

JOHN ASHTON

SOCIAL ENGLAND
UNDER THE REGENCY,
VOL. 1 (OF 2)

John Ashton

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the Regency, Vol. 1 (of 2)**

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PREFACE

Certainly, it is not the least part of an Author's reward, for all his pains and trouble, to find that the Public appreciates his efforts, and purchases, and reads his books.

This, I am happy to say, was specially the case with one of mine, "The Dawn of the Nineteenth Century." In it I wrote of Social England in the first decade of the century, leaving off at a time when George III. was hopelessly incompetent to govern, and a Regency was in progress of establishment.

The favour which the Public bestowed upon this book emboldens me to continue it, and sketch the men and manners of the Regency. Most books of this class deal mainly with the great ones of the land, but I have only done so where necessary to illustrate the history of the times, my aim being more to delineate the social condition of England, and her people; and this work will be found perfectly reliable as history, nothing being taken at second hand, but all compiled, even down to the illustrations, from original and contemporaneous authorities.

JOHN ASHTON.

CHAPTER I

**The King's Malady – Former preparations for a Regency – King's recovery –
The King at home – His love of music – Severe frost – Lucien Buonaparte a
prisoner of war – French obstructions to commerce – A gallant merchantman**

"State of His Majesty's Health

"Windsor Castle, January 1, 1811.

"His Majesty has passed a quiet night, without much sleep, and continues the same as he was yesterday.

"H. Halford.

"W. Heberden.

"R. Willis."

Such was the announcement contained in *The Times* of 2nd of January, 1811, and, for some time, the subjects of George III. were fed with daily news of the King's health. By and by, as his mental disease was confirmed, they grew fewer, until they were furnished just once a month, and then only the very scantiest intelligence of his condition was vouchsafed to his people.

This was not the first time that his mind had given way. In the early part of October, 1788, he had decided symptoms of mental aberration, and was totally incapable of undertaking any of the affairs of State; but his physicians were hopeful of his recovery – and their hopes were gratified. But the Ministry thought differently, and, after suggesting that the Government should be carried on by a Commission, on the 30th of December, 1788, Pitt wrote a letter to the Prince of Wales, stating that his Majesty's Ministers had come to the conclusion to offer him the Regency of the kingdom under certain restrictions.

The Prince of Wales replied at once, expressing his sorrow at the occasion of his proposed elevation, but accepting the trust. Of course, this suggestion of the Government could not be acted upon without mature deliberation, and it was not until the 30th of January, 1789, that the following resolutions of the Lords and Commons were presented to the Prince of Wales – "That his Royal Highness be empowered to exercise the royal authority under the title of Regent." "That the power given, should not extend to the granting of any peerage, except to the Royal issue." "Nor to the grant of any office in reversion, or any office, salary, or pension, than during his Majesty's pleasure; or to the granting his Majesty's real or personal estates." "That the Care of his Majesty be committed to the Queen, who should nominate all persons to the offices in the household."

Needless to say, the Prince made no objections, and by the 12th of February, the Regency Bill had gone through all its stages in the House of Commons, and was ordered to be sent to the Lords. But the proverbial "slip 'twixt cup and lip" occurred. On the 19th of February the Lord Chancellor informed the House of Lords that, according to the report of his physicians, the King's health was steadily mending, and they therefore abstained from further consideration of the Regency Bill.

The physicians' hopes were fully justified; the King got better rapidly, and, on the 27th of February, his perfect recovery was announced, the prayer for the same was discontinued, and a form of prayer of thanksgiving for his restoration to health, was ordered to be read in all Churches and Chapels throughout England and Wales. Rejoicings and illuminations were the order of the day, and, on the 23rd of April, the day of general thanksgiving, the King, Queen, and Royal family went in

state to St. Paul's Cathedral, to return thanks to God for his mercy in giving the King his reason and health once more.

Years went on, and the King did not suffer from mental disease, until the year 1810, when to bodily illness of his own, was added the death of his daughter, the Princess Amelia. This shock, his intellect, perhaps never too strong, could not stand, and, although his condition was concealed for some little time from the people – under the pretence that he had a cold – the truth was obliged to come out; and we read in *The Morning Post* of October 31st – "It is with heartfelt sorrow we announce that His Majesty's indisposition still continues. It commenced with the effect produced upon his tender parental feelings on receiving the ring¹ from the hand of his afflicted beloved daughter, the affecting inscription upon which, caused him, blessed, and most amiable of men, to burst into tears, with the most heart-touching lamentations on the present state, and approaching dissolution of the afflicted and interesting Princess. His Majesty is attended by Drs. Halford, Heberden, and Baillie, who issue daily bulletins of the state of the virtuous and revered monarch, for whose speedy recovery the prayers of all good men will not fail to be offered up."

This time the Physicians held out no hopes of the King's recovery, or if they did, it was at some vague, indefinite future, the date of which none could prognosticate, and Parliament found itself in a serious situation. It met on the 1st of November, to which date it had been prorogued, only to find that there was no King to open the session, and no Commission for so doing had been named. So, in default of any other recognized authority, the Lord Chancellor, and the Speaker, took the lead in their different assemblies, and, after vainly trying to find out how they should act, an Order in Council cut the Gordian Knot, adjourning Parliament to the 29th of November, a decision which was confirmed in the House of Commons by a majority of 285. When they again met, they, after discoursing of the King, set to work to concoct a Regency.

But that may wait for a while, and come in its proper place, for King George is passing away from this history, and the full blaze of the Regency leaves very little room for the shadow of the old King to show: yet, before he disappears altogether, it may be as well if we can recall a reminiscence of him, as late as possible, before his sad malady overtook, and mastered him. Not in his public capacity, but as it were *en famille*, let us see him; and we get a good view of him through the medium of the Rev. John Evans, LL.D., of Islington, who wrote "An excursion to Windsor," and thus describes what he saw on the 10th of July, 1810: —

"We entered Windsor about six o'clock, and, having refreshed ourselves at the inn with a cup of tea, hastened to *The Terrace*, where we found a considerable portion of genteel company. Intent on the gratification of a laudable curiosity, we felt peculiarly happy in joining them on this occasion. It was seven o'clock, and the good old King soon made his appearance with his accustomed punctuality.

"A little door in the Castle was thrown open, when two attendants were seen leading this *venerable personage* with great care down a flight of steps till he safely alighted upon the terrace. Then the Princesses *Elizabeth* and *Augusta*, who were present, accompanied him, one on each side, or rather took hold of his arm; they paced backwards and forwards for an hour, two bands of music playing alternately; and the fine tones of the several instruments being heightened by the stillness of the closing day.

"The King was dressed neatly: blue coat with gilt buttons and blue star, white waistcoat and small clothes, white stockings, and gold buckles in his shoes. His hat somewhat resembled that worn by the clergy, with the addition of a gold button and loop, mounted by a black cockade, which marks him out conspicuously from the rest of the company. His Majesty looked ruddy and full; his voice

¹ The Princess Amelia, when dying, ordered a valuable stone she possessed, to be set in a ring, for a keepsake of her to her father, and so urgent was she that it might be made before she died, that a jeweller was sent for, express, from London to make it. It contained a lock of her hair, and, on it, was her name, and, "*Remember me when I am gone.*"

is sonorous, and he converses with cheerfulness, though, when he attempts to speak rather hastily, it is with hesitation.

"His want of sight is very apparent, for his hat is drawn over the upper part of his face, and he feels about with his cane, especially ascending or descending a step. It is affecting to see him, though he appears cheerful when he speaks, and seems as if nothing were the matter with him. He now and then stops to converse either with the officers, or with the nobility and gentry. We saw him several times on the Terrace; but on this first evening there was a more than ordinary degree of conversation. He was full of inquiries respecting the *installation* of Lord Grenville as Chancellor of the University of Oxford, which had taken place during the week. He inquired also about the *balloon* in which Mr. Sadler² had ascended on this occasion, and was particularly anxious to know how long it continued in the air, and where it had alighted; Harrow-on-the-Hill was mentioned, though the spot had not then been ascertained. He conversed at all times on a variety of topics with the utmost freedom and even hilarity.

"This daily promenade must benefit both his mind and body: while the presence, as well as the attention, of so many of his subjects, some coming from distant parts, must yield him no inconsiderable gratification. The countenances of the Princesses are replete with good nature, and most exemplary is their attention to their aged parent...

"It should be mentioned that the King, in returning back to his apartments in the Castle, passing by the *band of musicians* on the steps, always touched his hat, and said, in an audible voice, '*Gentlemen, good night, I thank you.*' Indeed, his Majesty, during the whole time, seemed in perfect good humour with all the company.

"The only etiquette observed on *the Terrace* is, that when the King passes, the ladies and gentlemen withdraw on either side, the latter merely uncovering the head; bows and curtsies being dispensed with on the occasion. A police officer is in attendance, who, with a little switch, keeps individuals from pressing too much on the *King*, when he stops to converse; but this is done with the greatest urbanity. Owing to a slight indisposition, the Queen did not make her appearance on the Terrace; but we saw her on other occasions. His Majesty was regular in his attendance at Chapel every morning, and seemed seriously engaged in his devotions.

"About ten o'clock, when the weather is fine (Sundays excepted), the King rides out on horseback; and, considering his age, he mounted his horse with wonderful agility. He is, in his ride, accompanied by two of the Princesses, who have some of their *maids of honour* following in a landau or phaeton. The King has several attendants, two of whom are close by him, and one has a little stick, the crooked end of which catches that part of the bridle nearest the curb, so that should the animal, on which his Majesty rides, stumble, instant assistance might be given."

Music was his greatest solace from his latter seizure till his death, and we learn of him in the beginning of the year 1811 (*Morning Chronicle*, Jan. 8th): —

"Windsor, January 6th, — The Bulletin of to-day is of a very cheering nature, and for these five days past his Majesty has been gradually improving, both in mental and bodily strength. His Majesty has become more tranquillized in his general deportment, and there are daily visible signs that his malady is on the decline. His Majesty now uses the sitting-room in the Blenheim Tower; takes his meals regularly, and at intervals amuses himself with playing the most familiar tunes on the harpsichord, with a correctness surpassing the most sanguine expectations. As a striking proof of this fact, on some very recent occasions, when his Majesty, in consequence of his defective sight, struck a wrong key, he instantly corrected the error by modulating the tune, and finishing it with his accustomed science and judgment...

"The Harpsichord on which his Majesty plays, formerly belonged to the great Handel, and is supposed to have been manufactured at Antwerp in the year 1612. Handel's music is highly esteemed

² Then the principal Aëronaut in England.

by his Majesty, and many of his most favourite compositions are now played by his Majesty from recollection." And so let us leave him, for a while, to be soothed by his music.

