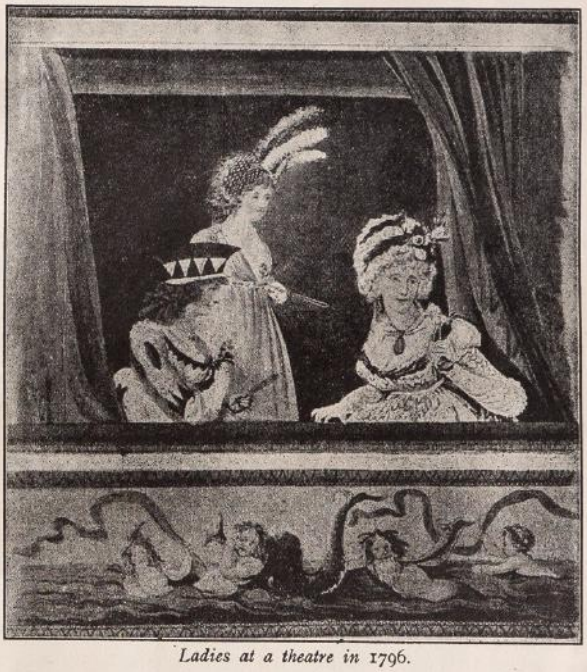
THE TWO GEORGIAN ERAS: a budget of contrasts

By A. S. Turberville

IT is obviously not altogether easy to compare the era of the first four Georges with that of King George V and our present sovereign, if only because the one lasted over 117 years (1714-1830), and the latter is not yet a quarter as long. The disparity is of course modified by the facts that the twentieth century moves much more rapidly than the eighteenth century ever did, and that the shorter period has included an unusually large number of momentous events.

One cannot start upon a brief comparison more appropriately in this Coronation year than by noting the remarkable development of the monarchy, both in public esteem and in constitutional significance. The first two Georges were notoriously unpopular, partly because they were felt to be foreigners, partly because there was nothing at all attractive in their personalities; George III, genuinely patriotic and always admirable in intention, alienated half his subjects by his conception of the royal prerogative, and by his methods of government; George IV, though not without gifts and accomplishments, brought contumely upon the throne by his heartlessness and the degradation of his private life. George V, owing much, it is true, to his two immediate predecessors, added new lustre to the Crown by his perfect appreciation alike of the limitations of our constitutional monarchy and of its great opportunities, and won the affection of his people by his sense of duty and his devotion to their interests. Our present King's resolve to follow in his father's footsteps is of happy augury for the new reign.



Ladies at a theatre in 1796.

The Tottenham Court Road turnpike in 1813.

There is no need to do more than allude to the fact—of which recent events have made everyone conscious, even if he did not appreciate it before—of the greatly enhanced significance of the monarchy as the sole remaining constitutional link, since the Statute of Westminster of 1931, between the Mother Country and the Dominions. But we may well reflect upon the complete change in the conception of empire which has made such a consummation possible. In the reigns of George II and George III we acquired immense new territories beyond the seas—in India, Canada, South Africa, Australia. But if we gained greatly, we also lost greatly. When we failed to retain the original thirteen colonies, which have become the United States of America, a severe blow was struck at the old idea of the colony as essentially a dependency, existing primarily for the benefit of the Mother Country. The result was disillusionment; and it was not until after the accession of Queen Victoria that there emerged the very different philosophy of imperial government which has culminated in the idea of the British Empire as a Commonwealth of Nations.

Almost as remarkable as the change in the character of imperial relations have been the developments in parliamentary government and in local government at home. In the reigns of the first two Georges the country was controlled by an oligarchy of great landowners, members of the peerage or of the squirearchy. They were predominant in the Cabinet and in both Houses of Parliament; they managed the countryside; indeed, they conducted nearly all the affairs of the nation. It was not until those great economic changes which we term the Industrial Revolution began to have an effect upon the size and distribution of the population and upon the popular mind that a movement for parliamentary reform arose in the reign of George III; at first encouraged by the democratic doctrines of the French Revolution, then retarded by the disgust and apprehension aroused by its excesses; and not achieving success until the carrying of the great Reform Bill two years after the death of George IV. The subsequent Reform Acts of 1867, 1884, 1918, and 1928 have enormously extended the electorate. Before the passing of the Act of 1832 there were but 435,391 voters; after the passing of the Act of 1928 there were 26,750,000.

