

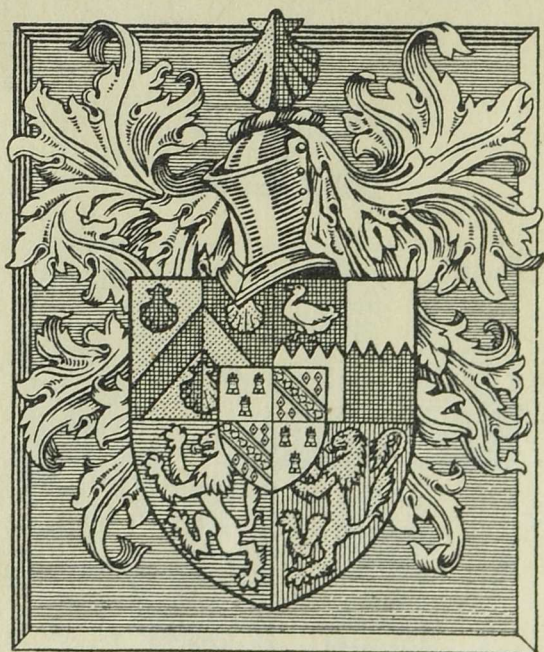
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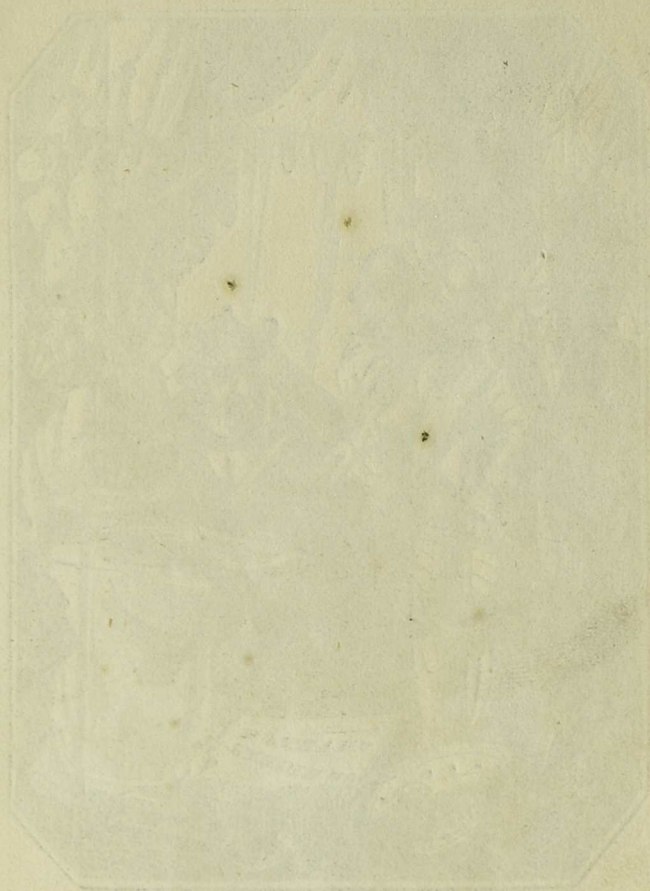
THE ROUND TABLE.

—

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THE ROUND TABLE.

OF THE



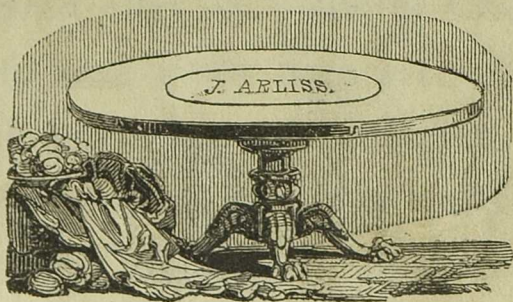
The Round Table.



KING JOHN SIGNING MAGNA CHARTA.

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OR,
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INTRODUCTION.