The year 1811 came in bitterly cold, and sad were the tales told in consequence. As to the Coaches, they suffered severely. On the 4th of January the fall of snow was so great, that the Northern roads were all but impassable, and the Mail Coach from Boston could only be dragged four miles through the snow, the guard having to do the best he could, on horseback, with the mails, and the mails from London to Boston had to be conveyed in the same manner. The Leicester Coach, on the way to Stamford, was upset in the snow at Burton-Lazarus, and several of the passengers were hurt; the Carlisle Mail was dug out of the snow at Tickencote, and with difficulty got to Stamford with eight horses, three hours later than usual; but it could not proceed further than Thornhaugh, whence the guard was obliged to take the letter-bags on horseback. Three coaches from the north lay all night in the snow about a mile from Stamford, and as many near Winsford. Oh! for the good old Coaching days! when Pulman's Cars were unknown, and people with slender purses had to ride outside in all weathers – and it was recorded that on the 5th of January, 1811, on the arrival of the Carlisle Coach in London two poor women, outside passengers, were frozen to death. The Coachman supposed them to be asleep, and did not attempt to disturb them until he arrived at his destination, when they were found stiff in death. Two persons near Lincoln perished in the snow, and the cold was so great, even so far south as London, that the Thames was nearly frozen over.

Tender hearts felt for the Poor Debtors, and those in Ludgate record their thanks to M. A. Taylor, Esq., M.P., for his annual benevolent gift of two Chaldrons of Coals, 158 lbs. Beef, and 23 half-peck loaves; and to Alderman Wood, the friend of Queen Caroline, for his present of £5; and an unknown donor for 40 lbs. Beef. The poor debtors in Newgate had very many large sums to acknowledge, and were duly grateful for the kindly and thoughtful assistance thus rendered them. Sad, however, is it to find that during the Severe Frost, on the 7th of January, a poor prisoner died of Cold and Want in the Marshalsea prison. At this time we learn there were about 320 debtors in Newgate alone; and those that were without private means, had to subsist on the prison allowance of 2d. worth of bread (the quartern loaf being, in January, 1s. 3d.), so that their relief during the inclement winter, was a work of necessity, as well as of benevolence.

In 1811 was living amongst us an illustrious Prisoner of War, no less than Lucien Buonaparte, Prince de Canino (his son, Prince Louis Lucien still lives at Norfolk Terrace, Bayswater), who, not altogether falling in with his brother's policy, was on his way to the United States, when, on the 1st of August, 1810, he was taken and made prisoner by a British Cruiser. After some detention at Malta, he was sent on to England, and Ludlow was assigned as his place of detention; and there he lived for some time, inhabiting Dinham House, the seat of the Earl of Powis. He seems to have accepted the inevitable cheerfully, according to *The Times* of Friday, January 4th: —

"Lucien Buonaparte arrived at Ludlow about 4 o'clock on the evening of Wednesday, sen'night, accompanied by his nephew, an interpreter, secretary, Mr. Mackenzie, and a few servants. He drove to the Angel Inn where he dined and slept. On Thursday morning he walked about the town, viewed the Castle, and some of the principal streets; but, as the weather was rather unfavourable, and public curiosity great, he did not stay out long. On that evening, one of the Winter Dancing Assemblies took place, which Lucien, his nephew, and some of his friends attended. Some of the latter danced, but Lucien did not. He continued in the room till supper was announced; he then attended Countess Powis to the supper rooms, and sat at her Ladyship's right hand during supper: after which he returned to the ball and card rooms. On Saturday he went to Stone-house, a seat of Lord Powis, about five miles from Ludlow, where Lucien is in future to reside, and from thence proceeded to Walcot, the principal residence of his Lordship, where he stayed a day or two, and returned to Ludlow."

The next day's *Times* says: "Madame Lucien Buonaparte, with her family, and a numerous train of servants, occupying, in all, four carriages, arrived at Ludlow on Wednesday; having performed the journey from Plymouth, in a week. Lucien removed, on the preceding day, from the Inn to Lord

Powis's residence in that town, called Dinham-house; his Lordship's seat in the neighbourhood (Stonehouse) being found too small for the reception of so numerous a suite."

In another Newspaper the ladies are described with almost American frankness: "Madame Buonaparte is extremely handsome and fascinating; Lucien's daughter, of whom so much has been said, has great claims to a genteel figure, and elegant demeanour, but she is not beautiful. The motto on Lucien's carriage is an extraordinary one, *Luceo, non uro*, 'I shine without burning,'" On this motto the following Epigram was made: —

"A Wag, requested to translate
The Motto, on the Coach of State
That sets all Wales into a wonder.
'It means,' said he, and scratcht his pole,
'It means *I shine*, with what I stole;
My foolish brother *burns* his plunder."

He afterwards, bought the estate of Thorngrove, near Worcester, and there lived until the restoration in 1814, when he went to Rome.

Some explanation is needed, to elucidate the last line of the above epigram. Napoleon was determined to do the utmost damage to England, and endeavoured to injure her in her most vulnerable part, her commerce — so, whenever the goods of Great Britain, or her Colonies, were found, they were burnt. That this was not an idle threat is shown by the following excerpts from *The Times* of January 7th and 8th: —

"A Gentleman who has arrived within these three days from the Continent, and has been present at several burnings of British manufactures, informs us that in every place where the decrees to that effect were put in force, it was done at the point of the bayonet: French Soldiers being always present to prevent tumults and disorder, which, on such occasions, manifested themselves everywhere."

"At the beginning of December, a number of French Officers of the Customs, with a detachment of the 17th regiment of Infantry, arrived at Brandenburg, to make searches for Colonial produce, which they immediately began with great strictness."

"Parma, December 12th. Yesterday, there were burnt in this town 24 bales of spun cotton, 150 pieces of cotton handkerchiefs, and 74 pieces of stuffs of the same manufacture; the whole being English manufactures, and seized by the Custom House agents on the frontiers of the department of the Po."

But, at sea, sometimes a Merchantman could look after its cargo itself, without need of the strong arm of a Convoy, as in the case of the good ship *Cumberland*, Barrett, master, bound from Quebec to England. On the 13th of January, 1811, she arrived in the Downs under a jury foremast and bowsprit, having lost both foremast and bowsprit in a heavy gale of wind off the banks of Newfoundland.

This, one would have thought, would have been sufficient excitement for one voyage, but no! when close home, between Deal and Folkestone, about seven and eight in the morning, she was attacked by four French lugger privateers, who approached under the pretence of knowing whether Captain Barrett wanted a pilot. But he was wary, and replied in the negative, whereupon the privateers declared themselves in their true colours, and poured in a volley of musketry.

Captain Barrett ordered his men down below, arming them with boarding pikes, and as soon as about twenty of the enemy were aboard, his crew attacked them, and cleared the decks, killing most of them; the others jumping overboard. Five times were they boarded, (the Frenchmen ceasing firing, for fear of hurting their own men), and five times the enemy experienced a crushing defeat. Captain Barrett then discharged three of his Carronades, loaded with round shot and Canister. One shot carried away the mainmast of one of the privateers; the second, the bowsprit of another, and doubtless

injured some of their men, as there was a great cry heard. This proved enough for "Mounseer," and the four luggers sheered off.

The Crew of the *Cumberland* was twenty-six men, and the force of the enemy was estimated at two hundred and seventy according to the statements of the prisoners taken. The loss to the *Cumberland* was one man killed, and the chief mate wounded; the French loss is set down as about sixty. And what think you was the reward of the gallant crew? "The Lords of the Admiralty have, as a mark of their satisfaction at the gallantry exhibited on this occasion, expressed their intention *to grant to each of the crew of the Cumberland, a protection from the impress, for the space of three Years.*"!!!

CHAPTER II

A Regency inevitable – Prince of Wales waited on – He undertakes the Regency – French and English prisoners of war – Roman Catholic soldiers – Roughness of manners – Passing of Regency Bill – The Prince's companions – Inauguration of the Prince as Regent – Improvement in the health of the King

All the year the Lords and Commons had been incubating a Regency, and matters were so far advanced, that on the 8th of January, the House of Commons received a message from the Lords that they had "ordered the Lord President, and the Lord Privy Seal to attend his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales with the several Resolutions agreed to by the Lords and Commons, for the purpose of supplying the defect of the personal exercise of the royal authority during his Majesty's illness, on the part of their lordships, and desired that that House would appoint a proportionate number of their members to go with them. Also that they had ordered Earl Harcourt, and Earl Morton, to attend her Majesty with the Resolution and Address agreed to by the Lords and Commons respecting the care of his Majesty's royal person, and the direction of such part of his Majesty's household as may be requisite for the comfort of his Majesty, and for the maintenance of the Royal dignity; and desired that the House would appoint a proportionate number of their members to go with them."

The Commons chose, as under, to go with the Lords to wait upon the Prince of Wales: – The Chancellor of the Exchequer (the Right Hon. Spencer Perceval), the Secretary of State for the Home Department (the Right Hon. Richard Ryder), the President of the Board of Control for the affairs of India (the Right Hon. Robert Saunders Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville), and Sir William Grant, the Master of the Rolls; whilst the members chosen to wait upon the Queen were Lord John Thynne, Lord Palmerston (Secretary at War), Lord Clive and Colonel Desbrowe.

On the 11th of January these two deputations went in great state, the one to the Prince, the other to the Queen. The Prince received them in the grand drawing room of Carlton House, standing with his Chancellor, William Adam, Esq., and Earl Moira on his right hand, the Duke of Cumberland and Mr. Sheridan on his left; whilst behind him were four Officers of his household, Mr. Tyrwhitt, Colonel M'Mahon, General Bloomfield, and General Turner.

The Lord President, as chief of the deputation, then read a paper, informing the Prince that "they were a Committee appointed to attend his Royal Highness with the resolutions which had been agreed to by the Lords and Commons, for the purpose of supplying the defect of the personal exercise of the royal authority, during his Majesty's illness, by empowering his Royal Highness to exercise that authority in the name and on the behalf of his Majesty, subject to such limitations and restrictions as shall be provided.

"And that they were directed to express the hope which the Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons entertain, that his Royal Highness, from his regard to the interests of his Majesty, will be ready to undertake the weighty and important trust proposed to be invested in his Royal Highness, as soon as an Act of Parliament shall have been passed for carrying the said resolutions into effect."

