

THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND

FROM THE
ACCESSION OF JAMES THE SECOND.

BY
LORD MACAULAY.

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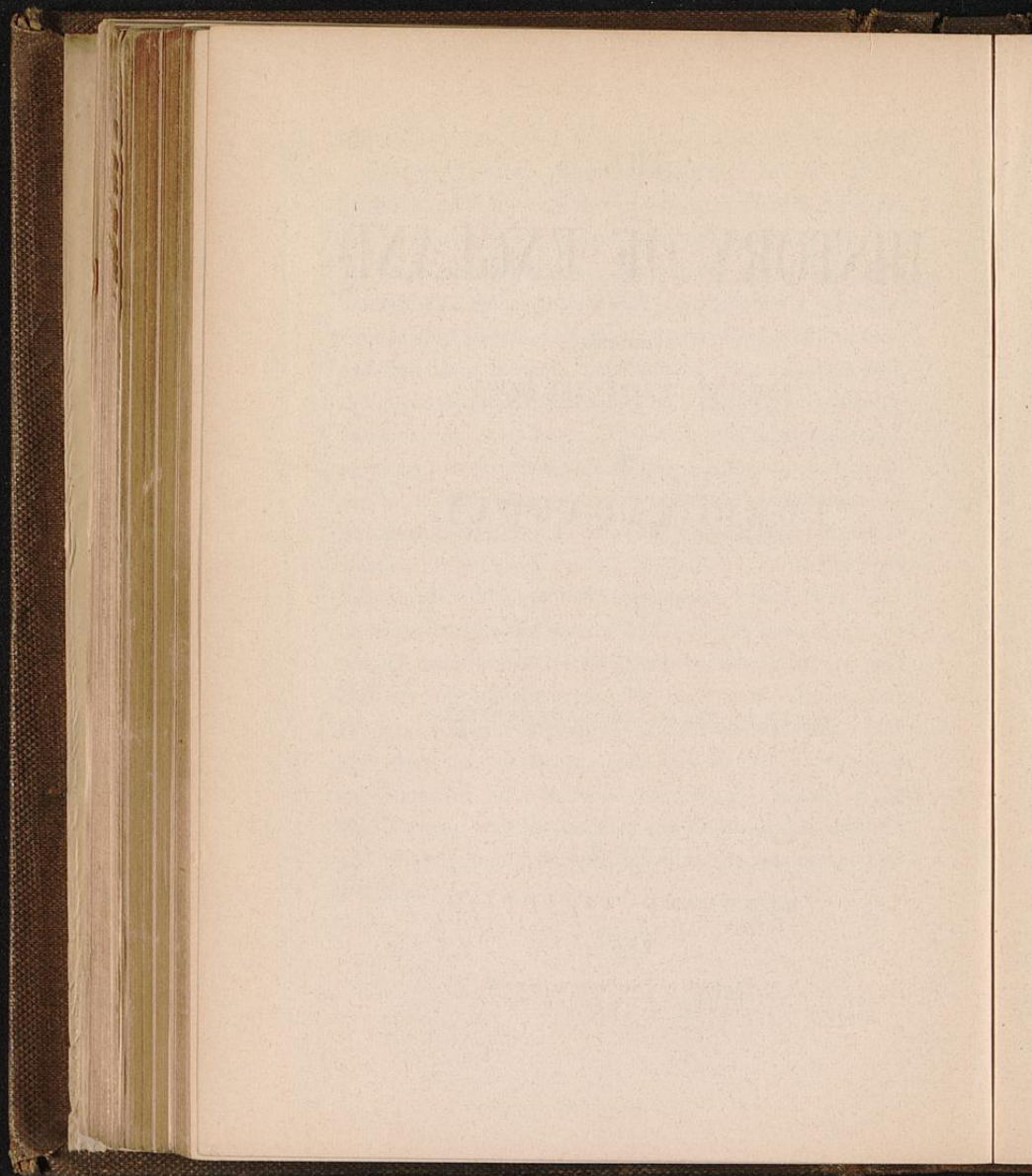
VOL. X.

EDITED BY HIS SISTER, LADY TREVELYAN.

LEIPZIG
BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1861.

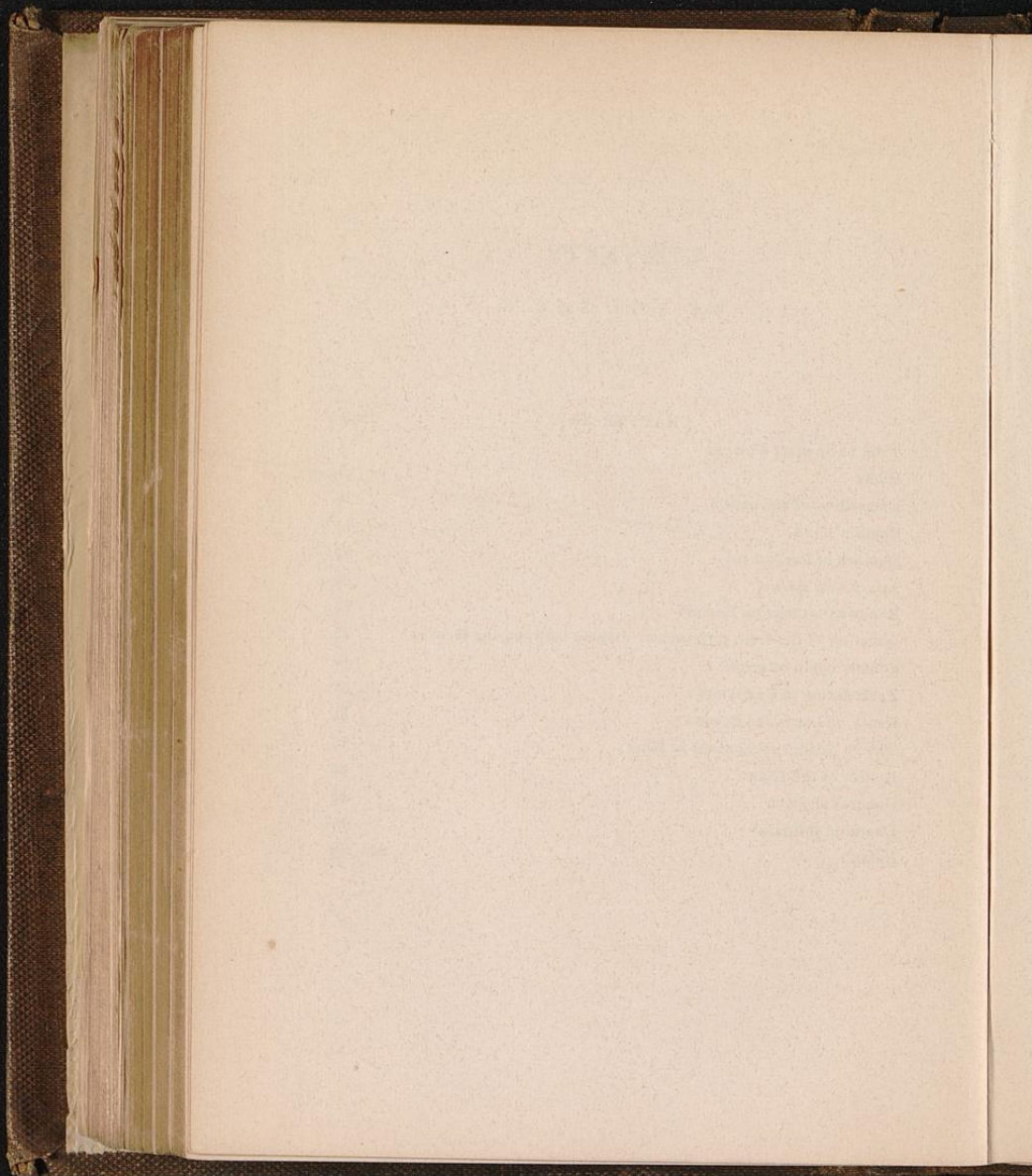
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CHAPTER XXV.

THE passions which had agitated the Parliament during the late session continued to ferment in the minds of men during the recess, and, having no longer a vent in the senate, broke forth in every part of the empire, destroyed the peace of towns, brought into peril the honour and the lives of innocent men, and impelled magistrates to leave the bench of justice and attack one another sword in hand. Private calamities, private brawls, which had nothing to do with the disputes between court and country, were turned by the political animosities of that unhappy summer into grave political events.

One mournful tale, which called forth the strongest feelings of the contending factions, is still remembered as a curious part of the history of our jurisprudence, and especially of the history of our medical jurisprudence. No Whig member of the Lower House, with the single exception of Montague, filled a larger space in the public

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Trial of
Spencer
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Macaulay, History. X.

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eye than William Cowper. In the art of conciliating an audience, Cowper was preeminent. His graceful and engaging eloquence cast a spell on juries; and the Commons, even in those stormy moments when no other defender of the administration could obtain a hearing, would always listen to him. He represented Hertford, a borough in which his family had considerable influence: but there was a strong Tory minority among the electors; and he had not won his seat without a hard fight, which had left behind it many bitter recollections. His younger brother Spencer, a man of parts and learning, was fast rising into practice as a barrister on the Home Circuit.

At Hertford resided an opulent Quaker family named Stout. A pretty young woman of this family had lately sunk into a melancholy of a kind not very unusual in girls of strong sensibility and lively imagination who are subject to the restraints of austere religious societies. Her dress, her looks, her gestures, indicated the disturbance of her mind. She sometimes hinted her dislike of the sect to which she belonged. She complained that a canting waterman who was one of the brotherhood had held forth against her at a meeting. She threatened to go beyond sea, to throw herself out of window, to drown herself. To two or three of her associates she owned that she was in love; and on one occasion she plainly said that the man whom she loved was one whom she never could marry. In fact, the object of her fondness was Spencer

Cowper, who was already married. She at length wrote to him in language which she never would have used if her intellect had not been disordered. He, like an honest man, took no advantage of her unhappy state of mind, and did his best to avoid her. His prudence mortified her to such a degree that on one occasion she went into fits. It was necessary, however, that he should see her, when he came to Hertford at the spring assizes of 1699. For he had been entrusted with some money which was due to her on mortgage. He called on her for this purpose late one evening, and delivered a bag of gold to her. She pressed him to be the guest of her family; but he excused himself and retired. The next morning she was found dead among the stakes of a mill dam on the stream called the Priory River. That she had destroyed herself there could be no reasonable doubt. The coroner's inquest found that she had drowned herself while in a state of mental derangement. But her family was unwilling to admit that she had shortened her own life, and looked about for somebody who might be accused of murdering her. The last person who could be proved to have been in her company was Spencer Cowper. It chanced that two attorneys and a scrivener, who had come down from town to the Hertford assizes, had been overheard, on that unhappy night, talking over their wine about the charms and flirtations of the handsome Quaker girl, in the light way in which such subjects are sometimes discussed even at the circuit tables and

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mess tables of our more refined generation. Some wild words, susceptible of a double meaning, were used about the way in which she had jilted one lover, and the way in which another lover would punish her for her coquetry. On no better grounds than these her relations imagined that Spencer Cowper had, with the assistance of these three retainers of the law, strangled her, and thrown her corpse into the water. There was absolutely no evidence of the crime. There was no evidence that any one of the accused had any motive to commit such a crime; there was no evidence that Spencer Cowper had any connection with the persons who were said to be his accomplices. One of those persons, indeed, he had never seen. But no story is too absurd to be imposed on minds blinded by religious and political fanaticism. The Quakers and the Tories joined to raise a formidable clamour. The Quakers had, in those days, no scruples about capital punishments. They would, indeed, as Spencer Cowper said bitterly, but too truly, rather send four innocent men to the gallows than let it be believed that one who had their light within her had committed suicide. The Tories exulted in the prospect of winning two seats from the Whigs. The whole kingdom was divided between Stouts and Cowpers. At the summer assizes Hertford was crowded with anxious faces from London and from parts of England more distant than London. The prosecution was conducted with a malignity and unfairness which to us seem almost in-

credible; and, unfortunately, the dullest and most ignorant judge of the twelve was on the bench. Cowper defended himself and those who were said to be his accomplices with admirable ability and self possession. His brother, much more distressed than himself, sate near him through the long agony of that day. The case against the prisoners rested chiefly on the vulgar error that a human body, found, as this poor girl's body had been found, floating in water, must have been thrown into the water while still alive. To prove this doctrine the counsel for the Crown called medical practitioners, of whom nothing is now known except that some of them had been active against the Whigs at Hertford elections. To confirm the evidence of these gentlemen two or three sailors were put into the witness box. On the other side appeared an array of men of science whose names are still remembered. Among them was William Cowper, not a kinsman of the defendant, but the most celebrated anatomist that England had then produced. He was, indeed, the founder of a dynasty illustrious in the history of science: for he was the teacher of William Cheselden, and William Cheselden was the teacher of John Hunter. On the same side appeared Samuel Garth, who, among the physicians of the capital, had no rival except Radcliffe, and Hans Sloane, the founder of the magnificent museum which is one of the glories of our country. The attempt of the prosecutors to make the superstitions of the forecastle evidence for the purpose of

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taking away the lives of men was treated by these philosophers with just disdain. The stupid judge asked Garth what he could say in answer to the testimony of the seamen. "My Lord," replied Garth, "I say that they are mistaken. I will find seamen in abundance to swear that they have known whistling raise the wind."

The jury found the prisoners Not guilty; and the report carried back to London by persons who had been present at the trial was that everybody applauded the verdict, and that even the Stouts seemed to be convinced of their error. It is certain, however, that the malevolence of the defeated party soon revived in all its energy. The lives of the four men who had just been absolved were again attacked by means of the most absurd and odious proceeding known to our old law, the appeal of murder. This attack too failed. Every artifice of chicane was at length exhausted; and nothing was left to the disappointed sect and the disappointed faction except to calumniate those whom it had been found impossible to murder. In a succession of libels Spencer Cowper was held up to the execration of the public. But the public did him justice. He rose to high eminence in his profession: he at length took his seat, with general applause, on the judicial bench, and there distinguished himself by the humanity which he never failed to show to unhappy men who stood, as he had once stood, at the bar. Many who seldom trouble themselves about pedigrees may be in-

terested by learning that he was the grandfather of that excellent man and excellent poet William Cowper, whose writings have long been peculiarly loved and prized by the members of the religious community which, under a strong delusion, sought to slay his innocent progenitor.*

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Though Spencer Cowper had escaped with life and honour, the Tories had carried their point. They had secured against the next election the support of the Quakers of Hertford; and the consequence was that the borough was lost to the family and to the party which had lately predominated there.