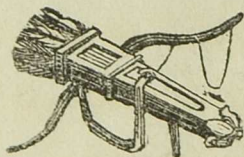


KING ARTHUR is said to have disappeared after the battle of Camlan, and to have never been seen again ; which gave rise to a tradition, that he had been carried away by Merlin, a famous prophet and magician of his time, and would return to his kingdom at some future period.—The Welch continued to expect him for many hundred years ; and it is

by no means certain that they have entirely given him up. He is here represented as inhabiting a solitary island, under the influence of the prophet Merlin ; by whose magic power he is shown all the kings and queens who have sat on his throne since his death, and giving to them a grand feast, at his old established round table, attended by their principal secretaries, dukes, lords, admirals, generals, poets, and a long train of courtiers. The kings are of course mentioned in the order of succession. The allegory is illustrated as concisely as possible in the notes. So many histories of



England being published for the use of young persons, we have only attached the names of the kings, and to such instances as might not be considered sufficiently explanatory.



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KING ARTHUR'S FEAST.

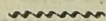
THE ROUND TABLE.



KING ARTHUR sat down by the lonely
sea-coast,
As thin as a lath, and as pale as a ghost:
He looked on the east, and the west,
and the south, [mouth;
With a tear in his eye, and a pipe in his

And he said to old Merlin, who near
him did stand,
Drawing circles, triangles, and squares
on the sand,
“ Sure nothing more dismal and tedious
can be,
Than to sit always smoking and watch-
ing the sea :
Say when shall the fates re-establish my
reign,
And spread my round-table in Britain
again ? ”

Old Merlin replied : “ By my art it
appears,
Not in less than three hundred and
seventy years ;
But in the mean time I am very well
able
To spread in this island your ancient
round table ;



And to grace it with guests of unpa-
rallelled splendour,
I'll summon old Pluto forthwith to
surrender
All the kings who have sat on your
throne, from the day
When from Camlan's destruction I
snatched you away."

King Arthur's long face, by these
accents restored,
Grew as round as his table, as bright
as his sword ;
While the wand of old Merlin waved
over the ocean,
Soon covered its billows with brilliant
commotion ;
For ships of all ages and sizes ap-
pearing,
Towards the same shore were all ra-
pidly steering,



Came cleaving the billows with sail and
with oar, [venty-four.

Yacht, pinnace, sloop, frigate, and se-

King Arthur scarce spied them afar
from the land, [yellow sea-sand;
Ere their keels were fixed deep in the



And from under their canopies, golden
and gay,
Came kings, queens, and courtiers, in
gallant array,
Much musing and marvelling who it
might be, [of the sea ;
That was smoking his pipe by the side

But Merlin stepped forth with a greet-
ing right warm,
And then introduced them in order and
form.

The Saxons* came first, the pre-
eminence claiming,
With scarce one among them but Alfred
worth naming.
Full sily they looked upon Canute†
the bold,
And remembered the drubbing he gave
them of old:

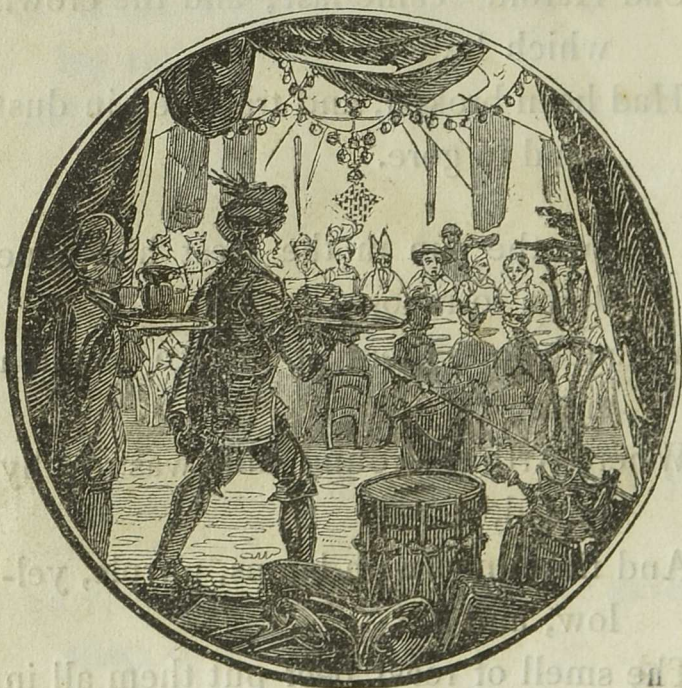
* The Saxons invaded England, and dispossessed the Britons. The most famous of the Saxon kings was Alfred.