The changes in local government have been no less remarkable. Before the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 the corporations consisted of small privileged non-elected oligarchies, administering the funds in their possession, but seldom performing any public services. In so far as these existed—the paving and lighting of streets, the provision of a water supply, &c.—they were under the authority of innumerable *ad hoe* authorities. The Poor Law System by the end of the eighteenth century had badly broken down, and was characterised now by prodigal largess, now by such callousness as the removal of paupers from parish to parish under the Acts of Settlement, which encouraged the authorities to evade their responsibilities by this means. The great Poor Law Reform Act, which brought order out of chaos, was carried four years after the death of George IV.

An outstanding contrast between the two periods we are considering is in respect of the growth and distribution of the population. In 1750, the population of England and Wales, which had long been more or less stationary, was about seven millions; by 1800 it had risen to approximately nine millions, and in 1830 it was over thirteen millions. This unprecedented phenomenon inspired Malthus' "Essay on Population," published in 1798, and suggested the alarming prospect of population increasing more rapidly than the means of subsistence. Nowadays we are concerned with the contrary problem of a rapidly declining birth-rate. In the

WHAT IS VIVISECTION? AND IS IT WRONG?

Vivisection means generally the infliction of real and serious suffering on a vertebrate living animal, that suffering being inflicted upon it for a scientific purpose and not for its own ultimate individual benefit.

We hold that this practice is immoral, and we believe that the right to take animal life carries with it the duty of taking it with the least possible cruelty.

VIVISECTION ALLOWED BY LAW

Vivisection as allowed by law in this country permits dreadful suffering to be inflicted on animals as the following examples show :—

LANCET, 1931. Monkeys were made artificially insane by inoculations and "bit themselves severely, two chewing off the end of a finger and one the whole skin of the forearm, exposing the muscles from elbow to wrist."

JOURNAL OF PHYSIOLOGY Vols. LXIV 1927 & LXXVI 1932. The spleens of dogs and cats were brought outside their bodies through a slit in the abdominal wall and fixed outside the skin, and the animals were afterwards kept alive.

THE NUMBER OF EXPERIMENTS IN A YEAR

The following figures are taken from the last *Annual Return of Experiments on Living Animals* under the Cruelty to Animals Act, 1876, presented to Parliament by the Home Office. The vivisectors acknowledge that they performed 736,716 experiments during the year. Of these, 34,437 were performed under Certificate B. This certificate, issued by the Home Office, exempts the person performing the experiments from the obligation to cause the animal on which the experiment is being performed to be killed before it recovers from the influence of the anaesthetic. Although, therefore, the law is framed to ensure that an anaesthetic is used for the original cutting operation, long-drawn-out suffering for the animal can subsequently ensue for days, weeks, or even months with complete immunity to the vivisector.

INSPECTION NO PROTECTION FROM CRUELTY

There are 340 places in this country where experiments on living animals are allowed by law to take place, and there are 1,857 licensed vivisectors, but there are only three Inspectors.

UNLIMITED TORTURE CAN BE INFLICTED

Suffering of every kind and intensity therefore can be inflicted with safety by any licensed vivisector with almost complete immunity. We do not suggest that every licensed vivisector is a cruel man, but we do say positively that under the present law, as administered by successive Secretaries of State, unlimited torture can be, and is, inflicted on animals by any licensed vivisector whose personal taste does not restrain him. That such torture is inflicted the experiments quoted above prove.

FURTHER PARTICULARS OF CRUEL EXPERIMENTS ON ANIMALS CAN BE OBTAINED FROM :—

THE NATIONAL ANTI-VIVISECTION SOCIETY

Director : CAPTAIN GUY COLERIDGE, R.N. (Retired)

