

HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER VII.

THE place which William Henry, Prince of Orange Nassau, occupies in the history of England and of mankind is so great that it may be desirable to portray with some minuteness the strong lineaments of his character.*

He was now in his thirty-seventh year. But both in body and in mind he was older than other men of the same age. Indeed it might be said that he had never been young. His external appearance is almost as well known to us as to his own captains and counsellors. Sculptors, painters, and medallists exerted their utmost skill in the work of transmitting his features to posterity; and his features were such as no artist could fail to seize, and such as, once seen, could never be forgotten. His name at once calls up before us a slender and feeble frame, a lofty and ample forehead, a nose curved like the beak of an eagle, and eye rivalling that of an eagle in brightness and keenness, a thoughtful and somewhat sullen brow, a firm and somewhat peevish mouth, a cheek pale, thin, and deeply furrowed by sickness and by care. That pensive, severe, and solemn aspect could scarcely have belonged to a happy or a good-humoured man. But it indicates

CHAP.
VII.

1657.

William,
Prince of
Orange.

His ap-
pearance.

* The chief materials from which I have taken my description of the Prince of Orange will be found in Burnet's History, in Temple's and Gourville's Memoirs, in the Negotiations of the Counts of Estrades and Avaux, in Sir George Downing's Letters to Lord Chancellor Clarendon, in Wagenaar's voluminous History, in Van Kamper's Karakterkunde der Vaderlandsche Geschiedenis, and, above all, in William's own confidential correspondence, of which the Duke of Portland permitted Sir James Mackintosh to take a copy.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

His early
life and
educa-
tion.

in a manner not to be mistaken capacity equal to the most arduous enterprises, and fortitude not to be shaken by reverses or dangers.

Nature had largely endowed William with the qualities of a great ruler; and education had developed those qualities in no common degree. With strong natural sense, and rare force of will, he found himself, when first his mind began to open, a fatherless and motherless child, the chief of a great but depressed and disheartened party, and the heir to vast and indefinite pretensions, which excited the dread and aversion of the oligarchy then supreme in the United Provinces. The common people, fondly attached during a century to his house, indicated, whenever they saw him, in a manner not to be mistaken, that they regarded him as their rightful head. The able and experienced ministers of the republic, mortal enemies of his name, came every day to pay their feigned civilities to him, and to observe the progress of his mind. The first movements of his ambition were carefully watched: every unguarded word uttered by him was noted down; nor had he near him any adviser on whose judgment reliance could be placed. He was scarcely fifteen years old when all the domestics who were attached to his interest, or who enjoyed any share of his confidence, were removed from under his roof by the jealous government. He remonstrated with energy beyond his years, but in vain. Vigilant observers saw the tears more than once rise in the eyes of the young state prisoner. His health, naturally delicate, sank for a time under the emotions which his desolate situation had produced. Such situations bewilder and unnerve the weak, but call forth all the strength of the strong. Surrounded by snares in which an ordinary youth would have perished, William learned to tread at once warily and firmly. Long before he reached manhood he knew how to keep secrets, how to baffle curiosity by dry and guarded answers, how to conceal all passions under the same show of grave tranquillity. Meanwhile he made little proficiency in fashionable or literary accomplishments. The manners of the Dutch nobility of that age wanted the grace which was found in the highest perfec-

tion among the gentlemen of France, and which, in an inferior degree, embellished the Court of England; and his manners were altogether Dutch. Even his countrymen thought him blunt. To foreigners he often seemed churlish. In his intercourse with the world in general he appeared ignorant or negligent of those arts which double the value of a favour and take away the sting of a refusal. He was little interested in letters or science. The discoveries of Newton and Leibnitz, the poems of Dryden and Boileau, were unknown to him. Dramatic performances tired him; and he was glad to turn away from the stage and to talk about public affairs, while Orestes was raving, or while Tartuffe was pressing Elmira's hand. He had indeed some talent for sarcasm, and not seldom employed, quite unconsciously, a natural rhetoric, quaint, indeed, but vigorous and original. He did not, however, in the least affect the character of a wit or of an orator. His attention had been confined to those studies which form strenuous and sagacious men of business. From a child he listened with interest when high questions of alliance, finance, and war were discussed. Of geometry he learned as much as was necessary for the construction of a ravelin or a horn-work. Of languages, by the help of a memory singularly powerful, he learned as much as was necessary to enable him to comprehend and answer without assistance everything that was said to him, and every letter which he received. The Dutch was his own tongue. He understood Latin, Italian, and Spanish. He spoke and wrote French, English, and German, inelegantly, it is true, and in exactly, but fluently and intelligibly. No qualification could be more important to a man whose life was to be passed in organizing great alliances, and in commanding armies assembled from different countries.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

One class of philosophical questions had been forced on his attention by circumstances, and seems to have interested him more than might have been expected from his general character. Among the Protestants of the United Provinces, as among the Protestants of our island, there were two great religious parties which almost exactly coincided with two

