

CHAPTER XXII.

ON the seventh of May 1696, William landed in Holland.* CHAP.
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Thence he proceeded to Flanders, and took the command of the allied forces, which were collected in the neighbourhood of Ghent. Villeroy and Boufflers were already in the field. All Europe waited impatiently for great news from the Netherlands, but waited in vain. No aggressive movement was made. The object of the generals on both sides was to keep their troops from dying of hunger; and it was an object by no means easily attained. The treasuries both of France and England were empty. Lewis had, during the winter, created with great difficulty and expense a gigantic magazine at Givet on the frontier of his kingdom. The buildings were commodious and of vast extent. The quantity of provender laid up in them for horses was immense. The number of rations for men was commonly estimated at from three to four millions. But early in the spring Athlone and Cohorn had, by a bold and dexterous move, surprised Givet, and had utterly destroyed both storehouses and stores.** Military
opera-
tions in
the Ne-
therlands. France, already fainting from exhaustion, was in no condition to repair such a loss. Sieges such as those of Mons and Namur were operations too costly for her means. The business of her army now was, not to conquer, but to subsist.

The army of William was reduced to straits not less painful. The material wealth of England, indeed, had not been very seriously impaired by the drain which the war had caused: but

* London Gazette, May 4. 1696.

** Ibid. March 12. 16. 1696; Monthly Mercury for March, 1696.

CHAP. she was suffering severely from the defective state of that in-
 XXII. strument by which her material wealth was distributed.
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Commer-
 cial crisis
 in Eng-
 land.

Saturday, the second of May, had been fixed by Parliament as the last day on which the clipped crowns, halfcrowns and shillings were to be received by tale in payment of taxes.* The Exchequer was besieged from dawn till midnight by an immense multitude. It was necessary to call in the guards for the purpose of keeping order. On the following Monday began a cruel agony of a few months, which was destined to be succeeded by many years of almost unbroken prosperity.**

Most of the old silver had vanished. The new silver had scarcely made its appearance. About four millions sterling, in ingots and hammered coin, were lying in the vaults of the Exchequer; and the milled money as yet came forth very slowly from the Mint.*** Alarmists predicted that the wealthiest and most enlightened kingdom in Europe would be reduced to the state of those barbarous societies in which a mat is bought with a hatchet, and a pair of mocassins with a piece of venison.

There were, indeed, some hammered pieces which had escaped mutilation; and sixpences not clipped within the innermost ring were still current. This old money and the new money together made up a scanty stock of silver, which, with the help of gold, was to carry the nation through the summer.† The manufacturers generally contrived, though with extreme difficulty, to pay their workmen in coin.†† The upper classes seem

* The Act provided that the clipped money must be brought in before the fourth of May. As the third was a Sunday, the second was practically the last day.

** L'Hermitage, May 1st. 1696; London Newsletter, May 4., May 6. In the Newsletter the fourth of May is mentioned as "the day so much taken notice of for the universal concern people had in it."

*** London Newsletter, May 21. 1696; Old Postmaster, June 25.; L'Hermitage, May 1st.

† Haynes's Brief Memoirs, Lansdowne MSS. 801.

†† See the petition from Birmingham in the Commons' Journals, Nov. 12. 1696; and the petition from Leicester, Nov. 21.

to have lived to a great extent on credit. Even an opulent man seldom had the means of discharging the weekly bills of his baker and butcher.* A promissory note, however, subscribed by such a man, was readily taken in the district where his means and character were well known. The notes of the wealthy moneychangers of Lombard Street circulated widely.** The paper of the Bank of England did much service, and would have done more, but for the unhappy error into which the Parliament had recently been led by Harley and Foley. The confidence which the public had felt in that powerful and opulent Company had been shaken by the Act which established the Land Bank. It might well be doubted whether there would be room for the two rival institutions; and of the two, the younger seemed to be the favourite of the government and of the legislature. The stock of the Bank of England had gone rapidly down from a hundred and ten to eighty three. Meanwhile the goldsmiths, who had from the first been hostile to that great corporation, were plotting against it. They collected its paper from every quarter; and on the fourth of May, when the Exchequer had just swallowed up most of the old money, and when scarcely any of the new money had been issued, they flocked to Grocers' Hall, and insisted on immediate payment. A single goldsmith demanded thirty thousand pounds. The Directors, in this extremity, acted wisely and firmly. They refused to cash the notes which had been thus maliciously presented, and left the holders to seek a remedy in Westminster Hall. Other creditors, who came in good faith to ask for their due, were paid. The conspirators affected to triumph over the powerful body, which

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* "Money exceeding scarce, so that none was paid or received: but all was on trust." — Evelyn, May 13. And again, on June 11.: "Want of current money to carry on the smallest concerns, even for daily provisions in the markets."

** L'Hermitage, ^{May 23.}_{June 1.} See a Letter of Dryden to Tonson, which Malone, with great probability, supposes to have been written at this time.

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they hated and dreaded. The bank which had recently begun to exist under such splendid auspices, which had seemed destined to make a revolution in commerce and in finance, which had been the boast of London and the envy of Amsterdam, was already insolvent, ruined, dishonoured. Wretched pasquinades were published, the Trial of the Land Bank for murdering the Bank of England, the last Will and Testament of the Bank of England, the Epitaph of the Bank of England, the Inquest on the Bank of England. But, in spite of all this clamour and all this wit, the correspondents of the States General reported, that the Bank of England had not really suffered in the public esteem, and that the conduct of the goldsmiths was generally condemned.*

The Directors soon found it impossible to procure silver enough to meet every claim which was made on them in good faith. They then bethought them of a new expedient. They made a call of twenty per cent on the proprietors, and thus raised a sum which enabled them to give every applicant fifteen per cent in milled money on what was due to him. They returned him his note, after making a minute upon it that part had been paid.** A few notes thus marked are still preserved among the archives of the Bank, as memorials of that terrible year. The paper of the Corporation continued to circulate: but the value fluctuated violently from day to day, and indeed from hour to hour; for the public mind was in so excitable a state that the most absurd lie which a stockjobber could invent sufficed to send the price up or down. At one time the discount was only six per cent, at another time twenty four per cent. A tenpound note, which had been taken in the morning as worth

* L'Hermitage to the States General, May $\frac{1}{3}$.; Paris Gazette, June $\frac{1}{2}$.; Trial and Condemnation of the Land Bank at Exeter Change for murdering the Bank of England at Grocers' Hall, 1696. The Will and the Epitaph will be found in the Trial.

** L'Hermitage, June $\frac{1}{2}$. 1696.

more than nine pounds, was often worth less than eight pounds before night.*

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Another, and, at that conjuncture, a more effectual substitute for a metallic currency, owed its existence to the ingenuity of Charles Montague. He had succeeded in engrafting on Harley's Land Bank Bill a clause which empowered the government to issue negotiable paper bearing interest at the rate of threepence a day on a hundred pounds. In the midst of the general distress and confusion appeared the first Exchequer Bills, drawn for various amounts from a hundred pounds down to five pounds. These instruments were rapidly distributed over the kingdom by the post, and were every where welcome. The Jacobites talked violently against them in every coffeehouse, and wrote much detestable verse against them, but to little purpose. The success of the plan was such, that the ministers at one time resolved to issue twentyshilling bills, and even fiftenshilling bills, for the payment of the troops. But it does not appear that this resolution was carried into effect.**

* On this subject see the Short History of the Last Parliament, 1699; Narcissus Luttrell's Diary; the newspapers of 1696 passim, and the letters of L'Hermitage passim. See also the petition of the Clothiers of Gloucester in the Commons' Journal, Nov. 27. 1696. Oldmixon, who had been himself a sufferer, writes on this subject with even more than his usual acrimony.

** See L'Hermitage, June 12, June 23, June 30, Aug. 1r, Aug. 28, July 3, July 10, Sept. 7. 1696. The Postman of August 15. mentions the great benefit derived from the Exchequer Bills. The Pegasus of Aug. 24. says: "The Exchequer Bills do more and more obtain with the public; and 'tis no wonder." The Pegasus of Aug. 28. says: "They pass as money from hand to hand: 'tis observed that such as cry them down are ill affected to the government." "They are found by experience," says the Postman of the seventh of May following, "to be of extraordinary use to the merchants and traders of the City of London, and all other parts of the kingdom." I will give one specimen of the unmetrical and almost unintelligible doggerel which the Jacobite poets published on this subject: —

"Pray, Sir, did you hear of the late proclamation,
Of sending paper for payment quite thro' the nation?"

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It is difficult to imagine how, without the Exchequer Bills, the government of the country could have been carried on during that year. Every source of revenue had been affected by the state of the currency; and one source, on which the Parliament had confidently reckoned for the means of defraying more than half the charge of the war, had yielded not a single farthing.

Financial
crisis.

The sum expected from the Land Bank was near two million six hundred thousand pounds. Of this sum one half was to be subscribed, and one quarter paid up by the first of August. The King, just before his departure, had signed a warrant appointing certain commissioners, among whom Harley and Foley were the most eminent, to receive the names of the contributors.* A great meeting of persons interested in the scheme was held in the Hall of the Middle Temple. One office was opened at Exeter Change, another at Mercers' Hall. Forty agents went down into the country, and announced to the landed gentry of every shire the approach of the golden age of high rents and low interest. The Council of Regency, in order to set an example to the nation, put down the King's name for five thousand pounds; and the newspapers assured the world that the subscription would speedily be filled.** But when three weeks had passed away, it was found that only fifteen hundred pounds had been added to the five thousand contributed by the King. Many wondered at this: yet there was little cause for wonder. The sum which the friends of the project had undertaken to raise was a sum which only the enemies of the project could furnish. The country gentlemen wished well to Harley's scheme: but they

Yes, Sir, I have: they're your Montague's notes,
Tinctured and coloured by your Parliament votes.
But 'tis plain on the people to be but a toast,
They come by the carrier and go by the post."

* Commons' Journals, Nov. 25. 1696.

** L'Hermitage, June 12. 1696; Commons' Journal, Nov. 25.; Postman, May 5., June 4., July 2.

wished well to it because they wanted to borrow money on easy terms; and, wanting to borrow money, they of course were not able to lend it. The moneyed class alone could supply what was necessary to the existence of the Land Bank; and the Land Bank was avowedly intended to diminish the profits, to destroy the political influence and to lower the social position of the moneyed class. As the usurers did not choose to take on themselves the expense of putting down usury, the whole plan failed in a manner which, if the aspect of public affairs had been less alarming, would have been exquisitely ludicrous. The day drew near. The neatly ruled pages of the subscription book at Mercers' Hall were still blank. The Commissioners stood aghast. In their distress they applied to the government for indulgence. Many great capitalists, they said, were desirous to subscribe, but stood aloof because the terms were too hard. There ought to be some relaxation. Would the Council of Regency consent to an abatement of three hundred thousand pounds? The finances were in such a state, and the letters in which the King represented his wants were so urgent, that the Council of Regency hesitated. The Commissioners were asked whether they would engage to raise the whole sum, with this abatement. Their answer was unsatisfactory. They did not venture to say that they could command more than eight hundred thousand pounds. The negotiation was, therefore, broken off. The first of August came; and the whole amount contributed by the whole nation to the magnificent undertaking from which so much had been expected was two thousand one hundred pounds.*

Just at this conjuncture Portland arrived from the Continent. He had been sent by William with charge to obtain money, at whatever cost and from whatever quarter. The King had strained his private credit in Holland to procure bread for his

* L'Hermitage, July $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{2}$. 1696; Commons' Journals, Nov. 25.; Paris Gazette, June 30., August 25.; Old Postmaster, July 9.

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army. But all was insufficient. He wrote to his Ministers that, unless they could send him a speedy supply, his troops would either rise in mutiny or desert by thousands. He knew, he said, that it would be hazardous to call Parliament together during his absence. But, if no other resource could be devised, that hazard must be run.* The Council of Regency, in extreme embarrassment, began to wish that the terms, hard as they were, which had been offered by the Commissioners at Mercers' Hall had been accepted. The negotiation was renewed. Shrewsbury, Godolphin and Portland, as agents for the King, had several conferences with Harley and Foley, who had recently pretended that eight hundred thousand pounds were ready to be subscribed to the Land Bank. The Ministers gave assurances, that, if, at this conjuncture, even half that sum were advanced, those who had done this service to the State should, in the next session, be incorporated as a National Land Bank. Harley and Foley at first promised, with an air of confidence, to raise what was required. But they soon went back from their word: they showed a great inclination to be punctilious and quarrelsome about trifles: at length the eight hundred thousand pounds dwindled to forty thousand; and even the forty thousand could be had only on hard conditions.** So ended the great delusion of the Land Bank. The commission expired; and the offices were closed.

And now the Council of Regency, almost in despair, had recourse to the Bank of England. Two hundred thousand pounds was the very smallest sum which would suffice to meet the King's most pressing wants. Would the Bank of England advance that sum? The capitalists who had the chief sway in that corporation were in bad humour, and not without reason.

* William to Heinsius, July 30. 1696; William to Shrewsbury, July 23. 30. 31.

** Shrewsbury to William, July 28. 31., Aug. 4. 1696; L'Hermitage, Aug. 11.

But fair words, earnest entreaties and large promises were not spared: all the influence of Montague, which was justly great, was exerted: the Directors promised to do their best: but they apprehended that it would be impossible for them to raise the money without making a second call of twenty per cent on their constituents. It was necessary that the question should be submitted to a General Court: in such a court more than six hundred persons were entitled to vote; and the result might well be doubted. The proprietors were summoned to meet on the fifteenth of August at Grocers' Hall. During the painful interval of suspense, Shrewsbury wrote to his master in language more tragic than is often found in official letters. "If this should not succeed, God knows what can be done. Any thing must be tried and ventured rather than lie down and die."* On the fifteenth of August, a great epoch in the history of the Bank, the General Court was held. In the chair sate Sir John Houblon, the Governor, who was also Lord Mayor of London, and, what would in our time be thought strange, a Commissioner of the Admiralty. Sir John, in a speech, every word of which had been written and had been carefully considered by the Directors, explained the case, and implored the assembly to stand by King William. There was at first a little murmuring. "If our notes would do," it was said, "we should be most willing to assist His Majesty: but two hundred thousand pounds in hard money at a time like this —." The Governor announced explicitly that nothing but gold or silver would supply the necessities of the army in Flanders. At length the question was put to the vote; and every hand in the Hall was held up for sending the money. The letters from the Dutch Embassy informed the States General that the events of that day had bound the Bank and the government together in close alliance, and that several of the

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* Shrewsbury to William, Aug. 7. 1696; L'Hermitage, Aug. 14.; London Gazette, Aug. 13.

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 XXII. merely in order to give a pledge of their attachment to the body
 1696. which had rendered so great a service to the State.*

Efforts to
 restore
 the cur-
 rency.

Meanwhile strenuous exertions were making to hasten the recoinage. Since the Restoration the Mint had, like every other public establishment in the kingdom, been a nest of idlers and jobbers. The important office of Warden, worth between six and seven hundred a year, had become a mere sinecure, and had been filled by a succession of fine gentlemen, who were well known at the hazard table of Whitehall, but who never condescended to come near the Tower. This office had just become vacant, and Montague had obtained it for Newton.** The ability, the industry and the strict uprightness of the great philosopher speedily produced a complete revolution throughout the department which was under his direction.*** He devoted

* L'Hermitage, Aug. 1³/₈. 1696. Among the records of the Bank is a resolution of the Directors prescribing the very words which Sir John Houblon was to use. William's sense of the service done by the Bank on this occasion is expressed in his letter to Shrewsbury, of ^{Aug. 24.} _{Sept. 3.} One of the Directors, in a letter concerning the Bank, printed in 1697, says: "The Directors could not have answered it to their members, had it been for any less occasion than the preservation of the kingdom."

** Haynes's Brief Memoires; Lansdowne MSS. 801. Montague's friendly letter to Newton, announcing the appointment, has been repeatedly printed. It bears date March 19. 169⁴/₂.

*** I have very great pleasure in quoting the words of Haynes, an able, experienced and practical man, who had been in the habit of transacting business with Newton. They have never, I believe, been printed. "Mr. Isaac Newton, public Professor of the Mathematicks in Cambridge, the greatest philosopher, and one of the best men of this age, was, by a great and wise statesman, recommended to the favour of the late King for Warden of the King's Mint and Exchanges, for which he was peculiarly qualified, because of his extraordinary skill in numbers, and his great integrity, by the first of which he could judge correctly of the Mint accounts and transactions as soon as he entered upon his office; and by the latter — I mean his integrity — he sett a standard to the conduct and behaviour of every officer and clerk in the Mint. Well had it been for the publick, had he acted a few years sooner in that situation." It is interesting to compare this testimony, borne by a man who thoroughly understood

himself to his task with an activity which left him no time to spare for those pursuits in which he had surpassed Archimedes and Galileo. Till the great work was completely done, he resisted firmly, and almost angrily, every attempt that was made by men of science, here or on the Continent, to draw him away from his official duties.* The old officers of the Mint had thought it a great feat to coin silver to the amount of fifteen thousand pounds in a week. When Montague talked of thirty or forty thousand, these men of form and precedent pronounced the thing impracticable. But the energy of the young Chancellor of the Exchequer and of his friend the Warden accomplished far greater wonders. Soon nineteen mills were going at once in the Tower. As fast as men could be trained to the work in London, bands of them were sent off to other parts of the kingdom. Mints were established at Bristol, York, Exeter, Norwich and Chester. This arrangement was in the highest degree popular. The machinery and the workmen were welcomed to the new stations with the ringing of bells and the firing of guns. The weekly issue increased to sixty thousand pounds, to eighty thousand, to a hundred thousand, and at length to a hundred and twenty thousand.** Yet even this issue, though great, not only

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the business of the Mint, with the childish talk of Pope. "Sir Isaac Newton," said Pope, "though so deep in algebra and fluxions, could not readily make up a common account; and, whilst he was Master of the Mint, used to get somebody to make up the accounts for him." Some of the statesmen with whom Pope lived might have told him that it is not always from ignorance of arithmetic that persons at the head of great departments leave to clerks the business of casting up pounds, shillings and pence.

* "I do not love," he wrote to Flamsteed, "to be printed on every occasion, much less to be dunned and teased by foreigners about mathematical things, or to be thought by our own people to be trifling away my time about them, when I am about the King's business."

** Hopton Haynes's Brief Memoires; Lansdowne MSS. 801.; the Old Postmaster, July 4. 1696; the Postman, May 30., July 4., September 12. 19., October 8.; L'Hermitage's despatches of this summer and autumn, passim.

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beyond precedent, but beyond hope, was scanty when compared with the demands of the nation. Nor did all the newly stamped silver pass into circulation: for during the summer and autumn those politicians who were for raising the denomination of the coin were active and clamorous; and it was generally expected that, as soon as the Parliament should reassemble, the standard would be lowered. Of course no person who thought it probable that he should, at a day not far distant, be able to pay a debt of a pound with three crown pieces instead of four, was willing to part with a crown piece till that day arrived. Most of the milled pieces were therefore hoarded.* May, June and July passed away without any perceptible increase in the quantity of good money. It was not till August that the keenest observer could discern the first faint signs of returning prosperity.**

Distress
of the
people:
their
temper
and con-
duct.

The distress of the common people was severe, and was aggravated by the follies of magistrates and by the arts of malecontents. A squire who was one of the quorum would sometimes think it his duty to administer to his neighbours, at this trying conjuncture, what seemed to him to be equity; and as no two of these rural prætors had exactly the same notion of what was equitable, their edicts added confusion to confusion. In one parish people were, in outrageous violation of the law, threatened with the stocks, if they refused to take clipped shillings by tale. In the next parish it was dangerous to pay such shillings except by weight.*** The enemies of the govern-

* Paris Gazette, Aug. 11. 1696.

** On the 7th of August L'Hermitage remarked for the first time that money seemed to be more abundant.

*** Compare Edmund Bohn's Letter to Carey of the 31st of July 1696 with the Paris Gazette of the same date. Bohn's description of the state of Norfolk is coloured, no doubt, by his constitutionally gloomy temper, and by the feeling with which he, not unnaturally, regarded the House of Commons. His statistics are not to be trusted; and his predictions were signally falsified. But he may be believed as to plain facts which happened in his immediate neighbourhood.

ment, at the same time, laboured indefatigably in their vocation. They harangued in every place of public resort, from the Chocolate House in Saint James's Street to the sanded kitchen of the alehouse on the village green. In verse and prose they incited the suffering multitude to rise up in arms. Of the tracts which they published at this time, the most remarkable was written by a deprived priest named Grascombe, of whose ferocity and scurrility the most respectable nonjurors had long been ashamed. He now did his best to persuade the rabble to tear in pieces those members of Parliament who had voted for the restoration of the currency.* It would be too much to say that the malignant industry of this man and of men like him produced no effect on a population which was doubtless severely tried. There were riots in several parts of the country, but riots which were suppressed with little difficulty, and, as far as can be discovered, without the shedding of a drop of blood.** In one place a crowd of poor ignorant creatures, excited by some knavish agitator, besieged the house of a Whig member of Parliament, and clamorously insisted on having their short money changed. The gentleman consented, and desired to know how much they had brought. After some delay they were able to produce a single clipped halfcrown.*** Such tumults as this were at a distance exaggerated into rebellions and massacres. At Paris it was gravely asserted in print that, in an English town which was not named, a soldier and a but-

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* As to Grascombe's character, and the opinion entertained of him by the most estimable Jacobites, see the Life of Kettlewell, part iii., section 55. Lee, the compiler of the Life of Kettlewell, mentions with just censure some of Grascombe's writings, but makes no allusion to the worst of them, the Account of the Proceedings in the House of Commons in relation to the Recoinage of the Clipped Money, and falling the price of Guineas. That Grascombe was the author, was proved before a Committee of the House of Commons. See the Journals, Nov. 30. 1696.