† The Danes, under Canute, conquered the Saxons. The sons of Canute died without children, and the government returned to the Saxon kings.

Sad Harold* came last; and the crown
which he wore
Had been broken, and trampled in dust
and in gore.

Now the sun in the west had gone
down to repose,
When before them at once a pavilion
arose;
Where Arthur's round table was royally
spread,
And illumined with lamps, purple, yellow,
and red.
The smell of roast beef put them all in
a foment,
So they scrambled for seats, and were
ranged in a moment.

* The last of the Saxon kings was Harold II. who was killed in the battle of Hastings, when William, Duke of Normandy, gained a decisive victory.



The Conqueror* stood up, as they
thought, to say grace ;
But he scowled round the board with a
resolute face ;

* William I. the Conqueror.



And the company stared, when he swore
by the fates,
That a list he would have of their names
and estates ;*

* Domesday Book.

And lest too much liquor their brains
should inspire
To set the pavilion and table on fire,
He hoped they'd acknowledge he coun-
selled right well,
To put out the lights when he tinkled
his bell.*

His speech was cut short by a general
dismay ;
For William the Second† had fainted
away,
At the smell of some New Forest Ve-
nison‡ before him ;
But a tweak of the nose, Arthur said,
would restore him.

* The curfew.

† William II. Rufus.

‡ Accidentally killed by an arrow while hunting
in the New Forest.



But another disturbance compelled
him to mark
The pitiful state of poor Henry Beau-
clerk ; *

* Henry I. Beauclerk.

Who had fallen on the lampreys with
ardour so stout,*
That he dropped from his chair in the
midst of the rout.
Old Arthur, surprised at a king so voracious,
Thought a salt-water ducking might
prove efficacious.

Now Stephen,† for whom some bold
barons had carved,‡
Said, while some could get surfeited, he
was half-starved :
For his arms were so pinioned, unfor-
tunate elf!§ [himself.
He could hit on no method of helping

* Died eating lampreys.

† Stephen, of Bloix.

‡ Held in subjection by the barons.

