

# HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

VOL. VIII.

## CHAPTER XXI.

On the Continent the news of Mary's death excited various emotions. The Huguenots, in every part of Europe to which they had wandered, bewailed the Elect Lady, who had renounced from her own royal state in order to furnish bread and shelter to the persecuted people of God.\* In the United Provinces, where she was well known and had always been popular, she was tenderly lamented. Matthew Prior, whose parts and accomplishments had obtained for him the patronage of the magnificent Dorset, and who was now attached to the Embassy at the Hague, wrote that the coldest and most passionless of nations was touched. The very marble, he said, wept.\*\* The lamentations of Cambridge and Oxford were echoed by Leyden and Utrecht. The States General put on mourning. The bells of all the steeples of Holland tolled dolefully day after day.\*\*\*

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Effect of  
Mary's  
death on  
the Con-  
tinent.

\* See Claude's Sermon on Mary's death.

\*\* Prior to Lord and Lady Lexington, Jan. 14, 1695. The letter is among the Lexington papers, a valuable collection, and well edited.

\*\*\* Monthly Mercury for January 1695. An orator who pronounced an eulogium on the Queen at Utrecht was so absurd as to say that she spent her last breath in prayers for the prosperity of the United Provinces:—"Valeant et Batavi;"—these are her last words—"sint incolumes; sint florentes; sint beati: stet in eternum, stet immota preclarissima illorum civitas, hospitium aliquando mihi gratissimum, optime de me meritum." See also the orations of Peter Francius of Amsterdam, and of John Ortwinus of Delft.

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James, meanwhile, strictly prohibited all mourning at Saint Germain, and prevailed on Lewis to issue a similar prohibition at Versailles. Some of the most illustrious nobles of France, and among them the Dukes of Bouillon and of Duras, were related to the House of Nassau, and had always, when death visited that House, punctiliously observed the decent ceremonial of sorrow. They were now forbidden to wear black; and they submitted: but it was beyond the power of the great King to prevent his highbred and sharpwitted courtiers from whispering to each other that there was something pitiful in this revenge taken by the living on the dead, by a parent on a child.\*

The hopes of James and of his companions in exile were now higher than they had been since the day of La Hogue. Indeed the general opinion of politicians, both here and on the Continent, was that William would find it impossible to sustain himself much longer on the throne. He would not, it was said, have sustained himself so long but for the help of his wife. Her affability had conciliated many who had been repelled by his freezing looks and short answers. Her English tones, sentiments and tastes had charmed many who were disgusted by his Dutch accent and Dutch habits. Though she did not belong to the High Church party, she loved that ritual to which she had been accustomed from infancy, and complied willingly and reverently with some ceremonies which he considered, not indeed as sinful, but as childish, and in which he could hardly bring himself to take part. While the war lasted, it would be necessary that he should pass nearly half the year out of England. Hitherto she had, when he was absent, supplied his place, and had supplied it well. Who was to supply it now? In what vicegerent could he place equal confidence? To what vicegerent would the nation look up with equal respect? All

\* Journal de Dangeau; Mémoires de Saint Simon.

the statesmen of Europe therefore agreed in thinking that his position, difficult and dangerous at best, had been made far more difficult and more dangerous by the death of the Queen. But all the statesmen of Europe were deceived; and, strange to say, his reign was decidedly more prosperous and more tranquil after the decease of Mary than during her life.

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A few hours after he had lost the most tender and beloved of all his friends, he was delivered from the most formidable of all his enemies. Death had been busy at Paris as well as in London. While Tenison was praying by the bed of Mary, Bourdaloue was administering the last unction to Luxemburg. The great French general had never been a favourite at the French Court: but when it was known that his feeble frame, exhausted by war and pleasure, was sinking under a dangerous disease, the value of his services was, for the first time, fully appreciated: the royal physicians were sent to prescribe for him: the sisters of Saint Cyr were ordered to pray for him: but prayers and prescriptions were vain. "How glad the Prince of Orange will be," said Lewis, "when the news of our loss reaches him." He was mistaken. That news found William unable to think of any loss but his own.\*

Death of  
Luxem-  
burg.

During the month which followed the death of Mary the King was incapable of exertion. Even to the addresses of the two Houses of Parliament he replied only by a few inarticulate sounds. The answers which appear in the Journals were not uttered by him, but were delivered in writing. Such business as could not be deferred was transacted by the intervention of Portland, who was himself oppressed with sorrow. During some weeks the important and confidential correspondence between the King and Heinsius was suspended. At length William forced himself to resume that correspondence: but his first letter was the letter of a heartbroken man. Even his

Distress  
of Wil-  
liam.

\* Saint Simon; Dangeau; Monthly Mercury for January 1695.

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1695. martial ardour had been tamed by misery. "I tell you in confidence," he wrote, "that I feel myself to be no longer fit for military command. Yet I will try to do my duty; and I hope that God will strengthen me." So despondingly did he look forward to the most brilliant and successful of his many campaigns.\*

Parliamentary proceedings: emancipation of the press.

There was no interruption of parliamentary business. While the Abbey was hanging with black for the funeral of the Queen, the Commons came to a vote, which at the time attracted little attention, which produced no excitement, which has been left unnoticed by voluminous annalists, and of which the history can be but imperfectly traced in the archives of Parliament, but which has done more for liberty and for civilisation than the Great Charter or the Bill of Rights. Early in the session a select committee had been appointed to ascertain what temporary statutes were about to expire, and to consider which of those statutes it might be expedient to continue. The report was made; and all the recommendations contained in that report were adopted, with one exception. Among the laws which the committee advised the House to renew was the law which subjected the press to a censorship. The question was put, "that the House do agree with the committee in the resolution that the Act entitled an Act for preventing Abuses in printing seditious, treasonable and unlicensed Pamphlets, and for regulating of Printing and Printing Presses, be continued." The Speaker pronounced that the Noes had it; and the Ayes did not think fit to divide.

A bill for continuing all the other temporary Acts, which, in the opinion of the committee, could not properly be suffered to expire, was brought in, passed and sent to the Lords. In a

\* L'Hermitage, Jan. 1<sup>r</sup>, 1695; Vernon to Lord Lexington, Jan. 1. 4.; Portland to Lord Lexington, Jan. 1<sup>5</sup>/<sub>2</sub>; William to Heinsius, Jan. 22.  
Feb. 1.

short time this bill came back with an important amendment. The Lords had inserted in the list of Acts to be continued the Act which placed the press under the control of licensers. The Commons resolved not to agree to the amendment, demanded a conference, and appointed a committee of managers. The leading manager was Edward Clarke, a staunch Whig, who represented Taunton, the stronghold, during fifty troubled years, of civil and religious freedom.

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Clarke delivered to the Lords in the Painted Chamber a paper containing the reasons which had determined the Lower House not to renew the Licensing Act. This paper completely vindicates the resolution to which the Commons had come. But it proves at the same time that they knew not what they were doing, what a revolution they were making, what a power they were calling into existence. They pointed out concisely, clearly, forcibly, and sometimes with a grave irony which is not unbecoming, the absurdities and iniquities of the statute which was about to expire. But all their objections will be found to relate to matters of detail. On the great question of principle, on the question whether the liberty of unlicensed printing be, on the whole, a blessing or a curse to society, not a word is said. The Licensing Act is condemned, not as a thing essentially evil, but on account of the petty grievances, the exactions, the jobs, the commercial restrictions, the domiciliary visits which were incidental to it. It is pronounced mischievous because it enables the Company of Stationers to extort money from publishers, because it empowers the agents of the government to search houses under the authority of general warrants, because it confines the foreign book trade to the port of London; because it detains valuable packages of books at the Custom House till the pages are mildewed. The Commons complain that the amount of the fee which the licenser may demand is not fixed. They complain that it is made pen in

CHAP. an officer of the Customs to open a box of books from abroad,  
 XXI. except in the presence of one of the censors of the press. How,  
 1695. it is very sensibly asked, is the officer to know that there  
 are books in the box till he has opened it? Such were the  
 arguments which did what Milton's *Areopagitica* had failed  
 to do.

The Lords yielded without a contest. They probably expected that some less objectionable bill for the regulation of the press would soon be sent up to them; and in fact such a bill was brought into the House of Commons, read twice, and referred to a select committee. But the session closed before the committee had reported; and English literature was emancipated, and emancipated for ever, from the control of the government.\* This great event passed almost unnoticed. Evelyn and Luttrell did not think it worth mentioning in their diaries. The Dutch minister did not think it worth mentioning in his despatches. No allusion to it is to be found in the *Monthly Mercuries*. The public attention was occupied by other and far more exciting subjects.

Death of  
 Halifax.

One of those subjects was the death of the most accomplished, the most enlightened, and, in spite of great faults, the most estimable of the statesmen who were formed in the corrupt and licentious Whitehall of the Restoration. About a month after the splendid obsequies of Mary, a funeral procession of almost ostentatious simplicity passed round the shrine of Edward the Confessor to the Chapel of Henry the Seventh. There, at the distance of a few feet from her coffin, lies the coffin of George Savile, Marquess of Halifax.

Halifax and Nottingham had long been friends: and Lord

\* See the Commons' Journals of Feb. 11., April 12. and April 17., and the Lords' Journals of April 8. and April 18. 1695. Unfortunately there is a hiatus in the Commons' Journal of the 12th of April, so that it is now impossible to discover whether there was a division on the question to agree with the amendment made by the Lords.

Eland, now Halifax's only son, had been affianced to the Lady Mary Finch, Nottingham's daughter. The day of the nuptials was fixed: a joyous company assembled at Burley on the Hill, the mansion of the bride's father, which, from one of the noblest terraces in the island, looks down on magnificent woods of beech and oak, on the rich valley of Catmos, and on the spire of Oakham. The father of the bridegroom was detained in London by indisposition, which was not supposed to be dangerous. On a sudden his malady took an alarming form. He was told that he had but a few hours to live. He received the intimation with tranquil fortitude. It was proposed to send off an express to summon his son to town. But Halifax, good natured to the last, would not disturb the felicity of the wedding day. He gave strict orders that his interment should be private, prepared himself for the great change by devotions which astonished those who had called him an atheist, and died with the serenity of a philosopher and of a Christian, while his friends and kindred, not suspecting his danger, were tasting the sack posset and drawing the curtain.\* His legitimate male posterity and his titles soon became extinct. No small portion, however, of his wit and eloquence descended to his daughter's son, Philip Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield. But it is perhaps not generally known that some adventurers, who, without advantages of fortune or position, made themselves conspicuous by the mere force of ability, inherited the blood of Halifax. He left a natural son, Henry Carey, whose dramas once drew crowded audiences to the theatres, and some of whose gay and spirited verses still live in the memory of hundreds of thousands. From Henry Carey descended that Edmund Kean, who, in our own time, transformed himself so marvellously into Shylock, Iago and Othello.

More than one historian has been charged with partiality to

\* L'Hermitage, April 10, 1695; Burnet, ii. 149.

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Halifax. The truth is that the memory of Halifax is entitled in an especial manner to the protection of history. For what distinguishes him from all other English statesmen is this, that, through a long public life, and through frequent and violent revolutions of public feeling, he almost invariably took that view of the great questions of his time which history has finally adopted. He was called inconstant, because the relative position in which he stood to the contending factions was perpetually varying. As well might the pole star be called inconstant because it is sometimes to the east and sometimes to the west of the pointers. To have defended the ancient and legal constitution of the realm against a seditious populace at one conjuncture and against a tyrannical government at another; to have been the foremost defender of order in the turbulent Parliament of 1680 and the foremost defender of liberty in the servile Parliament of 1685; to have been just and merciful to Roman Catholics in the days of the Popish plot and to Exclusionists in the days of the Rye House Plot; to have done all in his power to save both the head of Stafford and the head of Russell; this was a course which contemporaries, heated by passion and deluded by names and badges, might not unnaturally call fickle, but which deserves a very different name from the late justice of posterity.

There is one and only one deep stain on the memory of this eminent man. It is melancholy to think that he, who had acted so great a part in the Convention, could have afterwards stooped to hold communication with Saint Germain. The fact cannot be disputed: yet for him there are excuses which cannot be pleaded for others who were guilty of the same crime. He did not, like Marlborough, Russell, Godolphin and Shrewsbury, betray a master by whom he was trusted, and with whose benefits he was loaded. It was by the ingratitude and malice of the Whigs that he was driven to take shelter for a moment among the Jacobites. It may be added that he soon repented of the



error into which he had been hurried by passion, that, though never reconciled to the Court, he distinguished himself by his zeal for the vigorous prosecution of the war, and that his last work was a tract in which he exhorted his countrymen to remember that the public burdens, heavy as they might seem, were light when compared with the yoke of France and of Rome.\*

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About a fortnight after the death of Halifax, a fate far more cruel than death befell his old rival and enemy, the Lord President. That able, ambitious and daring statesman was again hurled down from power. In his first fall, terrible as it was, there had been something of dignity; and he had, by availing himself with rare skill of an extraordinary crisis in public affairs, risen once more to the most elevated position among English subjects. The second ruin was indeed less violent than the first: but it was ignominious and irretrievable.

The peculation and venality by which the official men of that age were in the habit of enriching themselves had excited in the public mind a feeling such as could not but vent itself, sooner or later, in some formidable explosion. But the gains were immediate: the day of retribution was uncertain; and the plunderers of the public were as greedy and as audacious as ever, when the vengeance, long threatened and long delayed, suddenly overtook the proudest and most powerful among them.

The first mutterings of the coming storm did not at all indicate the direction which it would take, or the fury with which it would burst. An infantry regiment, which was quartered at Royston, had levied contributions on the people of that town and of the neighbourhood. The sum exacted was not large. In France or Brabant the moderation of the demand would have been thought wonderful. But to English shopkeepers and farmers military extortion was happily quite new and quite insup-

\* An Essay upon Taxes, calculated for the present Juncture of Affairs, 1693.

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portable. A petition was sent up to the Commons. The Commons summoned the accusers and the accused to the bar. It soon appeared that a grave offence had been committed, but that the offenders were not altogether without excuse. The public money which had been issued from the Exchequer for their pay and subsistence had been fraudulently detained by their colonel and by his agent. It was not strange that men who had arms and who had not necessaries should trouble themselves little about the Petition of Right and the Declaration of Right. But it was monstrous that, while the citizen was heavily taxed for the purpose of paying to the soldier the largest military stipend known in Europe, the soldier should be driven by absolute want to plunder the citizen. This was strongly set forth in a representation which the Commons laid before William. William, who had been long struggling against abuses which grievously impaired the efficiency of his army, was glad to have his hands thus strengthened. He promised ample redress, cashiered the offending colonel, gave strict orders that the troops should receive their due regularly, and established a military board for the purpose of detecting and punishing such malpractices as had taken place at Royston.\*

But the whole administration was in such a state that it was hardly possible to track one offender without discovering ten others. In the course of the inquiry into the conduct of the troops at Royston, it was discovered that a bribe of two hundred guineas had been received by Henry Guy, member of Parliament for Heydon and Secretary of the Treasury. Guy was instantly sent to the Tower, not without much exultation on the part of

\* Commons' Journals, Jan. 12., Feb. 26., Mar. 6.; A Collection of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament in 1694 and 1695 upon the Inquiry into the late Briberies and Corrupt Practices, 1695; L'Hermitage to the States General, March 8.<sup>th</sup>; Van Citters, Mar. 15.<sup>th</sup>; L'Hermitage says: "Si par cette recherche la chambre pouvoit remédier au désordre qui règne, elle rendroit un service très utile et très agréable au Roy."

the Whigs: for he was one of those tools who had passed, together with the buildings and furniture of the public offices, from James to William: he affected the character of a High Churchman; and he was known to be closely connected with some of the heads of the Tory party, and especially with Trevor.\*

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Another name, which was afterwards but too widely celebrated, first became known to the public at this time. James Craggs had begun life as a barber. He had then been a footman of the Duchess of Cleveland. His abilities, eminently vigorous though not improved by education, had raised him in the world; and he was now entering on a career which was destined to end, after a quarter of a century of prosperity, in unutterable misery and despair. He had become an army clothier. He was examined as to his dealings with the colonels of regiments; and, as he obstinately refused to produce his books, he was sent to keep Guy company in the Tower.\*\*

A few hours after Craggs had been thrown into prison, a committee, which had been appointed to inquire into the truth of a petition signed by some of the hackney coachmen of London, laid on the table of the House a report which excited universal disgust and indignation. It appeared that these poor hardworking men had been cruelly wronged by the board under the authority of which an Act of the preceding session had placed them. They had been pillaged and insulted, not only by the commissioners, but by one commissioner's lacquey and by another commissioner's harlot. The Commons addressed

\* Commons' Journals, Feb. 16. 1695; Collection of the Debates and Proceedings in Parliament in 1694 and 1695; Life of Wharton; Burnet, ii. 144.

\*\* Speaker Onslow's note on Burnet, ii. 588.; Commons' Journals, Mar. 6, 7. 1695. The history of the terrible end of this man will be found in the pamphlets of the South Sea year.

CHAP. the King; and the King turned the delinquents out of their  
 XXI. places.\*  
 1695.

But by this time delinquents far higher in power and rank were beginning to be uneasy. At every new detection, the excitement, both within and without the walls of Parliament, became more intense. The frightful prevalence of bribery, corruption and extortion was every where the subject of conversation. A contemporary pamphleteer compares the state of the political world at this juncture to the state of a city in which the plague has just been discovered, and in which the terrible words, "Lord have mercy on us," are already seen on some doors.\*\* Whispers, which at another time would have speedily died away and been forgotten, now swelled, first into murmurs, and then into clamours. A rumour rose and spread that the funds of the two wealthiest corporations in the kingdom, the City of London and the East India Company, had been largely employed for the purpose of corrupting great men; and the names of Trevor, Seymour and Leeds were mentioned.

The mention of these names produced a stir in the Whig ranks. Trevor, Seymour and Leeds were all three Tories, and had, in different ways, greater influence than perhaps any other three Tories in the kingdom. If they could all be driven at once from public life with blasted characters, the Whigs would be completely predominant both in the Parliament and in the Cabinet.

Wharton was not the man to let such an opportunity escape him. At White's, no doubt, among those lads of quality who were his pupils in politics and in debauchery, he would have

\* Commons' Journals, March 8, 1695; Exact Collection of Debates and Proceedings in Parliament in 1694 and 1695; L'Hermitage, March 3<sup>d</sup>.

\*\* Exact Collection of Debates.

laughed heartily at the fury with which the nation had on a sudden begun to persecute men for doing what every body had always done and was always trying to do. But if people would be fools, it was the business of a politician to make use of their folly. The cant of political purity was not so familiar to the lips of Wharton as blasphemy and ribaldry: but his abilities were so versatile, and his impudence so consummate, that he ventured to appear before the world as an austere patriot mourning over the venality and perfidy of a degenerate age. While he, animated by that fierce party spirit which in honest men would be thought a vice, but which in him was almost a virtue, was eagerly stirring up his friends to demand an inquiry into the truth of the evil reports which were in circulation, the subject was suddenly and strangely forced forward. It chanced that, while a bill of little interest was under discussion in the Commons, the postman arrived with numerous letters directed to members; and the distribution took place at the bar with a buzz of conversation which drowned the voices of the orators. Seymour, whose imperious temper always prompted him to dictate and to chide, lectured the talkers on the scandalous irregularity of their conduct, and called on the Speaker to reprimand them. An angry discussion followed; and one of the offenders was provoked into making an allusion to the stories which were current about both Seymour and the Speaker. "It is undoubtedly improper to talk while a bill is under discussion: but it is much worse to take money for getting a bill passed. If we are extreme to mark a slight breach of form, how severely ought we to deal with that corruption which is eating away the very substance of our institutions!" That was enough: the spark had fallen: the train was ready: the explosion was immediate and terrible. After a tumultuous debate in which the cry of "the Tower" was repeatedly heard, Wharton managed to carry his point. Before the House rose

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CHAP. a committee was appointed to examine the books of the City of  
 XXI. London and of the East India Company.\*  
 1695.

Vote of  
 censure  
 on the  
 Speaker  
 of the  
 House of  
 Commons.

Foley was placed in the chair of the committee. Within a week he reported that the Speaker, Sir John Trevor, had in the preceding session received from the City a thousand guineas for expediting a local bill. This discovery gave great satisfaction to the Whigs, who had always hated Trevor, and was not unpleasing to many of the Tories. During six busy sessions his sordid rapacity had made him an object of general aversion. The legitimate emoluments of his post amounted to about four thousand a year: but it was believed that he had made at least ten thousand a year.\*\* His profligacy and insolence united had been too much even for the angelic temper of Tillotson. It was said that the gentle Archbishop had been heard to mutter something about a knave as the Speaker passed by him.\*\*\* Yet, great as were the offences of this bad man, his punishment was fully proportioned to them. As soon as the report of the committee had been read, it was moved that he had been guilty of a high crime and misdemeanour. He had to stand up and to put the question. There was a loud cry of Aye. He called on the Noes; and scarcely a voice was heard. He was forced to declare that the Ayes had it. A man of spirit would have given up the ghost with remorse and shame; and the unutterable ignominy of that moment left its mark even on the callous heart and brazen forehead of Trevor. Had he returned to the House on the following day, he would have had to put the question on a motion for his own expulsion. He therefore pleaded illness, and shut himself up in his bedroom. Wharton soon brought

\* L'Hermitage, March  $\frac{8}{13}$ . 1695. L'Hermitage's narrative is confirmed by the Journals, March 7. 169 $\frac{3}{4}$ . It appears that, just before the committee was appointed, the House resolved that letters should not be delivered out to members during a sitting.

\*\* L'Hermitage, March  $\frac{12}{13}$ . 1695.

\*\*\* Birch's Life of Tillotson.

down a royal message authorising the Commons to elect another Speaker.

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The Whig chiefs wished to place Littleton in the chair: but they were unable to accomplish their object. Foley was chosen, presented and approved. Though he had of late generally voted with the Tories, he still called himself a Whig, and was not unacceptable to many of the Whigs. He had both the abilities and the knowledge which were necessary to enable him to preside over the debates with dignity: but what, in the peculiar circumstances in which the House then found itself placed, was not unnaturally considered as his principal recommendation, was that implacable hatred of jobbery and corruption which he somewhat ostentatiously professed, and doubtless sincerely felt. On the day after he entered on his functions, his predecessor was expelled.\*

Foley  
elected  
Speaker.

The indiscretion of Trevor had been equal to his baseness, and his guilt had been apparent on the first inspection of the accounts of the City. The accounts of the East India Company were more obscure. The committee reported that they had sate in Leadenhall Street, had examined documents, had interrogated directors and clerks, but had been unable to arrive at the bottom of the mystery of iniquity. Some most suspicious entries had been discovered, under the head of special service. The expenditure on this account had, in the year 1693, exceeded eighty thousand pounds. It was proved that, as to the outlay of this money, the directors had placed implicit confidence in the governor, Sir Thomas Cook. He had merely told them in general terms that he had been at a charge of twenty three thousand, of twenty five thousand, of thirty thousand pounds, in the matter of the Charter; and the Court had, without calling on him for any detailed explanation, thanked him for his care,

Inquiry  
into the  
accounts  
of the  
East India  
Company.

\* Commons' Journals, March 12, 13, 14, 15, 16., 1694; Vernon to Lexington, March 16.; L'Hermitage, March 15.

CHAP. and ordered warrants for these great sums to be instantly made  
 XXI. out. It appeared that a few mutinous directors had murmured  
 1695. at this immense outlay, and had called for a detailed statement.  
 But the only answer which they had been able to extract from  
 Cook was that there were some great persons whom it was ne-  
 cessary to gratify.

Suspi-  
 cious  
 dealings  
 of Sey-  
 mour.

The committee also reported that they had lighted on an agreement by which the Company had covenanted to furnish a person named Colston with two hundred tons of saltpetre. At the first glance, this transaction seemed merchantlike and fair. But it was soon discovered that Colston was merely an agent for Seymour. Suspicion was excited. The complicated terms of the bargain were severely examined, and were found to be framed in such a manner that, in every possible event, Seymour must be a gainer and the Company a loser to the extent of ten or twelve thousand pounds. The opinion of all who understood the matter was that the compact was merely a disguise intended to cover a bribe. But the disguise was so skilfully managed that the country gentlemen were perplexed, and that the lawyers doubted whether there were such evidence of corruption as would be held sufficient by a court of justice. Seymour escaped without even a vote of censure, and still continued to take a leading part in the debates of the Commons.\* But the authority which he had long exercised in the House and in the western counties of England, though not destroyed, was visibly diminished; and, to the end of his life, his traffic in

\* On vit qu'il étoit impossible de le poursuivre en justice, chacun toutefois demeurant convaincu que c'étoit un marché fait à la main pour lui faire présent de la somme de 10,000*l.*, et qu'il avoit été plus habile que les autres novices que n'avoient pas su faire si finement leurs affaires. —

L'Hermitage, <sup>March 29.</sup>  
 April 8. Commons' Journals, March 12.; Vernon to Lex-  
 ington. April 26.; Burnet, ii. 145.



saltpetre was a favourite theme of Whig pamphleteers and poets.\*

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The escape of Seymour only inflamed the ardour of Wharton and of Wharton's confederates. They were determined to discover what had been done with the eighty or ninety thousand pounds of secret service money which had been entrusted to Cook by the East India Company. Cook, who was member for Colchester, was questioned in his place: he refused to answer: he was sent to the Tower; and a bill was brought in providing that if, before a certain day, he should not acknowledge the whole truth, he should be incapable of ever holding any office, should refund to the Company the whole of the immense sum which had been confided to him, and should pay a fine of twenty thousand pounds to the Crown. Rich as he was, these penalties would have reduced him to penury. The Commons were in such a temper that they passed the bill without a single division.\*\* Seymour, indeed, though his saltpetre contract was the talk of the whole town, came forward with unabashed forehead to plead for his accomplice: but his effrontery only injured the cause which he defended.\*\*\* In the Upper House the bill was condemned in the strongest terms by the Duke of Leeds. Pressing his hand on his heart, he declared, on his faith, on his honour, that he had no personal interest in the question, and that he was actuated by no motive but a pure love of justice. His eloquence was powerfully seconded by the tears and lamentations of Cook, who, from the bar, implored the Peers not to subject him to a species of torture unknown to the mild laws of England. "Instead of this cruel bill," he said, "pass a

Bill  
against  
Sir Tho-  
mas Cook.

\* In a poem called the Prophecy (1703), is the line

"When Seymour scorns saltpetre pence."

In another satire is the line

"Bribed Seymour bribes accuses."

\*\* Commons' Journals from March 26. to April 8. 1695.

\*\*\* L'Hermitage, April 18. 1695.

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bill of indemnity; and I will tell you all." The Lords thought his request not altogether unreasonable. After some communication with the Commons, it was determined that a joint committee of the two Houses should be appointed to inquire into the manner in which the secret service money of the East India Company had been expended; and an Act was rapidly passed providing that, if Cook would make to this committee a true and full discovery, he should be indemnified for the crimes which he might confess; and that, till he made such a discovery, he should remain in the Tower. To this arrangement Leeds gave in public all the opposition that he could with decency give. In private those who were conscious of guilt employed numerous artifices for the purpose of averting inquiry. It was whispered that things might come out which every good Englishman would wish to hide, and that the greater part of the enormous sums which had passed through Cook's hands had been paid to Portland for His Majesty's use. But the Parliament and the nation were determined to know the truth, whoever might suffer by the disclosure.\*

Inquiry  
by a joint  
commit-  
tee of  
Lords  
and Com-  
mons.

As soon as the Bill of Indemnity had received the royal assent, the joint committee, consisting of twelve lords and twenty four members of the House of Commons, met in the Exchequer Chamber. Wharton was placed in the chair; and in a few hours great discoveries were made.

The King and Portland came out of the inquiry with unblemished honour. Not only had not the King taken any part of the secret service money dispensed by Cook; but he had not, during some years, received even the ordinary present which the Company had, in former reigns, laid annually at the foot of the throne. It appeared that not less than fifty thousand pounds had been offered to Portland, and rejected. The money lay during a whole year ready to be paid to him if he should

\* Exact Collection of Debates and Proceedings.

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change his mind. He at length told those who pressed this immense bribe on him, that if they persisted in insulting him by such an offer, they would make him an enemy of their Company. Many people wondered at the probity which he showed on this occasion, for he was generally thought interested and grasping. The truth seems to be that he loved money, but that he was a man of strict integrity and honour. He took, without scruple, whatever he thought that he could honestly take, but was incapable of stooping to an act of baseness. Indeed, he resented as affronts the compliments which were paid him on this occasion.\* The integrity of Nottingham could excite no surprise. Ten thousand pounds had been offered to him, and had been refused. The number of cases in which bribery was fully made out was small. A large part of the sum which Cook had drawn from the Company's treasury had probably been embezzled by the brokers whom he had employed in the work of corruption; and what had become of the rest it was not easy to learn from the reluctant witnesses who were brought before the committee. One glimpse of light however was caught: it was followed; and it led to a discovery of the highest moment. A large sum was traced from Cook to an agent named Firebrace, and from Firebrace to another agent named Bates, who was well known to be closely connected with the High Church party and especially with Leeds. Bates was summoned, but absconded: messengers were sent in pursuit of him: he was caught, brought into the Exchequer Chamber and sworn. The story which he told showed that he was distracted between the fear of losing his ears and the fear of injuring his patron. He owned that he had undertaken to bribe Leeds, had been for that purpose furnished with five thousand five hundred guineas, had offered those guineas to His Grace, and had, by His Grace's per-

\* L'Hermitage, <sup>April 30.</sup> 1695; Portland to Lexington, <sup>April 23.</sup>  
<sub>May 10.</sub> <sub>May 3.</sub>

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mission, left them at His Grace's house in the care of a Swiss named Robart, who was His Grace's confidential man of business. It should seem that these facts admitted of only one interpretation. Bates however swore that the Duke had refused to accept a farthing. "Why then," it was asked, "was the gold left, by his consent, at his house and in the hands of his servant?" "Because," answered Bates, "I am bad at telling coin. I therefore begged His Grace to let me leave the pieces, in order that Robart might count them for me; and His Grace was so good as to give leave." It was evident that, if this strange story had been true, the guineas would, in a few hours, have been taken away. But Bates was forced to confess that they had remained half a year where he had left them. The money had indeed at last, — and this was one of the most suspicious circumstances in the case, — been paid back by Robart on the very morning on which the committee first met in the Exchequer Chamber. Who could believe that, if the transaction had been free from all taint of corruption, the guineas would have been detained as long as Cook was able to remain silent, and would have been refunded on the very first day on which he was under the necessity of speaking out?\*

Impeach-  
ment of  
Leeds.