In the very week in which the great trial took place ^{Duels.} at Hertford, a feud arising out of the late election for Buckinghamshire very nearly produced fatal effects. Wharton, the chief of the Buckinghamshire Whigs, had with difficulty succeeded in bringing in his brother as one of the knights of the shire. Graham Viscount Cheyney, of the kingdom of Scotland, had been returned at the head of the poll by the Tories. The two noblemen met at the quarter sessions. In England Cheyney was before the Union merely an Esquire. Wharton was un-

* It is curious that all Cowper's biographers with whom I am acquainted, Hayley, Southey, Grimshawe, Chalmers, mention the Judge, the common ancestor of the poet, of his first love Theodora Cowper, and of Lady Hesketh; but that none of those biographers makes the faintest allusion to the Hertford trial, the most remarkable event in the history of the family; nor do I believe that any allusion to that trial can be found in any of the poet's numerous letters.

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doubtedly entitled to take place of him, and had repeatedly taken place of him without any dispute. But angry passions now ran so high that a decent pretext for indulging them was hardly thought necessary. Cheyney fastened a quarrel on Wharton. They drew. Wharton, whose cool good humoured courage and skill in fence were the envy of all the swordsmen of that age, closed with his quarrelsome neighbour, disarmed him, and gave him his life.

A more tragical duel had just taken place at Westminster. Conway Seymour, the eldest son of Sir Edward Seymour, had lately come of age. He was in possession of an independent fortune of seven thousand pounds a year, which he lavished in costly fopperies. The town had nicknamed him Beau Seymour. He was displaying his curls and his embroidery in Saint James's Park on a midsummer evening, after indulging too freely in wine, when a young officer of the Blues named Kirke, who was as tipsy as himself, passed near him. "There goes Beau Seymour," said Kirke. Seymour flew into a rage. Angry words were exchanged between the foolish boys. They immediately went beyond the precincts of the Court, drew, and exchanged some pushes. Seymour was wounded in the neck. The wound was not very serious; but, when his cure was only half completed, he revelled in fruit, ice and Burgundy till he threw himself into a violent fever. Though a coxcomb and a voluptuary, he seems to have had some fine qualities. On the last

day of his life he saw Kirke. Kirke implored forgiveness; and the dying man declared that he forgave as he hoped to be forgiven. There can be no doubt that a person who kills another in a duel is, according to law, guilty of murder. But the law had never been strictly enforced against gentlemen in such cases; and in this case there was no peculiar atrocity, no deep seated malice, no suspicion of foul play. Sir Edward, however, vehemently declared that he would have life for life. Much indulgence is due to the resentment of an affectionate father maddened by the loss of a son. But there is but too much reason to believe that the implacability of Seymour was the implacability, not of an affectionate father, but of a factious and malignant agitator. He tried to make what is, in the jargon of our time, called political capital out of the desolation of his house and the blood of his first born. A brawl between two dissolute youths, a brawl distinguished by nothing but its unhappy result from the hundred brawls which took place every month in theatres and taverns, he magnified into an attack on the liberties of the nation, an attempt to introduce a military tyranny. The question was whether a soldier was to be permitted to insult English gentlemen, and, if they murmured, to cut their throats? It was moved in the Court of King's Bench that Kirke should either be brought to immediate trial or admitted to bail. Shower, as counsel for Seymour, opposed the motion. But Seymour was not content to leave the case in Shower's

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hands. In defiance of all decency, he went to Westminster Hall, demanded a hearing, and pronounced a harangue against standing armies. "Here," he said, "is a man who lives on money taken out of our pockets. The plea set up for taxing us in order to support him is that his sword protects us, and enables us to live in peace and security. And is he to be suffered to use that sword to destroy us?" Kirke was tried and found guilty of manslaughter. In his case, as in the case of Spencer Cowper, an attempt was made to obtain a writ of appeal. The attempt failed; and Seymour was disappointed of his revenge: but he was not left without consolation. If he had lost a son, he had found, what he seems to have prized quite as much, a fertile theme for invective.

Discon-
tent of
the na-
tion.

The King, on his return from the Continent, found his subjects in no bland humour. All Scotland, exasperated by the fate of the first expedition to Darien, and anxiously waiting for news of the second, called loudly for a Parliament. Several of the Scottish peers carried to Kensington an address which was subscribed by thirty six of their body, and which earnestly pressed William to convoke the Estates at Edinburgh, and to redress the wrongs which had been done to the colony of New Caledonia. A petition to the same effect was widely circulated among the commonalty of his Northern kingdom, and received, if report could be trusted, not less than thirty thousand signatures. Discontent was far from being as violent in England as in

Scotland. Yet in England there was discontent enough to make even a resolute prince uneasy. The time drew near at which the Houses must reassemble; and how were the Commons to be managed? Montague, enraged, mortified, and intimidated by the baiting of the last session, was fully determined not again to appear in the character of chief minister of finance. The secure and luxurious retreat which he had, some months ago, prepared for himself was awaiting him. He took the Auditorship, and resigned his other places. Smith became Chancellor of the Exchequer. A new commission of Treasury issued; and the first name was that of Tankerville. He had entered on his career, more than twenty years before, with the fairest hopes, young, noble, nobly allied, of distinguished abilities, of graceful manners. There was no more brilliant man of fashion in the theatre and in the ring. There was no more popular tribune in Guildhall. Such was the commencement of a life so miserable that all the indignation excited by great faults is overpowered by pity. A guilty passion, amounting to a madness, left on the moral character of the unhappy man a stain at which even libertines looked grave. He tried to make the errors of his private life forgotten by splendid and perilous services to a public cause; and, having endured in that cause penury and exile, the gloom of a dungeon, the prospect of a scaffold, the ruin of a noble estate, he was so unfortunate as to be regarded by the party for which he had sacrificed everything as a coward, if not a traitor. Yet, even against

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such accumulated disasters and disgraces, his vigorous and aspiring mind bore up. His parts and eloquence gained for him the ear of the House of Lords; and at length, though not till his constitution was so broken that he was fitter for flannel and cushions than for a laborious office at Whitehall, he was put at the head of one of the most important departments of the administration. It might have been expected that this appointment would call forth clamours from widely different quarters; that the Tories would be offended by the elevation of a rebel; that the Whigs would set up a cry against the captain to whose treachery or faint-heartedness they had been in the habit of imputing the rout of Sedgemoor; and that the whole of that great body of Englishmen which cannot be said to be steadily Whig or Tory, but which is zealous for decency and the domestic virtues, would see with indignation a signal mark of royal favour bestowed on one who had been convicted of debauching a noble damsel, the sister of his own wife. But so capricious is public feeling that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to find, in any of the letters, essays, dialogues, and poems which bear the date of 1699 or of 1700, a single allusion to the vices or misfortunes of the new First Lord of the Treasury. It is probable that his infirm health and his isolated position were his protection. The chiefs of the opposition did not fear him enough to hate him. The Whig Junto was still their terror and their abhorrence. They continued to assail Montague and Orford, though with somewhat less ferocity than while

Montague had the direction of the finances, and Orford of the marine. But the utmost spite of all the leading malecontents was concentrated on one object, the great magistrate who still held the highest civil post in the realm, and who was evidently determined to hold it in defiance of them. It was not so easy to get rid of him as it had been to drive his colleagues from office. His abilities the most intolerant Tories were forced grudgingly to acknowledge. His integrity might be questioned in nameless libels and in coffeehouse tattle, but was certain to come forth bright and pure from the most severe Parliamentary investigation. Nor was he guilty of those faults of temper and of manner to which, more than to any grave delinquency, the unpopularity of his associates is to be ascribed. He had as little of the insolence and perverseness of Orford as of the petulance and vain-gloriousness of Montague. One of the most severe trials to which the head and heart of man can be put is great and rapid elevation. To that trial both Montague and Somers were put. It was too much for Montague. But Somers was found equal to it. He was the son of a country attorney. At thirty seven he had been sitting in a stuff gown on a back bench in the Court of King's Bench. At forty two he was the first lay dignitary of the realm, and took precedence of the Archbishop of York, and of the Duke of Norfolk. He had risen from a lower point than Montague, had risen as fast as Montague, had risen as high as Montague, and yet had not excited envy such as dogged Montague through a long career.

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Garreteers, who were never weary of calling the cousin of the Earls of Manchester and Sandwich an upstart, could not, without an unwonted sense of shame, apply those words to the Chancellor, who, without one drop of patrician blood in his veins, had taken his place at the head of the patrician order with the quiet dignity of a man ennobled by nature. His serenity, his modesty, his self-command, proof even against the most sudden surprises of passion, his selfrespect, which forced the proudest grandees of the kingdom to respect him, his urbanity, which won the hearts of the youngest lawyers of the Chancery Bar, gained for him many private friends and admirers among the most respectable members of the opposition. But such men as Howe and Seymour hated him implacably: they hated his commanding genius much: they hated the mild majesty of his virtue still more. They sought occasion against him everywhere; and they at length flattered themselves that they had found it.

Captain
Kidd.

Some years before, while the war was still raging, there had been loud complaints in the city that even privateers of St. Malo's and Dunkirk caused less molestation to trade than another class of marauders. The English navy was fully employed in the Channel, in the Atlantic, and in the Mediterranean. The Indian ocean, meanwhile, swarmed with pirates of whose rapacity and cruelty frightful stories were told. Many of these men, it was said, came from our North American colonies, and carried back to those colonies the spoils gained by crime. Adventurers who

durst not show themselves in the Thames found a ready market for their ill-gotten spices and stuffs at New York. CHAP. XXV. 1699. Even the Puritans of New England, who in sanctimonious austerity surpassed even their brethren of Scotland, were accused of conniving at the wickedness which enabled them to enjoy abundantly and cheaply the produce of Indian looms and Chinese tea plantations.

In 1695 Richard Coote, Earl of Bellamont, an Irish peer who sat in the English House of Commons, was appointed Governor of New York and Massachusetts. He was a man of eminently fair character, upright, courageous and independent. Though a decided Whig, he had distinguished himself by bringing before the Parliament at Westminster some tyrannical acts done by Whigs at Dublin, and particularly the execution, if it is not rather to be called the murder, of Gafney. Before Bellamont sailed for America, William spoke strongly to him about the freebooting which was the disgrace of the colonies. "I send you, my Lord, to New York," he said, "because an honest and intrepid man is wanted to put these abuses down, and because I believe you to be such a man." Bellamont exerted himself to justify the high opinion which the King had formed of him. It was soon known at New York that the Governor who had just arrived from England was bent on the suppression of piracy; and some colonists in whom he placed great confidence suggested to him what they may perhaps have thought the best mode of attaining that object. There was then in the

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settlement a veteran mariner named William Kidd. He had passed most of his life on the waves, had distinguished himself by his seamanship, had had opportunities of showing his valour in action with the French, and had retired on a competence. No man knew the Eastern seas better. He was perfectly acquainted with all the haunts of the pirates who prowled between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Malacca; and he would undertake, if he were entrusted with a single ship of thirty or forty guns, to clear the Indian Ocean of the whole race. The brigantines of the rovers were numerous, no doubt; but none of them was large: one man of war, which in the royal navy would hardly rank as a fourth rate, would easily deal with them all in succession; and the lawful spoils of the enemies of mankind would much more than defray the charges of the expedition. Bellamont was charmed with this plan, and recommended it to the King. The King referred it to the Admiralty. The Admiralty raised difficulties; such as are perpetually raised by public boards when any deviation, whether for the better or for the worse, from the established course of proceeding is proposed. It then occurred to Bellamont that his favourite scheme might be carried into effect without any cost to the state. A few public spirited men might easily fit out a privateer which would soon make the Arabian Gulph and the Bay of Bengal secure highways for trade. He wrote to his friends in England imploring, remonstrating, complaining of their lamentable want of public spirit. Six

thousand pounds would be enough. That sum would be repaid, and repaid with large interest, from the sale of prizes; and an inestimable benefit would be conferred on the kingdom and on the world. His urgency succeeded. Shrewsbury and Romney contributed. Orford, though, as first Lord of the Admiralty, he had been unwilling to send Kidd to the Indian ocean with a king's ship, consented to subscribe a thousand pounds. Somers subscribed another thousand. A ship called the Adventure Galley was equipped in the port of London; and Kidd took the command. He carried with him, besides the ordinary letters of marque, a commission under the Great Seal empowering him to seize pirates, and to take them to some place where they might be dealt with according to law. Whatever right the King might have to the goods found in the possession of these malefactors he granted, by letters patent, to the persons who had been at the expense of fitting out the expedition, reserving to himself only one tenth part of the gains of the adventure, which was to be paid into the treasury. With the claim of merchants to have back the property of which they had been robbed His Majesty of course did not interfere. He granted away, and could grant away, no rights but his own.

The press for sailors to man the royal navy was at that time so hot that Kidd could not obtain his full complement of hands in the Thames. He crossed the Atlantic, visited New York, and there found volunteers in abundance. At length, in February 1697, he sailed from the Hudson with

CHAP. a crew of more than a hundred and fifty men, and in July
XXV. reached the coast of Madagascar.
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It is possible that Kidd may at first have meant to act in accordance with his instructions. But, on the subject of piracy, he held the notions which were then common in the North American colonies; and most of his crew were of the same mind. He found himself in a sea which was constantly traversed by rich and defenceless merchant ships; and he had to determine whether he would plunder those ships or protect them. The gain which might be made by plundering them was immense, and might be snatched without the dangers of a battle or the delays of a trial. The rewards of protecting the lawful trade were likely to be comparatively small. Such as they were, they would be got only by first fighting with desperate ruffians who would rather be killed than taken, and by then instituting a proceeding and obtaining a judgment in a Court of Admiralty. The risk of being called to a severe reckoning might not unnaturally seem small to one who had seen many old buccaneers living in comfort and credit at New York and Boston. Kidd soon threw off the character of a privateer, and became a pirate. He established friendly communications, and exchanged arms and ammunition, with the most notorious of those rovers whom his commission authorised him to destroy, and made war on those peaceful traders whom he was sent to defend. He began by robbing Mussulmans, and speedily proceeded from Mussulmans to Armenians, and from Armenians to Por-

tuguese. The Adventure Galley took such quantities of cotton and silk, sugar and coffee, cinnamon and pepper, that the very foremast men received from a hundred to two hundred pounds each, and that the captain's share of the spoil would have enabled him to live at home as an opulent gentleman. With the rapacity Kidd had the cruelty of his odious calling. He burned houses; he massacred peasantry. His prisoners were tied up and beaten with naked cutlasses in order to extort information about their concealed hoards. One of his crew, whom he had called a dog, was provoked into exclaiming, in an agony of remorse, "Yes, I am a dog; but it is you that have made me so." Kidd, in a fury, struck the man dead.