The Lord President first read and then delivered to the Prince the Resolutions, and he replied:

—
"I receive the communication which the two Houses have directed you to make to me of their joint Resolutions, on the subject of providing for 'the exercise of the Royal Authority during his Majesty's illness,' with those sentiments of regard which I must ever entertain for the united desires of the two Houses.

"With the same sentiments I receive the expressed hopes of the Lords and Commons, that from my regard for the interest of his Majesty and the Nation, I should be ready to undertake the weighty and important trust proposed to be invested in me, under the Restrictions and Limitations stated in those Resolutions.

"Conscious that every feeling of my heart would have prompted me, from dutiful affection to my beloved Father and Sovereign, to have shown all the reverential delicacy towards him inculcated in those Resolutions, I cannot refrain from expressing my regret, that I should not have been allowed the opportunity of manifesting to his afflicted and loyal subjects that such would have been my conduct.

"Deeply impressed, however, with the necessity of tranquilizing the public mind, and determined to submit to every personal sacrifice, consistent with the regard I owe to the security of my Father's Crown, and the equal regard I owe to the welfare of his people, I do not hesitate to accept the office and situation proposed to me, restricted as they are, still retaining every opinion expressed by me upon a former and similar distressing occasion.

"In undertaking the trust proposed to me I am well aware of the difficulties of the situation in which I shall be placed; but I shall rely with confidence upon the Constitutional advice of an enlightened Parliament, and the zealous support of a generous and loyal people. I will use all the means left to me to merit both.

"You will communicate this my answer to the two Houses, accompanied by my most fervent wishes and prayers, that the Divine Will may extricate us, and the nation, from the grievous embarrassments of our present Condition, by the speedy restoration of his Majesty's health."

The Queen gave an answer, couched in a similar spirit to the deputation which waited upon her.

Whilst the Lords and Commons are debating on the Regency Bill (and they took the whole of January to do it), let us see what was happening in England.

There was a subject that touched many, and all over Britain, from the highest to the lowest, and that was the British Prisoners of War in France. Truly we had many more French prisoners in England than there were English in France; *The Morning Post*, October 15, 1810, placing the numbers respectively at 50,000 and 12,000. The French prisoners here, were not treated too well; but the English prisoners in France, were treated worse, and many thousands of hearts must have yearned towards those poor Captives, and many thousands were willing to part with their means, although there were then many, and urgent, calls upon their purses, in order to alleviate their lot.

Lloyd's was then the Centre of benevolence, as the Mansion House now is; and the leading Merchants and Bankers issued an advertisement in *The Times* of January 7th, saying that their means of helping these prisoners were exhausted, and they appealed for fresh funds.

"The Committee beg to state that there are upwards of 10,000 British Prisoners in the different Prisons in France, for the most part in great distress, and that the subscription is intended for the alleviation of their sufferings in some degree, by assisting them with articles of clothing, bedding, fuel, and such other necessaries as they stand in most need of.

"They think it proper to add that the relief from the last subscription, was intrusted to the care of some of the most respectable persons detained in France, among whom were Clergymen, and several officers both Naval and Military, and that they have made so satisfactory a distribution of the funds, and rendered such particular details thereof, as to entitle them to the highest credit. The same Gentlemen, there is reason to expect, will kindly undertake the distribution of a new subscription."

Needless to say that the appeal was nobly responded to.

Scant courtesy seems to have been paid to the prisoners on either side, almost degenerating into pettiness: for, this month, an Order was issued from Whitehall, that no French women should be allowed to land in this country, who might have left France to see their husbands. The reason assigned for this very peculiar proceeding, was, that the French Government would not permit Lady Lavie and family, to join her husband, Sir Thomas, who was a prisoner at Verdun.

But pettiness in official circles seems to have obtained. Can we barely imagine, at a time when every soldier was wanted, and it might be thought that good treatment, at all events, might have allured men to the ranks, that they trod upon their tenderest feelings? Yet so it was, and it was mainly owing to the exertions of *The Dublin Evening Post* that the following "General Order" was issued: —

"Adjutant General's Office, Dublin,

"January, 1811.

"Reports having been circulated, that Catholic soldiers have been prevented from attending Divine worship, according to the tenets of their religion, and obliged, in certain instances to be present at that of the Established Church, the Commanding Officers of the several Regiments, are to be attentive to the prevention of such practices, if they have, in any instance, existed in the Troops under their command, as they are in *violation* of the Orders contained in the Circular letter of the 14 May, 1806, and, since, *repeated to the Army*. And the Catholic soldiers, as well as those of other Sects, are to be allowed, *in all cases*, to attend the Divine Worship of the Almighty according to their several persuasions, when duty does not interfere, *in the same manner, and under the same regulations*, as those of the Established Church.

"Wm. Raymond, Dep. Adj. Gen.

"N. Ramsey, Maj. Assist. Adj. Gen."

The Morning Chronicle commenting upon this, says: "So late as Friday morning last, some of the artillery, privates and drivers, quartered in Enniskillen, continued to do duty with *turned coats*, the most mortifying punishment ever inflicted on a brave man, and this, merely for having attended, *according to law*, to the Worship of their Church: but on the evening of that day, the scene was somewhat changed, the General Order arrived, and on the following morning, the officer accused of the oppression, departed for Dublin, and, on Sunday, the Catholic soldiers of the garrison were marched to the Roman Catholic Chapel, accompanied by the officers of that religion."

It would seem that all parties were trying to make the Services unpopular: the navy, especially, by impressment – and even the Militia did not escape – for in January, a number of farmers and others were summoned before the magistrates at Stafford for making deductions from the wages of those servants who were enrolled in the Militia and who had been absent for their training. It must be remembered that in those days farm labourers were hired at Statute fairs, for a twelvemonth, and the 15th clause of 48 Geo. III. cap. 3, had to be shown to those summoned, whereby they learned that no ballot, enrolment, or service under the Act should make void or in any manner affect, any indenture of apprenticeship, or contract of service. And so they had to pay their men.

They were rather a rough lot in the Country, and this anecdote is thus recorded in *The Times* of January 31, 1811: – "The following *ludicrous*³ circumstance occurred on Tuesday week at Bristol: – A couple of Jews being apprehended in the act of stealing several articles from the stables of the White Hart Inn, were hauled into the yard by two stout fellows, whither the whole fraternity of the currycomb were immediately summoned. The long beards of these disciples were then stuck together with pitch (their hands being previously tied behind them); and, whilst thus face to face, a profusion of snuff mixed with hellebore, was administered, which caused them to sneeze in such a manner, that by the frequent and violent bobbing of noses one against the other, a copious stream of blood issued from either nostril, whilst the enraged Culprits were kicking and capering about in all directions."

Chronologically, we must now turn to the Prince of Wales, who, one would imagine, was desirous of emulating the Squires of old, who spent the eve of their knighthood in vigil, prayer,

³ The italics are mine. – J. A.

fasting, and watching their armour – so before he became Prince Regent, he must needs partake of the Holy Eucharist, and did so at the Chapel Royal St. James' on Sunday the 27th of January, *the sole object of which was to obtain a certificate that he was in the Communion of the Church of England*. This public act of worship was a stately affair. The Prince was in the Royal Closet during the major portion of the service, the Bishop of London and sub-dean duly bowing to the royal presence, at their entrance. Afterwards, attended by the Earl of Moira, and Lords Dundas and Keith, he went up to the Altar, took his seat under a canopy, made his offering in a gold dish, and then the Dean, Prince, and the three Lords Communicated.

On the 5th of February the Lords and Commons had their final conference over the Regency Bill, they agreed to the interpolation of two words "and Commons," and the thing was all but finished. It only wanted what was done immediately afterwards, the Royal Commissioners to give the Royal Assent, the Deputy Clerk of the Crown to read the title of the Act, the Clerk Assistant of the Parliaments to utter the words "Le Roi le veult" – and the Prince of Wales was *de facto* Regent.

Knowing his proclivities, it was imagined that he would give places to all his *entourage*, and, accordingly, we have the caricature of "Robeing the Prince, or the Road to Preferment." To the extreme left is Earl Grey, who says "A bason of *Grey* pease soup is better than porter for your Highness," but Whitbread is of opinion that "If his Highness should want any refreshment, here's a pot of my best brewing." Grenville offers his services to the Prince. Sheridan hopes "your Royal Highness will not forget *Old Sherry*; pray allow me to brush the Royal shoes, they seem quite mouldy with lying by so long." Colonel Bloomfield is tying his garter. Whoever is holding the looking-glass exclaims, "What an honour this is! but I hope for greater." The Regent tells Sheridan, "Fear not, my friend, all in good time." Col. McMahon says, "Why! can't you see you have given him the wrong sleeve; do give it to me, you'll make a fine figure of him!" But the person holding the robe replies, "Don't push so, Col., you won't let any one come near his Highness but yourself." Mr. Adam, the Prince's Chancellor, soliloquises thus, "A dam good prospect now, however." Sir John Douglas calls out, "Who wants me?" and Col. Geo. Hanger, hopes "you won't forget poor Georgy."

Perhaps the three best known of these Companions of the Prince are Sheridan, Col. McMahon, and George Hanger. The first belongs to history, and the second will be noticed by and by. Col. Hanger came of a noble Irish family, but in his youth led a wild harum scarum life. Of course he entered the army, and whilst holding the King's Commission he fell in with, and joined a gang of gipsies, when he fell in love with a dusky beauty, and married her according to the customs of her tribe, which, probably, only involved the jumping over a broomstick. He introduced her to his brother officers, and all went well for about a fortnight, when she eloped with a bandy-legged tinker. His tastes were congenial to those of the Prince, and he made himself useful, bought horses for him, looked after his racing arrangements, and was one of his equeries, which post he kept until he was, by his extravagance, compelled to resign it. He was more than once imprisoned for debt, but turned steady after the death of his brother Lord Coleraine (called *blue Hanger*, from the colour of his garments) in 1814, when he succeeded to the title, which became extinct on his death in 1824.