** L'Hermitage, June 12., July 7., 1696.

*** See the Answer to Grascombe, entitled Reflections on a Scandalous Libel.

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cher had quarrelled about a piece of money, that the soldier had killed the butcher, that the butcher's man had snatched up a cleaver and killed the soldier, that a great fight had followed, and that fifty dead bodies had been left on the ground.* The truth was, that the behaviour of the great body of the people was beyond all praise. The Judges when, in September, they returned from their circuits, reported that the temper of the nation was excellent.** There was a patience, a reasonableness, a good nature, a good faith, which nobody had anticipated. Every body felt that nothing but mutual help and mutual forbearance could prevent the dissolution of society. A hard creditor, who sternly demanded payment to the day in milled money, was pointed at in the streets, and was beset by his own creditors with demands which soon brought him to reason. Much uneasiness had been felt about the troops. It was scarcely possible to pay them regularly: if they were not paid regularly, it might well be apprehended that they would supply their wants by rapine; and such rapine it was certain that the nation, altogether unaccustomed to military exaction and oppression, would not tamely endure. But, strange to say, there was, through this trying year, a better understanding than had ever been known between the soldiers and the rest of the community. The gentry, the farmers, the shopkeepers supplied the redcoats with necessaries in a manner so friendly and liberal that there was no brawling and no marauding. "Severely as these difficulties have been felt," L'Hermitage writes, "they have produced one happy effect: they have shown how good the spirit of the country is. No person, however favourable his opinion of the English may have been, could have expected that a time of such suffering would have been a time of such tranquillity."***

* Paris Gazette, Sept. 15. 1696.

** L'Hermitage, Oct. 7. 1696.

*** L'Hermitage. July 30., Oct. 12. 1696.

Men who loved to trace, in the strangely complicated maze of human affairs, the marks of more than human wisdom, were of opinion that, but for the interference of a gracious Providence, the plan so elaborately devised by great statesmen and great philosophers would have failed completely and ignominiously. Often, since the Revolution, the English had been sullen and querulous, unreasonably jealous of the Dutch, and disposed to put the worst construction on every act of the King. Had the fourth of May found our ancestors in such a mood, it can scarcely be doubted that sharp distress, irritating minds already irritable, would have caused an outbreak which must have shaken and might have subverted the throne of William. Happily, at the moment at which the loyalty of the nation was put to the most severe test, the King was more popular than he had ever been since the day on which the Crown was tendered to him in the Banqueting House. The plot which had been laid against his life had excited general disgust and horror. His reserved manners, his foreign attachments were forgotten. He had become an object of personal interest and of personal affection to his people. They were every where coming in crowds to sign the instrument which bound them to defend and to avenge him. They were every where carrying about in their hats the badges of their loyalty to him. They could hardly be restrained from inflicting summary punishment on the few who still dared openly to question his title. Jacobite was now a synonyme for cutthroat. Noted Jacobite laymen had just planned a foul murder. Noted Jacobite priests had, in the face of day, and in the administration of a solemn ordinance of religion, indicated their approbation of that murder. Many honest and pious men, who thought that their allegiance was still due to James, had indignantly relinquished all connection with zealots who seemed to think that a righteous end justified the most unrighteous means. Such was the state of public

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CHAP. feeling during the summer and autumn of 1696; and therefore
 XXII. it was that hardships which, in any of the seven preceding
 1696. years, would certainly have produced a rebellion, and might
 perhaps have produced a counterrevolution, did not produce
 a single tumult too serious to be suppressed by the constable's
 staff.

Negotia-
 tions with
 France:
 the Duke
 of Savoy
 deserts
 the coa-
 lition.

Nevertheless, the effect of the commercial and financial crisis in England was felt through all the fleets and armies of the coalition. The great source of subsidies was dry. No important military operation could any where be attempted. Meanwhile overtures tending to peace had been made, and a negotiation had been opened. Callieres, one of the ablest of the many able envoys in the service of France, had been sent to the Netherlands, and had held many conferences with Dykvelt. Those conferences might perhaps have come to a speedy and satisfactory close, had not France, at this time, won a great diplomatic victory in another quarter. Lewis had, during seven years, been scheming and labouring in vain to break the great array of potentates whom the dread of his might and of his ambition had brought together and kept together. But, during seven years, all his arts had been baffled by the skill of William; and, when the eighth campaign opened, the confederacy had not been weakened by a single desertion. Soon however it began to be suspected that the Duke of Savoy was secretly treating with the enemy. He solemnly assured Galway, who represented England at the Court of Turin, that there was not the slightest ground for such suspicions, and sent to William letters filled with professions of zeal for the common cause, and with earnest entreaties for more money. This dissimulation continued till a French army, commanded by Catinat, appeared in Piedmont. Then the Duke threw off his disguise, concluded peace with France, joined his troops to those of Catinat, marched into the Milanese, and informed the allies whom he

had just abandoned that, unless they wished to have him for an enemy, they must declare Italy neutral ground. The Courts of Vienna and Madrid, in great dismay, submitted to the terms which he dictated. William expostulated and protested in vain. His influence was no longer what it had been. The general opinion of Europe was, that the riches and the credit of England were completely exhausted; and both her confederates and her enemies imagined that they might safely treat her with indignity. Spain, true to her invariable maxim that every thing ought to be done for her and nothing by her, had the effrontery to reproach the Prince to whom she owed it that she had not lost the Netherlands and Catalonia, because he had not sent troops and ships to defend her possessions in Italy. The Imperial ministers formed and executed resolutions gravely affecting the interests of the coalition without consulting him who had been the author and the soul of the coalition.* Lewis had, after the failure of the Assassination Plot, made up his mind to the disagreeable necessity of recognising William, and had authorised Callieres to make a declaration to that effect. But the defection of Savoy, the neutrality of Italy, the disunion among the allies, and, above all, the distresses of England, exaggerated as they were in all the letters which the Jacobites of Saint Germain received from the Jacobites of London, produced a change. The tone of Callieres became high and arrogant: he went back from his word, and refused to give any pledge that his master would acknowledge the Prince of Orange as King of Great Britain. The joy was great among the non-jurors. They had always, they said, been certain that the Great Monarch would not be so unmindful of his own glory and of the common interest of Sovereigns as to abandon the cause

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* The Monthly Mercuries; Correspondence between Shrewsbury and Galway; William to Heinsius, July 23. 30. 1696; Memoir of the Marquess of Leganes.

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of his unfortunate guests, and to call an usurper his brother. They knew from the best authority that His Most Christian Majesty had lately, at Fontainebleau, given satisfactory assurances on this subject to King James. Indeed, there is reason to believe that the project of an invasion of our island was again seriously discussed at Versailles.* Catinat's army was now at liberty. France, relieved from all apprehension on the side of Savoy, might spare twenty thousand men for a descent on England; and, if the misery and discontent here were such as was generally reported, the nation might be disposed to receive foreign deliverers with open arms.

So gloomy was the prospect which lay before William, when, in the autumn of 1696, he quitted his camp in the Netherlands for England. His servants here meanwhile were looking forward to his arrival with very strong and very various emotions. The whole political world had been thrown into confusion by a cause which did not at first appear commensurate to such an effect.

Search
for Jaco-
bite con-
spirators
in Eng-
land;
Sir John
Fenwick.

During his absence, the search for the Jacobites who had been concerned in the plots of the preceding winter had not been intermitted; and of these Jacobites none was in greater peril than Sir John Fenwick. His birth, his connections, the high situations which he had filled, the indefatigable activity with which he had, during several years, laboured to subvert the government, and the personal insolence with which he had treated the deceased Queen, marked him out as a man fit to be made an example. He succeeded, however, in concealing himself from the officers of justice till the first heat of pursuit was over. In his hiding place he thought of an ingenious device which might, as he conceived, save him from the fate of his friends Charnock and Parkyns. Two witnesses were ne-

* William to Heinsius, Aug. 27, Sept. 6, Nov. 15, Nov. 17, 1696; Prior to Lexington, Nov. 17; Villiers to Shrewsbury, Nov. 13.

cessary to convict him. It appeared from what had passed on the trials of his accomplices, that there were only two witnesses who could prove his guilt, Porter and Goodman. His life was safe if either of these men could be persuaded to abscond.

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Fenwick was not the only person who had strong reason to wish that Porter or Goodman, or both, might be induced to leave England. Aylesbury had been arrested, and committed to the Tower; and he well knew that, if these men appeared against him, his head would be in serious danger. His friends and Fenwick's raised what was thought a sufficient sum; and two Irishmen, or, in the phrase of the newspapers of that day, bogtrotters, a barber named Clancy, and a disbanded captain named Donelagh, undertook the work of corruption.

The first attempt was made on Porter. Clancy contrived to fall in with him at a tavern, threw out significant hints, and, finding that those hints were favourably received, opened a regular negotiation. The terms offered were alluring; three hundred guineas down, three hundred more as soon as the witness should be beyond sea, a handsome annuity for life, a free pardon from King James, and a secure retreat in France. Porter seemed inclined, and perhaps was really inclined, to consent. He said that he still was what he had been, that he was at heart attached to the good cause, but that he had been tried beyond his strength. Life was sweet. It was easy for men who had never been in danger to say that none but a villain would save himself by hanging his associates: but a few hours in Newgate, with the near prospect of a journey on a sledge to Tyburn, would teach such boasters to be more charitable. After repeatedly conferring with Clancy, Porter was introduced to Fenwick's wife, Lady Mary, a sister of the Earl of Carlisle. Every thing was soon settled. Donelagh made the arrangements for the flight. A boat was in waiting. The letters which were to secure to the fugitive the protection of King James were

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prepared by Fenwick. The hour and place were fixed at which Porter was to receive the first instalment of the promised reward. But his heart misgave him. He had, in truth, gone such lengths that it would have been madness in him to turn back. He had sent Charnock, King, Keyes, Friend, Parkyns, Rookwood, Cranburne, to the gallows. It was impossible that such a Judas could ever be really forgiven. In France, among the friends and comrades of those whom he had destroyed, his life would not be worth one day's purchase. No pardon under the Great Seal would avert the stroke of the avenger of blood. Nay, who could say that the bribe now offered was not a bait intended to lure the victim to the place where a terrible doom awaited him? Porter resolved to be true to that government under which alone he could be safe: he carried to Whitehall information of the whole intrigue; and he received full instructions from the ministers. On the eve of the day fixed for his departure he had a farewell meeting with Clancy at a tavern. Three hundred guineas were counted out on the table. Porter pocketed them, and gave a signal. Instantly several messengers from the office of the Secretary of State rushed into the room, and produced a warrant. The unlucky barber was carried off to prison, tried for his offence, convicted and pilloried.*

Capture
of Fen-
wick.

This mishap made Fenwick's situation more perilous than ever. At the next sessions for the City of London a bill of indictment against him, for high treason, was laid before the grand jury. Porter and Goodman appeared as witnesses for the Crown; and the bill was found. Fenwick now thought that it was high time to steal away to the Continent. Arrangements

* My account of the attempt to corrupt Porter is taken from his examination before the House of Commons on Nov. 16. 1696, and from the following sources: Burnet, ii. 183.; L'Hermitage to the States General, May 1st, 12. 1696; the Postboy, May 9.; the Postman, May 9.; Narcissus Luttrell's Diary; London Gazette, Oct. 19. 1696.

were made for his passage. He quitted his hiding place, and repaired to Romney Marsh. There he hoped to find shelter till the vessel which was to convey him across the Channel should arrive. For, though Hunt's establishment had been broken up, there were still in that dreary region smugglers who carried on more than one lawless trade. It chanced that two of these men had just been arrested on a charge of harbouring traitors. The messenger who had taken them into custody was returning to London with them, when, on the high road, he met Fenwick face to face. Unfortunately for Fenwick, no face in England was better known than his. "It is Sir John," said the officer to the prisoners: "Stand by me, my good fellows, and, I warrant you, you will have your pardons, and a bag of guineas besides." The offer was too tempting to be refused: but Fenwick was better mounted than his assailants: he dashed through them, pistol in hand, and was soon out of sight. They pursued him: the hue and cry was raised: the bells of all the parish churches of the Marsh rang out the alarm: the whole country was up: every path was guarded: every thicket was beaten: every hut was searched; and at length the fugitive was found in bed. Just then a bark, of very suspicious appearance, came in sight: she soon approached the shore, and showed English colours: but to the practised eyes of the Kentish fishermen she looked much like a French privateer. It was not difficult to guess her errand. After waiting a short time in vain for her passenger, she stood out to sea.*

Fenwick, unluckily for himself, was able so far to elude the vigilance of those who had charge of him as to scrawl with a lead pencil a short letter to his wife. Every line contained evidence of his guilt. All, he wrote, was over: he was a dead

* London Gazette; Narcissus Luttrell; L'Hermitage, June 12.; Postman, June 11.

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man, unless, indeed, his friends could, by dint of solicitation, obtain a pardon for him. Perhaps the united entreaties of all the Howards might succeed. He would go abroad; he would solemnly promise never again to set foot on English ground, and never to draw sword against the government. Or would it be possible to bribe a juryman or two to starve out the rest? "That," he wrote, "or nothing can save me." This billet was intercepted in its way to the post, and sent up to Whitehall. Fenwick was soon carried to London and brought before the Lords Justices. At first he held high language and bade defiance to his accusers. He was told that he had not always been so confident; and his letter to his wife was laid before him. He had not till then been aware that it had fallen into hands for which it was not intended. His distress and confusion became great. He felt that, if he were instantly sent before a jury, a conviction was inevitable. One chance remained. If he could delay his trial for a short time, the judges would leave town for their circuits: a few weeks would be gained; and in the course of a few weeks something might be done.

Fenwick's
confession.

He addressed himself particularly to the Lord Steward, Devonshire, with whom he had formerly had some connection of a friendly kind. The unhappy man declared that he threw himself entirely on the royal mercy, and offered to disclose all that he knew touching the plots of the Jacobites. That he knew much nobody could doubt. Devonshire advised his colleagues to postpone the trial till the pleasure of William could be known. This advice was taken. The King was informed of what had passed; and he soon sent an answer directing Devonshire to receive the prisoner's confession in writing, and to send it over to the Netherlands with all speed.*

Fenwick had now to consider what he should confess. Had

* Life of William III., 1703; Vernon's evidence given in his place in the House of Commons, Nov. 16. 1696.

he, according to his promise, revealed all that he knew, there can be no doubt that his evidence would have seriously affected many Jacobite noblemen, gentlemen and clergymen. But, though he was very unwilling to die, attachment to his party was in his mind a stronger sentiment than the fear of death. The thought occurred to him that he might construct a story, which might possibly be considered as sufficient to earn his pardon, which would at least put off his trial some months, yet which would not injure a single sincere adherent of the banished dynasty, nay, which would cause distress and embarrassment to the enemies of that dynasty, and which would fill the Court, the Council, and the Parliament of William with fears and animosities. He would divulge nothing that could affect those true Jacobites who had repeatedly awaited, with pistols loaded and horses saddled, the landing of the rightful King accompanied by a French army. But if there were false Jacobites who had mocked their banished Sovereign year after year with professions of attachment and promises of service, and yet had, at every great crisis, found some excuse for disappointing him, and who were at that moment among the chief supports of the usurper's throne, why should they be spared? That there were such false Jacobites, high in political office and in military command, Fenwick had good reason to believe. He could indeed say nothing against them to which a Court of Justice would have listened: for none of them had ever entrusted him with any message or letter for France; and all that he knew about their treachery he had learned at second hand and third hand. But of their guilt he had no doubt. One of them was Marlborough. He had, after betraying James to William, promised to make reparation by betraying William to James, and had, at last, after much shuffling, again betrayed James and made peace with William. Godolphin had practised similar

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deception. He had long been sending fair words to Saint Germain: in return for those fair words he had received a pardon; and, with this pardon in his secret drawer, he had continued to administer the finances of the existing government. To ruin such a man would be a just punishment for his baseness, and a great service to King James. Still more desirable was it to blast the fame and to destroy the influence of Russell and Shrewsbury. Both were distinguished members of that party which had, under different names, been, during three generations, implacably hostile to the Kings of the House of Stuart. Both had taken a great part in the Revolution. The names of both were subscribed to the instrument which had invited the Prince of Orange to England. One of them was now his Minister for Maritime Affairs; the other his Principal Secretary of State; but neither had been constantly faithful to him. Both had, soon after his accession, bitterly resented his wise and magnanimous impartiality, which, to their minds, disordered by party spirit, seemed to be unjust and ungrateful partiality for the Tory faction; and both had, in their spleen, listened to agents from Saint Germain. Russell had vowed by all that was most sacred that he would himself bring back his exiled Sovereign. But the vow was broken as soon as it had been uttered; and he to whom the royal family had looked as to a second Monk had crushed the hopes of that family at La Hogue. Shrewsbury had not gone such lengths. Yet he too, while out of humour with William, had tampered with the agents of James. With the power and reputation of these two great men was closely connected the power and reputation of the whole Whig party. That party, after some quarrels, which were in truth quarrels of lovers, was now cordially reconciled to William, and bound to him by the strongest ties. If those ties could be dissolved, if he could be induced to regard with distrust and aversion the only set of men which was on principle

and with enthusiasm devoted to his interests, his enemies would indeed have reason to rejoice.

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With such views as these Fenwick delivered to Devonshire a paper so cunningly composed that it would probably have brought some severe calamity on the Prince to whom it was addressed, had not that Prince been a man of singularly clear judgment and singularly lofty spirit. The paper contained scarcely any thing respecting those Jacobite plots in which the writer had been himself concerned, and of which he intimately knew all the details. It contained nothing which could be of the smallest prejudice to any person who was really hostile to the existing order of things. The whole narrative was made up of stories, too true for the most part, yet resting on no better authority than hearsay, about the intrigues of some eminent warriors and statesmen, who, whatever their former conduct might have been, were now at least hearty in support of William. Godolphin, Fenwick averred, had accepted a seat at the Board of Treasury, with the sanction and for the benefit of King James. Marlborough had promised to carry over the army, Russell to carry over the fleet. Shrewsbury, while out of office, had plotted with Middleton against the government and King. Indeed the Whigs were now the favourites at Saint Germain's. Many old friends of hereditary right were moved to jealousy by the preference which James gave to the new converts. Nay, he had been heard to express his confident hope that the monarchy would be set up again by the very hands which had pulled it down.

Such was Fenwick's confession. Devonshire received it and sent it by express to the Netherlands, without intimating to any of his fellow councillors what it contained. The accused ministers afterwards complained bitterly of this proceeding. Devonshire defended himself by saying that he had been specially deputed by the King to take the prisoner's information, and was

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bound, as a true servant of the Crown, to transmit that information to His Majesty and to His Majesty alone.

The messenger sent by Devonshire found William at Loo. The King read the confession, and saw at once with what objects it had been drawn up. It contained little more than what he had long known, and had long, with politic and generous dissimulation, affected not to know. If he spared, employed and promoted men who had been false to him, it was not because he was their dupe. His observation was quick and just: his intelligence was good; and he had, during some years, had in his hands proofs of much that Fenwick had only gathered from wandering reports. It has seemed strange to many that a Prince of high spirit and acrimonious temper should have treated servants, who had so deeply wronged him, with a kindness hardly to be expected from the meekest of human beings. But William was emphatically a statesman. Ill humour, the natural and pardonable effect of much bodily and much mental suffering, might sometimes impel him to give a tart answer. But never did he on any important occasion indulge his angry passions at the expense of the great interests of which he was the guardian. For the sake of those interests, proud and imperious as he was by nature, he submitted patiently to galling restraints, bore cruel indignities and disappointments with the outward show of serenity, and not only forgave, but often pretended not to see, offences which might well have moved him to bitter resentment. He knew that he must work with such tools as he had. If he was to govern England he must employ the public men of England; and in his age, the public men of England, with much of a peculiar kind of ability, were, as a class, lowminded and immoral. There were doubtless exceptions. Such was Nottingham among the Tories, and Somers among the Whigs. But the majority, both of the Tory and of the Whig ministers of William, were men whose characters had taken the ply in the days of the

Antipuritan reaction. They had been formed in two evil schools, in the most unprincipled of courts, and the most unprincipled of oppositions, a court which took its character from Charles, an opposition headed by Shaftesbury. From men so trained it would have been unreasonable to expect disinterested and steadfast fidelity to any cause. But though they could not be trusted, they might be used and they might be useful. No reliance could be placed on their principles: but much reliance might be placed on their hopes and on their fears; and of the two Kings who laid claim to the English crown, the King from whom there was most to hope and most to fear was the King in possession. If therefore William had little reason to esteem these politicians his hearty friends, he had still less reason to number them among his hearty foes. Their conduct towards him, reprehensible as it was, might be called upright when compared with their conduct towards James. To the reigning Sovereign they had given valuable service; to the banished Sovereign little more than promises and professions. Shrewsbury might, in a moment of resentment or of weakness, have trafficked with Jacobite agents: but his general conduct had proved that he was as far as ever from being a Jacobite. Godolphin had been lavish of fair words to the dynasty which was out; but he had thriftily and skilfully managed the revenues of the dynasty which was in. Russell had sworn that he would desert with the English fleet; but he had burned the French fleet. Even Marlborough's known treasons, — for his share in the disaster of Brest and the death of Talmash was unsuspected, — had not done so much harm as his exertions at Walcourt, at Cork and at Kinsale had done good. William had therefore wisely resolved to shut his eyes to perfidy, which, however disgraceful it might be, had not injured him, and still to avail himself, with proper precautions, of the eminent talents which some of his unfaithful counsellors possessed. Having determined on this

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course, and having long followed it with happy effect, he could not but be annoyed and provoked by Fenwick's confession. Sir John, it was plain, thought himself a Machiavel. If his trick succeeded, the Princess, whom it was most important to keep in good humour, would be alienated from the government by the disgrace of Marlborough. The whole Whig party, the firmest support of the throne, would be alienated by the disgrace of Russell and Shrewsbury. In the meantime not one of those plotters whom Fenwick knew to have been deeply concerned in plans of insurrection, invasion, assassination, would be molested. This cunning schemer should find that he had not to do with a novice. William, instead of turning his accused servants out of their places, sent the confession to Shrewsbury, and desired that it might be laid before the Lords Justices. "I am astonished," the King wrote, "at the fellow's effrontery. You know me too well to think that such stories as his can make any impression on me. Observe this honest man's sincerity. He has nothing to say except against my friends. Not a word about the plans of his brother Jacobites." The King concluded by directing the Lords Justices to send Fenwick before a jury with all speed.*

The effect produced by William's letter was remarkable. Every one of the accused persons behaved himself in a manner singularly characteristic. Marlborough, the most culpable of all, preserved a serenity, mild, majestic and slightly contemptuous. Russell, scarcely less criminal than Marlborough, went into a towering passion, and breathed nothing but vengeance against the villanous informer. Godolphin, uneasy, but wary, reserved and selfpossessed, prepared himself to stand on the defensive. But Shrewsbury, who of all the four was the least to blame, was utterly overwhelmed. He wrote in extreme distress to William, acknowledged with warm expressions of

* William to Shrewsbury from Loo, Sept. 10. 1696.

gratitude the King's rare generosity, and protested that Fenwick had malignantly exaggerated and distorted mere trifles into enormous crimes. "My Lord Middleton," — such was the substance of the letter, — "was certainly in communication with me about the time of the battle of La Hogue. We are relations: we frequently met: we supped together just before he returned to France: I promised to take care of his interests here: he in return offered to do me good offices there; but I told him that I had offended too deeply to be forgiven, and that I would not stoop to ask forgiveness." This, Shrewsbury averred, was the whole extent of his offence.* It is but too fully proved that this confession was by no means ingenuous; nor is it likely that William was deceived. But he was determined to spare the repentant traitor the humiliation of owning a fault and accepting a pardon. "I can see," the King wrote, "no crime at all in what you have acknowledged. Be assured that these calumnies have made no unfavourable impression on me. Nay, you shall find that they have strengthened my confidence in you."** A man hardened in depravity would have been perfectly contented with an acquittal so complete, announced in language so gracious. But Shrewsbury was quite unnerved by a tenderness which he was conscious that he had not merited. He shrank from the thought of meeting the master whom he had wronged, and by whom he had been forgiven, and of sustaining the gaze of the peers, among whom his birth and his abilities had gained for him a station of which he felt that he was unworthy. The campaign in the Netherlands was over. The session of Parliament was approaching. The King was expected with the first fair wind. Shrewsbury left town and retired to the Wolds of Gloucestershire. In that district, then one of the wildest in the south of the island, he had a small country seat, surrounded by

* Shrewsbury to William, Sept. 18. 1696.

