AN INTERESTING DESCRIPTION of ENGLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES.

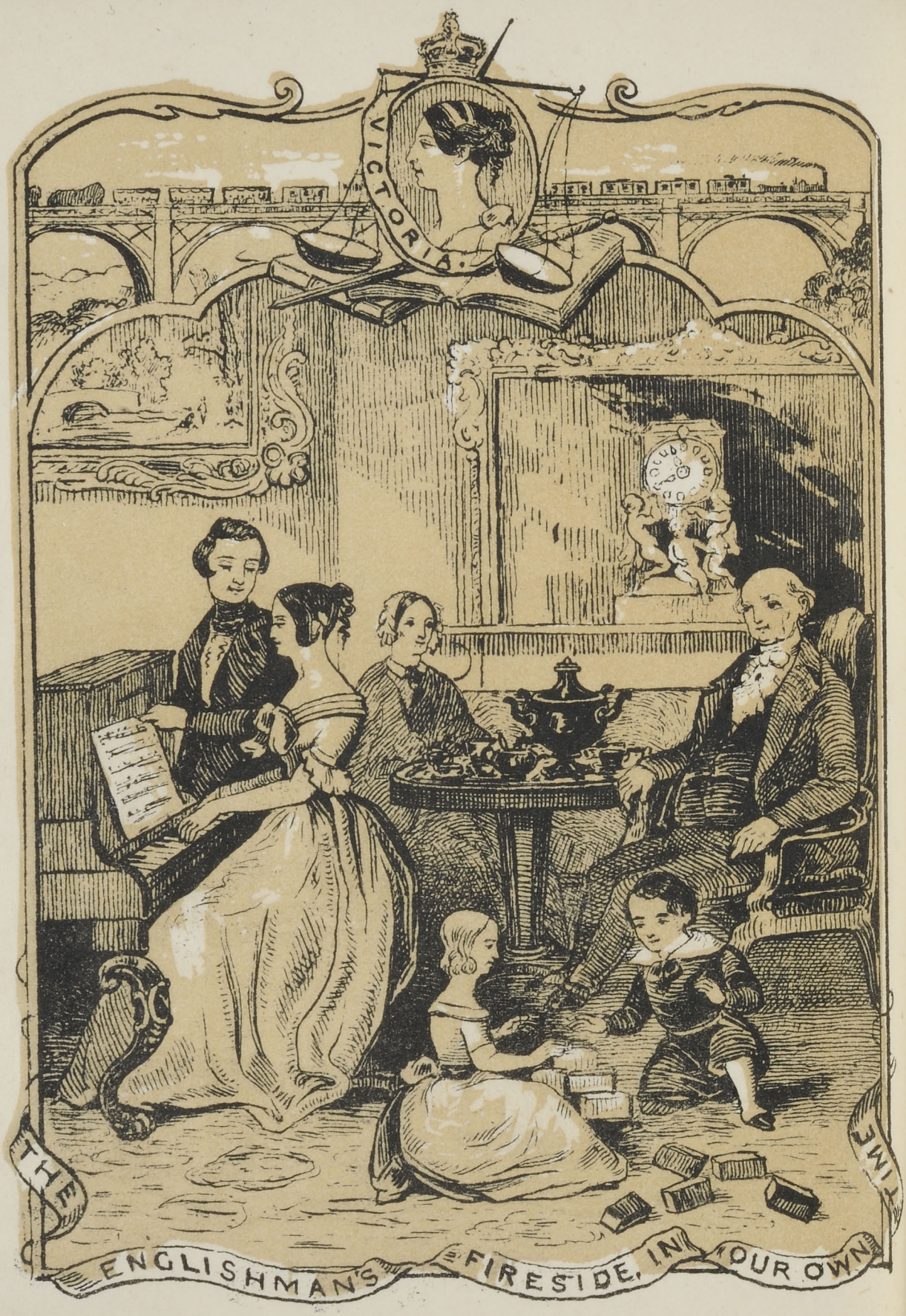
SHEWING THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND AND HOW THEY LIVED AND DRESSED, FROM THE REIGN OF JAMES THE SECOND, TO THAT OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

In Easy Language for Young Children.

BY MISS CORNER.

