditions were certainly an improvement. The Highlander learnt to substitute a national for a tribal loyalty. He was drawn with Celtic enthusiasm into the stern religious life of his country, which had hitherto little affected him. He began to play his part in the universities, and to make his own distinctive contribution to the imagination and thought of the world. And he had become a member of a great commonwealth which beckoned his adventurous spirit to every quarter of the globe.

In the Lowlands the transformation was more gradual, but even more radical. The frugal, shrewd, patient genius of the Lowlander began for the first time systematically to turn its attention to the business of wealth-making, of which he had hitherto had little experience : he was soon to show that this was not because he lacked qualifications. Already the Scots had seen, more quickly and more clearly than the English, the strength that could be drawn from a sound system of banking—perhaps because, in a poor country where nobody had much capital to dispose of, the advantages of pooling many small sums was more easily appreciated.

¹ Stevenson's *Kidnapped* gives a fine picture of these conditions.

It was a Scotsman who originated the scheme of the Bank of England ; Scotland herself already maintained no less than three considerable banks, in spite of her poverty ; she was, in 1750, in advance of England in the development of banking facilities outside the capital ; and undoubtedly this was one of the reasons why a country so poor was able very rapidly to win great wealth. In 1750 she had already developed to real prosperity the linen industry, which had been in a very backward and struggling condition at the beginning of the century ; she was creating a woollen industry of her own in the Tweed country ; and these products gave her something to form the basis of an export trade. In 1718 the first ship was launched on the Clyde : till then Glasgow had not even owned a single vessel, but had carried on her almost negligible foreign trade in ships borrowed from Whitehaven. By 1760 the Clyde had already become an important shipbuilding centre ; Glasgow had opened up a vigorous traffic with the New World ; she handled more tobacco than any other British port save London. Plainly the tide had turned.

No small part of the credit for the skill and patience with which poverty-stricken Scotland was making for herself a new wealth was due to the fact that she was educating all her people in her parish schools : her system of popular education was definitely in advance of that of any other European country, and immeasurably ahead of that of England. It was a *system*, not (like such popular schools as existed in England) an accidental growth. It was planned on a national basis by the General Assembly of a democratic Church, and assiduously nurtured by the ministers in every parish, who, unlike the Anglican clergy, were themselves of the people. They were narrow, hard, tyrannical in the use of the extraordinary powers of moral discipline which they claimed and exercised: there was much that is repellent in their work. But they trained the whole nation to study and to think, not only by maintaining schools, but also by the hard intellectual discipline of their sermons and their catechism. Moreover the Scottish universities—poor and mean places as they were in comparison with Oxford and Cambridge—were stirring into a new life : they were beginning to produce that remarkable series of philosophical teachers who in the second half of the century contributed to transform the thinking of Europe. In these years David Hume, a Scot, though not connected with a Scottish university, was accepted as the most profound and challenging

of writers in English ; and soon Adam Smith, a Glasgow professor, was to give a new turn to scientific thinking on economic and political questions. The hard discipline of the Scottish Church system was beginning to bear its fruits in other spheres besides the ecclesiastical.

It was still through the Church, also, that Scotland was training herself in self-government. Her share in the British Parliament meant nothing to the great majority of her people : in boroughs and counties alike the number of electors was so small that it was easy to get control over them, and there was no section of the united Parliament that was so easy to manage, or so completely at the disposal of the great Whig borough-mongers. Until 1832 the Scottish representatives in Parliament could not be said to speak for the Scottish people. Nor was there any effective system of local self-government in Scotland such as formed the pride of England. It was through the Church, and its parish sessions, presbyteries, synods and General Assembly, that the Scots were training themselves for future participation in the life of a Commonwealth of free nations.

The period was thus for Scotland one of beginnings. In all respects save education she was still far behind her great partner. There was still far more suffering among her poor than there was in England. The shadows that attended her slowly rising prosperity were yet deeper than those which attended the secure and growing wealth of England. If the English miners, for example, were a degraded and neglected class, the miners of Scotland (not yet numerous) were in a still more unhappy plight. For Scottish colliers and salt-workers were in this period actually serfs—the only legal serfs in the islands—bound to the mines or quarries which they worked, and passing with them from one owner to another.

§ 6. *The Stagnancy of Ireland.*

It is needless to say much about the condition of Ireland in the middle of the eighteenth century, for we have already described¹ the ugly system of oppression to which the majority of her people had been sentenced by the Revolution settlement. She lay chained and bound, helpless, stagnant and motionless.