News then travelled very slowly from the eastern seas to England. But, in August 1698, it was known in London that the Adventure Galley from which so much had been hoped was the terror of the merchants of Surat, and of the villagers of the coast of Malabar. It was thought probable that Kidd would carry his booty to some colony. Orders were therefore sent from Whitehall to the governors of the transmarine possessions of the Crown, directing them to be on the watch for him. He meanwhile, having burned his ship and dismissed most of his men, who easily found berths in the sloops of other pirates, returned to New York with the means, as he flattered himself, of making his peace and of living in splendour. He had fabricated a long romance to which Bellamont, naturally unwilling to believe that he had been duped and had been the means of

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duping others, was at first disposed to listen with favour. But the truth soon came out. The governor did his duty firmly; and Kidd was placed in close confinement till orders arrived from the Admiralty that he should be sent to England.

To an intelligent and candid judge of human actions it will not appear that any of the persons at whose expense the Adventure Galley was fitted out deserved serious blame. The worst that could be imputed even to Bellamont, who had drawn in all the rest, was that he had been led into a fault by his ardent zeal for the public service, and by the generosity of a nature as little prone to suspect as to devise villanies. His friends in England might surely be pardoned for giving credit to his recommendation. It is highly probable that the motive which induced some of them to aid his design was genuine public spirit. But, if we suppose them to have had a view to gain, it was to legitimate gain. Their conduct was the very opposite of corrupt. Not only had they taken no money. They had disbursed money largely, and had disbursed it with the certainty that they should never be reimbursed unless the outlay proved beneficial to the public. That they meant well they proved by staking thousands on the success of their plan; and, if they erred in judgment, the loss of those thousands was surely a sufficient punishment for such an error. On this subject there would probably have been no difference of opinion had not Somers been one of the contributors. About the other patrons of Kidd the chiefs of

the opposition cared little. Bellamont was far removed from the political scene. Romney could not, and Shrewsbury would not, play a first part. Orford had resigned his employments. But Somers still held the Great Seal, still presided in the House of Lords, still had constant access to the closet. The retreat of his friends had left him the sole and undisputed head of that party which had, in the late Parliament, been a majority, and which was, in the present Parliament, outnumbered indeed, disorganised and disheartened, but still numerous and respectable. His placid courage rose higher and higher to meet the dangers which threatened him. He provided for himself no refuge. He made no move towards flight; and, without uttering one boastful word, gave his enemies to understand, by the mild firmness of his demeanour, that he dared them to do their worst.

In their eagerness to displace and destroy him they overreached themselves. Had they been content to accuse him of lending his countenance, with a rashness unbecoming his high place, to an ill-concerted scheme, that large part of mankind which judges of a plan simply by the event would probably have thought the accusation well founded. But the malice which they bore to him was not to be so satisfied. They affected to believe that he had from the first been aware of Kidd's character and designs. The Great Seal had been employed to sanction a piratical expedition. The head of the law had laid down a thousand pounds in the hope of receiving tens of thousands

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when his accomplices should return, laden with the spoils of ruined merchants. It was fortunate for the Chancellor that the calumnies of which he was the object were too atrocious to be mischievous.

Meeting
of Parlia-
ment.

And now the time had come at which the hoarded ill-humour of six months was at liberty to explode. On the sixteenth of November the Houses met. The King, in his speech, assured them in gracious and affectionate language that he was determined to do his best to merit their love by constant care to preserve their liberty and their religion, by a pure administration of justice, by countenancing virtue, by discouraging vice, by shrinking from no difficulty or danger when the welfare of the nation was at stake. "These," he said, "are my resolutions; and I am persuaded that you are come together with purposes on your part suitable to these on mine. Since then our aims are only for the general good, let us act with confidence in one another, which will not fail, by God's blessing, to make me a happy king, and you a great and flourishing people."

It might have been thought that no words less likely to give offence had ever been uttered from the English throne. But even in those words the malevolence of faction sought and found matter for a quarrel. The gentle exhortation, "Let us act with confidence in one another," must mean that such confidence did not now exist, that the King distrusted the Parliament, or that the Parliament had shown an unwarrantable distrust of the King.

Such an exhortation was nothing less than a reproach; and such a reproach was a bad return for the gold and the blood which England had lavished in order to make and to keep him a great sovereign. There was a sharp debate, in which Seymour took part. With characteristic indelicacy and want of feeling he harangued the Commons as he had harangued the Court of King's Bench, about his son's death, and about the necessity of curbing the insolence of military men. There were loud complaints that the events of the preceding session had been misrepresented to the public, that emissaries of the Court, in every part of the kingdom, declaimed against the absurd jealousies or still more absurd parsimony which had refused to his Majesty the means of keeping up such an army as might secure the country against invasion. Even justices of the peace, it was said, even deputy-lieutenants, had used King James and King Lewis as bugbears, for the purpose of stirring up the people against honest and thrifty representatives. Angry resolutions were passed, declaring it to be the opinion of the House that the best way to establish entire confidence between the King and the Estates of the Realm would be to put a brand on those evil advisers who had dared to breathe in the royal ear calumnies against a faithful Parliament. An address founded on these resolutions was voted; many thought that a violent rupture was inevitable. But William returned an answer so prudent and gentle that malice itself could not prolong the dispute. By this time, indeed, a

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new dispute had begun. The address had scarcely been moved when the House called for copies of the papers relating to Kidd's expedition. Somers, conscious of innocence, knew that it was wise as well as right to be perfectly ingenuous, and resolved that there should be no concealment. His friends stood manfully by him, and his enemies struck at him with such blind fury that their blows injured only themselves. Howe raved like a maniac. "What is to become of the country, plundered by land, plundered by sea? Our rulers have laid hold on our lands, our woods, our mines, our money. And all this is not enough. We cannot send a cargo to the farthest ends of the earth, but they must send a gang of thieves after it." Harley and Seymour tried to carry a vote of censure without giving the House time to read the papers. But the general feeling was strongly for a short delay. At length, on the sixth of December, the subject was considered in a committee of the whole House. Shower undertook to prove that the letters patent to which Somers had put the Great Seal were illegal. Cowper replied to him with immense applause, and seems to have completely refuted him. Some of the Tory orators had employed what was then a favourite claptrap. Very great men, no doubt, were concerned in this business. But were the Commons of England to stand in awe of great men? Would not they have the spirit to censure corruption and oppression in the highest places? Cowper answered finely that assuredly the House ought not to be deterred from the dis-

charge of any duty by the fear of great men, but that fear was not the only base and evil passion of which great men were the objects, and that the flatterer who courted their favour was not a worse citizen than the envious calumniator who took pleasure in bringing whatever was eminent down to his own level. At length, after a debate which lasted from midday till nine at night, and in which all the leading members took part, the committee divided on the question that the letters patent were dishonourable to the King, inconsistent with the law of nations, contrary to the statutes of the realm, and destructive of property and trade. The Chancellor's enemies had felt confident of victory, and had made the resolution so strong in order that it might be impossible for him to retain the Great Seal. They soon found that it would have been wise to propose a gentler censure. Great numbers of their adherents, convinced by Cowper's arguments, or unwilling to put a cruel stigma on a man of whose genius and accomplishments the nation was proud, stole away before the doors were closed. To the general astonishment there were only one hundred and thirty three Ayes to one hundred and eighty nine Noes. That the City of London did not consider Somers as the destroyer, and his enemies as the protectors, of trade, was proved on the following morning by the most unequivocal of signs. As soon as the news of his triumph reached the Royal Exchange, the price of stocks went up.

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Attacks
on Burnet.

Some weeks elapsed before the Tories ventured again to attack him. In the meantime they amused themselves by trying to worry another person whom they hated even more bitterly. When, in a financial debate, the arrangements of the household of the Duke of Gloucester were incidentally mentioned, one or two members took the opportunity of throwing reflections on Burnet. Burnet's very name sufficed to raise among the High Churchmen a storm of mingled merriment and anger. The Speaker in vain reminded the orators that they were wandering from the question. The majority was determined to have some fun with the Right Reverend Whig, and encouraged them to proceed. Nothing appears to have been said on the other side. The chiefs of the opposition inferred from the laughing and cheering of the Bishop's enemies, and from the silence of his friends, that there would be no difficulty in driving from Court, with contumely, the prelate whom of all prelates they most detested, as the personification of the latitudinarian spirit, a Jack Presbyter in lawn sleeves. They, therefore, after the lapse of a few hours, moved quite unexpectedly an address requesting the King to remove the Bishop of Salisbury from the place of preceptor to the young heir apparent. But it soon appeared that many who could not help smiling at Burnet's weaknesses did justice to his abilities and virtues. The debate was hot. The unlucky Pastoral Letter was of course not forgotten. It was asked whether a man who had pro-

claimed that England was a conquered country, a man whose servile pages the English Commons had ordered to be burned by the hangman, could be a fit instructor for an English Prince. Some reviled the Bishop for being a Socinian, which he was not, and some for being a Scotchman, which he was. His defenders fought his battle gallantly. "Grant," they said, "that it is possible to find, amidst an immense mass of eloquent and learned matter published in defence of the Protestant religion and of the English Constitution, a paragraph which, though well intended, was not well considered, is that error of an unguarded minute to outweigh the services of more than twenty years? If one House of Commons, by a very small majority, censured a little tract of which his Lordship was the author, let it be remembered that another House of Commons unanimously voted thanks to him for a work of very different magnitude and importance, the History of the Reformation. And, as to what is said about his birthplace, is there not already ill humour enough in Scotland? Has not the failure of that unhappy expedition to Darien raised a sufficiently bitter feeling against us throughout that kingdom? Every wise and honest man is desirous to sooth the angry passions of our neighbours. And shall we, just at this moment, exasperate those passions by proclaiming that to be born on the north of the Tweed is a disqualification for all honourable trust?" The ministerial members would gladly have permitted the motion to be withdrawn. But the opposition, elated with hope, insisted

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on dividing, and were confounded by finding that, with all the advantage of a surprise, they were only one hundred and thirty three to one hundred and seventy three. Their defeat would probably have been less complete, had not all those members who were especially attached to the Princess of Denmark voted in the majority or absented themselves. Marlborough used all his influence against the motion; and he had strong reasons for doing so. He was by no means well pleased to see the Commons engaged in discussing the characters and past lives of the persons who were placed about the Duke of Gloucester. If the High Churchmen, by reviving old stories, succeeded in carrying a vote against the Preceptor, it was by no means unlikely that some malicious Whig might retaliate on the Governor. The Governor must have been conscious that he was not invulnerable; nor could he absolutely rely on the support of the whole body of Tories: for it was believed that their favourite leader, Rochester, thought himself the fittest person to superintend the education of his grand nephew.

Renewed
attack on
Somers.

From Burnet the opposition went back to Somers. Some Crown property near Reigate had been granted to Somers by the King. In this transaction there was nothing that deserved blame. The Great Seal ought always to be held by a lawyer of the highest distinction; nor can such a lawyer discharge his duties in a perfectly efficient manner unless, with the Great Seal, he accepts a peerage. But he may not have accumulated a fortune such as will

alone suffice to support a peerage: his peerage is permanent; and his tenure of the Great Seal is precarious. In a few weeks he may be dismissed from office, and may find that he has lost a lucrative profession, that he has got nothing but a costly dignity, that he has been transformed from a prosperous barrister into a mendicant lord. Such a risk no wise man will run. If, therefore, the state is to be well served in the highest civil post, it is absolutely necessary that a provision should be made for retired Chancellors. The Sovereign is now empowered by Act of Parliament to make such a provision out of the public revenue. In old times such a provision was ordinarily made out of the hereditary domain of the Crown. What had been bestowed on Somers appears to have amounted, after all deductions, to a net income of about sixteen hundred a year, a sum which will hardly shock us who have seen at one time five retired Chancellors enjoying pensions of five thousand a year each. For the crime, however, of accepting this grant the leaders of the opposition hoped that they should be able to punish Somers with disgrace and ruin. One difficulty stood in the way. All that he had received was but a pittance when compared with the wealth with which some of his persecutors had been loaded by the last two kings of the House of Stuart. It was not easy to pass any censure on him which should not imply a still more severe censure on two generations of Granvilles, on two generations of Hydes, and on two generations of Finches. At last some

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ingenious Tory thought of a device by which it might be possible to strike the enemy without wounding friends. The grants of Charles and James had been made in time of peace; and William's grant to Somers had been made in time of war. Malice eagerly caught at this childish distinction. It was moved that any minister who had been concerned in passing a grant for his own benefit while the nation was under the heavy taxes of the late war had violated his trust; as if the expenditure which is necessary to secure to the country a good administration of justice ought to be suspended by war; or as if it were not criminal in a government to squander the resources of the state in time of peace. The motion was made by James Brydges, eldest son of the Lord Chandos, the James Brydges who afterwards became Duke of Chandos, who raised a gigantic fortune out of war taxes, to squander it in comfortless and tasteless ostentation, and who is still remembered as the Timon of Pope's keen and brilliant satire. It was remarked as extraordinary that Brydges brought forward and defended his motion merely as the assertion of an abstract truth, and avoided all mention of the Chancellor. It seemed still more extraordinary that Howe, whose whole eloquence consisted in cutting personalities, named nobody on this occasion, and contented himself with declaiming in general terms against corruption and profusion. It was plain that the enemies of Somers were at once urged forward by hatred and kept back by fear. They knew that they could not carry a

resolution directly condemning him. They, therefore, cunningly brought forward a mere speculative proposition which many members might be willing to affirm without scrutinising it severely. But, as soon as the major premise had been admitted, the minor would be without difficulty established; and it would be impossible to avoid coming to the conclusion that Somers had violated his trust. Such tactics, however, have very seldom succeeded in English parliaments; for a little good sense and a little straightforwardness are quite sufficient to confound them. A sturdy Whig member, Sir Rowland Gwyn, disconcerted the whole scheme of operations. "Why this reserve?" he said, "Everybody knows your meaning. Everybody sees that you have not the courage to name the great man whom you are trying to destroy." "That is false," cried Brydges: and a stormy altercation followed. It soon appeared that innocence would again triumph. The two parties seemed to have exchanged characters for one day. The friends of the government, who in the Parliament were generally humble and timorous, took a high tone, and spoke as it becomes men to speak who are defending persecuted genius and virtue. The malecontents, generally so insolent and turbulent, seemed to be completely cowed. They abased themselves so low as to protest, what no human being could believe, that they had no intention of attacking the Chancellor, and had framed their resolution without any view to him. Howe, from whose lips scarcely any

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thing ever dropped but gall and poison, went so far as to say: "My Lord Somers is a man of eminent merit, of merit so eminent that, if he had made a slip, we might well overlook it." At a late hour the question was put; and the motion was rejected by a majority of fifty in a house of four hundred and nineteen members. It was long since there had been so large an attendance at a division.