PRICE 6d

LONDON DEAN AND SON THREADNEEDLE ST


VICTORIA.
THE ENGLISHMAN'S FIRESIDE, IN OUR OWN TIME

AN INTERESTING DESCRIPTION OF ENGLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES;

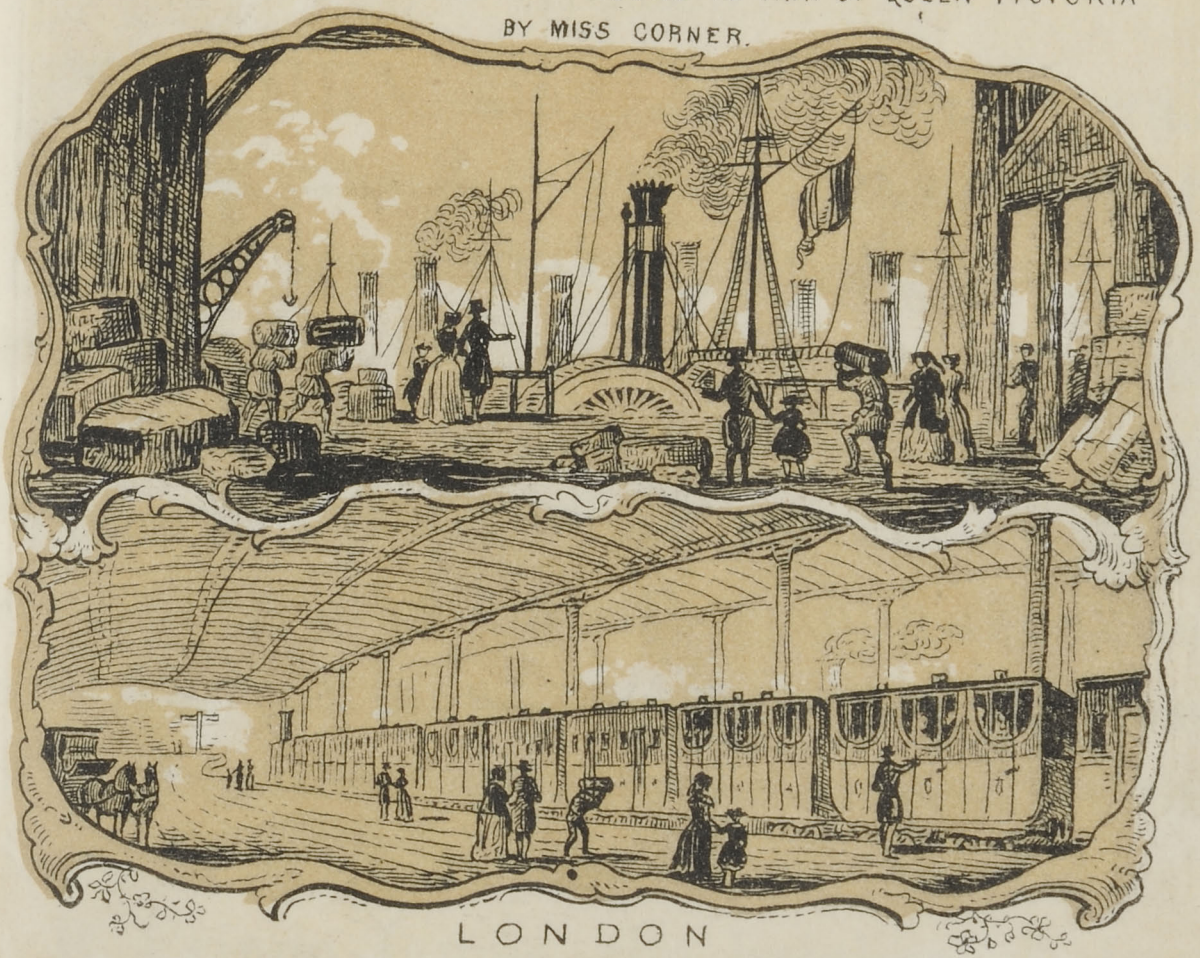
SHOWING THE

CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE,

THEIR MODES OF LIFE, AND HOW THEY LIVED & DRESSED

FROM THE REIGN OF JAMES THE SECOND TO THAT OF QUEEN VICTORIA

BY MISS CORNER.



LONDON

THOMAS DEAN AND SON

THREADNEEDLE STREET

c 1850

ENGLAND

IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES.

