

GEORGE IV



Or?



SON OF PORPHYRIA

George IV

George IV lived an extravagant lifestyle. In Edward Rutherfords London, the character Eugene Penny experiences a similar individual first hand. Eugene could feel the warm glow of The George Inn parlor when he visited in 1819. While there, Eugene received a taste of the daily life of George IV. While there he has “a steak and kidney pie and a bottle of porter, as dark beer was often called.” (London P. 919) Silas Dogget, The George Inn owner, enters the room. Ruthford uses Silas as a representation of George IV. He immediately orders for a beer upon entrance to the parlor, and he sits alone in seclusion, as George IV did in Windsor Castle. The two also have in common their appearance. They are both “shorter than most men, but very heavy-set and [they] moved with a surly slowness.” (London P. 919)

George IV was born on 12 August, 1762 at St. James' Palace in London, England. Upon birth he inherited the titles Duke of Cornwall and Duke of Rothesay, a few days later he was granted the titles of Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester. He was baptized by the Archbishop of Canterbury a month later.



George IV was fluent in French, German, Italian, and of course his native language of English. By 21, George IV established his residence at the Carlton House. Soon tensions between George IV and his father King George III began to rise. It was most evident in George IV's loyalty to radical politicians such as Charles James Fox, who had opposing views to the Kings conservatism. This was the beginnings to a rather fragile relationship between the King and his son, George IV.

George IV became the suitor to a Roman Catholic woman by the name of Maria Anne Fitzherbert. and Fitzherbert could not because of the 1701 Act Roman Catholics unable Also, under the 1772 would need the King's not be granted because Catholic. Against the on 15 December, 1785 at



She was the widow of two men, have married George IV anyways of Settlement declared that any to succeed the throne of England. Royal Marriages Act, George IV permission. This would of course Fitzherbert was a Roman King's wishes, they were married Fitzherbert's house in Mayfair.

She held to the belief that the law of the Church was above the law of the State, and held to it that their marriage was real. Due to political reasoning from this scandal, Fitzherbert was convinced and promised to keep their marriage a secret. Soon, George IV's debt from his very expensive life style caught up to him, even though he was receiving an annual income of 50,000 lire from his father, King George III, and was granted 60,000 lire from Parliament just two years prior. The couple was forced to leave the exquisite pleasures of the Carlton House because of their debt, and had to reside in Fitzherbert's old residence. All was well in 1787 when George IV's connections in the House of Commons introduced a proposal of a Parliamentary grant to relieve his debts, or so it seemed. The illegal marriage to Fitzherbert was suspected and if revealed his Parliamentary grant would be no more. Upon this recent update of scandalous doings, George IV's idol and leader of the Whig Party, Charles James Fox, publically announced that their "apparent" marriage was a slanderous lie. Fitzherbert was not pleased at all. She threatened to leave the Prince of Wales if something was not done about the sully on her name. So, George IV just had Whig Richard Sheridan restate the falsehood of the marriage in a more gentle manner. Fitzherbert was quickly and easily pleased, and remained quiet and secretly by the king's side. Parliament soon provided George IV with a 161,000 lire grant, along with 60,000 lire to make improvements on the Carlton House.

The excitement continues in the next year when porphyria and years of continuous and ongoing arsenic poisoning began to really take a toll on King George III. His bouts and random illness' from previous years quickly became an uphill battle of mental instability and random outbursts, along with conditions

(such as cataracts and rheumatism) of the Kings worsening. King George III's mental health was deteriorating fast, yet he was still able to influence his power in government. From 25 September to 20 November of 1788, the King expunged Parliament of their duties by declaring a prorogation. The Kings madness continued. He was so deranged by the time that Parliament was reconvened that he could not even give his Speech from the Throne which opens Parliament to proceed with the nations business during the State Opening of Parliament celebration which occurs after any prorogations.



Technically, Parliament was frozen because the King had not officially opened them to do business. Yet, due to the extenuating circumstances, Parliament began to discuss regency for the King. Soon, Charles James Fox began to preach that George IV, the Prince of Wales, was entitled to become regent because of the Kings inabilities. This was opposed by men like Williams Pitt the Younger, England's Prime Minister, who believed that Parliament should take control of the country. This soon became the truth and George IV became Prince Regent of England. Although, George IV did meet Parliament and the Prime Minister in the middle. He had his brother, the Duke of York Prince Frederick, declare for him that he would not exercise any of his power without obtaining the consent of Parliament. PM Pitt the Younger was still not satisfied. He began to construct a plan that would limit the regent's power, such as George IV not being able to sell any of the royal property. George IV quickly shutdown Pitt's plans and stated that it was a "project for producing weakness, disorder, and insecurity in every branch of the administration of affairs." There was more dilemma in the fact that Parliament was still not formally opened to reconvene. They needed the Regency Bill passed so on 3 February, 1789; a handful of the Lords Commissioners opened Parliament officially without the King's approval. Soon the King recovered and denounced its happening.

By 1795, George IV's lifestyle began to cause him to enter another debt. Unless he married his cousin, Caroline of Brunswick, the King would not administer to him any aid whatsoever. On 08 April of that year they were married at St. James's Palace's Chapel Royal. In 1796 they gave birth to their only child, Princess Charlotte. Directly after the birth of Princess Charlotte the couple



separated and remained that way for the rest of their lives. George IV found a way to manage himself, and it was through mistresses. He has many mistresses throughout his lifetime, dating as far back as the years before he was with Fitzherbert. It is believed that he had many illegitimate children with the numerous mistresses he obtained. Women were one of the numerous luxuries that plagued George IV. Meanwhile, in 1804, Caroline of Brunswick began a dispute over the custody of Princess Charlotte. George IV retaliated by calling Parliament to investigate an accusation against Caroline as to her having an illegitimate son while they were separated. Parliament's investigation resulted in no charges being filed, but they did announce that her behavior was "indiscreet."