The ignominious failure of the attacks on Somers and Burnet seemed to prove that the assembly was coming round to a better temper. But the temper of a House of Commons left without the guidance of a ministry is never to be trusted. "Nobody can tell today," said an experienced politician of that time, "what the majority may take it into their heads to do tomorrow." Already a storm was gathering in which the Constitution itself was in danger of perishing, and from which none of the three branches of the legislature escaped without serious damage.

Question
of the
Irish for-
feitures;
dispute
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The question of the Irish forfeitures had been raised; and about that question the minds of men, both within and without the walls of Parliament, were in a strangely excitable state. Candid and intelligent men, whatever veneration they may feel for the memory of William, must find it impossible to deny that, in his eagerness to enrich and aggrandise his personal friends, he too often forgot what was due to his own reputation and to the public interest. It is true that in giving away the

old domains of the Crown he did only what he had a right to do, and what all his predecessors had done; nor could the most factious opposition insist on resuming his grants of those domains without resuming at the same time the grants of his uncles. But between those domains and the estates recently forfeited in Ireland there was a distinction, which would not indeed have been recognised by the judges, but which to a popular assembly might well seem to be of grave importance. In the year 1690 a Bill had been brought in for applying the Irish forfeitures to the public service. That Bill passed the Commons, and would probably, with large amendments, have passed the Lords, had not the King, who was under the necessity of attending the Congress at the Hague, put an end to the session. In bidding the Houses farewell on that occasion, he assured them that he should not dispose of the property about which they had been deliberating, till they should have had another opportunity of settling that matter. He had, as he thought, strictly kept his word; for he had not disposed of this property till the Houses had repeatedly met and separated without presenting to him any bill on the subject. They had had the opportunity which he had assured them that they should have. They had had more than one such opportunity. The pledge which he had given had therefore been amply redeemed; and he did not conceive that he was bound to abstain longer from exercising his undoubted prerogative. But, though it

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could hardly be denied that he had literally fulfilled his promise, the general opinion was that such a promise ought to have been more than literally fulfilled. If this Parliament, overwhelmed with business which could not be postponed without danger to his throne and to his person, had been forced to defer, year after year, the consideration of so large and complex a question as that of the Irish forfeitures, it ill became him to take advantage of such a laches with the eagerness of a shrewd attorney. Many persons, therefore, who were sincerely attached to his government, and who on principle disapproved of resumptions, thought the case of these forfeitures an exception to the general rule.

The Commons had at the close of the last session tacked to the Land Tax Bill a clause empowering seven Commissioners, who were designated by name, to take account of the Irish forfeitures; and the Lords and the King, afraid of losing the Land Tax Bill, had reluctantly consented to this clause. During the recess, the commissioners had visited Ireland. They had since returned to England. Their report was soon laid before both Houses. By the Tories, and by their allies the republicans, it was eagerly hailed. It had, indeed, been framed for the express purpose of flattering and of inflaming them. Three of the commissioners had strongly objected to some passages as indecorous, and even calumnious: but the other four had overruled every objection.

Of the four the chief was Trenchard. He was by calling a pamphleteer, and seems not to have been aware that the sharpness of style and of temper which may be tolerated in a pamphlet is inexcusable in a state paper. He was certain that he should be protected and rewarded by the party to which he owed his appointment, and was delighted to have it in his power to publish, with perfect security and with a semblance of official authority, bitter reflections on King and ministry, Dutch favourites, French refugees, and Irish Papists. The consequence was that only four names were subscribed to the report. The three dissentients presented a separate memorial. As to the main facts, however, there was little or no dispute. It appeared that more than a million of Irish acres, or about seventeen hundred thousand English acres, an area equal to that of Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdonshire together, had been forfeited during the late troubles. But of the value of this large territory very different estimates were formed. The commissioners acknowledged that they could obtain no certain information. In the absence of such information they conjectured the annual rent to be about two hundred thousand pounds, and the fee simple to be worth thirteen years' purchase, that is to say, about two millions six hundred thousand pounds. They seem not to have been aware that much of the land had been let very low on perpetual leases, and that much was burdened with mortgages. A contemporary writer,

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CHAP. who was evidently well acquainted with Ireland, asserted
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1700. property in Carlow at six times the real market price, and that the two million six hundred thousand pounds, of which they talked, would be found to shrink to about half a million, which, as the exchanges then stood between Dublin and London, would have dwindled to four hundred thousand pounds by the time that it reached the English Exchequer. It was subsequently proved, beyond all dispute, that this estimate was very much nearer the truth than that which had been formed by Trenchard and Trenchard's colleagues.

Of the seventeen hundred thousand acres which had been forfeited, above a fourth part had been restored to the ancient proprietors in conformity with the civil articles of the treaty of Limerick. About one seventh of the remaining three fourths had been given back to unhappy families, which, though they could not plead the letter of the treaty, had been thought fit objects of clemency. The rest had been bestowed, partly on persons whose services merited all and more than all that they obtained, but chiefly on the King's personal friends. Romney had obtained a considerable share of the royal bounty. But of all the grants the largest was to Woodstock, the eldest son of Portland; the next was to Albemarle. An admirer of William cannot relate without pain that he divided between these two foreigners an extent of country larger than Hertfordshire.

This fact, simply reported, would have sufficed to excite a strong feeling of indignation in a House of Commons less irritable and querulous than that which then sate at Westminster. But Trenchard and his confederates were not content with simply reporting the fact. They employed all their skill to inflame the passions of the majority. They at once applied goads to its anger and held out baits to its cupidity.

They censured that part of William's conduct which deserved high praise even more severely than that part of his conduct for which it is impossible to set up any defence. They told the Parliament that the old proprietors of the soil had been treated with pernicious indulgence; that the capitulation of Limerick had been construed in a manner far too favourable to the conquered race; and that the King had suffered his compassion to lead him into the error of showing indulgence to many who could not pretend that they were within the terms of the capitulation. Even now, after the lapse of eight years, it might be possible, by instituting a severe inquisition, and by giving proper encouragement to informers, to prove that many Papists, who were still permitted to enjoy their estates, had taken the side of James during the civil war. There would thus be a new and plentiful harvest of confiscations. The four bitterly complained that their task had been made more difficult by the hostility of persons who held office in Ireland, and by the secret influence of great men who were interested in concealing the truth. These grave charges

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were made in general terms. No name was mentioned: no fact was specified: no evidence was tendered.

Had the report stopped here, those who drew it up might justly have been blamed for the unfair and ill natured manner in which they had discharged their functions; but they could not have been accused of usurping functions which did not belong to them for the purpose of insulting the Sovereign and exasperating the nation. But these men well knew in what way and for what purpose they might safely venture to exceed their commission. The Act of Parliament from which they derived their powers authorised them to report on estates forfeited during the late troubles. It contained not a word which could be construed into an authority to report on the old hereditary domain of the Crown. With that domain they had as little to do as with the seignorage levied on tin in the Duchy of Cornwall, or with the church patronage of the Duchy of Lancaster. But they had discovered that a part of that domain had been alienated by a grant which they could not deny themselves the pleasure of publishing to the world. It was indeed an unfortunate grant, a grant which could not be brought to light without much mischief and much scandal. It was long since William had ceased to be the lover of Elizabeth Villiers, long since he had asked her counsel or listened to her fascinating conversation except in the presence of other persons. She had been some years married to George Hamilton, a soldier who had distinguished himself by his courage in Ireland and Flanders,

and who probably held the courtier like doctrine that a lady is not dishonoured by having been the paramour of a king. William was well pleased with the marriage, bestowed on the wife a portion of the old Crown property in Ireland, and created the husband a peer of Scotland by the title of Earl of Orkney. Assuredly William would not have raised his character by abandoning to poverty a woman whom he had loved, though with a criminal love. He was undoubtedly bound, as a man of humanity and honour, to provide liberally for her; but he should have provided for her rather by saving from his civil list than by alienating his hereditary revenue. The four malecontent commissioners rejoiced with spiteful joy over this discovery. It was in vain that the other three represented that the grant to Lady Orkney was one with which they had nothing to do, and that, if they went out of their way to hold it up to obloquy, they might be justly said to fly in the King's face. "To fly in the King's face!" said one of the majority; "our business is to fly in the King's face. We were sent here to fly in the King's face." With this patriotic object a paragraph about Lady Orkney's grant was added to the report, a paragraph too in which the value of that grant was so monstrously exaggerated that William appeared to have surpassed the profligate extravagance of his uncle Charles. The estate bestowed on the countess was valued at twenty four thousand pounds a year. The truth seems to be that the income which she derived from the royal bounty, after making allowance for incumbrances

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The success of the report was complete. The nation and its representatives hated taxes, hated foreign favourites, and hated Irish Papists; and here was a document which held out the hope that England might, at the expense of foreign courtiers and of popish Celts, be relieved from a great load of taxes. Many, both within and without the walls of Parliament, gave entire faith to the estimate which the commissioners had formed by a wild guess, in the absence of trustworthy information. They gave entire faith also to the prediction that a strict inquiry would detect many traitors who had hitherto been permitted to escape with impunity, and that a large addition would thus be made to the extensive territory which had already been confiscated. It was popularly said that, if vigorous measures were taken, the gain to the kingdom would be not less than three hundred thousand pounds a year; and almost the whole of this sum, a sum more than sufficient to defray the whole charge of such an army as the Commons were disposed to keep up in time of peace, would be raised by simply taking away what had been unjustifiably given to Dutchmen, who would still retain immense wealth taken out of English pockets, or unjustifiably left to Irishmen, who thought it at once the most pleasant and the most pious of all employments to cut English throats. The Lower House went to work with the double eagerness of rapacity and of animosity. As soon as the report of the

four and the protest of the three had been laid on the table and read by the clerk, it was resolved that a Resumption Bill should be brought in. It was then resolved, in opposition to the plainest principles of justice, that no petition from any person who might think himself aggrieved by this bill should ever be received. It was necessary to consider how the commissioners should be remunerated for their services: and this question was decided with impudent injustice. It was determined that the commissioners who had signed the report should receive a thousand pounds each. But a large party thought that the dissentient three deserved no recompense; and two of them were merely allowed what was thought sufficient to cover the expense of their journey to Ireland. This was nothing less than to give notice to every man who should ever be employed in any similar inquiry that, if he wished to be paid, he must report what would please the assembly which held the purse of the state. In truth the House was despotic, and was fast contracting the vices of a despot. It was proud of its antipathy to courtiers; and it was calling into existence a new set of courtiers who would study all its humours, who would flatter all its weaknesses, who would prophesy to it smooth things, and who would assuredly be, in no respect, less greedy, less faithless, or less abject than the sycophants who bow in the antechambers of kings.

Indeed the dissentient commissioners had worse evils to apprehend than that of being left unremunerated. One of them, Sir Richard Levinz, had mentioned in private to

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his friends some disrespectful expressions which had been used by one of his colleagues about the King. What he had mentioned in private was, not perhaps very discreetly, repeated by Montague in the House. The predominant party eagerly seized the opportunity of worrying both Montague and Levinz. A resolution implying a severe censure on Montague was carried. Levinz was brought to the bar and examined. The four were also in attendance. They protested that he had misrepresented them. Trenchard declared that he had always spoken of his Majesty as a subject ought to speak of an excellent sovereign, who had been deceived by evil counsellors, and who would be grateful to those who should bring the truth to his knowledge. He vehemently denied that he had called the grant to Lady Orkney villainous. It was a word that he never used, a word that never came out of the mouth of a gentleman. These assertions will be estimated at the proper value by those who are acquainted with Trenchard's pamphlets, pamphlets in which the shocking word villainous will without difficulty be found, and which are full of malignant reflections on William.* But the House was determined not to believe Levinz. He was voted a calumniator, and sent to the Tower, as an example to all who should be

* I give an example of Trenchard's mode of showing his profound respect for an excellent Sovereign. He speaks thus of the commencement of the reign of Henry the Third. "The kingdom was recently delivered from a bitter tyrant, King John, and had likewise got rid of their perfidious deliverer, the Dauphin of France, who after the English had accepted him for their King, had secretly vowed their extirpation."

tempted to speak truth which the Commons might not like to hear.

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Meanwhile the bill had been brought in, and was proceeding easily. It provided that all the property which had belonged to the Crown at the time of the accession of James the Second, or which had been forfeited to the Crown since that time, should be vested in trustees. These trustees were named in the bill; and among them were the four commissioners who had signed the report. All the Irish grants of William were annulled. The legal rights of persons other than the grantees were saved. But of those rights the trustees were to be judges, and judges without appeal. A claimant who gave them the trouble of attending to him, and could not make out his case, was to be heavily fined. Rewards were offered to informers who should discover any property which was liable to confiscation, and which had not yet been confiscated. Though eight years had elapsed since an arm had been lifted up in the conquered island against the domination of the Englishry, the unhappy children of the soil, who had been suffered to live, submissive and obscure, on their hereditary fields, were threatened with a new and severe inquisition into old offences.

Objectionable as many parts of the bill undoubtedly were, nobody who knew the House of Commons believed it to be possible to carry any amendment. The King flattered himself that a motion for leaving at his disposal a third part of the forfeitures would be favourably re-

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ceived. There can be little doubt that a compromise would have been willingly accepted twelve months earlier. But the report had made all compromise impossible. William, however, was bent on trying the experiment; and Vernon consented to go on what he considered as a forlorn hope. He made his speech and his motion: but the reception which he met with was such that he did not venture to demand a division. This feeble attempt at obstruction only made the impetuous current chafe the more. Howe immediately moved two resolutions: one attributing the load of debts and taxes which lay on the nation to the Irish grants; the other censuring all who had been concerned in advising or passing those grants. Nobody was named; not because the majority was inclined to show any tenderness to the Whig ministers, but because some of the most objectionable grants had been sanctioned by the Board of Treasury when Godolphin and Seymour, who had great influence with the country party, sat at that board.