A few hours after the examination of Bates, Wharton reported to the Commons what had passed in the Exchequer Chamber. The indignation was general and vehement. "You now understand," said Wharton, "why obstructions have been thrown in our way at every step, why we have had to wring out truth drop by drop, why His Majesty's name has been artfully used to prevent us from going into an inquiry which has brought nothing to light but what is to His Majesty's honour. Can we think it strange that our difficulties should have been great, when we consider the power, the dexterity, the experience of

\* L'Hermitage ( $\frac{\text{April } 30.}{\text{May } 10.}$  1695) justly remarks, that the way in which the money was sent back strengthened the case against Leeds.

him who was secretly thwarting us? It is time for us to prove signally to the world that it is impossible for any criminal to double so cunningly that we cannot track him, or to climb so high that we cannot reach him. Never was there a more flagitious instance of corruption. Never was there an offender who had less claim to indulgence. The obligations which the Duke of Leeds has to his country are of no common kind. One great debt we generously cancelled; but the manner in which our generosity has been requited forces us to remember that he was long ago impeached for receiving money from France. How can we be safe while a man proved to be venal has access to the royal ear? Our best laid enterprises have been defeated. Our inmost counsels have been betrayed. And what wonder is it? Can we doubt that, together with this home trade in charters, a profitable foreign trade in secrets is carried on? Can we doubt that he who sells us to one another will, for a good price, sell us all to the common enemy?" Wharton concluded by moving that Leeds should be impeached of high crimes and misdemeanours.\*

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Leeds had many friends and dependents in the House of Commons: but they could say little. Wharton's motion was carried without a division; and he was ordered to go to the bar of the Lords, and there, in the name of the Commons of England, to impeach the Duke. But, before this order could be obeyed, it was announced that His Grace was at the door and requested an audience.

While Wharton had been making his report to the Commons, Leeds had been haranguing the Lords. He denied with the most solemn asseverations that he had taken any money for himself. But he acknowledged, and indeed almost boasted, that he had abetted Bates in getting money from the

\* There can, I think, be no doubt, that the member who is called D in the Exact Collection was Wharton.

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Company, and seemed to think that this was a service which any man in power might be reasonably expected to render to a friend. Too many persons, indeed, in that age made a most absurd and pernicious distinction between a minister who used his influence to obtain presents for himself and a minister who used his influence to obtain presents for his dependents. The former was corrupt: the latter was merely goodnatured. Leeds proceeded to tell with great complacency a story about himself, which would, in our days, drive a public man, not only out of office, but out of the society of gentlemen. "When I was Treasurer, in King Charles's time, my Lords, the excise was to be farmed. There were several bidders. Harry Savile, for whom I had a great value, informed me that they had asked for his interest with me, and begged me to tell them that he had done his best for them. 'What!' said I: 'tell them all so, when only one can have the farm?' 'No matter;' said Harry: 'tell them all so; and the one who gets the farm will think that he owes it to me.' The gentlemen came. I said to every one of them separately, 'Sir, you are much obliged to Mr. Savile:' 'Sir, Mr. Savile has been much your friend.' In the end Harry got a handsome present; and I wished him good luck with it. I was his shadow then. I am Mr. Bates's shadow now."

The Duke had hardly related this anecdote, so strikingly illustrative of the state of political morality in that generation, when it was whispered to him that a motion to impeach him had been made in the House of Commons. He hastened thither: but, before he arrived, the question had been put and carried. Nevertheless he pressed for admittance; and he was admitted. A chair, according to ancient usage, was placed for him within the bar; and he was informed that the House was ready to hear him.

He spoke, but with less tact and judgment than usual. He magnified his own public services. But for him, he said, there

would have been no House of Commons to impeach him; a boast so extravagant that it naturally made his hearers unwilling to allow him the praise which his conduct at the time of the Revolution really deserved. As to the charge against him he said little more than that he was innocent, that there had long been a malicious design to ruin him, that he would not go into particulars, that the facts which had been proved would bear two constructions, and that of the two constructions the more favourable ought in candour to be adopted. He withdrew, after praying the House to reconsider the vote which had just been passed, or, if that could not be, to let him have speedy justice.

His friends felt that his speech was no defence, and did not attempt to rescind the resolution which had been carried just before he was heard. Wharton, with a large following, went up to the Lords, and informed them that the Commons had resolved to impeach the Duke. A committee of managers was appointed to draw up the articles and to prepare the evidence.\*

The articles were speedily drawn: but to the chain of evidence one link appeared to be wanting. That link Robart, if he had been severely examined and confronted with other witnesses, would in all probability have been forced to supply. He was summoned to the bar of the Commons. A messenger went with the summons to the house of the Duke of Leeds, and was there informed that the Swiss was not within, that he had been three days absent, and that where he was the porter could not tell. The Lords immediately presented an address to the King, requesting him to give orders that the ports might be stopped and the fugitive arrested. But Robart was already in Holland on his way to his native mountains.

\* As to the proceedings of this eventful day, April 27, 1695, see the Journals of the two Houses, and the Exact Collection.

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The flight of this man made it impossible for the Commons to proceed. They vehemently accused Leeds of having sent away the witness who alone could furnish legal proof of that which was already established by moral proof. Leeds, now at ease as to the event of the impeachment, gave himself the airs of an injured man. "My Lords," he said, "the conduct of the Commons is without precedent. They impeach me of a high crime: they promise to prove it: then they find that they have not the means of proving it; and they revile me for not supplying them with the means. Surely they ought not to have brought a charge like this, without well considering whether they had or had not evidence sufficient to support it. If Robart's testimony be, as they now say, indispensable, why did they not send for him and hear his story before they made up their minds? They may thank their own intemperance, their own precipitancy, for his disappearance. He is a foreigner: he is timid: he hears that a transaction in which he has been concerned has been pronounced by the House of Commons to be highly criminal, that his master is impeached, that his friend Bates is in prison, that his own turn is coming. He naturally takes fright: he escapes to his own country; and, from what I know of him, I will venture to predict that it will be long before he trusts himself again within reach of the Speaker's warrant. But what is that to me? Am I to lie all my life under the stigma of an accusation like this, merely because the violence of my accusers has scared their own witness out of England? I demand an immediate trial. I move your Lordships to resolve that, unless the Commons shall proceed before the end of the session, the impeachment shall be dismissed." A few friendly voices cried out "Well moved." But the Peers were generally unwilling to take a step which would have been in the highest degree offensive to the Lower House, and to the great body of those whom that House represented.



The Duke's motion fell to the ground; and a few hours later the Parliament was prorogued.\*

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Disgrace  
of Leeds.

The impeachment was never revived. The evidence which would warrant a formal verdict of guilty was not forthcoming; and a formal verdict of guilty would hardly have answered Wharton's purpose better than the informal verdict of guilty which the whole nation had already pronounced. The work was done. The Whigs were dominant. Leeds was no longer chief minister, was indeed no longer a minister at all. William, from respect probably for the memory of the beloved wife whom he had lately lost, and to whom Leeds had shown peculiar attachment, avoided every thing that could look like harshness. The fallen statesman was suffered to retain during a considerable time the title of Lord President, and to walk on public occasions between the Great Seal and the Privy Seal. But he was told that he would do well not to show himself at Council: the business and the patronage even of the department of which he was the nominal head passed into other hands; and the place which he ostensibly filled was considered in political circles as really vacant.\*\*

He hastened into the country, and hid himself there, during some months, from the public eye. When the Parliament met again, however, he emerged from his retreat. Though he was well stricken in years and cruelly tortured by disease, his ambition was still as ardent as ever. With indefatigable energy he began a third time to climb, as he flattered himself, towards that dizzy pinnacle which he had twice reached, and from which he had twice fallen. He took a prominent part in debate: but, though his eloquence and knowledge always secured to him the attention of his hearers, he was never again, even when the

\* Exact Collection; Lords' Journals, May 3. 1695; Commons' Journals, May, 2, 3.; L'Hermitage, May  $\frac{1}{2}$ .; London Gazette, May 13.

\*\* L'Hermitage, May  $\frac{1}{2}$ o. 1695; Vernon to Shrewsbury, June 22. 1697.

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Tory party was in power, admitted to the smallest share in the direction of affairs.

Lords  
Justices  
appointed.

There was one great humiliation which he could not be spared. William was about to take the command of the army in the Netherlands; and it was necessary that, before he sailed, he should determine by whom the government should be administered during his absence. Hitherto Mary had acted as his vicegerent when he was out of England: but she was gone. He therefore delegated his authority to seven Lords Justices, Tenison, Archbishop of Canterbury, Somers, Keeper of the Great Seal, Pembroke, Keeper of the Privy Seal, Devonshire, Lord Steward, Dorset, Lord Chamberlain, Shrewsbury, Secretary of State, and Godolphin, First Commissioner of the Treasury. It is easy to judge from this list of names which way the balance of power was now leaning. Godolphin alone of the seven was a Tory. The Lord President, still second in rank, and a few days before first in power, of the great lay dignitaries of the realm, was passed over; and the omission was universally regarded as an official announcement of his disgrace.\*

Reconciliation  
between  
William  
and the  
Princess  
Anne.

There were some who wondered that the Princess of Denmark was not appointed Regent. The reconciliation, which had been begun while Mary was dying, had since her death been, in external show at least, completed. This was one of those occasions on which Sunderland was peculiarly qualified to be useful. He was admirably fitted to manage a personal negotiation, to soften resentment, to sooth wounded pride, to select, among all the objects of human desire, the very bait which was most likely to allure the mind with which he was dealing. On this occasion his task was not difficult. He had two excellent assistants, Marlborough in the household of Anne, and Somers in the cabinet of William.

Marlborough was now as desirous to support the govern-

\* London Gazette, May 6. 1695.

ment as he had once been to subvert it. The death of Mary had produced a complete change in all his schemes. There was one event to which he looked forward with the most intense longing, the accession of the Princess to the English throne. It was certain that, on the day on which she began to reign, he would be in her Court all that Buckingham had been in the Court of James the First. Marlborough too must have been conscious of powers of a very different order from those which Buckingham had possessed, of a genius for politics not inferior to that of Richelieu, of a genius for war not inferior to that of Turenne. Perhaps the disgraced General, in obscurity and inaction, anticipated the day when his power to help and hurt in Europe would be equal to that of her mightiest princes, when he would be servilely flattered and courted by Caesar on one side and by Lewis the Great on the other, and when every year would add another hundred thousand pounds to the largest fortune that had ever been accumulated by any English subject. All this might be if Mrs. Morley were Queen. But that Mr. Freeman should ever see Mrs. Morley Queen had till lately been not very probable. Mary's life was a much better life than his, and quite as good a life as her sister's. That William would have issue seemed unlikely. But it was generally expected that he would soon die. His widow might marry again, and might leave children who would succeed her. In these circumstances Marlborough might well think that he had very little interest in maintaining that settlement of the Crown which had been made by the Convention. Nothing was so likely to serve his purpose as confusion, civil war, another revolution, another abdication, another vacancy of the throne. Perhaps the nation, incensed against William, yet not reconciled to James, and distracted between hatred of foreigners and hatred of Jesuits, might prefer both to the Dutch King and to the Popish King one who was at once a native of our country and a member of our Church. That

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this was the real explanation of Marlborough's dark and complicated plots was, as we have seen, firmly believed by some of the most zealous Jacobites, and is in the highest degree probable. It is certain that during several years he had spared no efforts to inflame the army and the nation against the government. But all was now changed. Mary was gone. By the Bill of Rights the Crown was entailed on Anne after the death of William. The death of William could not be far distant. Indeed all the physicians who attended him wondered that he was still alive; and, when the risks of war were added to the risks of disease, the probability seemed to be that in a few months he would be in his grave. Marlborough saw that it would now be madness to throw every thing into disorder and to put every thing to hazard. He had done his best to shake the throne while it seemed unlikely that Anne would ever mount it except by violent means. But he did his best to fix it firmly, as soon as it became highly probable that she would soon be called to fill it in the regular course of nature and of law.

The Princess was easily induced by the Churchills to write to the King a submissive and affectionate letter of condolence. The King, who was never much inclined to engage in a commerce of insincere compliments, and who was still in the first agonies of his grief, showed little disposition to meet her advances. But Somers, who felt that every thing was at stake, went to Kensington, and made his way into the royal closet. William was sitting there, so deeply sunk in melancholy that he did not seem to perceive that any person had entered the room. The Lord Keeper, after a respectful pause, broke silence, and, doubtless with all that cautious delicacy which was characteristic of him, and which eminently qualified him to touch the sore places of the mind without hurting them, implored His Majesty to be reconciled to the Princess. "Do what you will," said William; "I can think of no business." Thus authorised, the

mediators speedily concluded a treaty.\* Anne came to Kensington, and was graciously received: she was lodged in Saint James's Palace: a guard of honour was again placed at her door; and the Gazettes again, after a long interval, announced that foreign ministers had had the honour of being presented to her.\*\* The Churchills were again permitted to dwell under the royal roof. But William did not at first include them in the peace which he had made with their mistress. Marlborough remained excluded from military and political employment; and it was not without much difficulty that he was admitted into the circle at Kensington, and permitted to kiss the royal hand.\*\*\* The feeling with which he was regarded by the King explains why Anne was not appointed Regent. The Regency of Anne would have been the Regency of Marlborough; and it is not strange that a man whom it was not thought safe to entrust with any office in the State or the army should not have been entrusted with the whole government of the kingdom.

Had Marlborough been of a proud and vindictive nature he might have been provoked into raising another quarrel in the royal family, and into forming new cabals in the army. But all his passions, except ambition and avarice, were under strict regulation. He was destitute alike of the sentiment of gratitude and of the sentiment of revenge. He had conspired against the government while it was loading him with favours. He now supported it, though it requited his support with contumely. He perfectly understood his own interest: he had perfect command of his temper: he endured decorously the hardships of his present situation, and contented himself by looking forward to a reversion which would amply repay him for a few years of patience. He did not indeed cease to correspond with the Court

\* Letter from Mrs. Burnet to the Duchess of Marlborough, 1704, quoted by Coxe; Shrewsbury to Russell, January 24. 1695; Burnet, ii. 149.

\*\* London Gazette, April 8. 15. 29. 1695.

\*\*\* Shrewsbury to Russell, January 24. 1695; Narcissus Luttrell's Diary.

CHAP. of Saint Germain: but the correspondence gradually became  
 XXI. more and more slack, and seems, on his part, to have been made  
 1695. up of vague professions and trifling excuses.

The event which had changed all Marlborough's views had filled the minds of fiercer and more pertinacious politicians with wild hopes and atrocious projects.

Jacobite  
 plots  
 against  
 William's  
 person.

During the two years and a half which followed the execution of Grandval, no serious design had been formed against the life of William. Some hotheaded malecontents had indeed laid schemes for kidnapping or murdering him: but those schemes were not, while his wife lived, countenanced by her father. James did not feel, and, to do him justice, was not such a hypocrite as to pretend to feel, any scruple about removing his enemies by those means which he had justly thought base and wicked when employed by his enemies against himself. If any such scruple had arisen in his mind, there was no want, under his roof, of casuists willing and competent to sooth his conscience with sophisms such as had corrupted the far nobler natures of Anthony Babington and Everard Digby. To question the lawfulness of assassination, in cases where assassination might promote the interests of the Church, was to question the authority of the most illustrious Jesuits, of Bellarmine and Suarez, of Molina and Mariana: nay, it was to rebel against the Chair of Saint Peter. One Pope had walked in procession at the head of his cardinals, had proclaimed a jubilee, had ordered the guns of Saint Angelo to be fired, in honour of the perfidious butchery in which Coligni had perished. Another Pope had in a solemn allocution hymned the murder of Henry the Third of France in rapturous language borrowed from the ode of the prophet Habakkuk, and had extolled the murderer above Phinehas and Judith.\* William was regarded at Saint Germain as a monster compared with whom Coligni and Henry

\* De Thou, liii. xvi.

the Third were saints. Nevertheless James, during some years, refused to sanction any attempt on his nephew's person. The reasons which he assigned for his refusal have come down to us, as he wrote them with his own hand. He did not affect to think that assassination was a sin which ought to be held in horror by a Christian, or a villany unworthy of a gentleman: he merely said that the difficulties were great, and that he would not push his friends on extreme danger when it would not be in his power to second them effectually.\* In truth, while Mary lived, it might well be doubted whether the murder of her husband would really be a service to the Jacobite cause. By his death the government would lose indeed the strength derived from his eminent personal qualities, but would at the same time be relieved from the load of his personal unpopularity. His whole power would at once devolve on his widow; and the nation would probably rally round her with enthusiasm. If her political abilities were not equal to his, she had not his repulsive manners, his foreign pronunciation, his partiality for every thing Dutch and for every thing Calvinistic. Many, who had thought her culpably wanting in filial piety, would be of opinion that now at least she was absolved from all duty to a father stained with the blood of her husband. The whole machinery of the administration would continue to work without that interruption which ordinarily followed a demise of the Crown. There would be no dissolution of the Parliament, no suspension of the customs and excise: commissions would retain their force; and all that James would have gained by the fall of his enemy would have been a barren revenge.

The death of the Queen changed every thing. If a dagger or a bullet should now reach the heart of William, it was pro-

\* Life of James, ii. 545., Orig. Mem. Of course James does not use the word assassination. He talks of the seizing and carrying away of the Prince of Orange.

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bable that there would instantly be general anarchy. The Parliament and the Privy Council would cease to exist. The authority of ministers and judges would expire with him from whom it was derived. It might seem not improbable that at such a moment a restoration might be effected without a blow.

Scarcely therefore had Mary been laid in the grave when restless and unprincipled men began to plot in earnest against the life of William. Foremost among these men in parts, in courage and in energy was Robert Charnock. He had been liberally educated, and had, in the late reign, been a fellow of Magdalene College, Oxford. Alone in that great society he had betrayed the common cause, had consented to be the tool of the High Commission, had publicly apostatized from the Church of England, and, while his college was a Popish seminary, had held the office of Vice President. The Revolution came, and altered at once the whole course of his life. Driven from the quiet cloister and the old grove of oaks on the bank of the Cherwell, he sought haunts of a very different kind. During several years he led the perilous and agitated life of a conspirator, passed and repassed on secret errands between England and France, changed his lodgings in London often, and was known at different coffeehouses by different names. His services had been requited with a captain's commission signed by the banished King.

With Charnock was closely connected George Porter, an adventurer who called himself a Roman Catholic and a Royalist, but who was in truth destitute of all religious and of all political principle. Porter's friends could not deny that he was a rake and a coxcomb, that he drank, that he swore, that he told extravagant lies about his amours, and that he had been convicted of manslaughter for a stab given in a brawl at the playhouse. His enemies affirmed that he was addicted to nauseous and horrible kinds of debauchery, and that he procured the



means of indulging his infamous tastes by cheating and marauding; that he was one of a gang of clippers; that he sometimes got on horseback late in the evening and stole out in disguise, and that, when he returned from these mysterious excursions, his appearance justified the suspicion that he had been doing business on Hounslow Heath or Finchley Common.\*

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Cardell Goodman, popularly called Scum Goodman, a knave <sup>Goodman.</sup> more abandoned, if possible, than Porter, was in the plot. Goodman had been on the stage, had been kept, like some much greater men, by the Duchess of Cleveland, had been taken into her house, had been loaded by her with gifts, and had requited her by bribing an Italian quack to poison two of her children. As the poison had not been administered, Goodman could be prosecuted only for a misdemeanour. He was tried, convicted and sentenced to a ruinous fine. He had since distinguished himself as one of the first forgers of bank notes.\*\*

Sir William Parkyns, a wealthy knight bred to the law, who <sup>Parkyns.</sup> had been conspicuous among the Tories in the days of the Exclusion Bill, was one of the most important members of the confederacy. He bore a much fairer character than most of his accomplices: but in one respect he was more culpable than any of them. For he had, in order to retain a lucrative office which he held in the Court of Chancery, sworn allegiance to the Prince against whose life he now conspired.

The design was imparted to Sir John Fenwick, celebrated <sup>Fenwick.</sup> on account of the cowardly insult which he had offered to the

\* Every thing bad that was known or rumoured about Porter came out on the State Trials of 1696.

\*\* As to Goodman see the evidence on the trial of Peter Cook; Cleverskirke, Feb. 2<sup>d</sup>; 1696; L'Hermitage, April 1<sup>o</sup>. 1696; and a pasquinade entitled the Duchess of Cleveland's Memorial.

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deceased Queen. Fenwick, if his own assertion is to be trusted, was willing to join in an insurrection, but recoiled from the thought of assassination, and showed so much of what was in his mind as sufficed to make him an object of suspicion to his less scrupulous associates. He kept their secret, however, as strictly as if he had wished them success.

It should seem that, at first, a natural feeling restrained the conspirators from calling their design by the proper name. Even in their private consultations they did not as yet talk of killing the Prince of Orange. They would try to seize him and to carry him alive into France. If there were any resistance they might be forced to use their swords and pistols, and nobody could be answerable for what a thrust or a shot might do. In the spring of 1695, the scheme of assassination, thus thinly veiled, was communicated to James, and his sanction was earnestly requested. But week followed week; and no answer arrived from him. He doubtless remained silent in the hope that his adherents would, after a short delay, venture to act on their own responsibility, and that he might thus have the advantage without the scandal of their crime. They seem indeed to have so understood him. He had not, they said, authorised the attempt: but he had not prohibited it; and, apprised as he was of their plan, the absence of prohibition was a sufficient warrant. They therefore determined to strike: but before they could make the necessary arrangements William set out for Flanders; and the plot against his life was necessarily suspended till his return.

Session  
of the  
Scottish  
Parliament.

It was on the twelfth of May that the King left Kensington for Gravesend, where he proposed to embark for the Continent. Three days before his departure the Parliament of Scotland had, after a recess of about two years, met again at Edinburgh. Hamilton, who had, in the preceding session, sate on the throne and held the sceptre, was dead; and it was necessary to

find a new Lord High Commissioner. The person selected was John Hay, Marquess of Tweedale, Chancellor of the Realm, a man grown old in business, well informed, prudent, humane, blameless in private life, and, on the whole, as respectable as any Scottish lord who had been long and deeply concerned in the politics of those troubled times.

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His task was not without difficulty. It was indeed well known that the Estates were generally inclined to support the government. But it was also well known that there was one subject which would require the most dexterous and delicate management. The cry of the blood shed more than three years before in Glencoe had at length made itself heard. Towards the close of the year 1693, the reports, which had at first been contemptuously derided as factious calumnies, began to be generally thought deserving of serious attention. Many people little disposed to place confidence in any thing that came forth from the secret presses of the Jacobites owned that, for the honour of the government, some inquiry ought to be instituted. The amiable Mary had been much shocked by what she heard. William had, at her request, empowered the Duke of Hamilton and several other Scotchmen of note to investigate the whole matter. But the Duke died: his colleagues were slack in the performance of their duty; and the King, who knew little and cared little about Scotland, forgot to urge them.\*

Inquiry  
into the  
slaughter  
of Glen-  
coe.

It now appeared that the government would have done wisely as well as rightly by anticipating the wishes of the country. The horrible story repeated by the nonjurors pertinaciously, confidently, and with so many circumstances as almost enforced belief, had at length roused all Scotland. The sensibility of a people eminently patriotic was galled by the taunts of southern pamphleteers, who asked whether there was on the north of the Tweed no law, no justice, no humanity,

\* See the preamble to the Commission of 1695.

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no spirit to demand redress even for the foulest wrongs. Each of the two extreme parties, which were diametrically opposed to each other in general politics, was impelled by a peculiar feeling to call for inquiry. The Jacobites were delighted by the prospect of being able to make out a case which would bring discredit on the usurper, and which might be set off against the many offences imputed by the Whigs to Claverhouse and Mackenzie. The zealous Presbyterians were not less delighted at the prospect of being able to ruin the Master of Stair. They had never forgotten or forgiven the service which he had rendered to the House of Stuart in the time of the persecution. They knew that, though he had cordially concurred in the political revolution which had freed them from the hated dynasty, he had seen with displeasure that ecclesiastical revolution which was, in their view, even more important. They knew that church government was with him merely an affair of State, and that, looking at it as an affair of State, he preferred the episcopal to the synodical model. They could not without uneasiness see so adroit and eloquent an enemy of pure religion constantly attending the royal steps and constantly breathing counsel in the royal ear. They were therefore impatient for an investigation, which, if one half of what was rumoured were true, must produce revelations fatal to the power and fame of the minister whom they distrusted. Nor could that minister rely on the cordial support of all who held office under the Crown. His genius and influence had excited the jealousy of many less successful courtiers, and especially of his fellow secretary, Johnstone.

Thus, on the eve of the meeting of the Scottish Parliament, Glencoe was in the mouths of all Scotchmen of all factions and of all sects. William, who was just about to start for the Continent, learned that, on this subject, the Estates must have their way, and that the best thing that he could do would be to

put himself at the head of a movement which it was impossible for him to resist. A Commission authorising Tweedale and several other privy councillors to examine fully into the matter about which the public mind was so strongly excited was signed by the King at Kensington, was sent down to Edinburgh, and was there sealed with the Great Seal of the realm. This was accomplished just in time.\* The Parliament had scarcely entered on business when a member rose to move for an inquiry into the circumstances of the slaughter of Glencoe. Tweedale was able to inform the Estates that His Majesty's goodness had prevented their desires, that a Commission of Precognition had, a few hours before, passed in all the forms, and that the lords and gentlemen named in that instrument would hold their first meeting before night.\*\* The Parliament unanimously voted thanks to the King for this instance of his paternal care: but some of those who joined in the vote of thanks expressed a very natural apprehension that the second investigation might end as unsatisfactorily as the first investigation had ended. The honour of the country, they said, was at stake; and the Commissioners were bound to proceed with such diligence that the result of the inquest might be known before the end of the session. Tweedale gave assurances which, for a time, silenced the murmurers.\*\*\* But, when three weeks had passed away, many members became mutinous and suspicious. On the fourteenth of June it was moved that the Commissioners should be ordered to report. The motion was not carried: but it was renewed day after day. In three successive sittings Tweedale was able to restrain the eagerness of the assembly. But, when he at length announced that the report had been completed, and added that it would not be laid before the Estates till it

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\* The Commission will be found in the Minutes of the Parliament.

\*\* Act. Parl. Scot., May 21. 1695; London Gazette, May 30.

\*\*\* Act. Parl. Scot., May 23. 1695.

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had been submitted to the King, there was a violent outcry. The public curiosity was intense: for the examination had been conducted with closed doors; and both Commissioners and clerks had been sworn to secrecy. The King was in the Netherlands. Weeks must elapse before his pleasure could be taken; and the session could not last much longer. In a fourth debate there were signs which convinced the Lord High Commissioner that it was expedient to yield; and the report was produced.\*

It is a paper highly creditable to those who framed it, an excellent digest of evidence, clear, passionless, and austere just. No source from which valuable information was likely to be derived had been neglected. Glengarry and Keppoch, though notoriously disaffected to the government, had been permitted to conduct the case on behalf of their unhappy kinsmen. Several of the Macdonalds who had escaped from the havoc of that night had been examined, and among them the reigning Mac Ian, the eldest son of the murdered Chief. The correspondence of the Master of Stair with the military men who commanded in the Highlands had been subjected to a strict but not unfair scrutiny. The conclusion to which the Commissioners came, and in which every intelligent and candid inquirer will concur, was that the slaughter of Glencoe was a barbarous murder, and that of this barbarous murder the letters of the Master of Stair were the sole warrant and cause.

That Breadalbane was an accomplice in the crime was not proved: but he did not come off quite clear. In the course of the investigation it was incidentally discovered that he had, while distributing the money of William among the Highland Chiefs, professed to them the warmest zeal for the interest of James, and advised them to take what they could get from the usurper, but to be constantly on the watch for a favourable op-

\* Act. Parl. Scot., June 14. 18. 20. 1695; London Gazette, June 27.

portunity of bringing back the rightful King. Breadalbane's defence was that he was a greater villain than his accusers imagined, and that he had pretended to be a Jacobite only in order to get at the bottom of the Jacobite plans. In truth the depths of this man's knavery were unfathomable. It was impossible to say which of his treasons were, to borrow the Italian classification, single treasons, and which double treasons. On this occasion the Parliament supposed him to have been guilty only of a single treason, and sent him to the Castle of Edinburgh. The government, on full consideration, gave credit to his assertion that he had been guilty of a double treason, and let him out again.\*

The Report of the Commission was taken into immediate consideration by the Estates. They resolved, without one dissentient voice, that the order signed by William did not authorise the slaughter of Glencoe. They next resolved, but, it should seem, not unanimously, that the slaughter was a murder.\*\* They proceeded to pass several votes, the sense of which was finally summed up in an address to the King. How that part of the address which related to the Master of Stair should be framed was a question about which there was much debate. Several of his letters were called for and read; and several amendments were put to the vote. It should seem that the Jacobites and the extreme Presbyterians were, with but too good cause, on the side of severity. The majority, under the skilful management of the Lord High Commissioner, acquiesced in words which made it impossible for the guilty minister to retain his office, but which did not impute to him such criminality as would have affected his life or his estate. They censured him, but censured him in terms far too soft. They blamed his immoderate zeal against the unfortunate clan, and

\* Burnet, ii. 157.; Act. Parl., June 10. 1695.