** William to Shrewsbury, Sept. 25. 1696.

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CHAP. pleasant gardens and fishponds. William had, in his progress
 XXII. a year before, visited this dwelling, which lay far from the
 1696. nearest high road and from the nearest market town, and had
 been much struck by the silence and loneliness of the retreat
 in which he found the most graceful and splendid of English
 courtiers.

Return of
 William
 to Eng-
 land.

At one in the morning of the sixth of October, the King
 landed at Margate. Late in the evening he reached Kensington.
 The following morning a brilliant crowd of ministers and
 nobles pressed to kiss his hand: but he missed one face which
 ought to have been there, and asked where the Duke of Shrews-
 bury was, and when he was expected in town. The next day
 came a letter from the Duke, averring that he had just had a
 bad fall in hunting. His side had been bruised: his lungs had
 suffered: he had spit blood, and could not venture to travel.*
 That he had fallen and hurt himself was true: but even those
 who felt most kindly towards him suspected, and not without
 strong reason, that he made the most of his convenient mis-
 fortune, and, that if he had not shrunk from appearing in
 public, he would have performed the journey with little diffi-
 culty. His correspondents told him that, if he was really as ill
 as he thought himself, he would do well to consult the physi-
 cians and surgeons of the capital. Somers, especially, implored
 him in the most earnest manner to come up to London. Every
 hour's delay was mischievous. His Grace must conquer his
 sensibility. He had only to face calumny courageously, and it
 would vanish.** The King, in a few kind lines, expressed his
 sorrow for the accident. "You are much wanted here," he
 wrote: "I am impatient to embrace you, and to assure you that

* London Gazette, Oct. 8. 1696; Vernon to Shrewsbury, Oct. 8.;
 Shrewsbury to Portland, Oct. 11.

** Vernon to Shrewsbury, Oct. 13. 1696; Somers to Shrewsbury,
 Oct. 15.

my esteem for you is undiminished.”* Shrewsbury answered that he had resolved to resign the seals.** Somers adjured him not to commit so fatal an error. If at that moment His Grace should quit office, what could the world think, except that he was condemned by his own conscience? He would, in fact, plead guilty: he would put a stain on his own honour, and on the honour of all who lay under the same accusation. It would no longer be possible to treat Fenwick’s story as a romance. “Forgive me,” Somers wrote, “for speaking after this free manner; for I do own I can scarce be temperate in this matter.”*** A few hours later William himself wrote to the same effect. “I have so much regard for you, that, if I could, I would positively interdict you from doing what must bring such grave suspicions on you. At any time, I should consider your resignation as a misfortune to myself: but I protest to you that, at this time, it is on your account more than on mine that I wish you to remain in my service.”† Sunderland, Portland, Russell and Wharton joined their entreaties to their master’s; and Shrewsbury consented to remain Secretary in name. But nothing could induce him to face the Parliament which was about to meet. A litter was sent down to him from London, but to no purpose. He set out, but declared that he found it impossible to proceed, and took refuge again in his lonely mansion among the hills.††

While these things were passing, the members of both Houses were from every part of the kingdom going up to Westminster. To the opening of the session, not only England, but the whole of Europe, looked forward with intense anxiety. Public credit

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* William to Shrewsbury, Oct. 9. 1696.

** Shrewsbury to William, Oct. 11. 1696.

*** Somers to Shrewsbury, Oct. 19. 1696.

† William to Shrewsbury, Oct. 20. 1696.

†† Vernon to Shrewsbury, Oct. 13. 15.; Portland to Shrewsbury, Oct. 20.

CHAP. had been deeply injured by the failure of the Land Bank. The
 XXII. restoration of the currency was not yet half accomplished. The
 1696. scarcity of money was still distressing. Much of the milled silver was buried in private repositories as fast as it came forth from the Mint. Those politicians who were bent on raising the denomination of the coin had found too ready audience from a population suffering under severe pressure; and, at one time, the general voice of the nation had seemed to be on their side.* Of course every person who thought it likely that the standard would be lowered, hoarded as much money as he could hoard; and thus the cry for little shillings aggravated the pressure from which it had sprung.** Both the allies and the enemies of England imagined that her resources were spent, that her spirit was broken, that the Commons, so often querulous and parsimonious even in tranquil and prosperous times, would now positively refuse to bear any additional burden, and would, with an importunity not to be withstood, insist on having peace at any price.

Speech of King William at the commencement of the session.

But all these prognostications were confounded by the firmness and ability of the Whig leaders, and by the steadiness of the Whig majority. On the twentieth of October the Houses met. William addressed to them a speech remarkable even among all the remarkable speeches in which his own high thoughts and purposes were expressed in the dignified and judicious language of Somers. There was, the King said, great reason for congratulation. It was true that the funds voted in the preceding session for the support of the war had failed, and that the recoinage had produced great distress. Yet the enemy had obtained no advantage abroad: the State had been torn by no convulsion at home: the loyalty shown by the army and by the nation under severe trials had disappointed

* L'Hermitage, July 18. 1696.

** Lansdowne MS. 801.

all the hopes of those who wished evil to England. Overtures tending to peace had been made. What might be the result of those overtures, was uncertain: but this was certain, that there could be no safe or honourable peace for a nation which was not prepared to wage vigorous war. "I am sure we shall all agree in opinion that the only way of treating with France is with our swords in our hands."

The Commons returned to their chamber; and Foley read the speech from the chair. A debate followed which resounded through all Christendom. That was the proudest day of Montague's life, and one of the proudest days in the history of the English Parliament. In 1798, Burke held up the proceedings of that day as an example to the statesmen whose hearts had failed them in the conflict with the gigantic power of the French republic. In 1822, Huskisson held up the proceedings of that day as an example to a legislature which, under the pressure of severe distress, was tempted to alter the standard of value and to break faith with the public creditor. Before the House rose the young Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose ascendancy, since the ludicrous failure of the Tory scheme of finance, was undisputed, proposed and carried three memorable resolutions. The first, which passed with only one muttered No, declared that the Commons would support the King against all foreign and domestic enemies, and would enable him to prosecute the war with vigour. The second, which passed, not without opposition, but without a division, declared that the standard of money should not be altered in fineness, weight or denomination. The third, against which not a single opponent of the government dared to raise his voice, pledged the House to make good all the deficiencies of all parliamentary funds established since the King's accession. The task of framing an answer to the royal speech was entrusted to a Committee exclusively composed of Whigs.

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Resolutions of the House of Commons.

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Montague was chairman; and the eloquent and animated address which he drew up may still be read in the Journals with interest and pride.*

Within a fortnight two millions and a half were granted for the military expenditure of the approaching year, and nearly as much for the maritime expenditure. Provision was made without any dispute for forty thousand seamen. About the amount of the land force there was a division. The King asked for eighty seven thousand soldiers; and the Tories thought that number too large. The vote was carried by two hundred and twenty three to sixty seven.

The malecontents flattered themselves, during a short time, that the vigorous resolutions of the Commons would be nothing more than resolutions, that it would be found impossible to restore public credit, to obtain advances from capitalists, or to wring taxes out of the distressed population, and that therefore the forty thousand seamen and the eighty seven thousand soldiers would exist only on paper. Howe, who had been more cowed than was usual with him on the first day of the session, attempted, a week later, to make a stand against the Ministry. "The King," he said, "must have been misinformed; or His Majesty never would have felicitated Parliament on the tranquil state of the country. I come from Gloucestershire. I know that part of the kingdom well. The people are all living on alms, or ruined by paying alms. The soldier helps himself, sword in hand, to what he wants. There have been serious riots already; and still more serious riots are to be apprehended." The disapprobation of the House was strongly expressed. Several members declared that in their counties every thing was

* I take my account of these proceedings from the Commons' Journals, from the despatches of Van Cleverskirke, and L'Hermitage to the States General, and from Vernon's letter to Shrewsbury of the 27th of October 1696. "I don't know," says Vernon, "that the House of Commons ever acted with greater concert than they do at present."

quiet. If Gloucestershire were in a more disturbed state than the rest of England, might not the cause be that Gloucestershire was cursed with a more malignant and unprincipled agitator than all the rest of England could show? Some Gloucestershire gentlemen took issue with Howe on the facts. There was no such distress, they said, no such discontent, no such rioting as he had described. In that county, as in every other county, the great body of the population was fully determined to support the King in waging a vigorous war till he could make an honourable peace.*

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In fact the tide had already turned. From the moment at which the Commons notified their fixed determination not to raise the denomination of the coin, the milled money began to come forth from a thousand strong boxes and private drawers. There was still pressure; but that pressure was less and less felt day by day. The nation, though still suffering, was joyful and grateful. Its feelings resembled those of a man who, having been long tortured by a malady which has embittered his life, has at last made up his mind to submit to the surgeon's knife, who has gone through a cruel operation with safety, and who, though still smarting from the steel, sees before him many years of health and enjoyment, and thanks God that the worst is over. Within four days after the meeting of Parliament there was a perceptible improvement in trade. The discount on bank notes had diminished by one third. The price of those wooden tallies, which, according to an usage handed to us from a rude age, were given as receipts for sums paid into the Exchequer, had risen. The exchanges, which had during many months been greatly against England, had begun to turn.** Soon the

Return of
prosperity.

* Vernon to Shrewsbury, Oct. 29. 1696; L'Hermitage, ^{Oct. 30,} _{Nov. 9.} L'Hermitage calls Howe Jaques Haut. No doubt the Frenchman had always heard Howe spoken of as Jack.

** Postman, October 24. 1696; L'Hermitage, ^{Oct. 23,} _{Nov. 2.} L'Hermitage says:

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Effect of
the pro-
ceedings
of the
House of
Com-
mons on
foreign
govern-
ments.

effect of the magnanimous firmness of the House of Commons was felt at every Court in Europe. So high indeed was the spirit of that assembly that the King had some difficulty in preventing the Whigs from moving and carrying a resolution that an address should be presented to him, requesting him to enter into no negotiation with France, till she should have acknowledged him as King of England.* Such an address was unnecessary. The votes of the Parliament had already forced on Lewis the conviction that there was no chance of a counter-revolution. There was as little chance that he would be able to effect that compromise of which he had, in the course of the negotiations, thrown out hints. It was not to be hoped that either William or the English nation would ever consent to make the settlement of the English crown a matter of bargain with France. And even had William and the English nation been disposed to purchase peace by such a sacrifice of dignity, there would have been insuperable difficulties in another quarter. James could not endure to hear of the expedient which Lewis had suggested. "I can bear," the exile said to his benefactor, "I can bear with Christian patience to be robbed by the Prince of Orange; but I never will consent to be robbed by my own son." Lewis never again mentioned the subject. Callieres received orders to make the concession on which the peace of the civilised world depended. He and Dykvelt came together at the Hague before Baron Lilienroth, the representative of the King of Sweden, whose mediation the belligerent powers had accepted. Dykvelt informed Lilienroth that the Most Christian King had engaged, whenever the Treaty of Peace should be

"On commence déjà à ressentir des effets avantageux des promptes et favorables résolutions que la Chambre des Communes prit Mardy. Le discomte des billets de banque, qui estoit le jour au paravant à 18, est revenu à douze, et les actions ont aussy augmenté, aussy bien que les taillis."

* William to Heinsius, Nov. 13. 1696.

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signed, to recognise the Prince of Orange as King of Great Britain, and added, with a very intelligible allusion to the compromise proposed by France, that the recognition would be without restriction, condition or reserve. Callieres then declared that he confirmed, in the name of his master, what Dykvelt had said.* A letter from Prior, containing the good news, was delivered to James Vernon, the Under Secretary of State, in the House of Commons. The tidings ran along the benches — such is Vernon's expression — like fire in a field of stubble. A load was taken away from every heart; and all was joy and triumph.** The Whig members might indeed well congratulate each other. For it was to the wisdom and resolution which they had shown, in a moment of extreme danger and distress, that their country was indebted for the near prospect of an honourable peace.

Meanwhile public credit, which had, in the autumn, sunk to the lowest point, was fast reviving. Ordinary financiers stood aghast when they learned that more than five millions were required to make good the deficiencies of past years. But Montague was not an ordinary financier. A bold and simple plan proposed by him, and popularly called the General Mortgage, restored confidence. New taxes were imposed; old taxes were augmented or continued; and thus a consolidated fund was formed sufficient to meet every just claim on the State. The Bank of England was at the same time enlarged by a new subscription; and the regulations for the payment of the subscription were framed in such a manner as to raise the value both of the notes of the corporation and of the public securities.

Meanwhile the mints were pouring forth the new silver faster

* Actes et Mémoires des Négociations de la Paix de Ryswick, 1707; Villiers to Shrewsbury, Dec. 1st. 1696; Letter of Heinsius quoted by M. Sirtema de Grovestins. Of this letter I have not a copy.

** Vernon to Shrewsbury, Dec. 8. 1696.

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than ever. The distress which began on the fourth of May 1696, which was almost insupportable during the five succeeding months, and which became lighter from the day on which the Commons declared their immutable resolution to maintain the old standard, ceased to be painfully felt in March 1697. Some months were still to elapse before credit completely recovered from the most tremendous shock that it has ever sustained. But already the deep and solid foundation had been laid on which was to rise the most gigantic fabric of commercial prosperity that the world had ever seen. The great body of the Whigs attributed the restoration of the health of the State to the genius and firmness of their leader Montague. His enemies were forced to confess, sulkily and sneeringly, that every one of his schemes had succeeded, the first Bank subscription, the second Bank subscription, the Recoinage, the General Mortgage, the Exchequer Bills. But some Tories muttered that he deserved no more praise than a prodigal who staves his whole estate at hazard, and has a run of good luck. England had indeed passed safely through a terrible crisis, and was the stronger for having passed through it. But she had been in imminent danger of perishing; and the minister who had exposed her to that danger deserved, not to be praised, but to be hanged. Others admitted that the plans which were popularly attributed to Montague were excellent, but denied that those plans were Montague's. The voice of detraction, however, was for a time drowned by the loud applauses of the Parliament and the City. The authority which the Chancellor of the Exchequer exercised in the House of Commons was unprecedented and unrivalled. In the Cabinet his influence was daily increasing. He had no longer a superior at the Board of Treasury. In consequence of Fenwick's confession, the last Tory who held a great and efficient office in the State had been removed, and there was at length a purely Whig Ministry.

It had been impossible to prevent reports about that confession from getting abroad. The prisoner, indeed, had found means of communicating with his friends, and had doubtless given them to understand that he had said nothing against them, and much against the creatures of the usurper. William wished the matter to be left to the ordinary tribunals, and was most unwilling that it should be debated elsewhere. But his counsellors, better acquainted than himself with the temper of large and divided assemblies, were of opinion that a parliamentary discussion, though perhaps undesirable, was inevitable. It was in the power of a single member of either House to force on such a discussion; and in both Houses there were members who, some from a sense of duty, some from mere love of mischief, were determined to know whether the prisoner had, as it was rumoured, brought grave charges against some of the most distinguished men in the kingdom. If there must be an inquiry, it was surely desirable that the accused statesmen should be the first to demand it. There was, however, one great difficulty. The Whigs, who formed the majority of the Lower House, were ready to vote, as one man, for the entire absolution of Russell and Shrewsbury, and had no wish to put a stigma on Marlborough, who was not in place, and therefore excited little jealousy. But a strong body of honest gentlemen, as Wharton called them, could not, by any management, be induced to join in a resolution acquitting Godolphin. To them Godolphin was an eyesore. All the other Tories who, in the earlier years of William's reign, had borne a chief part in the direction of affairs, had, one by one, been dismissed. Nottingham, Trevor, Leeds, were no longer in power. Pembroke could hardly be called a Tory, and had never been really in power. But Godolphin still retained his post at Whitehall; and to the men of the Revolution it seemed intolerable that one who had sate at the Council Board of Charles and James, and who had voted for a Regency,

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Effects of
Pen-
wick's
confes-
sion.

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Resigna-
tion of
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phin.

Feeling
of the
Whigs
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should be the principal minister of finance. Those who felt thus had learned with malicious delight that the First Lord of the Treasury was named in the confession about which all the world was talking; and they were determined not to let slip so good an opportunity of ejecting him from office. On the other hand, every body who had seen Fenwick's paper, and who had not, in the drunkenness of factious animosity, lost all sense of reason and justice, must have felt that it was impossible to make a distinction between two parts of that paper, and to treat all that related to Shrewsbury and Russell as false, and all that related to Godolphin as true. This was acknowledged even by Wharton, who of all public men was the least troubled by scruples or by shame.* If Godolphin had stedfastly refused to quit his place, the Whig leaders would have been in a most embarrassing position. But a politician of no common dexterity undertook to extricate them from their difficulties. In the art of reading and managing the minds of men Sunderland had no equal; and he was, as he had been during several years, desirous to see all the great posts in the kingdom filled by Whigs. By his skilful management Godolphin was induced to go into the royal closet, and to request permission to retire from office; and William granted that permission with a readiness by which Godolphin was much more surprised than pleased.**

One of the methods employed by the Whig junto, for the purpose of instituting and maintaining through all the ranks of the Whig party a discipline never before known, was the frequent holding of meetings of members of the House of Commons. Some of those meetings were numerous: others were select. The larger were held at the Rose, a tavern frequently

* Wharton to Shrewsbury, Oct. 27. 1696.

** Somers to Shrewsbury, Oct. 27. 31. 1696.; Vernon to Shrewsbury, Oct. 31.; Wharton to Shrewsbury, Nov. 10. "I am apt to think," says Wharton, "there never was more management than in bringing that about."

mentioned in the political pasquinades of that time;* the smaller at Russell's in Covent Garden, or at Somers's in Lincoln's Inn Fields. CHAP.
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On the day on which Godolphin resigned his great office two select meetings were called. In the morning the place of assembly was Russell's house. In the afternoon there was a fuller muster at the Lord Keeper's. Fenwick's confession, which, till that time, had probably been known only by rumour to most of those who were present, was read. The indignation of the hearers was strongly excited, particularly by one passage, of which the sense seemed to be that not only Russell, not only Shrewsbury, but the great body of the Whig party was, and had long been, at heart Jacobite. "The fellow insinuates," it was said, "that the Assassination Plot itself was a Whig scheme." The general opinion was that such a charge could not be lightly passed over. There must be a solemn debate and decision in Parliament. The best course would be that the King should himself see and examine the prisoner, and that Russell should then request the royal permission to bring the subject before the House of Commons. As Fenwick did not pretend that he had any authority for the stories which he had told except mere hearsay, there could be no difficulty in carrying a resolution branding him as a slanderer, and an address to the throne requesting that he might be forthwith brought to trial for high treason.**

The opinion of the meeting was conveyed to William by his ministers; and he consented, though not without reluctance, to see the prisoner. Fenwick was brought into the royal closet at Kensington. A few of the great officers of state and the Crown lawyers were present. "Your papers, Sir John," said

William examines Fenwick.

* See for example a poem on the last Treasury day at Kensington, March 1697.

** Somers to Shrewsbury, Oct. 31. 1696; Wharton to Shrewsbury, of the same date.

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the King, "are altogether unsatisfactory. Instead of giving me an account of the plots formed by you and your accomplices, plots of which all the details must be exactly known to you, you tell me stories, without authority, without date, without place, about noblemen and gentlemen with whom you do not pretend to have had any intercourse. In short your confession appears to be a contrivance intended to screen those who are really engaged in designs against me, and to make me suspect and discard those in whom I have good reason to place confidence. If you look for any favour from me, give me, this moment and on this spot, a full and straightforward account of what you know of your own knowledge." Fenwick said that he was taken by surprise, and asked for time. "No, Sir," said the King. "For what purpose can you want time? You may indeed want time if you mean to draw up another paper like this. But what I require is a plain narrative of what you have yourself done and seen; and such a narrative you can give, if you will, without pen and ink." Then Fenwick positively refused to say any thing. "Be it so," said William. "I will neither hear you nor hear from you any more."* Fenwick was carried back to his prison. He had at this audience shown a boldness and determination which surprised those who had observed his demeanour. He had, ever since he had been in confinement, appeared to be anxious and dejected: yet now, at the very crisis of his fate, he had braved the displeasure of the Prince whose clemency he had, a short time before, submissively implored. In a very few hours the mystery was explained. Just before he had been summoned to Kensington, he had received from his wife intelligence that his life was in no danger, that there was only one witness against him, that she and her friends had succeeded in corrupting Goodman.**

* Somers to Shrewsbury, Nov. 3. 1696. The King's unwillingness to see Fenwick is mentioned in Somers's letter of the 15th of October.

