

by a court-martial and condemned to be shot for *not having done the best he could*. The execution of this cruel sentence excited deep feeling in the country. The failure to relieve Minorca was followed by other disasters, and the outlook for England was gloomy in the extreme.

17. In 1754, the Prime Minister, Henry Pelham, had died. His immediate successor was his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, an incompetent man, who was forced by public opinion to retire in 1756. Then came into power one of the greatest

**William
Pitt.**

Englishmen that ever lived, William Pitt, known popularly as *The Great Commoner*. First the Duke of Devonshire was associated as Prime Minister with Pitt, and afterwards the Duke of Newcastle; but the real power was in Pitt's hands. His eloquence in Parliament was only equalled by his lofty patriotism and by the grandeur of his ambition. After he had been a year in office, the King dismissed him, but was glad to recall him on receipt of the tidings that the Duke of Cumberland had suffered an overwhelming defeat in Hanover. Pitt soon revived the tarnished reputation of his country.

18. In 1758 there began, under the directing genius of Pitt, that series of events which in the following year resulted in the conquest of Canada. The French were driven from the forts of Ticonderoga and Crown Point. The island of Cape Breton, adjoining Nova Scotia, fell into our possession

**The con-
quest of
Canada.**

by the capture of the important fortress of Louisburg. In September 1759, Quebec on the St Lawrence, the chief stronghold of the French in Canada, was taken after a desperate battle on the neighboring Plains of Abraham, in which both the French commander, Montcalm, and the English general, Wolfe, were mortally wounded. Within the following year the complete conquest of Canada was effected.

19. *The East India Company* has already been mentioned. It grew

India. gradually in wealth and power both by the new charters granted it by successive Governments and by the extension of its trade in the East. In dealing with the native princes of India, the Company assumed the possession of almost sovereign powers. Its influence was now greatly extended by the genius of one of its servants, Robert Clive. Clive dispossessed the French of the Carnatic, and by defeating Suraj-ad-Dowla, a native ruler, added the whole of Bengal to the Company's dominions. Suraj-ad-Dowla had previously captured the small English station of Calcutta, and had confined the captives taken, to the number of 146, in the notorious *Black Hole of Calcutta*, a room only twenty feet square, with two small windows. But *twenty-three* of the unhappy prisoners survived the horrors of that awful night. The *Battle of Plassey*, in which Clive took signal and summary vengeance for this inhuman outrage, was fought on June 23rd, 1757.

20. The conquest of Canada was not the only success attending British arms in 1759. An allied force gained the *Battle of Minden*