\*\* Act. Parl., June 26. 1695; London Gazette, July 4.

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his warm directions about performing the execution by surprise. His excess in his letters they pronounced to have been the original cause of the massacre: but, instead of demanding that he should be brought to trial as a murderer, they declared that, in consideration of his absence and of his great place, they left it to the royal wisdom to deal with him in such a manner as might vindicate the honour of the government.

The indulgence which was shown to the principal offender was not extended to his subordinates. Hamilton, who had fled and had been vainly cited by proclamation at the City Cross to appear before the Estates, was pronounced not to be clear of the blood of the Glencoe men. Glenlyon, Captain Drummond, Lieutenant Lindsey, Ensign Lundie, and Serjeant Barbour, were still more distinctly designated as murderers; and the King was requested to command the Lord Advocate to prosecute them.

The Parliament of Scotland was undoubtedly, on this occasion, severe in the wrong place and lenient in the wrong place. The cruelty and baseness of Glenlyon and his comrades excite, even after the lapse of a hundred and sixty years, emotions which make it difficult to reason calmly. Yet whoever can bring himself to look at the conduct of these men with judicial impartiality will probably be of opinion that they could not, without great detriment to the commonwealth, have been treated as assassins. They had slain nobody whom they had not been positively directed by their commanding officer to slay. That subordination without which an army is the worst of all rabbles would be at an end, if every soldier were to be held answerable for the justice of every order in obedience to which he pulls his trigger. The case of Glencoe was, doubtless, an extreme case: but it cannot easily be distinguished in principle from cases which, in war, are of ordinary occurrence. Very terrible military executions are sometimes indispensable. Hu-



manity itself may require them. Who then is to decide whether there be an emergency such as makes severity the truest mercy? Who is to determine whether it be or be not necessary to lay a thriving town in ashes, to decimate a large body of mutineers, to shoot a whole gang of banditti? Is the responsibility with the commanding officer, or with the rank and file whom he orders to make ready, present and fire? And if the general rule be that the responsibility is with the commanding officer, and not with those who obey him, is it possible to find any reason for pronouncing the case of Glencoe an exception to that rule? It is remarkable that no member of the Scottish Parliament proposed that any of the private men of Argyle's regiment should be prosecuted for murder. Absolute impunity was granted to every body below the rank of Serjeant. Yet on what principle? Surely, if military obedience was not a valid plea, every man who shot a Macdonald on that horrible night was a murderer. And, if military obedience was a valid plea for the musketeer who acted by order of Serjeant Barbour, why not for Barbour who acted by order of Glenlyon? And why not for Glenlyon who acted by order of Hamilton? It can scarcely be maintained that more deference is due from a private to a noncommissioned officer than from a noncommissioned officer to his captain, or from a captain to his colonel.

It may be said that the orders given to Glenlyon were of so peculiar a nature that, if he had been a man of virtue, he would have thrown up his commission, would have braved the displeasure of colonel, general, and Secretary of State, would have incurred the heaviest penalty which a Court Martial could inflict, rather than have performed the part assigned to him; and this is perfectly true: but the question is not whether he acted like a virtuous man, but whether he did that for which he could, without infringing a rule essential to the discipline of camps and to the security of nations, be hanged as a murderer.

CHAP. In this case, disobedience was assuredly a moral duty: but it  
XXI. does not follow that obedience was a legal crime.  
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It seems therefore that the guilt of Glenlyon and his fellows was not within the scope of the penal law. The only punishment which could properly be inflicted on them was that which made Cain cry out that it was greater than he could bear; to be vagabonds on the face of the earth, and to carry wherever they went a mark from which even bad men should turn away sick with horror.

It was not so with the Master of Stair. He had been solemnly pronounced, both by the Commission of Precognition and by the Estates of the Realm in full Parliament, to be the original author of the massacre. That it was not advisable to make examples of his tools was the strongest reason for making an example of him. Every argument which can be urged against punishing the soldier who executes the unjust and inhuman orders of his superior is an argument for punishing with the utmost rigour of the law the superior who gives unjust and inhuman orders. Where there can be no responsibility below, there should be double responsibility above. What the Parliament of Scotland ought with one voice to have demanded was, not that a poor illiterate serjeant, who was hardly more accountable than his own halbert for the bloody work which he had done, should be hanged in the Grassmarket, but that the real murderer, the most politic, the most eloquent, the most powerful, of Scottish statesmen, should be brought to a public trial, and should, if found guilty, die the death of a felon. Nothing less than such a sacrifice could expiate such a crime. Unhappily the Estates, by extenuating the guilt of the chief offender, and, at the same time, demanding that his humble agents should be treated with a severity beyond the law, made the stain which the massacre had left on the honour of the nation broader and deeper than before.

Nor is it possible to acquit the King of a great breach of duty. It is, indeed, highly probable that, till he received the report of his Commissioners, he had been very imperfectly informed as to the circumstances of the slaughter. We can hardly suppose that he was much in the habit of reading Jacobite pamphlets; and, if he did read them, he would have found in them such a quantity of absurd and rancorous invective against himself that he would have been very little inclined to credit any imputation which they might throw on his servants. He would have seen himself accused, in one tract, of being a concealed Papist, in another of having poisoned Jeffreys in the Tower, in a third of having contrived to have Talmash taken off at Brest. He would have seen it asserted that, in Ireland, he once ordered fifty of his wounded English soldiers to be burned alive. He would have seen that the unalterable affection which he felt from his boyhood to his death for three or four of the bravest and most trusty friends that ever prince had the happiness to possess was made a ground for imputing to him abominations as foul as those which are buried under the waters of the Dead Sea. He might therefore naturally be slow to believe frightful imputations thrown by writers whom he knew to be habitual liars on a statesman whose abilities he valued highly, and to whose exertions he had, on some great occasions, owed much. But he could not, after he had read the documents transmitted to him from Edinburgh by Tweedale, entertain the slightest doubt of the guilt of the Master of Stair. To visit that guilt with exemplary punishment was the sacred duty of a Sovereign who had sworn, with his hand lifted up towards heaven, that he would, in his kingdom of Scotland, repress, in all estates and degrees, all oppression, and would do justice, without acceptance of persons, as he hoped for mercy from the Father of all mercies. William contented himself with dismissing the Master from office. For this great fault, a fault amounting to a crime,

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CHAP. Burnet tried to frame, not a defence, but an excuse. He would  
 XXI. have us believe that the King, alarmed by finding how many  
 1695. persons had borne a part in the slaughter of Glencoe, thought  
 it better to grant a general amnesty than to punish one massacre  
 by another. But this representation is the very reverse of the  
 truth. Numerous instruments had doubtless been employed in  
 the work of death; but they had all received their impulse,  
 directly or indirectly, from a single mind. High above the  
 crowd of offenders towered one offender, preeminent in parts,  
 knowledge, rank and power. In return for many victims immo-  
 lated by treachery, only one victim was demanded by justice;  
 and it must ever be considered as a blemish on the fame of  
 William that the demand was refused.

On the seventeenth of July the session of the Parliament of  
 Scotland closed. The Estates had liberally voted such a supply  
 as the poor country which they represented could afford. They  
 had indeed been put into high good humour by the notion that  
 they had found out a way of speedily making that poor country  
 rich. Their attention had been divided between the inquiry into  
 the slaughter of Glencoe and some specious commercial projects  
 of which the nature will be explained and the fate related in a  
 future chapter.

War in  
 the Ne-  
 therlands:  
 Marshal  
 Villeroy.

Meanwhile all Europe was looking anxiously towards the  
 Low Countries. The great warrior who had been victorious at  
 Fleurus, at Steinkirk and at Landen had not left his equal  
 behind him. But France still possessed Marshals well qualified  
 for high command. Already Catinat and Boufflers had given  
 proofs of skill, of resolution and of zeal for the interests of the  
 state. Either of those distinguished officers would have been a  
 successor worthy of Luxemburg and an antagonist worthy of  
 William: but their master, unfortunately for himself, preferred  
 to both the Duke of Villeroy. The new general had been Lewis's

playmate when they were both children, had then become a favourite, and had never ceased to be so. In those superficial graces for which the French aristocracy was then renowned throughout Europe, Villeroy was preeminent among the French aristocracy. His stature was tall, his countenance handsome, his manners nobly and somewhat haughtily polite, his dress, his furniture, his equipages, his table, magnificent. No man told a story with more vivacity: no man sate his horse better in a hunting party: no man made love with more success: no man staked and lost heaps of gold with more agreeable unconcern: no man was more intimately acquainted with the adventures, the attachments, the enmities of the lords and ladies who daily filled the halls of Versailles. There were two characters especially which this fine gentleman had studied during many years, and of which he knew all the plaits and windings, the character of the King, and the character of her who was Queen in every thing but name. But there ended Villeroy's acquirements. He was profoundly ignorant both of books and of business. At the Council Board he never opened his mouth without exposing himself. For war he had not a single qualification except that personal courage which was common to him with the whole class of which he was a member. At every great crisis of his political and of his military life he was alternately drunk with arrogance and sunk in dejection. Just before he took a momentous step his selfconfidence was boundless: he would listen to no suggestion: he would not admit into his mind the thought that failure was possible. On the first check he gave up every thing for lost, became incapable of directing, and ran up and down in helpless despair. Lewis however loved him; and he, to do him justice, loved Lewis. The kindness of the master was proof against all the disasters which were brought on his kingdom by the rashness and weakness of the servant; and the gratitude of the servant

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CHAP. was honourably, though not judiciously, manifested on more  
 XXI. than one occasion after the death of the master.\*  
 1695. Such was the general to whom the direction of the campaign  
 The Duke of Maine. in the Netherlands was confided. The Duke of Maine was sent

to learn the art of war under this preceptor. Maine, the natural son of Lewis by the Duchess of Montespan, had been brought up from childhood by Madame de Maintenon, and was loved by Lewis with the love of a father, by Madame de Maintenon with the not less tender love of a foster mother. Grave men were scandalized by the ostentatious manner in which the King, while making a high profession of piety, exhibited his partiality for this offspring of a double adultery. Kindness, they said, was doubtless due from a parent to a child: but decency was also due from a Sovereign to his people. In spite of these murmurs the youth had been publicly acknowledged, loaded with wealth and dignities, created a Duke and Peer, placed, by an extraordinary act of royal power, above Dukes and Peers of older creation, married to a Princess of the blood royal, and appointed Grand Master of the Artillery of the Realm. With abilities and courage he might have played a great part in the world. But his intellect was small; his nerves were weak; and the women and priests who had educated him had effectually assisted nature. He was orthodox in belief, correct in morals, insinuating in address, a hypocrite, a mischiefmaker and a coward.

It was expected at Versailles that Flanders would, during this year, be the chief theatre of war. Here, therefore, a great army was collected. Strong lines were formed from the Lys to the Scheld, and Villeroy fixed his headquarters near Tournay. Boufflers, with about twelve thousand men, guarded the banks of the Sambre.

On the other side the British and Dutch troops, who were under William's immediate command, mustered in the neigh-

\* There is an excellent portrait of Villeroy in Saint Simon's Memoirs.

bourhood of Ghent. The Elector of Bavaria, at the head of a great force, lay near Brussels. A smaller army, consisting chiefly of Brandenburgers, was encamped not far from Huy.

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Early in June military operations commenced. The first movements of William were mere feints intended to prevent the French generals from suspecting his real purpose. He had set his heart on retaking Namur. The loss of Namur had been the most mortifying of all the disasters of a disastrous war. The importance of Namur in a military point of view had always been great, and had become greater than ever during the three years which had elapsed since the last siege. New works, the masterpieces of Vauban, had been added to the old defences which had been constructed with the utmost skill of Cohorn. So ably had the two illustrious engineers vied with each other and cooperated with nature that the fortress was esteemed the strongest in Europe. Over one gate had been placed a vaunting inscription which defied the allies to wrench the prize from the grasp of France.

William kept his own counsel so well that not a hint of his intention got abroad. Some thought that Dunkirk, some that Ypres was his object. The marches and skirmishes by which he disguised his design were compared by Saint Simon to the moves of a skilful chess player. Feuquieres, much more deeply versed in military science than Saint Simon, informs us that some of these moves were hazardous, and that such a game could not have been safely played against Luxemburg; and this is probably true: but Luxemburg was gone; and what Luxemburg had been to William, William now was to Villeroy.

While the King was thus employed, the Jacobites at home, being unable, in his absence, to prosecute their design against his person, contented themselves with plotting against his government. They were somewhat less closely watched than during the preceding year: for the event of the trials at Man-

Jacobite  
plots  
against  
the go-  
vernment  
during  
William's  
absence.

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chester had discouraged Aaron Smith and his agents. Trenchard, whose vigilance and severity had made him an object of terror and hatred, was no more, and had been succeeded, in what may be called the subordinate Secretaryship of State, by Sir William Trumball, a learned civilian and an experienced diplomatist, of moderate opinions, and of temper cautious to timidity.\* The malecontents were emboldened by the lenity of the administration. William had scarcely sailed for the Continent when they held a great meeting at one of their favourite haunts, the Old King's Head in Leadenhall Street. Charnock, Porter, Goodman, Parkyns and Fenwick were present. The Earl of Aylesbury was there, a man whose attachment to the exiled house was notorious, but who always denied that he had ever thought of effecting a restoration by immoral means. His denial would be entitled to more credit if he had not, by taking the oaths to the government against which he was constantly intriguing, forfeited the right to be considered as a man of conscience and honour. In the assembly was Sir John Friend, a nonjuror who had indeed a very slender wit, but who had made a very large fortune by brewing, and who spent it freely in sedition. After dinner, — for the plans of the Jacobites were generally laid over wine, and generally bore some trace of the conviviality in which they had originated, — it was resolved that the time was come for an insurrection and a French invasion, and that a special messenger should carry the sense of the meeting to Saint Germain. Charnock was selected. He undertook the commission, crossed the Channel, saw James, and had interviews with the ministers of Lewis, but could arrange nothing. The English malecontents would not stir till ten thousand French troops were in the island; and ten thousand French troops could not, without great risk, be with-

\* Some curious traits of Trumball's character will be found in Pepsy's Tangier Diary.



drawn from the army which was contending against William in the Low Countries. When Charnock returned to report that his embassy had been unsuccessful, he found some of his confederates in gaol. They had during his absence amused themselves, after their fashion, by trying to raise a riot in London on the tenth of June, the birthday of the unfortunate Prince of Wales. They met at a tavern in Drury Lane, and, when hot with wine, sallied forth sword in hand, headed by Porter and Goodman, beat kettledrums, unfurled banners, and began to light bonfires. But the watch, supported by the populace, was too strong for the revellers. They were put to rout: the tavern where they had feasted was sacked by the mob: the ringleaders were apprehended, tried, fined and imprisoned, but regained their liberty in time to bear a part in a far more criminal design.\*

By this time all was ready for the execution of the plan which William had formed. That plan had been communicated to the other chiefs of the allied forces, and had been warmly approved. Vaudemont was left in Flanders with a considerable force to watch Villeroy. The King, with the rest of his army, marched straight on Namur. At the same moment the Elector of Bavaria advanced towards the same point on one side, and the Brandenburgers on another. So well had these movements been concerted, and so rapidly were they performed, that the skilful and energetic Boufflers had but just time to throw himself into the fortress. He was accompanied by seven regiments of dragoons, by a strong body of gunners, sappers and miners, and by an officer named Megrigny, who was esteemed the best engineer in the French service with the exception of Vauban. A few hours after Boufflers had entered the place the besieging forces closed round it on every side; and the lines of circumvallation were rapidly formed.

Siege of  
Namur.

\* Postboy, June 13., July 9. 11., 1695; Intelligence Domestic and Foreign, June 14.; Pacquet Boat from Holland and Flanders, July 9.

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The news excited no alarm at the French Court. There it was not doubted that William would soon be compelled to abandon his enterprise with grievous loss and ignominy. The town was strong: the castle was believed to be impregnable: the magazines were filled with provisions and ammunition sufficient to last till the time at which the armies of that age were expected to retire into winter quarters: the garrison consisted of sixteen thousand of the best troops in the world: they were commanded by an excellent general: he was assisted by an excellent engineer; nor was it doubted that Villeroy would march with his great army to the assistance of Boufflers, and that the besiegers would then be in much more danger than the besieged.

These hopes were kept up by the despatches of Villeroy. He proposed, he said, first to annihilate the army of Vaudemont, and then to drive William from Namur. Vaudemont might try to avoid an action; but he could not escape. The Marshal went so far as to promise his master news of a complete victory within twenty four hours. Lewis passed a whole day in impatient expectation. At last, instead of an officer of high rank loaded with English and Dutch standards, arrived a courier bringing news that Vaudemont had effected a retreat with scarcely any loss, and was safe under the walls of Ghent. William extolled the generalship of his lieutenant in the warmest terms. "My cousin," he wrote, "you have shown yourself a greater master of your art than if you had won a pitched battle."\* In the French camp, however, and at the French Court it was universally held that Vaudemont had been saved less by his own skill than by the misconduct of those to whom he was opposed. Some threw the whole blame on Villeroy; and Villeroy made no attempt to vindicate himself. But it was generally

\* Vaudemont's Despatch and William's Answer are in the Monthly Mercury for July 1695.

believed that he might, at least to a great extent, have vindicated himself, had he not preferred royal favour to military renown. His plan, it was said, might have succeeded, had not the execution been entrusted to the Duke of Maine. At the first glimpse of danger the bastard's heart had died within him. He had not been able to conceal his poltroonery. He had stood trembling, stuttering, calling for his confessor, while the old officers round him, with tears in their eyes, urged him to advance. During a short time the disgrace of the son was concealed from the father. But the silence of Villeroy showed that there was a secret: the pleasantries of the Dutch gazettes soon elucidated the mystery; and Lewis learned, if not the whole truth, yet enough to make him miserable. Never during his long reign had he been so moved. During some hours his gloomy irritability kept his servants, his courtiers, even his priests, in terror. He so far forgot the grace and dignity for which he was renowned throughout the world that, in the sight of all the splendid crowd of gentlemen and ladies who came to see him dine at Marli, he broke a cane on the shoulders of a lacquey, and pursued the poor man with the handle.\*

The siege of Namur meanwhile was vigorously pressed by the allies. The scientific part of their operations was under the direction of Cohorn, who was spurred by emulation to exert his utmost skill. He had suffered, three years before, the mortification of seeing the town, as he had fortified it, taken by his great master Vauban. To retake it, now that the fortifications had received Vauban's last improvements, would be a noble revenge.

On the second of July the trenches were opened. On the eighth a gallant sally of French dragoons was gallantly beaten back; and, late on the same evening, a strong body of infantry,

\* See Saint Simon's Memoirs, and his note upon Dangeau.

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the English footguards leading the way, stormed, after a bloody conflict, the outworks on the Brussels side. The King in person directed the attack; and his subjects were delighted to learn that, when the fight was hottest, he laid his hand on the shoulder of the Elector of Bavaria, and exclaimed, "Look, look at my brave English!" Conspicuous in bravery even among those brave English was Cutts. In that bulldog courage which finches from no danger, however terrible, he was unrivalled. There was no difficulty in finding hardy volunteers, German, Dutch and British, to go on a forlorn hope: but Cutts was the only man who appeared to consider such an expedition as a party of pleasure. He was so much at his ease in the hottest fire of the French batteries that his soldiers gave him the honourable nickname of the Salamander.\*

On the seventeenth the first counterscarp of the town was attacked. The English and Dutch were thrice repulsed with great slaughter, and returned thrice to the charge. At length, in spite of the exertions of the French officers, who fought valiantly sword in hand on the glacis, the assailants remained in possession of the disputed works. While the conflict was raging, William, who was giving his orders under a shower of bullets, saw with surprise and anger, among the officers of his staff, Michael Godfrey the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England. This gentleman had come to the King's headquarters in order to make some arrangements for the speedy and safe remittance of money from England to the army in the Netherlands, and was curious to see real war. Such curiosity William could not endure. "Mr. Godfrey," he said, "you ought not to run these hazards: you are not a soldier: you can be of no use to us here." "Sir," answered Godfrey, "I run no more hazard

\* London Gazette, July 22. 1695; Monthly Mercury of August, 1695.; Swift, ten years later, wrote a lampoon on Cutts, so dull and so nauseously scurrilous that Ward or Gildon would have been ashamed of it, entitled the Description of a Salamander.

than Your Majesty." "Not so," said William; "I am where it is my duty to be; and I may without presumption commit my life to God's keeping: but you —" While they were talking a cannon ball from the ramparts laid Godfrey dead at the King's feet. It was not found however that the fear of being Godfreyed, — such was during some time the cant phrase, — sufficed to prevent idle gazers from coming to the trenches.\* Though William forbade his coachmen, footmen and cooks to expose themselves, he repeatedly saw them skulking near the most dangerous spots and trying to get a peep at the fighting. He was sometimes, it is said, provoked into horsewhipping them out of the range of the French guns; and the story, whether true or false, is very characteristic.

On the twentieth of July the Bavarians and Brandenburgers, under the direction of Cohorn, made themselves masters, after a hard fight, of a line of works which Vauban had cut in the solid rock from the Sambre to the Meuse. Three days later, the English and Dutch, Cutts, as usual, in the front, lodged themselves on the second counterscarp. All was ready for a general assault, when a white flag was hung out from the ramparts. The effective strength of the garrison was now little more than one half of what it had been when the trenches were opened. Boufflers apprehended that it would be impossible for eight thousand men to defend the whole circuit of the walls much longer; but he felt confident that such a force would be sufficient to keep the stronghold on the summit of the rock. Terms of capitulation were speedily adjusted. A gate was delivered up to the allies. The French were allowed forty eight hours to retire into the castle, and were assured that the wounded men whom they left below, about fifteen hundred in

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Surrender of  
the town  
of Namur.

\* London Gazette, July 29. 1695; Monthly Mercury for August 1695; Stepney to Lord Lexington, Aug.  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; Robert Fleming's Character of King William, 1702. It was in the attack of July  $\frac{1}{7}$ , that Captain Shandy received the memorable wound in his groin.

CHAP. number, should be well treated. On the sixth the allies marched  
XXI. in. The contest for the possession of the town was over; and a  
1695. second and more terrible contest began for the possession of  
the citadel.\*

Villeroy had in the meantime made some petty conquests. Dixmuyde, which might have offered some resistance, had opened its gates to him, not without grave suspicion of treachery on the part of the governor. Deynse, which was less able to make any defence, had followed the example. The garrisons of both towns were, in violation of a convention which had been made for the exchange of prisoners, sent into France. The Marshal then advanced towards Brussels in the hope, as it should seem, that, by menacing that beautiful capital, he might induce the allies to raise the siege of the castle of Namur. During thirty six hours he rained shells and redhot bullets on the city. The Electress of Bavaria, who was within the walls, miscarried from terror. Six convents perished. Fifteen hundred houses were at once in flames. The whole lower town would have been burned to the ground, had not the inhabitants stopped the conflagration by blowing up numerous buildings. Immense quantities of the finest lace and tapestry were destroyed: for the industry and trade which made Brussels famous throughout the world had hitherto been little affected by the war. Several of the stately piles which looked down on the market place were laid in ruins. The Town Hall itself, the noblest of the many noble senate houses reared by the burghers of the Netherlands, was in imminent peril. All this devastation, however, produced no effect except much private misery. William was not to be intimidated or provoked into relaxing the firm grasp with which he held Namur. The fire which his batteries kept up round the castle was such as had never been

\* London Gazette, Aug. 1. 5. 1695; Monthly Mercury of August 1695, containing the Letters of William and Dykvelt to the States General.

known in war. The French gunners were fairly driven from their pieces by the hail of balls, and forced to take refuge in vaulted galleries under the ground. Cohorn exultingly betted the Elector of Bavaria four hundred pistoles that the place would fall by the thirty-first of August, New Style. The great engineer lost his wager indeed, but lost it only by a few hours.\*

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Boufflers now began to feel that his only hope was in Villeroy. Villeroy had proceeded from Brussels to Enghien; he had there collected all the French troops that could be spared from the remotest fortresses of the Netherlands; and he now, at the head of more than eighty thousand men, marched towards Namur. Vaudemont meanwhile joined the besiegers. William therefore thought himself strong enough to offer battle to Villeroy, without intermitting for a moment the operations against Boufflers. The Elector of Bavaria was entrusted with the immediate direction of the siege. The King of England took up, on the west of the town, a strong position strongly intrenched, and there awaited the French, who were advancing from Enghien. Every thing seemed to indicate that a great day was at hand. Two of the most numerous and best ordered armies that Europe had ever seen were brought face to face. On the fifteenth of August the defenders of the castle saw from their watchtowers the mighty host of their countrymen. But between that host and the citadel was drawn up in battle order the not less mighty host of William. Villeroy, by a salute of ninety guns, conveyed to Boufflers the promise of a speedy rescue; and at night Boufflers, by fire signals which were seen far over the vast plain of the Meuse and Sambre, urged Villeroy to fulfil that promise without delay. In the capitals both of France and England the anxiety was intense. Lewis shut himself up in his oratory, confessed, received the Eucharist, and gave orders

\* Monthly Mercury for August 1695; Stepney to Lord Lexington, Aug. 18.

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that the host should be exposed in his chapel. His wife ordered all her nuns to their knees.\* London was kept in a state of distraction by a succession of rumours fabricated some by Jacobites and some by stockjobbers. Early one morning it was confidently averred that there had been a battle, that the allies had been beaten, that the King had been killed, that the siege had been raised. The Exchange, as soon as it was opened, was filled to overflowing by people who came to learn whether the bad news was true. The streets were stopped up all day by groups of talkers and listeners. In the afternoon the Gazette, which had been impatiently expected, and which was eagerly read by thousands, calmed the excitement, but not completely: for it was known that the Jacobites sometimes received, by the agency of privateers and smugglers who put to sea in all weathers, intelligence earlier than that which came through regular channels to the Secretary of State at Whitehall. Before night, however, the agitation had altogether subsided: but it was suddenly revived by a bold imposture. A horseman in the uniform of the Guards spurred through the City, announcing that the King had been killed. He would probably have raised a serious tumult, had not some apprentices, zealous for the Revolution and the Protestant religion, knocked him down and carried him to Newgate. The confidential correspondent of the States General informed them that, in spite of all the stories which the disaffected party invented and circulated, the general persuasion was that the allies would be successful. The touchstone of sincerity in England, he said, was the betting. The Jacobites were ready enough to prove that William must be defeated, or to assert that he had been defeated: but they would not give the odds, and could hardly be induced to take any moderate odds. The Whigs, on the other hand, were ready to

\* Monthly Mercury for August 1695; Letter from Paris, Aug. 2<sup>o</sup>. 1695, Sept. 5.



stake thousands of guineas on the conduct and good fortune of the King.\*

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The event justified the confidence of the Whigs and the backwardness of the Jacobites. On the sixteenth, the seventeenth, and the eighteenth of August the army of Villeroy and the army of William confronted each other. It was fully expected that the nineteenth would be the decisive day. The allies were under arms before dawn. At four William mounted, and continued till eight at night to ride from post to post, disposing his own troops and watching the movements of the enemy. The enemy approached his lines in several places, near enough to see that it would not be easy to dislodge him: but there was no fighting. He lay down to rest, expecting to be attacked when the sun rose. But when the sun rose he found that the French had fallen back some miles. He immediately sent to request that the Elector would storm the castle without delay. While the preparations were making, Portland was sent to summon the garrison for the last time. It was plain, he said to Boufflers, that Villeroy had given up all hope of being able to raise the siege. It would therefore be an useless waste of life to prolong the contest. Boufflers however thought that another day of slaughter was necessary to the honour of the French arms; and Portland returned unsuccessful.\*\*

Early in the afternoon the assault was made in four places at once by four divisions of the confederate army. One point was assigned to the Brandenburgers, another to the Dutch, a third to the Bavarians, and a fourth to the English. The English were at first less fortunate than they had hitherto been. The truth is that most of the regiments which had seen service had marched with William to encounter Villeroy. As soon as the

\* L'Hermitage, Aug. 13. 1695.

\*\* London Gazette, Aug. 26. 1695; Monthly Mercury; Stepney to Lexington, Aug. 28.

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signal was given by the blowing up of two barrels of powder, Cutts, at the head of a small body of grenadiers, marched first out of the trenches with drums beating and colours flying. This gallant band was to be supported by four battalions which had never been in action, and which, though full of spirit, wanted the steadiness which so terrible a service required. The officers fell fast. Every Colonel, every Lieutenant Colonel, was killed or severely wounded. Cutts received a shot in the head which for a time disabled him. The raw recruits, left almost without direction, rushed forward impetuously till they found themselves in disorder and out of breath, with a precipice before them, under a terrible fire, and under a shower, scarcely less terrible, of fragments of rock and wall. They lost heart, and rolled back in confusion, till Cutts, whose wound had by this time been dressed, succeeded in rallying them. He then led them, not to the place from which they had been driven back, but to another spot where a fearful battle was raging. The Bavarians had made their onset gallantly but unsuccessfully: their general had fallen; and they were beginning to waver when the arrival of the Salamander and his men changed the fate of the day. Two hundred English volunteers, bent on retrieving at all hazards the disgrace of the recent repulse, were the first to force a way, sword in hand, through the palisades, to storm a battery which had made great havoc among the Bavarians, and to turn the guns against the garrison. Meanwhile the Brandenburgers, excellently disciplined and excellently commanded, had performed, with no great loss, the duty assigned to them. The Dutch had been equally successful. When the evening closed in the allies had made a lodgment of a mile in extent on the outworks of the castle. The advantage had been purchased by the loss of two thousand men.\*

\* Boyer's History of King William III., 1703; London Gazette, Aug. 29. 1695; Stepany to Lexington, Aug. 28.; Blathwayt to Lexington, Sept. 2.