** Vernon to Shrewsbury, Nov. 3. 1696.

Goodman had been allowed a liberty which was afterwards, with some reason, made matter of charge against the government. For his testimony was most important: his character was notoriously bad: the attempts which had been made to seduce Porter proved that, if money could save Fenwick's life, money would not be spared; and Goodman had not, like Porter, been instrumental in sending Jacobites to the gallows, and therefore was not, like Porter, bound to the cause of William by an indissoluble tie. The families of the imprisoned conspirators employed the agency of a cunning and daring adventurer named O'Brien. This man knew Goodman well. Indeed they had belonged to the same gang of highwaymen. They met at the Dog in Drury Lane, a tavern which was frequented by lawless and desperate men. O'Brien was accompanied by another Jacobite of determined character. A simple choice was offered to Goodman, to abscond and to be rewarded with an annuity of five hundred a year, or to have his throat cut on the spot. He consented, half from cupidity, half from fear. O'Brien was not a man to be tricked as Clancy had been. He never parted company with Goodman from the moment when the bargain was struck till they were at Saint Germain.*

On the afternoon of the day on which Fenwick was examined by the King at Kensington it began to be noised abroad that Goodman was missing. He had been many hours absent from his house. He had not been seen at his usual haunts. At first a suspicion arose that he had been murdered by the Jacobites; and this suspicion was strengthened by a singular circumstance. Just after his disappearance, a human head was found severed from the body to which it belonged, and so frightfully mangled that no feature could be recognised. The multitude, possessed

* The circumstances of Goodman's flight were ascertained three years later by the Earl of Manchester, when Ambassador at Paris, and by him communicated to Jersey in a letter dated ^{Sept. 25,} 1699.
_{Oct. 5.}

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Disap-
pearance
of Good-
man.

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by the notion that there was no crime which an Irish Papist might not be found to commit, was inclined to believe that the fate of Godfrey had befallen another victim. On inquiry however it seemed certain that Goodman had designedly withdrawn himself. A proclamation appeared promising a reward of a thousand pounds to any person who should stop the runaway; but it was too late.*

This event exasperated the Whigs beyond measure. No jury could now find Fenwick guilty of high treason. Was he then to escape? Was a long series of offences against the State to go unpunished merely because to those offences had now been added the offence of bribing a witness to suppress his evidence and to desert his bail? Was there no extraordinary method by which justice might strike a criminal who, solely because he was worse than other criminals, was beyond the reach of the ordinary law? Such a method there was, a method authorised by numerous precedents, a method used both by Papists and by Protestants during the troubles of the sixteenth century, a method used both by Roundheads and by Cavaliers during the troubles of the seventeenth century, a method which scarcely any leader of the Tory party could condemn without condemning himself, a method of which Fenwick could not decently complain, since he had, a few years before, been eager to employ it against the unfortunate Monmouth. To that method the party which was now supreme in the State determined to have recourse.

Parliamentary proceedings touching Fenwick's confessions.

Soon after the Commons had met, on the morning of the sixth of November, Russell rose in his place and requested to be heard. The task which he had undertaken required courage not of the most respectable kind: but to him no kind of courage was wanting. Sir John Fenwick, he said, had sent to the King

* London Gazette, Nov. 9. 1696; Vernon to Shrewsbury, Nov. 3.; Van Cleverskirke and L'Hermitage of the same dat.

a paper in which grave accusations were brought against some of His Majesty's servants; and His Majesty had, at the request of his accused servants, graciously given orders that this paper should be laid before the House. The confession was produced and read. The Admiral then, with spirit and dignity worthy of a better man, demanded justice for himself and Shrewsbury. "If we are innocent, clear us. If we are guilty, punish us as we deserve. I put myself on you as on my country, and am ready to stand or fall by your verdict."

It was immediately ordered that Fenwick should be brought to the bar with all speed. Cutts, who sat in the House as member for Cambridgeshire, was directed to provide a sufficient escort, and was especially enjoined to take care that the prisoner should have no opportunity of making or receiving any communication, oral or written, on the road from Newgate to Westminster. The House then adjourned till the afternoon.

At five o'clock, then a late hour, the mace was again put on the table: candles were lighted; and the House and lobby were carefully cleared of strangers. Fenwick was in attendance under a strong guard. He was called in, and exhorted from the chair to make a full and ingenuous confession. He hesitated and evaded. "I cannot say any thing without the King's permission. His Majesty may be displeased if what ought to be known only to him should be divulged to others." He was told that his apprehensions were groundless. The King well knew that it was the right and the duty of his faithful Commons to inquire into whatever concerned the safety of his person and of his government. "I may be tried in a few days," said the prisoner. "I ought not to be asked to say any thing which may rise up in judgment against me." "You have nothing to fear," replied the Speaker, "if you will only make a full and free discovery. No man ever had reason to repent of having dealt candidly with the

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Commons of England." Then Fenwick begged for delay. He was not a ready orator: his memory was bad: he must have time to prepare himself. He was told, as he had been told a few days before in the royal closet, that, prepared or unprepared, he could not but remember the principal plots in which he had been engaged, and the names of his chief accomplices. If he would honestly relate what it was quite impossible that he could have forgotten, the House would make all fair allowances, and would grant him time to recollect subordinate details. Thrice he was removed from the bar; and thrice he was brought back. He was solemnly informed that the opportunity then given him of earning the favour of the Commons would probably be the last. He persisted in his refusal, and was sent back to Newgate.

It was then moved that his confession was false and scandalous. Coningsby proposed to add that it was a contrivance to create jealousies between the King and good subjects for the purpose of screening real traitors. A few implacable and unmanageable Whigs, whose hatred of Godolphin had not been mitigated by his resignation, hinted their doubts whether the whole paper ought to be condemned. But after a debate in which Montague particularly distinguished himself the motion was carried. One or two voices cried "No:" but nobody ventured to demand a division.

Bill for
attainting
Fenwick.

Thus far all had gone smoothly: but in a few minutes the storm broke forth. The terrible words, Bill of Attainder, were pronounced; and all the fiercest passions of both the great factions were instantly roused. The Tories had been taken by surprise, and many of them had left the house. Those who remained were loud in declaring that they never would consent to such a violation of the first principles of justice. The spirit of the Whigs was not less ardent, and their ranks were unbroken. The motion for leave to bring in a bill attainting Sir John Fen-

wick was carried very late at night by one hundred and seventy nine votes to sixty one: but it was plain that the struggle would be long and hard.*

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In truth party spirit had seldom been more strongly excited. On both sides there was doubtless much honest zeal; and on both sides an observant eye might have detected fear, hatred, and cupidity disguised under specious pretences of justice and public good. The baleful heat of faction rapidly warmed into life poisonous creeping things which had long been lying torpid, discarded spies and convicted false witnesses, the leavings of the scourge, the branding iron and the shears. Even Fuller hoped that he might again find dupes to listen to him. The world had forgotten him since his pillorying. He now had the effrontery to write to the Speaker, begging to be heard at the bar and promising much important information about Fenwick and others. On the ninth of November the Speaker informed the House that he had received this communication: but the House very properly refused even to suffer the letter of so notorious a villain to be read.

On the same day the Bill of Attainder, having been prepared by the Attorney and Solicitor General, was brought in and read a first time. The House was full and the debate sharp. John Manley, member for Bossiney, one of those stanch Tories who, in the preceding session, had long refused to sign the Association, accused the majority, in no measured terms, of fawning on the Court and betraying the liberties of the people. His words were taken down; and, though he tried to explain them away, he was sent to the Tower. Seymour spoke strongly

Debates
of the
Commons
on the
Bill of
Attainder.

* The account of the events of this day I have taken from the Commons' Journals; the valuable work entitled Proceedings in Parliament against Sir John Fenwick, Bart. upon a Bill of Attainder for High Treason, 1696; Vernon's Letter to Shrewsbury, November 6. 1696, and Somers's Letter to Shrewsbury, November 7. From both these letters it is plain that the Whig leaders had much difficulty in obtaining the absolution of Godolphin.

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XXII. Roman Senate against the motion that the accomplices of Cati-
1696. line should be put to death in an irregular manner. A Whig
orator keenly remarked that the worthy Baronet had forgotten
that Cæsar was grievously suspected of having been himself
concerned in Catiline's plot.* In this stage a hundred and ninety
six members voted for the bill, a hundred and four against
it. A copy was sent to Fenwick, in order that he might be pre-
pared to defend himself. He begged to be heard by counsel:
his request was granted; and the thirteenth was fixed for the
hearing.

Never within the memory of the oldest member had there
been such a stir round the House as on the morning of the
thirteenth. The approaches were with some difficulty cleared;
and no strangers, except peers, were suffered to come within
the doors. Of peers the throng was so great that their presence
had a perceptible influence on the debate. Even Seymour, who,
having formerly been Speaker, ought to have been peculiarly
mindful of the dignity of the Commons, so strangely forgot him-
self as once to say "My Lords." Fenwick, having been for-
mally given up by the Sheriffs of London to the Serjeant at
Arms, was put to the bar, attended by two barristers who were
generally employed by Jacobite culprits, Sir Thomas Powis and
Sir Bartholomew Shower. Counsel appointed by the House ap-
peared in support of the bill.

The examination of the witnesses and the arguments of the
advocates occupied three days. Porter was called in and inter-
rogated. It was established, not indeed by legal proof, but
by such moral proof as determines the conduct of men in the
affairs of common life, that Goodman's absence was to be attri-

* Commons' Journals, Nov. 9. 1696; Vernon to Shrewsbury, Nov. 10.
The editor of the State Trials is mistaken in supposing that the quotation
from Cæsar's speech was made in the debate of the 13th.

buted to a scheme planned and executed by Fenwick's friends with Fenwick's privity. Secondary evidence of what Goodman, if he had been present, would have been able to prove, was, after a warm debate, admitted. His confession, made on oath and subscribed by his hand, was put in. Some of the grand jurymen who had found the bill against Sir John gave an account of what Goodman had sworn before them; and their testimony was confirmed by some of the petty jurymen who had convicted another conspirator. No evidence was produced in behalf of the prisoner. After counsel for him and against him had been heard, he was sent back to his cell.* Then the real struggle began. It was long and violent. The House repeatedly sate from daybreak till near midnight. Once the Speaker was in the chair fifteen hours without intermission. Strangers were freely admitted: for it was felt that, since the House chose to take on itself the functions of a court of justice, it ought, like a court of justice, to sit with open doors.** The substance of the debates has consequently been preserved in a report, meagre, indeed, when compared with the reports of our time, but for that age unusually full. Every man of note in the House took part in the discussion. The bill was opposed by Finch with that fluent and sonorous rhetoric which had gained him the name of Silver-tongue, and by Howe with all the sharpness both of his wit and of his temper, by Seymour with characteristic energy, and by Harley with characteristic solemnity. On the other side Montague displayed the powers of a consummate debater, and was zealously supported by Littleton. Conspicuous in the front ranks of the hostile parties were two distinguished lawyers, Simon Harcourt and William Cowper. Both were gentlemen of honourable descent: both were distinguished by their fine per-

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* Commons' Journals, Nov. 13. 16, 17.; Proceedings against Sir John Fenwick.

** A Letter to a Friend in Vindication of the Proceedings against Sir John Fenwick, 1697.

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sons and graceful manners: both were renowned for eloquence; and both loved learning and learned men. It may be added that both had early in life been noted for prodigality and love of pleasure. Dissipation had made them poor: poverty had made them industrious; and though they were still, as age is reckoned at the Inns of Court, very young men, Harcourt only thirty six, Cowper only thirty two, they already had the first practice at the bar. They were destined to rise still higher, to be the bearers of the great seal of the realm, and the founders of patrician houses. In politics they were diametrically opposed to each other. Harcourt had seen the Revolution with disgust, had not chosen to sit in the Convention, had with difficulty reconciled his conscience to the oaths, and had tardily and unwillingly signed the Association. Cowper had been in arms for the Prince of Orange and a free Parliament, and had, in the short and tumultuary campaign which preceded the flight of James, distinguished himself by intelligence and courage. Since Somers had been removed to the Woolsack, the law officers of the Crown had not made a very distinguished figure in the Lower House, or indeed any where else; and their deficiencies had been more than once supplied by Cowper. His skill had, at the trial of Parkyns, recovered the verdict which the mismanagement of the Solicitor General had, for a moment, put in jeopardy. He had been chosen member for Hertford at the general election of 1695, and had scarcely taken his seat when he attained a high place among parliamentary speakers. Chesterfield many years later, in one of his letters to his son, described Cowper as an orator who never spoke without applause, but who reasoned feebly, and who owed the influence which he long exercised over great assemblies to the singular charm of his style, his voice and his action. Chesterfield was, beyond all doubt, intellectually qualified to form a correct judgment on such a subject. But it must be remembered that the object of his letters was to exalt

good taste and politeness in opposition to much higher qualities. He therefore constantly and systematically attributed the success of the most eminent persons of his age to their superiority, not in solid abilities and acquirements, but in superficial graces of diction and manner. He represented even Marlborough as a man of very ordinary capacity, who, solely because he was extremely well bred and well spoken, had risen from poverty and obscurity to the height of power and glory. It may confidently be pronounced that both to Marlborough and to Cowper Chesterfield was unjust. The general who saved the Empire and conquered the Low Countries was assuredly something more than a fine gentleman; and the judge who presided during nine years in the Court of Chancery with the approbation of all parties must have been something more than a fine declaimer.

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Whoever attentively and impartially studies the report of the debates will be of opinion that, on many points which were discussed at great length and with great animation, the Whigs had a decided superiority in argument, but that on the main question the Tories were in the right.

It was true that the crime of high treason was brought home to Fenwick by proofs which could leave no doubt on the mind of any man of common sense, and would have been brought home to him according to the strict rules of law, if he had not, by committing another crime, eluded the justice of the ordinary tribunals. It was true that he had, in the very act of professing repentance and imploring mercy, added a new offence to his former offences, that, while pretending to make a perfectly ingenuous confession, he had, with cunning malice, concealed every thing which it was for the interest of the government that he should divulge, and proclaimed every thing which it was for the interest of the government to bury in silence. It was a great evil that he should be beyond the reach of punishment: it was plain that he could be reached only by a bill of pains

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and penalties; and it could not be denied, either that many such bills had passed, or that no such bill had ever passed in a clearer case of guilt or after a fairer hearing.

All these propositions the Whigs seem to have fully established. They had also a decided advantage in the dispute about the rule which requires two witnesses in cases of high treason. The truth is that the rule is absurd. It is impossible to understand why the evidence which would be sufficient to prove that a man has fired at one of his fellow subjects should not be sufficient to prove that he has fired at his Sovereign. It can by no means be laid down as a general maxim that the assertion of two witnesses is more convincing to the mind than the assertion of one witness. The story told by one witness may be in itself probable. The story told by two witnesses may be extravagant. The story told by one witness may be uncontradicted. The story told by two witnesses may be contradicted by four witnesses. The story told by one witness may be corroborated by a crowd of circumstances. The story told by two witnesses may have no such corroboration. The one witness may be Tillotson or Ken. The two witnesses may be Oates and Bedloe.

The chiefs of the Tory party, however, vehemently maintained that the law which required two witnesses was of universal and eternal obligation, part of the law of nature, part of the law of God. Seymour quoted the book of Numbers and the book of Deuteronomy to prove that no man ought to be condemned to death by the mouth of a single witness. "Caiaphas and his Sanhedrim," said Harley, "were ready enough to set up the plea of expediency for a violation of justice: they said, — and we have heard such things said, — 'We must slay this man, or the Romans will come and take away our place and nation.' Yet even Caiaphas and his Sanhedrim, in that foulest act of judicial murder, did not venture to set aside the sacred law which required

two witnesses." "Even Jezebel," said another orator, "did not dare to take Naboth's vineyard from him till she had suborned two men of Belial to swear falsely." "If the testimony of one grave elder had been sufficient," it was asked, "what would have become of the virtuous Susannah?" This last allusion called forth a cry of "Apocrypha, Apocrypha," from the ranks of the Low Churchmen.*

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Over these arguments, which in truth can scarcely have imposed on those who condescended to use them, Montague obtained a complete and easy victory. "An eternal law! Where was this eternal law before the reign of Edward the Sixth? Where is it now, except in statutes which relate only to one very small class of offences. If these texts from the Pentateuch and these precedents from the practice of the Sanhedrim prove any thing, they prove the whole criminal jurisprudence of the realm to be a mass of injustice and impiety. One witness is sufficient to convict a murderer, a burglar, a highwayman, an incendiary, a ravisher. Nay, there are cases of high treason in which only one witness is required. One witness can send to Tyburn a gang of clippers and coiners. Are you, then, prepared to say that the whole law of evidence, according to which men have during ages been tried in this country for offences against life and property, is vicious and ought to be remodelled? If you shrink from saying this, you must admit that we are now proposing to dispense, not with a divine ordinance of universal and perpetual obligation, but simply with an English rule of procedure, which applies to not more than two or three crimes, which has not been in force a hundred and fifty years, which derives all its authority from an Act of Parliament, and which may therefore be by another Act abrogated or suspended without offence to God or men."

It was much less easy to answer the chiefs of the opposition

* This incident is mentioned by L'Hermitage.

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when they set forth the danger of breaking down the partition which separates the functions of the legislator from those of the judge. "This man," it was said, "may be a bad Englishman; and yet his cause may be the cause of all good Englishmen. Only last year we passed an Act to regulate the procedure of the ordinary courts in cases of treason. We passed that Act because we thought that, in those courts, the life of a subject obnoxious to the government was not then sufficiently secured. Yet the life of a subject obnoxious to the government was then far more secure than it will be if this House takes on itself to be the supreme criminal judicature in political cases." Warm eulogies were pronounced on the ancient national mode of trial by twelve good men and true; and indeed the advantages of that mode of trial in political cases are obvious. The prisoner is allowed to challenge any number of jurors with cause, and a considerable number without cause. The twelve, from the moment at which they are invested with their short magistracy, till the moment when they lay it down, are kept separate from the rest of the community. Every precaution is taken to prevent any agent of power from soliciting or corrupting them. Every one of them must hear every word of the evidence and every argument used on either side. The case is then summed up by a judge who knows that, if he is guilty of partiality, he may be called to account by the great inquest of the nation. In the trial of Fenwick at the bar of the House of Commons all these securities were wanting. Some hundreds of gentlemen, every one of whom had much more than half made up his mind before the case was opened, performed the functions both of judge and jury. They were not restrained, as a judge is restrained, by the sense of responsibility; for who was to punish a Parliament? They were not selected, as a jury is selected, in a manner which enables the culprit to exclude his personal and political enemies. The arbiters of his fate came in

and went out as they chose. They heard a fragment here and there of what was said against him, and a fragment here and there of what was said in his favour. During the progress of the bill they were exposed to every species of influence. One member was threatened by the electors of his borough with the loss of his seat: another might obtain a frigate for his brother from Russell: the vote of a third might be secured by the caresses and Burgundy of Wharton. In the debates arts were practised and passions excited which are unknown to well constituted tribunals, but from which no great popular assembly divided into parties ever was or ever will be free. The rhetoric of one orator called forth loud cries of "Hear him." Another was coughed and scraped down. A third spoke against time in order that his friends who were supping might come in to divide.* If the life of the most worthless man could be sported with thus, was the life of the most virtuous man secure?

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The opponents of the bill did not, indeed, venture to say that there could be no public danger sufficient to justify an Act of Attainder. They admitted that there might be cases in which the general rule must bend to an overpowering necessity. But was this such a case? Even if it were granted, for the sake of argument, that Strafford and Monmouth were justly attainted, was Fenwick, like Strafford, a great minister who had long ruled England north of Trent, and all Ireland, with absolute power, who was high in the royal favour, and whose capacity, eloquence and resolution made him an object of dread even in his fall? Or was Fenwick, like Monmouth, a pretender to the Crown and the idol of the common people? Were all the finest youths of three counties crowding to enlist under his banners? What was he but a subordinate plotter? He had indeed once had good employments: but he had long lost them. He had once had a good estate: but he had wasted it. Eminent

* L'Hermitage tells us that such things took place in these debates.

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abilities and weight of character he had never had. He was, no doubt, connected by marriage with a very noble family: but that family did not share his political prejudices. What importance, then, had he, except that importance which his persecutors were most unwisely giving him by breaking through all the fences which guard the lives of Englishmen in order to destroy him? Even if he were set a liberty, what could he do but haunt Jacobite coffeehouses, squeeze oranges, and drink the health of King James and the Prince of Wales? If, however, the government, supported by the Lords and the Commons, by the fleet and the army, by a militia one hundred and sixty thousand strong, and by the half million of men who had signed the Association, did really apprehend danger from this poor ruined baronet, the benefit of the Habeas Corpus Act might be withheld from him. He might be kept within four walls as long as there was the least chance of his doing mischief. It could hardly be contended that he was an enemy so terrible that the State could be safe only when he was in the grave.

It was acknowledged that precedents might be found for this bill, or even for a bill far more objectionable. But it was said that whoever reviewed our history would be disposed to regard such precedents rather as warnings than as examples. It had many times happened that an Act of Attainder, passed in a fit of servility or animosity, had, when fortune had changed, or when passion had cooled, been repealed and solemnly stigmatized as unjust. Thus, in old times, the Act which was passed against Roger Mortimer, in the paroxysm of a resentment not unprovoked, had been, at a calmer moment, rescinded on the ground that, however guilty he might have been, he had not had fair play for his life. Thus, within the memory of the existing generation, the law which attainted Strafford had been annulled, without one dissentient voice. Nor, it was

added, ought it to be left unnoticed that, whether by virtue of the ordinary law of cause and effect, or by the extraordinary judgment of God, persons who had been eager to pass bills of pains and penalties, had repeatedly perished by such bills. No man had ever made a more unscrupulous use of the legislative power for the destruction of his enemies than Thomas Cromwell; and it was by an unscrupulous use of the legislative power that he was himself destroyed. If it were true that the unhappy gentleman whose fate was now trembling in the balance had himself formerly borne a part in a proceeding similar to that which was now instituted against him, was not this a fact which ought to suggest very serious reflections? Those who tauntingly reminded Fenwick that he had supported the bill which attainted Monmouth might perhaps themselves be tauntingly reminded, in some dark and terrible hour, that they had supported the bill which had attainted Fenwick. "Let us remember what vicissitudes we have seen. Let us, from so many signal examples of the inconstancy of fortune, learn moderation in prosperity. How little we thought, when we saw this man a favourite courtier at Whitehall, a general surrounded with military pomp at Hounslow, that we should live to see him standing at our bar, and awaiting his doom from our lips! And how far is it from certain that we may not one day, in the bitterness of our souls, vainly invoke the protection of those mild laws which we now treat so lightly! God forbid that we should ever again be subject to tyranny! But God forbid, above all, that our tyrants should ever be able to plead, in justification of the worst that they can inflict upon us, precedents furnished by ourselves!"