Meanwhile, all was being prepared for the assumption of the Regency, Carlton House was being brushed up, chandeliers cleaned, &c., a congenial task for its occupier, the Hanoverian creams were publicly exercised, and made to pass between files of soldiers, and, at last, the 6th of February, the day appointed for the Prince to take the oaths, arrived. The following is probably an official *communiqué*, as it appears in all the Newspapers of the period: —

"The 6th of February being the day appointed for swearing in the Prince of Wales as Regent, before his taking upon himself that important office, about twelve o'clock a party of the flank companies of the grenadiers, with their Colours, the band of the first regiment, drums and fifes, with white gaiters on, marched into the courtyard of Carlton House, where the colours were pitched in the centre of the grand entrance; the band struck up 'God save the King,' and continued playing that national piece alternately with martial airs during the day, until near five o'clock. Colonel Bloomfield,

one of the Prince's principal attendants, having written to the Earl of Macclesfield, the Captain of his Majesty's yeomen of the guard, informing him it was his Royal Highness' command that as many yeoman of the guard should attend at Carlton House, as usually attended upon councils being held by the King in state, the noble Earl not being in London, the letter was opened by the person in waiting, who ordered six yeomen and an usher to attend at Carlton House, which they accordingly did; and they, together with the Prince's servants in state, lined the grand hall and staircase: several of the lifeguards men were also in some of the rooms, in a similar manner as on Court-days at St. James' Palace. About a quarter before two o'clock, the Duke of Montrose arrived, being the first of the privy councillors who attended; he was followed by all the royal dukes, and a very numerous assembly of privy councillors, who had all arrived by a quarter before three o'clock. The whole of the magnificent suite of state apartments were opened, and the illustrious persons were ushered into the Gold Room (so called from the style of the ornaments). Almost every privy councillor then in town was present – exceeding above a hundred in number.

"About half-past two o'clock, Earl Moira, of his Royal Highness' council, being also a privy councillor to the King, brought a message from the Prince to the President of the Council, Earl Camden, desiring his attendance on the Prince in an adjoining room, according to the usual form, to communicate to him officially the return to the summons, &c. The noble Earl accordingly went with Earl Moira, made the necessary intimation to his Royal Highness, and returned to the company; who, during this time of waiting were highly gratified with seeing the Princess Charlotte on horse-back, accompanied by two grooms, make the tour of the beautiful gardens in the rear of the palace. Her Royal Highness appeared to be in excellent health and spirits.

"After Earl Camden's return, the Prince approached in grand procession, preceded by the officers of his own household, and several of his own council, among whom were Earl Moira, Lords Keith, Cassilis, Hutchinson, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. M. Angelo Taylor, Mr. Tyrwhitt, Colonel McMahan, Colonel Bloomfield, General Hulse, Mr. Bicknell, &c., &c. (His Chancellor, Mr. Adam, was, by accident not present, and there was a delay, in consequence of his Royal Highness' anxious desire of his presence.) The Prince was also accompanied by all the Royal Dukes. They passed through the room where the privy councillors were assembled, through the Circular drawing room, into the grand saloon (a beautiful room in scarlet drapery, embellished with portraits of all the most distinguished Admirals who have fought the battles that have given us the dominion of the seas); and here the Prince seated himself at the top of the table, his Royal brothers and cousin seating themselves on each hand, according to seniority, and all the officers of his household, not privy councillors, ranging themselves on each side of the entrance to the Saloon. The privy councillors then proceeded, all in full dress, according to their rank – the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, the Archbishop of York, the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal, &c., &c., &c., and, as they severally entered, they made their reverence to the Prince, who made a graceful return to each, and they successively took their places at the table; and lastly, Mr. Fawkener and Sir Stephen Cottrell took their seats as Clerk, and Keeper, of the Records.

"The Prince then spoke to the following effect: —

"I understand that by the Act passed by the Parliament, appointing me Regent of the United Kingdom, in the name, and on behalf of his Majesty, I am required to take certain oaths, and to make a declaration before your lordships, as prescribed by the said Act. I am now ready to take these oaths, and to make the declaration prescribed.'

"The Lord Privy Seal then rose, made his reverence, approached the Regent, and read from a Parchment the oaths as follows. The Prince with an audible voice pronounced after him: —

"I do sincerely promise and swear that I will be faithful, and bear true allegiance to his Majesty King George.

"So help me, God.'

"I do solemnly promise and swear, that I will truly and faithfully execute the office of Regent of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, according to an Act of Parliament passed in the fifty-first year of the reign of his Majesty King George the Third (entitled "An Act" &c.), and that I will administer, according to law, the power and authority vested in me by virtue of the said Act; and that I will in all things, to the utmost of my power and ability, consult and maintain the safety, honour, and dignity of his Majesty, and the welfare of his people.

"So help me God!"

"And the Prince subscribed the two oaths. The Lord President then presented to his Royal Highness, the declaration mentioned in an Act made in the 30th year of King Charles II., entitled, 'An Act for the more effectual preserving the King's person, and government, by disabling Papists from sitting in either House of Parliament,' and which declaration his Royal Highness audibly made, repeated, and subscribed. The Lord President signed first, and every one of the Privy Councillors in succession signed these instruments as witnesses, and the same was delivered into the hand of the Keeper of the Records.

"The Prince then delivered to the President of the Council a Certificate of his having received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at the Chapel Royal of St. James, on Sunday the 27th of January, which was also countersigned, and delivered to the Keeper of the Records, who deposited all these instruments in a box at the bottom of the table.

"The Lord President then approached the Regent, bent the knee, and had the honour to kiss his hand. The Royal Dukes followed, and afterwards, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and all the rest, according to the order in which they sat at the long table, advancing to the chair on both sides. During the whole of this ceremony, his Royal Highness maintained the most graceful and dignified deportment; and it was remarked, that there was not the slightest indication of partiality of behaviour to one set of men more than to another.

"The Ceremony being closed, a short *levée* took place in the drawing room, where his Royal Highness addressed himself to the circle; and, afterwards, he gave an audience to Mr. Perceval, who had the honour of again kissing his hand as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer."

The Regent did wisely in not changing his Ministry, and Perceval turned dutifully towards the rising sun. It was said that in a visit he and the Chancellor (Lord Eldon) paid the King on Jan. 26th, that he turned his back on the King, a monstrous piece of rudeness in Court etiquette. Probably the poor old blind, half-demented Monarch never observed it; but others did, and there were several epigrams thereon, the following being the best —

"The people have heard, with delight and surprize,
That his Minister's conduct has op'd the K – 's eyes;
That with just indignation his Royal breast burn'd,
When he thought he saw Per – l's back on him turn'd;
Exclaiming, 'Thank G – d! I've recover'd my sight,
For I now see you, Sir, in your own proper light.'"

The Queen had the Custody of the King's person, but had to account to a Council consisting of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and several Noblemen of high rank, and her first Council under the Regency was held on Feb. 13th.

About this time there was an improvement in the King's health; so much so that on the 8th of February the Queen and the Princess Augusta were allowed to have an interview with him, and on the next day and for two or three others, he appeared on the Terrace and walked for a time accompanied by the Physicians in attendance upon him.

CHAPTER III

Story of a crime – The Shanavests and the Caravats – Gluttony – Smuggling bullion – A Tar at the theatre – Deposition of French Colours in Whitehall Chapel – The Duke of York reinstated as Commander-in-Chief – The Regency Fête – Account of the entertainment

And now, for a while, we will leave Royalty alone, and note anything particular that occurred – not that there ever was much general news recorded – there were no country correspondents to the London Newspapers, which were but of small size, and with very little space to spare for what we call News. As these little scraps of information will be scattered throughout this book, I may at once say that they will, perforce, have no sequence one to another except that of Chronological order.

At the beginning of February, as a dragoon was returning from duty to his quarters, which were at a small public-house called "Barndean Hut," near Petersfield, in the New Forest, his attention was arrested by the cries of some person in distress, which induced him to ride up to the spot from whence they proceeded, where his humanity was shocked on beholding a woman tied to a tree, with the tears, which her situation and suffering had produced, actually frozen to her cheeks, and, horrid to relate, quite naked, having been stripped and robbed of every article of dress, by two villains, who, afterwards, left her in that deplorable condition. The dragoon instantly cut the cords that bound her hands and feet to the tree, and, having in some measure restored her to the use of her limbs by rubbing them, wrapped her up in his cloak, placed her on his horse, and proceeded on to his quarters, where he soon after arrived; and, as he was conducting the shivering object of his care into the house, she looked through a window that commanded a view of the kitchen, and, in a faint voice, exclaimed, "There are the two men that robbed me of my all, and used me so cruelly." The soldier, in consequence, entered the kitchen and secured the men, who were the next day taken before a magistrate, and, after the necessary examination, fully committed to Winchester jail, for trial at the next assizes.

Ireland has always been a sweet boon to England ever since the Union; and faction fights used to abound. Among others were those of the Caravats and Shanavests – the Capulets and Montagues of their time; and the etymon of the names of two formidable factions, which embraced the greater part of the lower order of people in the two counties of Tipperary and Limerick, is thus given: —

It was at a trial of some of these at a Special Commission at Clonmel, and *James Slattery* was under examination.

Chief Baron. What is the cause of quarrel between these two parties – the Shanavests and the Caravats?

A. I do not know.

Q. What's the true reason?

A. I cannot tell.

Q. So, then, according to your account, I am to understand that each party attacks each other by way of defence.

Q. (*by a juror*). Were the men who were concerned in the affray in the month of August, the same that were concerned at the races of Coolmoyné?

A. They were.

Q. Do you know a man of the name of Pauddeen Car?

A. I do.

Q. He is your uncle; was not he the principal ringleader and commander of the army of Shanavests?

A. He is a poor old man, and not able to take command.

Q. (by Lord Norbury). What was the first cause of quarrel?

A. It was the same foolish dispute made about May-poles.

Q. (by the Chief Baron). Which is the oldest party?

A. The Caravats were going on for two years before the Shanavests stirred.

Q. Why were they called Caravats?

A. A man of the name of Hanly was hanged; he was prosecuted by the Shanavests, and Pauddeen Car said he would not leave the place of execution until he saw the Caravat about the fellow's neck, and from that time they were called Caravats.

Q. For what offence was Hanly hanged?

A. For burning the house of a man who had taken land over his neighbour's head.

Q. Hanly was the leader of the Caravats?

A. Before he was hanged, his party was called the Moyle Rangers. The Shanavests were called Pauddeen Car's party.

Q. Why were they called Shanavests?

A. Because they wore old waistcoats.

We occasionally hear of feats of gluttony, but, as a piece of downright lunacy, the following can scarcely be matched.

Morning Chronicle, Mar. 26th: "A blacksmith at Strout ate on Tuesday, for a trifling wager, a pint of periwinkles with the shells, in the space of ten minutes. Being desired to repeat this disgusting feat he readily did it, but he is now so dangerously ill that he is not expected to recover."