WHEN king James the Second was dethroned, and obliged to leave the country, he had three children, two daughters, and an infant son. One daughter was Mary, whose husband, William, Prince of Orange, was made king, instead of her father; and the other was Anne, who was married to the Prince of Denmark, and became Queen on the death of William the Third, in 1702.

If Prince James, the brother of those ladies, had been a Protestant, he would

have been allowed to reign; but he was brought up in the Catholic faith, and our parliament had, in the year 1689, made a law, that the Sovereign of Great Britain must be a Protestant; so that was the reason his sister Anne was chosen instead of him to succeed king William.

In the reign of Queen Anne, the English went to war with the French, and a great many battles were fought in Germany, which cost the lives of thousands of our brave English soldiers; yet it was for no better reason than to settle a dispute whether a German or a French Prince should be king of Spain. It costs a great deal of money to carry on a war, and the government gets the money from the people, by making them pay more taxes; so, in consequence of that foolish quarrel in the time of Queen Anne, the

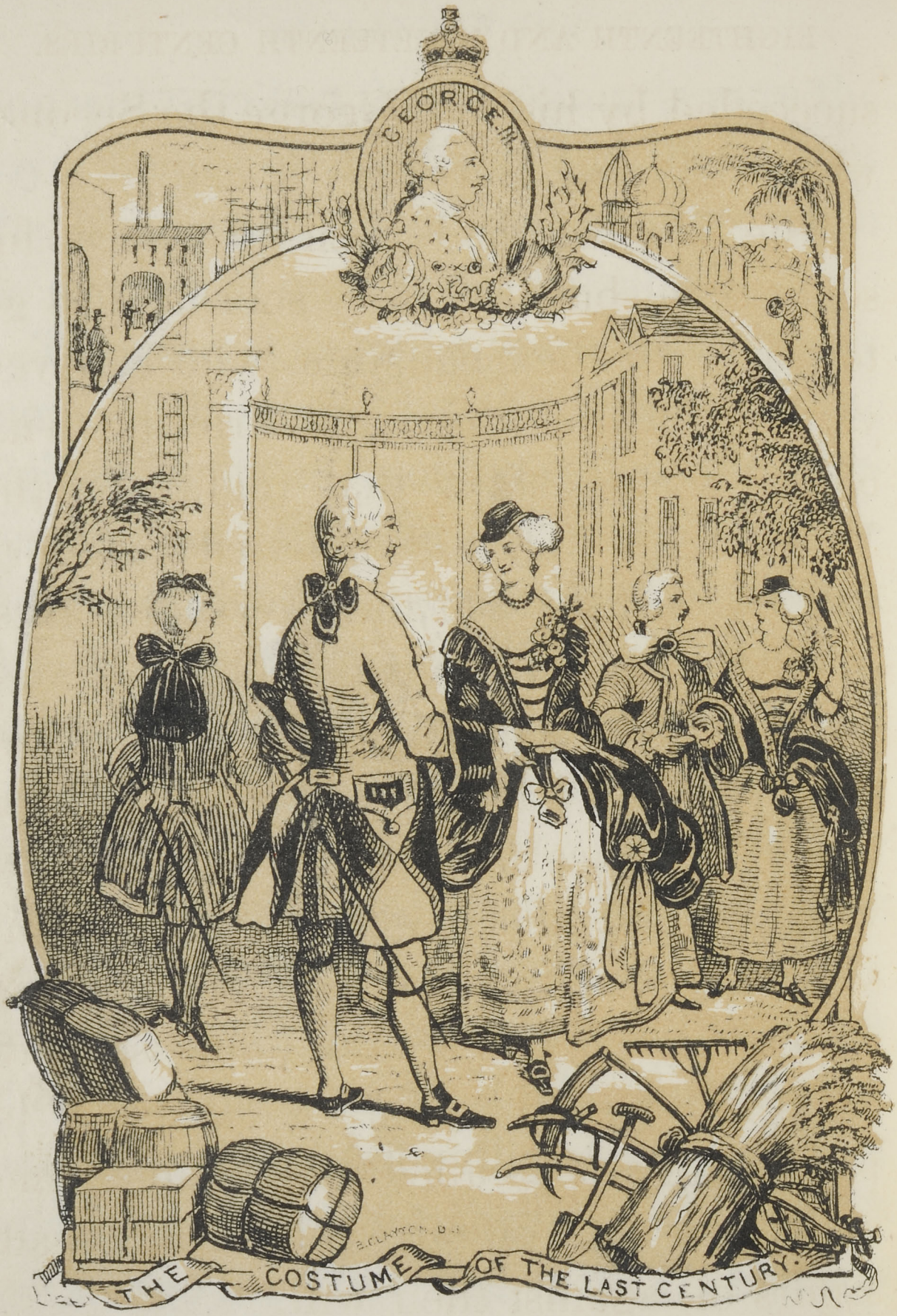
taxes were so heavy, and trade so bad, that the people were almost ruined. One good thing was done in this reign, which you ought to remember, which was, to unite the Scottish with the English Parliament, and so have only one Parliament for the whole of Great Britain.