And now Boufflers thought that he had done all that his duty required. On the morrow he asked for a truce of forty eight hours in order that the hundreds of corpses which choked the ditches and which would soon have spread pestilence among both the besiegers and the besieged might be removed and interred. His request was granted; and, before the time expired, he intimated that he was disposed to capitulate. He would, he said, deliver up the castle in ten days, if he were not relieved sooner. He was informed that the allies would not treat with him on such terms, and that he must either consent to an immediate surrender, or prepare for an immediate assault. He yielded, and it was agreed that he and his men should be suffered to depart, leaving the citadel, the artillery, and the stores to the conquerors. Three peals from all the guns of the confederate army notified to Villeroy the fall of the stronghold which he had vainly attempted to succour. He instantly retreated towards Mons, leaving William to enjoy undisturbed a triumph which was made more delightful by the recollection of many misfortunes.

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The twenty-sixth of August was fixed for an exhibition such as the oldest soldier in Europe had never seen, and such as, a few weeks before, the youngest had scarcely hoped to see. From the first battle of Condé to the last battle of Luxemburg, the tide of military success had run, without any serious interruption, in one direction. That tide had turned. For the first time, men said, since France had Marshals, a Marshal of France was to deliver up a fortress to a victorious enemy.

The allied forces, foot and horse, drawn up in two lines, formed a magnificent avenue from the breach which had lately been so desperately contested to the bank of the Meuse. The Elector of Bavaria, the Landgrave of Hesse, and many distinguished officers were on horseback in the vicinity of the castle. William was near them in his coach. The garrison, reduced to

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Castle of  
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about five thousand men, came forth with drums beating and ensigns flying. Boufflers and his staff closed the procession. There had been some difficulty about the form of the greeting which was to be exchanged between him and the allied Sovereigns. An Elector of Bavaria was hardly entitled to be saluted by the Marshal with the sword. A King of England was undoubtedly entitled to such a mark of respect: but France did not recognise William as King of England. At last Boufflers consented to perform the salute without marking for which of the two princes it was intended. He lowered his sword. William alone acknowledged the compliment. A short conversation followed. The Marshal, in order to avoid the use of the words Sire and Majesty, addressed himself only to the Elector. The Elector, with every mark of deference, reported to William what had been said; and William gravely touched his hat. The officers of the garrison carried back to their country the news that the upstart who at Paris was designated only as Prince of Orange, was treated by the proudest potentates of the Germanic body with a respect as profound as that which Lewis exacted from the gentlemen of his bedchamber.\*

Arrest of  
Boufflers.

The ceremonial was now over; and Boufflers passed on: but he had proceeded but a short way when he was stopped by Dykvelt who accompanied the allied army as deputy from the States General. "You must return to the town, Sir," said Dykvelt. "The King of England has ordered me to inform you that you are his prisoner." Boufflers was in transports of rage. His officers crowded round him and vowed to die in his defence. But resistance was out of the question: a strong body of Dutch cavalry came up; and the Brigadier who commanded them demanded the Marshal's sword. The Marshal uttered indignant exclamations: "This is an infamous breach of faith.

\* Postscript to the Monthly Mercury for August 1695; London Gazette, Sept. 9.; Saint Simon; Dangeau.

Look at the terms of the capitulation. What have I done to deserve such an affront? Have I not behaved like a man of honour? Ought I not to be treated as such? But beware what you do, gentlemen. I serve a master who can and will avenge me." "I am a soldier, Sir," answered the Brigadier; "and my business is to obey orders without troubling myself about consequences." Dykvelt calmly and courteously replied to the Marshal's indignant exclamations. "The King of England has reluctantly followed the example set by your master. The soldiers who garrisoned Dixmuyde and Deynse have, in defiance of plighted faith, been sent prisoners into France. The Prince whom they serve would be wanting in his duty to them if he did not retaliate. His Majesty might with perfect justice have detained all the French who were in Namur. But he will not follow to such a length a precedent which he disapproves. He has determined to arrest you and you alone: and, Sir, you must not regard as an affront what is in truth a mark of his very particular esteem. How can he pay you a higher compliment than by showing that he considers you as fully equivalent to the five or six thousand men whom your sovereign wrongfully holds in captivity? Nay, you shall even now be permitted to proceed if you will give me your word of honour to return hither unless the garrisons of Dixmuyde and Deynse are released within a fortnight." "I do not at all know," answered Boufflers, "why the King my master detains those men; and therefore I cannot hold out any hope that he will liberate them. You have an army at your back: I am alone; and you must do your pleasure." He gave up his sword, returned to Namur, and was sent thence to Huy, where he passed a few days in luxurious repose, was allowed to choose his own walks and rides, and was treated with marked respect by those who guarded him. In the shortest time in which it was possible to post from the place where he was confined to the French Court and back again, he received

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full powers to promise that the garrisons of Dixmuyde and Deynse should be sent back. He was instantly liberated; and he set off for Fontainebleau, where an honourable reception awaited him. He was created a Duke and a Peer. That he might be able to support his new dignities a considerable sum of money was bestowed on him; and, in the presence of the whole aristocracy of France, he was welcomed home by Lewis with an affectionate embrace.\*

In all the countries which were united against France the news of the fall of Namur was received with joy: but here the exultation was greatest. During several generations our ancestors had achieved nothing considerable by land against foreign enemies. We had indeed occasionally furnished to our allies small bands of auxiliaries who had well maintained the honour of the nation. But from the day on which the two brave Talbots, father and son, had perished in the vain attempt to reconquer Guienne, till the Revolution, there had been on the Continent no campaign in which Englishmen had borne a principal part. At length our ancestors had again, after an interval of near two centuries and a half, begun to dispute with the warriors of France the palm of military prowess. The struggle had been hard. The genius of Luxemburg and the consummate discipline of the household troops of Lewis had prevailed in two great battles: but the event of those battles had been long doubtful; the victory had been dearly purchased, and the victor had gained little more than the honour of remaining master of the field of slaughter. Meanwhile he was himself training his adversaries. The recruits who survived his severe tuition speedily became veterans. Steinkirk and Landen had formed the volunteers who followed Cutts through the pali-

\* Boyer. History of King William III., 1703; Postscript to the Monthly Mercury, Aug. 1695; London Gazette, Sept. 9. 12.; Blathwayt to Lexington, Sept. 6.; Saint Simon; Dangeau.

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sades of Namur. The judgment of all the great warriors whom all the nations of Western Europe had sent to the confluence of the Sambre and the Meuse was that the English subaltern was inferior to no subaltern and the English private soldier to no private soldier in Christendom. The English officers of higher rank were thought hardly worthy to command such an army. Cutts, indeed, had distinguished himself by his intrepidity. But those who most admired him acknowledged that he had neither the capacity nor the science necessary to a general.

The joy of the conquerors was heightened by the recollection of the discomfiture which they had suffered, three years before, on the same spot, and of the insolence with which their enemy had then triumphed over them. They now triumphed in their turn. The Dutch struck medals. The Spaniards sang *Te Deums*. Many poems, serious and sportive, appeared, of which one only has lived. Prior burlesqued, with admirable spirit and pleasantry, the bombastic verses in which Boileau had celebrated the first taking of Namur. The two odes, printed side by side, were read with delight in London; and the critics at Will's pronounced that, in wit as in arms, England had been victorious.

The fall of Namur was the great military event of this year. The Turkish war still kept a large part of the forces of the Emperor employed in indecisive operations on the Danube. Nothing deserving to be mentioned took place either in Piedmont or on the Rhine. In Catalonia the Spaniards obtained some slight advantages, advantages due to their English and Dutch allies, who seem to have done all that could be done to help a nation never much disposed to help itself. The maritime superiority of England and Holland was now fully established. During the whole year Russell was the undisputed master of the Mediterranean, passed and repassed between Spain and

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Italy, bombarded Palamos, spread terror along the whole shore of Provence, and kept the French fleet imprisoned in the harbour of Toulon. Meanwhile Berkeley was the undisputed master of the Channel, sailed to and fro in sight of the coasts of Artois, Picardy, Normandy and Brittany, threw shells into Saint Maloes, Calais and Dunkirk, and burned Granville to the ground. The navy of Lewis, which, five years before, had been the most formidable in Europe, which had ranged the British seas unopposed from the Downs to the Land's End, which had anchored in Torbay and had laid Teignmouth in ashes, now gave no sign of existence except by pillaging merchantmen which were unprovided with convoy. In this lucrative war the French privateers were, towards the close of the summer, very successful. Several vessels laden with sugar from Barbadoes were captured. The losses of the unfortunate East India Company, already surrounded by difficulties and impoverished by boundless prodigality in corruption, were enormous. Five large ships returning from the Eastern seas, with cargoes of which the value was popularly estimated at a million, fell into the hands of the enemy. These misfortunes produced some murmuring on the Royal Exchange. But, on the whole, the temper of the capital and of the nation was better than it had been during some years.

Meanwhile events which no preceding historian has condescended to mention, but which were of far greater importance than the achievements of William's army or of Russell's fleet, were taking place in London. A great experiment was making. A great revolution was in progress. Newspapers had made their appearance.

Effect  
of the  
emanci-  
pation of  
the Eng-  
lish press.

While the Licensing Act was in force there was no newspaper in England except the London Gazette, which was edited by a clerk in the office of the Secretary of State, and which contained nothing but what the Secretary of State wished the na-



tion to know. There were indeed many periodical papers: but none of those papers could be called a newspaper. Welwood, a zealous Whig, published a journal called the *Observator*: but his *Observator*, like the *Observator* which Lestrange had formerly edited, contained, not the news, but merely dissertations on politics. A crazy bookseller, named John Dunton, published the *Athenian Mercury*: but the *Athenian Mercury* merely discussed questions of natural philosophy, of casuistry and of gallantry. A fellow of the Royal Society, named John Houghton, published what he called a *Collection for the Improvement of Industry and Trade*. But his *Collection* contained little more than the prices of stocks, explanations of the modes of doing business in the City, puffs of new projects, and advertisements of books, quack medicines, chocolate, spa water, civet cats, surgeons wanting ships, valets wanting masters and ladies wanting husbands. If ever he printed any political news, he transcribed it from the *Gazette*. The *Gazette* was so partial and so meagre a chronicle of events that, though it had no competitors, it had but a small circulation. Only eight thousand copies were printed, much less than one to each parish in the kingdom. In truth a person who had studied the history of his own time only in the *Gazette* would have been ignorant of many events of the highest importance. He would, for example, have known nothing about the Court Martial on Torrington, the Lancashire Trials, the burning of the Bishop of Salisbury's Pastoral Letter or the impeachment of the Duke of Leeds. But the deficiencies of the *Gazette* were to a certain extent supplied in London by the coffeehouses, and in the country by the newsletters.

On the third of May 1695 the law which had subjected the press to a censorship expired. Within a fortnight, a stanch old Whig, named Harris, who had, in the days of the Exclusion Bill, attempted to set up a newspaper entitled *Intelligence*

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Domestic and Foreign, and who had been speedily forced to relinquish that design, announced that the Intelligence Domestic and Foreign, suppressed fourteen years before by tyranny, would again appear. Ten days after the first number of the Intelligence Domestic and Foreign was printed the first number of the English Courant. Then came the Packet Boat from Holland and Flanders, the Pegasus, the London News-letter, the London Post, the Flying Post, the Old Postmaster, the Postboy and the Postman. The history of the newspapers of England from that time to the present day is a most interesting and instructive part of the history of the country. At first they were small and meanlooking. Even the Postboy and the Postman, which seem to have been the best conducted and the most prosperous, were wretchedly printed on scraps of dingy paper such as would not now be thought good enough for street ballads. Only two numbers came out in a week; and a number contained little more matter than may be found in a single column of a daily paper of our time. What is now called a leading article seldom appeared, except when there was a scarcity of intelligence, when the Dutch mails were detained by the west wind, when the Rapparees were quiet in the Bog of Allen, when no stage coach had been stopped by highwaymen, when no nonjuring congregation had been dispersed by constables, when no ambassador had made his entry with a long train of coaches and six, when no lord or poet had been buried in the Abbey, and when consequently it was difficult to fill up four scanty pages. Yet the leading articles, though inserted, as it should seem, only in the absence of more attractive matter, are by no means contemptibly written.

It is a remarkable fact that the infant newspapers were all on the side of King William and the Revolution. This fact may be partly explained by the circumstance that the editors were, at first, on their good behaviour. It was by no means clear

that their trade was not in itself illegal. The printing of newspapers was certainly not prohibited by any statute. But, towards the close of the reign of Charles the Second, the judges had pronounced that it was a misdemeanour at common law to publish political intelligence without the King's license. It is true that the judges who laid down this doctrine were removable at the royal pleasure and were eager on all occasions to exalt the royal prerogative. How the question, if it were again raised, would be decided by Holt and Treby was doubtful; and the effect of the doubt was to make the ministers of the Crown indulgent and to make the journalists cautious. On neither side was there a wish to bring the question of right to issue. The government therefore connived at the publication of the newspapers; and the conductors of the newspapers carefully abstained from publishing any thing that could provoke or alarm the government. It is true that, in one of the earliest numbers of one of the new journals, a paragraph appeared which seemed intended to convey an insinuation that the Princess Anne did not sincerely rejoice at the fall of Namur. But the printer made haste to atone for his fault by the most submissive apologies. During a considerable time the unofficial gazettes, though much more garrulous and amusing than the official gazette, were scarcely less courtly. Whoever examines them will find that the King is always mentioned with profound respect. About the debates and divisions of the two Houses a reverential silence is preserved. There is much invective: but it is almost all directed against the Jacobites and the French. It seems certain that the government of William gained not a little by the substitution of these printed newspapers, composed under constant dread of the Attorney General, for the old newsletters, which were written with unbounded license.\*

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\* There is a noble, and, I suppose, unique Collection of the newspapers

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The pamphleteers were under less restraint than the journalists: yet no person who has studied with attention the political controversies of that time can have failed to perceive that the libels on William's person and government were decidedly less coarse and rancorous during the latter half of his reign than during the earlier half. And the reason evidently is that the press, which had been fettered during the earlier half of his reign, was free during the latter half. While the censorship existed, no tract blaming, even in the most temperate and decorous language, the conduct of any public department, was likely to be printed with the approbation of the licenser. To print such a tract without the approbation of the licenser was illegal. In general; therefore, the respectable and moderate opponents of the Court, not being able to publish in the manner prescribed by law, and not thinking it right or safe to publish in a manner prohibited by law, held their peace, and left the business of criticizing the administration to two classes of men, fanatical nonjurors who sincerely thought that the Prince of Orange was entitled to as little charity or courtesy as the Prince of Darkness, and Grub Street hacks, coarseminded, badhearted and foulmouthed. Thus there was scarcely a single man of judgment, temper and integrity among the many who were in the habit of writing against the government. Indeed of William's reign in the British Museum. I have turned over every page of that Collection. It is strange that neither Luttrell nor Evelyn should have noticed the first appearance of the new journals. The earliest mention of those journals which I have found, is in a despatch of L'Hermitage, dated July 12. 1695. I will transcribe his words:—"Depuis quelque tems on imprime ici plusieurs feuilles volantes en forme de gazette, qui sont remplies de toutes sortes de nouvelles. Cette licence est venue de ce que le parlement n'a pas achevé le bill ou projet d'acte qui avoit été porté dans la Chambre des Communes pour régler l'imprimerie et empêcher que ces sortes de choses n'arrivassent. Il n'y avoit ci-devant qu'un des commis des Secrétaires d'Etat qui eût le pouvoir de faire des gazettes: mais aujourd'hui il s'en fait plusieurs sous d'autres noms." L'Hermitage mentions the paragraph reflecting on the Princess, and the submission of the libeller.

the habit of writing against the government had, of itself, an unfavourable effect on the character. For whoever was in the habit of writing against the government was in the habit of breaking the law; and the habit of breaking even an unreasonable law tends to make men altogether lawless. However absurd a tariff may be, a smuggler is but too likely to be a knave and a ruffian. However oppressive a game law may be, the transition is but too easy from a poacher to a murderer. And so, though little indeed can be said in favour of the statutes which imposed restraints on literature, there was much risk that a man who was constantly violating those statutes would not be a man of high honour and rigid uprightness. An author who was determined to print, and could not obtain the sanction of the licenser, must employ the services of needy and desperate outcasts, who, hunted by the peace officers, and forced to assume every week new aliases and new disguises, hid their paper and their types in those dens of vice which are the pest and the shame of great capitals. Such wretches as these he must bribe to keep his secret and to run the chance of having their backs flayed and their ears clipped in his stead. A man stooping to such companions and to such expedients could hardly retain unimpaired the delicacy of his sense of what was right and becoming. The emancipation of the press produced a great and salutary change. The best and wisest men in the ranks of the opposition now assumed an office which had hitherto been abandoned to the unprincipled or the hotheaded. Tracts against the government were written in a style not misbecoming statesmen and gentlemen; and even the compositions of the lower and fiercer class of malecontents became somewhat less brutal and less ribald than in the days of the licensers.

Some weak men had imagined that religion and morality stood in need of the protection of the licenser. The event

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signally proved that they were in error. In truth the censorship had scarcely put any restraint on licentiousness or profaneness. The *Paradise Lost* had narrowly escaped mutilation: for the *Paradise Lost* was the work of a man whose politics were hateful to the ruling powers. But *Etherege's She Would If She Could*, *Wycherley's Country Wife*, *Dryden's Translations from the Fourth Book of Lucretius*, obtained the imprimatur without difficulty: for *Dryden*, *Etherege* and *Wycherley* were courtiers. From the day on which the emancipation of our literature was accomplished, the purification of our literature began. That purification was effected, not by the intervention of senates or magistrates, but by the opinion of the great body of educated Englishmen, before whom good and evil were set, and who were left free to make their choice. During a hundred and sixty years the liberty of our press has been constantly becoming more and more entire; and during those hundred and sixty years the restraint imposed on writers by the general feeling of readers has been constantly becoming more and more strict. At length even that class of works in which it was formerly thought that a voluptuous imagination was privileged to disport itself, love songs, comedies, novels, have become more decorous than the sermons of the seventeenth century. At this day foreigners, who dare not print a word reflecting on the government under which they live, are at a loss to understand how it happens that the freest press in Europe is the most prudish.

Return of  
William  
to Eng-  
land: dis-  
solution  
of the  
Parlia-  
ment.

On the tenth of October, the King, leaving his army in winter quarters, arrived in England, and was received with unwonted enthusiasm. During his passage through the capital to his palace, the bells of every church were ringing, and every street was lighted up. It was late before he made his way through the shouting crowds to Kensington. But, late as it was, a council was instantly held. An important point was to

be decided. Should the House of Commons be permitted to sit again, or should there be an immediate dissolution? The King would probably have been willing to keep that House to the end of his reign. But this was not in his power. The Triennial Act had fixed the twenty-fifth of March as the latest day of the existence of the Parliament. If therefore there were not a general election in 1695, there must be a general election in 1696; and who could say what might be the state of the country in 1696? There might be an unfortunate campaign. There might be, indeed there was but too good reason to believe that there would be, a terrible commercial crisis. In either case, it was probable that there would be much ill humour. The campaign of 1695 had been brilliant: the nation was in an excellent temper; and William wisely determined to seize the fortunate moment. Two proclamations were immediately published. One of them announced, in the ordinary form, that His Majesty had determined to dissolve the old Parliament and had ordered writs to be issued for a new Parliament. The other proclamation was unprecedented. It signified the royal pleasure to be that every regiment quartered in a place where an election was to be held should march out of that place the day before the nomination, and should not return till the people had made their choice. From this order, which was generally considered as indicating a laudable respect for popular rights, the garrisons of fortified towns and castles were necessarily excepted.

But, though William carefully abstained from disgusting the constituent bodies by any thing that could look like coercion or intimidation, he did not disdain to influence their votes by milder means. He resolved to spend the six weeks of the general election in showing himself to the people of many districts which he had never yet visited. He hoped to acquire in this way a popularity which might have a considerable effect

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on the returns. He therefore forced himself to behave with a graciousness and affability in which he was too often deficient; and the consequence was that he received, at every stage of his progress, marks of the good will of his subjects. Before he set out he paid a visit in form to his sister in law, and was much pleased with his reception. The Duke of Gloucester, only six years old, with a little musket on his shoulder, came to meet his uncle, and presented arms. "I am learning my drill," the child said, "that I may help you to beat the French." The King laughed much, and, a few days later, rewarded the young soldier with the Garter.\*

William makes a progress through the country.

On the seventeenth of October William went to Newmarket, now a place rather of business than of pleasure, but, in the autumns of the seventeenth century, the gayest and most luxurious spot in the island. It was not unusual for the whole Court and Cabinet to go down to the meetings. Jewellers and milliners, players and fiddlers, venal wits and venal beauties followed in crowds. The streets were made impassable by coaches and six. In the places of public resort peers flirted with maids of honour; and officers of the Life Guards, all plumes and gold lace, jostled professors in trencher caps and black gowns. For the neighbouring University of Cambridge always sent her highest functionaries with loyal addresses, and selected her ablest theologians to preach before the Sovereign and his splendid retinue. In the wild days of the Restoration, indeed, the most learned and eloquent divine might fail to draw a fashionable audience, particularly if Buckingham announced his intention of holding forth; for sometimes His Grace would enliven the dulness of a Sunday morning by addressing to the bevy of fine gentlemen and fine ladies a ribald exhortation which he called a sermon. But the Court of William was more decent; and the Academic dignitaries were treated with marked

\* L'Hermitage, Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>, Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>. 1695.



respect. With lords and ladies from Saint James's and Soho, and with doctors from Trinity College and King's College, were mingled the provincial aristocracy, foxhunting squires and their rosycheeked daughters, who had come in queerlooking family coaches drawn by carthorses from the remotest parishes of three or four counties to see their Sovereign. The heath was fringed by a wild gipsylike camp of vast extent. For the hope of being able to feed on the leavings of many sumptuous tables, and to pick up some of the guineas and crowns which the spendthrifts of London were throwing about, attracted thousands of peasants from a circle of many miles.\*

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William, after holding his court a few days at this joyous place, and receiving the homage of Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Suffolk, proceeded to Althorpe. It seems strange that he should, in the course of what was really a canvassing tour, have honoured with such a mark of favour a man so generally distrusted and hated as Sunderland. But the people were determined to be pleased. All Northamptonshire crowded to kiss the royal hand in that fine gallery which had been embellished by the pencil of Vandyke and made classical by the muse of Waller; and the Earl tried to conciliate his neighbours by feasting them at eight tables, all blazing with plate. From Althorpe the King proceeded to Stamford. The Earl of Exeter, whose princely seat was, and still is, one of the great sights of England, had never taken the oaths, and had, in order to avoid an interview which must have been disagreeable, found some pretext for going up to London, but had left directions that the illustrious guest should be received with fitting hospitality. William was fond of architecture and of gardening; and his nobles could not

\* London Gazette, Oct. 24. 1695. See Evelyn's Account of Newmarket in 1671, and Pepys, July 18. 1668. From Tallard's despatches written after the Peace of Ryswick, it appears that the autumn meetings were not less numerous or splendid in the days of William than in those of his uncles.

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flatter him more than by asking his opinion about the improvement of their country seats. At a time when he had many cares pressing on his mind he took a great interest in the building of Castle Howard; and a wooden model of that edifice, the finest specimen of a vicious style, was sent to Kensington for his inspection. We cannot therefore wonder that he should have seen Burleigh with delight. He was indeed not content with one view, but rose early on the following morning for the purpose of examining the building a second time. From Stamford he went on to Lincoln, where he was greeted by the clergy in full canonicals, by the magistrates in scarlet robes, and by a multitude of baronets, knights and esquires, from all parts of the immense plain which lies between the Trent and the German Ocean. After attending divine service in the magnificent cathedral, he took his departure, and journeyed eastward. On the frontier of Nottinghamshire the Lord Lieutenant of the county, John Holles, Duke of Newcastle, with a great following, met the royal carriages and escorted them to his seat at Welbeck, a mansion surrounded by gigantic oaks which scarcely seem older now than on the day when that splendid procession passed under their shade. The house in which William was then, during a few hours, a guest, passed long after his death, by female descents, from the Holleses to the Harleys, and from the Harleys to the Bentincks, and now contains the originals of those singularly interesting letters which passed between him and his trusty friend and servant Portland. At Welbeck the grandes of the north were assembled. The Lord Mayor of York came thither with a train of magistrates, and the Archbishop of York with a train of divines. William hunted several times in that forest, the finest in the kingdom, which in old times gave shelter to Robin Hood and Little John, and which is now portioned out into the princely domains of Welbeck, Thoresby, Clumber and Worksop. Four hundred gentlemen on horseback

partook of his sport. The Nottinghamshire squires were delighted to hear him say at table, after a noble stag chase, that he hoped that this was not the last run which he should have with them, and that he must hire a hunting box among their delightful woods. He then turned southward. He was entertained during one day by the Earl of Stamford at Bradgate, the place where Lady Jane Grey sate alone reading the last words of Socrates while the deer was flying through the park followed by the whirlwind of hounds and hunters. On the morrow the Lord Brook welcomed his Sovereign to Warwick Castle, the finest of those fortresses of the middle ages which have been turned into peaceful dwellings. Guy's Tower was illuminated. A hundred and twenty gallons of punch were drunk to His Majesty's health; and a mighty pile of faggots blazed in the middle of the spacious court overhung by ruins green with the ivy of centuries. The next morning the King, accompanied by a multitude of Warwickshire gentlemen on horseback, proceeded towards the borders of Gloucestershire. He deviated from his route to dine with Shrewsbury at a secluded mansion in the Wolds, and in the evening went on to Burford. The whole population of Burford met him, and entreated him to accept a small token of their love. Burford was then renowned for its saddles. One inhabitant of the town, in particular, was said by the English to be the best saddler in Europe. Two of his masterpieces were respectfully offered to William, who received them with much grace, and ordered them to be especially reserved for his own use.\*

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At Oxford he was received with great pomp, complimented in a Latin oration, presented with some of the most beautiful productions of the Academic press, entertained with music,

\* I have taken this account of William's progress chiefly from the London Gazette, from the despatches of L'Hermitage, from Narcissus Luttrell's Diary, and from the letters of Vernon, Yard and Cartwright among the Lexington Papers.

CHAP. and invited to a sumptuous feast in the Sheldonian theatre.  
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1695. shortness of his stay that he had seen the colleges before, and that this was a visit, not of curiosity, but of kindness. As it was well known that he did not love the Oxonians and was not loved by them, his haste gave occasion to some idle rumours which found credit with the vulgar. It was said that he hurried away without tasting the costly banquet which had been provided for him, because he had been warned by an anonymous letter, that, if he ate or drank in the theatre, he was a dead man. But it is difficult to believe that a Prince who could scarcely be induced, by the most earnest entreaties of his friends, to take the most common precautions against assassins of whose designs he had trustworthy evidence, would have been scared by so silly a hoax; and it is quite certain that the stages of his progress had been marked, and that he remained at Oxford as long as was compatible with arrangements previously made.\*

He was welcomed back to his capital by a splendid show, which had been prepared at great cost during his absence. Sidney, now Earl of Romney and Master of the Ordnance, had determined to astonish London by an exhibition which had never been seen in England on so large a scale. The whole skill of the pyrotechnists of his department was employed to produce a display of fireworks which might vie with any that had been seen in the gardens of Versailles or on the great tank at the Hague. Saint James's Square was selected as the place for the spectacle. All the stately mansions on the northern, eastern and western sides were crowded with people of fashion. The King appeared at a window of Romney's drawing room. The Princess of Denmark, her husband and her court occupied a neighbouring house. The whole diplomatic body assembled at

\* See the letter of Yard to Lexington, November 8. 1695, and the note by the editor of the Lexington Papers.

the dwelling of the minister of the United Provinces. A huge pyramid of flame in the centre of the area threw out brilliant cascades which were seen by hundreds of thousands who crowded the neighbouring streets and parks. The States General were informed by their correspondent that, great as the multitude was, the night had passed without the slightest disturbance.\*

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By this time the elections were almost completed. In every part of the country it had been manifest that the constituent bodies were generally zealous for the King and for the war. The City of London, which had returned four Tories in 1690, returned four Whigs in 1695. Of the proceedings at Westminster an account more than usually circumstantial has come down to us. In 1690 the electors, disgusted by the Sacheverell Clause, had returned two Tories. In 1695, as soon as it was known that a new Parliament was likely to be called, a meeting was held, at which it was resolved that a deputation should be sent with an invitation to two Commissioners of the Treasury, Charles Montague and Sir Stephen Fox. Sir Walter Clarges stood on the Tory interest. On the day of nomination near five thousand electors paraded the streets on horseback. They were divided into three bands; and at the head of each band rode one of the candidates. It was easy to estimate at a glance the comparative strength of the parties. For the cavalcade which followed Clarges was the least numerous of the three; and it was well known that the followers of Montague would vote for Fox, and the followers of Fox for Montague. The business of the day was interrupted by loud clamours. The Whigs cried shame on the Jacobite candidate who wished to make the English go to mass, eat frogs and wear wooden shoes. The Tories hooted the two placemen who were raising great estates out of the plunder of the poor overburdened nation. From

\* L'Hermitage, Nov.  $\frac{1}{2}$ . 1695.

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words the incensed factions proceeded to blows; and there was a riot which was with some difficulty quelled. The High Bailiff then walked round the three companies of horsemen, and pronounced, on the view, that Montague and Fox were duly elected. A poll was demanded. The Tories exerted themselves strenuously. Neither money nor ink was spared. Clarges disbursed two thousand pounds in a few hours, a great outlay in times when the average income of a member of Parliament was not estimated at more than eight hundred a year. In the course of the night which followed the nomination, broadsides filled with invectives against the two courtly upstarts who had raised themselves by knavery from poverty and obscurity to opulence and power were scattered all over the capital. The Bishop of London canvassed openly against the government; for the interference of peers in elections had not yet been declared by the Commons to be a breach of privilege. But all was vain. Clarges was at the bottom of the poll without hope of rising. He withdrew; and Montague was carried on the shoulders of an immense multitude from Westminster Abbey to his office at Whitehall.\*

The same feeling exhibited itself in many other places. The freeholders of Cumberland instructed their representatives to support the King, and to vote whatever supplies might be necessary for the purpose of carrying on the war with vigour; and this example was followed by several counties and towns.\*\* Russell did not arrive in England till after the writs had gone out. But he had only to choose for what place he would sit. His popularity was immense: for his villainies were secret, and his public services were universally known. He had won the battle of La Hogue. He had commanded two years in the Mediterranean. He had there shut up the French fleets in the

\* L'Hermitage,  $\frac{\text{Oct. 25.}}{\text{Nov. 4.}}$ ,  $\frac{\text{Oct. 29.}}{\text{Nov. 8.}}$  1695.