§ And so restricted in his authority, that he had little more than the name of a king.

~~~~~  
But a tumult more furious called  
Arthur to check it,

'Twixt Henry the Second\* and Thomas-  
a-Becket.†

“ Turn out,” exclaimed Arthur, “ that  
prelate so free,

And from the first rock see him thrown  
in the sea.”

So they hustled out Becket without  
judge or jury, [fury.

Who quickly returned in a terrible  
The lords were enraged, and the ladies  
affrighted ;

But his head was soon cracked in the  
fray he excited ;

---

\* Henry II. Fitz-Empress.

† Quarrelled with his minister, Thomas-a-Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was compelled to fly the country ; but afterwards returning, was murdered by some followers of the king ; for which Henry was forced to do penance, and was whipped by the monks at Becket's tomb.





When in rushed some monks in a great  
perturbation,  
And gave good King Henry a sound  
flagellation ;  
Which so coolly he took, that the pre-  
sident swore,  
He ne'er saw such a bigotted milk-sop  
before.



But Arthur's good humour was quickly  
restored,  
When to lion-heart Richard\* a bumper  
he poured ;

---

\* Richard Cœur-de-Lion.

Whose pilgrim's array told the tale of  
his toils,  
Half-veiling his arms and his Saracen  
spoils ; \*  
As he sliced up the venison of merry  
Sherwood,  
He told a long story of bold Robin Hood, †  
Which gave good King Arthur such  
hearty delight,  
That he vow'd he'd make Robin a  
round-table knight.

While Merlin to fetch Robin Hood  
was preparing,  
John Lackland ‡ was blustering, and  
vapouring, and swearing,

---

\* Returned in a pilgrim's disguise through Europe from his wars in the Holy Land.

† In his time lived Robin Hood, the celebrated robber of Sherwood Forest.

‡ King John, surnamed Lackland.



And seemed quite determined the roast  
 to be ruling ;\*  
 But some stout fellows near him pre-  
 pared him a cooling ;  
 Who seized him, and held him, nor gave  
 him release,  
 Till he signed them a bond for pre-  
 serving the peace.†

While Henry the Third,‡ dull, con-  
 temned, and forsaken,  
 Sat stupidly silent, regaling on Bacon,§

---

\* Ambitious of absolute power.

† Forced by his barons to sign Magna Charta.

‡ Henry III. of Winchester.

§ A weak and foolish king, in whose reign lived Friar Bacon.

The First of the Edwards\* charmed  
 Arthur with tales [Wales; †  
 Of fighting in Palestine, Scotland, and  
 But Merlin asserted his angry regards,  
 Recollecting how Edward had treated  
 the Bards. ‡

The Second, § whose days in affliction  
 had run, || [and son.  
 Sat pensive and sad 'twixt his father  
 But on the Third Edward\*\* resplend-  
 ently glance  
 The blazons of knighthood, and trophies  
 of France; ††

\* Edward I. Longshanks.

† Gained many victories.

‡ Massacred the Welch Bards.

§ Edward II. of Caernarvon.

|| Murdered by his wife's knowledge in Berkeley Castle.

\*\* Edward III.

†† Conquered France in conjunction with his son, the Black Prince.



Beside him his son || in black armour  
appears,  
That yet bears the marks of the field of  
Poictiers.\*

---

\* The battle of Poictiers.



From the festival's pomp, and the  
table's array,  
Pale Richard of Bourdeaux\* turned  
sadly away ;  
The thought of that time his remem-  
brance appals,  
When Famine scowled on him in Pom-  
fret's dark walls.†

Beside him sat Bolingbroke,‡ gloomy  
and stern, [to turn ; §  
Nor dared his dark eyes on his victim  
The wrinkles of care o'er his features  
were spread,  
And thorns lined the crown that encir-  
cled his head. ||

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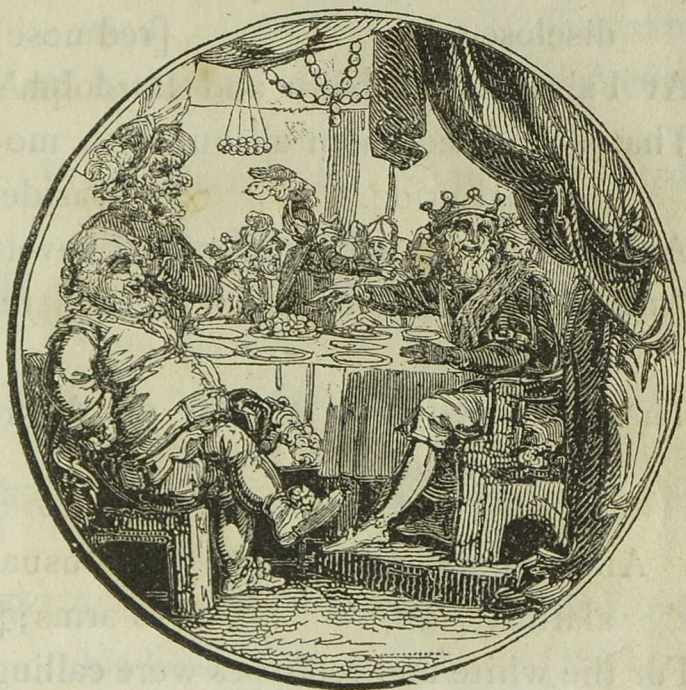
\* Richard II. of Bourdeaux.

† Killed in Pomfret Castle.

‡ Henry IV. Bolingbroke.

§ Obtained the crown by rebelling against Richard II.

|| Was miserable all his reign.



But Harry of Monmouth\* some guests  
had brought in,  
Who drank so much liquor, and made  
such a din,†

---

\* Henry V. of Monmouth.

† Led a very dissolute life while Prince of

(While Arthur full loudly his mirth did  
disclose [red nose)  
At Falstaff's fat belly and Bardolph's  
That he turned them all out with mo-  
narchial pride,\* [aside,  
And laid the plumed cap of his revels  
And put on the helmet, and breastplate,  
and shield,  
That did such great service on Agin-  
court's field.†

And now rang the tent with unusual  
alarms, [to arms; ‡  
For the white and red roses were calling

---

Wales, and kept a set of drunken companions, to whom Shakspeare has given the names of Falstaff, Bardolph, &c.

\* Discarded them when he came to be king.

† And gained great victories in France, particularly the battle of Agincourt.

‡ The civil wars of York and Lancaster, of which respective parties the white and red roses were the emblems.



