**The years 1714-1760**

George I was more than fifty years of age when he became king. He knew nothing of England, and never even learnt the English language. No one cared much for him, but Englishmen made him their king, as the only way of keeping out the Pretender. Under his rule the ministers could do almost what they liked, and so the system of Party Government became fully established. The Tories now lost their power and popularity. Both under George I and his son, George II,none but Whigs became the king's ministers.

The friends of the Pretender were much disappointed at the peaceable accession of GeorgeI. In 1715 Th They stirred up a rebellion against the new king. Nothing much came of this in England, but a serious revolt broke out in the Highlands of Scotland. In those days the Highlanders lived quite a different life from that of the rest of Scots or Englishmen. They were divided into clans, or great families, and each of these clans was ruled by a chieftain. They cared nothing for the law, and were often fighting each other or uniting to plunder the people of the Lowlands. When the mass of Englishmen and Scots had ceased to care for the Stuarts, the Highlanders still remained their friends. They were splendid soldiers, and their fierce charge often threw the slow-moving regular soldiers of those days into utter confusion. But in 1715 the Highlanders had a poor leader in the Earl of Mar. Before long the Pretender himself went to Scotland. But he was so dull and desponding that he killed all enthusiasm for his cause. The disgusted Highlanders went home, and the Pretender quickly returned to France.

Ever since the Peace of Utrecht the country had been very prosperous. Men were making much money in trade, and were looking out for good ways of getting a high interest for their

savings. A great many people put their money into a company called the South Sea Company.

This company had been started to trade with South America, and soon flourished greatly. Its success encouraged other companies to try and get people to buy their shares. Some of these companies were mere swindles, and were soon found out. Then there followed a panic. The price of shares in all these companies went down suddenly. A great many people were ruined, and the whole country was plunged into deep distress. The South Sea Bubble, as it was called, had been blown out so big that it had burst. This happened in 1720.

Some of those ruined by the South Sea Bubble found out that the king's ministers had been bribed by the South Sea Company. A great outcry rose against them, and they were driven

from office. Sir Robert Walpole was now made chief minister. He had the best head for figures of any one in the country, and took such wise measures that the panic was soon at an end. He remained in office for more than twenty years. Long before his rule came to an end

George I died suddenly, in 1727.

George II was a thorough German, but he knew more about England than his father had done. Before he became king he had been jealous of Walpole. He was now wise enough to see

that Walpole was the best man to be his chief minister, and kept him on in office. Walpole

soon won so strong a position that all the other ministers were forced to obey him. He was the first minister who was called Prime Minister. As long as Walpole remained in power he kept England at peace. Walpole was a very prudent statesman. Under him people became so contented with the House of Hanover that the Jacobites had no chance of bringing back the Pretender. As Walpole grew old, however, there was a great outcry for war against Spain. The merchants complained that the Spaniards would not let them trade freely with the Spanish colonies in South America. Very unwillingly Walpole gave way

to their clamour, and in 1739 declared war. But he took little pains to carry it out vigorously. The outcry against him was renewed, and in 1742 he was driven from office.

Before Walpole's fall the war with Spain had grown into a war with France also. The struggle was called the War of the Austrian Succession. England supported the claim of Maria Theresa, a young girl, to the Austrian Succession throne, while France and other powers wanted to divide her dominions between them.

One result of the war was that the Jacobites again rose in revolt against the House of Hanover. James,the Old Pretender, was still alive, but the real leader of the Jacobites was now his son,

Charles Edward, called the Young Pretender. Charles Edward was good-looking, bright, and enthusiastic,and a much better leader of men than his melancholy father. In 1745 he landed in the Highlands. The Highlanders gave him a hearty welcome, and he was soon master of nearly all Scotland. His progress was the more rapid since most of the British army was abroad, waging war against the French. But those soldiers sent out against him fought very badly. At

the battle of Preston Pans, near Edinburgh, King George's troops ran away disgracefully from the fierce rush of the Highlanders' charge.