\*\* L'Hermitage, Nov.  $\frac{1}{2}$ . 1695.

harbour of Toulon, and had stopped and turned back the French armies in Catalonia. He had taken many vessels, and among them two ships of the line; and he had not, during his long absence in a remote sea, lost a single vessel either by war or by weather. He had made the red cross of Saint George an object of terror to all the princes and commonwealths of Italy. The effect of his successes was that embassies were on their way from Florence, Genoa and Venice, with tardy congratulations to William on his accession. Russell's merits, artfully magnified by the Whigs, made such an impression that he was returned to Parliament not only by Portsmouth where his official situation gave him great influence, and by Cambridgeshire where his private property was considerable, but also by Middlesex. This last distinction, indeed, he owed chiefly to the name which he bore. Before his arrival in England it had been generally thought that two Tories would be returned for the metropolitan county. Somers and Shrewsbury were of opinion that the only way to avert such a misfortune was to conjure with the name of the most virtuous of all the martyrs of English liberty. They entreated Lady Russell to suffer her eldest son, a boy of fifteen, who was about to commence his studies at Cambridge, to be put in nomination. He must, they said, drop, for one day, his new title of Marquess of Tavistock, and call himself Lord Russell. There will be no expense. There will be no contest. Thousands of gentlemen on horseback will escort him to the hustings; nobody will dare to stand against him; and he will not only come in himself, but bring in another Whig. The widowed mother, in a letter written with all the excellent sense and feeling which distinguished her, refused to sacrifice her son to her party. His education, she said, would be interrupted: his head would be turned: his triumph would be his undoing. Just at this conjuncture the Admiral arrived. He made his appearance before the freeholders of Middlesex

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Meanwhile several noted malecontents received marks of public disapprobation. John Knight, the most factious and insolent of those Jacobites who had dishonestly sworn fealty to King William in order to qualify themselves to sit in Parliament, ceased to represent the great city of Bristol. Exeter, the capital of the west, was violently agitated. It had been long supposed that the ability, the eloquence, the experience, the ample fortune, the noble descent of Seymour would make it impossible to unseat him. But his moral character, which had never stood very high, had, during the last three or four years, been constantly sinking. He had been virulent in opposition till he had got a place. While he had a place he had defended the most unpopular acts of the government. As soon as he was out of place, he had again been virulent in opposition. His saltpetre contract had left a deep stain on his personal honour. Two candidates were therefore brought forward against him; and a contest, the longest and fiercest of that age, fixed the attention of the whole kingdom, and was watched with interest even by foreign governments. The poll was open five weeks. The expense on both sides was enormous. The freemen of Exeter, who, while the election lasted, fared sumptuously every day, were by no means impatient for the termination of their luxurious carnival. They ate and drank heartily; they turned out every evening with good cudgels to fight for Mother Church or for King William: but the votes came in very slowly. It was not till the eve of the meeting of Parliament that the return was made. Seymour was defeated,

\* L'Hermitage, Nov.  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{15}{25}$ , 1695; Sir James Forbes to Lady Russell, Oct. 3, 1695; Lady Russell to Lord Edward Russell; The Postman, Nov. 16, 1695.



to his bitter mortification, and was forced to take refuge in the small borough of Totness.\*

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It is remarkable that, at this election as at the preceding election, John Hampden failed to obtain a seat. He had, since he ceased to be a member of Parliament, been brooding over his evil fate and his indelible shame, and occasionally venting his spleen in bitter pamphlets against the government. When the Whigs had become predominant at the Court and in the House of Commons, when Nottingham had retired, when Caermarthen had been impeached, Hampden, it should seem, again conceived the hope that he might play a great part in public life. But the leaders of his party, apparently, did not wish for an ally of so acrimonious and turbulent a spirit. He found himself still excluded from the House of Commons. He led, during a few months, a miserable life, sometimes trying to forget his cares among the wellbred gamblers and frail beauties who filled the drawingroom of the Duchess of Mazarin, and sometimes sunk in religious melancholy. The thought of suicide often rose in his mind. Soon there was a vacancy in the representation of Buckinghamshire, the county which had repeatedly sent himself and his progenitors to Parliament; and he expected that he should, by the help of Wharton, whose dominion over the Buckinghamshire Whigs was absolute, be returned without difficulty. Wharton, however, gave his interest to another candidate. This was a final blow. The town was agitated by the news that John Hampden had cut his throat, that he had survived his wound a few hours, that he had professed deep penitence for his sins, had requested the prayers of Burnet, and had sent a solemn warning to the Duchess of Mazarin. A coroner's jury found a verdict of insanity. The wretched man had entered on life with the

\* There is a highly curious account of this contest in the despatches of L'Hermitage.

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fairest prospects. He bore a name which was more than noble. He was heir to an ample estate, and to a patrimony much more precious, the confidence and attachment of hundreds of thousands of his countrymen. His own abilities were considerable, and had been carefully cultivated. Unhappily ambition and party spirit impelled him to place himself in a situation full of danger. To that danger his fortitude proved unequal. He stooped to supplications which saved him and dishonoured him. From that moment, he never knew peace of mind. His temper became perverse; and his understanding was perverted by his temper. He tried to find relief in devotion and in revenge, in fashionable dissipation and in political turmoil. But the dark shade never passed away from his mind, till, in the twelfth year of his humiliation, his unhappy life was terminated by an unhappy death.\*

The result of the general election proved that William had chosen a fortunate moment for dissolving. The number of new members was about a hundred and sixty; and most of these were known to be thoroughly well affected to the government.\*\*

Alarming  
state of  
the cur-  
rency.

It was of the highest importance that the House of Commons should, at that moment, be disposed to cooperate cordially with the King. For it was absolutely necessary to apply a remedy to an internal evil which had by slow degrees grown to a fearful magnitude. The silver coin, which was then the standard coin of the realm, was in a state at which the boldest and most enlightened statesmen stood aghast.\*\*\*

\* Postman, Dec. 15. 17. 1696; Vernon to Shrewsbury, Dec. 13. 15. Narcissus Luttrell's Diary; Burnet, i. 647; Saint Evremond's Verses to Hampden.

\*\* L'Hermitage, Nov. 13. 1695.

\*\*\* I have derived much valuable information on this subject from a MS. in the British Museum, Lansdowne Collection, No. 801. It is entitled Brief Memoires relating to the Silver and Gold Coins of England, with an Account of the Corruption of the Hammered Money, and of the Reform by the

Till the reign of Charles the Second our coin had been struck by a process as old as the thirteenth century. Edward the First had invited hither skilful artists from Florence, which, in his time, was to London what London, in the time of William the Third, was to Moscow. During many generations, the instruments which were then introduced into our mint continued to be employed with little alteration. The metal was divided with shears, and afterwards shaped and stamped by the hammer. In these operations much was left to the hand and eye of the workman. It necessarily happened that some pieces contained a little more and some a little less than the just quantity of silver: few pieces were exactly round; and the rims were not marked. It was therefore in the course of years discovered that to clip the coin was one of the easiest and most profitable kinds of fraud. In the reign of Elizabeth it had been thought necessary to enact that the clipper should be, as the coiner had long been, liable to the penalties of high treason.\* The practice of paring down money, however, was far too lucrative to be so checked; and, about the time of the Restoration, people began to observe that a large proportion of the crowns, halfcrowns and shillings which were passing from hand to hand had undergone some slight mutilation.

That was a time fruitful of experiments and inventions in all the departments of science. A great improvement in the mode of shaping and striking the coin was suggested. A mill, which to a great extent superseded the human hand, was set up in the Tower of London. This mill was worked by horses, and would doubtless be considered by modern engineers as a rude and feeble machine. The pieces which it produced, however, were among the best in Europe. It was not easy to counterfeit them;

late Grand Coinage at the Tower and the Country Mints, by Hopton Haynes, Assay Master of the Mint.

\* Stat. 5 Eliz. c. 11., and 18 Eliz. c. 1.

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and, as their shape was exactly circular, and their edges were inscribed with a legend, clipping was not to be apprehended.\* The hammered coins and the milled coins were current together. They were received without distinction in public, and consequently in private, payments. The financiers of that age seem to have expected that the new money, which was excellent, would soon displace the old money which was much impaired. Yet any man of plain understanding might have known that, when the State treats perfect coin and light coin as of equal value, the perfect coin will not drive the light coin out of circulation, but will itself be driven out. A clipped crown, on English ground, went as far in the payment of a tax or a debt as a milled crown. But the milled crown, as soon as it had been flung into the crucible or carried across the Channel, became much more valuable than the clipped crown. It might therefore have been predicted, as confidently as any thing can be predicted which depends on the human will, that the inferior pieces would remain in the only market in which they could fetch the same price as the superior pieces, and that the superior pieces would take some form or fly to some place in which some advantage could be derived from their superiority.\*\*

\* Pepys's Diary, November 23. 1663.

\*\* The first writer who noticed the fact that, where good money and bad money are thrown into circulation together, the bad money drives out the good money, was Aristophanes. He seems to have thought that the preference which his fellow citizens gave to light coins was to be attributed to a depraved taste, such as led them to entrust men like Cleon and Hyperbolus with the conduct of great affairs. But, though his political economy will not bear examination, his verses are excellent:—

*πολλάκις γ' ἡμῖν ἔδοξεν ἢ πόλις πεπονθέναι  
αὐτὸν ἐς τε τῶν πολιτῶν τοὺς καλοὺς τε κάγαθούς  
ἐς τε τὰ χαίρον νόμισμα καὶ τὸ καινὸν χρυσίον.  
οὔτε γὰρ τοῖσι οὖσιν οὐδ' κερβηλευμένοις  
ἀλλὰ καλλίστοις ἀπάντων, ὡς δοκεῖ, νομισμάτων,  
καὶ μόνοις ὁρθῶς κοπέσει, καὶ κερωδανισμένοις  
ἐν τε τοῖς Ἑλλήσι καὶ τοῖς βαρβάροισι πανταχοῦ,  
χρῶμεθ' οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ τοῖσι τοῖς πονηροῖς χαλκίοις,*

The politicians of that age, however, generally overlooked these very obvious considerations. They marvelled exceedingly that every body should be so perverse as to use light money in preference to good money. In other words, they marvelled that nobody chose to pay twelve ounces of silver when ten would serve the turn. The horse in the Tower still paced his rounds. Fresh waggon loads of choice money still came forth from the mill; and still they vanished as fast as they appeared. Great masses were melted down; great masses exported; great masses hoarded: but scarcely one new piece was to be found in the till of a shop, or in the leathern bag which the farmer carried home from the cattle fair. In the receipts and payments of the Exchequer the milled money did not exceed ten shillings in a hundred pounds. A writer of that age mentions the case of a merchant who, in a sum of thirty five pounds, received only a single halfcrown in milled silver. Meanwhile the shears of the clippers were constantly at work. The coiners too multiplied and prospered: for the worse the current money became the more easily it was imitated. During more than thirty years this evil had gone on increasing. At first it had been disregarded: but it had at length become an insupportable curse to the country. It was to no purpose that the rigorous laws against coining and clipping were rigorously executed. At every session that was held at the Old Bailey terrible examples were made. Hurdles, with four, five, six wretches convicted of counterfeiting or mutilating the money of the realm, were dragged month after month up Holborn Hill. On one morning seven men were hanged and a woman burned for clipping. But

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*χθής τε και πρόην λοιπείσι τῷ καίριστῳ κόμμεσι,  
τῶν πολιτῶν δ' οὐς μὲν ἴσμεν εὐγενεῖς και σώφρονας  
ἀνδρας ὄντας, και δικαίους, και καλοὺς τε κάγαθοὺς,  
και τραφέντας ἐν παλαιστραῖς και χοροῖς και μουσικῇ,  
προσελοῦμεν τοῖς δὲ γαλκοῖς, και ξένοις, και πηθρίαις,  
και πονηροῖς, και πονηρῶν, εἰς ἅπαντα χρώμεθα.*

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all was vain. The gains were such as to lawless spirits seemed more than proportioned to the risks. Some clippers were said to have made great fortunes. One in particular offered six thousand pounds for a pardon. His bribe was indeed rejected; but the fame of his riches did much to counteract the effect which the spectacle of his death was designed to produce.\* Nay the severity of the punishment gave encouragement to the crime. For the practice of clipping, pernicious as it was, did not excite in the common mind a detestation resembling that with which men regard murder, arson, robbery, nay, even theft. The injury done by the whole body of clippers to the whole society was indeed immense: but each particular act of clipping was a trifle. To pass a halfcrown, after paring a penny-worth of silver from it, seemed a minute, an almost imperceptible, fault. Even while the nation was crying out most loudly under the distress which the state of the currency had produced, every individual who was capitally punished for contributing to bring the currency into that state had the general sympathy on his side. Constables were unwilling to arrest the offenders. Justices were unwilling to commit. Witnesses were unwilling to tell the whole truth. Juries were unwilling to pronounce the word Guilty. It was vain to tell the common people that the mutilators of the coin were causing far more misery than all the highwaymen and housebreakers in the island. For, great as the aggregate of the evil was, only an infinitesimal part of that evil was brought home to the individual malefactor. There was, therefore, a general conspiracy to prevent the law from taking its course. The convictions, numerous as they might seem, were few indeed when compared with the offences; and the offenders who were convicted looked on themselves as

\* Narcissus Luttrell's Diary is filled with accounts of these executions. "Le métier de rogneur de monnoye," says L'Hermitage, "est si lucratif et paroit si facile que, quelque chose qu'on fasse pour les détruire, il s'en trouve toujours d'autres pour prendre leur place. Oct. 11. 1695."

murdered men, and were firm in the belief that their sin, if sin it were, was as venial as that of a schoolboy who goes nutting in the wood of a neighbour. All the eloquence of the ordinary could seldom induce them to conform to the wholesome usage of acknowledging in their dying speeches the enormity of their wickedness.\*

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The evil proceeded with constantly accelerating velocity. At length in the autumn of 1695 it could hardly be said that the country possessed, for practical purposes, any measure of the value of commodities. It was a mere chance whether what was called a shilling was really tenpence, sixpence or a groat. The results of some experiments which were tried at that time deserve to be mentioned. The officers of the Exchequer weighed fifty seven thousand two hundred pounds of hammered money which had recently been paid in. The weight ought to have been above two hundred and twenty thousand ounces. It proved to be under one hundred and fourteen thousand ounces.\*\* Three eminent London goldsmiths were invited to send a hundred pounds each in current silver to be tried by the balance.

\* As to the sympathy of the public with the clippers, see the very curious sermon which Fleetwood, afterwards Bishop of Ely, preached before the Lord Mayor in December 1694. Fleetwood says that "a soft pernicious tenderness slackened the care of magistrates, kept back the under officers, corrupted the juries, and withheld the evidence." He mentions the difficulty of convincing the criminals themselves that they had done wrong. See also a Sermon preached at York Castle by George Halley, a clergyman of the Cathedral, to some clippers who were to be hanged the next day. He mentions the impenitent ends which clippers generally made, and does his best to awaken the consciences of his hearers. He dwells on one aggravation of their crime which I should not have thought of. "If," says he, "the same question were to be put in this age, as of old, 'Whose is this image and superscription?' we could not answer the whole. We may guess at the image: but we cannot tell whose it is by the superscription: for that is all gone." The testimony of these two divines is confirmed by that of Tom Brown, who tells a facetious story, which I do not venture to quote, about a conversation between the ordinary of Newgate and a clipper.

\*\* Lowndes's Essay for the Amendment of the Silver Coins, 1695.

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1695. Three hundred pounds ought to have weighed about twelve hundred ounces. The actual weight proved to be six hundred and twenty four ounces. The same test was applied in various parts of the kingdom. It was found that a hundred pounds, which should have weighed about four hundred ounces, did actually weigh at Bristol two hundred and forty ounces, at Cambridge two hundred and three, at Exeter one hundred and eighty, and at Oxford only one hundred and sixteen.\* There were, indeed, some northern districts into which the clipped money had only begun to find its way. An honest Quaker, who lived in one of these districts, recorded, in some notes which are still extant, the amazement with which, when he travelled southward, shopkeepers and innkeepers stared at the broad and heavy halfcrowns with which he paid his way. They asked whence he came, and where such money was to be found. The guinea which he purchased for twenty two shillings at Lancaster bore a different value at every stage of his journey. When he reached London it was worth thirty shillings, and would indeed have been worth more had not the government fixed that rate as the highest at which gold should be received in the payment of taxes.\*\*

The evils produced by this state of the currency were not such as have generally been thought worthy to occupy a prominent place in history. Yet it may well be doubted whether all the misery which had been inflicted on the English nation in a quarter of a century by bad Kings, bad Ministers, bad Parliaments and bad Judges, was equal to the misery caused in a single year by bad crowns and bad shillings. Those events which furnish the best themes for pathetic or indignant eloquence are not always those which most affect the happiness of

\* L'Hermitage, Nov. 29.  
Dec. 9, 1695.

\*\* The Memoirs of this Lancashire Quaker were printed a few years ago in a most respectable newspaper, the Manchester Guardian.



the great body of the people. The misgovernment of Charles and James, gross as it had been, had not prevented the common business of life from going steadily and prosperously on. While the honour and independence of the State were sold to a foreign power, while chartered rights were invaded, while fundamental laws were violated, hundreds of thousands of quiet, honest and industrious families laboured and traded, ate their meals and lay down to rest, in comfort and security. Whether Whigs or Tories, Protestants or Jesuits were uppermost, the grazier drove his beasts to market: the grocer weighed out his currants: the draper measured out his broadcloth: the hum of buyers and sellers was as loud as ever in the towns: the harvest home was celebrated as joyously as ever in the hamlets: the cream overflowed the pails of Cheshire: the apple juice foamed in the presses of Herefordshire: the piles of crockery glowed in the furnaces of the Trent; and the barrows of coal rolled fast along the timber railways of the Tyne. But when the great instrument of exchange became thoroughly deranged, all trade, all industry, were smitten as with a palsy. The evil was felt daily and hourly in almost every place and by almost every class, in the dairy and on the threshing floor, by the anvil and by the loom, on the billows of the ocean and in the depths of the mine. Nothing could be purchased without a dispute. Over every counter there was wrangling from morning to night. The workman and his employer had a quarrel as regularly as the Saturday came round. On a fair day or a market day the clamours, the reproaches, the taunts, the curses, were incessant; and it was well if no booth was overturned and no head broken.\* No merchant would contract to deliver goods without making some stipulation about the quality of the coin in which he was to be paid. Even men of business were often bewildered by the confusion into which all pecuniary transactions were thrown. The

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\* Lowndes's Essay.

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simple and the careless were pillaged without mercy by extortioners whose demands grew even more rapidly than the money shrank. The price of the necessaries of life, of shoes, of ale, of oatmeal, rose fast. The labourer found that the bit of metal which when he received it was called a shilling would hardly, when he wanted to purchase a pot of beer or a loaf of rye bread, go as far as sixpence. Where artisans of more than usual intelligence were collected together in great numbers, as in the dockyard at Chatham, they were able to make their complaints heard and to obtain some redress.\* But the ignorant and helpless peasant was cruelly ground between one class which would give money only by tale and another which would take it only by weight. Yet his sufferings hardly exceeded those of the unfortunate race of authors. Of the way in which obscure writers were treated we may easily form a judgment from the letters, still extant, of Dryden to his bookseller Tonson. One day Tonson sends forty brass shillings, to say nothing of clipped money. Another day he pays a debt with pieces so bad that none of them will go. The great poet sends them all back, and demands in their place guineas at twenty nine shillings each. "I expect," he says in one letter, "good silver, not such as I have had formerly." "If you have any silver that will go," he says in another letter, "my wife will be glad of it. I lost thirty shillings or more by the last payment of fifty pounds." These complaints and demands, which have been preserved from destruction only by the eminence of the writer, are doubtless merely a fair sample of the correspondence which filled all the mail bags of England during several months.

In the midst of the public distress one class prospered greatly, the bankers; and among the bankers none could in skill or in luck bear a comparison with Charles Duncombe. He

\* L'Hermitage, Dec. 24. 1695.  
Jan. 3.

had been, not many years before, a goldsmith of very moderate wealth. He had probably, after the fashion of his craft, plied for customers under the arcades of the Royal Exchange, had saluted merchants with profound bows, and had begged to be allowed the honour of keeping their cash. But so dexterously did he now avail himself of the opportunities of profit which the general confusion of prices gave to a moneychanger, that, at the moment when the trade of the kingdom was depressed to the lowest point, he laid down near ninety thousand pounds for the estate of Helmsley in the North Riding of Yorkshire. That great property had, in a troubled time, been bestowed by the Commons of England on their victorious general Fairfax, and had been part of the dower which Fairfax's daughter had brought to the brilliant and dissolute Buckingham. Thither Buckingham, having wasted in mad intemperance, sensual and intellectual, all the choicest bounties of nature and of fortune, had carried the feeble ruins of his fine person and of his fine mind; and there he had closed his chequered life under that humble roof and on that coarse pallet which the great satirist of the succeeding generation described in immortal verse. The spacious domain passed to a new race; and in a few years a palace more splendid and costly than had ever been inhabited by the magnificent Villiers rose amidst the beautiful woods and waters which had been his, and was called by the once humble name of Duncombe.

Since the Revolution the state of the currency had been repeatedly discussed in Parliament. In 1689 a committee of the Commons had been appointed to investigate the subject, but had made no report. In 1690 another committee had reported that immense quantities of silver were carried out of the country by Jews, who, it was said, would do any thing for profit. Schemes were formed for encouraging the importation and discouraging the exportation of the precious metals. One foolish

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bill after another was brought in and dropped. At length, in the beginning of the year 1695, the question assumed so serious an aspect that the Houses applied themselves to it in earnest. The only practical result of their deliberations, however, was a new penal law which, it was hoped, would prevent the clipping of the hammered coin and the melting and exporting of the milled coin. It was enacted that every person who informed against a clipper should be entitled to a reward of forty pounds, that every clipper who informed against two clippers should be entitled to a pardon, and that whoever should be found in possession of silver filings or parings should be burned in the cheek with a redhot iron. Certain officers were empowered to search for bullion. If bullion were found in a house or on board of a ship, the burden of proving that it had never been part of the money of the realm was thrown on the owner. If he failed in making out a satisfactory history of every ingot he was liable to severe penalties. This Act was, as might have been expected, altogether ineffective. During the following summer and autumn, the coins went on dwindling, and the cry of distress from every county in the realm became louder and more piercing.

But happily for England there were among her rulers some who clearly perceived that it was not by halts and branding irons that her decaying industry and commerce could be restored to health. The state of the currency had during some time occupied the serious attention of four eminent men closely connected by public and private ties. Two of them were politicians who had never, in the midst of official and parliamentary business, ceased to love and honour philosophy; and two were philosophers, in whom habits of abstruse meditation had not impaired the homely good sense without which even genius is mischievous in politics. Never had there been an occasion which more urgently required both practical and speculative abilities; and never had the world seen the highest practical

and the highest speculative abilities united in an alliance so close, so harmonious, and so honourable as that which bound Somers and Montague to Locke and Newton.

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It is much to be lamented that we have not a minute history of the conferences of the men to whom England owed the restoration of her currency and the long series of prosperous years which dates from that restoration. It would be interesting to see how the pure gold of scientific truth found by the two philosophers was mingled by the two statesmen with just that quantity of alloy which was necessary for the working. It would be curious to study the many plans which were propounded, discussed and rejected, some as inefficacious, some as unjust, some as too costly, some as too hazardous, till at length a plan was devised of which the wisdom was proved by the best evidence, complete success.

Newton has left to posterity no exposition of his opinions touching the currency. But the tracts of Locke on this subject are happily still extant; and it may be doubted whether in any of his writings, even in those ingenious and deeply meditated chapters on language which form perhaps the most valuable part of the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, the force of his mind appears more conspicuously. Whether he had ever been acquainted with Dudley North is not known. In moral character the two men bore little resemblance to each other. They belonged to different parties. Indeed, had not Locke taken shelter from tyranny in Holland, it is by no means impossible that he might have been sent to Tyburn by a jury which Dudley North had packed. Intellectually, however, there was much in common between the Tory and the Whig. They had laboriously thought out, each for himself, a theory of political economy, substantially the same with that which Adam Smith afterwards expounded. Nay, in some respects the theory of Locke and North was more complete and symmetrical than that of their

CHAP. illustrious successor. Adam Smith has often been justly blamed  
 XXI. for maintaining, in direct opposition to all his own principles,  
 1695. that the rate of interest ought to be regulated by the State; and he is the more blamable because, long before he was born, both Locke and North had taught that it was as absurd to make laws fixing the price of money as to make laws fixing the price of cutlery or of broadcloth.\*

Dudley North died in 1693. A short time before his death he published, without his name, a small tract which contains a concise sketch of a plan for the restoration of the currency. This plan appears to have been substantially the same with that which was afterwards fully developed and ably defended by Locke.

One question, which was doubtless the subject of many anxious deliberations, was whether any thing should be done while the war lasted. In whatever way the restoration of the coin might be effected, great sacrifices must be made, either by the whole community or by a part of the community. And to call for such sacrifices at a time when the nation was already paying taxes such as, ten years before, no financier would have thought it possible to raise, was undoubtedly a course full of danger. Timorous politicians were for delay: but the deliberate conviction of the great Whig leaders was that something must be hazarded, or that every thing was lost. Montague, in particular, is said to have expressed in strong language his determination to kill or cure. If indeed there had been any hope that the evil would merely continue to be what it was, it might have been wise to defer till the return of peace an experiment which must severely try the strength of the body politic. But the evil was one which daily made progress almost visible to the eye.

\* It ought always to be remembered, to Adam Smith's honour, that he was entirely converted by Bentham's Defence of Usury, and acknowledged, with candour worthy of a true philosopher, that the doctrine laid down in the Wealth of Nations was erroneous.

There might have been a recoinage in 1694 with half the risk which must be run in 1696; and, great as would be the risk in 1696, that risk would be doubled if the recoinage were postponed till 1698.

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Those politicians whose voice was for delay gave less trouble than another set of politicians, who were for a general and immediate recoinage, but who insisted that the new shilling should be worth only ninepence or ninepence halfpenny. At the head of this party was William Lowndes, Secretary of the Treasury, and member of Parliament for the borough of Seaford, a most respectable and industrious public servant, but much more versed in the details of his office than in the higher parts of political philosophy. He was not in the least aware that a piece of metal with the King's head on it was a commodity of which the price was governed by the same laws which govern the price of a piece of metal fashioned into a spoon or a buckle, and that it was no more in the power of Parliament to make the kingdom richer by calling a crown a pound than to make the kingdom larger by calling a furlong a mile. He seriously believed, incredible as it may seem, that, if the ounce of silver were divided into seven shillings instead of five, foreign nations would sell us their wines and their silks for a smaller number of ounces. He had a considerable following, composed partly of dull men who really believed what he told them, and partly of shrewd men who were perfectly willing to be authorised by law to pay a hundred pounds with eighty. Had his arguments prevailed, the evils of a vast confiscation would have been added to all the other evils which afflicted the nation: public credit, still in its tender and sickly infancy, would have been destroyed; and there would have been much risk of a general mutiny of the fleet and army. Happily Lowndes was completely refuted by Locke in a paper drawn up for the use of Somers. Somers was delighted with this little treatise, and desired that it might be

CHAP. printed. It speedily became the text book of all the most en-  
 XXI. lightened politicians in the kingdom, and may still be read with  
 1695. pleasure and profit. The effect of Locke's forcible and perspi-  
 cacious reasoning is greatly heightened by his evident anxiety to  
 get at the truth, and by the singularly generous and graceful  
 courtesy with which he treats an antagonist of powers far in-  
 ferior to his own. Flamsteed, the Astronomer Royal, described  
 the controversy well by saying that the point in dispute was  
 whether five was six or only five.\*

Thus far Somers and Montague entirely agreed with Locke: but as to the manner in which the restoration of the currency ought to be effected there was some difference of opinion. Locke recommended, as Dudley North had recommended, that the King should by proclamation fix a near day after which the hammered money should in all payments pass only by weight. The advantages of this plan were doubtless great and obvious. It was most simple, and, at the same time, most efficient. What searching, fining, branding, hanging, burning, had failed to do would be done in an instant. The clipping of the hammered pieces, the melting of the milled pieces would cease. Great quantities of good coin would come forth from secret drawers and from behind the panels of wainscots. The mutilated silver would gradually flow into the mint, and would come forth again in a form which would make mutilation impossible. In a short time the whole currency of the realm would be in a sound state, and, during the progress of this great change, there would never at any moment be any scarcity of money.