~~~~~  
Confusion and tumult established their
reign, [in vain.
And Arthur stood up, and called silence

Poor Harry the Sixth,* hustled,
beaten, and prest,
Had his nosegay of lilies† soon torn
from his breast ;
And, though Margaret, to shield him,
had clasped him around,‡
From her arms he was shaken, and
hurled to the ground ;§
While Edward of York|| flourished over
his head [the red ;
The rose's pale blossoms, and trampled

* Henry VI. of Windsor.

† Lost the kingdom of France.

‡ Supported by his queen, Margaret.

§ Overcome by the York party, and made a prisoner in the tower.

|| Edward IV. raised to the throne by the aid of the Earl of Warwick ; who afterwards quarrelled with Edward, and endeavoured to restore Henry, but without success.

Though Warwick strove vainly the ill
to repair,
And set fallen Henry again on his chair.

The children* of Edward stood up in
the fray,
But, touched by cruel Richard,† they
vanished away ;
Who, knowing none loved him, resolved
all should fear him,
And therefore knocked every one down
who was near him.
Till him in his turn Harry Richmond‡
assailed, [order prevailed ;
And at once, on his downfall, good

* Edward V. and his brother, the Duke of York, died while children, supposed to have been murdered in the Tower by order of their uncle Richard.

† Richard III. a cruel and sanguinary tyrant.

‡ Conquered in the battle of Bosworth by Henry of Richmond, afterwards Henry VII.



And Richmond uplifted, to prove the
 strife ended,
 A wreath where the white and red roses
 were blended.*

* Being himself of the house of Lancaster, married Elizabeth, sister of Edward V. who was

With his Jane, and his Annes, and
his Catherines beside,
Sat Henry the Eighth,* in true Otto-
man pride,
And quaffed off with Wolsey the gob-
let's red tide ;
But over the head of each lady so
fair
An axe was impending, that hung by
a hair.†

of the house of York ; thus uniting the two
houses, and ending the civil wars.

* Henry VIII.

† Had six wives—one Jane, two Annes, and
three Catherines, in the following order :

1. Catherine of Arragon, whom he divorced.
2. Ann Boleyn, whom he beheaded.
3. Jane Seymour, who died in giving birth
to Edward VI.
4. Ann of Cleves, whom he sent back to her
parents.
5. Catherine Howard, whom he beheaded.
6. Catherine Parr, who outlived him.



Bold Arthur, whose fancy this king
had not won,
Look'd with hope and delight on young
Edward* his son ;

* Edward VI. a very promising young prince.

But had scarcely commended his learn-
ing and grace,
Ere he found his attention called off*
to the place
Where the infamous Mary† polluted
the feast,
Who sat drinking blood from the skull
of a priest.‡

But he struggled his horror and rage
to repress,
And sought consolation from worthy
Queen Bess,§

* Died in his sixteenth year.