Queen Anne died in 1714, and was succeeded by George the First, a German Prince, who was the son of a grand-daughter of James the First. But he was not much liked in England; for he was neither a good nor a clever man, besides being a stranger, and not able to speak the English language. These causes, added to the distress occasioned by the late wars, made many people think that it would perhaps be better to let the Prince James Stuart be king, and almost all the Scotch people were of that opinion, for

you will recollect that the Stuarts were the royal family of Scotland, and that James the First was king of that country when he succeeded our Queen Elizabeth.

Then secret meetings were held in many parts of England by the friends of the Prince, who is usually called the Pretender; and they formed plans with the people of Scotland, with a view of placing him on the throne. When king George heard what was going on, he sent troops into the north, and two battles were fought with the rebels, who were defeated, and many thousands of them killed or made prisoners, who, I am sorry to say, were sold for slaves; which was a sad thing for their friends, who, no doubt, wished they had been contented with the monarch that had been chosen for them.

George the First died in 1727, and was


GEORGE III
THE COSTUME OF THE LAST CENTURY.

succeeded by his son, George the Second, who was also a German.

The English had been at peace for some time, but they very soon had to go to war with the Spaniards, who behaved very ill on the seas, by interfering with our merchant ships that traded to the West Indies. They even seized some British vessels, and sold the crews for slaves; so the English government at last declared war against Spain, and this war lasted nine years. While it was going on, the kings of France and England also went to war, so that there were a great many soldiers and sailors wanted; and numbers of poor working men were impressed into the service; that is, they were seized by parties of men, called press-gangs, and carried by force on board ships, and made sailors of, against their will.

In the midst of these troubles, another rebellion broke out in Scotland, which lasted much longer, and created far more disturbance than the former one. It was headed by Charles Edward Stuart, the son of the former Pretender, who landed in Scotland in the year 1745, and was joined by so many of the people that he soon had a large army at his command. After some months of civil war, which caused a great deal of suffering and sorrow in the families of those who were so imprudent as to side with the young Pretender, that unfortunate Prince was defeated at the battle of Culloden, near Inverness, in Scotland, and escaped in disguise to France. This was the last battle fought in Great Britain, and the last attempt made for the restoration of the Stuarts.

In the reign of George the Second, most of the principal towns of England were enlarged, and manufactures of various kinds were more extensively carried on in them. New roads were made, harbours built for shipping, canals formed, new bridges erected, and the land better cultivated; so that the labouring classes found plenty of employment.

In this reign our first great conquests were made in India, and our trade with that country was so increased, that Indian goods, as well as tea from China, were brought here in large quantities. It was then that the custom of drinking tea began to be adopted by all who could afford it; but the cups and saucers used at that time were not larger than doll's tea things, and were very expensive, being brought from abroad, as no china was made in England

till the reign of George the Third. The best sort of earthenware then made was the common white glazed, which was thought very handsome, as every body had, before that time, been accustomed to use pewter or wooden plates and dishes. You may judge, therefore, how much the English have improved in this kind of manufacture within the last hundred years; for English china is now as good and beautiful as any in the world.

The style of dress had been very much altered since the time of James the Second; for our Dutch and German Sovereigns brought new fashions into the country. Ladies wore hoops under their dresses, and powdered their hair and frizzed it out till their heads looked three times as large as they really were; and little girls were as stiffly dressed as

their mothers. Gentlemen wore wigs curled and powdered, with three cornered hats bound with gold lace, like our parish beadles. Their coats were stiff and ugly, and of gayer colours than they wear now, with large cuffs, and lace ruffles; their waistcoats were made with long flaps nearly down to the knees, and they wore coloured silk stockings and swords.