George IV encountered more debt issues, which reached an all time high of 630,000 lire in 1795. Parliament once again decided to bail George IV out. They added an addition 65,000 lire to his income each year in 1795 to help pay off the debt. In 1803, Parliament added another 60,000 lire to that sum. George IV's 1795 debt was cleared in 1806, but he had gathered more debt in the 11 years in between.

By 1811, the old Regency Act was officially established because King George III became overwhelmed once again by his numerous illnesses. George III had "a long reign which lasted, nominally- since the poor king, who suffered from porphyria, was declared mentally incapable for extensive periods." (London P. 915) This time it was triggered by the death of Princess Amelia, his youngest daughter. Parliament declared George IV Prince Regent, and put a limit on his powers for one year's time. This was official on 05 January, the peak of the Catholic Emancipation. This removed Roman Catholics from any political positions in England. The Tories, under new Prime Minister Spencer Perceval, opposed the Catholic Emancipation while the Whigs supported it. The Whigs expected the Prince Regent to put their leader, William Grenville, as new Prime Minister. George IV did not follow their beliefs because he claimed that the sudden change in government would be 'the last straw' and cause his father to never recover from his fallout. On 10 May, 1812, Perceval was assassinated. The Prince Regent appointed Richard



Wellesley and Francis Rawdon-Hastings as dual Prime Ministers. This was a setup for failure, so he reappointed the Perceval administration with Robert Jenkinson as the new Prime Minister.

Problems continued in government as the Tories denounced the ongoing war with France. Napoleon was defeated by 1814, and again in 1815 at Waterloo when he attempted a return. The British-American War of 1812, another folly to the Tories, ended in 1815 as well (no side being the victor). Lastly, the Congress of Vienna caused Britain's electorate, Hanover, to become an independent state. This was a lot of political occurrences for the new Prince Regent to enact upon. But once again George IV made due.



He did so by taking a great interest in architecture. Along with architect John Nash, George IV began what is known today as Regency style architecture. Terraces of this style were built in England. George IV even had a seaside palace created and he based it off of Indian architecture. It was named the Brighton Pavilion, and was developed off of the design of the Taj Mahal.

In 1820, King George III finally died and George IV assumed the throne. Due to the circumstances of his regency, he really had no change in power. The biggest difference between George IV at the beginning of his regency and George IV during his ascendance to the throne was that his appearance now matched his lifestyle. His alcoholism and love for eating copious amounts of food had beaten out his young metabolism and made him greatly obese. He was known as the *First Gentleman of England* because of this lifestyle. His food and alcohol habits, along with being a patron of the arts- especially in architecture and the bronze statues of himself, were the reasoning's for this name.

Caroline of Brunswick was technically queen, but she had not been on George IV's good side for quite some time now. She had left England, but now returned in order to take the throne. George IV acted quickly and had her name omitted from the Church of England's liturgy. George IV wanted a divorce, but

Caroline threatened to publicize his adulterous activities, even though she had some of her own. Instead, the new King enacted the Pains and Penalties Bill of 1820 which allowed Parliament to impose law without the need of the courts. This did not pass because of public outcry, so the marriage still was not annulled.

Anyways, George IV attended his 243,000 lire coronation as King of England without his wife. It just so happens that Caroline fell ill that day of 19 July, 1821. On the 7th of August, Caroline of Brunswick died of her illness, all the while claiming that she had been poisoned. It was either perfect timing for George IV, or a well kept secret murder.

The coronation was a popular event and defined the extravagant lifestyle that George IV loved so much. Not only was he the first king to hold such a great event, but he was the first English king to visit Ireland since Richard II and Scotland since Charles I. Besides these two trips, George IV remained at Windsor Castle for the majority of his reign as king. Although, George IV continued to remain involved in politics.



Once 1824 rolled around, George IV was publically denouncing the Catholic faith. His previous accounts of anti-Catholicism, such as going against the Catholic Relief Bill of 1813, began to surface during this time. George IV now claimed that he had to withhold the Protestant faith and his power was so great that the Tories had no effect. It wasn't until 13 April that the Catholic Relief Bill, after much deliberation and a lot of political pressure, was passed by the king.

By the late 1820's, towards the end of his reign, George IV's indulgent lifestyle his health. His with his an obese mess. He Castle even more time he made ridiculed and appearance. Many depicted him in a inherited cataracts hasn't been that he also George IV also arthritis (gout) and which negatively breathing. He died buried at St. Windsor. His last what is this? My brother, William death because he really was not at *England*, as his



really took a huge toll on love of eating combined alcoholism made him into stayed indoors at Windsor often than before. Every himself public he was made fun of for his newspapers and other texts demining way. He had from his father, and it confirmed but is believed suffered from porphyria. suffered from metabolic arteriosclerosis, both of affected his blood flow and on 26 June, 1830 and was Georges Chapel in words were "Good God, boy, this is death!" His IV, took the throne after his was next in line. George IV all the *First Gentleman of* nickname stated.

WORKS CITED

May, Thomas. (1896). The Constitutional History of England Since the Accession Of George III, 1760-1860, 11th edition. Chapter 3. Green and Company.

Smith, E. A. (2001). George IV. Yale University Press.

Hibbert, Christopher. (1972). George IV: Prince of Wales, 1762-1811. Longman Publishing.

Rutherford, Edward. ((1997) London. The Random House Publishing Group