† Mary. Cruel Queen Mary. Daughter of Henry the Eighth.

‡ Burned three hundred persons for not being of her opinion in religion.

§ Elizabeth. A wise and fortunate queen.

Who had brought Drake and Raleigh
her state to sustain,*
With American spoils and the trophies
of Spain ;
While Shakspeare and Spenser,† with
song and with fable,
Enchanted King Arthur and all round
his table.

Now the First of the James's‡ com-
plained of the heat,
And seemed ill at ease on his ricketty
seat ;

* Her admirals, among whom were Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh, sailed round the world, settled colonies in North America, defeated the Spanish Armada, &c.

† In her reign lived many eminent authors, particularly Shakspeare and Spenser.

‡ James the First.



It proved, when examined (which made
 them all stare),
 A gunpowder barrel instead of a chair.*

* The gunpowder plot, 5th November, 1605.



The First of the Charles's* was clearing the dishes,
Taking more than his share of the loaves
and the fishes,†

* Charles I.

† Overstrained his prerogative; encroached on

Not minding at all what the company
said,
When up started Cromwell, and sliced
off his head.*

Charles the Second,† enraged at the
villainous deed,
Tried to turn out old Cromwell, but
could not succeed ;
But he mastered young Dick, and then
cooled his own wrath
In syllabub, trifle, and fillagree broth.‡

the liberties of the people, and on the privileges of parliament. The consequence was a civil war and the loss of his head.

* The Commonwealth succeeded, at the head of which was Oliver Cromwell. He was succeeded by his son Richard, who was displaced by the restoration of Charles II.

† Charles II.