His theo-
logical
opinions.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

great political parties. The chiefs of the municipal oligarchy were Arminians, and were commonly regarded by the multitude as little better than Papists. The princes of Orange had generally been the patrons of the Calvinistic divinity, and owed no small part of their popularity to their zeal for the doctrines of election and final perseverance, a zeal not always enlightened by knowledge or tempered by humanity. William had been carefully instructed from a child in the theological system to which his family was attached, and regarded that system with even more than the partiality which men generally feel for a hereditary faith. He had ruminated on the great enigmas which had been discussed in the Synod of Dort, and had found in the austere and inflexible logic of the Genevese school something which suited his intellect and his temper. That example of intolerance indeed which some of his predecessors had set he never imitated. For all persecution he felt a fixed aversion, which he avowed, not only where the avowal was obviously politic, but on occasions where it seemed that his interest would have been promoted by dissimulation or by silence. His theological opinions, however, were even more decided than those of his ancestors. The tenet of predestination was the keystone of his religion. He often declared that, if he were to abandon that tenet, he must abandon with it all belief in a superintending Providence, and must become a mere Epicurean. Except in this single instance, all the sap of his vigorous mind was early drawn away from the speculative to the practical. The faculties which are necessary for the conduct of important business ripened in him at a time of life when they have scarcely begun to blossom in ordinary men. Since Octavius the world had seen no such instance of precocious statesmanship. Skilful diplomatists were surprised to hear the weighty observations which at seventeen the Prince made on public affairs, and still more surprised to see a lad, in situations in which he might have been expected to betray strong passion, preserve a composure as imperturbable as their own. At eighteen he sat among the fathers of the commonwealth, grave, discreet, and judicious as the oldest among them. At twenty-one, in a day of gloom and terror, he was

placed at the head of the administration. At twenty-three he was renowned throughout Europe as a soldier and a politician. He had put domestic factions under his feet: he was the soul of a mighty coalition; and he had contended with honour in the field against some of the greatest generals of the age.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

His personal tastes were those rather of a warrior than of a statesman: but he, like his greatgrandfather, the silent prince who founded the Batavian commonwealth, occupies a far higher place among statesmen than among warriors. The event of battles, indeed, is not an unfailling test of the abilities of a commander; and it would be peculiarly unjust to apply this test to William: for it was his fortune to be almost always opposed to captains who were consummate masters of their art, and to troops far superior in discipline to his own. Yet there is reason to believe that he was by no means equal, as a general in the field, to some who ranked far below him in intellectual powers. To those whom he trusted he spoke on this subject with the magnanimous frankness of a man who had done great things, and who could well afford to acknowledge some deficiencies. He had never, he said, served an apprenticeship to the military profession. He had been placed, while still a boy, at the head of an army. Among his officers there had been none competent to instruct him. His own blunders and their consequences had been his only lessons. "I would give," he once exclaimed, "a good part of my estates to have served a few campaigns under the Prince of Condé before I had to command against him." It is not improbable that the circumstance which prevented William from attaining any eminent dexterity in strategy may have been favourable to the general vigour of his intellect. If his battles were not those of a great tactician, they entitled him to be called a great man. No disaster could for one moment deprive him of his firmness or of the entire possession of all his faculties. His defeats were repaired with such marvellous celerity that, before his enemies had sung the *Te Deum*, he was again ready for conflict; nor did his adverse fortune ever deprive him of the respect and confidence of his soldiers. That respect and confidence he owed in no small measure to

His mili-
tary qua-
lifica-
tions.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

his personal courage. Courage, in the degree which is necessary to carry a soldier without disgrace through a campaign, is possessed, or might, under proper training, be acquired, by the great majority of men. But courage like that of William is rare indeed. He was proved by every test; by war, by wounds, by painful and depressing maladies, by raging seas, by the imminent and constant risk of assassination, a risk which has shaken very strong nerves, a risk which severely tried even the adamantine fortitude of Cromwell. Yet none could ever discover what that thing was which the Prince of Orange feared. His advisers could with difficulty induce him to take any precaution against the pistols and daggers of conspirators.* Old sailors were amazed at the composure which he preserved amidst roaring breakers on a perilous coast. In battle his bravery made him conspicuous even among tens of thousands of brave warriors, drew forth the generous applause of hostile armies, and was never questioned even by the injustice of hostile factions. During his first campaigns he exposed himself like a man who sought for death, was always foremost in the charge and last in the retreat, fought, sword in hand, in the thickest press, and, with a musket ball in his arm and the blood streaming over his cuirass, still stood his ground and waved his hat under the hottest fire. His friends adjured him to take more care of a life invaluable to his country; and his most illustrious antagonist, the great Condé, remarked, after the bloody day of Seneff, that the Prince of Orange had in all things borne himself like an old general, except in exposing himself like a young soldier. William denied that he was guilty of temerity. It was, he said, from a sense of duty and on a cool calculation

* William was earnestly intreated by his friends, after the peace of Ryswick, to speak seriously to the French ambassador about the schemes of assassination which the Jacobites of St. Germain's were constantly contriving. The cold magnanimity with which these intimations of danger were received is singularly characteristic. To Bentinck, who had sent from Paris very alarming intelligence, William merely replied, at the end of a long letter of business, — "Pour les assassins je ne luy en ay pas voulu parler, croyant que c'étoit au desous de moy." May 3, 1698. I keep the original orthography, if it is to be so called.

of what the public interest required that he was always at the post of danger. The troops which he commanded had been little used to war, and shrank from a close encounter with the veteran soldiery of France. It was necessary that their leader should show them how battles were to be won. And in truth more than one day which had seemed hopelessly lost was retrieved by the hardihood with which he rallied his broken battalions and cut down with his own hand the cowards who set the example of flight. Sometimes, however, it seemed that he had a strange pleasure in venturing his person. It was remarked that his spirits were never so high and his manners never so gracious and easy as amidst the tumult and carnage of a battle. Even in his pastimes he liked the excitement of danger. Cards, chess, and billiards gave him no pleasure. The chase was his favourite recreation; and he loved it most when it was most hazardous. His leaps were sometimes such that his boldest companions did not like to follow him. He seems even to have thought the most hardy field sports of England effeminate, and to have pined in the Great Park of Windsor for the game which he had been used to drive to bay in the forests of Guelders, wolves, and wild boars, and huge stags with sixteen antlers.*

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

The audacity of his spirit was the more remarkable because his physical organization was unusually delicate. From a child he had been weak and sickly. In the prime of manhood his complaints had been aggravated by a severe attack of small pox. He was asthmatic and consumptive. His slender frame was shaken by a constant hoarse cough. He could not sleep unless his head was propped by several pillows, and could scarcely draw his breath in any but the purest air. Cruel headaches frequently tortured him. Exertion soon fa-

His love
of
danger:
his bad
health.