Howe's two resolutions were laid before the King by the Speaker, in whose train all the leaders of the opposition appeared at Kensington. Even Seymour, with characteristic effrontery, showed himself there as one of the chief authors of a vote which pronounced him guilty of a breach of duty. William's answer was that he had thought himself bound to reward out of the forfeited property those who had served him well, and especially those who had borne a principal part in the reduction of Ireland.

The war, he said, had undoubtedly left behind it a heavy debt; and he should be glad to see that debt reduced by just and effectual means. This answer was but a bad one; and, in truth, it was hardly possible for him to return a good one. He had done what was indefensible; and, by attempting to defend himself, he made his case worse. It was not true that the Irish forfeitures, or one fifth part of them, had been granted to men who had distinguished themselves in the Irish war; and it was not judicious to hint that those forfeitures could not justly be applied to the discharge of the public debts. The Commons murmured, and not altogether without reason. "His Majesty tells us," they said, "that the debts fall to us and the forfeitures to him. We are to make good out of the purses of Englishmen what was spent upon the war; and he is to put into the purses of Dutchmen what was got by the war." When the House met again, Howe moved that whoever had advised the King to return such an answer was an enemy to His Majesty and the kingdom; and this resolution was carried with some slight modification.

To whatever criticism William's answer might be open, he had said one thing which well deserved the attention of the House. A small part of the forfeited property had been bestowed on men whose services to the state well deserved a much larger recompense; and that part could not be resumed without gross injustice and ingratitude. An estate of very moderate value had been given, with the

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title of Earl of Athlone, to Ginkell, whose skill and valour had brought the war in Ireland to a triumphant close. Another estate had been given, with the title of Earl of Galway, to Ruvigny, who, in the crisis of the decisive battle, at the very moment when Saint Ruth was waving his hat, and exclaiming that the English should be beaten back to Dublin, had, at the head of a gallant body of horse, struggled through the morass, turned the left wing of the Celtic army, and retrieved the day. But the predominant faction, drunk with insolence and animosity, made no distinction between courtiers who had been enriched by injudicious partiality and warriors who had been sparingly rewarded for great exploits achieved in defence of the liberties and the religion of our country. Athlone was a Dutchman: Galway was a Frenchman; and it did not become a good Englishman to say a word in favour of either.

Yet this was not the most flagrant injustice of which the Commons were guilty. According to the plainest principles of common law and of common sense, no man can forfeit any rights except those which he has. All the donations which William had made he had made subject to this limitation. But by this limitation the Commons were too angry and too rapacious to be bound. They determined to vest in the trustees of the forfeited lands an estate greater than had ever belonged to the forfeiting landholders. Thus innocent persons were violently deprived of property which was their's by descent or by

purchase, of property which had been strictly respected by the King and by his grantees. No immunity was granted even to men who had fought on the English side, even to men who had lined the walls of Londonderry and rushed on the Irish guns at Newton Butler.

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In some cases the Commons showed indulgence: but their indulgence was not less unjustifiable, nor of less pernicious example, than their severity. The ancient rule, a rule which is still strictly maintained, and which cannot be relaxed without danger of boundless profusion and shameless jobbery, is that whatever the Parliament grants shall be granted to the Sovereign, and that no public bounty shall be bestowed on any private person except by the Sovereign.

The Lower House now, contemptuously disregarding both principles and precedents, took on itself to carve estates out of the forfeitures for persons whom it was inclined to favour. To the Duke of Ormond especially, who ranked among the Tories and was distinguished by his dislike of the foreigners, marked partiality was shown. Some of his friends, indeed, hoped that they should be able to insert in the bill a clause bestowing on him all the confiscated estates in the county of Tipperary. But they found that it would be prudent in them to content themselves with conferring on him a boon smaller in amount, but equally objectionable in principle. He had owed very large debts to persons who had forfeited to the Crown all that belonged to them. Those debts were therefore now

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XXV. make him a present of the whole, that very House which
1700. would not consent to leave a single acre to the general
who had stormed Athlone, who had gained the battle of
Aghrim, who had entered Galway in triumph, and who
had received the submission of Limerick.

That a bill so violent, so unjust, and so unconstitutional would pass the Lords without considerable alterations was hardly to be expected. The ruling demagogues, therefore, resolved to join it with the bill which granted to the Crown a land tax of two shillings in the pound for the service of the next year, and thus to place the Upper House under the necessity of either passing both bills together without the change of a word, or rejecting both together, and leaving the public creditor unpaid and the nation defenceless.

There was great indignation among the Peers. They were not indeed more disposed than the Commons to approve of the manner in which the Irish forfeitures had been granted away; for the antipathy to the foreigners, strong as it was in the nation generally, was strongest in the highest ranks. Old barons were angry at seeing themselves preceded by new earls from Holland and Guelders. Garters, gold keys, white staves, rangerships, which had been considered as peculiarly belonging to the hereditary grandees of the realm, were now intercepted by aliens. Every English nobleman felt that his chance of obtaining a share of the favours of the Crown was seriously dimin-

ished by the competition of Bentincks and Keppels, Auverquerque and Zulesteins. But, though the riches and dignities heaped on the little knot of Dutch courtiers might disgust him, the recent proceedings of the Commons could not but disgust him still more. The authority, the respectability, the existence of his order were threatened with destruction. Not only, — such were the just complaints of the Peers, — not only are we to be deprived of that coordinate legislative power to which we are, by the constitution of the realm, entitled. We are not to be allowed even a suspensive veto. We are not to dare to remonstrate, to suggest an amendment, to offer a reason, to ask for an explanation. Whenever the other House has passed a bill to which it is known that we have strong objections, that bill is to be tacked to a bill of supply. If we alter it, we are told that we are attacking the most sacred privilege of the representatives of the people, and that we must either take the whole or reject the whole. If we reject the whole, public credit is shaken; the Royal Exchange is in confusion; the Bank stops payment; the army is disbanded; the fleet is in mutiny; the island is left, without one regiment, without one frigate, at the mercy of every enemy. The danger of throwing out a bill of supply is doubtless great. Yet it may on the whole be better that we should face that danger, once for all, than that we should consent to be, what we are fast becoming, a body of no more importance than the Convocation.

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Animated by such feelings as these, a party in the Upper House was eager to take the earliest opportunity of making a stand. On the fourth of April, the second reading was moved. Near a hundred lords were present. Somers, whose serene wisdom and persuasive eloquence had seldom been more needed, was confined to his room by illness; and his place on the woolsack was supplied by the Earl of Bridgewater. Several orators, both Whig and Tory, objected to proceeding farther. But the chiefs of both parties thought it better to try the almost hopeless experiment of committing the bill and sending it back amended to the Commons. The second reading was carried by seventy votes to twenty three. It was remarked that both Portland and Albemarle voted in the majority.

In the Committee and on the third reading several amendments were proposed and carried. Wharton, the boldest and most active of the Whig peers, and the Lord Privy Seal Lonsdale, one of the most moderate and reasonable of the Tories, took the lead, and were strenuously supported by the Lord President Pembroke, and by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who seems on this occasion to have a little forgotten his habitual sobriety and caution. Two natural sons of Charles the Second, Richmond and Southampton, who had strong personal reasons for disliking resumption bills, were zealous on the same side. No peer, however, as far as can now be discovered, ventured to defend the way in which William had disposed of his Irish domains. The provisions which annulled the

grants of those domains were left untouched. But the words of which the effect was to vest in the parliamentary trustees property which had never been forfeited to the King, and had never been given away by him, were altered; and the clauses by which estates and sums of money were, in defiance of constitutional principle and of immemorial practice, bestowed on persons who were favourites of the Commons, were so far modified as to be, in form, somewhat less exceptionable. The bill, improved by these changes, was sent down by two Judges to the Lower House.

The Lower House was all in a flame. There was now no difference of opinion there. Even those members who thought that the Resumption Bill and the Land Tax Bill ought not to have been tacked together, yet felt that, since those bills had been tacked together, it was impossible to agree to the amendments made by the Lords without surrendering one of the most precious privileges of the Commons. The amendments were rejected without one dissentient voice. It was resolved that a conference should be demanded; and the gentlemen who were to manage the conference were instructed to say merely that the Upper House had no right to alter a money bill; that the point had long been settled and was too clear for argument; that they should leave the bill with the Lords, and that they should leave with the Lords also the responsibility of stopping the supplies which were necessary for the public service. Several votes of menacing sound were passed at

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the same sitting. It was Monday the eighth of April. Tuesday the ninth was allowed to the other House for reflection and repentance. It was resolved that on the Wednesday morning the question of the Irish forfeitures should again be taken into consideration, and that every member who was in town should be then in his place on peril of the highest displeasure of the House. It was moved and carried that every Privy Councillor who had been concerned in procuring or passing any exorbitant grant for his own benefit had been guilty of a high crime and misdemeanour. Lest the courtiers should flatter themselves that this was meant to be a mere abstract proposition, it was ordered that a list of the members of the Privy Council should be laid on the table. As it was thought not improbable that the crisis might end in an appeal to the constituent bodies, nothing was omitted which could excite out of doors a feeling in favour of the bill. The Speaker was directed to print and publish the report signed by the four Commissioners, not accompanied, as in common justice it ought to have been, by the protest of the three dissentients, but accompanied by several extracts from the journals which were thought likely to produce an impression favourable to the House and unfavourable to the Court. All these resolutions passed without any division, and without, as far as appears, any debate. There was, indeed, much speaking, but all on one side. Seymour, Harley, Howe, Harcourt, Shower, Musgrave, declaimed, one after another, about the obstinacy of the other House,

the alarming state of the country, the dangers which threatened the public peace and the public credit. If, it was said, none but Englishmen sate in the Parliament and in the Council, we might hope that they would relent at the thought of the calamities which impend over England. But we have to deal with men who are not Englishmen, with men who consider this country as their own only for evil, as their property, not as their home; who, when they have gorged themselves with our wealth, will, without one uneasy feeling, leave us sunk in bankruptey, distracted by faction, exposed without defence to invasion. "A new war," said one of these orators, "a new war, as long, as bloody, and as costly as the last, would do less mischief than has been done by the introduction of that batch of Dutchmen among the barons of the realm." Another was so absurd as to call on the House to declare that whoever should advise a dissolution would be guilty of high treason. A third gave utterance to a sentiment which it is difficult to understand how any assembly of civilised and Christian men, even in a moment of strong excitement, should have heard without horror. "They object to tacking; do they? Let them take care that they do not provoke us to tack in earnest. How would they like to have bills of supply with bills of attainder tacked to them?" This atrocious threat, worthy of the tribune of the French Convention in the worst days of the Jacobin tyranny, seems to have passed unreprehended. It was meant — such at least was the impression at the Dutch em-

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bassy — to intimidate Somers. He was confined by illness. He had been unable to take any public part in the proceedings of the Lords; and he had privately blamed them for engaging in a conflict in which he justly thought that they could not be victorious. Nevertheless, the Tory leaders hoped that they might be able to direct against him the whole force of the storm which they had raised. Seymour, in particular, encouraged by the wild and almost savage temper of his hearers, harangued with rancorous violence against the wisdom and the virtue which presented the strongest contrast to his own turbulence, insolence, faithlessness, and rapacity. No doubt, he said, the Lord Chancellor was a man of parts. Anybody might be glad to have for counsel so acute and eloquent an advocate. But a very good advocate might be a very bad minister; and, of all the ministers who had brought the kingdom into difficulties, this plausible fair-spoken person was the most dangerous. Nor was the old reprobate ashamed to add that he was afraid that his Lordship was no better than a Hobbist in religion.

After a long sitting the members separated; but they reassembled early on the morning of the following day, Tuesday the ninth of April. A conference was held; and Seymour, as chief manager for the Commons, returned the bill and the amendments to the Peers in the manner which had been prescribed to him. From the Painted Chamber he went back to the Lower House, and reported what had passed. "If," he said, "I may venture

to judge by the looks and manner of their Lordships, all will go right." But within half an hour evil tidings came through the Court of Requests and the lobbies. The Lords had divided on the question whether they would adhere to their amendments. Forty seven had voted for adhering, and thirty four for giving way. The House of Commons broke up with gloomy looks, and in great agitation. All London looked forward to the next day with painful forebodings. The general feeling was in favour of the bill. It was rumoured that the majority which had determined to stand by the amendments had been swollen by several prelates, by several of the illegitimate sons of Charles the Second, and by several needy and greedy courtiers. The cry in all the public places of resort was that the nation would be ruined by the three B's, Bishops, Bastards, and Beggars. On Wednesday the tenth, at length, the contest came to a decisive issue. Both Houses were early crowded. The Lords demanded a conference. It was held; and Pembroke delivered back to Seymour the bill and the amendments, together with a paper containing a concise, but luminous and forcible, exposition of the grounds on which the Lords conceived themselves to be acting in a constitutional and strictly defensive manner. This paper was read at the bar: but, whatever effect it may now produce on a dispassionate student of history, it produced none on the thick ranks of country gentlemen. It was instantly resolved that the bill should again be sent back to the Lords with a peremptory an-

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nouncement that the Commons' determination was unalterable.

