**The years 1760 - 1820**

George III was born in England, and was proud of it. He was not very quick, but he was very persevering. He wanted to enjoy as much power as the law allowed him. He saw how the Whigs under George I and GeorgeII had taken away many of the powers that the king had once enjoyed. For that reason he hated the Whigs bitterly, and drove them from office as soon as he could. So blindly did he dislike the Whigs that he could not see that there was any difference between Pitt and Newcastle. In fact, he was more afraid of Pitt than Newcastle, because Pitt was so much more liked by his people. He ended the war with France in 1763. He was in such a hurry to make peace that he did not win for Britain all that she might have got. Nevertheless, it was a very profitable peace for the country, By it England kept Canada and the chief power in India.

 George's chief desire was to choose his own ministers freely. Since the Revolution of 1688 the kings had gradually been forced to take as their ministers the leaders of the party that was strongest in the House of Commons. George wished to go back to the earlier custom, and

have whatever ministers he thought best. He went to work in a very clumsy way to carry out his ideas. But he took care to keep the Whigs out of office as much as he could. At last George found a minister to please him in Lord North, the first Tory Prime Minister since Queen Anne's time. North remained in power from 1770 to 1782.

The great event of Lord North's ministry was the revolt of the American colonies. The Seven Years' War had cost England a great deal, and George thought that the Americans ought to pay something towards it. He therefore passed a Stamp Act in the British Parliament which called on the Americans to pay certain stamp duties to the English Government. The Americans were very angry at this. They said that they ought not to betaxed by the British Parliament,because they sent no members to it. They raised such an outcry that the law taxing America was repealed. But before this was done grave troubles had taken place. The Americans levied troops, and rose in revolt against King George. War broke out in 1775, and immediately afterwards the Americans issued a Declaration of Independence. In this they declared that they would be no longer subjects of King George. The thirteen colonies all joined together, and took the name of the United States of America.

Many people in England had sympathised with the Americans when they resisted the new taxes. Among these was William Pitt, who had become Earl of Chatham. He rejoiced that America had resisted George III. But the whole blame of the war did not rest with George, Some of the American leaders were anxious from the beginning to be independent of England. Chatham grew very angry when he saw that the result of this was likely to be the break-up of the British Empire. He was still more indignant when France, Spain, and other old enemies of England took up the cause of the Americans and declared war against England. With his dying breath he declared that the British Empire, which he had done so much to make, should not be rent asunder. He soon died, and with him went the last hope of the Americans and British remaining united.

England had now to face both the Americans and half Europe as well. George III and Lord North did their best against all these enemies. They were not, however, able to carry on the war with the same spirit as Chatham had shown during the Seven Years' War. For a time England even lost the command of the seas. But a great admiral arose in “Rodney”, whose victories over the French made England mistress of the ocean once more. The war in America went on rather badly. Two English armies were forced to surrender to the Americans. When peace was made in 1783 England was forced to acknowledge the independence of the United States.

Lord North resigned office before the war was over. After a period of great trouble the king found in 1783 another minister whom he could trust. This was William Pitt, the second son of the of the great Lord Chatham. Pitt the younger was only four and twenty when George made him his Prime Minister. He was not such a genius as his father but he was eloquent, clear-headed, and business-like. He could work with others much better than his father had done. He made himself trusted by the people as well as by the king. Now that George had made Pitt

his minister he could defy the Whig lords. Pitt remained in office from 1783 to 1801, and then only resigned because he disagreed with the king. Pitt was generally called a Tory, though his views were very like those of his father, who had always been called a Whig. With North and Pitt began a long period of Tory rule, which lasted longer than the reign of George III.

England was changing very quickly during Pitt's ministry. It was for the first time becoming a great manufacturing country. Up to now Britain had been a land of farmers and merchants. The Agricultural revolution, the enclosure movments, the Scientific Revolution and other reasons played an important role in this shift. Some wonderful machines were invented which made it possible to make goods more quickly and more cheaply than in the days when yarn was spun and cloth woven by hand. Moreover, the steam-engine was for the first time made use of to drive all sorts of machines. Good hard roads were every-where built and deep canals cut. By means of these, manufactured goods could be taken easily and cheaply from the factory to the place where they could be sold. Great towns now arose wherever there was coal or iron.More money was made in England and more people lived in it. But much trouble arose in consequence of all these changes. There were many more poor, and they were badly looked after. Wages were low, and many men were often out of work. Neither masters nor men in the manufacturing districts had any voice in electing members of Parliament. The workmen in factories were often so miserable that they were not likely to stand up for England in her day of trouble. For many years, however, things looked very prosperous. Pitt understood trade and money matters better than most statesmen, and did a good deal to help forward these changes.