The great mass of her population, whether they belonged to the Protestant minority or to the Roman Catholic

¹ See above, Bk. v. chap. vi. pp. 586 ff.

majority, drew their livelihood from the land. But most of the land was in Protestant hands ; Catholics were forbidden by law to acquire land except as tenants. Many of the landlords, especially the greatest among them, were habitual absentees, living in England, and spending there the rents which were exacted from their tenants by agents. Others spent their time largely in hunting and drinking : the Irish country gentry had become notorious for the reckless and thriftless joviality of their life. They took, except in rare instances, no interest in the improvement of their lands, but were content to draw their rents. Between these resident gentry and the peasantry relations were not unfriendly, in spite of the religious differences which separated them, and the miserable penury to which the system condemned most of the peasants. Good-fellowship and the common love of sport tended to ease and obscure the cruelties of the system. On the whole, though nothing had been done to relax the Penal Code, the position of the Catholics had improved by the middle of the century. Religious intolerance was dying out, largely because the Protestants had ceased to fear a Catholic revolt; Catholic priests were allowed to go about their business without interference ; and the guerilla warfare which had been waged by bands of ' tories ' and ' rapparees ' for a generation after the Revolution had practically come to an end. Ireland seemed to be quiet.

Nevertheless the country was in an unhappy state. Respect for law is the very foundation of a healthy society ; and respect for law could not and did not exist in Ireland. It was destroyed among the Catholics by the iniquity of the laws to which they were subject; it was weakened among the Protestant landlord class by the feeling that they were above the laws, which existed for their protection. No society can be healthy unless its members can feel that its organisation, however defective, is meant to help and protect them. That feeling was impossible for the majority of Irishmen, who knew that society was so organised as to deny them all civic rights, to forbid them to educate their children, to exclude them from the means of attaining prosperity, and to ruin and destroy their religion. These were the express objects of the Irish system.

We have seen¹ that the development of all industries save the linen manufacture had been crushed by the English Parliament. This meant that except in the small linen area

¹ See above, pp. 506, 587.

the whole population had to draw its livelihood directly or indirectly from the land. But even the resources of the land could not be fully developed, since the export both of wool and of woollen manufactures was prohibited, and even Irish cattle could not be sent to England. To some extent the prohibition of the export of wool was evaded, and there was a very large smuggling trade with France, which increased the general contempt for law. In spite of the prohibition of the export of wool and cattle, much of the best land in Ireland was given over to pasture, which employed little labour in comparison with agriculture. The result was that there was terrible competition for the land which remained, and extortionate rack-rents were charged for the smallest plots. Living in the most abject penury the peasantry had neither the means nor the knowledge to cultivate their land properly.

It may safely be said that in no country of the world was destitution so great as in Ireland. 'Never did I behold,' wrote a Protestant bishop on being transferred to an Irish see, 'even in Picardy, Westphalia or Scotland, such dismal marks of hunger and want as appeared in the countenances of most of the poor creatures I met with on the road'; and he describes how, one of his carriage-horses being killed, a crowd of famished peasants tore the flesh from its bones to take to their children. After a bad season, under such conditions, the most appalling famines almost inevitably resulted. In 1740 and 1741 it is said that 400,000 perished of starvation and of consequent diseases; and the pictures of horrors drawn by those who witnessed this famine surpass imagination or belief. Well might Burke say, of the system which produced such results, '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/

§ 7. *The British Lands oversea: their Social Character.*

From Ireland, the one land to which membership of the British Commonwealth had brought nothing but evil, it is refreshing to turn to the oversea settlements created by the strenuous activities of the previous century and a half. For in these settlements, under a political and legal system wholly derived from England, there were to be seen an abounding prosperity, a progressive energy and a wide

diffusion of political liberty, such as could be seen scarcely anywhere else in the world.

These settlements fell into two main groups, the West Indies and the continental colonies ; the little group of the Bermudas, far out in the Atlantic, forming a sort of link between them. But each of the two great groups was divided into a number of separate colonies, which, though they had many interests and many characteristics in common, had no common centre of government, but were equipped with their own governors and their own representative assemblies. Hence, apart from the parent islands, and leaving out of account the newly established British power in India and the trading stations on the West African Coast, the British Commonwealth already included no less than twenty-three distinctly organised States, all subordinate to the British Crown, and (though in a more indefinite way) to the British Parliament, all priding themselves upon their British citizenship, nearly all possessing representative institutions, and all linked together by the same imperial system of trade regulation.