* From Windsor he wrote to Bentinck, then ambassador at Paris. "J'ay pris avant hier un cerf dans la forest avec les chaines du Pr. de Denn. et ay fait un assez jolie chasse, autant que ce vilain pais le permet." ^{March 20.} 1698. The spelling is bad, but not worse than Napoleon's. William wrote in better humour from Loo. "Nous avons pris deux gros cerfs, le premier dans Dorewaert, qui est un des plus gros que je sache avoir jamais pris. Il porte seize." ^{Oct. 25.} ^{Nov. 4} 1697.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

tigued him. The physicians constantly kept up the hopes of his enemies by fixing some date beyond which, if there were anything certain in medical science, it was impossible that his broken constitution could hold out. Yet, through a life which was one long disease, the force of his mind never failed, on any great occasion, to bear up his suffering and languid body.

Coldness
of his
manners
and
strength
of his
emotions.

He was born with violent passions and quick sensibilities: but the strength of his emotions was not suspected by the world. From the multitude his joy and his grief, his affection and his resentment, were hidden by a phlegmatic serenity, which made him pass for the most cold-blooded of mankind. Those who brought him good news could seldom detect any sign of pleasure. Those who saw him after a defeat looked in vain for any trace of vexation. He praised and reprimanded, rewarded and punished, with the stern tranquillity of a Mohawk chief: but those who knew him well and saw him near were aware that under all this ice a fierce fire was constantly burning. It was seldom that anger deprived him of power over himself. But when he was really enraged the first outbreak of his passion was terrible. It was indeed scarcely safe to approach him. On these rare occasions, however, as soon as he regained his self command, he made such ample reparation to those whom he had wronged as tempted them to wish that he would go into a fury again. His affection was as impetuous as his wrath. Where he loved, he loved with the whole energy of his strong mind. When death separated him from what he loved, the few who witnessed his agonies trembled for his reason and his life. To a very small circle of intimate friends, on whose fidelity and secrecy he could absolutely depend, he was a different man from the reserved and stoical William whom the multitude supposed to be destitute of human feelings. He was kind, cordial, open, even convivial and jocose, would sit at table many hours, and would bear his full share in festive conversation. Highest in his favour stood a gentleman of his household named Bentinck, sprung from a noble Batavian race, and destined to be the founder of one of the great patrician houses of England. The fidelity of Bentinck had been tried by no common test. It

His
friend-
ship for
Bentinck.

was while the United Provinces were struggling for existence against the French power that the young Prince on whom all their hopes were fixed was seized by the small pox. That disease had been fatal to many members of his family, and at first wore, in his case, a peculiarly malignant aspect. The public consternation was great. The streets of the Hague were crowded from daybreak to sunset by persons anxiously asking how his Highness was. At length his complaint took a favourable turn. His escape was attributed partly to his own singular equanimity, and partly to the intrepid and indefatigable friendship of Bentinck. From the hands of Bentinck alone William took food and medicine. By Bentinck alone William was lifted from his bed and laid down in it. "Whether Bentinck slept or not while I was ill," said William to Temple, with great tenderness, "I know not. But this I know, that, through sixteen days and nights, I never once called for anything but that Bentinck was instantly at my side." Before the faithful servant had entirely performed his task, he had himself caught the contagion. Still, however, he bore up against drowsiness and fever till his master was pronounced convalescent. Then, at length, Bentinck asked leave to go home. It was time: for his limbs would no longer support him. He was in great danger, but recovered, and, as soon as he left his bed, hastened to the army, where, during many sharp campaigns, he was ever found, as he had been in peril of a different kind, close to William's side.

Such was the origin of a friendship as warm and pure as any that ancient or modern history records. The descendants of Bentinck still preserve many letters written by William to their ancestor: and it is not too much to say that no person who has not studied those letters can form a correct notion of the Prince's character. He whom even his admirers generally accounted the most distant and frigid of men here forgets all distinctions of rank, and pours out all his thoughts with the ingenuousness of a schoolboy. He imparts without reserve secrets of the highest moment. He explains with perfect simplicity vast designs affecting all the governments of Europe. Mingled with his communications on such subjects are