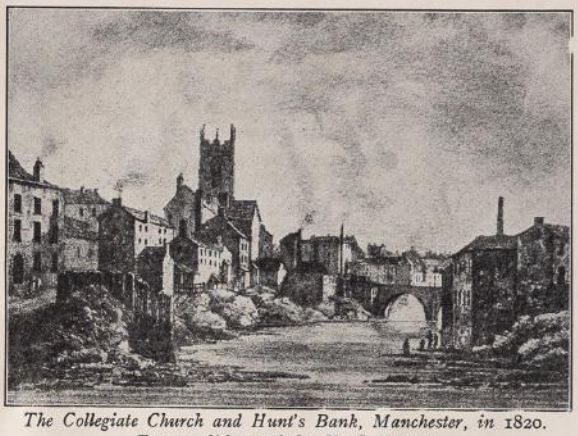
92 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, S.W. 1

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION 10/- *Telephone : Victoria* 4705 LIFE MEMBERSHIP £5

THE TWO GEORGIAN ERAS—*Continued*

days of Dr. Malthus, population was congregating most thickly where hitherto it had been thinnest—in the north, where the coal, iron, and textile industries were thriving. To-day a reverse process is taking place and the trend of industry is to the south.

When we speak of the Industrial Revolution of the later eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, we think first of all of the great mechanical inventions of such men as Arkwright, Crompton, Cartwright, Watt and Stephenson; of mass production by machinery; of factories, insufficiently lighted and ventilated, with teeming operatives; of the application of power to industry—first water



The Collegiate Church and Hunt's Bank, Manchester, in 1820. From a lithograph by H. G. James.

A highwayman seized at Covent Garden

power, then steam power—of urban areas springing up with mushroom-like rapidity; of squalid slums; of unregulated conditions of labour; of unrestricted hours of work for men, women and children. We must not assume that masters were cruel and parents callous. The solution of the numerous and difficult social problems involved in the new industrial developments was beyond the capacity of the generations that were first confronted with them. Nowadays such problems are dealt with comprehensively by the State; then State Action was anathema to the prevailing philosophy of "laisser faire," and the problems were met, if at all, by self-help and private philanthropy.

If we could magically step back into the era of the first four Georges, what are the features which would strike us most forcibly? To devotees of the cinema, perhaps the absence of cheap and ubiquitous entertainment; to those accustomed to rapid transport by motor car, rail, or air, the slowness of travel by road, even when Metcalfe, Macadam, and Telford had transformed the highways and Palmer introduced his fine new mail coaches; and of travel by rail, even when, in the year of George IV's death, Stephenson's locomotive, on the Liverpool-Manchester Railway, attained the unheard-of speed of thirty-six miles an hour. Accustomed as we are to streets thoroughly cleansed, electrically lighted, and well-policed, we might be horrified by the vision of open sewers, the feeble illumination of oil lamps (gas was not introduced till 1807), and the absence of all policing, save by a few decrepit and useless watchmen.

Probably we should be most of all offended by the far lower standard of cleanliness almost everywhere, and especially of personal cleanliness. The domestic bath existed only in the houses of the wealthy. Dr. Johnson cheerfully admitted that he had no passion for clean linen, and that he thoroughly disliked immersion. Despite their greater facilities, the aristocracy had not necessarily a higher standard than those less fortunately placed. Charles James Fox's shirts were as dirty as Johnson's, and it was said of the eleventh Duke of Norfolk that he was never properly washed except when he became so drunk that his valets could bath him without his being aware of it. Medical and surgical skill were not negligible, but they were crude by comparison with modern standards; hospitals were few, anæsthetics there were none, and there were no public health services. The absence of adequate personal and public hygiene meant the prevalence of diseases, especially those due to some kind of dirt or impurity, such as typhus and typhoid. The expectation of survival for the infant, of long life for the adult, was much smaller than it is to-day.

Such comparisons may induce complacency; but the study of history, unless it be purely superficial, breeds humility. The march of science increasingly adds to the conveniences and luxuries of life; but the material progress which we too often tend to regard as synonymous with civilization does not necessarily involve, and may even be detrimental to, intellectual and spiritual advance. The eighteenth century may not have been as much an age of reason as is commonly supposed; but it was much less prone to fanaticism than the twentieth. If the engines it built were technically inferior to those of our own time, they were fashioned for utility; it did not fabricate terrible weapons of destruction. Its wars were conducted in gentlemanly fashion by small professional forces; mankind was not oppressed by the terrible dread of that last abomination—totalitarian war. The era of the four Georges has endowed us with a superb heritage of art and literature, beyond comparison more rich than our contemporaries have so far succeeded in producing; while if we could but imbibe something of the wisdom and serenity of the eighteenth century, our own era would become saner and happier than it is.