The Young Pretender saw that his best chance of succeeding was to be bold. He now invaded England, hoping to march to London and drive King George from his throne. He advanced

through Cumberland, Lancashire, and Derby-shire, as far as Derby ; but very few of the English joined him, and he dared not proceed further south. He retreated rapidly to Scotland, and was soon driven to the extreme north. At last, in 1746, he was defeated by the king's second son, the Duke of Cumberland, at Culloden Moor, near Inverness. The Highland

revolt was now cruelly put down by Cumberland, who behaved so brutally that people called him the butcher. Charles Edward escaped to the Continent. He lived for many years more, but soon lost all influence. On his death, and that of his brother, the unfortunate House of Stuart came to an end. Henceforth the House of Hanover remained firmly established on the British throne.

The period after the fall of Walpole was a dull time. The Whigs continued to govern the country. Most of the Whig leaders were great noble- men or landlords. They cared very little

about the common people, and wanted to make as few changes as they could. They kept

themselves in power by bribery. Yet, with all their faults, they did not govern the country badly. They were clear-headed, sensible men of business, but there was nothing noble or inspiring about them. A good example of this class of statesmen was the Duke of Newcastle. He was a fussy, meddlesome, incompetentman. If he had not been a duke he would never have won a high position for himself. A man such as he was managed well enough in time of peace ; but soon great war was to break out, and Newcastle made it clear that he was not clever enough to guide the fortunes of the country in troubled times.

Fortunately, England had a far greater statesman than Newcastle. This was William Pitt. Pitt did not belong to one of the "great Whig" families, and was never a good man of business. But he was wonderfully eloquent, high-minded, and patriotic. He was careless about money and his own interests, and had a lofty scorn for the bribers and wirepullers. He was extremely popular with the mass of Englishmen, who called him the Great Commoner. In a dull and

selfish age he did for English politics what was being done for religion in England at the same time by JohnWesley, the famous founder of the Methodist movement.

Unluckily, Pitt had not so much influence with the House of Commons as with the people. In those days the members of the House of Commons were chosen by very few electors, A great number of people had no votes for members of Parliament, and many members owed their seats in Parliament to the influence of great Whig nobles like Newcastle, who forced all the tenants on their estates to vote for the man they wanted. So it followed that, while Pitt had great power over the people, Newcastle had more authority over the Parliament.

A war now broke out called the Seven Years War. It began with a struggle between the French and English for mastery in two remote parts of the world, America and India. Since the days of James I, the English had set up colonies on the eastern coast of North America.

They were very prosperous. But the French had also colonies in North America. The chief of these was Canada, which lay along the great river St. Lawrence, while the next important was Louisiana which was situated on the Lower Mississippi. The French now formed a scheme for joining Canada and Louisiana together, and thus shutting up the English on the east coast. War thus broke out in the backwoods of America, and the French got the better in all the early fighting.

There was a similar struggle between the English and French in India. Up to now- India had been ruled by native princes, and the English and French only went there as traders. But the

French joined with the native princes against the English, and soon pressed them very hard. Their ally, the Nabob of Bengal, captured the English settlement of Calcutta. He shut up all his prisoners in a room called the Black Hole of Calcutta. In one hot night nearly all the prisoners perished from the heat and overcrowding.

As the result of these troubles. war broke out in 1756 between England and France. Newcastle was then Prime Minister, but was quite incompetent to carry on the war, and disasters fell upon the English in every part of the world. Newcastle then made an alliance William Pitt. who joined with him in the ministry in 1757. Pitt's faith, courage, and enthusiasm soon changed the whole face of affairs.He had a wonderful power of choosing the right men to lead the fleets and armies, and of inspiring them with his Own faith in the greatness of England. He sent one of his favourite soldiers, General Wolfe, to conquer Canada from the French. In 1759 a battle was fought outside Quebec, the capital of Canada. Though Wolfe was slain in the fight, the French were utterly beaten, and all Canada was soon conquered. Equal success was made in India. In 1757 Robert Olive, the first of the great men who have won India for Britain, defeated the cruel Nabob of Bengal at the Battle of Plassey. All Bengal was soon conquered, and thus the British Empire in India began. Thanks to the genius of William Pitt, the Seven Years' War, which had begun so badly for England, had now become the most glorious and successful war that the English had fought since the days of Marlborough. It was still going on when George II died in 1700, and was succeeded by his grandson George III.