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

other communications of a very different, but perhaps not of a less interesting kind. All his adventures, all his personal feelings, his long runs after enormous stags, his carousals on St. Hubert's day, the growth of his plantations, the failure of his melons, the state of his stud, his wish to procure an easy pad nag for his wife, his vexation at learning that one of his household, after ruining a girl of good family, refused to marry her, his fits of sea-sickness, his coughs, his headaches, his devotional moods, his gratitude for the divine protection after a great escape, his struggles to submit himself to the divine will after a disaster, are described with an amiable garrulity hardly to have been expected from the most discreet and sedate statesman of the age. Still more remarkable is the careless effusion of his tenderness, and the brotherly interest which he takes in his friend's domestic felicity. When an heir is born to Bentinck, "he will live, I hope," says William, "to be as good a fellow as you are; and, if I should have a son, our children will love each other, I hope, as we have done."* Through life he continues to regard the little Bentincks with paternal kindness. He calls them by endearing diminutives: he takes charge of them in their father's absence, and, though vexed at being forced to refuse them any pleasure, will not suffer them to go on a hunting party, where there would be risk of a push from a stag's horn, or to sit up late at a riotous supper.** When their mother is taken ill during her husband's absence, William, in the midst of business of the highest moment, finds time to send off several expresses in one day with short notes containing intelligence of her state.*** On one occasion, when she is pronounced out of danger after a severe attack, the Prince breaks forth into fervent expressions of gratitude to God. "I write," he says, "with tears of joy in my eyes."† There

* March 3. 1679.

** "Voilà en peu de mot le detail de nostre St. Hubert. Et j'ay eu soin que M. Woodstoc" (Bentinck's eldest son) "n'a point esté à la chasse, bien moim au soupé, quoyqu'il fut icy. Vous pouvez pourtant croire que de n'avoir pas chassé l'a un peu mortifié, mais je ne l'ay pas ausé prendre sur moy, puisque vous m'aviez dit que vous ne le souhaitiez pas." From Loo; Nov. 4. 1697.

*** On the 15th of June, 1688.

† Sept. 6. 1679.

is a singular charm in such letters, penned by a man whose irresistible energy and inflexible firmness extorted the respect of his enemies, whose cold and ungracious demeanour repelled the attachment of almost all his partisans, and whose mind was occupied by gigantic schemes which have changed the face of the world.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

His kindness was not misplaced. Bentinck was early pronounced by Temple to be the best and truest servant that ever prince had the good fortune to possess, and continued through life to merit that honourable character. The friends were indeed made for each other. William wanted neither a guide nor a flatterer. Having a firm and just reliance on his own judgment, he was not partial to counsellors who dealt much in suggestions and objections. At the same time he had too much discernment, and too much elevation of mind, to be gratified by sycophancy. The confidant of such a prince ought to be a man, not of inventive genius or commanding spirit, but brave and faithful, capable of executing orders punctually, of keeping secrets inviolably, of observing facts vigilantly, and of reporting them truly; and such a man was Bentinck.

William was not less fortunate in marriage than in friendship. Yet his marriage had not at first promised much of domestic happiness. His choice had been determined chiefly by political considerations: nor did it seem likely that any strong affection would grow up between a handsome girl of sixteen, well disposed indeed, and naturally intelligent, but ignorant and simple, and a bridegroom who, though he had not completed his twenty-eighth year, was in constitution older than her father, whose manner was chilling, and whose head was constantly occupied by public business or by field sports. For a time William was a negligent husband. He was indeed drawn away from his wife by other women, particularly by one of her ladies, Elizabeth Villiers, who, though destitute of personal attractions, and disfigured by a hideous squint, possessed talents which well fitted her to partake his cares.* He was indeed ashamed of his errors, and spared no

Mary,
Princess
of
Orange.

* See Swift's account of her in the Journal to Stella.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

pains to conceal them: but, in spite of all his precautions, Mary well knew that he was not strictly faithful to her. Spies and tale-bearers, encouraged by her father, did their best to inflame her resentment. A man of a very different character, the excellent Ken, who was her chaplain at the Hague during some months, was so much incensed by her wrongs that he, with more zeal than discretion, threatened to reprimand her husband severely.* She, however, bore her injuries with a meekness and patience which deserved, and gradually obtained, William's esteem and gratitude. Yet there still remained one cause of estrangement. A time would probably come when the Princess, who had been educated only to work embroidery, to play on the spinet, and to read the Bible and the Whole Duty of Man, would be the chief of a great monarchy, and would hold the balance of Europe, while her lord, ambitious, versed in affairs, and bent on great enterprises, would find in the British government no place marked out for him, and would hold power only from her bounty and during her pleasure. It is not strange that a man so fond of authority as William, and so conscious of a genius for command, should have strongly felt that jealousy which, during a few hours of royalty, put dissension between Guildford Dudley and the Lady Jane, and which produced a rupture still more tragical between Darnley and the Queen of Scots. The Princess of Orange had not the faintest suspicion of her husband's feelings. Her preceptor, Bishop Compton, had instructed her carefully in religion, and had especially guarded her mind against the arts of Roman Catholic divines, but had left her profoundly ignorant of the English constitution and of her own position. She knew that her marriage vow bound her to obey her husband; and it had never occurred to her that the relation in which they stood to each other might one day be inverted. She had been nine years married before she discovered the cause of William's discontent; nor would she ever have learned it from himself. In general his temper inclined him rather to brood over his griefs

* Henry Sidney's Journal of March 31. 1680, in Mr. Blencowe's interesting collection.

than to give utterance to them; and in this particular case his lips were sealed by a very natural delicacy. At length a complete explanation and reconciliation were brought about by the agency of Gilbert Burnet.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

