

On June 26, 1830, George IV. had died in his sixty-eighth year, unregretted by any single class of his subjects. It was a great boon to the nation that his successor was a prince of a very different stamp.

Accession of
William IV.

William, Duke of Clarence, the king's next surviving brother, who now ascended the throne under the name of William IV., was a simple, good-hearted, genial old man, who had served with credit in the navy, and had long occupied the honorary post of Lord High Admiral. His intelligence was limited, but his intentions were good, and no one could dislike or despise him. The only thing against him was an eccentricity which sometimes led him into absurd speeches and actions, and made men fear that he was tainted with the insanity of his father, George III. Fortunately their dread turned out to be unfounded; he kept his head and made an admirable constitutional king. It was of enormous benefit to the nation as well as the monarchy that he was not a party man like his brother, and got on with the Whigs as well as with the Tories. He had married late in life (1818) and had two daughters, but both of them died in infancy, so that the succession to the throne now passed to his ten-year-old niece Alexandrina Victoria, the only child of Edward Duke of Kent, the fourth son of George III.

During the very week in which William IV. ascended the throne the political horizon of Europe grew overcast. The domination of the "Holy Alliance" was suddenly threatened by popular risings in every region of the continent, the natural result of fifteen years of despotic rule, during which every national and constitutional aspiration had been crushed by brute force. The trouble began in Paris, where the narrow-minded and reactionary Charles X. was expelled by a revolt in which the army joined the mob. France did not become a red republic, as many had feared, but merely changed its dynasty; for Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, a very astute

Europe in
1830—Louis
Philippe
"King of
the French."