‡ A frivolous and dissolute king.

~~~~~

James the Second,\* with looks full  
 of anger and gloom,  
 Pronounced nothing good but the cook-  
 ery of Rome;†  
 So begged of King Arthur, his dear  
 royal crony,  
 To make all the company eat macaroni;‡  
 But Arthur bade Mary an orange pre-  
 sent,§ [from the tent.  
 At which James grew queasy, and fled  
 So she placed on his seat honest Wil-  
 liam,|| her spouse, [brows; \*\*  
 And with laurel and olive encircled his

---

\* James II.

† A bigoted Roman Catholic.

‡ Used violent measures to establish that religion in England.

§ Was obliged to fly the country; and the crown devolved to his daughter Mary, and her husband, William, Prince of Orange.

|| William III.

\*\* His reign was distinguished by foreign victories and domestic prosperity.

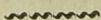


Wreath of glory and peace, by young  
 Freedom entwined,\* [mind.  
 And gave him a key to the lock\* of the

---

\* By being the origin of the present form of the English constitution, in the glorious revolution of 1688; and by the life and writings of the philosopher Locke.





Now as Arthur continued the party  
to scan,

He did not well know what to make of  
Queen Anne;\*

But Marlborough,† he saw, did her  
credit uplift,

And he heartily laughed at the jokes of  
Dean Swift.‡

Then shook hands with two Georges,§  
who near him were seated,

Who closed in his left, and the circle  
completed ;

---

\* Anne.

† Her general, the Duke of Marlborough,  
gained several great victories in France.

‡ Many eminent literary characters flourished  
in her time, particularly Swift and Pope.

§ The House of Hanover.

George I.

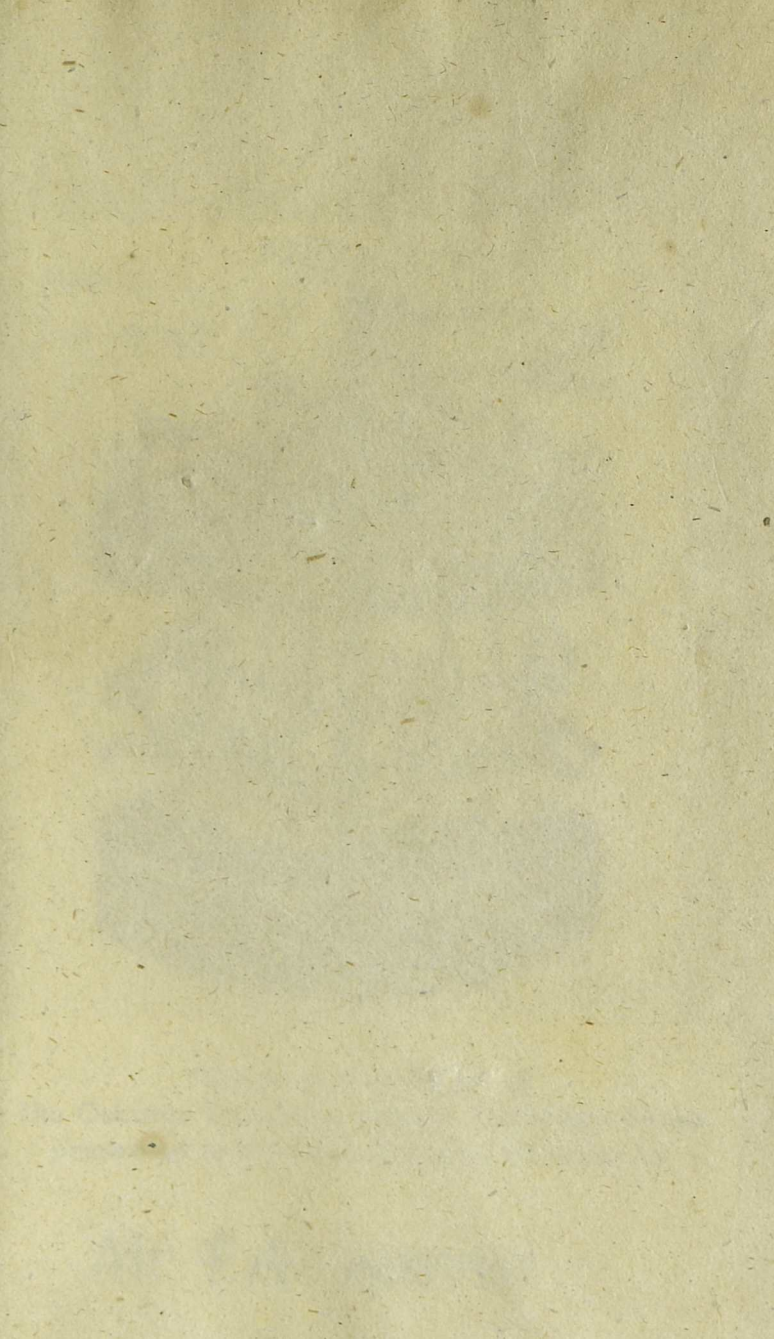
George II.

George III.



He liked them both well, but he frankly  
averred,  
He expected to prove better pleased  
with the Third.

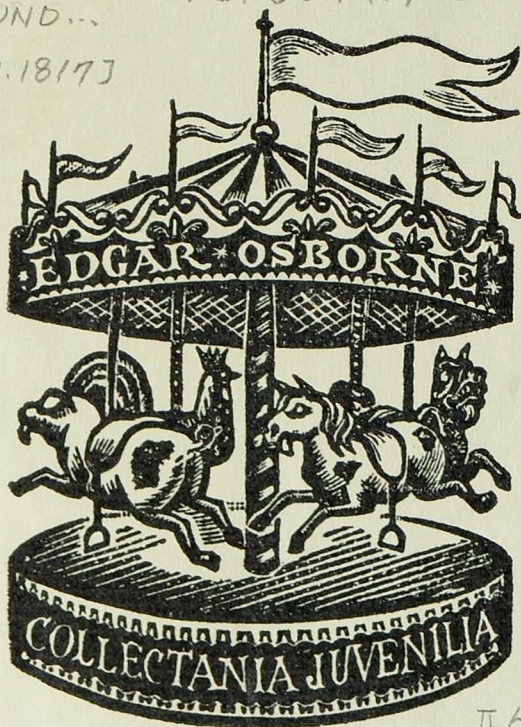
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