Of these twenty-three States, five were included in the West Indian group ; which had, in 1760, attained almost its highest degree of prosperity. There was the great island of Jamaica, upon which depended several tiny islands, as well as certain logwood-cutting stations on the coast of Honduras, later to develop into the colony of British Honduras. Long the headquarters of piracy, and hampered by constant wars with the descendants of Spanish slaves (known as Maroons) who had their fortresses in the wooded mountains of the interior Jamaica had nevertheless developed into a highly prosperous colony, where a planter aristocracy employed an army of negro slaves in the cultivation of sugar and other tropical products. In 1763, Jamaica was more prosperous than it had ever been, for the war had brought it great riches ; and at a time when the whole commercial world valued the West Indian trade beyond all others, Jamaica seemed to many to be ' the brightest jewel in the British Crown/ The island of Barbados, almost the oldest of the British West Indian settlements, ranked next after Jamaica in wealth and population. Its white inhabitants included many Irishmen ; they had shown great zeal in raising contingents of volunteers to take part in the war. Next came the federated group of the Leeward Islands, St. Kitts, Antigua, Nevis, Montserrat, Barbuda, Anguilla and the Virgin Islands, which had now fully

recovered from the set-back caused by the struggle of the seventeenth century with France. The Bahama Islands formed a fourth separately organised group ; long infested by pirates, they had only begun to enjoy settled order and prosperity during the generation before 1760. Finally, the conquests of Pitt had added a new group in the Windward Islands—Grenada, Dominica, St. Vincent/ Tobago and the little Grenadines—which, being close neighbours of the great French islands, Martinique and Guadeloupe, had already seen, and were still to see, more fighting than any other group. But in 1763 they were a new acquisition, scarcely yet settled, and only beginning to be provided with the normal institutions of the British colonial system.

All these five colonies, though separately organised, were marked by common features. They were all (except the Bahamas) devoted mainly to the cultivation of sugar. They were all dependent mainly upon slave-labour, and their negro population outnumbered their white population, in many cases, by ten to one. Their whole social structure, the very foundations of their prosperity, rested on the assumption (which was as yet unchallenged) that negro slavery was legitimate. Their white population constituted, therefore, a proud aristocracy, with the defects, but also with many of the virtues, of an aristocracy. And in any case they were a free aristocracy; for each island-group had its representative assembly, and made its own laws.

Sharply contrasted with the West Indian colonies was the little group of the Bermudas, far out in the Atlantic, whose total area only amounted to nineteen square miles. With no great natural resources, these tiny islands nevertheless supported a considerable population. They were able to do so because their enterprising settlers had shown great vigour in ship-building and in trade. They had played a lively part in the settlement of the Bahamas and other West Indian islands. They were very active in privateering during the war. And their ships were to be seen in every harbour both of the West Indies and of the continental colonies. Freedom and enterprise marked none of the British colonies in a higher degree than this little group, which was almost the earliest of the whole brotherhood.

Of the sixteen distinct colonies on the mainland of North America, three had been the subject of long conflict with the French. Canada, just conquered, and peopled, as yet, wholly with Frenchmen, was naturally still under military

rule. Newfoundland, the scene of the first British experiment in colonisation, had long been disputed with the French, and only became finally and definitely British in 1713. Even then the French had retained certain rights, for fishing purposes, over a part of the coast. The settlers were still but a small number of hardy fishermen scattered along the shore ; and it was only since 1728 that they had enjoyed organised government. Nova Scotia, which had been twice conquered from the French during the seventeenth century and twice restored, had been finally ceded to Britain in 1713 ; but it was only since 1755, when the French settlers were deported¹ and 4000 British immigrants were brought in, that Nova Scotia became in any full sense a British colony. She had obtained the normal institutions of representative government in 1758. But the participation of these three St. Lawrence colonies in the history of the British Commonwealth was only beginning in 1763.