S. Austin. J. Davies.

THE INFIRMARY, DISPENSARY, & LUNATIC ASYLUM, MANCHESTER.

TO THE PRESIDENT THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF STAMFORD AND WARRINGTON AND OFFICERS THIS PLATE IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY THE PUBLISHERS

SCOTLAND UNDER THE GEORGES

From the Jacobites to the Industrialists

By George Blake

THE advent of the first George in 1714 lies for the Englishman well within the modern period of history. In the Scottish mind it is an event of a mediæval age. For a parallel to the thoroughness and violence of the changes that have overtaken the realm north of the Tweed during these 200 years one would have to go to the history of Japan.

The first of the " wee, wee German lairdies " was hardly on his throne when his ministers had to deal with a Jacobite rising of some gravity in the North. Thirty years later his son and many good English people got a considerable fright when, with 300 recruits from Manchester, Charles Edward led his Highland host as far as Derby, there turning back for a reason that is the matter of one of the most fascinating mysteries in British history. That turning back led directly to the smashing of the foundations of one half of the traditional Scottish system.

The motives behind the Jacobite movement were various. Apart from the natural ambition of a prince, there was the religious impulse ; apart from a generalised awareness of national identity, there was the specifically Highland desire to preserve a unique system. And it was on this Highland system that the defeat at Culloden and its brutal after-events had the most shattering effects. With the dispersal of the clans, the demilitarisation of the north, and the parcelling out of the clan lands, a big thing happened to Scotland ; whether prematurely or inevitably or not does not matter now.

There is a great deal of interest in the thought that, little more than 150 years ago, a considerable part of this island contained intact a people of blood and language and culture utterly different from those of the southern majority. The clan system had virtues that are now but imperfectly appreciated. It represented democracy in perfection. The chieftain was not the landowner, but the approved leader. The clans peopled fertile glens and straths that are now empty. When " military necessity " dictated the destruction of the system, an important member of the Scottish body politic was paralysed, and since then that member has tended to turn gangrenous. For the chieftains thereupon did become landowners, and landowning in its later phases led through the Clearances and enforced emigration, and then through the development of sporting rights, to the making of a desert where were formerly husbandry and song and, for all the war-like qualities of the Gael, a real gentility.

Oddly enough, the rape of the Highlands led to Edinburgh's enjoyment of a Golden Age as something like a true capital. There converged on the old town a Highland aristocracy of the post-Culloden order, and with it, a copious supply of cheap menial labour in the shape of uprooted clansmen. Before the country's nobility and gentry inevitably deserted to London, these joined forces with the aboriginal Lowland orders to make Edinburgh a city full of colour and vitality and interest. This was the Edinburgh of Hume and the Man of Feeling and Mrs. Rochead of Inverleith, who would sail into a drawing-room " like a ship from Tarshish." This was the Edinburgh through which Burns was bear-led to his elegant affair with Clarinda—the Edinburgh seen by Samuel Johnson in tow of the exuberant young Auchinleck, whom he could " smell in the dark " ; the Edinburgh that had its dying blaze of glory under the reign of Walter Scott, when the fourth George landed at the Pier of Leith, was suitably flattered by the Wizard of the North, and as suitably entered into the spirit of his welcome. One often fancies that a Scots version of " The Beggar's Opera " could easily and profitably be based on this lively period.

On the state of Scotland, as a whole, in the eighteenth century, there is perhaps not a better commentator than Johnson himself. The " Journey to the Western Islands " is certainly a Scottish case-book of the first importance. It indicates with clarity the crudity of the social life as an Englishman saw it. It perfectly suggests the constitution of Scotland as a congeries of settlements rather than as the settled home of a coherent nation ; with farming in a primitive state and the Kirk in still effective control of the morals and manners of the people. It displays the incipient decadence of Highland life. That picture of Scotland on the eve of the Industrial Revolution is the marvellous gift to a nation of the man who affected to despise it—in poor Boswell's hearing, at all events.