These were weighty considerations; and to the joint authority of North and Locke on such a question great respect is due. Yet it must be owned that their plan was open to one

\* Lowndes's Essay for the Amendment of the Silver Coins; Locke's Further Considerations concerning raising the Value of Money; Locke to Molyneux, Nov. 20. 1695; Molyneux to Locke, Dec. 24. 1695.



serious objection, which did not indeed altogether escape their notice, but of which they seem to have thought too lightly. The restoration of the currency was a benefit to the whole community. On what principle then was the expense of restoring the currency to be borne by a part of the community? It was most desirable doubtless that the words pound and shilling should again have a fixed signification, that every man should know what his contracts meant and what his property was worth. But was it just to attain this excellent end by means of which the effect would be that every farmer who had put by a hundred pounds to pay his rent, every trader who had scraped together a hundred pounds to meet his acceptances, would find his hundred pounds reduced in a moment to fifty or sixty? It was not the fault of such a farmer or of such a trader that his crowns and halfcrowns were not of full weight. The government itself was to blame. The evil which the State had caused the State was bound to repair; and it would evidently have been wrong to throw the charge of the reparation on a particular class, merely because that class was so situated that it could conveniently be pillaged. It would have been as reasonable to require the timber merchants to bear the whole cost of fitting out the Channel fleet, or the gunsmiths to bear the whole cost of supplying arms to the regiments in Flanders, as to restore the currency of the kingdom at the expense of those individuals in whose hands the clipped silver happened at a particular moment to be.

Locke declared that he regretted the loss which, if his advice were taken, would fall on the holders of the short money. But it appeared to him that the nation must make a choice between evils. And in truth it was much easier to lay down the general proposition that the expenses of restoring the currency ought to be borne by the public than to devise any mode in which they could without extreme inconvenience and danger be

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so borne. Was it to be announced that every person who should within a term of a year or half a year carry to the mint a clipped crown should receive in exchange for it a milled crown, and that the difference between the value of the two pieces should be made good out of the public purse? That would be to offer a premium for clipping. The shears would be more busy than ever. The short money would every day become shorter. The difference which the taxpayers would have to make good would probably be greater by a million at the end of the term than at the beginning: and the whole of this million would go to reward malefactors. If the time allowed for the bringing in of the hammered coin were much shortened, the danger of further clipping would be proportionally diminished; but another danger would be incurred. The silver would flow into the mint so much faster than it could possibly flow out, that there must during some months be a grievous scarcity of money.

A singularly bold and ingenious expedient occurred to Somers and was approved by William. It was that a proclamation should be prepared with great secrecy, and published at once in all parts of the kingdom. This proclamation was to announce that hammered coins would thenceforth pass only by weight. But every possessor of such coins was to be invited to deliver them up within three days, in a sealed packet, to the public authorities. The coins were to be examined, numbered, weighed, and returned to the owner with a promissory note entitling him to receive from the Treasury at a future time the difference between the actual quantity of silver in his pieces and the quantity of silver which, according to the standard, those pieces ought to have contained.\* Had this plan been adopted an immediate stop would have been put to the clipping, the melting and the exporting; and the expense of the restoration

\* Burnet, ii. 147.

of the currency would have been borne, as was right, by the public. The inconvenience arising from a scarcity of money would have been of very short duration: for the mutilated pieces would have been detained only till they could be told and weighed: they would then have been sent back into circulation, and the recoinage would have taken place gradually and without any perceptible suspension or disturbance of trade. But against these great advantages were to be set off hazards, which Somers was prepared to brave, but from which it is not strange that politicians of less elevated character should have shrunk. The course which he recommended to his colleagues was indeed the safest for the country, but was by no means the safest for themselves. His plan could not be successful unless the execution were sudden: the execution could not be sudden if the previous sanction of Parliament were asked and obtained; and to take a step of such fearful importance without the previous sanction of Parliament was to run the risk of censure, impeachment, imprisonment, ruin. The King and the Lord Keeper were alone in the Council. Even Montague quailed; and it was determined to do nothing without the authority of the legislature. Montague undertook to submit to the Commons a scheme, which was not indeed without dangers and inconveniences, but which was probably the best which he could hope to carry.

On the twenty-second of November the Houses met. Foley was on that day again chosen Speaker. On the following day he was presented and approved. The King opened the session with a speech very skilfully framed. He congratulated his hearers on the success of the campaign on the Continent. That success he attributed, in language which must have gratified their feelings, to the bravery of the English army. He spoke of the evils which had arisen from the deplorable state of the coin, and of the necessity of applying a speedy remedy. He intimated very

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Meeting  
of the  
Parliament:  
loyalty of  
the House  
of Commons.

CHAP. plainly his opinion that the expense of restoring the currency  
 XXI. ought to be borne by the State: but he declared that he re-  
 1695. ferred the whole matter to the wisdom of his Great Council.  
 Before he concluded he addressed himself particularly to the  
 newly elected House of Commons, and warmly expressed his  
 approbation of the excellent choice which his people had made.  
 The speech was received with a low but very significant hum  
 of assent both from above and from below the bar, and was as  
 favourably received by the public as by the Parliament.\* In  
 the Commons an address of thanks was moved by Wharton,  
 faintly opposed by Musgrave, adopted without a division, and  
 carried up by the whole House to Kensington. At the palace  
 the loyalty of the crowd of gentlemen showed itself in a way  
 which would now be thought hardly consistent with senatorial  
 gravity. When refreshments were handed round in the ante-  
 chamber, the Speaker filled his glass, and proposed two toasts,  
 the health of King William, and confusion to King Lewis; and  
 both were drunk with loud acclamations. Yet near observers  
 could perceive that, though the representatives of the nation  
 were as a body zealous for civil liberty and for the Protestant  
 religion, and though they were prepared to endure every thing  
 rather than see their country again reduced to vassalage, they  
 were anxious and dispirited. All were thinking of the state of  
 the coin: all were saying that something must be done; and all  
 acknowledged that they did not know what could be done.  
 "I am afraid," said a member who expressed what many felt,  
 "that the nation can bear neither the disease nor the cure."\*\*

There was indeed a minority by which the difficulties and  
 dangers of that crisis were seen with malignant delight; and of

\* Commons' Journals, Nov. 22, 23, 26. 1695; L'Hermitage,  $\frac{\text{Nov. 26.}}{\text{Dec. 6.}}$

\*\* Commons' Journals, Nov. 26, 27, 28, 29. 1695; L'Hermitage,  $\frac{\text{Nov. 26.}}{\text{Dec. 6.}}$

$\frac{\text{Nov. 29.}}{\text{Dec. 9.}}$ ,  $\frac{\text{Dec. 3.}}{13.}$

that minority the keenest, boldest and most factious leader was Howe, whom poverty had made more acrimonious than ever. He moved that the House should resolve itself into a Committee on the State of the Nation; and the Ministry, — for that word may now with propriety be used, — readily consented. Indeed the great question touching the currency could not be brought forward more conveniently than in such a Committee. When the Speaker had left the chair, Howe harangued against the war as vehemently as he had in former years harangued for it. He called for peace, peace on any terms. The nation, he said, resembled a wounded man, fighting desperately on, with blood flowing in torrents. During a short time the spirit might bear up the frame: but faintness must soon come on. No moral energy could long hold out against physical exhaustion. He found very little support. The great majority of his hearers were fully determined to put every thing to hazard rather than submit to France. It was sneeringly remarked that the state of his own finances had suggested to him the image of a man bleeding to death, and that, if a cordial were administered to him in the form of a salary, he would trouble himself little about the drained veins of the commonwealth. "We did not," said the Whig orators, "degrade ourselves by suing for peace when our flag was chased out of our own Channel, when Tourville's fleet lay at anchor in Torbay, when the Irish nation was in arms against us, when every post from the Netherlands brought news of some disaster, when we had to contend against the genius of Louvois in the Cabinet and of Luxemburg in the field. And are we to turn suppliants now, when no hostile squadron dares to show itself even in the Mediterranean, when our arms are victorious on the Continent, when God has removed the great statesman and the great soldier whose abilities long frustrated our efforts, and when the weakness of the French administration indicates, in a manner not to be mis-

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CHAP. taken, the ascendancy of a female favourite?" Howe's sugges-  
 XXI. tion was contemptuously rejected; and the Committee pro-  
 1695. ceeded to take into consideration the state of the currency.\*

Contro-  
 versy  
 touching  
 the cur-  
 rency.

Meanwhile the newly liberated presses of the capital never rested a moment. Innumerable pamphlets and broadsides about the coin lay on the counters of the booksellers, and were thrust into the hands of members of Parliament in the lobby. In one of the most curious and amusing of these pieces Lewis and his ministers are introduced, expressing the greatest alarm lest England should make herself the richest country in the world by the simple expedient of calling ninepence a shilling, and confidently predicting that, if the old standard were maintained, there would be another revolution. Some writers vehemently objected to the proposition that the public should bear the expense of restoring the currency: some urged the government to take this opportunity of assimilating the money of England to the money of neighbouring nations: one projector was for coining guilders; another for coining dollars.\*\*

Parlia-  
 mentary  
 proceed-  
 ings  
 touching  
 the cur-  
 rency.

Within the walls of Parliament the debates continued during several anxious days. At length Montague, after defeating, first those who were for letting things remain unaltered till the peace, and then those who were for the little shilling, carried eleven resolutions in which the outlines of his own plan were set

\* Commons' Journals, Nov. 28, 29. 1695; L'Hermitage, Dec.  $\frac{1}{3}$ .

\*\* L'Hermitage, Nov. 22.  
 Dec. 2., Dec.  $\frac{1}{6}$ . 1695; An Abstract of the Consul-  
 tations and Debates between the French King and his Council concerning the new Coin that is intended to be made in England, privately sent by a Friend of the Confederates from the French Court to his Brother at Brussels, Dec. 12. 1695; A Discourse of the General Notions of Money, Trade and Exchanges, by Mr. Clement of Bristol; A Letter from an English Merchant at Amsterdam to his Friend in London; A Fund for preserving and supplying our Coin; An Essay for regulating the Coin, by A. V.; A Proposal for supplying His Majesty with 1,200,000*l.*, by mending the Coin, and yet preserving the ancient Standard of the Kingdom. These are a few of the tracts which were distributed among members of Parliament at this conjuncture.

forth. It was resolved that the money of the kingdom should be recoined according to the old standard both of weight and of fineness; that all the new pieces should be milled; that the loss on the clipped pieces should be borne by the public; that a time should be fixed after which no clipped money should pass, except in payments to the government; and that a later time should be fixed, after which no clipped money should pass at all. What divisions took place in the Committee cannot be ascertained. When the resolutions were reported there was one division. It was on the question whether the old standard of weight should be maintained. The Noes were a hundred and fourteen; the Ayes two hundred and twenty five.\*

It was ordered that a bill founded on the resolutions should be brought in. A few days later the Chancellor of the Exchequer explained to the Commons, in a Committee of Ways and Means, the plan by which he proposed to meet the expense of the recoinage. It was impossible to estimate with precision the charge of making good the deficiencies of the clipped money. But it was certain that at least twelve hundred thousand pounds would be required. Twelve hundred thousand pounds the Bank of England undertook to advance on good security. It was a maxim received among financiers that no security which the government could offer was so good as the old hearth money had been. That tax, odious as it was to the great majority of those who paid it, was remembered with regret at the Treasury and in the City. It occurred to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it might be possible to devise an impost on houses, which might be not less productive nor less certain than the hearth money, but which might press less heavily on the poor, and might be collected by a less vexatious process. The number of hearths in a house could not be ascertained without domiciliary visits. The windows a collector might count without

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\* Commons' Journals, Dec. 10. 1695; L'Hermitage, Dec.  $\frac{7}{13}$ ,  $\frac{6}{16}$ ,  $\frac{10}{16}$ .

CHAP. passing the threshold. Montague proposed that the inhabitants  
XXI. of cottages, who had been cruelly harassed by the chimney  
1695. men, should be altogether exempted from the new duty. His  
plan was approved by the Committee of Ways and Means, and  
was sanctioned by the House without a division. Such was the  
origin of the window tax, a tax which, though doubtless a  
great evil, must be considered as a blessing when compared  
with the curse from which it rescued the nation.\*

Thus far things had gone smoothly. But now came a crisis  
which required the most skilful steering. The news that the  
Parliament and the government were determined on a reform of  
the currency produced an ignorant panic among the common  
people. Every man wished to get rid of his clipped crowns and  
halfcrowns. No man liked to take them. There were brawls  
approaching to riots in half the streets of London. The Jaco-  
bites, always full of joy and hope in a day of adversity and pub-  
lic danger, ran about with eager looks and noisy tongues. The  
health of King James was publicly drunk in taverns and on ale  
benches. Many members of Parliament, who had hitherto sup-  
ported the government, began to waver; and, that nothing  
might be wanting to the difficulties of the conjuncture, a dispute  
on a point of privilege arose between the Houses. The Recoinage  
Bill, framed in conformity with Montague's resolutions, had  
gone up to the Peers and had come back with amendments,  
some of which, in the opinion of the Commons, their Lordships  
had no right to make. The emergency was too serious to admit  
of delay. Montague brought in a new bill, which was in fact  
his former bill modified in some points to meet the wishes of the  
Lords: the Lords, though not perfectly contented with the new  
bill, passed it without any alteration; and the royal assent was  
immediately given. The fourth of May, a date long remembered  
over the whole kingdom and especially in the capital, was fixed

\* Commons' Journals, Dec. 13. 1695.



as the day on which the government would cease to receive the clipped money in payment of taxes.\*

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The principles of the Recoinage Act are excellent. But some of the details, both of that Act and of a supplementary Act which was passed at a later period of the session, seem to prove that Montague had not fully considered what legislation can, and what it cannot, effect. For example, he persuaded the Parliament to enact that it should be penal to give or take more than twenty two shillings for a guinea. It may be confidently affirmed that this enactment was not suggested or approved by Locke. He well knew that the high price of gold was not the evil which afflicted the State, but merely a symptom of that evil, and that a fall in the price of gold would inevitably follow, and could by no human power or ingenuity be made to precede, the recoinage of the silver. In fact, the penalty seems to have produced no effect whatever, good or bad. Till the milled silver was in circulation, the guinea continued, in spite of the law, to pass for thirty shillings. When the milled silver became plentiful, the guinea fell, not to twenty two shillings, which was the highest price allowed by the law, but to twenty one shillings and sixpence.\*\*

\* Stat. 7 Gul. 3. c. 1.; Lords' and Commons' Journals; L'Hermitage Dec. 31.  
Jan. 10. Jan. 17. 19. 24. 1696. L'Hermitage describes in strong language the extreme inconvenience caused by the dispute between the Houses: — "La longueur qu'il y a dans cette affaire est d'autant plus désagréable qu'il n'y a point de sujet sur lequel le peuple en général puisse souffrir plus d'incommodité, puisqu'il n'y a personne qui, à tous moments, n'aye occasion de l'esprouver."

\*\* That Locke was not a party to the attempt to make gold cheaper by penal laws, I infer from a passage in which he notices Lowndes's complaints about the high price of guineas. "The only remedy," says Locke, "for that mischief, as well as a great many others, is the putting an end to the passing of clipped money by tale." — Locke's Further Considerations. That the penalty proved, as might have been expected, inefficient, appears from several passages in the despatches of L'Hermitage, and even from Haynes's Brief Memoires, though Haynes was a devoted adherent of Montague.

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Early in February the panic which had been caused by the first debates on the currency subsided; and, from that time till the fourth of May, the want of money was not very severely felt. The recoinage began. The furnaces were erected in the garden behind the Treasury; and every day huge heaps of pared and defaced crowns and shillings were turned into massy ingots which were instantly sent off to the mint in the Tower.\*

Passing  
of the  
Act regu-  
lating  
Trials in  
cases of  
High  
Treason.

With the fate of the law which restored the currency was closely connected the fate of another law, which had been several years under the consideration of Parliament, and had caused several warm disputes between the hereditary and the elective branch of the legislature. The session had scarcely commenced when the Bill for regulating Trials in cases of High Treason was again laid on the table of the Commons. Of the debates to which it gave occasion nothing is known except one interesting circumstance which has been preserved by tradition. Among those who supported the bill appeared conspicuous a young Whig of high rank, of ample fortune, and of great abilities which had been assiduously improved by study. This was Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Ashley, eldest son of the second Earl of Shaftesbury, and grandson of that renowned politician who had, in the days of Charles the Second, been at one time the most unprincipled of ministers, and at another the most unprincipled of demagogues. Ashley had just been returned to Parliament for the borough of Poole, and was in his twenty-fifth year. In the course of his speech he faltered, stammered and seemed to lose the thread of his reasoning. The House, then, as now, indulgent to novices, and then, as now, well aware that, on a first appearance, the hesitation which is the effect of modesty and sensibility is quite as promising a sign as volubility of utterance and ease of manner, encouraged him to proceed. "How can I, Sir," said the young orator, recovering

\* L'Hermitage, Jan. 14. 1696.

himself, "produce a stronger argument in favour of this bill than my own failure? My fortune, my character, my life, are not at stake. I am speaking to an audience whose kindness might well inspire me with courage. And yet, from mere nervousness, from mere want of practice in addressing large assemblies, I have lost my recollection: I am unable to go on with my argument. How helpless, then, must be a poor man who, never having opened his lips in public, is called upon to reply, without a moment's preparation, to the ablest and most experienced advocates in the kingdom, and whose faculties are paralysed by the thought that, if he fails to convince his hearers, he will in a few hours die on a gallows, and leave beggary and infamy to those who are dearest to him." It may reasonably be suspected that Ashley's confusion and the ingenious use which he made of it had been carefully premeditated. His speech, however, made a great impression, and probably raised expectations which were not fulfilled. His health was delicate: his taste was refined even to fastidiousness: he soon left politics to men whose bodies and minds were of coarser texture than his own, gave himself up to mere intellectual luxury, lost himself in the mazes of the old Academic philosophy, and aspired to the glory of reviving the old Academic eloquence. His diction, affected and florid, but often singularly beautiful and melodious, fascinated many young enthusiasts. He had not merely disciples, but worshippers. His life was short: but he lived long enough to become the founder of a new sect of English freethinkers, diametrically opposed in opinions and feelings to that sect of freethinkers of which Hobbes was the oracle. During many years the Characteristics continued to be the Gospel of romantic and sentimental unbelievers, while the Gospel of coldblooded and hardheaded unbelievers was the Leviathan.

The bill, so often brought in and so often lost, went through

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the Commons without a division, and was carried up to the Lords. It soon came back with the long disputed clause altering the constitution of the Court of the Lord High Steward. A strong party among the representatives of the people was still unwilling to grant any new privilege to the nobility: but the moment was critical. The misunderstanding which had arisen between the Houses touching the Recoinage Bill had produced inconveniences which might well alarm even a bold politician. It was necessary to purchase concession by concession. The Commons, by a hundred and ninety two votes to a hundred and fifty, agreed to the amendment on which the Lords had, during four years, so obstinately insisted; and the Lords in return immediately passed the Recoinage Bill without any amendment.

There had been much contention as to the time at which the new system of procedure in cases of high treason should come into operation; and the bill had once been lost in consequence of a dispute on this point. Many persons were of opinion that the change ought not to take place till the close of the war. It was notorious, they said, that the foreign enemy was abetted by too many traitors at home; and, at such a time, the severity of the laws which protected the commonwealth against the machinations of bad citizens ought not to be relaxed. It was at last determined that the new regulations should take effect on the twenty-fifth of March, the first day, according to the old Calendar, of the year 1696.

Parliamentary proceedings touching the grant of Crown lands in Wales to Portland.

On the twenty-first of January the Recoinage Bill and the Bill for regulating Trials in cases of High Treason received the royal assent. On the following day the Commons repaired to Kensington on an errand by no means agreeable either to themselves or to the King. They were, as a body, fully resolved to support him, at whatever cost and at whatever hazard, against every foreign and domestic foe. But they were, as indeed every

assembly of five hundred and thirteen English gentlemen that could by any process have been brought together must have been, jealous of the favour which he showed to the friends of his youth. He had set his heart on placing the house of Bentinck on a level in wealth and splendour with the houses of Howard and Seymour, of Russell and Cavendish. Some of the fairest hereditary domains of the Crown had been granted to Portland, not without murmuring on the part both of Whigs and Tories. Nothing had been done, it is true, which was not in conformity with the letter of the law and with a long series of precedents. Every English sovereign had from time immemorial considered the lands to which he had succeeded in virtue of his office as his private property. Every family that had been great in England, from the De Veres down to the Hydes, had been enriched by royal deeds of gift. Charles Second had carved ducal estates for his bastards out of his hereditary domain. Nor did the Bill of Rights contain a word which could be construed to mean that the King was not at perfect liberty to alienate any part of the estates of the Crown. At first, therefore, William's liberality to his countrymen, though it caused much discontent, called forth no remonstrance from the Parliament. But he at length went too far. In 1695 he ordered the Lords of the Treasury to make out a warrant granting to Portland a magnificent estate in Denbighshire. This estate was said to be worth more than a hundred thousand pounds. The annual income, therefore, can hardly have been less than six thousand pounds; and the annual rent which was reserved to the Crown was only six and eightpence. This, however, was not the worst. With the property were inseparably connected extensive royalties, which the people of North Wales could not patiently see in the hands of any subject. More than a century before Elizabeth had bestowed a part of the same territory on her favourite Leicester. On that occasion the population of Denbighshire had

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CHAP. risen in arms; and, after much tumult and several executions,  
 XXI. Leicester had thought it advisable to resign his mistress's gift  
 1696. back to her. The opposition to Portland was less violent, but  
 not less effective. Some of the chief gentlemen of the princi-  
 pality made strong representations to the ministers through  
 whose offices the warrant had to pass, and at length brought  
 the subject under the consideration of the Lower House. An  
 address was unanimously voted requesting the King to stop the  
 grant: Portland begged that he might not be the cause of a  
 dispute between his master and the Parliament; and the King,  
 though much mortified, yielded to the general wish of the  
 nation.\*

This unfortunate affair, though it terminated without an  
 open quarrel, left much sore feeling. The King was angry  
 with the Commons, and still more angry with the Whig ministers  
 who had not ventured to defend his grant. The loyal affection  
 which the Parliament had testified to him during the first days of  
 the session had perceptibly cooled: and he was almost as unpop-  
 ular as he had ever been, when an event took place which  
 suddenly brought back to him the hearts of millions, and made  
 him for a time as much the idol of the nation as he had been at  
 the end of 1688.\*\*

Two Ja-  
 cobite  
 plots  
 formed.

The plan of assassination which had been formed in the  
 preceding spring had been given up in consequence of William's  
 departure for the Continent. The plan of insurrection which

\* Commons' Journals, Jan. 14. 17. 23. 1696; L'Hermitage, Jan. 14: Gloria Cambriæ, or Speech of a Bold Briton against a Dutch Prince of Wales, 1702; Life of the late Honourable Robert Price, &c. 1734. Price was the bold Briton whose speech — never, I believe, spoken — was printed in 1702. He would have better deserved to be called bold, if he had published his impertinence while William was living. The Life of Price is a miserable performance, full of blunders and anachronisms.

\*\* L'Hermitage mentions the unfavourable change in the temper of the Commons; and William alludes to it repeatedly in his letters to Heinsius, Jan. 31. 1696, <sup>Jan. 28.</sup> Feb. 7.

had been formed in the summer had been given up for want of help from France. But before the end of the autumn both plans were resumed. William had returned to England; and the possibility of getting rid of him by a lucky shot or stab was again seriously discussed. The French troops had gone into winter quarters; and the force, which Charnock had in vain demanded while war was raging round Namur, might now be spared without inconvenience. Now, therefore, a plot was laid, more formidable than any that had yet threatened the throne and the life of William: or rather, as has more than once happened in our history, two plots were laid, one within the other. The object of the greater plot was an open insurrection, an insurrection which was to be supported by a foreign army. In this plot almost all the Jacobites of note were more or less concerned. Some laid in arms: some bought horses: some made lists of the servants and tenants in whom they could place firm reliance. The less warlike members of the party could at least take off bumpers to the King over the water, and intimate by significant shrugs and whispers that he would not be over the water long. It was universally remarked that the malecontents looked wiser than usual when they were sober, and bragged more loudly than usual when they were drunk.\* To the smaller plot, of which the object was the murder of William, only a few select traitors were privy.

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Each of these plots was under the direction of a leader specially sent from Saint Germain. The more honourable mission was entrusted to Berwick. He was charged to communicate with the Jacobite nobility and gentry, to ascertain what force they could bring into the field, and to fix a time for the rising. He was authorised to assure them that the French government

Berwick's  
plot.

\* The gaiety of the Jacobites is said by Van Cleverskirke to have been noticed during some time; Feb. 25. 1696. March 6.

CHAP. was collecting troops and transports at Calais, and that, as soon  
 XXI. as it was known there that a rebellion had broken out in Eng-  
 1696. land, his father would embark with twelve thousand veteran  
 soldiers, and would be among them in a few hours.

The As-  
 sassina-  
 tion Plot.  
 Sir  
 George  
 Barclay.

A more hazardous part was assigned to an emissary of lower rank, but of great address, activity and courage. This was Sir George Barclay, a Scotch gentleman who had served with credit under Dundee, and who, when the war in the Highlands had ended, had retired to Saint Germain's. Barclay was called into the royal closet, and received his orders from the royal lips. He was directed to steal across the Channel and to repair to London. He was told that a few select officers and soldiers should speedily follow him by twos and threes. That they might have no difficulty in finding him, he was to walk, on Mondays and Thursdays, in the Piazza of Covent Garden after nightfall, with a white handkerchief hanging from his coat pocket. He was furnished with a considerable sum of money, and with a commission which was not only signed but written from beginning to end by James himself. This commission authorised the bearer to do from time to time such acts of hostility against the Prince of Orange and that Prince's adherents as should most conduce to the service of the King. What explanation of these very comprehensive words was orally given by James we are not informed.

Lest Barclay's absence from Saint Germain's should cause any suspicion, it was given out that his loose way of life had made it necessary for him to put himself under the care of a surgeon at Paris.\* He set out with eight hundred pounds in his portmanteau, hastened to the coast, and embarked on board of a privateer which was employed by the Jacobites as a regular packet boat between France and England. This vessel conveyed him to a desolate spot in Romney Marsh. About half a

\* Harris's deposition, March 28. 1696.



mile from the landing place a smuggler named Hunt lived on a dreary and unwholesome fen where he had no neighbours but a few rude shepherds. His dwelling was singularly well situated for a contraband traffic in French wares. Cargoes of Lyons silk and Valenciennes lace sufficient to load thirty packhorses had repeatedly been landed in that dismal solitude without attracting notice. But, since the Revolution, Hunt had discovered that of all cargoes a cargo of traitors paid best. His lonely abode became the resort of men of high consideration, Earls and Barons, Knights and Doctors of Divinity. Some of them lodged many days under his roof while waiting for a passage. A clandestine post was established between his house and London. The couriers were constantly going and returning: they performed their journeys up and down on foot; but they appeared to be gentlemen, and it was whispered that one of them was the son of a titled man. The letters from Saint Germain were few and small. Those directed to Saint Germain were numerous and bulky: they were made up like parcels of millinery, and were buried in the morass till they were called for by the privateer.

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Here Barclay landed in January 1696; and hence he took the road to London. He was followed, a few days later, by a tall youth, who concealed his name, but who produced credentials of the highest authority. This youth too proceeded to London. Hunt afterwards discovered that his humble roof had had the honour of sheltering the Duke of Berwick.\*

The part which Barclay had to perform was difficult and hazardous; and he omitted no precaution. He had been little in London; and his face was consequently unknown to the agents of the government. Nevertheless he had several lodgings: he disguised himself so well that his oldest friends

\* Hunt's deposition.

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would not have known him by broad daylight; and yet he seldom ventured into the streets except in the dark. His chief agent was a monk who, under several names, heard confessions and said masses at the risk of his neck. This man intimated to some of the zealots with whom he consorted that a special agent of the royal family was to be spoken with in Covent Garden, on certain nights, at a certain hour, and might be known by certain signs.\* In this way Barclay became acquainted with several men fit for his purpose. The first persons to whom he fully opened himself were Charnock and Parkyns. He talked with them about the plot which they and some of their friends had formed in the preceding spring against the life of William. Both Charnock and Parkyns declared that the scheme might easily be executed, that there was no want of resolute hearts among the Royalists, and that all that was wanting was some sign of His Majesty's approbation.

Then Barclay produced his commission. He showed his two accomplices that James had expressly commanded all good Englishmen, not only to rise in arms, not only to make war on the usurping government, not only to seize forts and towns, but also to do from time to time such other acts of hostility against the Prince of Orange as might be for the royal service. These words, Barclay said, plainly authorised an attack on the Prince's person. Charnock and Parkyns were satisfied. How in truth was it possible for them to doubt that James's confidential agent correctly construed James's expressions? Nay, how was it possible for them to understand the large words of the commission in any sense but one, even if Barclay had not been there to act as commentator? If indeed the subject had never been brought under James's consideration, it might well be thought that those words had dropped from his pen without any definite meaning. But he had been repeatedly apprised

\* Fisher's and Harris's depositions.

that some of his friends in England meditated a deed of blood, and that they were waiting only for his approbation. They had importuned him to speak one word, to give one sign. He had long kept silence; and, now that he broke silence, he merely told them to do whatever might be beneficial to himself and prejudicial to the usurper. They had his authority as plainly given as they could reasonably expect to have it given in such a case.\*

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All that remained was to find a sufficient number of courageous and trustworthy assistants, to provide horses and weapons, and to fix the hour and the place of the slaughter. Forty or fifty men, it was thought, would be sufficient. Those troopers of James's guard who had already followed Barclay across the Channel made up nearly half that number. James had himself seen some of these men before their departure from Saint Germain, had given them money for their journey, had told them by what name each of them was to pass in England, had commanded them to act as they should be directed by Barclay, and had informed them where Barclay was to be found and by what tokens he was to be known.\*\* They were ordered to depart in small parties, and to assign different reasons for going. Some were ill: some were weary of the service: Cassels, one of the most noisy and profane among them, announced that, since he could not get military promotion, he should enter at the Scotch college and study for a learned profession. Under such pretexts about twenty picked men left the palace of James, made their way by Romney Marsh to London, and found their captain walking in the dim lamplight of the Piazza with the handkerchief hanging from his pocket. One of these men was Ambrose Rookwood, who held

\* Barclay's narrative, in the Life of James, ii. 548.; Paper by Charnock among the Nairne MSS. in the Bodleian Library.

\*\* Harris's deposition.