The Lords again took the amendments into consideration. During the last forty eight hours, great exertions had been made in various quarters to avert a complete rupture between the Houses. The statesmen of the Junto were far too wise not to see that it would be madness to continue the struggle longer. It was indeed necessary, unless the King and the Lords were to be of as little weight in the State as in 1648, unless the House of Commons was not merely to exercise a general control over the government, but to be, as in the days of the Rump, itself the whole government, the sole legislative chamber, the fountain from which were to flow all those favours which had hitherto been in the gift of the Crown, that a determined stand should be made. But, in order that such a stand might be successful, the ground must be carefully selected; for a defeat might be fatal. The Lords must wait for some occasion on which their privileges would be bound up with the privileges of all Englishmen, for some occasion on which the constituent bodies would, if an appeal were made to them, disavow the acts of the representative body; and this was not such an occasion. The enlightened and large minded few considered tacking as a practice so pernicious that it would be justified only by an emergency which would justify a resort to physical force. But, in the many, tacking, when employed for a popular end, excited little or no disapprobation. The

public, which seldom troubles itself with nice distinctions, could not be made to understand that the question at issue was any other than this, whether a sum which was vulgarly estimated at millions, and which undoubtedly amounted to some hundreds of thousands, should be employed in paying the debts of the state and alleviating the load of taxation, or in making Dutchmen, who were already too rich, still richer. It was evident that on that question the Lords could not hope to have the country with them, and that, if a general election took place while that question was unsettled, the new House of Commons would be even more mutinous and impracticable than the present House. Somers, in his sick chamber, had given this opinion. Orford had voted for the bill in every stage. Montague, though no longer a minister, had obtained admission to the royal closet, and had strongly represented to the King the dangers which threatened the state. The King had at length consented to let it be understood that he considered the passing of the bill as on the whole the less of two great evils. It was soon clear that the temper of the Peers had undergone a considerable alteration since the preceding day. Scarcely any, indeed, changed sides. But not a few abstained from voting. Wharton, who had at first spoken powerfully for the amendments, left town for Newmarket. On the other hand, some Lords who had not yet taken their part came down to give a healing vote. Among

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them were the two persons to whom the education of the young heir apparent had been entrusted, Marlborough and Burnet. Marlborough showed his usual prudence. He had remained neutral while by taking a part he must have offended either the House of Commons or the King. He took a part as soon as he saw that it was possible to please both. Burnet, alarmed for the public peace, was in a state of great excitement, and, as was usual with him when in such a state, forgot dignity and decorum, called out "stuff" in a very audible voice while a noble Lord was haranguing in favour of the amendments, and was in great danger of being reprimanded at the bar or delivered over to Black Rod. The motion on which the division took place was that the House do adhere to the amendments. There were forty contents and thirty seven not contents. Proxies were called; and the numbers were found to be exactly even. In the House of Lords there is no casting vote. When the numbers are even, the non contents have it. The motion to adhere had therefore been negatived. But this was not enough. It was necessary that an affirmative resolution should be moved to the effect that the House agreed to the bill without amendments; and, if the numbers should again be equal, this motion would also be lost. It was an anxious moment. Fortunately the Primate's heart failed him. He had obstinately fought the battle down to the last stage. But he probably felt that

it was no light thing to take on himself, and to bring on his order, the responsibility of throwing the whole kingdom into confusion. He started up and hurried out of the House, beckoning to some of his brethren. His brethren followed him with a prompt obedience, which, serious as the crisis was, caused no small merriment. In consequence of this defection, the motion to agree was carried by a majority of five. Meanwhile the members of the other House had been impatiently waiting for news, and had been alternately elated and depressed by the reports which followed one another in rapid succession. At first it was confidently expected that the Peers would yield; and there was general good humour. Then came intelligence that the majority of the Lords present had voted for adhering to the amendments. "I believe," so Vernon wrote the next day, "I believe there was not one man in the House that did not think the nation ruined." The lobbies were cleared: the back doors were locked: the keys were laid on the table: the Serjeant at Arms was directed to take his post at the front door, and to suffer no member to withdraw. An awful interval followed, during which the angry passions of the assembly seemed to be subdued by terror. Some of the leaders of the opposition, men of grave character and of large property, stood aghast at finding that they were engaged, — they scarcely knew how, — in a conflict such as they had not at all expected, in a conflict in which they could be

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victorious only at the expense of the peace and order of society. Even Seymour was sobered by the greatness and nearness of the danger. Even Howe thought it advisable to hold conciliatory language. It was no time, he said, for wrangling. Court party and country party were Englishmen alike. Their duty was to forget all past grievances, and to cooperate heartily for the purpose of saving the country.

In a moment all was changed. A message from the Lords was announced. It was a message which lightened many heavy hearts. The bill had been passed without amendments.

Somers
again at-
tacked.

The leading malecontents, who, a few minutes before, scared by finding that their violence had brought on a crisis for which they were not prepared, had talked about the duty of mutual forgiveness and close union, instantly became again as rancorous as ever. One danger, they said, was over. So far well. But it was the duty of the representatives of the people to take such steps as might make it impossible that there should ever again be such danger. Every adviser of the Crown, who had been concerned in the procuring or passing of any exorbitant grant, ought to be excluded from all access to the royal ear. A list of the privy councillors, furnished in conformity with the order made two days before, was on the table. That list the clerk was ordered to read. Prince George of Denmark and the Archbishop of Canterbury

passed without remark. But, as soon as the Chancellor's name had been pronounced, the rage of his enemies broke forth. Twice already, in the course of that stormy session, they had attempted to ruin his fame and his fortunes; and twice his innocence and his calm fortitude had confounded all their politics. Perhaps, in the state of excitement to which the House had been wrought up, a third attack on him might be successful. Orator after orator declaimed against him. He was the great offender. He was responsible for all the grievances of which the nation complained. He had obtained exorbitant grants for himself. He had defended the exorbitant grants obtained by others. He had not, indeed, been able, in the late debates, to raise his own voice against the just demands of the nation. But it might well be suspected that he had in secret prompted the ungracious answer of the King and encouraged the pertinacious resistance of the Lords. Sir John Levison Gower, a noisy and acrimonious Tory, called for impeachment. But Musgrave, an abler and more experienced politician, saw that, if the imputations which the opposition had been in the habit of throwing on the Chancellor were exhibited with the precision of a legal charge, their futility would excite universal derision, and thought it more expedient to move that the House should, without assigning any reason, request the King to remove Lord Somers from His Majesty's counsels and presence for ever. Cowper defended his persecuted

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friend with great eloquence and effect; and he was warmly supported by many members who had been zealous for the resumption of the Irish grants. Only a hundred and six members went into the lobby with Musgrave; a hundred and sixty seven voted against him. Such a division, in such a House of Commons. and on such a day, is sufficient evidence of the respect which the great qualities of Somers had extorted even from his political enemies.

The clerk then went on with the list. The Lord President and the Lord Privy Seal, who were well known to have stood up strongly for the privileges of the Lords, were reviled by some angry members; but no motion was made against either. And soon the Tories became uneasy in their turn: for the name of the Duke of Leeds was read. He was one of themselves. They were very unwilling to put a stigma on him. Yet how could they, just after declaiming against the chancellor for accepting a very moderate and well earned provision, undertake the defence of a statesman who had, out of grants, pardons and bribes, accumulated a princely fortune? There was actually on the table evidence that His Grace was receiving from the bounty of the Crown more than thrice as much as had been bestowed on Somers; and nobody could doubt that His Grace's secret gains had very far exceeded those of which there was evidence on the table. It was accordingly moved that the House, which had indeed been sitting many hours,

should adjourn. The motion was lost; but neither party was disposed to move that the consideration of the list should be resumed. It was however resolved, without a division, that an address should be presented to the King, requesting that no person not a native of his dominions, Prince George excepted, might be admitted to the Privy Council either of England or of Ireland. The evening was now far spent. The candles had been some time lighted; and the House rose. So ended one of the most anxious, turbulent, and variously eventful days in the long Parliamentary History of England.

What the morrow would have produced if time had been allowed for a renewal of hostilities can only be guessed. The supplies had been voted. The King was determined not to receive the address which requested him to disgrace his dearest and most trusty friends. Indeed he would have prevented the passing of that address by proroguing Parliament on the preceding day, had not the Lords risen the moment after they had agreed to the Resumption Bill. He had actually come from Kensington to the Treasury for that purpose; and his robes and crown were in readiness. He now took care to be at Westminster in good time. The Commons had scarcely met when the knock of Black Rod was heard. They repaired to the other House. The bills were passed; and Bridgewater, by the royal command, prorogued the Parliament. For the first time since the Revolution the session closed

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Prorogation of
Parliament.

CHAP. without a speech from the throne. William was too angry
XXV. to thank the Commons, and too prudent to reprimand
1700. them.

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THE health of James had been during some years declining: and he had at length, on Good Friday, 1701, suffered a shock from which he had never recovered. While he was listening in his chapel to the solemn service of the day, he fell down in a fit, and remained long insensible. Some people imagined that the words of the anthem which his choristers were chanting had produced in him emotions too violent to be borne by an enfeebled body and mind. For that anthem was taken from the plaintive elegy in which a servant of the true God, chastened by many sorrows and humiliations, banished, homesick, and living on the bounty of strangers, bewailed the fallen throne and the desolate Temple of Sion: "Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us; consider and behold our reproach. Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens; the crown is fallen from our head. Wherefore 'dost thou forget us for ever?"

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Death of
James the
Second.

The King's malady proved to be paralytic. Fagon, the first physician of the French Court, and, on medical questions, the oracle of all Europe, prescribed the waters of Bourbon. Lewis, with all his usual generosity, sent to Saint Germain ten thousand crowns in gold for the charges of the journey, and gave orders that every town

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along the road should receive his good brother with all the honours due to royalty.*

James, after passing some time at Bourbon, returned to the neighbourhood of Paris with health so far re-established that he was able to take exercise on horseback, but with judgment and memory evidently impaired. On the thirteenth of September, he had a second fit in his chapel; and it soon became clear that this was a final stroke. He rallied the last energies of his failing body and mind to testify his firm belief in the religion for which he had sacrificed so much. He received the last sacraments with every mark of devotion, exhorted his son to hold fast to the true faith in spite of all temptations, and entreated Middleton, who, almost alone among the courtiers assembled in the bedchamber, professed himself a Protestant, to take refuge from doubt and error in the bosom of the one infallible Church. After the extreme unction had been administered, James declared that he pardoned all his enemies, and named particularly the Prince of Orange, the Princess of Denmark, and the Emperor. The Emperor's name he repeated with peculiar emphasis: "Take notice, father," he said to the confessor, "that I forgive the Emperor with all my heart." It may perhaps seem strange that he should have found this the hardest of all exercises of Christian charity. But it must be remembered that the Emperor was the only Roman Catholic Prince still living

* Life of James; St. Simon; Dangeau.

who had been accessory to the Revolution, and that James might not unnaturally consider Roman Catholics who had been accessory to the Revolution as more inexcusably guilty than heretics who might have deluded themselves into the belief that, in violating their duty to him, they were discharging their duty to God.

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While James was still able to understand what was said to him, and make intelligible answers, Lewis visited him twice. The English exiles observed that the Most Christian King was to the last considerate and kind in the very slightest matters which concerned his unfortunate guest. He would not allow his coach to enter the court of Saint Germain, lest the noise of the wheels should be heard in the sick room. In both interviews he was gracious, friendly, and even tender. But he carefully abstained from saying anything about the future position of the family which was about to lose its head. Indeed he could say nothing: for he had not yet made up his own mind. Soon, however, it became necessary for him to form some resolution. On the sixteenth James sank into a stupor which indicated the near approach of death. While he lay in this helpless state, Madame de Maintenon visited his consort. To this visit many persons who were likely to be well informed attributed a long series of great events. We cannot wonder that a woman should have been moved to pity by the misery of a woman; that a devout Roman Catholic should have taken a deep interest in the fate of a family persecuted, as she conceived, solely for being Ro-

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man Catholics; or that the pride of the widow of Scarron should have been intensely gratified by the supplications of a daughter of Este and a Queen of England. From mixed motives, probably, the wife of Lewis promised her powerful protection to the wife of James.

Madame de Maintenon was just leaving Saint Germain when, on the brow of the hill which overlooks the valley of the Seine, she met her husband, who had come to ask after his guest. It was probably at this moment that he was persuaded to form a resolution, of which neither he nor she by whom he was governed foresaw the consequences. Before he announced that resolution, however, he observed all the decent forms of deliberation. A council was held that evening at Marli, and was attended by the princes of the blood and by the ministers of state. The question was propounded, whether, when God should take James the Second of England to himself, France should recognise the Pretender as King James the Third?

The ministers were, one and all, against the recognition. Indeed, it seems difficult to understand how any person who had any pretensions to the name of statesman should have been of a different opinion. Torcy took his stand on the ground that to recognise the Prince of Wales would be to violate the Treaty of Ryswick. This was indeed an impregnable position. By that treaty His Most Christian Majesty had bound himself to do nothing which could, directly or indirectly, disturb the existing order of

things in England. And in what way, except by an actual invasion, could he do more to disturb the existing order of things in England than by solemnly declaring, in the face of the whole world, that he did not consider that order of things as legitimate, that he regarded the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement as nullities, and the King in possession as an usurper? The recognition would then be a breach of faith: and, even if all considerations of morality were set aside, it was plain that it would, at that moment, be wise in the French government to avoid everything which could with plausibility be represented as a breach of faith. The crisis was a very peculiar one. The great diplomatic victory won by France in the preceding year had excited the fear and hatred of her neighbours. Nevertheless there was, as yet, no great coalition against her. The House of Austria, indeed, had appealed to arms. But with the House of Austria alone the House of Bourbon could easily deal. Other powers were still looking in doubt to England for the signal; and England, though her aspect was sullen and menacing, still preserved neutrality. That neutrality would not have lasted so long, if William could have relied on the support of his Parliament and of his people. In his Parliament there were agents of France, who, though few, had obtained so much influence by clamouring against standing armies, profuse grants, Dutch favourites, that they were often blindly followed by the majority; and his people, distracted by domestic factions, unaccustomed to busy themselves about

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continental politics, and remembering with bitterness the disasters and burdens of the last war, the carnage of Landen, the loss of the Smyrna fleet, the land tax at four shillings in the pound, hesitated about engaging in another contest, and would probably continue to hesitate while he continued to live. He could not live long. It had, indeed, often been prophesied that his death was at hand; and the prophets had hitherto been mistaken. But there was now no possibility of mistake. His cough was more violent than ever; his legs were swollen; his eyes, once bright and clear as those of a falcon, had grown dim; he who, on the day of the Boyne, had been sixteen hours on the backs of different horses, could now with great difficulty creep into his state coach.* The vigorous intellect, and the intrepid spirit, remained; but on the body fifty years had done the work of ninety. In a few months the vaults of Westminster would receive the emaciated and shattered frame which was animated by the most far-sighted, the most daring, the most commanding of souls. In a few months the British throne would be filled by a woman whose understanding was well known to be feeble, and who was believed to lean towards the party which was averse from war. To get over those few months without an open and violent rupture should have been the first object of the

* Poussin to Torcy, $\frac{\text{April 28.}}{\text{May 8.}}$ 1701. "Le roi d'Angleterre toussé plus qu'il n'a jamais fait, et ses jambes sont fort enflées. Je le vis hier sortir du préche de Saint James. Je le trouve fort cassé, les yeux éteints, et il eut beaucoup de peine à monter en carrosse."

French government. Every engagement should have been punctually fulfilled: every occasion of quarrel should have been studiously avoided. Nothing should have been spared which could quiet the alarms and sooth the wounded pride of neighbouring nations.