The drama of Scottish destiny within the reigns of the first Georges developed swiftly. Act I abolished the clans and shattered the Highland economy ; so terribly that one island that had 600 inhabitants at the end of the eighteenth century has about a dozen now. Act II saw the birth of James Watt, the deepening of the Clyde, the development of the coal and iron of Lanarkshire, and an immense, unregulated concentration of the country's forces towards the basin of the Clyde. It meant the passing of effective power from Edinburgh to Glasgow. It meant a further denudation of the Highlands ; even an importation of Irish and Poles and Lithuanians. Unhappily, it has also meant in the long run a fantastic disbalance of population and a Commissioner for the Special Areas in Scotland.

The original Glasgow was rather a charming little pocket of isolated activity —a glorified market town, with a good, untouched Cathedral on the hill, and a fine old College in the High Street ; a town which even an observer so recent as Daniel Defoe could describe as " the beautifullest little city in Europe." For the flavour of the period Scott in " Rob Roy " is as good an authority as any. But it is a serious, and common, mistake to believe that Glasgow was elevated to eminence entirely by steam pressure. The Union of the Parliaments in 1707 gave her merchants free trading rights overseas, and by the 1770's the Tobacco Lords of Glasgow were controlling fifty per cent. of the British trade in that commodity. In 1775 they handled 57,000,000 pounds of the stuff ; and they were the monarchs of all they surveyed. It was the beginning of the new industrial plutocracy. " They were in a fair way," writes William Power, " to demoralise the nation by their wealth."

All that matters now is that the deepening of the Clyde was hastened by their urge to make Glasgow a true port. That the successful deepening coincided with Watt's discovery and the development of the steamboat, and therefore of the shipbuilding art, was accidental. It is indeed a pretty arrangement of facts that another great Georgian event—the American Declaration of Independence—ruined the Tobacco Lords and released them and their children to blacken the sky with the soot of their engines, create slums, and attract to one small corner of Scotland one quarter of that country's population.

The rest is modern history ; and if in England it is still possible to hear in the speech of a Suffolk farm labourer the echoes of the Middle Ages, the folk of the northern realm have been almost completely modernised by a proportionally excessive industrialism and a rural depopulation that is, unhappily, still proceeding at an alarming rate. For the ripe rural characters of Scott and Galt you would have to seek out a handful of upland shepherds. The Highland heroes of Stevenson and Neil Munro now know what a pylon is, and the Gaelic drolls in the Alan Breck tradition are apt to be propping up the Labour Exchange twice a week. One may even fear that the gentle, kirk-going people of the Kailyard are disappearing under the impact of broadcasting and the influence of the internal combustion engine. No amount of nostalgia, and no force of optimism, can away with the fact that two-thirds of Scotland's population are contained within the walls of only four cities.

And still, in any detached historical view, it is a wonderful story that has unfolded within the reigns of six Georges. If one resents the excessively industrial character of the modern Scotland it is just because so much character, enterprise, humour, and salt have been ironed out in the process of evolution, because so many of the centres of population have lost the flavour of Provost Pawkie's Gudetown and wear, even in the eyes of an observer so competent as Christopher Morley, a distinctly American air. Otherwise, it is possible to say soberly that the reign of King George VI opens hopefully for Scotland.

Kendals in 1836

Since William the Fourth was King

KENDAL MILNE & CO.

has served its Public

THE Pomp and Pageantry of three Coronations has passed into history since Kendals first opened its doors to the public of Manchester.

From small beginnings Kendals has gradually added department to department—service to service, until to-day everything for the Home and everything to wear await you. You will find that Quality and Value are the first considerations in every item of merchandise.

A Restaurant famed for its good food ; a modern Library ; a fully equipped Hairdressing and Beauty Salon ; the finest Fur Storage in the North ; and a large covered Car Park for the use of customers, are amongst the many services.

Built on the solid foundation of a century of steady progress, Kendals are now looking forward to an even greater future.

Below you will find an impression of the proposed new store to be built in the near future on the present site of Kendals Furnishing Building. It will be the last word in Store construction and will mean even greater facilities for Kendals ever increasing Public.

KENDAL MILNE & CO. • DEANSGATE • MANCHESTER. 3

Printed and Published for THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN AND EVENING NEWS LTD., by JOHN RUSSELL SCOTT, at the Guardian Building, 3 Cross Street, Manchester, 2. Monday, May 3, 1937