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1696. the rank of Brigadier, and who had a high reputation for courage and honour: another was Major John Bernardi, an adventurer of Genoese extraction, whose name has derived a melancholy celebrity from a punishment so strangely prolonged that it at length shocked a generation which could not remember his crime.\*

It was in these adventurers from France that Barclay placed his chief trust. In a moment of elation he once called them his Janissaries, and expressed a hope that they would get him the George and Garter. But twenty more assassins at least were wanted. The conspirators probably expected valuable help from Sir John Friend, who had received a Colonel's commission signed by James, and had been most active in enlisting men and providing arms against the day when the French should appear on the coast of Kent. The design was imparted to him: but he thought it so rash, and so likely to bring reproach and disaster on the good cause, that he would lend no assistance to his friends, though he kept their secret religiously.\*\* Charnock undertook to find eight brave and trusty fellows. He communicated the design to Porter, not with Barclay's entire approbation; for Barclay appears to have thought that a tavern brawler, who had recently been in prison for swaggering drunk about the streets and huzzaing in honour of the Prince of Wales, was hardly to be trusted with a secret of such fearful import. Porter entered into the plot with enthusiasm, and promised to bring in others who would be useful. Among those whose help he engaged was his servant Thomas Keyes. Keyes was a far more formidable conspirator than might have been expected from his station in life. The household troops generally were devoted to William: but there was a taint of

\* Harris's deposition. Bernardi's autobiography is not at all to be trusted.

\*\* See his trial.

disaffection among the Blues. The chief conspirators had already been tampering with some Roman Catholics who were in that regiment; and Keyes was excellently qualified to bear a part in this work; for he had formerly been trumpeter of the corps, and, though he had quitted the service, he still kept up an acquaintance with some of the old soldiers in whose company he had lived at free quarter on the Somersetshire farmers after the battle of Sedgemoor.

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Parkyns, who was old and gouty, could not himself take a share in the work of death. But he employed himself in providing horses, saddles and weapons for his younger and more active accomplices. In this department of business he was assisted by Charles Cranburne, a person who had long acted as a broker between Jacobite plotters and people who dealt in cutlery and firearms. Special orders were given by Barclay that the swords should be made rather for stabbing than for slashing. Barclay himself enlisted Edward Lowick, who had been a Major in the Irish army, and who had, since the capitulation of Limerick, been living obscurely in London. The monk who had been Barclay's first confidant recommended two busy Papists, Richard Fisher and Christopher Knightley; and this recommendation was thought sufficient. Knightley drew in Edward King, a Roman Catholic gentleman of hot and restless temper; and King procured the assistance of a French gambler and bully named De la Rue.\*

Meanwhile the heads of the conspiracy held frequent meetings at treason taverns, for the purpose of settling a plan of operations. Several schemes were proposed, applauded, and, on full consideration, abandoned. At one time it was thought that an attack on Kensington House at dead of night might probably be successful. The outer wall might easily be scaled.

\* Fisher's deposition; Knightley's deposition; Cranburne's trial; De la Rue's deposition.

CHAP. If once forty armed men were in the garden, the palace would  
XXI. soon be stormed or set on fire. Some were of opinion that it  
1696. would be best to strike the blow on a Sunday as William went  
from Kensington to attend divine service at the chapel of Saint  
James's Palace. The murderers might assemble near the spot  
where Apsley House and Hamilton Place now stand. Just as  
the royal coach passed out of Hyde Park, and was about to  
enter what has since been called the Green Park, thirty of the  
conspirators, well mounted, might fall on the guards. The  
guards were ordinarily only five and twenty. They would be  
taken completely by surprise; and probably half of them would  
be shot or cut down before they could strike a blow. Meanwhile  
ten or twelve resolute men on foot would stop the carriage by  
shooting the horses, and would then without difficulty despatch  
the King. At last the preference was given to a plan originally  
sketched by Fisher and put into shape by Porter. William was  
in the habit of going every Saturday from Kensington to hunt  
in Richmond Park. There was then no bridge over the Thames  
between London and Kingston. The King therefore went, in  
a coach escorted by some of his body guards, through Turnham  
Green to the river. There he took boat, crossed the water and  
found another coach and another set of guards ready to receive  
him on the Surrey side. The first coach and the first set of  
guards awaited his return on the northern bank. The con-  
spirators ascertained with great precision the whole order of  
these journeys, and carefully examined the ground on both  
sides of the Thames. They thought that they should attack the  
King with more advantage on the Middlesex than on the  
Surrey bank, and when he was returning than when he was  
going. For, when he was going, he was often attended to the  
water side by a great retinue of lords and gentlemen; but on  
his return he had only his guards about him. The place and  
time were fixed. The place was to be a narrow and winding

lane leading from the landingplace on the north of the river to Turnham Green. The spot may still be easily found. The ground has since been drained by trenches. But in the seventeenth century it was a quagmire, through which the royal coach was with difficulty tugged at a foot's pace. The time was to be the afternoon of Saturday the fifteenth of February. On that day the Forty were to assemble in small parties at public houses near the Green. When the signal was given that the coach was approaching they were to take horse and repair to their posts. As the cavalcade came up this lane Charnock was to attack the guards in the rear, Rookwood on one flank, Porter on the other. Meanwhile Barclay, with eight trusty men, was to stop the coach and to do the deed. That no movement of the King might escape notice, two orderlies were appointed to watch the palace. One of these men, a bold and active Fleming, named Durant, was especially charged to keep Barclay well informed. The other, whose business was to communicate with Charnock, was a ruffian named Chambers, who had served in the Irish army, had received a severe wound in the breast at the Boyne, and, on account of that wound, bore a savage personal hatred to William.\*

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While Barclay was making all his arrangements for the assassination, Berwick was endeavouring to persuade the Jacobite aristocracy to rise in arms. But this was no easy task. Several consultations were held; and there was one great muster of the party under the pretence of a masquerade, for which tickets were distributed among the initiated at one guinea each.\*\* All ended however in talking, singing and drinking. Many men of rank and fortune indeed declared that they would draw their swords for their rightful Sovereign as soon as their rightful Sovereign was in the island with a French

Failure  
of Ber-  
wick's  
plot.

\* See the trials and depositions.

\*\* L'Hermitage, March 17.

CHAP. army; and Berwick had been empowered to assure them that a  
XXI. French army should be sent as soon as they had drawn the  
— 1696. sword. But between what they asked and what he was  
authorised to grant there was a difference which admitted of no  
compromise. Lewis, situated as he was, would not risk ten or  
twelve thousand excellent soldiers on the mere faith of prom-  
ises. Similar promises had been made in 1690; and yet,  
when the fleet of Tourville had appeared on the coast of Devon-  
shire, the western counties had risen as one man in defence of  
the government, and not a single malecontent had dared to  
utter a whisper in favour of the invaders. Similar promises had  
been made in 1692; and to the confidence which had been  
placed in those promises was to be attributed the great disaster  
of La Hogue. The French King would not be deceived a third  
time. He would gladly help the English royalists: but he must  
first see them help themselves. There was much reason in this;  
and there was reason also in what the Jacobites urged on the  
other side. If, they said, they were to rise, without a single  
disciplined regiment to back them, against an usurper sup-  
ported by a regular army, they should all be cut to pieces before  
the news that they were up could reach Versailles. As Berwick  
could hold out no hope that there would be an invasion before  
there was an insurrection, and as his English friends were im-  
movable in their determination that there should be no insur-  
rection till there was an invasion, he had nothing more to do  
here, and became impatient to depart.

He was the more impatient to depart because the fifteenth  
of February drew near. For he was in constant communication  
with Barclay, and was perfectly apprised of all the details of  
the crime which was to be perpetrated on that day. He was  
generally considered as a man of sturdy and even ungracious  
integrity. But to such a degree had his sense of right and  
wrong been perverted by his zeal for the interests of his family,



and by his respect for the lessons of his priests, that he did not, as he has himself ingenuously confessed, think that he lay under any obligation to dissuade the assassins from the execution of their purpose. He had indeed only one objection to their design; and that objection he kept to himself. It was simply this, that all who were concerned were very likely to be hanged. That, however, was their affair; and, if they chose to run such a risk in the good cause, it was not his business to discourage them. His mission was quite distinct from theirs: he was not to act with them; and he had no inclination to suffer with them. He therefore hastened down to Romney Marsh, and crossed to Calais. \*

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At Calais he found preparations making for a descent on Kent. Troops filled the town: transports filled the port. Boufflers had been ordered to repair thither from Flanders, and to take the command. James himself was daily expected. In fact he had already left Saint Germain. Berwick, however, would not wait. He took the road to Paris, met his father at Clermont, and made a full report of the state of things in England. His embassy had failed: the Royalist nobility and gentry seemed resolved not to rise till a French army was in the island: but there was still a hope: news would probably come within a few days that the usurper was no more; and such news would change the whole aspect of affairs. James determined to go on to Calais, and there to await the event of Barclay's plot. Berwick hastened to Versailles for the purpose of giving explanations to Lewis. What the nature of the explanations was we know from Berwick's own narrative. He plainly told the French King that a small band of loyal men would in a short time make an attempt on the life of the great enemy of France. The next courier might bring tidings of an event which would probably subvert the English government and dissolve the European

\* See Berwick's Memoirs.

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coalition. It might have been thought that a prince who ostentatiously affected the character of a devout Christian and of a courteous knight would instantly have taken measures for conveying to his rival a caution which perhaps might still arrive in time, and would have severely reprimanded the guests who had so grossly abused his hospitality. Such, however, was not the conduct of Lewis. Had he been asked to give his sanction to a murder he would probably have refused with indignation. But he was not moved to indignation by learning that, without his sanction, a crime was likely to be committed which would be far more beneficial to his interests than ten such victories as that of Landen. He sent down orders to Calais that his fleet should be in such readiness as might enable him to take advantage of the great crisis which he anticipated. At Calais James waited with still more impatience for the signal that his nephew was no more. That signal was to be given by a fire, of which the fuel was already prepared on the cliffs of Kent, and which would be visible across the straits.\*

Detection  
of the  
Assassi-  
nation  
Plot.

But a peculiar fate has, in our country, always attended such conspiracies as that of Barclay and Charnock. The English regard assassination, and have during some ages regarded it, with a loathing peculiar to themselves. So English indeed is this sentiment that it cannot even now be called Irish, and that, till a recent period, it was not Scotch. In Ireland to this day the villain who shoots at his enemy from behind a hedge is too often protected from justice by public sympathy. In Scotland plans of assassination were often, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, successfully executed, though known to

\* Van Cleverskirke, Feb. 25.  
March 6, 1696. I am confident that no sensible and impartial person, after attentively reading Berwick's narrative of these transactions and comparing it with the narrative in the Life of James (ii. 544.) which is taken, word for word, from the Original Memoirs, can doubt that James was accessory to the design of assassination.

great numbers of persons. The murders of Beaton, of Rizzio, of Darnley, of Murray, of Sharpe, are conspicuous instances. The royalists who murdered Lisle in Switzerland were Irishmen: the royalists who murdered Ascham at Madrid were Irishmen: the royalists who murdered Dorislaus at the Hague were Scotchmen. In England, as soon as such a design ceases to be a secret hidden in the recesses of one gloomy and ulcerated heart, the risk of detection and failure becomes extreme. Felton and Bellingham reposed trust in no human being; and they were therefore able to accomplish their evil purposes. But Babington's conspiracy against Elizabeth, Fawkes's conspiracy against James, Gerard's conspiracy against Cromwell, the Rye House conspiracy, the Cato Street conspiracy, were all discovered, frustrated and punished. In truth such a conspiracy is here exposed to equal danger from the good and from the bad qualities of the conspirators. Scarcely any Englishman, not utterly destitute of conscience and honour, will engage in a plot for slaying an unsuspecting fellow creature; and a wretch who has neither conscience nor honour is likely to think much on the danger which he incurs by being true to his associates, and on the rewards which he may obtain by betraying them. There are, it is true, persons in whom religious or political fanaticism has destroyed all moral sensibility on one particular point, and yet has left that sensibility generally unimpaired. Such a person was Digby. He had no scruple about blowing King, Lords and Commons into the air. Yet to his accomplices he was religiously and chivalrously faithful; nor could even the fear of the rack extort from him one word to their prejudice. But this union of depravity and heroism is very rare. The vast majority of men are either not vicious enough or not virtuous enough to be loyal and devoted members of treacherous and cruel confederacies; and, if a single member should want either the necessary vice or the necessary virtue, the whole confederacy is in

CHAP. danger. To bring together in one body forty Englishmen, all  
 XXI. hardened cutthroats, and yet all so upright and generous that  
 1696. neither the hope of opulence nor the dread of the gallows can  
 tempt any one of them to be false to the rest, has hitherto  
 been found, and will, it is to be hoped, always be found  
 impossible.

There were among Barclay's followers both men too bad and men too good to be trusted with such a secret as his. The first whose heart failed him was Fisher. Even before the time and place of the crime had been fixed, he obtained an audience of Portland, and told that lord that a design was forming against the King's life. Some days later Fisher came again with more precise intelligence. But his character was not such as entitled him to much credit; and the knavery of Fuller, of Young, of Whitney and of Taaffe, had made men of sense slow to believe stories of plots. Portland, therefore, though in general very easily alarmed where the safety of his master and friend was concerned, seems to have thought little about the matter. But, on the evening of the fourteenth of February, he received a visit from a person whose testimony he could not treat lightly. This was a Roman Catholic gentleman of known courage and honour, named Pendergrass. He had, on the preceding day, come up to town from Hampshire, in consequence of a pressing summons from Porter, who, dissolute and unprincipled as he was, had to Pendergrass been a most kind friend, indeed almost a father. In a Jacobite insurrection Pendergrass would probably have been one of the foremost. But he learned with horror that he was expected to bear a part in a wicked and shameful deed. He found himself in one of those situations which most cruelly torture noble and sensitive natures. What was he to do? Was he to commit a murder? Was he to suffer a murder which he could prevent to be committed? Yet was he to betray one who, however culpable, had loaded him with

benefits? Perhaps it might be possible to save William without harming Porter? Pendergrass determined to make the attempt. "My Lord," he said to Portland, "as you value King William's life, do not let him hunt tomorrow. He is the enemy of my religion: yet my religion constrains me to give him this caution. But the names of the conspirators I am resolved to conceal: some of them are my friends: one of them especially is my benefactor; and I will not betray them."

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Portland went instantly to the King: but the King received the intelligence very coolly, and seemed determined not to be frightened out of a good day's sport by such an idle story. Portland argued and implored in vain. He was at last forced to threaten that he would immediately make the whole matter public, unless His Majesty would consent to remain within doors during the next day; and this threat was successful.\*

Saturday the fifteenth came. The Forty were all ready to mount, when they received intelligence from the orderlies who watched Kensington House that the King did not mean to hunt that morning. "The fox," said Chambers, with vindictive bitterness, "keeps his earth." Then he opened his shirt, showed the great scar in his breast, and vowed revenge on William.

The first thought of the conspirators was that their design had been detected. But they were soon reassured. It was given out that the weather had kept the King at home; and indeed the day was cold and stormy. There was no sign of agitation at the palace. No extraordinary precaution was taken. No arrest was made. No ominous whisper was heard at the coffeehouses. The delay was vexatious: but Saturday the twenty-second would do as well.

But, before Saturday the twenty-second arrived, a third

\* L'Hermitage, Feb. 25.  
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CHAP. informer, De la Rue, had presented himself at the palace. His  
XXI. way of life did not entitle him to much respect; but his story  
1696. agreed so exactly with what had been said by Fisher and Pendergrass that even William began to believe that there was real danger.

Very late in the evening of Friday the twenty-first, Pendergrass, who had as yet disclosed much less than either of the other informers, but whose single word was worth much more than their joint oath, was sent for to the royal closet. The faithful Portland and the gallant Cutts were the only persons who witnessed the singular interview between the King and his generous enemy. William, with courtesy and animation which he rarely showed, but which he never showed without making a deep impression, urged Pendergrass to speak out. "You are a man of true probity and honour: I am deeply obliged to you: but you must feel that the same considerations which have induced you to tell us so much ought to induce you to tell us something more. The cautions which you have as yet given can only make me suspect every body that comes near me. They are sufficient to embitter my life, but not sufficient to preserve it. You must let me know the names of these men." During more than half an hour the King continued to entreat and Pendergrass to refuse. At last Pendergrass said that he would give the information which was required, if he could be assured that it would be used only for the prevention of the crime, and not for the destruction of the criminals. "I give you my word of honour," said William, "that your evidence shall not be used against any person without your own free consent." It was long past midnight when Pendergrass wrote down the names of the chief conspirators.

While these things were passing at Kensington, a large party of the assassins was revelling at a Jacobite tavern in Maiden Lane. Here they received their final orders for the

morrow. "Tomorrow or never," said King. "Tomorrow, boys," cried Cassels with a curse, "we shall have the plunder of the field." The morrow came. All was ready: the horses were saddled: the pistols were loaded: the swords were sharpened: the orderlies were on the alert: they early sent intelligence from the palace that the King was certainly going a hunting: all the usual preparations had been made: a party of guards had been sent round by Kingston Bridge to Richmond: the royal coaches, each with six horses, had gone from the stables at Charing Cross to Kensington. The chief murderers assembled in high glee at Porter's lodgings. Pendergrass, who, by the King's command, appeared among them, was greeted with ferocious mirth. "Pendergrass," said Porter, "you are named one of the eight who are to do his business. I have a musquetoen for you that will carry eight balls." "Mr. Pendergrass," said King, "pray do not be afraid of smashing the glass windows." From Porter's lodgings the party adjourned to the Blue Posts in Spring Gardens, where they meant to take some refreshment before they started for Turnham Green. They were at table when a message came from an orderly that the King had changed his mind and would not hunt; and scarcely had they recovered from their first surprise at this ominous news, when Keyes, who had been out scouting among his old comrades, arrived with news more ominous still. "The coaches have returned to Charing Cross. The guards that were sent round to Richmond have just come back to Kensington at full gallop, the flanks of the horses all white with foam. I have had a word with one of the Blues. He told me that strange things are muttered." Then the countenances of the assassins fell; and their hearts died within them. Porter made a feeble attempt to disguise his uneasiness. He took up an orange and squeezed it. "What cannot be done one day may be done another. Come, gentlemen, before we part let us have one glass

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CHAP. to the squeezing of the rotten orange." The squeezing of the  
 XXI. rotten orange was drunk; and the company dispersed.\*  
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A few hours elapsed before all the conspirators abandoned all hope. Some of them derived comfort from a report that the King had taken physic, and that this was his only reason for not going to Richmond. If it were so, the blow might still be struck. Two Saturdays had been unpropitious. But Sunday was at hand. One of the plans which had formerly been discussed and abandoned might be resumed. The usurper might be set upon at Hyde Park Corner on his way to his chapel. Charnock was ready for any enterprise however desperate. If the hunt was up, it was better to die biting and scratching to the last than to be worried without resistance or revenge. He assembled some of his accomplices at one of the numerous houses at which he had lodgings, and plied them hard with healths to the King, to the Queen, to the Prince, and to the Grand Monarch, as they called Lewis. But the terror and dejection of the gang were beyond the power of wine; and so many had stolen away that those who were left could effect nothing. In the course of the afternoon it was known that the guards had been doubled at the palace; and soon after nightfall messengers from the Secretary of State's office were hurrying to and fro with torches through the streets, accompanied by files of musketeers. Before the dawn of Sunday Charnock was in custody. A little later, Rookwood and Bernardi were found in bed at a Jacobite alehouse on Tower Hill. Seventeen more traitors were seized before noon; and three of the Blues were put under arrest. That morning a Council was held; and, as soon as it rose, an express was sent off to call home some regiments from Flanders: Dorset set out for Sussex, of which

\* My account of these events is taken chiefly from the trials and depositions. See also Burnet, ii. 165, 166, 167., and Blackmore's True and Impartial History, compiled under the direction of Shrewsbury and Somers, and Boyer's History of King William III., 1703.



he was Lord Lieutenant: Romney, who was Warden of the Cinque Ports, started for the coast of Kent; and Russell hastened down the Thames to take the command of the fleet. In the evening the Council sate again. Some of the prisoners were examined and committed. The Lord Mayor was in attendance, was informed of what had been discovered, and was specially charged to look well to the peace of the capital.\*

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On Monday morning all the trainbands of the City were under arms. The King went in state to the House of Lords, sent for the Commons, and from the throne told the Parliament that, but for the protection of a gracious Providence, he should at that moment have been a corpse, and the kingdom would have been invaded by a French army. The danger of invasion, he added, was still great: but he had already given such orders as would, he hoped, suffice for the protection of the realm. Some traitors were in custody: warrants were out against others: he should do his part in this emergency; and he relied on the Houses to do theirs.\*\*

The Houses instantly voted a joint address in which they thankfully acknowledged the divine goodness which had preserved him to his people, and implored him to take more than ordinary care of his person. They concluded by exhorting him to seize and secure all persons whom he regarded as dangerous. On the same day two important bills were brought into the Commons. By one the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended. The other provided that the Parliament should not be dissolved by the death of William. Sir Rowland Gwyn, an honest country gentleman, made a motion of which he did not at all foresee the important consequences. He proposed that the members should enter into an association for the defence of their

Parliamentary proceedings touching the Assassination Plot.

\* Portland to Lexington, March  $\frac{3}{13}$ , 1696; Van Cleverskirke, Feb. 25. ;  
L'Hermitage, same date. Mar. 6. ;

\*\* Commons' Journals, Feb. 24. 1695.

CHAP. Sovereign and their country. Montague, who of all men was  
 XXI. the quickest at taking and improving a hint, saw how much  
 1696. such an association would strengthen the government and the  
 Whig party.\* An instrument was immediately drawn up, by  
 which the representatives of the people, each for himself,  
 solemnly recognised William as rightful and lawful King, and  
 bound themselves to stand by him and by each other against  
 James and James's adherents. Lastly they vowed that, if His  
 Majesty's life should be shortened by violence, they would  
 avenge him signally on his murderers, and would, with one  
 heart, strenuously support the order of succession settled by  
 the Bill of Rights. It was ordered that the House should be  
 called over the next morning.\*\* The attendance was con-  
 sequently great: the Association, engrossed on parchment,  
 was on the table; and the members went up, county by county,  
 to sign their names.\*\*\*

State of  
 public  
 feeling.

The King's speech, the joint address of both Houses, the  
 Association framed by the Commons, and a proclamation, con-  
 taining a list of the conspirators and offering a reward of a thou-  
 sand pounds for the apprehension of any one of them, were  
 soon cried in all the streets of the capital and carried out by all  
 the postbags. Wherever the news came it raised the whole  
 country. Those two hateful words, assassination and invasion,  
 acted like a spell. No impressment was necessary. The seamen  
 came forth from their hiding places by thousands to man the  
 fleet. Only three days after the King had appealed to the  
 nation, Russell sailed out of the Thames with one great squad-  
 ron. Another was ready for action at Spithead. The militia  
 of all the maritime counties from the Wash to the Land's End

\* England's Enemies Exposed, 1701.

\*\* Commons' Journals, Feb. 24. 1696.

\*\*\* Commons' Journals, Feb. 25. 1696; Van Cleverskirke, Feb. 28.  
 L'Hermitage, of the same date. Mar. 9. †

was under arms. For persons accused of offences merely political there was generally much sympathy. But Barclay's assassins were hunted like wolves by the whole population. The abhorrence which the English have, through many generations, felt for domiciliary visits, and for all those impediments which the police of continental states throws in the way of travellers, was for a time suspended. The gates of the City of London were kept many hours closed while a strict search was made within. The magistrates of almost every walled town in the kingdom followed the example of the capital. On every highway parties of armed men were posted with orders to stop passengers of suspicious appearance. During a few days it was hardly possible to perform a journey without a passport, or to procure posthorses without the authority of a justice of the peace. Nor was any voice raised against these precautions. The common people indeed were, if possible, more eager than the public functionaries to bring the traitors to justice. This eagerness may perhaps be in part ascribed to the great rewards promised by the royal proclamation. The hatred which every good Protestant felt for Popish cutthroats was not a little strengthened by the songs in which the street poets celebrated the lucky hackney coachman who had caught his traitor, had received his thousand pounds, and had set up as a gentleman.\* The zeal of the populace could in some places hardly be kept within the limits of the law. At the country seat of Parkyns in Warwickshire, arms and accoutrements sufficient to equip a troop of cavalry were found. As soon as this was known, a furious mob assembled, pulled down the house and laid the

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\* According to L'Hermitage, <sup>Feb. 28.</sup> <sub>Mar. 9.</sub> there were two of these fortunate hackney coachmen. A shrewd and vigilant hackney coachman indeed was, from the nature of his calling, very likely to be successful in this sort of chase. The newspapers abound with proofs of the general enthusiasm.

CHAP. gardens utterly waste.\* Parkyns himself was tracked to a  
 XXI. garret in the Temple. Porter and Keyes, who had fled into  
 1696. Surrey, were pursued by the hue and cry, stopped by the coun-  
 try people near Leatherhead, and, after some show of resist-  
 ance, secured and sent to prison. Friend was found hidden in  
 the house of a Quaker. Knightley was caught in the dress of a  
 fine lady, and recognised in spite of his patches and paint. In  
 a few days all the chief conspirators were in custody except Bar-  
 clay, who succeeded in making his escape to France.

At the same time some notorious malecontents were ar-  
 rested, and were detained for a time on suspicion. Old Roger  
 Lestrangle, now in his eightieth year, was taken up. Ferguson  
 was found hidden under a bed in Gray's Inn Lane, and was, to  
 the general joy, locked up in Newgate.\*\* Meanwhile a special  
 commission was issued for the trial of the traitors. There was  
 no want of evidence. For, of the conspirators who had been  
 seized, ten or twelve were ready to save themselves by bearing  
 witness against their associates. None had been deeper in  
 guilt, and none shrank with more abject terror from death,  
 than Porter. The government consented to spare him, and  
 thus obtained, not only his evidence, but the much more re-  
 spectable evidence of Pendergrass. Pendergrass was in no  
 danger: he had committed no offence: his character was fair;  
 and his testimony would have far greater weight with a jury  
 than the testimony of a crowd of approvers swearing for their  
 necks. But he had the royal word of honour that he should not  
 be a witness without his own consent; and he was fully deter-  
 mined not to be a witness unless he were assured of Porter's  
 safety. Porter was now safe; and Pendergrass had no longer  
 any scruple about relating the whole truth.

Charnock, King and Keyes were set first to the bar. The

Trial of  
 Charnock,  
 King and  
 Keyes.

\* Postman, March 5. 1695.

\*\* The Postman, Feb. 29., March 2., March 12., March 14. 1695.

Chiefs of the three Courts of Common Law and several other Judges were on the bench; and among the audience were many members of both Houses of Parliament.

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It was the eleventh of March. The new Act which regulated the procedure in cases of high treason was not to come into force till the twenty-fifth. The culprits urged that, as the Legislature had, by passing that Act, recognised the justice of allowing them to see their indictment, and to avail themselves of the assistance of an advocate, the tribunal ought either to grant them what the highest authority had declared to be a reasonable indulgence, or to defer the trial for a fortnight. The Judges, however, would consent to no delay. They have therefore been accused by later writers of using the mere letter of the law in order to destroy men who, if that law had been construed according to its spirit, might have had some chance of escape. This accusation is unjust. The Judges undoubtedly carried the real intention of the Legislature into effect; and, for whatever injustice was committed, the Legislature, and not the Judges, ought to be held accountable. The words, "twenty-fifth of March," had not slipped into the Act by mere inadvertence. All parties in Parliament had long been agreed as to the principle of the new regulations. The only matter about which there was any dispute was the time at which those regulations should take effect. After debates extending through several sessions, after repeated divisions with various results, a compromise had been made; and it was surely not for the Courts to alter the terms of that compromise. It may indeed be confidently affirmed that, if the Houses had foreseen the Assassination Plot, they would have fixed, not an earlier, but a later day for the commencement of the new system. Undoubtedly the Parliament, and especially the Whig party, deserved serious blame. For, if the old rules of procedure gave no unfair advantage to the Crown, there was no reason for altering

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1696. them; and if, as was generally admitted, they did give an unfair advantage to the Crown, and that against a defendant on trial for his life, they ought not to have been suffered to continue in force a single day. But no blame is due to the tribunals for not acting in direct opposition both to the letter and to the spirit of the law.

The government might indeed have postponed the trials till the new Act came into force; and it would have been wise, as well as right, to do so; for the prisoners would have gained nothing by the delay. The case against them was one on which all the ingenuity of the Inns of Court could have made no impression. Porter, Pendergrass, De la Rue and others gave evidence which admitted of no answer. Charnock said the very little that he had to say with readiness and presence of mind. The jury found all the defendants guilty. It is not much to the honour of that age that the announcement of the verdict was received with loud huzzas by the crowd which surrounded the Courthouse. Those huzzas were renewed when the three unhappy men, having heard their doom, were brought forth under a guard.\*

Charnock had hitherto shown no sign of flinching: but when he was again in his cell his fortitude gave way. He begged hard for mercy. He would be content, he said, to pass the rest of his days in an easy confinement. He asked only for his life. In return for his life, he promised to discover all that he knew of the schemes of the Jacobites against the government. If it should appear that he prevaricated or that he suppressed any thing, he was willing to undergo the utmost rigour of the law. This offer produced much excitement, and some difference of opinion, among the councillors of William. But the King de-

\* Postman, March 12. 1696; Vernon to Lexington, March 13.; Van Cleverskirke, March 13. The proceedings are fully reported in the Collection of State Trials.

cided, as in such cases he seldom failed to decide, wisely and magnanimously. He saw that the discovery of the Assassination Plot had changed the whole posture of affairs. His throne, lately tottering, was fixed on an immovable basis. His popularity had risen impetuously to as great a height as when he was on his march from Torbay to London. Many who had been out of humour with his administration, and who had, in their spleen, held some communication with Saint Germain, were shocked to find that they had been, in some sense, leagued with murderers. He would not drive such persons to despair. He would not even put them to the blush. Not only should they not be punished: they should not undergo the humiliation of being pardoned. He would not know that they had offended. Charnock was left to his fate.\* When he found that he had no chance of being received as a deserter, he assumed the dignity of a martyr, and played his part resolutely to the close. That he might bid farewell to the world with a better grace, he ordered a fine new coat to be hanged in, and was very particular on his last day about the powdering and curling of his wig.\*\* Just before he was turned off, he delivered to the Sheriffs a paper in which he avowed that he had conspired against the life of the Prince of Orange, but solemnly denied that James had given any commission authorising assassination. The denial was doubtless literally correct: but Charnock did not deny, and assuredly could not with truth have denied, that he had seen a commission written and signed by James, and containing words which might without any violence be construed, and which were, by all to whom they were shown, actually

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\* Burnet, ii. 171.; The Present Disposition of England considered; The answer entitled England's Enemies Exposed, 1701; L'Hermitage, March 17. 1696. L'Hermitage says, "Charnock a fait des grandes instances pour avoir sa grace, et a offert de tout déclarer: mais elle lui a esté refusée."