The fame of Burnet has been attacked with singular malice ^{Gilbert} and pertinacity. ^{Burnet.} The attack began early in his life, and is still carried on with undiminished vigour, though he has now been more than a century and a quarter in his grave. He is indeed as fair a mark as factious animosity and petulant wit could desire. The faults of his understanding and temper lie on the surface, and cannot be missed. They were not the faults which are ordinarily considered as belonging to his country. Alone among the many Scotchmen who have raised themselves to distinction and prosperity in England, he had that character which satirists, novelists, and dramatists have agreed to ascribe to Irish adventurers. His high animal spirits, his boastfulness, his undissembled vanity, his propensity to blunder, his provoking indiscretion, his unabashed audacity, afforded inexhaustible subjects of ridicule to the Tories. Nor did his enemies omit to compliment him, sometimes with more pleasantry than delicacy, on the breadth of his shoulders, the thickness of his calves, and his success in matrimonial projects on amorous and opulent widows. Yet Burnet, though open in many respects to ridicule, and even to serious censure, was no contemptible man. His parts were quick, his industry unwearied, his reading various and most extensive. He was at once a historian, an antiquary, a theologian, a preacher, a pamphleteer, a debater, and an active political leader; and in every one of these characters made himself conspicuous among able competitors. The many spirited tracts which he wrote on passing events are now known only to the curious: but his History of his own Times, his History of the Reformation, his Exposition of the Articles, his Discourse of Pastoral Care, his Life of Hale, his Life of Wilmot, are still reprinted, nor is any good private library without them. Against such a fact as this all the efforts of detractors are vain. A writer, whose voluminous works, in several branches of literature, find numerous readers a

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

hundred and thirty years after his death, may have had great faults, but must also have had great merits: and Burnet had great merits, a fertile and vigorous mind, and a style, far indeed removed from faultless purity, but always clear, often lively, and sometimes rising to solemn and fervid eloquence. In the pulpit the effect of his discourses, which were delivered without any note, was heightened by a noble figure and by pathetic action. He was often interrupted by the deep hum of his audience; and when, after preaching out the hour glass, which in those days was part of the furniture of the pulpit, he held it up in his hand, the congregation clamorously encouraged him to go on till the sand had run off once more.* In his moral character, as in his intellect, great blemishes were more than compensated by great excellence. Though often misled by prejudice and passion, he was emphatically an honest man. Though he was not secure from the seductions of vanity, his spirit was raised high above the influence either of cupidity or of fear. His nature was kind, generous, grateful, forgiving.** His religious zeal, though steady and ardent, was in general restrained by humanity, and by a respect for the rights of conscience. Strongly attached to what he regarded as the spirit of Christianity, he looked with indifference on rites, names, and forms of ecclesiastical polity, and was by no means disposed to be severe even on infidels

* Speaker Onslow's note on Burnet, i. 596.; Johnson's Life of Sprat.

** No person has contradicted Burnet more frequently or with more asperity than Dartmouth. Yet Dartmouth wrote, "I do not think he designedly published anything he believed to be false." At a later period Dartmouth, provoked by some remarks on himself in the second volume of the Bishop's history, retracted this praise: but to such a retraction little importance can be attached. Even Swift has the justice to say, "After all, he was a man of generosity and good-nature." — Short Remarks on Bishop Burnet's History.

It is usual to censure Burnet as a singularly inaccurate historian; but I believe the charge to be altogether unjust. He appears to be singularly inaccurate only because his narrative has been subjected to a scrutiny singularly severe and unfriendly. If any Whig thought it worth while to subject Reresby's Memoirs, North's Examen, Mulgrave's Account of the Revolution, or the Life of James the Second, edited by Clarke, to a similar scrutiny, it would soon appear that Burnet was far indeed from being the most inexact writer of his time.

and heretics whose lives were pure, and whose errors appeared to be the effect rather of some perversion of the understanding than of the depravity of the heart. But, like many other good men of that age, he regarded the case of the Church of Rome as an exception to all ordinary rules.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

Burnet had during some years had an European reputation. His History of the Reformation had been received with loud applause by all Protestants, and had been felt by the Roman Catholics as a severe blow. The greatest Doctor that the Church of Rome has produced since the schism of the sixteenth century, Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, was engaged in framing an elaborate reply. Burnet had been honoured by a vote of thanks from one of the zealous Parliaments which had sate during the excitement of the Popish plot, and had been exhorted, in the name of the Commons of England, to continue his historical researches. He had been admitted to familiar conversation both with Charles and James, had lived on terms of close intimacy with several distinguished statesmen, particularly with Halifax, and had been the spiritual guide of some persons of the highest note. He had reclaimed from atheism and from licentiousness one of the most brilliant libertines of the age, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. Lord Stafford, the victim of Oates, had, though a Roman Catholic, been edified in his last hours by Burnet's exhortations touching those points on which all Christians agree. A few years later a more illustrious sufferer, Lord Russell, had been accompanied by Burnet from the Tower to the scaffold in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The court had neglected no means of gaining so active and able a divine. Neither royal blandishments nor promises of valuable preferment had been spared. But Burnet, though infected in early youth by those servile doctrines which were commonly held by the clergy of that age, had become on conviction a Whig; and he firmly adhered through all vicissitudes to his principles. He had, however, no part in that conspiracy which brought so much disgrace and calamity on the Whig party, and not only abhorred the murderous designs of Goodenough and Ferguson, but was of opinion that even his beloved and honoured friend Russell