George the Second died in 1760, and was succeeded by his grandson, George the Third, who was by birth an Englishman. At this time all that part of America, now called the United States, belonged to England, and was governed by our king. The reason was, that it was first colonized by English emigrants; that is, the first people who went to settle there, when the country was in a wild uncultivated state, were English families,

who, from misfortune, were obliged to leave their native land. In course of time these colonies improved and became large populous places, and then, as they were governed by the English laws, and the people paid taxes to this government, they thought they ought to be allowed to send members to Parliament. This being refused, they declared they would not be governed by the king of England any longer, but would choose their own rulers and make their own laws. This dispute gave rise to a long war, which lasted eighteen years, when the king was persuaded to put an end to it by giving up his authority over the Americans, who thus became an independent people.

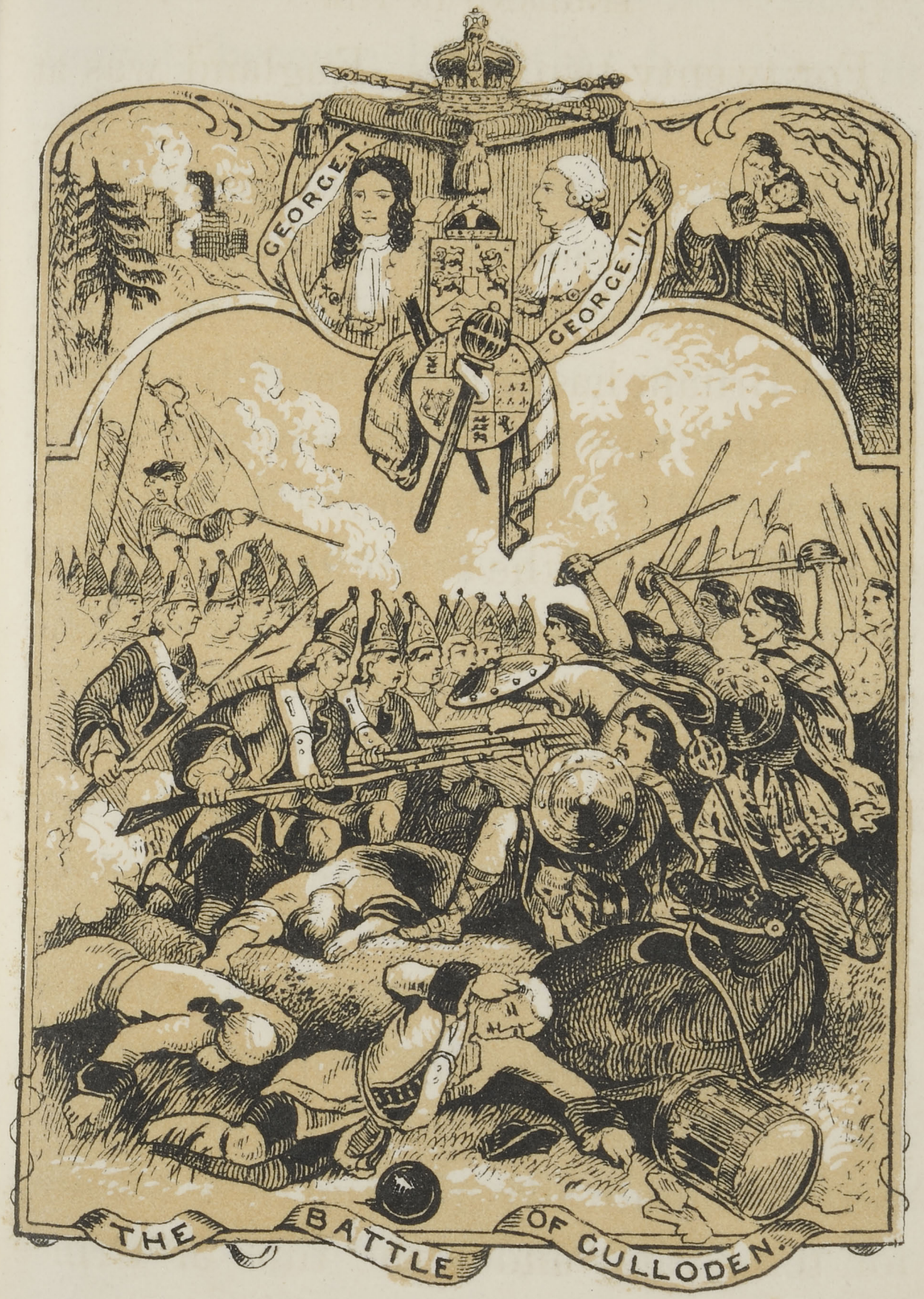
In the first year of the present century, 1800, the Parliament of Ireland, which used to be held at Dublin, was united to