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The House of Bourbon was so situated that one year of moderation might not improbably be rewarded by thirty years of undisputed ascendancy. Was it possible the politic and experienced Lewis would at such a conjuncture offer a new and most galling provocation, not only to William, whose animosity was already as great as it could be, but to the people whom William had hitherto been vainly endeavouring to inspire with animosity resembling his own? How often, since the Revolution of 1688, had it seemed that the English were thoroughly weary of the new government. And how often had the detection of a Jacobite plot, or the approach of a French armament, changed the whole face of things. All at once the grumbling had ceased, the grumblers had crowded to sign loyal addresses to the usurper, had formed associations in support of his authority, had appeared in arms at the head of the militia, crying God save King William. So it would be now. Most of those who had taken a pleasure in crossing him on the question of his Dutch guards, on the question of his Irish grants, would be moved to vehement resentment when they learned that Lewis had, in direct violation of a treaty, determined to force on England a king of his own religion, a king bred in his own dominions,

CHAP. a king who would be at Westminster what Philip was at
 XXV. Madrid, a great feudatory of France.
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These arguments were concisely but clearly and strongly urged by Torey in a paper which is still extant, and which it is difficult to believe that his master can have read without great misgivings.* On one side were the faith of treaties, the peace of Europe, the welfare of France, nay the selfish interest of the House of Bourbon. On the other side were the influence of an artful woman, and the promptings of vanity which, we must in candour acknowledge, was ennobled by a mixture of compassion and chivalrous generosity. The King determined to act in direct opposition to the advice of all his ablest servants; and the princes of the blood applauded his decision, as they would have applauded any decision which he had announced. Nowhere was he regarded with a more timorous, a more slavish, respect than in his own family.

On the following day he went again to Saint Germain, and, attended by a splendid retinue, entered James's bed-chamber. The dying man scarcely opened his heavy eyes, and then closed them again. "I have something," said Lewis, "of great moment to communicate to Your Majesty." The courtiers who filled the room took this as a signal to retire, and were crowding towards the door, when they were stopped by that commanding voice: "Let no-

* Mémoire sur la proposition de reconnoître au prince des Galles le titre du Roi de la Grande Bretagne, Sept. 3^o. 1701.

body withdraw. I come to tell Your Majesty that, whenever it shall please God to take you from us, I will be to your son what I have been to you, and will acknowledge him as King of England, Scotland and Ireland." The English exiles who were standing round the couch fell on their knees. Some burst into tears. Some poured forth praises and blessings with clamour such as was scarcely becoming in such a place and at such a time. Some indistinct murmurs which James uttered, and which were drowned by the noisy gratitude of his attendants, were interpreted to mean thanks. But from the most trustworthy accounts it appears that he was insensible to all that was passing around him.*

As soon as Lewis was again at Marli, he repeated to the Court assembled there the announcement which he had made at Saint Germain. The whole circle broke forth into exclamations of delight and admiration. What piety! What humanity! What magnanimity! Nor was this enthusiasm altogether feigned. For, in the estimation of the greater part of that brilliant crowd, nations were nothing and princes everything. What could be more generous, more amiable, than to protect an innocent boy, who was kept out of his rightful inheritance by an ambitious kinsman? The fine gentlemen and fine ladies who talked thus forgot that, besides the innocent boy and

* By the most trustworthy accounts I mean those of St. Simon and Dangeau. The reader may compare their narratives with the Life of James.

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that ambitious kinsman, five millions and a half of Englishmen were concerned, who were little disposed to consider themselves as the absolute property of any master, and who were still less disposed to accept a master chosen for them by the French King.

James lingered three days longer. He was occasionally sensible during a few minutes, and, during one of these lucid intervals, faintly expressed his gratitude to Lewis. On the sixteenth he died. His Queen retired that evening to the nunnery of Chaillot, where she could weep and pray undisturbed. She left Saint Germain in joyous agitation. A herald made his appearance before the palace gate, and, with sound of trumpet, proclaimed, in Latin, French and English, King James the Third of England and Eighth of Scotland. The streets, in consequence doubtless of orders from the government, were illuminated; and the townsmen with loud shouts wished a long reign to their illustrious neighbour. The poor lad received from his ministers, and delivered back to them, the seals of their offices, and held out his hand to be kissed. One of the first acts of his mock reign was to bestow some mock peerages in conformity with directions which he found in his father's will. Middleton, who had as yet no English title, was created Earl of Monmouth. Perth, who had stood high in the favour of his late master, both as an apostate from the Protestant religion, and as the author of the last improvements on the thumb screw, took the title of Duke.

Meanwhile the remains of James were escorted, in the dusk of the evening, by a slender retinue to the Chapel of the English Benedictines at Paris, and deposited there in the vain hope that, at some future time, they would be laid with kingly pomp at Westminster among the graves of the Plantagenets and Tudors.

Three days after these humble obsequies Lewis visited Saint Germain in form. On the morrow the visit was returned. The French Court was now at Versailles; and the Pretender was received there, in all points, as his father would have been, sate in his father's arm chair, took, as his father had always done, the right hand of the great monarch, and wore the long violet coloured mantle which was by ancient usage the mourning garb of the Kings of France. There was on that day a great concourse of ambassadors and envoys; but one well known figure was wanting. Manchester had sent off to Loo intelligence of the affront which had been offered to his country and his master, had solicited instructions, and had determined that, till these instructions should arrive, he would live in strict seclusion. He did not think that he should be justified in quitting his post without express orders; but his earnest hope was that he should be directed to turn his back in contemptuous defiance on the Court which had dared to treat England as a subject province.

As soon as the fault into which Lewis had been hurried by pity, by the desire of applause, and by female influence

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The Pre-
tender re-
cognised
as King.

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1701. was complete and irreparable, he began to feel serious uneasiness. His ministers were directed to declare everywhere that their master had no intention of affronting the English government, that he had not violated the Treaty of Ryswick, that he had no intention of violating it, that he had merely meant to gratify an unfortunate family nearly related to himself by using names and observing forms which really meant nothing, and that he was resolved not to countenance any attempt to subvert the throne of William. Torcy, who had, a few days before, proved by irrefragable arguments that his master could not, without a gross breach of contract, recognise the Pretender, imagined that sophisms which had not imposed on himself might possibly impose on others. He visited the English embassy, obtained admittance, and, as was his duty, did his best to excuse the fatal act which he had done his best to prevent. Manchester's answer to this attempt at explanation was as strong and plain as it could be in the absence of precise instructions. The instructions speedily arrived. The courier who carried the news of the recognition to Loo arrived there when William was at table with some of his nobles and some princes of the German Empire who had visited him in his retreat. The King said not a word: but his pale cheek flushed: and he pulled his hat over his eyes to conceal the changes of his countenance. He hastened to send off several messengers. One carried a letter commanding Manchester to quit France

without taking leave. Another started for London with a despatch which directed the Lords Justices to send Poussin instantly out of England. CHAP.
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England was already in a flame when it was first known there that James was dying. Some of his eager partisans formed plans and made preparations for a great public manifestation of feeling in different parts of the island. But the insolence of Lewis produced a burst of public indignation which scarcely any malecontent had the courage to face.

In the city of London, indeed, some zealots, who had probably swallowed too many bumpers to their Sovereign, played one of those senseless pranks which were characteristic of their party. They dressed themselves in coats bearing some resemblance to the tabards of heralds, rode through the streets, halted at some places, and muttered something which nobody could understand. It was at first supposed that they were merely a company of prize fighters from Hockley in the Hole who had taken this way of advertising their performances with back sword, sword and buckler, and single falchion. But it was soon discovered that these gaudily dressed horsemen were proclaiming James the Third. In an instant the pageant was at an end. The mock kings at arms and pursuivants threw away their finery and fled for their lives in all directions, followed by yells and showers of stones.* Already the Common

* Lettres Historiques, Mois de Novembre 1701.

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Council of London had met, and had voted, without one dissentient voice, an address expressing the highest resentment at the insult which France had offered to the King and the kingdom. A few hours after this address had been presented to the Regents, the Livery assembled to choose a Lord Mayor. Duncombe, the Tory candidate, lately the popular favourite, was rejected, and a Whig alderman placed in the chair. All over the kingdom, corporations, grand juries, meetings of magistrates, meetings of freeholders, were passing resolutions breathing affection to William, and defiance to Lewis. It was necessary to enlarge the "London Gazette" from four columns to twelve; and even twelve were too few to hold the multitude of loyal and patriotic addresses. In some of those addresses severe reflections were thrown on the House of Commons. Our deliverer had been ungratefully requited, thwarted, mortified, denied the means of making the country respected and feared by neighbouring states. The factious wrangling, the penny wise economy, of three disgraceful years had produced the effect which might have been expected. His Majesty would never have been so grossly affronted abroad, if he had not first been affronted at home. But the eyes of his people were opened. He had only to appeal from the representatives to the constituents; and he would find that the nation was still sound at heart.

Poussin had been directed to offer to the Lords Justices explanations similar to those with which Torey had at-

tempted to appease Manchester. A memorial was accordingly drawn up and presented to Vernon: but Vernon refused to look at it. Soon a courier arrived from Loo with the letter in which William directed his vicegerents to send the French agent out of the kingdom. An officer of the royal household was charged with the execution of the order. He repaired to Poussin's lodgings: but Poussin was not at home: he was supping at the Blue Posts, a tavern much frequented by Jacobites, the very tavern indeed at which Charnock and his gang had breakfasted on the day fixed for the murderous ambuscade of Turnham Green. To this house the messenger went; and there he found Poussin at table with three of the most virulent Tory members of the House of Commons, Tredenham, who returned himself for Saint Mawes; Hammond, who had been sent to Parliament by the high churchmen of the University of Cambridge; and Davenant, who had recently, at Poussin's suggestion, been rewarded by Lewis for some savage invectives against the Whigs with a diamond ring worth three thousand pistoles. This supper party was, during some weeks, the chief topic of conversation. The exultation of the Whigs was boundless. These then were the true English patriots, the men who could not endure a foreigner, the men who would not suffer His Majesty to bestow a moderate reward on the foreigners who had stormed Athlone, and turned the flank of the Celtic army at Aghrim. It now appeared they could be on excellent terms with a foreigner, provided only that he was the

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emissary of a tyrant hostile to the liberty, the independence, and the religion of their country. The Tories, vexed and abashed, heartily wished that, on that unlucky day, their friends had been supping somewhere else. Even the bronze of Davenant's forehead was not proof to the general reproach. He defended himself by pretending that Poussin, with whom he had passed whole days, who had corrected his scurrilous pamphlets, and who had paid him his shameful wages, was a stranger to him, and that the meeting at the Blue Posts was purely accidental. If his word was doubted, he was willing to repeat his assertion on oath. The public, however, which had formed a very correct notion of his character, thought that his word was worth as much as his oath, and that his oath was worth nothing.

Return of
the King.

Meanwhile the arrival of William was impatiently expected. From Loo he had gone to Breda, where he had passed some time in reviewing his troops, and in conferring with Marlborough and Heinsius. He had hoped to be in England early in October. But adverse winds detained him three weeks at the Hague. At length, in the afternoon of the fourth of November, it was known in London that he had landed early that morning at Margate. Great preparations were made for welcoming him to his capital on the following day, the thirteenth anniversary of his landing in Devonshire. But a journey across the bridge, and along Cornhill and Cheapside, Fleet Street, and the Strand, would have been too great an effort for his enfeebled frame.

He accordingly slept at Greenwich, and thence proceeded to Hampton Court without entering London. His return was, however, celebrated by the populace with every sign of joy and attachment. The bonfires blazed, and the gunpowder roared, all night. In every parish from Mile End to Saint James's was to be seen enthroned on the shoulders of stout Protestant porters a pope, gorgeous in robes of tinsel and triple crown of pasteboard; and close to the ear of His Holiness stood a devil with horns, cloven hoof, and a snaky tail.

Even in his country house the King could find no refuge from the importunate loyalty of his people. Deputations from cities, counties, universities, besieged him all day. He was, he wrote to Heinsius, quite exhausted by the labour of hearing harangues and returning answers. The whole kingdom meanwhile was looking anxiously towards Hampton Court. Most of the ministers were assembled there. The most eminent men of the party which was out of power had repaired thither, to pay their duty to their sovereign, and to congratulate him on his safe return. It was remarked that Somers and Halifax, so malignantly persecuted a few months ago by the House of Commons, were received with such marks of esteem and kindness as William was little in the habit of vouchsafing to his English courtiers. The lower ranks of both the great factions were violently agitated. The Whigs, lately vanquished and dispirited, were full of hope and ardour. The Tories, lately triumphant and secure, were exasperated and

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alarmed. Both Whigs and Tories waited with intense anxiety for the decision of one momentous and pressing question. Would there be a dissolution? On the seventh of November the King propounded that question to his Privy Council. It was rumoured, and is highly probable, that Jersey, Wright and Hedges advised him to keep the existing Parliament. But they were not men whose opinion was likely to have much weight with him; and Rochester, whose opinion might have had some weight, had set out to take possession of his Viceroyalty just before the death of James, and was still at Dublin. William, however, had, as he owed to Heinsius, some difficulty in making up his mind. He had no doubt that a general election would give him a better House of Commons: but a general election would cause delay; and delay might cause much mischief. After balancing these considerations, during some hours, he determined to dissolve.

General
election.

The writs were sent out with all expedition; and in three days the whole kingdom was up. Never — such was the intelligence sent from the Dutch Embassy to the Hague — had there been more intriguing, more canvassing, more virulence of party feeling. It was in the capital that the first great contests took place. The decisions of the Metropolitan constituent bodies were impatiently expected as auguries of the general result. All the pens of Grub Street, all the presses of Little Britain, were hard at work. Handbills for and against every candidate were sent to every voter. The popular slogans

on both sides were indefatigably repeated. Presbyterian, Papist, Tool of Holland, Pensioner of France, were the appellations interchanged between the contending factions. The Whig cry was that the Tory members of the last two Parliaments had, from a malignant desire to mortify the King, left the kingdom exposed to danger and insult, had unconstitutionally encroached both on the legislature and on the judicial functions of the House of Lords, had turned the House of Commons into a new Star Chamber, had used as instruments of capricious tyranny those privileges which ought never to be employed but in defence of freedom, had persecuted, without regard to law, to natural justice, or to decorum, the great Commander who had saved the state at La Hogue, the great Financier who had restored the currency and reestablished public credit, the great Judge whom all persons not blinded by prejudice acknowledged to be, in virtue, in prudence, in learning and eloquence, the first of living English jurists and statesmen. The Tories answered that they had been only too moderate, only too merciful; that they had used the Speaker's warrant and the power of tacking only too sparingly; and that, if they ever again had a majority, the three Whig leaders who now imagined themselves secure should be impeached, not for high misdemeanours, but for high treason. It soon appeared that these threats were not likely to be very speedily executed. Four Whig and four Tory candidates contested the City of London. The show of hands was

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CHAP. for the Whigs. A poll was demanded; and the Whigs
XXV. polled nearly two votes to one. Sir John Levison Gower,
1701. who was supposed to have ingratiated himself with the
whole body of shopkeepers by some parts of his parlia-
mentary conduct, was put up for Westminster on the
Tory interest; and the electors were reminded by puffs
in the newspapers of the services which he had ren-
dered to trade. But the dread of the French King, the
Pope, and the Pretender, prevailed; and Sir John was
at the bottom of the poll. Southwark not only returned
Whigs, but gave them instructions of the most Whiggish
character.