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

had gone to unjustifiable lengths against the government. A time at length arrived when innocence was not a sufficient protection. Burnet, though not guilty of any legal offence, was pursued by the vengeance of the court. He retired to the Continent, and, after passing about a year in those wanderings through Switzerland, Italy, and Germany, of which he has left us an agreeable narrative, reached the Hague in the summer of 1686, and was received there with kindness and respect. He had many free conversations with the Princess on politics and religion, and soon became her spiritual director and confidential adviser. William proved a much more gracious host than could have been expected. For of all faults officiousness and indiscretion were the most offensive to him: and Burnet was allowed even by friends and admirers to be the most officious and indiscreet of mankind. But the sagacious Prince perceived that this pushing talkative divine, who was always blabbing secrets, asking impertinent questions, obtruding unasked advice, was nevertheless an upright, courageous and able man, well acquainted with the temper and the views of British sects and factions. The fame of Burnet's eloquence and erudition was also widely spread. William was not himself a reading man. But he had now been many years at the head of the Dutch administration, in an age when the Dutch press was one of the most formidable engines by which the public mind of Europe was moved, and, though he had no taste for literary pleasures, was far too wise and too observant to be ignorant of the value of literary assistance. He was aware that a popular pamphlet might sometimes be of as much service as a victory in the field. He also felt the importance of having always near him some person well informed as to the civil and ecclesiastical polity of our island: and Burnet was eminently qualified to be of use as a living dictionary of British affairs. For his knowledge, though not always accurate, was of immense extent; and there were in England and Scotland few eminent men of any political or religious party with whom he had not conversed. He was therefore admitted to as large a share of favour and confidence as was granted to any but those who composed the very small

inmost knot of the Prince's private friends. When the Doctor took liberties, which was not seldom the case, his patron became more than usually cold and sullen, and sometimes uttered a short dry sarcasm which would have struck dumb any person of ordinary assurance. In spite of such occurrences, however, the amity between this singular pair continued, with some temporary interruptions, till it was dissolved by death. Indeed, it was not easy to wound Burnet's feelings. His self-complacency, his animal spirits, and his want of tact, were such that, though he frequently gave offence, he never took it.

All the peculiarities of his character fitted him to be the peacemaker between William and Mary. When persons who ought to esteem and love each other are kept asunder, as often happens, by some cause which three-words of frank explanation would remove, they are fortunate if they possess an indiscreet friend who blurts out the whole truth. Burnet plainly told the Princess what the feeling was which preyed upon her husband's mind. She learned for the first time, with no small astonishment, that, when she became Queen of England, William would not share her throne. She warmly declared that there was no proof of conjugal submission and affection which she was not ready to give. Burnet, with many apologies and with solemn protestations that no human being had put words into his mouth, informed her that the remedy was in her own hands. She might easily, when the crown devolved on her, induce her Parliament not only to give the regal title to her husband, but even to transfer to him by a legislative act the administration of the government. "But," he added, "your Royal Highness ought to consider well before you announce any such resolution. For it is a resolution which, having once been announced, cannot safely or easily be retracted." "I want no time for consideration," answered Mary. "It is enough that I have an opportunity of showing my regard for the Prince. Tell him what I say; and bring him to me that he may hear it from my own lips." Burnet went in quest of William; but William was many miles off after a stag. It was not till the next day that the

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

He brings
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tween the
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and
Princess.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

decisive interview took place. "I did not know till yesterday," said Mary, "that there was such a difference between the laws of England and the laws of God. But I now promise you that you shall always bear rule: and, in return, I ask only this, that, as I shall observe the precept which enjoins wives to obey their husbands, you will observe that which enjoins husbands to love their wives." Her generous affection completely gained the heart of William. From that time till the sad day when he was carried away in fits from her dying bed, there was entire friendship and confidence between them. Many of her letters to him are extant; and they contain abundant evidence that this man, unamiable as he was in the eyes of the multitude, had succeeded in inspiring a beautiful and virtuous woman, born his superior, with a passion fond even to idolatry.

The service which Burnet had rendered to his country was of high moment. A time had arrived at which it was important to the public safety that there should be entire concord between the Prince and Princess.

Relations
between
William
and
English
parties.

Till after the suppression of the Western insurrection grave causes of dissension had separated William both from Whigs and Tories. He had seen with displeasure the attempts of the Whigs to strip the executive government of some powers which he thought necessary to its efficiency and dignity. He had seen with still deeper displeasure the countenance given by a large section of that party to the pretensions of Monmouth. The opposition, it seemed, wished first to make the crown of England not worth the wearing, and then to place it on the head of a bastard and impostor. At the same time the Prince's religious system differed widely from that which was the badge of the Tories. They were Arminians and Prelatists. They looked down on the Protestant Churches of the Continent, and regarded every line of their own liturgy and rubric as scarcely less sacred than the gospels. His opinions touching the metaphysics of theology were Calvinistic. His opinions respecting ecclesiastical polity and modes of worship were latitudinarian. He owned that episcopacy was a lawful and convenient form of church

government; but he spoke with sharpness and scorn of the bigotry of those who thought episcopal ordination essential to a Christian society. He had no scruple about the vestments and gestures prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer. But he avowed that he should like the rites of the Church of England better if they reminded him less of the rites of the Church of Rome. He had been heard to utter an ominous growl when first he saw, in his wife's private chapel, an altar decked after the Anglican fashion, and had not seemed well pleased at finding her with Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity in her hands.*

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

He therefore long observed the contest between the English factions attentively, but without feeling a strong predilection for either side. Nor in truth did he ever, to the end of his life, become either a Whig or a Tory. He wanted that which is the common groundwork of both characters; for he never became an Englishman. He saved England, it is true; but he never loved her, and he never obtained her love. To him she was always a land of exile, visited with reluctance and quitted with delight. Even when he rendered to her those services of which, at this day, we feel the happy effects, her welfare was not his chief object. Whatever patriotic feeling he had was for Holland. There was the stately tomb where slept the great politician whose blood, whose name, whose temperament, and whose genius he had inherited. There the very sound of his title was a spell which had, through three generations, called forth the affectionate enthusiasm of boors and artisans. The Dutch language was the language of his nursery. Among the Dutch gentry he had chosen his early friends. The amusements, the architecture, the landscape of his native country, had taken hold on his heart. To her he turned with constant fondness from a prouder and fairer rival. In the gallery of Whitehall he pined for the familiar House in the Wood at the Hague, and never was so happy as when he could quit the magnificence of Windsor for his far humbler seat at Loo. During his splend

His feelings towards England.