These topics, skilfully handled, produced a great effect on many moderate Whigs. Montague did his best to rally his followers. We still possess the rude outline of what must have been a most effective peroration. "Gentlemen warn us" —

CHAP. this, or very nearly this, seems to have been what he said —
 XXII. “not to furnish King James with a precedent which, if ever he
 1696. should be restored, he may use against ourselves. Do they
 really believe that, if that evil day shall ever come, this just
 and necessary law will be the pattern which he will imitate?
 No, Sir, his model will be, not our bill of attainder, but his
 own; not our bill, which, on full proof, and after a most fair
 hearing, inflicts deserved retribution on a single guilty head;
 but his own bill, which, without a defence, without an in-
 vestigation, without an accusation, doomed near three thou-
 sand people, whose only crimes were their English blood
 and their Protestant faith, the men to the gallows and the
 women to the stake. That is the precedent which he has set,
 and which he will follow. In order that he never may be able
 to follow it, in order that the fear of a righteous punishment
 may restrain those enemies of our country who wish to see him
 ruling in London as he ruled at Dublin, I give my vote for this
 bill.”

In spite of all the eloquence and influence of the ministry, the minority grew stronger and stronger as the debates proceeded. The question that leave should be given to bring in the bill had been carried by nearly three to one. On the question that the bill should be committed, the Ayes were a hundred and eighty six, the Noes a hundred and twenty eight. On the question that the bill should pass, the Ayes were a hundred and eighty nine, the Noes a hundred and fifty six.

The Bill
 of At-
 tainder
 carried
 up to the
 Lords.

On the twenty-sixth of November the bill was carried up to the Lords. Before it arrived, the Lords had made preparations to receive it. Every peer who was absent from town had been summoned up: every peer who disobeyed the summons and was unable to give a satisfactory explanation of his disobedience was taken into custody by Black Rod. On the day fixed for the first reading, the crowd on the benches was unprecedented.

The whole number of temporal Lords, exclusive of minors, Roman Catholics and nonjurors, was about a hundred and forty. Of these a hundred and five were in their places. Many thought that the Bishops ought to have been permitted, if not required, to withdraw: for, by an ancient canon, those who ministered at the altars of God were forbidden to take any part in the infliction of capital punishment. On the trial of a peer impeached of high treason, the prelates always retire, and leave the culprit to be absolved or condemned by laymen. And surely, if it be unseemly that a divine should doom his fellow creatures to death as a judge, it must be still more unseemly that he should doom them to death as a legislator. In the latter case, as in the former, he contracts that stain of blood which the Church regards with horror; and it will scarcely be denied that there are some grave objections to the shedding of blood by Act of Attainder which do not apply to the shedding of blood in the ordinary course of justice. In fact, when the bill for taking away the life of Strafford was under consideration, all the spiritual peers withdrew. Now, however, the example of Cranmer, who had voted for some of the most infamous acts of attainder that ever passed, was thought more worthy of imitation; and there was a great muster of lawn sleeves. It was very properly resolved that, on this occasion, the privilege of voting by proxy should be suspended, that the House should be called over at the beginning and at the end of every sitting, and that every member who did not answer to his name should be taken into custody.*

Meanwhile the unquiet brain of Monmouth was teeming with strange designs. He had now reached a time of life at which youth could no longer be pleaded as an excuse for his faults: but he was more wayward and eccentric than ever. Both in his intellectual and in his moral character there was an abundance

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Artifices
of Mon-
mouth.

* See the Lords' Journals, Nov. 14., Nov. 30., Dec. 1. 1696.

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of those fine qualities which may be called luxuries, and a lamentable deficiency of those solid qualities which are of the first necessity. He had brilliant wit and ready invention without common sense, and chivalrous generosity and delicacy without common honesty. He was capable of rising to the part of the Black Prince; and yet he was capable of sinking to the part of Fuller. His political life was blemished by some most dishonourable actions: yet he was not under the influence of those motives to which most of the dishonourable actions of politicians are to be ascribed. He valued power little and money less. Of fear he was utterly insensible. If he sometimes stooped to be a villain, — for no milder word will come up to the truth, — it was merely to amuse himself and to astonish other people. In civil as in military affairs, he loved ambuscades, surprises, night attacks. He now imagined that he had a glorious opportunity of making a sensation, of producing a great commotion; and the temptation was irresistible to a spirit so restless as his.

He knew, or at least strongly suspected, that the stories which Fenwick had told on hearsay, and which King, Lords and Commons, Whigs and Tories, had agreed to treat as calumnies, were, in the main, true. Was it possible to prove that they were true, to cross the wise policy of William, to bring disgrace at once on some of the most eminent men of both parties, to throw the whole political world into inextricable confusion?

Nothing could be done without the help of the prisoner; and with the prisoner it was impossible to communicate directly. It was necessary to employ the intervention of more than one female agent. The Duchess of Norfolk was a Mordaunt, and Monmouth's first cousin. Her gallantries were notorious; and her husband had, some years before, tried to induce his brother nobles to pass a bill for dissolving his marriage: but the at-

tempt had been defeated, in consequence partly of the zeal with which Monmouth had fought the battle of his kinswoman. The lady, though separated from her lord, lived in a style suitable to her rank, and associated with many women of fashion, among others, with Lady Mary Fenwick, and with a relation of Lady Mary, named Elizabeth Lawson. By the instrumentality of the Duchess, Monmouth conveyed to the prisoner several papers containing suggestions framed with much art. Let Sir John, — such was the substance of these suggestions, — boldly affirm that his confession is true, that he has brought accusations, on hearsay indeed, but not on common hearsay, that he has derived his knowledge of the facts which he has asserted from the highest quarters; and let him point out a mode in which his veracity may be easily brought to the test. Let him pray that the Earls of Portland and Romney, who are well known to enjoy the royal confidence, may be called upon to declare whether they are not in possession of information agreeing with what he has related. Let him pray that the King may be requested to lay before Parliament the evidence which caused the sudden disgrace of Lord Marlborough, and any letters which may have been intercepted while passing between Saint Germain and Lord Godolphin. “Unless,” said Monmouth to his female agents, “Sir John is under a fate, unless he is out of his mind, he will take my counsel. If he does, his life and honour are safe. If he does not, he is a dead man.” Then this strange intriguer, with his usual license of speech, reviled William for what was in truth one of William’s best titles to glory. “He is the worst of men. He has acted basely. He pretends not to believe these charges against Shrewsbury, Russell, Marlborough, Godolphin. And yet he knows,” — and Monmouth confirmed the assertion by a tremendous oath, — “he knows that every word of the charges is true.”

The papers written by Monmouth were delivered by Lady

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Mary to her husband. If the advice which they contained had been followed, there can be little doubt that the object of the adviser would have been attained. The King would have been bitterly mortified: there would have been a general panic among public men of every party: even Marlborough's serene fortitude would have been severely tried; and Shrewsbury would probably have shot himself. But that Fenwick would have put himself in a better situation is by no means clear. Such was his own opinion. He saw that the step which he was urged to take was hazardous. He knew that he was urged to take that step, not because it was likely to save himself, but because it was certain to annoy others; and he was resolved not to be Monmouth's tool.

Debates
of the
Lords on
the Bill
of At-
tainer.

On the first of December the bill went through the earliest stage without a division. Then Fenwick's confession, which had, by the royal command, been laid on the table, was read; and then Marlborough stood up. "Nobody can wonder," he said, "that a man whose head is in danger should try to save himself by accusing others. I assure Your Lordships that, since the accession of his present Majesty, I have had no intercourse with Sir John on any subject whatever; and this I declare on my word of honour."* Marlborough's assertion may have been true: but it was perfectly compatible with the truth of all that Fenwick had said. Godolphin went further. "I certainly did," he said, "continue to the last in the service of King James and of his Queen. I was esteemed by them both. But I cannot think that a crime. It is possible that they and those who are about them may imagine that I am still attached to their interest. That I cannot help. But it is utterly false that I have had any such dealings with the Court of Saint Germain's as are described in the paper which Your Lordships have heard read."**

* Wharton to Shrewsbury, Dec. 1. 1696; L'Hermitage, of same date.

** L'Hermitage, Dec. 1st, 1696; Wharton to Shrewsbury, Dec. 1.

Fenwick was then brought in, and asked whether he had any further confession to make. Several peers interrogated him, but to no purpose. Monmouth, who could not believe that the papers which he had sent to Newgate had produced no effect, put, in a friendly and encouraging manner, several questions intended to bring out answers which would have been by no means agreeable to the accused Lords. No such answer however was to be extracted from Fenwick. Monmouth saw that his ingenious machinations had failed. Enraged and disappointed, he suddenly turned round, and became more zealous for the bill than any other peer in the House. Every body noticed the rapid change in his temper and manner: but that change was at first imputed merely to his well known levity.

On the eighth of December the bill was again taken into consideration; and on that day Fenwick, accompanied by his counsel, was in attendance. But, before he was called in, a previous question was raised. Several distinguished Tories, particularly Nottingham, Rochester, Normanby and Leeds, said that, in their opinion, it was idle to inquire whether the prisoner was guilty or not guilty, unless the House was of opinion that he was a person so formidable that, if guilty, he ought to be attainted by Act of Parliament. They did not wish, they said, to hear any evidence. For, even on the supposition that the evidence left no doubt of his criminality, they should still think it better to leave him unpunished than to make a law for punishing him. The general sense, however, was decidedly for proceeding.* The prisoner and his counsel were allowed another week to prepare themselves; and, at length, on the fifteenth of December, the struggle commenced in earnest.

The debates were the longest and the hottest, the divisions

* Lords' Journals, Dec. 8. 1696; L'Hermitage, of the same date.

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were the largest, the protests were the most numerous signed that had ever been known in the whole history of the House of Peers. Repeatedly the benches continued to be filled from ten in the morning till past midnight.* The health of many lords suffered severely: for the winter was bitterly cold; but the majority was not disposed to be indulgent. One evening Devonshire was unwell: he stole away and went to bed: but Black Rod was soon sent to bring him back. Leeds, whose constitution was extremely infirm, complained loudly. "It is very well," he said, "for young gentlemen to sit down to their suppers and their wine at two o'clock in the morning; but some of us old men are likely to be of as much use here as they; and we shall soon be in our graves if we are forced to keep such hours at such a season.** So strongly was party spirit excited that this appeal was disregarded, and the House continued to sit fourteen or fifteen hours a day. The chief opponents of the bill were Rochester, Nottingham, Normanby and Leeds. The chief orators on the other side were Tankerville, who, in spite of the deep stains which a life singularly unfortunate had left on his public and private character, always spoke with an eloquence which riveted the attention of his hearers; Burnet, who made a great display of historical learning; Wharton, whose lively and familiar style of speaking, acquired in the House of Commons, sometimes shocked the formality of the Lords; and Monmouth, who had always carried the liberty of debate to the verge of licentiousness, and who now never opened his lips without inflicting a wound on the feelings of some adversary. A very few nobles of great weight, Devonshire, Dorset, Pembroke and Ormond, formed a third party. They were willing to use the Bill of Attainder as an instrument of torture for the purpose of wringing a full confession out of the prisoner. But they

* L'Hermitage, Dec. 1st. 1696.

** L'Hermitage, Dec. 1st. 1696.

were determined not to give a final vote for sending him to the scaffold.

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The first division was on the question whether secondary evidence of what Goodman could have proved should be admitted. On this occasion Burnet closed the debate by a powerful speech which none of the Tory orators could undertake to answer without premeditation. A hundred and twenty six lords were present, a number unprecedented in our history. There were seventy three Contents, and fifty three Not Contents. Thirty six of the minority protested against the decision of the House.*

The next great trial of strength was on the question whether the bill should be read a second time. The debate was diversified by a curious episode. Monmouth, in a vehement declamation, threw some severe and well merited reflections on the memory of the late Lord Jeffreys. The title and part of the ill gotten wealth of Jeffreys had descended to his son, a dissolute lad, who had lately come of age, and who was then sitting in the House. The young man fired at hearing his father reviled. The House was forced to interfere, and to make both the disputants promise that the matter should go no further. On this day a hundred and twenty eight peers were present. The second reading was carried by seventy three to fifty five; and forty nine of the fifty five protested.**

It was now thought by many that Fenwick's courage would give way. It was known that he was very unwilling to die. Hitherto he might have flattered himself with hopes that the bill would miscarry. But now that it had passed one House,

* Lords' Journals, Dec. 15. 1696; L'Hermitage, Dec. 15.; Vernon to Shrewsbury, Dec. 15. About the numbers there is a slight difference between Vernon and L'Hermitage. I have followed Vernon.

** Lords' Journals, Dec. 18. 1696; Vernon to Shrewsbury, Dec. 19.; L'Hermitage, Dec. 22. I take the numbers from Vernon.
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and seemed certain to pass the other, it was probable that he would save himself by disclosing all that he knew. He was again put to the bar and interrogated. He refused to answer, on the ground that his answers might be used against him by the Crown at the Old Bailey. He was assured that the House would protect him: but he pretended that this assurance was not sufficient: the House was not always sitting: he might be brought to trial during a recess, and hanged before their Lordships met again. The royal word alone, he said, would be a complete guarantee. The Peers ordered him to be removed, and immediately resolved that Wharton should go to Kensington, and should entreat His Majesty to give the pledge which the prisoner required. Wharton hastened to Kensington, and hastened back with a gracious answer. Fenwick was again placed at the bar. The royal word, he was told, had been passed that nothing which he might say there should be used against him in any other place. Still he made difficulties. He might confess all that he knew, and yet might be told that he was still keeping something back. In short, he would say nothing till he had a pardon. He was then, for the last time, solemnly cautioned from the Woolsack. He was assured that, if he would deal ingenuously with the Lords, they would be intercessors for him at the foot of the throne, and that their intercession would not be unsuccessful. If he continued obstinate, they would proceed with the bill. A short interval was allowed him for consideration; and he was then required to give his final answer. "I have given it," he said: "I have no security. If I had, I should be glad to satisfy the House." He was then carried back to his cell; and the Peers separated, having sat for the night.*

* Lords' Journals, Dec. 25. 1696; L'Hermitage, ^{Dec. 26.}_{Jan. 1.} In the Vernon Correspondence there is a letter from Vernon to Shrewsbury giving an account of the transactions of this day; but it is erroneously dated Dec. 2.,

At noon they met again. The third reading was moved. Tenison spoke for the bill with more ability than was expected from him, and Monmouth with as much sharpness as in the previous debates. But Devonshire declared that he could go no further. He had hoped that fear would induce Fenwick to make a frank confession: that hope was at an end: the question now was simply whether this man should be put to death by an Act of Parliament; and to that question Devonshire said that he must answer, "Not Content." It is not easy to understand on what principle he can have thought himself justified in threatening to do what he did not think himself justified in doing. He was, however, followed by Dorset, Ormond, Pembroke, and two or three others. Devonshire, in the name of his little party, and Rochester, in the name of the Tories, offered to waive all objections to the mode of proceeding, if the penalty were reduced from death to perpetual imprisonment. But the majority, though weakened by the defection of some considerable men, was still a majority, and would hear of no terms of compromise. The third reading was carried by only sixty eight votes to sixty one. Fifty three Lords recorded their dissent; and forty one subscribed a protest, in which the arguments against the bill were ably summed up.* The peers whom Fenwick had accused took different sides. Marlborough steadily voted with the majority, and induced Prince George to do the same. Godolphin as steadily voted with the minority,

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and is placed according to that date. This is not the only blunder of the kind. A letter from Vernon to Shrewsbury, evidently written on the 7th of November 1696, is dated and placed as a letter of the 7th of January 1697. A letter of June 14, 1700 is dated and placed as a letter of June 14, 1698. The Vernon Correspondence is of great value: but it is so ill edited that it cannot be safely used without much caution, and constant reference to other authorities.

* Lords' Journals, Dec. 23. 1696; Vernon to Shrewsbury, Dec. 24.;

L'Hermitage, Dec. 25.
Jan. 4.

CHAP. but, with characteristic wariness, abstained from giving any
 XXII. reasons for his votes. No part of his life warrants us in ascribing
 1696. his conduct to any exalted motive. It is probable that, having
 been driven from office by the Whigs and forced to take
 refuge among the Tories, he thought it advisable to go with his
 party.*

Proceed-
 ings
 against
 Mon-
 mouth.

As soon as the bill had been read a third time, the attention of the Peers was called to a matter which deeply concerned the honour of their order. Lady Mary Fenwick had been, not unnaturally, moved to the highest resentment by the conduct of Monmouth. He had, after professing a great desire to save her husband, suddenly turned round, and become the most merciless of her husband's persecutors; and all this solely because the unfortunate prisoner would not suffer himself to be used as an instrument for the accomplishing of a wild scheme of mischief. She might be excused for thinking that revenge would be sweet. In her rage she showed to her kinsman the Earl of Carlisle the papers which she had received from the Duchess of Norfolk. Carlisle brought the subject before the Lords. The papers were produced. Lady Mary declared that she had received them from the Duchess. The Duchess declared that she had received them from Monmouth. Elizabeth Lawson confirmed the evidence of her two friends. All the bitter things which the petulant Earl had said about William were repeated. The rage of both the great factions broke forth with ungovernable violence. The Whigs were exasperated by discovering that Monmouth had been secretly labouring to bring to shame and ruin two eminent men with whose reputation the reputation of the whole party was bound up. The Tories accused him of dealing treacherously and cruelly by the prisoner and the prisoner's wife. Both among the Whigs and among the Tories Monmouth had, by his sneers and invectives,

* Vernon to Shrewsbury, Dec. 24. 1696.

made numerous personal enemies, whom fear of his wit and of his sword had hitherto kept in awe.* All these enemies were now openmouthed against him. There was great curiosity to know what he would be able to say in his defence. His eloquence, the correspondent of the States General wrote, had often annoyed others. He would now want it all to protect himself.** That eloquence indeed was of a kind much better suited to attack than to defence. Monmouth spoke near three hours in a confused and rambling manner, boasted extravagantly of his services and sacrifices, told the House that he had borne a great part in the Revolution, that he had made four voyages to Holland in the evil times, that he had since refused great places, that he had always held lucre in contempt. "I," he said, turning significantly to Nottingham, "have bought no great estate: I have built no palace: I am twenty thousand pounds poorer than when I entered public life. My old hereditary mansion is ready to fall about my ears. Who that remembers what I have done and suffered for His Majesty will believe that I would speak disrespectfully of him?" He solemnly declared, — and this was the most serious of the many serious faults of his long and unquiet life, — that he had nothing to do with the papers which had caused so much scandal. The Papists, he said, hated him: they had laid a scheme to ruin him: his ungrateful kinswoman had consented to be their implement, and had requited the strenuous efforts which he had made in defence of her honour by trying to blast his. When he concluded there was a long silence. He asked whether their Lordships wished him to withdraw. Then Leeds, to whom he had once professed a strong attachment, but whom

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* Dohna, who knew Monmouth well, describes him thus: "Il avoit de l'esprit infiniment, et même du plus agréable; mais il y avoit un peu trop de haut et de bas dans son fait. Il ne savoit ce que c'étoit que de ménager les gens; et il turlupinoit à l'outrance ceux qui ne lui plaisoient pas."

** L'Hermitage, Jan. 12. 1697.

CHAP. he had deserted with characteristic inconstancy and assailed
 XXI. with characteristic petulance, seized the opportunity of
 1697. revenging himself. "It is quite unnecessary," the shrewd old
 statesman said, "that the noble Earl should withdraw at present. The question which we have now to decide is merely whether these papers do or do not deserve our censure. Who wrote them is a question which may be considered hereafter." It was then moved and unanimously resolved that the papers were scandalous, and that the author had been guilty of a high crime and misdemeanour. Monmouth himself was, by these dexterous tactics, forced to join in condemning his own compositions.* Then the House proceeded to consider the charge against him. The character of his cousin the Duchess did not stand high; but her testimony was confirmed both by direct and by circumstantial evidence. Her husband said, with sour pleasantry, that he gave entire faith to what she had deposed. "My Lord Monmouth thought her good enough to be wife to me; and, if she is good enough to be wife to me, I am sure that she is good enough to be a witness against him." In a House of near eighty peers only eight or ten seemed inclined to show any favour to Monmouth. He was pronounced guilty of the act of which he had, in the most solemn manner, protested that he was innocent: he was sent to the Tower: he was turned out of all his places; and his name was struck out of the Council Book.** It might well have been thought that the ruin of his fame and of his fortunes was irreparable. But there was about his nature an elasticity which nothing could subdue. In his prison, indeed, he was as violent as a falcon just caged, and would, if he had been long detained, have died of mere impatience. His only solace was to contrive wild and romantic

* Lords' Journals, Jan. 9. 1697; Vernon to Shrewsbury, of the same date; L'Hermitage, Jan. 12.

** Lords' Journals, Jan. 15. 1697; Vernon to Shrewsbury, of the same date; L'Hermitage, of the same date.

schemes for extricating himself from his difficulties and avenging himself on his enemies. When he regained his liberty, he stood alone in the world, a dishonoured man, more hated by the Whigs than any Tory, and by the Tories than any Whig, and reduced to such poverty that he talked of retiring to the country, living like a farmer, and putting his Countess into the dairy to churn and to make cheeses. Yet even after this fall, that mounting spirit rose again, and rose higher than ever. When he next appeared before the world, he had inherited the earldom of the head of his family: he had ceased to be called by the tarnished name of Monmouth; and he soon added new lustre to the name of Peterborough. He was still all air and fire. His ready wit and his dauntless courage made him formidable: some amiable qualities which contrasted strangely with his vices, and some great exploits of which the effect was heightened by the careless levity with which they were performed, made him popular; and his countrymen were willing to forget that a hero of whose achievements they were proud, and who was not more distinguished by parts and valour than by courtesy and generosity, had stooped to tricks worthy of the pillory.

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It is interesting and instructive to compare the fate of Shrewsbury with the fate of Peterborough. The honour of Shrewsbury was safe. He had been triumphantly acquitted of the charges contained in Fenwick's confession. He was soon afterwards still more triumphantly acquitted of a still more odious charge. A wretched spy named Matthew Smith, who thought that he had not been sufficiently rewarded, and was bent on being revenged, affirmed that Shrewsbury had received early information of the Assassination Plot, but had suppressed that information, and had taken no measures to prevent the conspirators from accomplishing their design. That this was a

Position
and feel-
ings of
Shrews-
bury.