Bullion both Gold and Silver got scarcer and scarcer, so much was exported: and, early in 1810, large quantities of Dollars were stamped at Birmingham with the image and superscription of George III.; in fact, the dollars stamped in 1797 and down to 1810, inclusive, were about five millions – but they were smuggled out of the kingdom wholesale. On the 19th of March an official rise of 10 per cent. in their value took place, in the hopes that raising them to 5s. 6d. would be prohibitory to their exportation, but it was not: more still were needed, and on April 15th 300,000 dollars were sent to Boulton and Watts, Soho Works, Birmingham, to be stamped, "and the same quantity are to be forwarded in a few days." The price fell on the 25th of April to 5s. 1d. per dollar.

On the 27th of March, the Duke of Gloucester was elected Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, by a majority of 114 over his opponent, the Duke of Rutland.

We may take the following as an example of how Jack fooled away his prize-money: – "A Tar, who had just received his prize-money, lately engaged a small provincial Theatre entirely to himself: he took his seat in the centre of the pit, furnished himself with an inordinate quantity of beer, punch, and tobacco, &c., and requested the performances to commence, as no one should enter the Theatre but himself; at the close of every speech which pleased him, he presented the Actor with a glass, and when the curtain dropped, he transferred his stores to the stage, and invited the whole of the *Dram. Per.*, to partake."

Under date of the 8th of April, we read: "A very singular discovery has been made at Colchester, respecting the sex of a servant who had lived thirty years in a family in that town, as housemaid and nurse. Having lately paid the debt of Nature, it was discovered that the deceased was a man."

On the 5th of May, the Court of Common Council voted the Regent, the freedom of the City of London in *an Oak box*, but the presentation was abandoned as it was found that etiquette forbade the Regent accepting the Freedom, as he then stood in the position of Sovereign.

On March 5th the English troops under the command of General Graham, engaged and defeated a much superior French force under the command of Marshal Victor, at Barrosa in Andalusia, after a severe conflict. How thoroughly the French were then beaten, may be judged by the fact that an Eagle and twelve standards were taken from them. A sergeant of the 87th, or Prince's Own Royal Irish Volunteers, who took the Eagle, was promoted to an Ensingency, and ordered to be removed

to his own regiment, on the first Vacancy. On the 18th of May, these Colours were taken, with great military ceremony, from the Parade in St. James's Park, to Whitehall Chapel, and deposited on each side of the Altar. It was a fine sight, and three Royal Dukes, York, Cambridge, and Gloucester, were present, besides many generals, and the Spanish and Portuguese Ambassadors.

Apropos of the Duke of York, he formerly had a mistress named Mary Anne Clarke, who abused her position by selling Commissions in the Army at a cheap rate, and using her influence over the Duke to confirm them. In 1809, Mr. Wardell, M.P. for Oakhampton, brought the scandal before the House of Commons, and, although the House eventually found that there was nothing in the evidence to prove personal corruption, or criminal connivance on the part of his Royal Highness – yet public opinion against him was so strong, that he had to resign his position as Commander-in-Chief.

The Regent and the Duke of York were tied together by strong bonds of fraternal feeling, and the first important act of the Regent was to re-appoint his brother to his old position on the 25th of May. This naturally created great dissatisfaction, for his former resignation only saved the Duke from the ignominy of being cashiered, and Viscount Milton moved in the House of Commons on the 6th of June: "That upon a deliberate consideration of the recent circumstances under which his Royal Highness the Duke of York retired from the Command of the Army in March, 1809, it appears to this House that it has been highly improper and indecorous in the advisers of the Prince Regent to have recommended to his Royal Highness the re-appointment of the Duke of York to the Office of Commander-in-Chief." It is astonishing how the opinion of the House of Commons varied during two years, for this motion, when put, was only supported by 47 members – against 296.

But although he obtained the post, he had to run the gauntlet of public opinion, and which way that went is shown by the accompanying Satirical print, "The Soldier's Welcome Home!!!" where the Duke of York amid the Cheers of his friends, Buckingham, Temple, and Grenville, is leaping into the portals of the Horse Guards, the Regent standing just inside to welcome him. A figure, I presume meant to be John Walter, is pointing to *The Times* Newspaper. There were several others, but this is best suited to this book.

The next event of public note, and next to the appointment of the Prince of Wales to the Regency, it was the principal topic of conversation of the year, was a grand fête given to upwards of 2,000 of the Nobility and gentry, including the French Royal Family, the foreign Ambassadors, &c. – at an estimated cost of £15,000. For fully six weeks previously all the available weavers, tailors, mantua-makers, and milliners, were put under requisition for it, and ample work was found for architects, upholsterers, painters, carpenters, cooks, and confectioners, and diamonds were borrowed for the night at 11 per cent.

This wonderful fête took place on the 19th of June, and the company began to arrive between 9 and 10 o'clock. The whole of Carlton House, even down to the basements, which were utilized as supper rooms, was thrown open to the guests, but failed to afford sufficient accommodation, so a large portion of the garden was canvassed over and used for supper. It is impossible, in the limits of this book, to describe the luxury with which this palace was furnished, but I must be excused, as Carlton House has long been numbered with the things of the past, if I revive the description of the Throne and Ball Rooms, simply that my readers may form some idea of the splendour in which "the first gentleman in Europe" lived.

The first was hung with crimson velvet, with embroidered ornaments in pure gold, and most massive gold fringes and laces. The Canopy, superbly carved and gilt, was surmounted by four helmets of real gold, having plumes of the finest white ostrich feathers, many of them 17 inches in height. On each side the Canopy, were magnificent antique draperies; decorated to correspond with it, and forming back-grounds to two superb candelabra, after the antique, executed in the finest manner, with lions *couchant*, and other appropriate ornaments. Under the Canopy stood a grand state chair and foot-stool. The compartments of the room were decorated with the richest gold ornaments on a crimson velvet ground, with draperies enriched with gold fringes, *en suite*. There were two superb

glasses about twelve feet high, with oriental alabaster tables, on frames, carved and gilt, in the most magnificent style. On a chimney, decorated with *or-molu* foliage of the richest sculpture, was placed a large glass in a superb frame; and on the chimney-piece and tables, were fine French girandoles of *or-molu*. In this room were no other seats than stools gilt and covered with crimson velvet. Here were whole length portraits in grand gold frames, of their Majesties, the Prince Regent, and the Duke of York. Through a door at one end of this room, a temporary staircase presented itself to view, which communicated with the Conservatory; this erection was intended as a private passage for the Prince Regent and his particular friends to pass down to the head of the tables, when supper was announced. Opposite the above door, a door leading to the Throne room being removed, and a large glass being placed in the opposite door, on the further side beyond the Throne, the whole range of Candelabra, and the throne itself were reflected in it; and a striking *coup d'œil* was thereby produced.

The Ball room was decorated with Arabesque ornament, and figures, painted in the finest style imaginable, on gold grounds, in panels, between pilasters richly carved and gilt; the ceiling was decorated in compartments. The windows and recesses have circular tops, and they were decorated with rich blue velvet draperies, with massive gold fringes, lace, tassels, and ropes – the latter were likewise of gold. In the recesses were magnificent French plates of looking-glass, in gold frames, having sofas under them, richly carved and covered with blue velvet; the chairs to suit. Before each pilaster was placed a rich gilt pedestal, on which was a superb French girandole, carrying eight wax-lights, executed in *or-molu*. The two chimney-pieces of Statuary marble, were ornamented with foliage and figures in bronze and *or-molu*, and, over them, were glasses in gold frames, and French Candelabra, worthy of the *tout ensemble*.

The Prince Regent entered the State apartments about a quarter past nine, dressed in a scarlet coat, most richly and elegantly ornamented, in a very novel style, with gold lace, and a brilliant star of the Order of the Garter; and he arrived just at the same time as the dethroned Louis XVIII. – who was present as the Comte de Lille – and his family. Dancing began about half past eleven or twelve, and at half past two supper was announced. As one account says: "Upon no previous occasion, and at no Court in Europe, was ever the experiment made to sit down 2,000 of the principal nobility and gentry of a kingdom to a regular supper, as was the case at the Prince Regent's fête. The largest entertainment, at the most brilliant period of the French Monarchy, was that given by the Prince of Condé at Chantilli, to the King of Sweden, when 400 covers were laid. Here covers were laid for 1,600 under canvas, and 400 in the house."

The Times gives a short, but succinct, account of this brilliant fête, and being so, I take it, as well fitted for this book, as all accounts, more or less, are by press correspondents, and relate only to the internal arrangement and decoration of Carlton House.

"It was totally impossible, capacious as the Mansion of the Prince is, to accommodate such a number of persons in the rooms of the Mansion itself. From the central apartment of the lower range, which we have mentioned, on the south, or garden front, proceeded a broad and lofty wall, towards the southern wall of the garden, adjoining St. James's Park, which was crossed by three similar walks, from east to west, lengthwise in the garden. All these walks were closed in by walls, and covered over by awnings made for the occasion. In each of these cross walks were placed long supper tables, and at the end of each walk were communications to circular *marquées*, in which were tables containing all the necessary refreshments for the company, with space for the numerous servants, and assistants in attendance. The Great Walk from the house southward had in it six tables, leaving those spaces quite open where other walks crossed it. The intermediate spaces between these, were lawns, which communicated to the walks by suitable openings. The interior sides of these grand walks were lined with festoons of flowers, yielding the most odoriferous perfumes, and relieved by the verdant and softer beauties that more towering plants and shrubs could bestow. The arched roofs were ornamented in the liveliest manner, and, from them, were suspended thousands of lights, in all the different forms and fashions by which illumination can be produced. The *coup d'œil* of the whole, especially from the

central south entrance to the gardens, was inexpressibly delightful, and even magically impressive. The entrance was under an illuminated arch, and the southern end of the walk was filled by an immense mirror, and ornamented at the top and sides with a superb drapery, and with artificial flowers and costly candelabra: particularly the long range of supper rooms on the grand level, at the head of which the Regent sat, at the west end of the Conservatory, inspired the highest ideas of real magnificence.

"This range, beginning from the east end, comprises the new Gothic rooms, not yet entirely finished, but temporarily hung with crimson, and the Library, beautifully ornamented with marbles. In these apartments there were two rows of tables, elegantly adorned. The centre room was left open. To the west, the eating room, &c., and the Conservatory had one long table running through both. The appearance of the Conservatory was truly striking and brilliant. The architecture of it is of the most delicate Gothic. The upper end was a kind of circular buffet surmounted by a Medallion, with the initials G. P. R. lined by festoons and antique draperies of pink and silver, and partly filled by mirrors, before which, on ornamented shelves, stood a variety of vases, candlesticks, &c., of the most gorgeous gold plate. Supplied, as indeed all the tables were, with every attainable delicacy and luxury which wealth and rank could command, or ingenuity suggest, and embellished by all the art and skill of the confectioner, with emblematical devices of every conceivable appropriate description, this table displayed a still more splendid exuberance.