His feelings towards Holland and France.

* Dr. Hooper's MS. narrative, published in the Appendix to Lord Dugannon's Life of William.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

banishment it was his consolation to create round him, by building, planting, and digging, a scene which might remind him of the formal piles of red brick, of the long canals, and of the symmetrical flower beds amidst which his early life had been passed. Yet even his affection for the land of his birth was subordinate to another feeling which early became supreme in his soul, which mixed itself with all his passions, which impelled him to marvellous enterprises, which supported him when sinking under mortification, pain, sickness, and sorrow, which, towards the close of his career, seemed during a short time to languish, but which soon broke forth again fiercer than ever, and continued to animate him even while the prayer for the departing was read at his bedside. That feeling was enmity to France, and to the magnificent King who, in more than one sense, represented France, and who to virtues and accomplishments eminently French joined in large measure that unquiet, unscrupulous, and vainglorious ambition which has repeatedly drawn on France the resentment of Europe.

It is not difficult to trace the progress of the sentiment which gradually possessed itself of William's whole soul. When he was little more than a boy his country had been attacked by Lewis in ostentatious defiance of justice and public law, had been overrun, had been desolated, had been given up to every excess of rapacity, licentiousness, and cruelty. The Dutch had in dismay humbled themselves before the conqueror, and had implored mercy. They had been told in reply that, if they desired peace, they must resign their independence and do annual homage to the House of Bourbon. The injured nation, driven to despair, had opened its dykes and had called in the sea as an ally against the French tyranny. It was in the agony of that conflict, when peasants were flying in terror before the invaders, when hundreds of fair gardens and pleasure houses were buried beneath the waves, when the deliberations of the States were interrupted by the fainting and the loud weeping of ancient senators who could not bear the thought of surviving the freedom and glory of their native land, that William had been called to the head

of affairs. For a time it seemed to him that resistance was hopeless. He looked round for succour, and looked in vain. Spain was unnerved, Germany distracted, England corrupted. Nothing seemed left to the young Stadtholder but to perish sword in hand, or to be the Æneas of a great emigration, and to create another Holland in countries beyond the reach of the tyranny of France. No obstacle would then remain to check the progress of the House of Bourbon. A few years; and that House might add to its dominions Loraine and Flanders, Castile and Aragon, Naples and Milan, Mexico and Peru. Lewis might wear the imperial crown, might place a prince of his family on the throne of Poland, might be sole master of Europe from the Scythian deserts to the Atlantic Ocean, and of America from regions north of the Tropic of Cancer to regions south of the Tropic of Capricorn. Such was the prospect which lay before William when first he entered on public life, and which never ceased to haunt him till his latest day. The French monarchy was to him what the Roman republic was to Hannibal, what the Ottoman power was to Scanderbeg, what the southern domination was to Wallace. Religion gave her sanction to that intense and unquenchable animosity. Hundreds of Calvinistic preachers proclaimed that the same power which had set apart Samson from the womb to be the scourge of the Philistine, and which had called Gideon from the threshing floor to smite the Midianite, had raised up William of Orange to be the champion of all free nations and of all pure Churches; nor was this notion without influence on his own mind. To the confidence which the heroic fatalist placed in his high destiny and in his sacred cause is to be partly attributed his singular indifference to danger. He had a great work to do; and till it was done nothing could harm him. Therefore it was that, in spite of the prognostications of physicians, he recovered from maladies which seemed hopeless, that bands of assassins conspired in vain against his life, that the open skiff to which he trusted himself on a starless night, on a raging ocean, and near a treacherous shore, brought him safe to land, and that, on twenty fields of battle, the cannon balls passed him by to right and left. The ardour

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

and perseverance with which he devoted himself to his mission have scarcely any parallel in history. In comparison with his great object he held the lives of other men as cheap as his own. It was but too much the habit, even of the most humane and generous soldiers of that age, to think very lightly of the bloodshed and devastation inseparable from great martial exploits; and the heart of William was steeled, not only by professional insensibility, but by that sterner insensibility which is the effect of a sense of duty. Three great coalitions, three long and bloody wars in which all Europe from the Vistula to the Western Ocean was in arms, are to be ascribed to his unconquerable energy. When in 1678 the States General, exhausted and disheartened, were desirous of repose, his voice was still against sheathing the sword. If peace was made, it was made only because he could not breathe into other men a spirit as fierce and determined as his own. At the very last moment, in the hope of breaking off the negotiation which he knew to be all but concluded, he fought one of the most bloody and obstinate battles of that age. From the day on which the treaty of Nimeguen was signed, he began to meditate a second coalition. His contest with Lewis, transferred from the field to the cabinet, was soon exasperated by a private feud. In talents, temper, manners and opinions, the rivals were diametrically opposed to each other. Lewis, polite and dignified, profuse and voluptuous, fond of display and averse from danger, a munificent patron of arts and letters, and a cruel persecutor of Calvinists, presented a remarkable contrast to William, simple in tastes, ungracious in demeanour, indefatigable and intrepid in war, regardless of all the ornamental branches of knowledge, and firmly attached to the theology of Geneva. The enemies did not long observe those courtesies which men of their rank, even when opposed to each other at the head of armies, seldom neglect. William, indeed, went through the form of tendering his best services to Lewis. But this civility was rated at its true value, and requited with a dry reprimand. The great King affected contempt for the petty Prince who was the servant of a confederacy of trading towns; and to every mark