The greatest glory and pride of the Commonwealth at that date consisted in the thirteen free States which were soon to break away and found a new independent commonwealth of their own. Their progress during the first half of the eighteenth century had been amazing. At the beginning of the century the West Indian colonies had been regarded as more important, or at any rate as commercially more valuable, than the continental colonies. But even in regard to trade, the latter now took first place : then-exports to England were rather larger than these of the West Indies, and their imports from England were twice as great. And in all other respects—in population, in enterprise, in the development of a progressive civilisation, they stood far ahead not only of the British West Indies, but of any colonies that had been established by the European peoples.

In 1760 their total population numbered about a million and a half, of whom nearly half a million were negroes. This represents an increase of more than 700 per cent, since the Revolution. The settled and cultivated area showed an increase proportionate to the growth of population ; it now extended to the edge of the mountain belt. Along the great length of the western border there was a vanguard of adventurous frontiersmen and pioneers, who had begun to find their way across the hills into the great central plain, even before the overthrow of the French, and who were now ready to enter into that great heritage,

¹ See above, Chap. vi. p. 724.

In the more settled regions a highly developed civilisation had already been established. There were thriving and prosperous towns, notably Boston, New York and Philadelphia. There was cultivated society, not only in these towns but among the planter aristocracy of Virginia. Education was widely diffused, especially in New England. Already there were the beginnings of a newspaper press ; and colleges which were to develop into universities had been established in all the more populous and progressive colonies. Not only were representative assemblies everywhere in existence, and everywhere active ; not only were the white settlers everywhere protected in their civil liberties by the usage of English Common Law ; not only was religious toleration everywhere practised ; but (what is far more difficult to secure) a real degree of social equality existed, because the inexhaustible abundance of unoccupied land made it unnecessary for any white man of vigour to remain in a condition of permanent dependence.

The widely diffused prosperity of the colonies was, of course, due to the inexhaustible riches of a new land ; their unrestrained freedom to the fact that in this new land traditional restraints and inherited obligations did not, for white men, exist. But it was only in the new lands peopled from Britain that these blessings were fully enjoyed. Before long the colonies were to revolt, not against any grave oppression, but against an invasion of their political liberties which no other people would have dreamed of mentioning. The spirit which could be so ready to resist any, even the most modest, infraction of freedom was itself a product of the liberty which the British system had planted and nurtured.

To white men, beyond a doubt, these happy lands afforded a degree of freedom and of opportunity not to be attained anywhere else in the world. But there was a dark shadow in this otherwise bright prospect. Nearly one-third of the population consisted of negro slaves, who enjoyed no share in these blessings. The slaves were naturally most numerous in the planter-colonies of the south, where the staple industries largely depended on their labour. But they were to be found in all the colonies, even in the Puritan north ; and everywhere they were subject to extremely harsh and even ferocious laws, drawn up by the colonial legislatures. Even the free negroes were nowhere allowed the civil liberties that belonged to white men. The harshness of these laws was perhaps not unnatural in the southern

colonies, which lived in fear of black rebellions ; and the fear was sometimes justified. There was less excuse in the northern colonies, where (except in New York) the negroes formed a small minority of the population. Yet Quaker Pennsylvania ordained, for example, that any negro found 'gadding about' on Sunday should be locked up without meat or" drink until Monday, and should then receive thirty-nine lashes 'well-laid on' before being released; while Puritan Massachusetts enacted that all free negroes should be bound to white masters, and that any free negro sheltering a negro slave should be heavily lined and flogged. Like the West Indian colonies, those of the American continent were still far from being ready to share with all men the freedom which their white inhabitants so abundantly enjoyed. In this respect, at least, the mother country was well in advance of her daughter states ; for in Britain slavery was practically non-existent, and in 1772 it was to be declared, by a great judicial decision, to be inconsistent with the Common Law of England.

The thirteen colonies fell into three clearly marked groups, sharply distinguished from one another by their social systems. The first group consisted of the New England colonies—Massachusetts (with Maine as a dependency), New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Connecticut; these four colonies had a population of nearly 500,000. The second group consisted of the Middle colonies, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, with a population of over 400,000. The third group included the southern or planter colonies, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia, with a population of over 700,000 including 250,000 negro slaves.