"In the front of the Regent's seat there was a circular basin of water, with an enriched Temple in the centre of it, from whence there was a meandering stream to the bottom of the table, bordered with green banks. Three or four fantastic bridges were thrown over it, one of them with a small tower upon it, which gave the little stream a picturesque appearance. It contained also a number of gold and silver fish. The excellence of design, and exquisiteness of workmanship could not be exceeded; it exhibited a grandeur beyond description; while the many and various purposes for which gold and silver materials were used were equally beautiful and superb in all their minute details.⁴

"The Company, who continued to arrive from nine till half-past twelve, were ushered into the state rooms, and soon filled the house. The hall was crowded with Peers and Peeresses, and was made the same use of, as the apartments of State. Under the grand arched doorway between the halls, was a most elegant scarlet and gold drapery, after the antique.

"The male part of the nobility and gentry, were habited in court suits, many richly embroidered, or in naval and military uniforms. The waving plumes, the elegant, variegated dresses, the sparkling diamonds, and, still more, the native beauty and grace of the ladies, gave a sort of enchanting perfection to the whole of this brilliant courtly exhibition. The *Vieille Cour de Versailles*, with all its proud pretensions, could never have more attractively set forth the elegant fascinations of fashionable life, and exalted rank.

"The upper servants of his Royal Highness' household wore a rich costume of dark blue, trimmed with very broad gold lace; the others wore their state liveries. A considerable number of the Yeomen of the Guard attended in different parts. The assistants, out of livery, were dressed uniformly, in black suits with white vests. Two of the bands of the Guards, in state uniforms, played various airs throughout the night. Parties of the Foot-guards protected all the immediate avenues, and the Horse-guards were stationed in Pall Mall, St. James's Street, St. James's Square, Piccadilly, &c. Everything was managed, with the assistance of the Police, with unexampled care and convenience."

⁴ Nearly a waggon load of the family plate of the late Sir William Pulteney decorated the Tables at Carlton House. It is said that the weight of the whole of the gold and silver plate used on this occasion, was Six Tons.

CHAPTER IV

Ladies' dresses at the Fête – The banquet – Carlton House thrown open to the public – The crush – Sir F. Burdett's action against the Speaker – Relief of British Prisoners in France – Scarcity of guineas – Lord King and his tenants – Stories respecting the Currency

The ladies had been requested to dress themselves in the productions of British industry, and some of their costumes were truly magnificent. They are so uniformly beautiful, that in the examples I give, I take them as they follow, and make the extracts for the sake of their brevity.

The Marchioness of Downshire wore a petticoat of white satin, trimmed at the bottom with a Spanish net of embossed silver, over which was a tunic of the most beautiful silver stuff, of Irish manufacture, on which was delicately woven the shamrock: over the shoulders were superb epaulettes of embossed Spanish silver. The tunic was laced with diamond chains, and fastened in front with large diamond brooches. Her ladyship's ear-rings were the largest diamonds at the fête, to which there was a corresponding necklace, and a profusion of diamond ornaments.

The Marchioness of Sligo. A dress of white satin, with a superb border of brilliant embroidery round the train; a robe richly embroidered in silver shamrock, round which was an elegant, and brilliant border, to correspond with the dress; diamond stomacher, armllets, necklace, and brooches. Head-dress, diamonds and ostrich feathers.

The Marchioness of Tavistock. Splendid dress, embroidered in white and gold.

The Marchioness of Hertford. White satin dress, embroidered in white and gold.

The Marchioness of Stafford. Violet satin dress, richly embroidered in gold.

The Marchioness of Exeter. White satin, embroidered in gold.

The Marchioness Cornwallis. White satin dress, richly embroidered with amethysts.

The Marchioness Waterford. White satin dress, richly embroidered with silver.

The Countess of Cavan. A dress of white and silver tissue, with a superb border of prominent silver jonquils; body and sleeves splendidly ornamented with diamonds. Head-dress, diamonds and ostrich feathers.

Needless to say, this grand fête was made fun of – and so we see in "Gudgeon fishing à la Conservatory," the meandering stream down the centre of the Regent's table is caricatured, and the fair ladies are provided with rods and lines. The artist has taken liberties with his subject – the Prince, for instance, sat on a plain mahogany chair, and the "stream" was banked up with moss and flowers. The Earl of Moira, and Sheridan, are taking wine together, and on the right of the Regent sits the Duchesse d'Angoulême. A person in plain evening dress is in the extreme right, and points to a paper on the ground, "Admission to John Bull to look at the Gold."

This was the subject of another caricature, called "The Regency Fête, or John Bull in the Conservatory." This shows John Bull, his wife, three men and one woman looking at the royal table loaded with gold plate and wine, a beef-eater and a butler guarding the plate on the table and on the buffet behind the royal chair. Says John Bull (scratching his head) to his wife: "Why, odd Zookers! this is marvellous fine indeed. Oh, Nan! how we should enjoy a rasher on one of they monstracious beautiful plates. Why, now I think I shan't grumble to pay three or four Bank Tokens towards this grand treat; methinks I should just like a nippikin or two." Mrs. Bull: "Oh, John! one of our milk-white chickens roasted by myself by our wood fire would be luscious indeed." The speeches of the others are not worth reprinting.

Needless to say the privilege of visiting the scene of festivity was eagerly embraced by the public, and they came in such shoals, that the Horse Guards had to keep order, and it was feared some accident would occur. And sure enough, on the last day, the 26th of June, there was a pretty scrimmage. This is *The Times* report: —

"Yesterday being the last day that the public were permitted to view the interior of Carlton House, the crowd, from an early hour in the morning, was immense; and, as the day advanced, the scene excited additional interest. Every precaution had been adopted to facilitate the entrance of the visitors. The Horse-guards paraded in front of the House, and were stationed at both ends of Pall Mall, and the various streets leading from it. The pressure to gain admittance was so great, that early in the day several females fainted away; many lost their shoes, and endeavoured to extricate themselves from the crowd, but this was quite impossible. The gates were only opened at certain intervals, and, when this was the case, the torrent was so rapid, that many people were taken off their feet, some with their backs towards the entrance, screaming to get out. The scene, at last began to wear a still more serious aspect; when it was deemed expedient that some measure should be resorted to, to prevent farther mischief. Lord Yarmouth, and the Duke of Gloucester appeared, and announced to the public that the gates would not be again opened: and that, for the sake of preventing the loss of any lives, they had to express the strongest wish that the persons assembled would cease from endeavouring to gain admittance. This, however, had not the desired effect; as many, who probably were ignorant of what had happened, remained, in the anxious hope of being admitted at last.

"The greatest pressure to obtain admittance took place about half-past two o'clock. About one, the crowd in the inside of Carlton House had accumulated so much, that it was found necessary to shut the gates. The line of carriages now extended the whole length of Pall Mall, up to the very top of St. James's Street, and, as there had been a complete stoppage for above half an hour, hundreds of ladies left their carriages, and hastened on foot towards the gates of Carlton House. At this time you might see ladies and gentlemen coming out of the crowd covered with perspiration, and unable any longer to bear the pressure. Those who thus made their retreat in time will be able to congratulate themselves on their superior prudence.

"Hitherto all was comparatively well, and the scene rather afforded amusement than excited alarm. But the case was most materially altered when the gate of entrance was next opened. It became exactly like some of those rushes at our Theatres, which have sometimes produced such melancholy consequences. Those behind, irresistibly pushed on those before, and of the number of delicate and helpless females who were present, some were thrown down, and, shocking to relate, literally trod upon by those behind, without the possibility of being extricated. When, at last, the crowd got inside Carlton House gates, four females were found in a lifeless state, lying on their backs on the ground, with their clothes almost completely torn off. One young lady, elegantly attired, or, rather, who had been so, presented a shocking spectacle; she had been trodden on, until her face was quite black from strangulation, and every part of her body bruised to such a degree, as to leave little hopes of her recovery: surgical assistance was immediately had, but her life was not expected to be saved. An elderly lady had her leg broken, and was carried away in a chair; and two others were also seriously hurt, but, on being bled, were restored to animation. One of them was able to walk home, the other was led by two men.

"The situation of almost all the ladies who were involved in this terrible rush was truly deplorable; very few of them could leave Carlton House until furnished with a fresh supply of clothes; they were to be seen all round the gardens, most of them without shoes or gowns; and many almost completely undressed, and their hair hanging about their shoulders. The crowd outside, at one time, literally carried away the Horse-guards for several paces, when the animals became restive to an alarming degree, rearing on their hind legs, and beating down all within their reach with their fore ones: several women were trodden under foot, and received considerable injury; and five or six men were so overcome, that they fainted, and were carried off."

The Morning Chronicle of the 29th of June says: "The number of stray shoes in the courtyard of Carlton House, on Wednesday, was so great, they filled a large tub, from which the shoeless ladies were invited to select their lost property. Many ladies, however, and also gentlemen, might be seen walking away in their stockinged feet. About a dozen females were so completely disrobed in the squeeze, they were obliged to send home for clothes, before they could venture out in the streets, and one lady was so completely disencumbered of all dress, a female domestic, in kind compassion, wrapped her up in an apron."

On the 6th of April, 1810, Sir Francis Burdett was, by a majority of 38 Members of the House of Commons, sentenced to be committed to the Tower, for a breach of privilege committed by him against the house, in an address written by him in *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register* of March 24, 1810: "Sir Francis Burdett to his Constituents, denying the power of the House of Commons to imprison the People of England." After some trouble, and a great deal of rodomontade on his part, he was safely lodged in the fortress – after which a slight affray took place between the mob and the troops in which one of the former was killed, and eight wounded."⁵

The demagogue did not like the position in which he found himself, and breathed fire and fury. He would bring actions against the Speaker, the Sergeant-at-Arms, and the Earl of Moira, who was then Governor of the Tower. He was released, on the prorogation of Parliament, 21st of June, 1810, and on March 8, 1811, he brought an action against the Speaker (Abbott) for a trespass and assault in breaking open his house on the 6th of April, 1810. The Speaker pleaded justification, and the case was tried on the 19th of June, when the jury found a verdict for the defendant, thereby admitting and enforcing the right of the House of Commons to commit for breach of privilege.

Mention has already been made of a fund started by a number of Merchants, Bankers, and others of the City of London, at Lloyd's, for the "Relief of British prisoners in France," which, on the 29th of June, reached about £54,000. But their practical charity did not end here, for there was also another fund begun "for Relief of Portuguese sufferers during the French Invasion," which, on the 21st of June, amounted to nearly £52,000. The West End, evidently tried to emulate the City, and at Willis's Rooms, under the presidency of the Duke of York, there was a "Fund for the Relief of the Unfortunate Sufferers in Portugal – who have been plundered and treated by the French Armies with the most unexampled barbarity." By June 29th this had reached £15,000.