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foul calumny no person who has examined the evidence can doubt. The King declared that he could himself prove his minister's innocence; and the Peers, after examining Smith, pronounced the accusation unfounded. Shrewsbury was cleared as far as it was in the power of the Crown and of the Parliament to clear him. He had power and wealth, the favour of the King and the favour of the people. No man had a greater number of devoted friends. He was the idol of the Whigs: yet he was not personally disliked by the Tories. It should seem that his situation was one which Peterborough might well have envied. But happiness and misery are from within. Peterborough had one of those minds of which the deepest wounds heal and leave no scar. Shrewsbury had one of those minds in which the slightest scratch may fester to the death. He had been publicly accused of corresponding with Saint Germain; and, though King, Lords and Commons had pronounced him innocent, his conscience told him that he was guilty. The praises which he knew that he had not deserved sounded to him like reproaches. He never regained his lost peace of mind. He left office: but one cruel recollection accompanied him into retirement. He left England: but one cruel recollection pursued him over the Alps and the Apennines. On a memorable day, indeed, big with the fate of his country, he again, after many inactive and inglorious years, stood forth the Shrewsbury of 1688. Scarcely any thing in history is more melancholy than that late and solitary gleam, lighting up the close of a life which had dawned so splendidly, and which had so early become hopelessly troubled and gloomy.

The Bill
of At-
tainer
passed.

On the day on which the Lords passed the Bill of Attainder, they adjourned over the Christmas holidays. The fate of Fenwick consequently remained during more than a fortnight in suspense. In the interval plans of escape were formed; and it was thought necessary to place a strong military guard round

Newgate.* Some Jacobites knew William so little as to send him anonymous letters, threatening that he should be shot or stabbed if he dared to touch a hair of the prisoner's head.** On the morning of the eleventh of January he passed the bill. He at the same time passed a bill which authorised the government to detain Bernardi and some other conspirators in custody during twelve months. On the evening of that day a deeply mournful event was the talk of all London. The Countess of Aylesbury had watched with intense anxiety the proceedings against Sir John. Her lord had been as deep as Sir John in treason, was, like Sir John, in confinement, and had, like Sir John, been a party to Goodman's flight. She had learned with dismay that there was a method by which a criminal who was beyond the reach of the ordinary law might be punished. Her terror had increased at every stage in the progress of the Bill of Attainder. On the day on which the royal assent was to be given, her agitation became greater than her frame could support. When she heard the sound of the guns which announced that the King was on his way to Westminster, she fell into fits, and died in a few hours.***

Even after the bill had become law, strenuous efforts were made to save Fenwick. His wife threw herself at William's feet, and offered him a petition. He took the petition, and said, very gently, that it should be considered, but that the matter was one of public concern, and that he must deliberate with his ministers before he decided.† She then addressed herself to the Lords. She told them that her husband had not expected his doom, that he had not had time to prepare himself for death, that he had not, during his long imprisonment, seen a divine. They were easily induced to request that he might be

Attempts
to save
Fenwick.

* Postman, Dec. 29. 31. 1696.

** L'Hermitage, Jan. 1st. 1697.

*** Van Cleverskirke, Jan. 1st. 1697; L'Hermitage, Jan. 1st.

† L'Hermitage, Jan. 1st. 1697.

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respired for a week. A respite was granted: but, forty eight hours before it expired, Lady Mary presented to the Lords another petition, imploring them to intercede with the King that her husband's punishment might be commuted to banishment. The House was taken by surprise; and a motion to adjourn was with difficulty carried by two votes.* On the morrow, the last day of Fenwick's life, a similar petition was presented to the Commons. But the Whig leaders were on their guard: the attendance was full; and a motion for reading the Orders of the Day was carried by a hundred and fifty two to a hundred and seven.** In truth, neither branch of the legislature could, without condemning itself, request William to spare Fenwick's life. Jurymen, who have, in the discharge of a painful duty, pronounced a culprit guilty, may, with perfect consistency, recommend him to the favourable consideration of the Crown. But the Houses ought not to have passed the Bill of Attainder unless they were convinced, not merely that Sir John had committed high treason, but also that he could not, without serious danger to the Commonwealth, be suffered to live. He could not be at once a proper object of such a bill and a proper object of the royal mercy.

Fen-
wick's
execu-
tion.

On the twenty-eighth of January the execution took place. In compliment to the noble families with which Fenwick was connected, orders were given that the ceremonial should be in all respects the same as when a peer of the realm suffers death. A scaffold was erected on Tower Hill and hung with black. The prisoner was brought from Newgate in the coach of his kinsman the Earl of Carlisle, which was surrounded by a troop of the Life Guards. Though the day was cold and stormy, the crowd

* Lords' Journals, Jan. 22. 26. 1695; Vernon to Shrewsbury, Jan. 26.

** Commons' Journals, Jan. 27. 1695. The entry in the Journals, which might easily escape notice, is explained by a letter of L'Hermitage,

written
Jan. 29.
Feb. 8.

of spectators was immense: but there was no disturbance, and no sign that the multitude sympathized with the criminal. He behaved with a firmness which had not been expected from him. He ascended the scaffold with steady steps, and bowed courteously to the persons who were assembled on it, but spoke to none, except White, the deprived Bishop of Peterborough. White prayed with him during about half an hour. In the prayer the King was commended to the Divine protection; but no name which could give offence was pronounced. Fenwick then delivered a sealed paper to the Sheriffs, took leave of the Bishop, knelt down, laid his neck on the block, and exclaimed, "Lord Jesus, receive my soul." His head was severed from his body at a single blow. His remains were placed in a rich coffin, and buried that night, by torchlight, under the pavement of Saint Martin's church. No person has, since that day, suffered death in England by Act of Attainder.*

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Meanwhile an important question, about which public feeling was much excited, had been under discussion. As soon as the Parliament met, a Bill for Regulating Elections, differing little in substance from the bill which the King had refused to pass in the preceding session, was brought into the House of Commons, was eagerly welcomed by the country gentlemen, and was pushed through every stage. On the report it was moved that five thousand pounds in personal estate should be a sufficient qualification for the representative of a city or borough. But this amendment was rejected. On the third reading a rider was added, which permitted a merchant possessed of five thousand pounds to represent the town in which he resided: but it was provided that no person should be considered as a merchant because he was a proprietor of Bank Stock or East India Stock. The fight was hard. Cowper distinguished him-

Bill for
the Re-
gulating
of Elec-
tions.

* L'Hermitage, ^{Jan. 29.} 1697; London Gazette, Feb. 1.; Paris Gazette; ^{Feb. 8.} Vernon to Shrewsbury, Jan. 28.; Burnet, ii. 193.

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self among the opponents of the bill. His sarcastic remarks on the hunting, hawking boors, who wished to keep in their own hands the whole business of legislation, called forth some sharp rustic retorts. A plain squire, he was told, was as likely to serve the country well as the most fluent gowmsman, who was ready, for a guinea, to prove that black was white. On the question whether the bill should pass, the Ayes were two hundred, the Noes a hundred and sixty.*

The Lords had, twelve months before, readily agreed to a similar bill; but they had since reconsidered the subject and changed their opinion. The truth is that, if a law requiring every member of the House of Commons to possess an estate of some hundreds of pounds a year in land could have been strictly enforced, such a law would have been very advantageous to country gentlemen of moderate property, but would have been by no means advantageous to the grantees of the realm. A lord of a small manor would have stood for the town in the neighbourhood of which his family had resided during centuries, without any apprehension that he should be opposed by some alderman of London, whom the electors had never seen before the day of nomination, and whose chief title to their favour was a pocketbook full of bank notes. But a great nobleman, who had an estate of fifteen or twenty thousand pounds a year, and who commanded two or three boroughs, would no longer be able to put his younger son, his younger brother, his man of business, into Parliament, or to earn a garter or a step in the peerage by finding a seat for a Lord of the Treasury or an Attorney General. On this occasion therefore the interest of the chiefs of the aristocracy, Norfolk and Somerset, Newcastle and Bedford, Pembroke and Dorset, coincided with that of the wealthy traders of the City and of the clever young aspirants of

* Commons' Journals, December 19. 1696; Vernon to Shrewsbury, Nov. 28. 1696.

the Temple, and was diametrically opposed to the interest of a squire of a thousand or twelve hundred a year. On the day fixed for the second reading the attendance of lords was great. Several petitions from constituent bodies, which thought it hard that a new restriction should be imposed on the exercise of the elective franchise, were presented and read. After a debate of some hours the bill was rejected by sixty two votes to thirty seven.* Only three days later, a strong party in the Commons, burning with resentment, proposed to tack the bill which the Peers had just rejected to the Land Tax Bill. This motion would probably have been carried, had not Foley gone somewhat beyond the duties of his place, and, under pretence of speaking to order, shown that such a tack would be without a precedent in parliamentary history. When the question was put, the Ayes raised so loud a cry that it was believed that they were the majority: but on a division they proved to be only a hundred and thirty five. The Noes were a hundred and sixty three.**

Other parliamentary proceedings of this session deserve mention. While the Commons were busily engaged in the great work of restoring the finances, an incident took place which seemed, during a short time, likely to be fatal to the infant liberty of the press, but which eventually proved the means of confirming that liberty. Among the many newspapers which had been established since the expiration of the censorship, was one called the Flying Post. The editor, John Salisbury, was the tool of a band of stockjobbers in the City, whose interest it happened to be to cry down the public securities. He one day published a false and malicious paragraph, evidently intended

Bill for
the Regu-
lation of
the Press.

* Lords' Journals, Jan. 23. 1695; Vernon to Shrewsbury, Jan. 23.; L'Hermitage, Jan. 26.
Feb. 5.

** Commons' Journals, Jan. 26. 1695; Vernon to Shrewsbury and Van Cleverskirke to the States General of the same date. It is curious that the King and the Lords should have made so strenuous a fight against the Commons in defence of one of the five points of the People's Charter.

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to throw suspicion on the Exchequer Bills. On the credit of the Exchequer Bills depended, at that moment, the political greatness and the commercial prosperity of the realm. The House of Commons was in a flame. The Speaker issued his warrant against Salisbury. It was resolved without a division that a bill should be brought in to prohibit the publishing of news without a license. Forty eight hours later the bill was presented and read. But the members had now had time to cool. There was scarcely one of them whose residence in the country had not, during the preceding summer, been made more agreeable by the London journals. Meagre as those journals may seem to a person who has the Times daily on his breakfast table, they were to that generation a new and abundant source of pleasure. No Devonshire or Yorkshire gentleman, Whig or Tory, could bear the thought of being again dependent, during seven months of every year, for all information about what was doing in the world, on newsletters. If the bill passed, the sheets, which were now so impatiently expected twice a week at every country seat in the kingdom, would contain nothing but what it suited the Secretary of State to make public: they would be, in fact, so many London Gazettes; and the most assiduous reader of the London Gazette might be utterly ignorant of the most important events of his time. A few voices, however, were raised in favour of a censorship. "These papers," it was said, "frequently contain mischievous matter." "Then why are they not prosecuted?" was the answer. "Has the Attorney-General filed an information against any one of them? And is it not absurd to ask us to give a new remedy by statute, when the old remedy afforded by the common law has never been tried?" On the question whether the bill should be read a second time, the Ayes were only sixteen, the Noes two hundred.*

* Commons' Journals, April 1. 3. 1697; Narcissus Luttrell's Diary;

Another bill, which fared better, ought to be noticed as an instance of the slow, but steady progress of civilisation. The ancient immunities enjoyed by some districts of the capital, of which the largest and the most infamous was Whitefriars, had produced abuses which could no longer be endured. The Templars on one side of Alsatia, and the citizens on the other, had long been calling on the government and the legislature to put down so monstrous a nuisance. Yet still, bounded on the west by the great school of English jurisprudence, and on the east by the great mart of English trade, stood this labyrinth of squalid, tottering houses, close packed, every one, from cellar to cockloft, with outcasts whose life was one long war with society. The best part of the population consisted of debtors who were in fear of bailiffs. The rest were attorneys struck off the roll, witnesses who carried straw in their shoes as a sign to inform the public where a false oath might be procured for half a crown, sharpers, receivers of stolen goods, clippers of coin, forgers of bank notes, and tawdry women, blooming with paint and brandy, who, in their anger, made free use of their nails and their scissors, yet whose anger was less to be dreaded than their kindness. With these wretches the narrow alleys of the sanctuary swarmed. The rattling of dice, the call for more punch and more wine, and the noise of blasphemy and ribald song never ceased during the whole night. The benchers of the Inner Temple could bear the scandal and the annoyance no longer. They ordered the gate leading into Whitefriars to be bricked up. The Alsatians mustered in great force, attacked

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Bill abolishing the privileges of Whitefriars and the Savoy.

L'Hermitage, April 23. 1697. L'Hermitage says, "La plupart des membres, lorsqu'ils sont à la campagne, estant bien aises d'estre informez par plus d'un endroit de ce qui se passe, et s'imaginant que la Gazette qui se fait sous la direction d'un des Secrétaires d'Etat, ne contiendroit pas autant de choses que fait celle-cy, ne sont pas fâchez que d'autres les instruisent." The numbers on the division I take from L'Hermitage. They are not to be found in the Journals. But the Journals were not then so accurately kept as at present.

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the workmen, killed one of them, pulled down the wall, knocked down the Sheriff who came to keep the peace, and carried off his gold chain, which, no doubt, was soon in the melting pot. The riot was not suppressed till a company of the Foot Guards arrived. This outrage excited general indignation. The City, indignant at the outrage offered to the Sheriff, cried loudly for justice. Yet, so difficult was it to execute any process in the dens of Whitefriars, that near two years elapsed before a single ringleader was apprehended.*

The Savoy was another place of the same kind, smaller indeed, and less renowned, but inhabited by a not less lawless population. An unfortunate tailor, who ventured to go thither for the purpose of demanding payment of a debt, was set upon by the whole mob of cheats, ruffians and courtesans. He offered to give a full discharge to his debtor and a treat to the rabble, but in vain. He had violated their franchises; and this crime was not to be pardoned. He was knocked down, stripped, tarred, feathered. A rope was tied round his waist. He was dragged naked up and down the streets amidst yells of "A bailiff! A bailiff!" Finally he was compelled to kneel down and to curse his father and mother. Having performed this ceremony he was permitted, — and the permission was blamed by many of the Savoyards, — to limp home without a rag upon him.** The Bog of Allen, the passes of the Grampians, were not more unsafe than this small knot of lanes, surrounded by the mansions of the greatest nobles of a flourishing and enlightened kingdom.

At length, in 1697, a bill for abolishing the franchises of these places passed both Houses, and received the royal assent. The Alsatians and Savoyards were furious. Anonymous letters, containing menaces of assassination, were received by

* Narcissus Luttrell's Diary, June 1691, May 1693.

** Commons' Journals, Dec. 30. 1696; Postman, July 4. 1696.

members of Parliament who had made themselves conspicuous by the zeal with which they had supported the bill: but such threats only strengthened the general conviction that it was high time to destroy these nests of knaves and ruffians. A fortnight's grace was allowed; and it was made known that, when that time had expired, the vermin who had been the curse of London would be unearthed and hunted without mercy. There was a tumultuous flight to Ireland, to France, to the Colonies, to vaults and garrets in less notorious parts of the capital; and when, on the prescribed day, the Sheriff's officers ventured to cross the boundary, they found those streets where, a few weeks before, the cry of "A writ!" would have drawn together a thousand raging bullies and vixens, as quiet as the cloister of a cathedral.*

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On the sixteenth of April, the King closed the session with a speech, in which he returned warm and well merited thanks to the Houses for the firmness and wisdom which had rescued the nation from commercial and financial difficulties unprecedented in our history. Before he set out for the Continent, he conferred some new honours, and made some new ministerial arrangements. Every member of the Whig junto was distinguished by some conspicuous mark of royal favour. Somers delivered up the seal, of which he was Keeper: he received it back again with the higher title of Chancellor, and was immediately commanded to affix it to a patent, by which he was created Baron Somers of Evesham.** Russell became Earl of Orford and Viscount Barfleur. No English title had ever before been taken from a place of battle lying within a foreign territory. But the precedent then set has been repeatedly followed; and the names of Saint Vincent, Trafalgar, Camperdown, and Douro are now borne by the successors of great commanders. Russell seems to

Close of
the ses-
sion:
promo-
tions and
appoint-
ments.

* Postman, April 22. 1697; Narcissus Luttrell's Diary.

** London Gazette, April 26. 29. 1697.

CHAP. have accepted his earldom, after his fashion, not only without
 XXII. gratitude, but grumblingly, and as if some great wrong had
 1697. been done him. What was a coronet to him? He had no child
 to inherit it. The only distinction which he should have prized
 was the garter; and the garter had been given to Portland. Of
 course, such things were for the Dutch; and it was strange pre-
 sumption in an Englishman, though he might have won a
 victory which had saved the State, to expect that his pretensions
 would be considered till all the Mynheers about the palace had
 been served.*

Wharton, still retaining his place of Comptroller of the
 Household, obtained the lucrative office of Chief Justice in Eyre,
 South of Trent; and his brother, Godwin Wharton, was made a
 Lord of the Admiralty.**

Though the resignation of Godolphin had been accepted in
 October, no new commission of Treasury was issued till after
 the prorogation. Who should be First Commissioner was a
 question long and fiercely disputed. For Montague's faults had
 made him many enemies, and his merits many more. Dull for-
 malists sneered at him as a wit and poet, who, no doubt, showed
 quick parts in debate, but who had already been raised far
 higher than his services merited or than his brain would bear. It
 would be absurd to place such a young coxcomb, merely because
 he could talk fluently and cleverly, in an office on which the well
 being of the kingdom depended. Surely Sir Stephen Fox was,
 of all the Lords of the Treasury, the fittest to be at the head of
 the Board. He was an elderly man, grave, experienced, exact,
 laborious; and he had never made a verse in his life. The King
 hesitated during a considerable time between the two candi-
 dates: but time was all in Montague's favour; for, from the first

* London Gazette, April 29. 1697; L'Hermitage, $\frac{\text{April 23.}}{\text{May 3.}}$

** London Gazette, April 26. 29. 1697; L'Hermitage, $\frac{\text{April 23.}}{\text{May 3.}}$

to the last day of the session, his fame was constantly rising. The voice of the House of Commons and of the City loudly designated him as preeminently qualified to be the chief minister of finance. At length Sir Stephen Fox withdrew from the competition, though not with a very good grace. He wished it to be notified in the London Gazette that the place of First Lord had been offered to him, and declined by him. Such a notification would have been an affront to Montague; and Montague, flushed with prosperity and glory, was not in a mood to put up with affronts. The dispute was compromised. Montague became First Lord of the Treasury; and the vacant seat at the Board was filled by Sir Thomas Littleton, one of the ablest and most consistent Whigs in the House of Commons. But, from tenderness to Fox, these promotions were not announced in the Gazette.*

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Dorset resigned the office of Chamberlain, but not in ill humour, and retired loaded with marks of royal favour. He was succeeded by Sunderland, who was also appointed one of the Lords Justices, not without much murmuring from various quarters.** To the Tories Sunderland was an object of unmixed detestation. Some of the Whig leaders had been unable to resist his insinuating address; and others were grateful for the services which he had lately rendered to the party. But the leaders could not restrain their followers. Plain men, who were zealous for civil liberty and for the Protestant religion, who were beyond the range of Sunderland's irresistible fascination, and who knew that he had sate in the High Commission, con-

* What the opinion of the public was we learn from a letter written by L'Hermitage immediately after Godolphin's resignation, Nov. 7th, 1696, "Le public tourne plus la veue sur le Sieur Montegu, qui a la seconde charge de la Trésorerie que sur aucun autre." The strange silence of the London Gazette is explained by a letter of Vernon to Shrewsbury, dated May 1. 1697.

** London Gazette, April 22. 26. 1697.

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curred in the Declaration of Indulgence, borne witness against the Seven Bishops, and received the host from a Popish priest, could not, without indignation and shame, see him standing, with the staff in his hand, close to the throne. Still more monstrous was it that such a man should be entrusted with the administration of the government during the absence of the Sovereign. William did not understand these feelings. Sunderland was able: he was useful: he was unprincipled indeed: but so were all the English politicians of the generation which had learned, under the sullen tyranny of the Saints, to disbelieve in virtue, and which had, during the wild jubilee of the Restoration, been utterly dissolved in vice. He was a fair specimen of his class, a little worse, perhaps, than Leeds or Godolphin, and about as bad as Russell or Marlborough. Why he was to be hunted from the herd the King could not imagine.

Notwithstanding the discontent which was caused by Sunderland's elevation, England was, during this summer, perfectly quiet and in excellent temper. All but the fanatical Jacobites were elated by the rapid revival of trade and by the near prospect of peace. Nor were Ireland and Scotland less tranquil.

State of
Ireland.

In Ireland nothing deserving to be minutely related had taken place since Sidney had ceased to be Lord Lieutenant. The government had suffered the colonists to domineer unchecked over the native population; and the colonists had in return been profoundly obsequious to the government. The proceedings of the local legislature which sat at Dublin had been in no respect more important or more interesting than the proceedings of the Assembly of Barbadoes. Perhaps the most momentous event in the parliamentary history of Ireland at this time was a dispute between the two Houses which was caused by a collision between the coach of the Speaker and the coach of the Chancellor. There were, indeed, factions, but factions

which sprang merely from personal pretensions and animosities. The names of Whig and Tory had been carried across Saint George's Channel, but had in the passage lost all their meaning. A man who was called a Tory at Dublin would have passed at Westminster for as staunch a Whig as Wharton. The highest Churchmen in Ireland abhorred and dreaded Popery so much that they were disposed to consider every Protestant as a brother. They remembered the tyranny of James, the robberies, the burnings, the confiscations, the brass money, the Act of Attainder, with bitter resentment. They honoured William as their deliverer and preserver. Nay, they could not help feeling a certain respect even for the memory of Cromwell: for, whatever else he might have been, he had been the champion and the avenger of their race. Between the divisions of England, therefore, and the divisions of Ireland, there was scarcely any thing in common. In England there were two parties, of the same race and religion, contending with each other. In Ireland there were two castes, of different races and religions, one trampling on the other.

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Scotland too was quiet. The harvest of the last year had indeed been scanty; and there was consequently much suffering. But the spirit of the nation was buoyed up by wild hopes, destined to end in cruel disappointment. A magnificent day-dream of wealth and empire so completely occupied the minds of men that they hardly felt the present distress. How that dream originated, and by how terrible an awakening it was broken, will be related hereafter.

State of
Scotland.

In the autumn of 1696 the Estates of Scotland met at Edinburgh. The attendance was thin; and the session lasted only five weeks. A supply amounting to little more than a hundred thousand pounds sterling was voted. Two Acts for the securing of the government were passed. One of those Acts required all persons in public trust to sign an Association similar to the

A session
of Parlia-
ment at
Edin-
burgh.

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Association which had been so generally subscribed in the south of the island. The other Act provided that the Parliament of Scotland should not be dissolved by the death of the King.

Act for
the settling of
Schools.