The New England colonies were essentially agricultural settlements. They had scarcely yet begun to develop manufacturing industries, except in the crudest forms. But under the shelter of the British Navigation Acts, which placed their shipping on equal terms with that of the mother country, they had developed a large oversea trade, especially with the other colonies and with the West Indies ; they had also a share in the West African slave-trade ; and they had shown themselves during the war expert and active in privateering, at the expense not only of French but of Spanish and Dutch shipping. They were more vigorous and enterprising than any of the other colonies, and had taken the largest part in every phase of the long struggle with France. They were also the best educated of the colonies, having a

school in every parish : they alone had developed the beginnings of a literature of their own ; and, as in Scotland, the hard discipline of their Church system had strengthened their intellectual grasp, and made them lovers of disputation. The bitter religious intolerance of New England had indeed been largely moderated by the middle of the eighteenth century. There were now many religious sects in all the New England colonies, and there was no religious persecution. But the old dour Puritan temper was by no means dead. It showed itself in an austerity of life which made the New England colonies less attractive to immigrants than the other colonies ; and for that reason they retained a more marked unity of character than their neighbours. And the fondness for discussing principles, and the stiffness in maintaining them, which Puritanism had engendered, still survived. It found a vent in constant controversies with successive governors, and also in a keen interest in law : the New Englanders were a notably litigious people. From the time of their establishment, these colonies had been distinguished as the most unmanageable of all the American colonies. Now, with their steadily expanding commerce (much of which was carried on in direct defiance of the trade regulations), they were tempted to be more critical and more prickly than ever. Their system of government, local as well as central, had become, under the Charter of 1691, genuinely democratic. There was no serious poverty among them. Hard-working, thrifty, enterprising, intelligent, clean-living, tenacious of their rights and full of self-complacency, the New Englanders formed a magnificent stock, though scarcely a genial one.

The middle colonies were the most cosmopolitan of the group. Though the bulk of the settlers were British, there were also many Dutch, Swedes, Swiss and Germans ; and the variety of religious denominations was as great as that of races. For these reasons the middle colonies had no such clear-cut character, and no such highly organised unity of sentiment, as the New England colonies. On the other hand there was in them a greater social freedom, because of the absence of any single dominating standard of life such as existed in New England. Like New England, they were chiefly concerned in agricultural work, though they also carried on (especially in New York) an active trade with the Indians ; while Pennsylvania had begun iron-works. They exported a large part of their products to the West Indies ; but they traded mainly with British ports, and did not

defy the prohibition of trade with the French West Indies on anything like the same scale as the New Englanders. It is noteworthy that the bulk of this oversea trade belonged to Pennsylvania, not to New York, which, though a thriving port, was still far from attaining the primacy in American trade that was later to fall to it. The rapid development of Pennsylvania was, indeed, one of the most striking features of colonial history during the first half of the eighteenth century. More and more this colony attracted to itself the main stream of emigration from Europe. Poor emigrants were brought out on an undertaking to pay for their passage by working for three to five years without wages. But at the end of this period it was the practice in Pennsylvania to give to the immigrant a grant of fifty acres of land. This attraction drew especially a steady stream of emigrants from Germany; and the German settlers, who clung together in defined areas and maintained the use of their native tongue, formed a very substantial element in the population. Under an Act of the British Parliament of 1740, alien immigrants acquired the full rights of British citizenship after seven years' residence. They were thus able to take a part in politics such as had never been open to them in their homeland. But the German settlers were docile folk, who brought with them no traditions of self-government. They were content to leave political power in the hands of the English element. Hence it came about that the Quakers, though now a small minority in the population, still retained control of the government of Pennsylvania. The Quakers were obstinate folk, as they showed when, at the crisis of the struggle with France, they refused to vote either men or money even for the defence of their own frontiers. But the communities of the Middle Colonies as a whole, just because of their lack of homogeneity, were more docile and more easily handled than the New Englanders. They seem also to have shown less resentment against the trade regulations; at all events, they did not openly defy them as New England did.

The southern colonies were all alike distinguished by the fact that they depended economically on slave-labour. There were slaves in the other colonies—there were even slave-revolts, very cruelly suppressed, in New York—but elsewhere slaves were used mainly as domestic servants: in the southern colonies the conduct of the staple industries mainly depended upon negro slaves, who formed one-third of the population in Maryland and Virginia, and

two-thirds in South Carolina. A slave-owning society is seldom a democratic society ; and alongside of the negro slaves, in all the southern colonies, was a large population of ' mean whites/ many of whom had originally come out as transported convicts. Shiftless and idle, they formed an element in the population unlike anything in the more northerly colonies ; but in that happy climate they found it easy to live somehow, as hangers-on of the planter aristocracy. All the southern colonies were, indeed, essentially aristocratic in character. But an aristocracy can be as proud and as tenacious of its rights as any democracy ; and while the easy-going and lavish-living Virginian gentleman was above troubling himself about trade regulations, he could be as stiff as the New Englander (or the British aristocrat) when he thought his rights were threatened.