In the country, parties were more nearly balanced
than in the capital. Yet the news from every quarter
was that the Whigs had recovered part at least of the
ground which they had lost. Wharton had regained his
ascendancy in Buckinghamshire. Musgrave was rejected
by Westmoreland. Nothing did more harm to the Tory
candidates than the story of Poussin's farewell supper.
We learn from their own acrimonious invectives that the
unlucky discovery of the three members of Parliament at
the Blue Posts cost thirty honest gentlemen their seats.
One of the criminals, Tredenham, escaped with impunity.
For the dominion of his family over the borough of
St. Mawes was absolute even to a proverb. The other
two had the fate which they deserved. Davenant ceased
to sit for Bedwin. Hammond, who had lately stood high
in the favour of the University of Cambridge, was defeated

by a great majority, and was succeeded by the glory of the Whig party, Isaac Newton.

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There was one district to which the eyes of hundreds of thousands were turned with anxious interest, Gloucestershire. Would the patriotic and high spirited gentry and yeomanry of that great county again confide their dearest interests to the Impudent Scandal of parliaments, the renegade, the slanderer, the mountebank, who had been, during thirteen years, railing at his betters of every party with a spite restrained by nothing but the craven fear of corporal chastisement, and who had in the last Parliament made himself conspicuous by the abject court which he had paid to Lewis and by the impertinence with which he had spoken of William.

The Gloucestershire election became a national affair. Portmanteaus full of pamphlets and broadsides were sent down from London. Every freeholder in the county had several tracts left at his door. In every market place, on the market day, papers about the brazen forehead, the viperous tongue, and the white liver of Jack Howe, the French King's buffoon, flew about like flakes in a snow storm. Clowns from the Cotswold Hills and the forest of Dean, who had votes, but who did not know their letters, were invited to hear these satires read, and were asked whether they were prepared to endure the two great evils which were then considered by the common people of England as the inseparable concomitants of despotism, to wear wooden shoes, and to live on frogs. The dissenting

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[*Here the revised part ends.* — EDITOR.]

Meanwhile reports about the state of the King's health were constantly becoming more and more alarming. His medical advisers, both English and Dutch, were at the end of their resources. He had consulted by letter all the most eminent physicians of Europe; and, as he was apprehensive that they might return flattering answers if they knew who he was, he had written under feigned names. To Fagon he had described himself as a parish priest. Fagon replied, somewhat bluntly, that such symptoms could have only one meaning, and that the only advice which he had to give to the sick man was to prepare himself for death. Having obtained this plain answer, William consulted Fagon again without disguise, and obtained some prescriptions which were thought to have a little retarded the approach of the inevitable hour. But the great King's days were numbered. Headaches and shivering fits returned on him almost daily. He still rode and even hunted*; but he had no longer that firm seat or that perfect command of the bridle for which he had once been renowned. Still all his care was for the future. The filial respect and tenderness of Albemarle

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Death of
William.

* Last letter to Heinsius.

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had been almost a necessary of life to him. But it was of importance that Heinsius should be fully informed both as to the whole plan of the next campaign and as to the state of the preparations. Albemarle was in full possession of the King's views on these subjects. He was therefore sent to the Hague. Heinsius was at that time suffering from indisposition, which was indeed a trifle when compared with the maladies under which William was sinking. But in the nature of William there was none of that selfishness which is the too common vice of invalids. On the twentieth of February he sent to Heinsius a letter in which he did not even allude to his own sufferings and infirmities. "I am," he said, "infinitely concerned to learn that your health is not yet quite reestablished. May God be pleased to grant you a speedy recovery. I am unalterably your good friend, William." Those were the last lines of that long correspondence.

On the twentieth of February William was ambling on a favourite horse, named Sorrel, through the park of Hampton Court. He urged his horse to strike into a gallop just at the spot where a mole had been at work. Sorrel stumbled on the mole-hill, and went down on his knees. The King fell off, and broke his collar bone. The bone was set; and he returned to Kensington in his coach. The jolting of the rough roads of that time made it necessary to reduce the fracture again. To a young and vigorous man such an accident would have been a

trifle. But the frame of William was not in a condition to bear even the slightest shock. He felt that his time was short, and grieved, with a grief such as only noble spirits feel, to think that he must leave his work but half finished. It was possible that he might still live until one of his plans should be carried into execution. He had long known that the relation in which England and Scotland stood to each other was at best precarious, and often unfriendly, and that it might be doubted whether, in an estimate of the British power, the resources of the smaller country ought not to be deducted from those of the larger. Recent events had proved that, without doubt, the two kingdoms could not possibly continue for another year to be on the terms on which they had been during the preceding century, and that there must be between them either absolute union or deadly enmity. Their enmity would bring frightful calamities, not on themselves alone, but on all the civilised world. Their union would be the best security for the prosperity of both, for the internal tranquillity of the island, for the just balance of power among European states, and for the immunities of all Protestant countries. On the twenty eighth of February the Commons listened with uncovered heads to the last message that bore William's sign manual. An unhappy accident, he told them, had forced him to make to them in writing a communication which he would gladly have made from the throne. He had, in the first year of his reign, expressed his desire to see an union accomplished

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between England and Scotland. He was convinced that nothing could more conduce to the safety and happiness of both. He should think it his peculiar felicity if, before the close of his reign, some happy expedient could be devised for making the two kingdoms one; and he, in the most earnest manner, recommended the question to the consideration of the Houses. It was resolved that the message should be taken into consideration on Saturday, the seventh of March.

But on the first of March humours of menacing appearance showed themselves in the king's knee. On the fourth of March he was attacked by fever; on the fifth his strength failed greatly; and on the sixth he was scarcely kept alive by cordials. The Abjuration Bill and a money bill were awaiting his assent. That assent he felt that he should not be able to give in person. He therefore ordered a commission to be prepared for his signature. His hand was now too weak to form the letters of his name, and it was suggested that a stamp should be prepared. On the seventh of March the stamp was ready. The Lord Keeper and the clerks of the parliament came, according to usage, to witness the signing of the commission. But they were detained some hours in the ante-chamber while he was in one of the paroxysms of his malady. Meanwhile the Houses were sitting. It was Saturday, the seventh, the day on which the Commons had resolved to take into consideration the question of the union with Scotland. But that subject was not mentioned.

It was known that the King had but a few hours to live; and the members asked each other anxiously whether it was likely that the Abjuration and money bills would be passed before he died. After sitting long in the expectation of a message, the Commons adjourned till six in the afternoon. By that time William had recovered himself sufficiently to put the stamp on the parchment which authorised his commissioners to act for him. In the evening, when the Houses had assembled, Black Rod knocked. The Commons were summoned to the bar of the Lords; the commission was read, the Abjuration Bill and the Malt Bill became laws, and both Houses adjourned till nine o'clock in the morning of the following day. The following day was Sunday. But there was little chance that William would live through the night. It was of the highest importance that, within the shortest possible time after his decease, the successor designated by the Bill of Rights and the Act of Succession should receive the homage of the Estates of the Realm, and be publicly proclaimed in the Council: and the most rigid Pharisee in the Society for the Reformation of Manners could hardly deny that it was lawful to save the state, even on the Sabbath.

The King meanwhile was sinking fast. Albemarle had arrived at Kensington from the Hague, exhausted by rapid travelling. His master kindly bade him go to rest for some hours, and then summoned him to make his report. That report was in all respects satisfactory.

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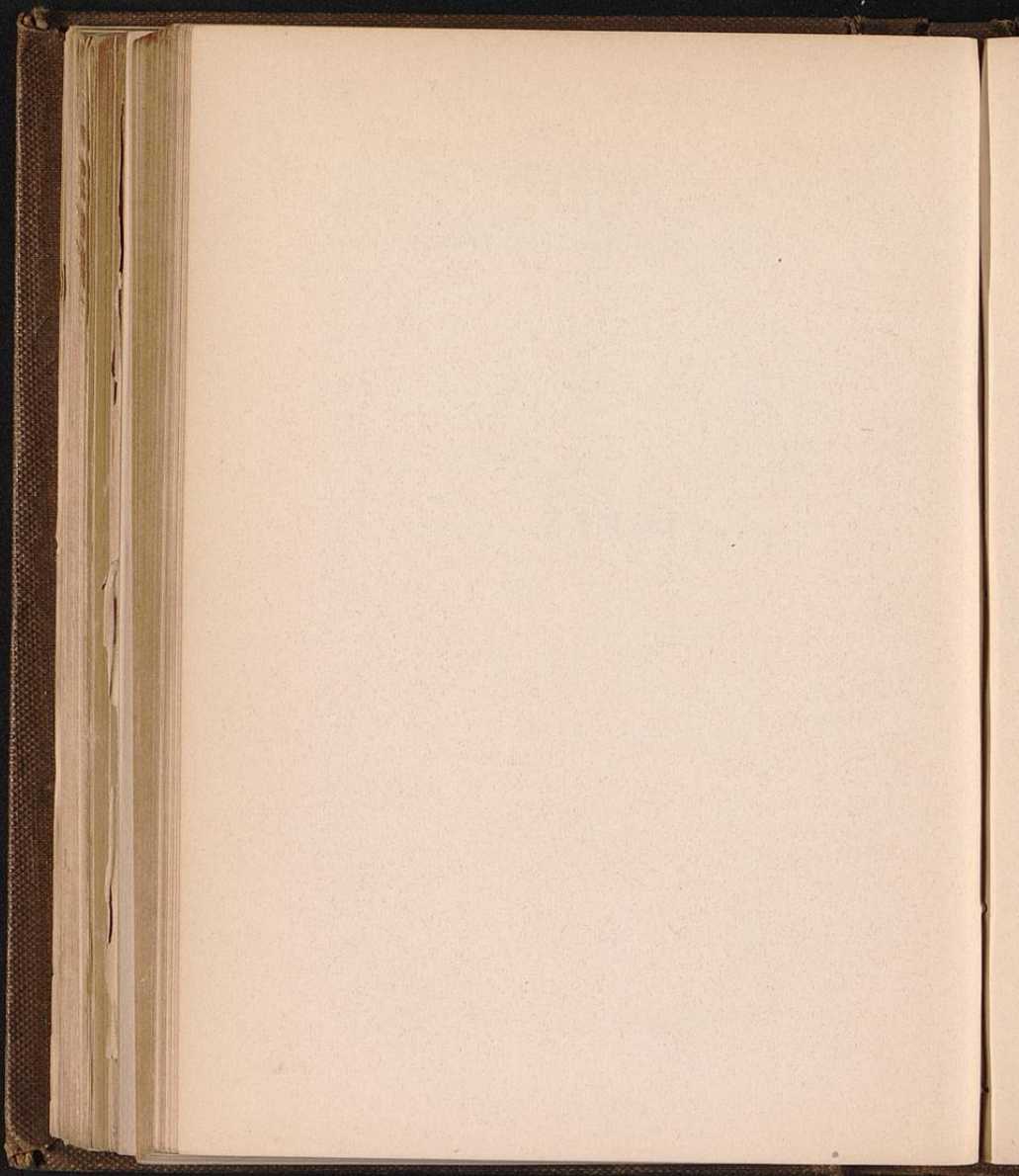
The States General were in the best temper; the troops, the provisions and the magazines were in the best order. Every thing was in readiness for an early campaign. William received the intelligence with the calmness of a man whose work was done. He was under no illusion as to his danger. "I am fast drawing," he said, "to my end." His end was worthy of his life. His intellect was not for a moment clouded. His fortitude was the more admirable because he was not willing to die. He had very lately said to one of those whom he most loved: "You know that I never feared death; there have been times when I should have wished it; but, now that this great new prospect is opening before me, I do wish to stay here a little longer." Yet no weakness, no querulousness, disgraced the noble close of that noble career. To the physicians the King returned his thanks graciously and gently. "I know that you have done all that skill and learning could do for me: but the case is beyond your art; and I submit." From the words which escaped him he seemed to be frequently engaged in mental prayer. Burnet and Tenison remained many hours in the sick room. He professed to them his firm belief in the truth of the Christian religion, and received the sacrament from their hands with great seriousness. The antechambers were crowded all night with lords and privy councillors. He ordered several of them to be called in, and exerted himself to take leave of them with a few kind and cheerful words. Among the English who were admitted to his bedside were Devonshire and Ormond.

But there were in the crowd those who felt as no Englishman could feel, friends of his youth who had been true to him, and to whom he had been true, through all vicissitudes of fortune; who had served him with unalterable fidelity when his Secretaries of State, his Treasury and his Admiralty had betrayed him; who had never on any field of battle, or in an atmosphere tainted with loathsome and deadly disease, shrunk from placing their own lives in jeopardy to save his, and whose truth he had at the cost of his own popularity rewarded with bounteous munificence. He strained his feeble voice to thank Auverquerque for the affectionate and loyal services of thirty years. To Albemarle he gave the keys of his closet, and of his private drawers. "You know," he said, "what to do with them." By this time he could scarcely respire. "Can this," he said to the physicians, "last long?" He was told that the end was approaching. He swallowed a cordial, and asked for Bentinck. Those were his last articulate words. Bentinck instantly came to the bedside, bent down, and placed his ear close to the King's mouth. The lips of the dying man moved; but nothing could be heard. The King took the hand of his earliest friend, and pressed it tenderly to his heart. In that moment, no doubt, all that had cast a slight passing cloud over their long and pure friendship was forgotten. It was now between seven and eight in the morning. He closed his eyes, and gasped for breath. The bishops knelt down and read the commendatory prayer. When it ended William was no more.

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When his remains were laid out, it was found that he wore next to his skin a small piece of black silk riband. The lords in waiting ordered it to be taken off. It contained a gold ring and a lock of the hair of Mary.

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