But by far the most important event of this short session was the passing of the Act for the settling of Schools. By this memorable law it was, in the Scotch phrase, statuted and ordained that every parish in the realm should provide a commodious schoolhouse and should pay a moderate stipend to a schoolmaster. The effect could not be immediately felt. But, before one generation had passed away, it began to be evident that the common people of Scotland were superior in intelligence to the common people of any other country in Europe. To whatever land the Scotchman might wander, to whatever calling he might betake himself, in America or in India, in trade or in war, the advantage which he derived from his early training raised him above his competitors. If he was taken into a warehouse as a porter, he soon became foreman. If he enlisted in the army, he soon became a serjeant. Scotland, meanwhile, in spite of the barrenness of her soil and the severity of her climate, made such progress in agriculture, in manufactures, in commerce, in letters, in science, in all that constitutes civilisation, as the Old World had never seen equalled, and as even the New World has scarcely seen surpassed.

This wonderful change is to be attributed, not indeed solely, but principally, to the national system of education. But to the men by whom that system was established posterity owes no gratitude. They knew not what they were doing. They were the unconscious instruments of enlightening the understandings and humanising the hearts of millions. But their own understandings were as dark and their own hearts as obdurate as those of the Familiars of the Inquisition at Lisbon. In the very month in which the Act for the settling of Schools was

touched with the sceptre, the rulers of the Church and State in Scotland began to carry on with vigour two persecutions worthy of the tenth century, a persecution of witches and a persecution of infidels. A crowd of wretches, guilty only of being old and miserable, were accused of trafficking with the devil. The Privy Council was not ashamed to issue a Commission for the trial of twenty two of these poor creatures.* The shops of the booksellers of Edinburgh were strictly searched for heretical works. Impious books, among which the sages of the Presbytery ranked Thomas Burnet's Sacred Theory of the Earth, were strictly suppressed.** But the destruction of mere paper and sheepskin would not satisfy the bigots. Their hatred required victims who could feel, and was not appeased till they had perpetrated a crime such as has never since polluted the island.

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A student of eighteen, named Thomas Aikenhead, whose habits were studious and whose morals were irreproachable, had, in the course of his reading, met with some of the ordinary arguments against the Bible. He fancied that he had lighted on a mine of wisdom which had been hidden from the rest of mankind, and, with the conceit from which half educated lads of quick parts are seldom free, proclaimed his discoveries to four or five of his companions. Trinity in unity, he said, was as much a contradiction as a square circle. Ezra was the author of the Pentateuch. The Apocalypse was an allegorical book about the philosopher's stone. Moses had learned magic in Egypt. Christianity was a delusion which would not last till the year 1800. For this wild talk, of which, in all probability, he would himself have been ashamed long before he was five and twenty, he was prosecuted by the Lord Advocate. The Lord Advocate was that James Stewart who had been so often a Whig

Case of
Thomas
Aiken-
head.

* Postman, Jan. 26., Mar. 7. 11. 1697, April 8. 1697.

** Postman, Oct. 29. 1696.

putatious and factious temper had brought ruin on the expedition of Argyle, and had caused not a little annoyance to the government of William. In the Club which had braved the King and domineered over the Parliament there had been no more noisy republican. But a title and a place had produced a wonderful conversion. Sir Patrick was now Lord Polwarth: he had the custody of the Great Seal of Scotland: he presided in the Privy Council; and thus he had it in his power to do the worst action of his bad life.

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It remained to be seen how the clergy of Edinburgh would act. That divines should be deaf to the entreaties of a penitent who asks, not for pardon, but for a little more time to receive their instructions and to pray to Heaven for the mercy which cannot be extended to him on earth, seems almost incredible. Yet so it was. The ministers demanded, not only the poor boy's death, but his speedy death, though it should be his eternal death. Even from their pulpits they cried out for cutting him off. It is probable that their real reason for refusing him a respite of a few days was their apprehension that the circumstances of his case might be reported at Kensington, and that the King, who, while reciting the Coronation Oath, had declared from the throne that he would not be a persecutor, might send down positive orders that the sentence should not be executed. Aikenhead was hanged between Edinburgh and Leith. He professed deep repentance, and suffered with the Bible in his hand. The people of Edinburgh, though assuredly not disposed to think lightly of his offence, were moved to compassion by his youth, by his penitence, and by the cruel haste with which he was hurried out of the world. It seems that there was some apprehension of a rescue: for a strong body of fusileers was under arms to support the civil power. The preachers who were the boy's murderers crowded round him at the gallows, and, while he was struggling in the last agony, insulted Heaven with

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Military
opera-
tions in
the Ne-
ther-
lands.

On the whole, the British islands had not, during ten years, been so free from internal troubles as when William, at the close of April 1697, set out for the Continent. The war in the Netherlands was a little, and but a little, less languid than in the preceding year. The French generals opened the campaign by taking the small town of Aeth. They then meditated a far more important conquest. They made a sudden push for Brussels, and would probably have succeeded in their design but for the activity of William. He was encamped on ground which lies within sight of the Lion of Waterloo, when he received, late in the evening, intelligence that the capital of the Netherlands was in danger. He instantly put his forces in motion, marched all night, and, having traversed the field destined to acquire, a hundred and eighteen years later, a terrible renown, and threaded the long defiles of the Forest of Soignies, he was at ten in the morning on the spot from which Brussels had been bombarded two years before, and would, if he had been only three hours later, have been bombarded again. Here he surrounded himself with entrenchments which the enemy did not venture to attack. This was the most important military event which, during that summer, took place in the Low Countries. In both camps there was an unwillingness to run any great risk on the eve of a general pacification.

Terms of
peace of-
fered by
France.

Lewis had, early in the spring, for the first time during his long reign, spontaneously offered equitable and honourable conditions to his foes. He had declared himself willing to relinquish the conquests which he had made in the course of the war, to cede Lorraine to its own Duke, to give back Luxemburg to Spain, to give back Strasburg to the Empire and to

* Howell's State Trials; Postman, Jan. 2^d, 1695.

acknowledge the existing government of England.* Those who remembered the great woes which his faithless and merciless ambition had brought on Europe might well suspect that this unwonted moderation was not to be ascribed to sentiments of justice or humanity. But, whatever might be his motive for proposing such terms, it was plainly the interest and the duty of the Confederacy to accept them. For there was little hope indeed of wringing from him by war concessions larger than those which he now tendered as the price of peace. The most sanguine of his enemies could hardly expect a long series of campaigns as successful as the campaign of 1695. Yet in a long series of campaigns, as successful as that of 1695, the allies would hardly be able to retake all that he now professed himself ready to restore. William, who took, as usual, a clear and statesmanlike view of the whole situation, now gave his voice as decidedly for concluding peace as he had in former years given it for vigorously prosecuting the war; and he was backed by the public opinion both of England and of Holland. But, unhappily, just at the time when the two powers which alone, among the members of the coalition, had manfully done their duty in the long struggle, were beginning to rejoice in the near prospect of repose, some of those governments which had never furnished their full contingents, which had never been ready in time, which had been constantly sending excuses in return for subsidies, began to raise difficulties such as seemed likely to make the miseries of Europe eternal.

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Spain had, as William, in the bitterness of his spirit, wrote to Heinsius, contributed nothing to the common cause but rodomontades. She had made no vigorous effort even to defend her own territories against invasion. She would have lost Flan-

Conduct
of Spain.

* See the Protocol of February 10. 1697 in the Actes et Mémoires des Négociations de la Paix de Ryswick, 1707.

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ders and Brabant but for the English and Dutch armies. She would have lost Catalonia but for the English and Dutch fleets. The Milanese she had saved, not by arms, but by concluding, in spite of the remonstrances of the English and Dutch governments, an ignominious treaty of neutrality. She had not a ship of war able to weather a gale. She had not a regiment that was not ill paid and ill disciplined, ragged and famished. Yet repeatedly, within the last two years, she had treated both William and the States General with an impertinence which showed that she was altogether ignorant of her place among states. She now became punctilious, demanded from Lewis concessions which the events of the war gave her no right to expect, and seemed to think it hard that allies, whom she was constantly treating with indignity, were not willing to lavish their blood and treasure for her during eight years more.

Conduct
of the
Emperor.

The conduct of Spain is to be attributed merely to arrogance and folly. But the unwillingness of the Emperor to consent even to the fairest terms of accommodation was the effect of selfish ambition. The Catholic King was childless: he was sickly: his life was not worth three years' purchase; and when he died, his dominions would be left to be struggled for by a crowd of competitors. Both the House of Austria and the House of Bourbon had claims to that immense heritage. It was plainly for the interest of the House of Austria that the important day, come when it might, should find a great European coalition in arms against the House of Bourbon. The object of the Emperor therefore was that the war should continue to be carried on, as it had hitherto been carried on, at a light charge to him and a heavy charge to England and Holland, not till just conditions of peace could be obtained, but simply till the King of Spain should die. "The ministers of the Emperor," William wrote to Heinsius, "ought to be ashamed of their conduct. It is intolerable that a government which is doing every thing in its power to make the

negotiations fail, should contribute nothing to the common defence."*

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It is not strange that in such circumstances the work of pacification should have made little progress. International law, like other law, has its chicanery, its subtle pleadings, its technical forms, which may too easily be so employed as to make its substance inefficient. Those litigants therefore who did not wish the litigation to come to a speedy close had no difficulty in interposing delays. There was a long dispute about the place where the conferences should be held. The Emperor proposed Aix la Chapelle. The French objected, and proposed the Hague. Then the Emperor objected in his turn. At last it was arranged that the ministers of the Allied Powers should meet at the Hague, and that the French plenipotentiaries should take up their abode five miles off at Delft.** To Delft accordingly repaired Harlay, a man of distinguished wit and good breeding, sprung from one of the great families of the robe; Crecy, a shrewd, patient and laborious diplomatist; and Cailleres, who, though he was named only third in the credentials, was much better informed than either of his colleagues touching all the points which were likely to be debated.*** At the Hague were the Earl of Pembroke and Edward, Viscount Villiers, who represented England. Prior accompanied them with the rank of Secretary. At the head of the Imperial Legation was Count Kaunitz: at the head of the Spanish Legation was Don Francisco Bernardo de Quiros; the ministers of inferior rank it would be tedious to enumerate.†

* William to Heinsius, Dec. 11. 1696. There are similar expressions in other letters written by the King about the same time.

** See the papers drawn up at Vienna, and dated Sept. 16. 1696, and March 14. 1697. See also the protocol drawn up at the Hague, March 13. 1697. These documents will be found in the *Actes et Mémoires des Négociations de la Paix de Ryswick, 1707.*

*** Characters of all the three French ministers are given by Saint Simon.
† *Actes et Mémoires des Négociations de la Paix de Ryswick.*

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Congress
of Rys-
wick.

Half way between Delft and the Hague is a village named Ryswick; and near it then stood, in a rectangular garden, which was bounded by straight canals, and divided into formal woods, flower beds and melon beds, a seat of the Princes of Orange. The house seemed to have been built expressly for the accommodation of such a set of diplomatists as were to meet there. In the centre was a large hall painted by Honthorst. On the right hand and on the left were wings exactly corresponding to each other. Each wing was accessible by its own bridge, its own gate and its own avenue. One wing was assigned to the Allies, the other to the French, the hall in the centre to the mediator.* Some preliminary questions of etiquette were, not without difficulty, adjusted; and at length, on the ninth of May, many coaches and six, attended by harbingers, footmen and pages, approached the mansion by different roads. The Swedish Minister alighted at the grand entrance. The procession from the Hague came up the side alley on the right. The procession from Delft came up the side alley on the left. At the first meeting, the full powers of the representatives of the belligerent governments were delivered to the mediator. At the second meeting, forty eight hours later, the mediator performed the ceremony of exchanging these full powers. Then several meetings were spent in settling how many carriages, how many horses, how many lacqueys, how many pages, each minister should be entitled to bring to Ryswick; whether the serving men should carry canes; whether they should wear swords; whether they should have pistols in their holsters; who should take the upper hand in the public walks, and whose carriage should break the way in the streets. It soon appeared that the mediator would have to mediate, not only between the the coalition and the French,

* An engraving and ground plan of the mansion will be found in the Actes et Mémoires.

but also between the different members of the coalition. The Imperial Ambassadors claimed a right to sit at the head of the table. The Spanish Ambassador would not admit this pretension, and tried to thrust himself in between two of them. The Imperial Ambassadors refused to call the Ambassadors of Electors and Commonwealths by the title of Excellency. "If I am not called Excellency," said the Minister of the Elector of Brandenburg, "my master will withdraw his troops from Hungary." The Imperial Ambassadors insisted on having a room to themselves in the building, and on having a special place assigned to their carriages in the court. All the other Ministers of the Confederacy pronounced this a most unjustifiable demand, and a whole sitting was wasted in this childish dispute. It may easily be supposed that allies who were so punctilious in their dealings with each other were not likely to be very easy in their intercourse with the common enemy. The chief business of Harlay and Kaunitz was to watch each other's legs. Neither of them thought it consistent with the dignity of the Crown which he served to advance towards the other faster than the other advanced towards him. If therefore one of them perceived that he had inadvertently stepped forward too quick, he went back to the door, and the stately minuet began again. The ministers of Lewis drew up a paper in their own language. The German statesmen protested against this innovation, this insult to the dignity of the Holy Roman Empire, this encroachment on the rights of independent nations, and would not know any thing about the paper till it had been translated from good French into bad Latin. In the middle of April it was known to every body at the Hague that Charles the Eleventh, King of Sweden, was dead, and had been succeeded by his son: but it was contrary to etiquette that any of the assembled envoys should appear to be acquainted with this fact till Lilienroth had made a formal announcement:

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it was not less contrary to etiquette that Lilienroth should make such an announcement till his equipages and his household had been put into mourning; and some weeks elapsed before his coachmakers and tailors had completed their task. At length, on the twelfth of June, he came to Ryswick in a carriage lined with black and attended by servants in black liveries, and there, in full congress, proclaimed that it had pleased God to take to himself the most puissant King Charles the Eleventh. All the Ambassadors then condoled with him on the sad and unexpected news, and went home to put off their embroidery and to dress themselves in the garb of sorrow. In such solemn trifling week after week passed away. No real progress was made. Lilienroth had no wish to accelerate matters. While the congress lasted, his position was one of great dignity. He would willingly have gone on mediating for ever; and he could not go on mediating, unless the parties on his right and on his left went on wrangling.*

In June the hope of peace began to grow faint. Men remembered that the last war had continued to rage, year after year, while a congress was sitting at Nimeguen. The mediators had made their entrance into that town in February 1676. The treaty had not been signed till February 1679. Yet the negotiation of Nimeguen had not proceeded more slowly than the negotiation of Ryswick. It seemed but too probable that the eighteenth century would find great armies still confronting each other on the Meuse and the Rhine, industrious populations still ground down by taxation, fertile provinces still lying waste, the ocean still made impassable by corsairs, and the plenipotentiaries still exchanging notes, drawing up protocols, and wrangling about the place where this minister should sit, and the title by which that minister should be called.

* Whoever wishes to be fully informed as to the idle controversies and nummeries in which the Congress wasted its time, may consult the Actes et Mémoires.

But William was fully determined to bring this mummery to a speedy close. He would have either peace or war. Either was, in his view, better than this intermediate state which united the disadvantages of both. While the negotiation was pending there could be no diminution of the burdens which pressed on his people; and yet he could expect no energetic action from his allies. If France was really disposed to conclude a treaty on fair terms, that treaty should be concluded in spite of the imbecility of the Catholic King and in spite of the selfish cunning of the Emperor. If France was insincere, the sooner the truth was known, the sooner the farce which was acting at Ryswick was over, the sooner the people of England and Holland, — for on them every thing depended, — were told that they must make up their minds to great exertions and sacrifices, the better

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William
opens a
distinct
negotia-
tion.

Pembroke and Villiers, though they had now the help of a veteran diplomatist, Sir Joseph Williamson, could do little or nothing to accelerate the proceedings of the Congress. For, though France had promised that, whenever peace should be made, she would recognise the Prince of Orange as King of Great Britain and Ireland, she had not yet recognised him. His ministers had therefore had no direct intercourse with Harlay, Crecy and Cailleres. William, with the judgment and decision of a true statesman, determined to open a communication with Lewis through one of the French Marshals who commanded in the Netherlands. Of those Marshals Villeroy was the highest in rank. But Villeroy was weak, rash, haughty, irritable. Such a negotiator was far more likely to embroil matters than to bring them to an amicable settlement. Boufflers was a man of sense and temper; and fortunately he had, during the few days which he had passed at Huy after the fall of Namur, been under the care of Portland, by whom he had been treated with the greatest courtesy and kindness. A friendship had

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sprung up between the prisoner and his keeper. They were both brave soldiers, honourable gentlemen, trusty servants. William justly thought that they were far more likely to come to an understanding than Harlay and Kaunitz even with the aid of Lilienroth. Portland indeed had all the essential qualities of an excellent diplomatist. In England, the people were prejudiced against him as a foreigner: his earldom, his garter, his lucrative places, his rapidly growing wealth, excited envy: his dialect was not understood: his manners were not those of the men of fashion who had been formed at Whitehall: his abilities were therefore greatly underrated; and it was the fashion to call him a blockhead, fit only to carry messages. But, on the Continent, where he was judged without malevolence, he made a very different impression. It is a remarkable fact that this man, who in the drawingrooms and coffeehouses of London was described as an awkward, stupid, Hogan Mogan, — such was the phrase of that time, — was considered at Versailles as an eminently polished courtier and an eminently expert negotiator.* His chief recommendation however was his incorruptible integrity. It was certain that the interests which were committed to his care would be as dear to him as his own life, and that every report which he made to his master would be literally exact.

* Saint Simon was certainly as good a judge of men as any of those English grumblers who called Portland a dunce and a boor. Saint Simon too had every opportunity of forming a correct judgment; for he saw Portland in a situation full of difficulties; and Saint Simon says, in one place, "Benting, discret, secret, poli aux autres, fidèle à son maître, adroit en affaires, le servit très utilement;" in another, "Portland parut avec un éclat personnel, une politesse, un air de monde et de cour, une galanterie et des grâces qui surprirent: avec cela, beaucoup de dignité, même de hauteur, mais avec discernement et un jugement prompt sans rien de hasardé." Boufflers too extols Portland's good breeding and tact. Boufflers to Lewis, July 9. 1697. This letter is in the archives of the French Foreign Office. A translation will be found in the valuable collection published by M. Grimblot.

Towards the close of June Portland sent to Boufflers a friendly message, begging for an interview of half an hour. Boufflers instantly sent off an express to Lewis, and received an answer in the shortest time in which it was possible for a courier to ride post to Versailles and back again. Lewis directed the Marshal to comply with Portland's request, to say as little as possible, and to learn as much possible.*

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Meetings
of Port-
land and
Boufflers.

On the twenty-eighth of June, according to the Old Style, the meeting took place in the neighbourhood of Hal, a town which lies about ten miles from Brussels, on the road to Mons. After the first civilities had been exchanged, Boufflers and Portland dismounted: their attendants retired; and the two negotiators were left alone in an orchard. Here they walked up and down during two hours, and, in that time, did much more business than the plenipotentiaries at Ryswick were able to despatch in as many months.**

Till this time the French government had entertained a suspicion, natural indeed, but altogether erroneous, that William was bent on protracting the war, that he had consented to treat merely because he could not venture to oppose himself to the public opinion both of England and of Holland, but that he wished the negotiation to be abortive, and that the perverse conduct of the House of Austria and the difficulties which had arisen at Ryswick were to be chiefly ascribed to his machinations. That suspicion was now removed. Compliments, cold, austere and full of dignity, yet respectful, were exchanged between the two great princes whose enmity had, during a quarter of a century, kept Europe in constant agitation. The negotiation between Boufflers and Portland proceeded as fast as the

* Boufflers to Lewis, $\frac{\text{June 21.}}{\text{July 1.}}$ 1697; Lewis to Boufflers, $\frac{\text{June 22.}}{\text{July 2.}}$; Boufflers to Lewis, $\frac{\text{June 25.}}{\text{July 5.}}$

** Boufflers to Lewis, $\frac{\text{June 28.}}{\text{July 5.}}$, $\frac{\text{June 29.}}{\text{July 9.}}$ 1697.

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necessity of frequent reference to Versailles would permit. Their first five conferences were held in the open air; but, at their sixth meeting, they retired into a small house in which Portland had ordered tables, pens, ink and paper to be placed; and here the result of their labours was reduced to writing.

The really important points which had been in issue were four. William had at first demanded two concessions from Lewis; and Lewis had demanded two concessions from William.

William's first demand was that France should bind herself to give no help or countenance, directly or indirectly, to any attempt which might be made by James, or by James's adherents, to disturb the existing order of things in England.

William's second demand was that James should no longer be suffered to reside at a place so dangerously near to England as Saint Germain's.

To the first of these demands Lewis replied that he was perfectly ready to bind himself by the most solemn engagements not to assist or countenance, in any manner, any attempt to disturb the existing order of things in England; but that it was inconsistent with his honour that the name of his kinsman and guest should appear in the treaty.

To the second demand Lewis replied that he could not refuse his hospitality to an unfortunate king who had taken refuge in his dominions, and that he could not promise even to indicate a wish that James would quit Saint Germain's. But Boufflers, as if speaking his own thoughts, though doubtless saying nothing but what he knew to be in conformity to his master's wishes, hinted that the matter would probably be managed, and named Avignon as a place where the banished family might reside without giving any umbrage to the English government.

Lewis, on the other side, demanded, first, that a general

amnesty should be granted to the Jacobites; and secondly, that Mary of Modena should receive her jointure of fifty thousand pounds a year.

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With the first of these demands William peremptorily refused to comply. He should always be ready, of his own free will, to pardon the offences of men who showed a disposition to live quietly for the future under his government; but he could not consent to make the exercise of his prerogative of mercy a matter of stipulation with any foreign power. The annuity claimed by Mary of Modena he would willingly pay, if he could only be satisfied that it would not be expended in machinations against his throne and his person, in supporting, on the coast of Kent, another establishment like that of Hunt, or in buying horses and arms for another enterprise like that of Turnham Green. Boufflers had mentioned Avignon. If James and his Queen would take up their abode there, no difficulties would be made about the jointure.