Silver, as we have seen, had got, to use a mercantile phrase, "a little easier," but the Guinea! it was almost as scarce as Russian gold coins are now, and, in spite of every effort, it was quoted at a premium, and yet was exported. Here is a Police report, anent it: "Mansion House, 23rd of April. James King, guard of the Yarmouth mail coach, was brought up for examination, upon a charge of purchasing eight guineas, the Coin of this realm, at a price considerably beyond their current value. The Charge was brought by Mr. Nalder, the Under Marshal of the City of London; who, in consequence of information received from the Treasury, that there were persons about town employed as agents to purchase guineas for exportation, made diligent enquiry, and having found out the defendant, he marked eight guineas, and went with Sayer, the Bow Street officer, who sold those guineas to the prisoner, and received for each £1 5s. 6d. Mr. Nalder shortly afterwards took the prisoner into custody, found the marked guineas upon him, and brought him before the Lord Mayor; the transaction being against the Statute of the third of Edward III., which subjects offenders to the penalty of twelve months' imprisonment, and fine at the discretion of the Court. The defendant was admitted to bail." Ultimately he was fined forty shillings.

On the 6th of May the officers rummaged a smack called the *Union*, and found, in a hole between the timbers, seven canvas bags containing 4,500 guineas, making in all 11,128 guineas found in that vessel.

⁵ See *The Dawn of the Nineteenth Century*, by John Ashton, 1 vol. edit., pp. 166 to 176.

The greater part of May was taken up by the discussion in the House of Commons of the Report of the Bullion Committee, which recommended the resumption of specie payments by the Bank of England as speedily as possible. This was negatived, on the ground that the Bank paper was not depreciated – but, as a matter of fact, it was. *Vide* the following letter from Lord King to his tenants: —

"By lease, dated 1802, you have agreed to pay the annual rent of – in good and lawful money of Great Britain. In consequence of the late depreciation of paper money, I can no longer accept of any bank notes at their nominal value in payment of your rent in the legal coin of the realm; at the same time, having no other object than to receive payment of the real intrinsic value of the sum stipulated by agreement, and being desirous to avoid giving you unnecessary trouble, I shall be willing to receive payment in either of the manners following, according to your option —

"1st. By payment in guineas.

"2nd. If guineas cannot be procured, by a payment in Portugal gold coin, equal in weight to the number of guineas requisite to discharge the debt.

"3rd. By a payment in Bank-paper of a sum sufficient to purchase (at the present market price) the weight of standard gold requisite to discharge the rent. The alteration of the value of paper money is estimated in this manner.

"The price of gold in 1802, the year of your agreement, was £4 per oz.; the present market price is £4 14s., owing to the diminished value of paper – in that proportion, an addition of £17 10s. per cent. in paper money will be required as equivalent for the payment of rent in paper.

"(Signed) King.

"N.B. – A power of re-entry and ejectment is reserved by deed in case of non-payment of rent due. No draft will be received."

This gave rise to a pictorial *jeu d'esprit* entitled "Jew King," depreciating Bank notes. A farmer, of the then typical John Bull type, has called on Lord King to pay his rent, and says to him, "I be come to pay you some money! but I cannot get Guineas for love nor money! so you must take Bank Notes. – Why! no person ever refused them before." To which Lord King replies, "I tell you I will have Guineas. If I take Bank Notes I will have 20 per cent. I like good profit." With one hand he points to some Guineas, and, on the table, are the "Laws of Landlord and Tenant," and "Tables of Interest."

Earl Stanhope, on the 27th of June, in consequence of Lord King's action, introduced a Bill into the House of Lords to prevent the Gold coin from being paid or received for more than its nominal value, or the Bank paper for less. In the course of the debate he stated that guineas were publicly bought at Manchester, at an advance of *twenty* per cent. by persons from Ireland, for the purpose of paying their landlords, who insisted on gold: and the Earl of Lauderdale declared that he knew an instance, where a landlord called upon his tenants to pay in gold; and the latter having represented to the steward the impossibility of procuring gold, they were each told that there were 100 guineas at a Chandler's shop in the neighbourhood, which might be purchased; and it was a fact, that with those 100 guineas, passing from one to another, a rent of £7,000 was actually paid. The Bill passed both Houses, and received the royal assent on the 24th of July.

In *The Morning Chronicle* of the 11th of July we find: "It has been for several weeks a known and common practice, at one shop in the City, for a man to have a twenty-shilling note, and a dish of fish, for a guinea." And so it was after the passing of Earl Stanhope's Act, the guineas were still bought at an advanced price, and the first Commitment under the Act is recorded in the same paper of Monday, the 9th of September, 1811: "On Friday sen'night Adkins, the Bow Street officer, arrived at Worcester, in pursuit of one Thomas Woodford, who was known to have dealt pretty largely in guineas; having found him, Adkins offered him eight guineas, and three half-guineas, for which Woodford gave him £10 18s. 6d. in Bank of England Notes. – He was immediately apprehended, and committed to gaol."

It was no use trying to fight the purchase of these precious coins: every plan possible was put in force – How is this? "Lost – Eight Guineas – Whoever may have found the same, and will bring them to – shall receive ten pounds reward." It was all of no use, the guineas used to be smuggled out of the Country as much as ever, and on July 3rd, in the Court of King's Bench, in the case of De Yonge, who had been convicted of purchasing guineas for more than 21 shillings, and whose case had been reserved for the opinion of the twelve judges, it was decided that such purchase was not an offence punishable under the existing laws.

CHAPTER V

A smuggler's victim – Illness of Gilray – A gallant highwayman – A Witch – Bartholomew Fair – The Comet – A Practical joke on the Queen – Woman's Cricket Match – Ballooning – French prisoners of war – Luddite riots – The King and his physicians – His health

The odds and ends of gossip for July may be taken briefly as follows – Smuggling was very common, and our grandfathers had not the faintest notion that they were doing wrong in purchasing wares that had never paid the King his dues. In fact, many were proud of it. Sometimes they got sold, as the following story will vouch for. It happened that in Windsor and its neighbourhood, a woman, clad in a long red cloak, appeared, calling about dusk at several houses with a sample of excellent Cognac brandy. She stated that her husband was waiting at a little distance with several casks of the same, which they could sell at a very low price. Several people agreed to take Casks, which were duly delivered, and the money for which was properly paid. Alas! alas! when the brandy came to be tapped it was nothing but water.

Poor Gilray, the Caricaturist, from whom I have so much borrowed, and who exemplified the manners of his times as well as ever Hogarth did, had been ill, and had knocked off work for some time – yet he still lived at Mrs. Humphrey's house in St. James Street, attempted, while in a fit of delirium, to throw himself out of the attic storey window. Luckily for him there were iron bars to that window, and his head got jammed, which, being perceived by a Chairman waiting outside White's Club, who instantly went to render assistance, he was extricated, and proper persons were appointed to take care of him. Poor Gilray etched his last picture in 1811, and it was entitled, "Interior of a Barber's Shop in Assize Time," but it was not published until May 15, 1818, nearly three years after his death, which took place on the 1st of June, 1815. It is a comfort to know that from the setting in of his mania until his death, he was well looked after by his old friend Mrs. Humphrey.

It is hard to have to chronicle the rise and fall of a most useful invention, the percussion *Cap*, which was patented by the Rev. A. J. Forsyth, of Belhevie, Aberdeenshire, on the 11th of April, 1807. Lepage, the noted gun-maker of Paris pirated it; and Napoleon, in 1811, ordered it to be generally introduced into the French Army. It has been superseded, or rather its form has been altered by the modern breech loader.

Good manners and courtesy from Robber to robbed evidently had not gone out of fashion with Claude Duval, and a "gentle thief" was not unknown, as the Miss Somervilles could testify. They were in a carriage with their papa, who was a surgeon, when it was stopped, on Hounslow Heath, by a *foot pad* – for there were subtle distinctions in theft in those days. The Man who robbed you, and was on horseback, was at the top of his profession – he was a Highwayman; but the poor, scurvy rogue whose financial arrangements could not compass the dignity of a horse, was a common thief, a wolf's head, a foot pad. This mean specimen of roguery, only armed with a Clasp Knife, with many oaths, declared that he would operate upon the Surgeon to his disadvantage, unless he gave him his money. Under this compulsion Mr. Somerville gave him all he had about him, two five-pound notes, and four shillings; meanwhile the women folk, who saw what was being done to dear papa, besought the evil-doer, with tears in their eyes, and their money in their hands, to take what his strong arm had won, and depart in peace. Then the innate chivalry of that robber arose within him, and he said, in a somewhat mixed vein of politeness, and brutality, "Nay, ladies, don't be frightened, I never did the least injury to a woman in my life, nor never will, d – n me; as for your money, keep it yourselves: all that I ask from you is a kiss apiece; if you grudge me that, I'm sure you are neither sensible, nor

good humoured." *Vae Victis!* The soft penalty was paid, and the wicked man turned away from his wickedness after doing a mild "Confiteor" – that he had spent all his money very foolishly, and the sum in which he had mulcted papa would carry him to his friends, and then he should have plenty. It was the first robbery he had ever committed, and it should be the last – and then he faded into the *ewigkeit*. But how about the stout coachman and footman who drove, and sat behind the carriage? Probably Somerville *père* had something to say to them on his return home.