\*\* L'Hermitage, March 17.

CHAP. construed, to authorise the murderous ambuscade of Turnham  
 XXI. Green.  
 1696.

Indeed Charnock, in another paper, which is still in existence, but has never been printed, held very different language. He plainly said that, for reasons too obvious to be mentioned, he could not tell the whole truth in the paper which he had delivered to the Sheriffs. He acknowledged that the plot in which he had been engaged seemed, even to many loyal subjects, highly criminal. They called him assassin and murderer. Yet what had he done more than had been done by Mucius Scævola? Nay, what had he done more than had been done by every body who bore arms against the Prince of Orange? If an army of twenty thousand men had suddenly landed in England and surprised the usurper, this would have been called legitimate war. Did the difference between war and assassination depend merely on the number of persons engaged? What then was the smallest number which could lawfully surprise an enemy? Was it five thousand, or a thousand, or a hundred? Jonathan and his armourbearer were only two. Yet they made a great slaughter of the Philistines. Was that assassination? It cannot, said Charnock, be the mere act, it must be the cause, that makes killing assassination. It followed that it was not assassination to kill one, — and here the dying man gave a loose to all his hatred, — who had declared a war of extermination against loyal subjects, who hung, drew and quartered every man who stood up for the right, and who had laid waste England to enrich the Dutch. Charnock admitted that his enterprise would have been unjustifiable if it had not been authorised by James: but he maintained that it had been authorised, not indeed expressly, but by implication. His Majesty had indeed formerly prohibited similar attempts; but had prohibited them, not as in themselves criminal, but merely as inexpedient at this or that con-



junction of affairs. Circumstances had changed. The prohibition might therefore reasonably be considered as withdrawn. His Majesty's faithful subjects had then only to look to the words of his commission; and those words, beyond all doubt, fully warranted an attack on the person of the usurper.\*

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King and Keyes suffered with Charnock. King behaved with firmness and decency. He acknowledged his crime, and said that he repented of it. He thought it due to the Church of which he was a member, and on which his conduct had brought reproach, to declare that he had been misled, not by any casuistry about tyrannicide, but merely by the violence of his own evil passions. Poor Keyes was in an agony of terror. His tears and lamentations moved the pity of some of the spectators. It was said at the time, and it has often since been repeated, that a servant drawn into crime by a master was a proper object of royal clemency. But those who have blamed the severity with which Keyes was treated have altogether omitted to notice the important circumstance which distinguished his case from that of every other conspirator. He had been one of the Blues. He had kept up to the last an intercourse with his old comrades. On the very day fixed for the murder he had contrived to mingle with them and to pick up intelligence from them. The regiment had been so deeply infected with

Execu-  
tion of  
Charnock,  
King and  
Keyes.

\* This most curious paper is among the Nairne MSS. in the Bodleian Library. A short, and not perfectly ingenuous, abstract of it will be found in the Life of James, ii. 555. Why Macpherson, who has printed many less interesting documents, did not choose to print this document, it is easy to guess. I will transcribe two or three important sentences. "It may reasonably be presumed that what, in one juncture, His Majesty had rejected he might in another accept, when his own and the public good necessarily required it. For I could not understand it in such a manner as if he had given a general prohibition that at no time the Prince of Orange should be touched. . . . . Nobody that believes His Majesty to be lawful King of England can doubt but that in virtue of his commission to levy war against the Prince of Orange and his adherents, the setting upon his person is justifiable, as well by the laws of the land duly interpreted and explained as by the law of God."

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disloyalty that it had been found necessary to confine some men and to dismiss many more. Surely, if any example was to be made, it was proper to make an example of the agent by whose instrumentality the men who meant to shoot the King communicated with the men whose business was to guard him.

Trial of  
Friend.

Friend was tried next. His crime was not of so black a dye as that of the three conspirators who had just suffered. He had indeed invited foreign enemies to invade the realm, and had made preparations for joining them. But, though he had been privy to the design of assassination, he had not been a party to it. His large fortune however, and the use which he was well known to have made of it, marked him out as a fit object for punishment. He, like Charnock, asked for counsel, and, like Charnock, asked in vain. The Judges could not relax the law; and the Attorney General would not postpone the trial. The proceedings of that day furnish a strong argument in favour of the Act from the benefit of which Friend was excluded. It is impossible to read them over at this distance of time without feeling compassion for a silly ill educated man, unnerved by extreme danger, and opposed to cool, astute and experienced antagonists. Charnock had defended himself and those who were tried with him as well as any professional advocate could have done. But poor Friend was as helpless as a child. He could do little more than exclaim that he was a Protestant, and that the witnesses against him were Papists, who had dispensations from their priests for perjury, and who believed, that to swear away the lives of heretics was a meritorious work. He was so grossly ignorant of law and history as to imagine that the statute of treasons, passed in the reign of Edward the Third, at a time when there was only one religion in Western Europe, contained a clause providing that no Papist should be a witness, and actually forced the Clerk of the Court to read the whole Act from beginning to end. About his guilt it was impossible

that there could be a doubt in any rational mind. He was convicted; and he would have been convicted if he had been allowed the privileges for which he asked. CHAP.  
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Parkyns came next. He had been deeply concerned in the worst part of the plot, and was, in one respect, less excusable than any of his accomplices: for they were all nonjurors; and he had taken the oaths to the existing government. He too insisted that he ought to be tried according to the provisions of the new Act. But the counsel for the Crown stood on their extreme right; and his request was denied. As he was a man of considerable abilities, and had been bred to the bar, he probably said for himself all that counsel could have said for him; and that all amounted to very little. He was found guilty, and received sentence of death on the evening of the twenty-fourth of March, within six hours of the time when the law of which he had vainly demanded the benefit was to come into force.\*

The execution of the two knights was eagerly expected by the population of London. The States General were informed by their correspondent that, of all sights, that in which the English most delighted was a hanging, and that, of all hangings within the memory of the oldest man, that of Friend and Parkyns excited the greatest interest. The multitude had been incensed against Friend by reports touching the exceeding badness of the beer which he brewed. It was even rumoured that he had, in his zeal for the Jacobite cause, poisoned all the casks which he had furnished to the navy. An innumerable crowd accordingly assembled at Tyburn. Scaffolding had been put up which formed an immense amphitheatre round the gallows. On this scaffolding the wealthier spectators stood, row above row; and expectation was at the height when it was announced that the

\* The trials of Friend and Parkyns will be found, excellently reported, among the State Trials.

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show was deferred. The mob broke up in bad humour, and not without many fights between those who had given money for their places and those who refused to return it.\*

The cause of this severe disappointment was a resolution suddenly passed by the Commons. A member had proposed that a Committee should be sent to the Tower with authority to examine the prisoners, and to hold out to them the hope that they might, by a full and ingenuous confession, obtain the intercession of the House. The debate appears, from the scanty information which has come down to us, to have been a very curious one. Parties seemed to have changed characters. It might have been expected that the Whigs would have been inexorably severe, and that, if there was any tenderness for the unhappy men, that tenderness would have been found among the Tories. But in truth many of the Whigs hoped that they might, by sparing two criminals who had no power to do mischief, be able to detect and destroy numerous criminals high in rank and office. On the other hand, every man who had ever had any dealings direct or indirect with Saint Germain, or who took an interest in any person likely to have had such dealings, looked forward with dread to the disclosures which the captives might, under the strong terrors of death, be induced to make. Seymour, simply because he had gone further in treason than almost any other member of the House, was louder than any other member of the House in exclaiming against all indulgence to his brother traitors. Would the Commons usurp the most sacred prerogative of the Crown? It was for His Majesty, and not for them, to judge whether lives justly forfeited could be without danger spared. The Whigs however carried their point. A Committee, consisting of all the Privy Councillors in the House, set off instantly for Newgate. Friend and Parkyns were interrogated, but to no purpose. They had, after sentence

\* L'Hermitage, April  $\frac{3}{13}$ , 1696.

had been passed on them, shown at first some symptoms of weakness: but their courage had been fortified by the exhortations of nonjuring divines who had been admitted to the prison. The rumour was that Parkyns would have given way but for the entreaties of his daughter, who adjured him to suffer like a man for the good cause. The criminals acknowledged that they had done the acts of which they had been convicted, but, with a resolution which is the more respectable because it seems to have sprung, not from constitutional hardihood, but from sentiments of honour and religion, refused to say any thing which could compromise others.\*

In a few hours the crowd again assembled at Tyburn; and this time the sightseers were not defrauded of their amusement. They saw indeed one sight which they had not expected, and which produced a greater sensation than the execution itself. Jeremy Collier and two other nonjuring divines of less celebrity, named Cook and Snatt, had attended the prisoners in Newgate, and were in the cart under the gallows. When the prayers were over, and just before the hangman did his office, the three schismatical priests stood up, and laid their hands on the heads of the dying men who continued to kneel. Collier pronounced a form of absolution taken from the service for the Visitation of the Sick, and his brethren exclaimed "Amen!"

This ceremony raised a great outcry; and the outcry became louder when, a few hours after the execution, the papers delivered by the two traitors to the Sheriffs were made public. It had been supposed that Parkyns at least would express some repentance for the crime which had brought him to the gallows. Indeed he had, before the Committee of the Commons, owned that the Assassination Plot could not be justified. But, in his last declaration, he avowed his share in that plot, not only

\* Commons' Journals, April 1, 2. 1696; L'Hermitage, April 3, 1696; Van Cleverskirke, of the same date.

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Execu-  
tion of  
Friend  
and Par-  
kyus.

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without a word indicating remorse, but with something which resembled exultation. Was this a man to be absolved by Christian divines, absolved before the eyes of tens of thousands, absolved with rites evidently intended to attract public attention, with rites of which there was no trace in the Book of Common Prayer or in the practice of the Church of England?

In journals, pamphlets and broadsides, the insolence of the three Levites, as they were called, was sharply reprehended. Warrants were soon out. Cook and Snatt were taken and imprisoned: but Collier was able to conceal himself, and, by the help of one of the presses which were at the service of his party, sent forth from his hiding place a defence of his conduct. He declared that he abhorred assassination as much as any of those who railed against him; and his general character warrants us in believing that this declaration was perfectly sincere. But the rash act into which he had been hurried by party spirit furnished his adversaries with very plausible reasons for questioning his sincerity. A crowd of answers to his defence appeared. Pre-eminent among them in importance was a solemn manifesto signed by the two Archbishops and by all the Bishops who were then in London, twelve in number. Even Crewe of Durham and Sprat of Rochester set their names to this document. They condemned the proceedings of the three nonjuring divines, as in form irregular and in substance impious. To remit the sins of impenitent sinners was a profane abuse of the power which Christ had delegated to his ministers. It was not denied that Parkyns had planned an assassination. It was not pretended that he had professed any repentance for planning an assassination. The plain inference was that the divines who absolved him did not think it sinful to assassinate King William. Collier rejoined: but, though a pugnacious controversialist, he on this occasion shrank from close conflict, and made his escape as well as he could under a cloud of quotations from Tertullian,

Cyprian and Jerome, Albaspinæus and Hammond, the Council of Carthage and the Council of Toledo. The public feeling was strongly against the three absolvers. The government however wisely determined not to confer on them the honour of martyrdom. A bill was found against them by the grand jury of Middlesex: but they were not brought to trial. Cook and Snatt were set at liberty after a short detention; and Collier would have been treated with equal lenity if he would have consented to put in bail. But he was determined to do no act which could be construed into a recognition of the usurping government. He was therefore outlawed; and when he died, more than thirty years later, his outlawry had not been reversed.\*

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Parkyns was the last Englishman who was tried for high treason under the old system of procedure. The first who was tried under the new system was Rookwood. He was defended by Sir Bartholomew Shower, who in the preceding reign had made himself unenviably conspicuous as a servile and cruel sycophant, who had obtained from James the Recordership of London when Holt honourably resigned it, and who had, as Recorder, sent soldiers to the gibbet for breaches of military discipline. By his servile cruelty he had earned the nickname of the Manhunter. Shower deserved, if any offender deserved, to be excepted from the Act of Indemnity, and left to the utmost rigour of those laws which he had so shamelessly perverted. But he had been saved by the clemency of William, and had requited that clemency by pertinacious and malignant opposition.\*\* It was doubtless on account of Shower's known leaning towards Jacobitism that he was employed on this occasion. He raised some technical objections which the Court overruled. On the merits of the case he could make no defence. The jury returned

Trials of  
Rook-  
wood,  
Cran-  
burne  
and Lo-  
wick.

\* L'Hermitage, April 7, 1696. The Declaration of the Bishops, Collier's Defence, and Further Defence, and a long legal argument for Cook and Snatt will be found in the Collection of State Trials.

\*\* See the Manhunter, 1690.

CHAP. XXI. a verdict of guilty. Cranburne and Lowick were then tried and  
 1696. convicted. They suffered with Rookwood; and there the executions stopped.\*

The Association.

The temper of the nation was such that the government might have shed much more blood without incurring the reproach of cruelty. The feeling which had been called forth by the discovery of the plot continued during several weeks to increase day by day. Of that feeling the able men who were at the head of the Whig party made a singularly skilful use. They saw that the public enthusiasm, if left without guidance, would exhaust itself in huzzas, healths and bonfires, but might, if wisely guided, be the means of producing a great and lasting effect. The Association, into which the Commons had entered while the King's speech was still in their ears, furnished the means of combining four fifths of the nation in one vast club for the defence of the order of succession with which were inseparably combined the dearest liberties of the English people, and of establishing a test which would distinguish those who were zealous for that order of succession from those who sullenly and reluctantly acquiesced in it. Of the five hundred and thirty members of the Lower House about four hundred and twenty voluntarily subscribed the instrument which recognised William as rightful and lawful King of England. It was moved in the Upper House that the same form should be adopted: but objections were raised by the Tories. Nottingham, ever conscientious, honourable and narrow minded, declared that he could not assent to the words "rightful and lawful." He still held, as he had held from the first, that a prince who had taken the Crown, not by birthright, but by the gift of the Convention, could not properly be so described. William was doubtless King in fact, and, as King in fact, was entitled to the obedience of Christians. "No man," said Nottingham, "has served or

\* State Trials.



will serve His Majesty more faithfully than I. But to this document I cannot set my hand." Rochester and Normanby held similar language. Monmouth, in a speech of two hours and a half, earnestly exhorted the Lords to agree with the Commons. Burnet was vehement on the same side. Wharton, whose father had lately died, and who was now Lord Wharton, appeared in the foremost rank of the Whig peers. But no man distinguished himself more in the debate than one whose life, both public and private, had been one long series of faults and disasters, the incestuous lover of Henrietta Berkeley, the unfortunate lieutenant of Monmouth. He had recently ceased to be called by the tarnished name of Grey of Wark, and was now Earl of Tankerville. He spoke on that day with great force and eloquence for the words, "rightful and lawful." Leeds, after expressing his regret that a question about a mere phrase should have produced dissension among noble persons who were all equally attached to the reigning Sovereign, undertook the office of mediator. He proposed that their Lordships, instead of recognising William as rightful and lawful King, should declare that William had the right by law to the English Crown, and that no other person had any right whatever to that Crown. Strange to say, almost all the Tory peers were perfectly satisfied with what Leeds had suggested. Among the Whigs there was some unwillingness to consent to a change which, slight as it was, might be thought to indicate a difference of opinion between the two Houses on a subject of grave importance. But Devonshire and Portland declared themselves content: their authority prevailed; and the alteration was made. How a rightful and lawful possessor is to be distinguished from a possessor who has the exclusive right by law is a question which a Whig may, without any painful sense of shame, acknowledge to be beyond the reach of his faculties, and leave to be discussed by High Churchmen. Eighty three peers immediately

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CHAP. affixed their names to the amended form of association; and  
 XXI. Rochester was among them. Nottingham, not yet quite satis-  
 1696. fied, asked time for consideration.\*

Beyond the walls of Parliament there was none of this verbal quibbling. The language of the House of Commons was adopted by the whole country. The City of London led the way. Within thirty six hours after the Association had been published under the direction of the Speaker it was subscribed by the Lord Mayor, by the Aldermen, and by almost all the members of the Common Council. The municipal corporations all over the kingdom followed the example. The spring assizes were just beginning; and at every county town the grand jurors and the justices of the peace put down their names. Soon shopkeepers, artisans, yeomen, farmers, husbandmen, came by thousands to the tables where the parchments were laid out. In Westminster there were thirty seven thousand associators, in the Tower Hamlets eight thousand, in Southwark eighteen thousand. The rural parts of Surrey furnished seventeen thousand. At Ipswich all the freemen signed except two. At Warwick all the male inhabitants who had attained the age of sixteen signed, except two Papists and two Quakers. At Taunton, where the memory of the Bloody Circuit was fresh, every man who could write gave in his adhesion to the government. All the churches and all the meeting houses in the town were crowded, as they had never been crowded before, with people who came to thank God for having preserved him whom they fondly called William the Deliverer. Of all the counties of England Lancashire was the most Jacobitical. Yet Lancashire furnished fifty thousand signatures. Of all the great towns of England Norwich was the

\* The best, indeed the only good, account of these debates is given by L'Hermitage, <sup>Feb. 28.</sup> 1696. He says, very truly, "La différence n'est qu'une dispute de mots, le droit qu'on a à une chose selon les loix estant aussy bon qu'il puisse estre."

most Jacobitical. The magistrates of that city were supposed to be in the interest of the exiled dynasty. The nonjurors were numerous, and had, just before the discovery of the plot, seemed to be in unusual spirits and ventured to take unusual liberties. One of the chief divines of the schism had preached a sermon there which gave rise to strange suspicions. He had taken for his text the verse in which the Prophet Jeremiah announced that the day of vengeance was come, that the sword would be drunk with blood, that the Lord God of Hosts had a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates. Very soon it was known that, at the time when this discourse was delivered, swords had actually been sharpening, under the direction of Barclay and Parkyns, for a bloody sacrifice on the north bank of the river Thames. The indignation of the common people of Norwich was not to be restrained. They came in multitudes, though discouraged by the municipal authorities, to plight faith to William, rightful and lawful King. In Norfolk the number of signatures amounted to forty eight thousand, in Suffolk to seventy thousand. Upwards of five hundred rolls went up to London from every part of England. The number of names attached to twenty seven of those rolls appears from the London Gazette to have been three hundred and fourteen thousand. After making the largest allowance for fraud, it seems certain that the Association included the great majority of the adult male inhabitants of England who were able to sign their names. The tide of popular feeling was so strong that a man who was known not to have signed ran considerable risk of being publicly affronted. In many places nobody appeared without wearing in his hat a red riband on which were embroidered the words, "General Association for King William." Once a party of Jacobites had the courage to parade a street in London with an emblematic device which seemed to indicate their contempt for the new Solemn League and Covenant. They were instantly put

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to rout by the mob, and their leader was well ducked. The enthusiasm spread to secluded isles, to factories in foreign countries, to remote colonies. The Association was signed by the rude fishermen of the Scilly Rocks, by the English merchants of Malaga, by the English merchants of Genoa, by the citizens of New York, by the tobacco planters of Virginia and by the sugar planters of Barbadoes.\*

Emboldened by success, the Whig leaders ventured to proceed a step further. They brought into the Lower House a bill for the securing of the King's person and government. By this bill it was provided that whoever, while the war lasted, should come from France into England without the royal license should incur the penalties of treason, that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act should continue to the end of the year 1696, and that all functionaries appointed by William should retain their offices, notwithstanding his death, till his successor should be pleased to dismiss them. The form of Association which the House of Commons had adopted was solemnly ratified; and it was provided that no person should sit in that House or should hold any office, civil or military, without signing. The Lords were indulged in the use of their own form; and nothing was said about the clergy.

The Tories, headed by Finch and Seymour, complained bitterly of this new test, and ventured once to divide, but were defeated. Finch seems to have been heard patiently: but, notwithstanding all Seymour's eloquence, the contemptuous manner in which he spoke of the Association raised a storm against which he could not stand. Loud cries of "the Tower, the Tower," were heard. Haughty and imperious as he was, he was forced to explain away his words, and could scarcely, by apologizing in a manner to which he was little accustomed, save

\* See the London Gazettes during several weeks; L'Hermitage, March 24, April 11, 1696; Postman, April 9. 25. 30. April 3.

himself from the humiliation of being called to the bar and reprimanded on his knees. The bill went up to the Lords, and passed with great speed in spite of the opposition of Rochester and Nottingham.\*

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The nature and extent of the change which the discovery of the Assassination Plot had produced in the temper of the House of Commons and of the nation is strikingly illustrated by the history of a bill entitled a Bill for the further Regulation of Elections of Members of Parliament. The moneyed interest was almost entirely Whig, and was therefore an object of dislike to the Tories. The rapidly growing power of that interest was generally regarded with jealousy by landowners whether they were Whigs or Tories. It was something new and monstrous to see a trader from Lombard Street, who had no tie to the soil of our island, and whose wealth was entirely personal and movable, post down to Devonshire or Sussex with a portmanteau full of guineas, offer himself as candidate for a borough in opposition to a neighbouring gentleman whose ancestors had been regularly returned ever since the Wars of the Roses, and come in at the head of the poll. Yet even this was not the worst. More than one seat in Parliament, it was said, had been bought and sold over a dish of coffee at Garraway's. The purchaser had not been required even to go through the form of showing himself to the electors. Without leaving his counting house in Cheapside, he had been chosen to represent a place which he had never seen. Such things were intolerable. No man, it was said, ought to sit in the English legislature who was not master of some hundreds of acres of English ground.\*\* A bill was accordingly brought in which provided that every

\* Journals of the Commons and Lords; L'Hermitage, April 17. 1696.

\*\* See the Freeholder's Plea against Stockjobbing Elections of Parliament Men, and the Considerations upon Corrupt Elections of Members to serve in Parliament. Both these pamphlets were published in 1701.

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member of the House of Commons must have a certain estate in land. For a knight of a shire the qualification was fixed at five hundred a year; for a burgess at two hundred a year. Early in February this bill was read a second time and referred to a Select Committee. A motion was made that the Committee should be instructed to add a clause enacting that all elections should be by ballot. Whether this motion proceeded from a Whig or a Tory, by what arguments it was supported and on what grounds it was opposed, we have now no means of discovering. We know only that it was rejected without a division.

Before the bill came back from the Committee, some of the most respectable constituent bodies in the kingdom had raised their voices against the new restriction to which it was proposed to subject them. There had in general been little sympathy between the commercial towns and the Universities. For the commercial towns were the chief seats of Whiggism and Non-conformity; and the Universities were zealous for the Crown and the Church. Now, however, Oxford and Cambridge made common cause with London and Bristol. It was hard, said the Academics, that a grave and learned man, sent by a large body of grave and learned men to the Great Council of the nation, should be thought less fit to sit in that Council than a boozing clown who had scarcely literature enough to entitle him to the benefit of clergy. It was hard, said the traders, that a merchant prince, who had been the first magistrate of the first city in the world, whose name on the back of a bill commanded entire confidence at Smyrna and at Genoa, at Hamburg and at Amsterdam, who had at sea ships every one of which was worth a manor, and who had repeatedly, when the liberty and religion of the kingdom were in peril, advanced to the government, at an hour's notice, five or ten thousand pounds, should be supposed to have a less stake in the prosperity of the common-

wealth than a squire who sold his own bullocks and hops over a pot of ale at the nearest market town. On the report, it was moved that the Universities should be excepted: but the motion was lost by a hundred and fifty one votes to a hundred and forty three. On the third reading it was moved that the City of London should be excepted: but it was not thought advisable to divide. The final question that the bill do pass, was carried by a hundred and seventy three votes to a hundred and fifty on the day which preceded the discovery of the Assassination Plot. The Lords agreed to the bill without any amendment.

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William had to consider whether he would give or withhold his assent. The commercial towns of the kingdom, and among them the City of London, which had always stood firmly by him, and which had extricated him many times from great embarrassments, implored his protection. It was represented to him that the Commons were far indeed from being unanimous on this subject; that, in the last stage, the majority had been only twenty three in a full House; that the motion to except the Universities had been lost by a majority of only eight. On full consideration he resolved not to pass the bill. Nobody, he said, could accuse him of acting selfishly on this occasion: his prerogative was not concerned in the matter; and he could have no objection to the proposed law except that it would be mischievous to his people.

On the tenth of April 1696, therefore, the Clerk of the Parliament was commanded to inform the Houses that the King would consider of the Bill for the further Regulation of Elections. Some violent Tories in the House of Commons flattered themselves that they might be able to carry a resolution reflecting on the King. They moved that whoever had advised His Majesty to refuse his assent to their bill was an enemy to him and to the nation. Never was a greater blunder committed. The temper of the House was very different from what it had

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been on the day when the address against Portland's grant had been voted by acclamation. The detection of a murderous conspiracy, the apprehension of a French invasion, had changed every thing. The King was popular. Every day ten or twelve bales of parchment covered with the signatures of associators were laid at his feet. Nothing could be more imprudent than to propose, at such a time, a thinly disguised vote of censure on him. The moderate Tories accordingly separated themselves from their angry and unreasonable brethren. The motion was rejected by two hundred and nineteen votes to seventy; and the House ordered the question and the numbers on both sides to be published, in order that the world might know how completely the attempt to produce a quarrel between the King and the Parliament had failed.\*

Act  
establish-  
ing a Land  
Bank.

The country gentlemen might perhaps have been more inclined to resent the loss of their bill, had they not been put into high goodhumour by another bill which they considered as even more important. The project of a Land Bank had been revived; not in the form in which it had, two years before, been brought under the consideration of the House of Commons, but in a form much less shocking to common sense and less open to ridicule. Chamberlayne indeed protested loudly against all modifications of his plan, and proclaimed, with undiminished confidence, that he would make all his countrymen rich if they would only let him. He was not, he said, the first great discoverer whom princes and statesmen had regarded as a dreamer. Henry the Seventh had, in an evil hour, refused to listen to Christopher Columbus: the consequence had been that England had lost the mines of Mexico and Peru; yet what were the mines of Mexico and Peru to the riches of a nation blessed with an unlimited paper currency? But the united force of reason and

\* The history of this bill will be found in the Journals of the Commons, and in a very interesting despatch of L'Hermitage, April  $\frac{1}{4}$ , 1696.



ridicule had reduced the once numerous sect which followed Chamberlayne to a small and select company of incorrigible fools. Few even of the squires now believed in his two great doctrines; the doctrine that the State can, by merely calling a bundle of old rags ten millions sterling, add ten millions sterling to the riches of the nation; and the doctrine that a lease of land for a term of years may be worth many times the fee simple. But it was still the general opinion of the country gentlemen that a bank, of which it should be the special business to advance money on the security of land, might be a great blessing to the nation. Harley and the Speaker Foley now proposed that such a bank should be established by Act of Parliament, and promised that, if their plan was adopted, the King should be amply supplied with money for the next campaign.

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The Whig leaders, and especially Montague, saw that the scheme was a delusion, that it must speedily fail, and that, before it failed, it might not improbably ruin their own favourite institution, the Bank of England. But on this point they had against them, not only the whole Tory party, but also their master and many of their followers. The necessities of the State were pressing. The offers of the projectors were tempting. The Bank of England had, in return for its charter, advanced to the State only one million at eight per cent. The Land Bank would advance more than two millions and a half at seven per cent. William, whose chief object was to procure money for the service of the year, was little inclined to find fault with any source from which two millions and a half could be obtained. Sunderland, who generally exerted his influence in favour of the Whig leaders, failed them on this occasion. The Whig country gentlemen were delighted by the prospect of being able to repair their stables, replenish their cellars, and give portions to their daughters. It was impossible to contend against such a combi-

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nation of force. A bill was passed which authorised the government to borrow two million five hundred and sixty four thousand pounds at seven per cent. A fund, arising chiefly from a new tax on salt, was set apart for the payment of the interest. If, before the first of August, the subscription for one half of this loan should have been filled, and if one half of the sum subscribed should have been paid into the Exchequer, the subscribers were to become a corporate body, under the name of the National Land Bank. As this bank was expressly intended to accommodate country gentlemen, it was strictly interdicted from lending money on any private security other than a mortgage of land, and was bound to lend on mortgage at least half a million annually. The interest on this half million was not to exceed three and a half per cent, if the payments were quarterly, or four per cent, if the payments were half yearly. At that time the market rate of interest on the best mortgages was full six per cent. The shrewd observers at the Dutch Embassy therefore thought that capitalists would eschew all connection with what must necessarily be a losing concern, and that the subscription would never be half filled up; and it seems strange that any sane person should have thought otherwise.\*

It was vain however to reason against the general infatuation. The Tories exultingly predicted that the Bank of Robert Harley would completely eclipse the Bank of Charles Montague. The bill passed both Houses. On the twenty-seventh of April it received the royal assent; and the Parliament was immediately afterwards prorogued.

\* The Act is 7 & 8 Will. 3. c. 31. Its history may be traced in the Journals.