

Parliament ordered a searching investigation, and happily was able to make the South Sea directors refund a large part of their ill-gotten gains.

9. Only a single leading statesman had opposed the South Sea Scheme, and had pointed out the ruin it was sure to entail. This was Robert Walpole, who became Prime Minister in 1721, and *Sir Robert Walpole* in 1725. For nearly twenty years he was the real ruler of England. In maintaining his control of Parliament, he did not scruple to employ means which cannot be defended, nor to own as his motto, "Every man has his price."

**Sir Robert
Walpole.**

10. In June 1722 died John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough. The remains of the great general were interred in Westminster Abbey. About the same time Bolingbroke was pardoned, and allowed to return to England.

**Death of
Marl-
borough.**

11. In June 1727, King George I. left England to pay his usual summer visit to his ancestral domain in Hanover. As he was journeying thither near Osnabrück, he died in his carriage of a sudden attack of apoplexy.

**Death of
George I.**

CHAPTER XLVI.

HOUSE OF HANOVER.—GEORGE II. 1727 to 1760 A.D.

1. George I. was peaceably succeeded by his only son, who ascended the throne as George II. The new King was of the mature age of forty-four when he began to reign. Like his father, with whom, however, he had been on very bad terms, he was a German both by birth and in sympathies. He possessed a fair mastery of English, though he spoke it with a decidedly foreign accent. While diminutive in stature, he was personally brave and fond of military life. He was also characterized by excellent business habits. His wife was the Princess Caroline of Anspach, a lady of beauty and great force of character. Caroline was, indeed, one of the most important political factors of her husband's reign. Her influence over George was particularly shown in the continuance in office of Sir Robert Walpole, whose dismissal every one expected, from the previously existing enmity between him and the new King when Prince of Wales. The Queen had the sagacity to see that Walpole was the only statesman capable of guiding her husband amid the difficulties which surrounded him.

**Accession
and char-
acter of
George II.**

2. We have already alluded to the art by which Walpole secured