In 1789 the French Revolution broke out across the Channel. Up to this time France had been ruled by despotic kings, and the people had been very badly treated. At last things fell into such a desperate state that something had to be done. The French king was forced to summon a sort of parliament of his people. This body took everything into its own hands. It set up a constitutional government something like that of England ; but the new system would not work. Before long the extreme men got to the head of affairs. They beheaded the king and queen and set up a Republic. Thousands of Frenchmen were put to death. A time set in so full of horrors that it was called the Reign of Terror. And the fierce rulers of France now offered to help all nations who wished to follow the example of the French and overthrow their kings.

In 1793 England went to war against the French Revolution. England and France remained at war for more than twenty years, with only one short peace of a few months. It was a most desperate struggle. Pitt was not so successful a war minister as his father, and the French gained many victories over the English. Luckily, England was more successful by sea than by land. English victories at sea alone prevented the French crossing the Channel and invading the country. The danger grew worse as time went on. At last the most brilliant of the French generals Napoleon Bonaparte, overthrew the Revolution and made himself Emperor of the French. He forced not only France, but nearly all Europe, to obey him. He then gathered together a great army along the north coast of France, and tried hard to entice the British navy away from the Channel, so that he might cross over into England. The English fleet was then commanded by Lord Nelson, the greatest of all English admirals. Nelson was quite able to withstand all Napoleon's tricks. At last, in 1805, he fell upon the French navy and utterly destroyed it in the Battle of Trafalgar. Nelson himself was killed during the fight. But he had already won the victory . From that time onward England had such complete power over the seas that she was in no serious danger of invasion.

 Pitt had not only to fight against the French abroad. Many people in England were friends of the French Revolution and of Napoleon. The new manufacturing towns of the north were full of ignorant and suffering men who wished to follow the example of the French. Pitt put down all who attempted to adopt French ways with a firm hand. But England was too well off to make it likely that she would act as the French had done. Unluckily, the fear of the French Revolution made men afraid to make any changes at all. Pitt, like his father, had once been in favour of reforming the way in which Parliament was elected. But there was now no chance of this being carried out, since so many feared that any reform would lead to Revolution. Long after Napoleon had upset the Revolution in France, people in England were still afraid of its teachings. Pitt had a great deal of trouble in Ireland. Pitt saw that it was no longer possible to allow the Irish Protestants to go on ruling Ireland as they liked. He brought forward a scheme for uniting Ireland to Great Britain, just as England and Scotland had been united. Unhappily George III prevented Pitt carrying out his scheme in favour of freeing the Roman Catholics, which Was called Catholic Emancipation. Pitt was much disgusted, and resigned office in 1801.

After 1808 the British began to fight successfully against Napoleon by land as well as by sea. In that year Napoleon had offended the proud Spanish by making his brother Joseph Bonaparte King of Spain. The Spaniards would not receive Joseph, and England sent an army to help them. Its general was Arthur Wellesley, who soon won such great victories over the French that he was made Duke of Wellington. From 1808 to 1814 he carried on what was called the Peninsular War against the French emperor.

In 1812 Napoleon quarrelled with Russia, and invaded that country. But when winter came he was forced to retreat, and lost nearly all his army. This Russian disaster was the beginning of the fall of Napoleon. The nations that he had so long kept in slavery now rose against him, and in 1814 he was forced to resign his empire and go into banishment. In 1815 he returned to France and was restored to power. But all Europe was now united to put down the great despot. After a fierce fight, wellington defeated Napoleon in the Battle of Waterloo. The French emperor was once more driven from power, and spent the rest of his life a prisoner in the small British island of St. Helena, in the southern Atlantic. George III died in 1820, after a reign of sixty years.