§ 8. *Problems of the Commonwealth.*

The British Commonwealth, which emerged triumphant from the ordeal of war in 1763, manifestly the greatest power in the world, was a loosely organised bundle of communities, no one of which, not even the happiest, could be described as having won for its citizens the full enjoyment of justice and freedom, yet all of which, with the flagrant and tragic exception of Ireland, had attained a nearer approach to both justice and freedom, and were more palpably striving after them, than most societies that had yet existed on the face of the earth. With that tragic exception, they formed a fellowship or partnership of free communities, the like of which history had not yet seen.

The triumph of 1763 was the culmination of the first great phase in the history of the Commonwealth, to which it opened a magnificent vista of opportunity. But 1763 was not only the culmination of past history, it was the opening of new and vast problems, such as had never yet been set before any group of peoples. The supremacy of the seas had been won : how was it to be used ? Was it to be used in a spirit of mere domineering ascendancy, like that which had earlier led Spain and Portugal to their ruin ? Or was it to mean a greater freedom and a greater security of the seas for all peoples, and a restriction of opportunities for none ? The foundations of an amazing and undesired dominion had been laid in India : how was it to be used ? Was it to be used (as the spirit of a trading company might naturally suggest) merely for the exploitation of unhappy

subjects ? Was it to be, like earlier dominions in India, a sway exercised solely for the profit of the rulers, or was it to bring to the Indian peoples an enlargement of justice and of liberty ? Supremacy over the whole North American continent had been won for the British peoples and for the English tongue. But that momentous decision raised fresh problems. It raised the problem of dealing with an alien and proud people in conquered Canada. Were they to be dealt with in the spirit of mere ascendancy, which had been allowed unchecked sway in Ireland, or were they to enjoy freedom for their own mode of life, and a liberty larger than they had hitherto known ? It raised also the problem of the relations between the mother country and her proud and free daughter States. Was that to be a relation of dominion on the one side, dependence on the other, or could some mode of organised partnership be wrought out ? In all the new lands, but especially in the West Indies, the amazing growth of wealth and power had been won at the expense of the servitude and suffering of multitudes of unhappy negroes. Could the freedom of the British Commonwealth be extended to them also ? Could this iniquity be got rid of without a ruinous dislocation ? At home in the islands the misery of Ireland affected not only herself, but shamed and weakened the whole Commonwealth. Could it be amended ? In Great Britain the power of a proud aristocracy, necessary perhaps as a stage in the development of political freedom and as a security against despotism, was manifestly becoming harmful and acting as a restraint upon freedom. Could it be replaced by a more generous system of co-operation in the direction of public affairs ? The machinery of local self-government, which had done so much for England, was becoming rigid and unreal. Could it be revitalised ? The marvellous economic progress which the British peoples were making was enriching the nation indeed, but by the forms which it was assuming was tending to diminish the freedom and happiness of very large elements in the population. Could this progress be enhanced and accelerated without hurting the happiness of the mass of labouring men ?

All these problems, and many others besides, presented themselves inevitably to the triumphant British peoples. Has a more difficult bundle of problems ever been laid before any generation ? They had to be dealt with by fallible men, largely unconscious of the magnitude of the issues which faced them, and governed, as all men at all times are

governed, by the traditions and presuppositions which belonged to their generation. They made many blunders, and answered many of the questions in a disastrously wrong sense. Nevertheless the period during which they had to answer them was one of the most instructive, as it was one of the most critical, in the history of the British Commonwealth. It will be dealt with in our next volume; and in view of the momentousness of the issues then to be raised, we may well feel that the triumphs of 1763 ought to be regarded not merely as the climax of a long and varied story, but as the preamble of a story yet more complex, more stimulating and more noble, a story which the Fates are still telling.

[Lecky's *History of England and Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*; Traill's *Social England*; Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*; de Saussure's *Foreign View of England in the Reign of George I. and George II.*; S. and B. Webb's *English Local Government*; Nichol's *History of the Poor Law*; Hasbach's *English Agricultural Labourer*; Graham's *Social Life in Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*; Channing's *History of the United States*.]

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