Here is another case of wickedness, by a supposed Witch, the belief in Witchcraft being a cult not yet thoroughly ignored in England, copied from the *Annual Register* of August 26th: "At the Bridgewater assizes, Betty Townsend, a very old woman, aged 77, who for many years past has been considered by the superstitious as a *Witch*, was tried for obtaining money of a child under the following circumstances: The prosecutor, Jacob Poole, was a labouring man, residing in the hamlet of Taunton, in which parish the prisoner also resided, and he had been in the habit of sending his daughter, aged about thirteen, with apples in a basket, to market. About the 24th of January last, the old woman met the little girl, stopped her, and asked to see what she had in her basket; which, having examined, she said to her, 'Hast' got any money?' The child said she had none. 'Then get some for me,' said the old woman, 'and bring it to the Castle (a tavern in Taunton) door, or I will kill thee.' The child, terrified at such a threat from a witch, procured two shillings, and carried it to her; when the old woman said, 'Tis a good turn thou hast got it, or else I would have made thee die by inches.' This was repeated seven times within five months, when Poole, the girl's father, going to the shop of Mr. Burford, a druggist in Taunton, to pay a little bill which he owed for medicine, found no less than seven different charges against him for money lent; and, on inquiry, found that different small sums of two shillings, half-a-crown, five shillings, &c., had been borrowed by the little girl in her father's name, for the purpose, as she said, of going to market, but carried as a peace-offering to the old woman. The whole was now discovered, and Poole's wife, and another woman, took the girl with them to the prisoner's house, and interrogated her as to the facts. She admitted a knowledge of the girl, but, on being reprehended for her conduct, raved and swore, that if they dared to accuse her, she would make them 'die by inches.' 'No,' said Mrs. Poole, who appears to have thought that she knew much better how to deal with a Witch than her daughter, 'that thee shall not – I'll hinder that': and, taking a pin from her clothes, she scratched the witch from her elbow to her wrist, in three places, *to draw her blood*, a process, believed to be of unfailing efficacy, as an antidote to witchcraft. The idea of this wicked woman's power has had such an effect upon the mind of the poor little girl, that she is now reduced to such a state of debility, that she is scarcely able to take any sustenance. The Jury found the prisoner guilty (*what of?*); and the Judge observed that only her extreme old age prevented him from pronouncing on her the severest sentence the law would allow. She was sentenced to pay a fine of one shilling, and to be kept to hard labour in the House of Correction for six Calendar months."

Bartholomew Fair must be within the recollection of many of my readers, for it was not abolished until 1855. At one time it was always opened by the Lord Mayor – yet it reads with an old-world flavour that "Yesterday Morning (Sept. 3) the Lord Mayor, attended by the City Marshals, &c., went in procession, after having partaken of a cool tankard at the house of Mr. Newman, the keeper of Newgate, to the corner of Long Lane, West Smithfield, where the fair was proclaimed, and all its usual din and bustle commenced." The fair was not finally suppressed until 1855.

It was not till 1835 that Bull baiting was made illegal in England, and it is refreshing to read that the bull, even for a very short time, had the best of his human persecutor, who on such an occasion ever cuts a sorry figure. *Morning Chronicle*, Sept. 4th: "A dreadful catastrophe occurred at Chapel Wake, Birmingham, on Tuesday last. A concourse of people having assembled at the Fives Court, Lawrence Street, for the purpose of baiting a bull, the enraged animal broke loose, and ran with great fury into Coleshill Street. A Scene of the greatest confusion ensued. An infant, three months old, was killed on the spot: two women and boys were dreadfully trampled and bruised, and remain in the hospital with little hopes of recovery, and many others received injury." *Bravo Toro!*

Annus Mirabilis! A Regent, and a Comet! According to Shakespeare, when "beggars die, there are no Comets."⁶ These Celestial aberrations are for far greater mundane personages – they are for the great ones of the earth only; and, again, from the same authority we learn that "Comets importing change,"⁷ is fairly fulfilled in the Regency.

Of course the Caricaturist got hold of it, and fixed it for all time. "The Comet of 1811" has, as nucleus, the *facile princeps* of his age. Its tail is studded with celebrities, all of whom I cannot, unfortunately, make out. First is Earl Moira, then Sheridan and Erskine; Lord Derby with his hydrocephalous forehead, and the Duke of Norfolk. Behind Lord Derby is Col. Bloomfield; behind him is Lord Grenville, and side by side with him are Temple and Buckingham, whose wig and spectacles betray him anywhere. The last face to be recognized is that of Earl Grey.

This Comet was discovered at Viviers on the 25th of March, by M. de Flanguergues, and was again noticed by M. Pons at Marseilles on the 11th of April. It was seen at Paris on the 20th of May, but was not generally visible in England until the latter end of August or the beginning of September. It was nearest to the earth on the 24th of October, and then it went on its course, and, in due time, vanished.

In September a practical joke was played, on no less a person than the Queen. For four consecutive days, ending Sept. 26th, Buckingham Palace, or, as it was then called, the Queen's House, was besieged by Washerwomen, from morning till night. It seems that a woman, calling herself the head of the Queen's laundry had gone round to hundreds of Washerwomen, telling them that she had held her present situation for five years, and that she had been obliged to discharge all her staff, because they did not wash the royal linen clean, and also that they got drunk. She was very affable with her dupes, and was not above drinking with them, or of borrowing from them, cloaks, shawls, umbrellas, and other trifles, promising some of them two guineas a week, others 4s. a day, a pot of porter, and as much rum, gin, and wine as they chose.

Early on Monday morning they began to arrive, about 6 o'clock, so as to set to work, and it was in vain that the porters refused them admission. Their tale was, that the lady who had hired them, had given them the key of the laundry to let themselves in, so that they might get to work, light the fire, &c. But, as there was no laundry at Buckingham Palace, they sent the poor women to St. James's Palace, where there was one, and, when they got there, it was only to be told that none had been engaged, nor even wanted. One can imagine the scene, more especially as many of the poor women had come from great distances, some had left good situations to go there, and others had sent their children into the Country to nurse, in order to enable them to take the place.

A more pleasing contest of women took place on the 3rd of October, 1811, in the shape of a Cricket Match between two teams, not the sort of thing as "Actresses" Cricket, which is now played between a team each of men and women, the former being armed with broom handles, the latter with cricket bats; but a much rougher sort of thing, if we can believe the accompanying illustration, which is taken from an etching of Rowlandson's, called "Rural Sports, or a Cricket Match Extraordinary. On Wednesday, Oct. 3, 1811, a Singular Cricket Match took place at Ball's Pond, Newington. The players on both sides were 22 Women, 11 Hampshire, against 11 Surrey. The Match was made between some amateur Noblemen of the respective Counties, for 500 Guineas a side. The performers in the Contest were of all ages and sizes."

The Match really began on the 2nd of October, and lasted three days, the Hampshire team winning. The ages varied from 14 to upwards of forty.

⁶ *Julius Caesar*, act ii. sc. 2.

⁷ *Henry IV.*, act i. sc. 1.

Rowlandson sketched with a freedom approaching decided coarseness – but his sketches were natural, and in this instance valuable, as showing us Cricket as then played, although the game, with its two stump wickets, curved bats, and primitive scoring was then obsolete, at least in matches.⁸

But, if we can believe the same artist, Baldwin and his congeners were outdone this year by a woman descending from a balloon in a parachute. It is taken from an etching by Rowlandson, dated the 25th of October, 1811, and entitled "Balloon Hunting." It represents the mishaps of a party of ladies who went balloon hunting across country, in a one-horse vehicle, the shafts of which are smashed, and the horse is being reduced to docility by the driver. I know of no woman who descended by means of a parachute, in this year.

They were not novelties, for André Jacques Garnerin, the Aëronaut, came down in one in 1802, and, according to Larousse, Elisa, daughter of Jean Baptiste Olivier Garnerin, brother of the above, was the first woman who tried a "drop from the clouds." She made her first descent in 1815, and in 1820 had made over twenty.

Taken as a whole, the French Prisoners of War, whose numbers were ever increasing, were not a bad lot of fellows. There were many breaches of parole, and large numbers of the rank and file, and seamen got away; for, in a Trial in the Court of King's Bench, November 14, 1811, the Attorney-General asserted that, of the French Officers, prisoners of war, on their parole, in this country, one-fourth had effected their escape: and that one condition on which smugglers from this country were permitted to land their goods in France, was the bringing over with them, a French prisoner.

Those interned at Cupar fitted up a neat little Theatre, which was opened on the 3rd of September. A prologue composed by one of the Officers, complimentary to the inhabitants for their hospitality to the Captives, was spoken and acted. This was followed by a Comedy in verse, by Regnard, called "Les Folies Amoureuses," and an after piece "Le Quaterne." The Scene painting, interior decorations of the theatre, Stage Apparatus, and Costumes, were all their own work: nor did they stop there, for they had an excellent band of their own.

But they could behave sternly on occasion, if there is any truth in the following story. In May, 1811, the French prisoners confined on board the *Sampson* (prison ship lying in the Medway), formed a conspiracy to forcibly take possession of the ship, and effect their escape, which was prevented by one of their number imparting secretly their projected plan to the commanding officer. Enraged at the disappointment of their hopes, they used every effort to find out the individual by whose communication their secret had transpired; and having, as they thought, fixed upon the right man, as soon as they were locked up for the night, they formed a Court, for his trial, at which a *procès verbal* was drawn up, declaratory of their proceedings. The suspected traitor was found guilty, but there was a difference of opinion as to his punishment, and it was at last resolved and carried into effect, that he should be tattooed on his forehead and cheeks "J'ai vendu mes frères aux Anglais aboard le ponton 'Le Sampson,' 31 Mai, 1811."

There is not much more to chronicle for the remainder of this year, except the Census, and we must glance at the figures to see the enormous difference in the population then, and now. In 1811, the whole population was 12,552,144, in 1881, 35,246,562, or, in other words, the population had all but trebled itself in 70 years. In the last Census (1881) the sexes were very evenly balanced, being 17,253,947 males, and 17,992,615 females, and so they were in 1811, 6,310,548 males, and 6,241,596 females.

Still the Luddite Riots must not be forgotten, for, at one time, they threatened to be somewhat serious. They began in the neighbourhood of Nottingham, the Manufacturers there, having been obliged, from the decrease of demand for their manufactures, to discharge many of their workmen, and consequently much distress was caused. Nor was this all; a certain wide frame for weaving stockings had been introduced, which saved much labour, and, consequently, fewer hands were

⁸ The third stump was added by the Hambledon Club, 1775.

wanted. In November, these riots became rather serious, as, not only were the obnoxious frames smashed, and manufacturers' stock destroyed, but millers, corn dealers, &c., suffered, and the military had to be called out. Their name was taken from their imaginary leader, one Captain Ludd, who never had any existence, but probably stood for the Committee of Management.

At this time, at all events, the public were free from the sickening details of the illness of Royalty, such as they have lately had – in the case of the German Emperor, Frederic – details which could do no good whatever to the outer world, and which must have been very painful to the relatives of the deceased Kaiser. They managed things better in George III.'s reign. If the medical men quarrelled, they did not openly wash their dirty linen, but it only was known to a few that Dr. Willis's treatment of his Royal patient, during his former illness, had been considered unnecessarily severe, and that, perhaps, they were not too well content to have him associated with them in the present crisis: still for the first year or so, the people, who really loved old Farmer George, were kept fairly acquainted with the state of his health, until it became hopeless – and then, perhaps very wisely, they only were fed with the merest details of his disorder.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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