that of Great Britain; which was a very good thing for the Irish people, because the United Parliament could do more good for them than the Irish Parliament could do.

They did not like this union at first, any more than the Scotch people liked their union with England in the time of Queen Anne, until they began to feel the benefit of it. The government has abolished several bad laws, and made many good laws for the benefit of the people of Ireland, since the union; especially one for establishing free schools throughout the country; and one for making poor laws, and building workhouses for orphan children, and for the infirm and aged poor; instead of suffering them to die of starvation, as was the case until poor laws were established for their relief.

For twenty two years, England was at war with France. This destructive war, in which all Europe was at last engaged, began in the year 1793, and was carried on till the year 1815. Since that time, Great Britain has enjoyed more peace and prosperity than at any other period of her history. Wonderful improvements have been made in all the arts and sciences; the people are in general much better educated, and all the comforts and luxuries of life are more plentiful, and more easily obtained, because they are cheaper; for, since that war was ended, taxes have been taken off very many things that we eat, drink, wear, and use.

George the Third died in 1820, when his son, George the Fourth, became king; but he had already governed the country for ten years, under the title of Prince


GEORGE I.
GEORGE II.
THE BATTLE OF CULLODEN.

Regent, because his father had been in very bad health. In the time of George the Fourth, the wants and desires of the people began to be considered by the government; laws were passed to emancipate Protestant dissenters, and Roman Catholics from the restraints under which they had laboured; Regents park was made and thrown open to the public, as Victoria park, and St. James's park have been since. During his reign, too, gas lights and steam boats were brought into general use; but there were no railways till after his death, which happened in 1830. He was succeeded by his brother, William the Fourth.

Travelling on rail roads, by steam, is the grand invention of the present age, and has been of more benefit to the world than any discovery ever made, except the

art of printing. The speed with which people can now travel enables them to visit places they never would have seen, if railways and steam vessels had not been invented; besides which, more business is done; letters and goods are conveyed in a short time to and from distant places; and people gain more knowledge by seeing more of the world. Two of the most important laws passed by Parliament, in the reign of William the Fourth, was, one for greatly increasing the number of voters, or electors of members of Parliament; and another for the total abolition of slavery in the West Indies, and other British Colonies.

You know, I dare say, that many thousands of black slaves used to be employed in the plantations of the West India Islands. Now it had long been thought

very wicked to keep people in slavery; so at last our Parliament passed a law, that all the slaves should be made free; and to compensate their owners, the British government paid to them a very large sum of money, and then set the slaves at liberty, on the first of August, 1834; which must have been a joyful day for the many thousands of poor negroes, and their poor little slave children.

William the Fourth died in the year 1837, when his niece, her present Majesty Queen Victoria, came to the throne. She was crowned in Westminster abbey, June 28th 1838; and in February 1840, was married to Prince Albert, of Saxe Coburg.

At the present time there is no country in the world equal to Great Britain for its wealth and commerce, arts and manufactures; and there is no city in Europe

equal to London for its large size, and the number of its inhabitants. Great improvements are making in the drainage of towns, in opening spacious burial grounds at a distance from our dwellings, and in building more healthy habitations for the working people. Our ships bring us all kinds of luxuries from every part of the world; the necessaries of life are cheap and abundant; the children of the poorest people can now gain useful knowledge, by means of national, or other schools, and cheap books; we have for years had a good government; and as we are in the full enjoyment of peace and prosperity, we ought to be a happy and thankful people.

The End.

DEAN AND SON, PRINTERS,
THREADNEEDLE-STREET, LONDON.