At length all the questions in dispute were settled. After much discussion an article was framed by which Lewis pledged his word of honour that he would not favour, in any manner, any attempt to subvert or disturb the existing government of England. William, in return, gave his promise not to countenance any attempt against the government of France. This promise Lewis had not asked, and at first seemed inclined to consider as an affront. His throne, he said, was perfectly secure, his title undisputed. There were in his dominions no nonjurors, no conspirators; and he did not think it consistent with his dignity to enter into a compact which seemed to imply that he was in fear of plots and insurrections such as a dynasty sprung from a revolution might naturally apprehend. On this point, however, he gave way; and it was agreed that the covenants should be strictly reciprocal. William ceased to demand that James should be mentioned by name; and Lewis

Terms of
peace
between
France
and Eng-
land set-
tled.

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ceased to demand that an amnesty should be granted to James's adherents. It was determined that nothing should be said in the treaty, either about the place where the banished King of England should reside, or about the jointure of his Queen. But William authorised his plenipotentiaries at the Congress to declare that Mary of Modena should have whatever, on examination, it should appear that she was by law entitled to have. What she was by law entitled to have was a question which it would have puzzled all Westminster Hall to answer. But it was well understood that she would receive, without any contest, the utmost that she could have any pretence for asking as soon as she and her husband should retire to Provence or to Italy.*

* My account of this negotiation I have taken chiefly from the despatches in the French Foreign Office. Translations of those despatches have been published by M. Grimblot. See also Burnet, ii. 200, 201.

It has been frequently asserted that William promised to pay Mary of Modena fifty thousand pounds a year. Whoever takes the trouble to read the Protocol of Sept. 1st. 1697, among the Acts of the Peace of Ryswick, will see that my account is correct. Prior evidently understood the protocol as I understand it. For he says, in a letter to Lexington of Sept. 17. 1697, "No. 2. is the thing to which the King consents as to Queen Marie's settlements. It is fairly giving her what the law allows her. The mediator is to dictate this paper to the French, and enter it into his protocol; and so I think we shall come off à bon marché upon that article."

It was rumoured at the time (see Boyer's History of King William III. 1703) that Portland and Boufflers had agreed on a secret article by which it was stipulated that, after the death of William, the Prince of Wales should succeed to the English throne. This fable has often been repeated, but was never believed by men of sense, and can hardly, since the publication of the letters which passed between Lewis and Boufflers, find credit even with the weakest. Dalrymple and other writers imagined that they had found in the Life of James (ii. 374, 375.) proof that the story of the secret article was true. The passage on which they relied was certainly not written by James, nor under his direction; and the authority of those portions of the Life which were not written by him, or under his direction, is but small. Moreover, when we examine this passage, we shall find that it not only does not bear out the story of the secret article, but directly contradicts that story. The compiler of the Life tells us that, after James had declared that he never would consent to purchase the English throne

Before the end of July every thing was settled, as far as France and England were concerned. Meanwhile it was known to the ministers assembled at Ryswick that Boufflers and Portland had repeatedly met in Brabant, and that they were negotiating in a most irregular and indecorous manner, without credentials, or mediation, or notes, or protocols, without counting each other's steps, and without calling each other Excellency. So barbarously ignorant were they of the rudiments of the noble science of diplomacy that they had very nearly accomplished the work of restoring peace to Christendom while walking up and down an alley under some apple trees. The

CHAP.
XXII.
1697.
Difficulties
caused by
Spain and
the Em-
peror.

for his posterity by surrendering his own rights, nothing more was said on the subject. Now it is quite certain that James, in his Memorial published in March 1697, a Memorial which will be found both in the *Life* (ii. 566.) and in the *Acts of the Peace of Ryswick*, declared to all Europe that he never would stoop to so low and degenerate an action as to permit the Prince of Orange to reign on condition that the Prince of Wales should succeed. It follows, therefore, that nothing can have been said on this subject after March 1697. Nothing, therefore, can have been said on this subject in the conferences between Boufflers and Portland, which did not begin till late in June.

Was there then absolutely no foundation for the story? I believe that there was a foundation; and I have already related the facts on which this superstructure of fiction has been reared. It is quite certain that Lewis, in 1693, intimated to the allies, through the government of Sweden, his hope that some expedient might be devised which would reconcile the Princes who laid claim to the English crown. The expedient at which he hinted was, no doubt, that the Prince of Wales should succeed William and Mary. It is possible that, as the compiler of the *Life of James* says, William may have "show'd no great aversness" to this arrangement. He had no reason, public or private, for preferring his sister in law to his brother in law, if his brother in law were bred a Protestant. But William could do nothing without the concurrence of the Parliament; and it is in the highest degree improbable that either he or the Parliament would ever have consented to make the settlement of the English crown a matter of stipulation with France. What he would or would not have done, however, we cannot with certainty pronounce. For James proved impracticable. Lewis consequently gave up all thoughts of effecting a compromise, and promised, as we have seen, to recognise William as King of England "without any difficulty, restriction, condition, or reserve." It seems certain that, after this promise, which was made in December 1696, the Prince of Wales was not again mentioned in the negotiations.

Macaulay, History. VIII.

CHAP.
XXVII.
1697.

English and Dutch loudly applauded William's prudence and decision. He had cut the knot which the Congress had only twisted and tangled. He had done in a month what all the formalists and pedants assembled at the Hague would not have done in ten years. Nor were the French plenipotentiaries ill pleased. "It is curious," said Harlay, a man of wit and sense, "that, while the Ambassadors are making war, the generals should be making peace."* But Spain preserved the same air of arrogant listlessness; and the ministers of the Emperor, forgetting apparently that their master had, a few months before, concluded a treaty of neutrality for Italy without consulting William, seemed to think it most extraordinary that William should presume to negotiate without consulting their master. It became daily more evident that the Court of Vienna was bent on prolonging the war. On the tenth of July the French ministers again proposed fair and honourable terms of peace, but added that, if those terms were not accepted by the twenty-first of August, the Most Christian King would not consider himself bound by his offer.** William in vain exhorted his allies to be reasonable. The senseless pride of one branch of the House of Austria and the selfish policy of the other were proof to all argument. The twenty-first of August came and passed; the treaty had not been signed: France was at liberty to raise her demands; and she did so. For just at this time news arrived of two great blows which had fallen on Spain, one in the Old and one in the New World. A French army, commanded by Vendome, had taken Barcelona. A French squadron had stolen out of Brest, had eluded the allied fleets, had crossed the Atlantic, had sacked Carthagena, and had re-

* Prior MS.; Williamson to Lexington, July 28. 1697; Williamson to Shrewsbury, ^{July 23.} Aug. 2.

** The note of the French ministers, dated July 10. 1697, will be found in the Actes et Mémoires.

turned to France laden with treasure.* The Spanish government passed at once from haughty apathy to abject terror, and was ready to accept any conditions which the conqueror might dictate. The French plenipotentiaries announced to the Congress that their master was determined to keep Strasburg, and that, unless the terms which he had offered, thus modified, were accepted by the tenth of September, he should hold himself at liberty to insist on further modifications. Never had the temper of William been more severely tried. He was provoked by the perverseness of his allies: he was provoked by the imperious language of the enemy. It was not without a hard struggle and a sharp pang that he made up his mind to consent to what France now proposed. But he felt that it would be utterly impossible, even if it were desirable, to prevail on the House of Commons and on the States General to continue the war for the purpose of wresting from France a single fortress, a fortress in the fate of which neither England nor Holland had any immediate interest, a fortress, too, which had been lost to the Empire solely in consequence of the unreasonable obstinacy of the Imperial Court. He determined to accept the modified terms, and directed his Ambassadors at Ryswick to sign on the prescribed day. The Ambassadors of Spain and Holland received similar instructions. There was no doubt that the Emperor, though he murmured and protested, would soon follow the example of his confederates. That he might have time to make up his mind, it was stipulated that he should be included in the treaty if he notified his adhesion by the first of November.

Meanwhile James was moving the mirth and pity of all Europe by his lamentations and menaces. He had in vain insisted on his right to send, as the only true King of England,

CHAP.
XXII.
1697.

Attempts
of James
to pre-
vent a
general
pacifica-
tion.

* Monthly Mercuries for August and September, 1697.

CHAP. a minister to the Congress.* He had in vain addressed to all
 XXII. the Roman Catholic princes of the Confederacy a memorial in
 1697. which he adjured them to join with France in a crusade against
 England for the purpose of restoring him to his inheritance,
 and of annulling that impious Bill of Rights which excluded
 members of the true Church from the throne.** When he
 found that this appeal was disregarded, he put forth a solemn
 protest against the validity of all treaties to which the existing
 government of England should be a party. He pronounced all
 the engagements into which his kingdom had entered since the
 Revolution null and void. He gave notice that he should not,
 if he should regain his power, think himself bound by any of
 those engagements. He admitted that he might, by breaking
 those engagements, bring great calamities both on his own do-
 minions and on all Christendom. But for those calamities he
 declared that he should not think himself answerable either be-
 fore God or before man. It seems almost incredible that even
 a Stuart, and the worst and dullest of the Stuarts, should have
 thought that the first duty, not merely of his own subjects, but
 of all mankind, was to support his rights; that Frenchmen,
 Germans, Italians, Spaniards, were guilty of a crime if they
 did not shed their blood and lavish their wealth, year after
 year, in his cause; that the interests of the sixty millions of
 human beings to whom peace would be a blessing were of ab-
 solutely no account when compared with the interests of one
 man.***

The
 treaty of
 Ryswick
 signed.

In spite of his protests the day of peace drew nigh. On the
 tenth of September the Ambassadors of France, England, Spain
 and the United Provinces, met at Ryswick. Three treaties
 were to be signed; and there was a long dispute on the mo-

* Life of James, ii. 565.

** Actes et Memoires des Négociations de la Paix de Ryswick; Life of
 James, ii. 566.

*** James's Protest will be found in his Life, ii. 572.

mentous question which should be signed first. It was one in the morning before it was settled that the treaty between France and the States General should have precedence; and the day was breaking before all the instruments had been executed. Then the plenipotentiaries, with many bows, congratulated each other on having had the honour of contributing to so great a work.*

CHAP.
XXII.
1697.

A sloop was in waiting for Prior. He hastened on board, and on the third day, after weathering an equinoctial gale, landed on the coast of Suffolk.**

Very seldom had there been greater excitement in London than during the month which preceded his arrival. When the west wind kept back the Dutch packets, the anxiety of the people became intense. Every morning hundreds of thousands rose up hoping to hear that the treaty was signed; and every mail which came in without bringing the good news caused bitter disappointment. The malecontents, indeed, loudly asserted that there would be no peace, and that the negotiation would, even at this late hour, be broken off. One of them had seen a person just arrived from Saint Germain: another had had the privilege of reading a letter in the handwriting of Her Majesty; and all were confident that Lewis would never acknowledge the usurper. Many of those who held this language were under so strong a delusion that they backed their opinion by large wagers. When the intelligence of the fall of Barcelona arrived, all the treason taverns were in a ferment with nonjuring priests laughing, talking loud, and shaking each other by the hand.***

Anxiety
in Eng-
land.

* Actes et Mémoires des Négociations de la Paix de Ryswick; Williamson to Lexington, Sept. 14. 1697; Prior MS.

** Prior MS.

*** L'Hermitage, July 26., July 27., Aug. 24., Aug. 27., Aug. 31.,
Aug. 6., Sept. 3., Sept. 6., Sept. 10. 1697;
Postman, Aug. 31.

CHAP. At length, in the afternoon of the thirteenth of September,
 XXII. some speculators in the City received, by a private channel,
 1697. certain intelligence that the treaty had been signed before dawn
 News of the peace arrives in on the morning of the eleventh. They kept their own secret,
 England. and hastened to make a profitable use of it; but their eagerness
 to obtain Bank stock, and the high prices which they offered,
 excited suspicion; and there was a general belief that on the
 next day something important would be announced. On the
 next day Prior, with the treaty, presented himself before the
 Lords Justices at Whitehall. Instantly a flag was hoisted on
 the Abbey, another on Saint Martin's Church. The Tower guns
 proclaimed the glad tidings. All the spires and towers from
 Greenwich to Chelsea made answer. It was not one of the days
 on which the newspapers ordinarily appeared: but extraordinary
 numbers, with headings in large capitals, were, for the
 first time, cried about the streets. The price of Bank stock
 rose fast from eighty four to ninety seven. In a few hours
 triumphal arches began to rise in some places. Huge bonfires
 were blazing in others. The Dutch ambassador informed the
 States General that he should try to show his joy by a bonfire
 worthy of the commonwealth which he represented; and he
 kept his word; for no such pyre had ever been seen in London.
 A hundred and forty barrels of pitch roared and blazed before
 his house in Saint James's Square, and sent up a flame which
 made Pall Mall and Piccadilly as bright as at noonday.*

Dismay
 of the
 Jacobites.

Among the Jacobites the dismay was great. Some of those
 who had betted deep on the constancy of Lewis took flight. One
 unfortunate zealot of divine right drowned himself. But soon
 the party again took heart. The treaty had been signed: but it
 surely would never be ratified. In a short time the ratification

* Van Cleverskirke to the States General, Sept. 14. 1697; L'Hermitage, Sept. 14.; Postscript to the Postman, of the same date; Postman and Post-boy of Sept. 15., Postman of Sept. 15.

came: the peace was solemnly proclaimed by the heralds; and the most obstinate nonjurors began to despair. Some divines, who had during eight years continued true to James, now swore allegiance to William. They were probably men who held, with Sherlock, that a settled government, though illegitimate in its origin, is entitled to the obedience of Christians, but who had thought that the government of William could not properly be said to be settled while the greatest power in Europe not only refused to recognise him, but strenuously supported his competitor.* The fiercer and more determined adherents of the banished family were furious against Lewis. He had deceived, he had betrayed his suppliants. It was idle to talk about the misery of his people. It was idle to say that he had drained every source of revenue dry, and that, in all the provinces of his kingdom, the peasantry were clothed in rags, and were unable to eat their fill even of the coarsest and blackest bread. His first duty was that which he owed to the royal family of England. The Jacobites talked against him, and wrote against him, as absurdly, and almost as scurrilously, as they had long talked and written against William. One of their libels was so indecent that the Lords Justices ordered the author to be arrested and held to bail.**

CHAP.
XXII.
1697.

* L'Hermitage, Sept. $\frac{17}{2}$, Sept. 24, Oct. 4. 1697, Oct. $\frac{13}{2}$; Postman, Nov. 20.

** L'Hermitage, Sept. 21, Oct. 1, Nov. $\frac{1}{2}$, 1697; Paris Gazette, Nov. $\frac{30}{8}$;

Postboy, Nov. 2. At this time appeared a pasquinade entitled, A Satyr upon the French King, written after the Peace was concluded at Reswick, anno 1697, by a Non-Swearing Parson, and said to be drop'd out of his Pocket at Sam's Coffee House. I quote a few of the most decent couplets.

"Lord! with what monstrous lies and senseless shams
Have we been cull'd all along at Sam's!
Who could have e'er believed, unless in spite
Lewis le Grand would turn rank Williamite?
Thou that hast look'd so fierce and talk'd so big,
In thine old age to dwindle to a Whig!
Of Kings distress'd thou art a fine securer.
Thou mak'st me swear, that am a known nonjuror.

CHAP.
XXII.
1697.
General
rejoicing.

But the rage and mortification were confined to a very small minority. Never, since the year of the Restoration, had there been such signs of public gladness. In every part of the kingdom where the peace was proclaimed, the general sentiment was manifested by banquets, pageants, loyal healths, salutes, beating of drums, blowing of trumpets, breaking up of hogsheds. At some places the whole population, of its own accord, repaired to the churches to give thanks. At others processions of girls, clad all in white, and crowned with laurels, carried banners inscribed with "God bless King William." At every county town a long cavalcade of the principal gentlemen, from a circle of many miles, escorted the mayor to the market cross. Nor was one holiday enough for the expression of so much joy. On the fourth of November, the anniversary of the King's birth, and on the fifth, the anniversary of his landing at Torbay, the bellringing, the shouting, and the illuminations were renewed both in London and all over the country.* On the day on which he returned to his capital no work was done, no shop was opened, in the two thousand streets of that immense mart. For that day the chief streets had, mile after mile, been covered with gravel: all the Companies had provided new banners; all the magistrates new robes. Twelve thousand pounds had been expended in preparing fireworks. Great multitudes of people from all the neighbouring shires had come up to see the show. Never had the City been in a more loyal or more joyous mood. The evil days were past. The guinea had fallen to twenty one shillings and sixpence. The bank note had risen to par. The new crowns and halfcrowns, broad, heavy

Were Job alive, and banter'd by such shufflers,
He'd outrail Oates, and curse both thee and Boufflers.
For thee I've lost, if I can rightly scan 'em,
Two livings, worth full eightscore pounds *per annum*,
Bonæ et legalis Angliæ Moneta.
But now I'm clearly routed by the treaty."

* London Gazettes; Postboy of Nov. 18. 1697; L'Hermitage, Nov. 15.

and sharply milled, were ringing on all the counters. After some days of impatient expectation it was known, on the fourteenth of November, that His Majesty had landed at Margate. Late on the fifteenth he reached Greenwich, and rested in the stately building which, under his auspices, was turning from a palace into a hospital. On the next morning, a bright and soft morning, eighty coaches and six, filled with nobles, prelates, privy councillors and judges, came to swell his train. In Southwark he was met by the Lord Mayor and the Aldermen in all the pomp of office. The way through the Borough to the bridge was lined by the Surrey militia; the way from the bridge to Walbrook by three regiments of the militia of the City. All along Cheapside, on the right hand and on the left, the livery were marshalled under the standards of their trades. At the east end of Saint Paul's churchyard stood the boys of the school of Edward the Sixth, wearing, as they still wear, the garb of the sixteenth century. Round the Cathedral, down Ludgate Hill and along Fleet Street, were drawn up three more regiments of Londoners. From Temple Bar to Whitehall gate the trainbands of Middlesex and the Foot Guards were under arms. The windows along the whole route were gay with tapestry, ribands and flags. But the finest part of the show was the innumerable crowd of spectators, all in their Sunday clothing, and such clothing as only the upper classes of other countries could afford to wear. "I never," William wrote that evening to Heinsius, "I never saw such a multitude of well-dressed people." Nor was the King less struck by the indications of joy and affection with which he was greeted from the beginning to the end of his triumph. His coach, from the moment when he entered it at Greenwich till he alighted from it in the court of Whitehall, was accompanied by one long huzza. Scarcely had he reached his palace when addresses of congratulation, from all the great corporations of his kingdom, were presented to him. It was

CHAP.
XXII.
1697.

The
King's
entry into
London.

CHAP. XXII. 1697. remarked that the very foremost among those corporations was the University of Oxford. The eloquent composition in which that learned body extolled the wisdom, the courage and the virtue of His Majesty, was read with cruel vexation by the non-jurors, and with exultation by the Whigs.*

The
Thanks-
giving
Day.

The rejoicings were not yet over. At a council which was held a few hours after the King's public entry, the second of December was appointed to be the day of thanksgiving for the peace. The Chapter of Saint Paul's resolved that, on that day, their noble Cathedral, which had been long slowly rising on the ruins of a succession of pagan and Christian temples, should be opened for public worship. William announced his intention of being one of the congregation. But it was represented to him that, if he persisted in that intention, three hundred thousand people would assemble to see him pass, and all the parish churches of London would be left empty. He therefore attended the service in his own chapel at Whitehall, and heard Burnet preach a sermon, somewhat too eulogistic for the place.** At Saint Paul's the magistrates of the City appeared in all their state. Compton ascended, for the first time, a throne rich with the sculpture of Gibbons, and thence exhorted a numerous and splendid assembly. His discourse has not been preserved: but its purport may be easily guessed; for he preached on that noble Psalm: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." He doubtless reminded his hearers that, in addition to the debt which was common to them with all Englishmen, they owed as Londoners a peculiar debt of gratitude to the divine goodness, which had permitted them to efface the last trace of the ravages of the great fire, and to

* London Gazette, Nov. 18. 22. 1697; Van Cleverskirke, Nov. 18. 19.; L'Hermitage, Nov. 18.; Postboy and Postman, Nov. 18.; William to Heinsius, Nov. 18.

** Evelyn's Diary, Dec. 2. 1697. The sermon is extant; and I must acknowledge that it deserves Evelyn's censure.

assemble once more, for prayer and praise, after so many years, on that spot consecrated by the devotions of thirty generations. Throughout London, and in every part of the realm, even to the remotest parishes of Cumberland and Cornwall, the churches were filled on the morning of that day; and the evening was an evening of festivity.*

CHAP.
XXI.
1697.

There was indeed reason for joy and thankfulness. England had passed through severe trials, and had come forth renewed in health and vigour. Ten years before, it had seemed that both her liberty and her independence were no more. Her liberty she had vindicated by a just and necessary revolution. Her independence she had reconquered by a not less just and necessary war. She had successfully defended the order of things established by the Bill of Rights against the mighty monarchy of France, against the aboriginal population of Ireland, against the avowed hostility of the nonjurors, against the more dangerous hostility of traitors who were ready to take any oath, and whom no oath could bind. Her open enemies had been victorious on many fields of battle. Her secret enemies had commanded her fleets and armies, had been in charge of her arsenals, had ministered at her altars, had taught at her Universities, had swarmed in her public offices, had sate in her Parliament, had bowed and fawned in the bedchamber of her King. More than once it had seemed impossible that any thing could avert a restoration which would inevitably have been followed, first by proscriptions and confiscations, by the violation of fundamental laws, and the persecution of the established religion, and then by a third rising up of the nation against that House which two depositions and two banishments had only made more obstinate in evil. To the dangers of war and the dangers of treason had recently been added the dangers of a terrible financial and com-

* London Gazette, Dec. 6. 1697; Postman, Dec. 4.; Van Cleverskirke, Dec. 1^o.; L'Hermitage, Nov. 1^o.

CHAP.
XXII.
1697.

mercial crisis. But all those dangers were over. There was peace abroad and at home. The kingdom, after many years of ignominious vassalage, had resumed its ancient place in the first rank of European powers. Many signs justified the hope that the Revolution of 1688 would be our last Revolution. The ancient constitution was adapting itself, by a natural, a gradual, a peaceful development, to the wants of a modern society. Already freedom of conscience and freedom of discussion existed to an extent unknown in any preceding age. The currency had been restored. Public credit had been reestablished. Trade had revived. The Exchequer was overflowing. There was a sense of relief every where, from the Royal Exchange to the most secluded hamlets among the mountains of Wales and the fens of Lincolnshire. The ploughmen, the shepherds, the miners of the Northumbrian coalpits, the artisans who toiled at the looms of Norwich and the anvils of Birmingham, felt the change, without understanding it; and the cheerful bustle in every seaport and every market town indicated, not obscurely, the commencement of a happier age.