of contempt the dauntless Stadtholder replied by a fresh defiance. William took his title, a title which the events of the preceding century had made one of the most illustrious in Europe, from a city which lies on the banks of the Rhone not far from Avignon, and which, like Avignon, though inclosed on every side by the French territory, was properly a fief not of the French but of the Imperial Crown. Lewis, with that ostentatious contempt of public law which was characteristic of him, occupied Orange, dismantled the fortifications, and confiscated the revenues. William declared aloud at his table before many persons that he would make the most Christian King repent the outrage, and, when questioned about these words by the Count of Avaux, positively refused either to retract them or to explain them away. The quarrel was carried so far that the French minister could not venture to present himself at the drawing room of the Princess for fear of receiving some affront.*

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

The feeling with which William regarded France explains the whole of his policy towards England. His public spirit was an European public spirit. The chief object of his care was not our island, not even his native Holland, but the great community of nations threatened with subjugation by one too powerful member. Those who commit the error of considering him as an English statesman must necessarily see his whole life in a false light, and will be unable to discover any principle, good or bad, Whig or Tory, to which his most important acts can be referred. But, when we consider him as a man whose especial task was to join a crowd of feeble, divided and dispirited states in firm and energetic union against a common enemy, when we consider him as a man in whose eyes England was important chiefly because, without her, the great coalition which he projected must be incomplete, we shall be forced to admit that no long career recorded in history has been more uniform from the beginning to the close than that of this great Prince.**

* Avaux Negotiations, Aug. 10. Sept. 13.; Sept. 28.
Oct. 8.; Dec. 17. 1682.

** I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting Massillon's unfriendly, yet discriminating and noble, character of William. "Un

CHAP.

VII.

1687.

His policy
consistent
through-
out.

The clue of which we are now possessed will enable us to track without difficulty the course, in reality consistent, though in appearance sometimes tortuous, which he pursued towards our domestic factions. He clearly saw what had not escaped persons far inferior to him in sagacity, that the enterprise on which his whole soul was intent would probably be successful if England were on his side, would be of uncertain issue if England were neutral, and would be hopeless if England acted as she had acted in the days of the Cabal. He saw not less clearly that between the foreign policy and the domestic policy of the English government there was a close connection; that the sovereign of this country, acting in harmony with the legislature, must always have a great sway in the affairs of Christendom, and must also have an obvious interest in opposing the undue aggrandisement of any continental potentate; that, on the other hand, the sovereign, distrusted and thwarted by the legislature, could be of little weight in European politics, and that the whole of that little weight would be thrown into the wrong scale. The Prince's first wish therefore was that there should be concord between the throne and the Parliament. How that concord should be established, and on which side concessions should be made, were, in his view, questions of secondary importance. He would have been best pleased, no doubt, to see a complete reconciliation effected without the sacrifice of one tittle of the prerogative. For in the integrity of that prerogative he had a reversionary interest; and he was, by nature, at least as covetous of power and as impatient of restraint as any of the Stuarts. But there was no flower of the crown which he was not prepared to sacrifice, even after the crown had been placed on his own head, if he could only be convinced that

prince profond dans ses vues; habile à former des ligues et à réunir les esprits; plus heureux à exciter les guerres qu'à combattre; plus à craindre encore dans le secret du cabinet, qu'à la tête des armées; un ennemi que la haine du nom Français avoit rendu capable d'imaginer de grandes choses et de les exécuter; un de ces génies qui semblent être nés pour mouvoir à leur gré les peuples et les souverains; un grand homme, s'il n'avoit jamais voulu être roi." — Oraison funèbre de M. le Dauphin.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

such a sacrifice was indispensably necessary to his great design. In the days of the Popish plot, therefore, though he disapproved of the violence with which the opposition attacked the royal authority, he exhorted the government to give way. The conduct of the Commons, he said, as respected domestic affairs, was most unreasonable: but while the Commons were discontented the liberties of Europe could never be safe; and to that paramount consideration every other consideration ought to yield. On these principles he acted when the Exclusion Bill had thrown the nation into convulsions. There is no reason to believe that he encouraged the opposition to bring forward that bill or to reject the offers of compromise which were repeatedly made from the throne. But when it became clear that, unless that bill were carried, there would be a serious breach between the Commons and the court, he indicated very intelligibly, though with decorous reserve, his opinion that the representatives of the people ought to be conciliated at any price. When a violent and rapid reflux of public feeling had left the Whig party for a time utterly helpless, he attempted to attain his grand object by a new road perhaps more agreeable to his temper than that which he had previously tried. In the altered temper of the nation there was little chance that any Parliament disposed to cross the wishes of the sovereign would be elected. Charles was for a time master. To gain Charles, therefore, was the Prince's first wish. In the summer of 1683, almost at the moment at which the detection of the Rye House Plot made the discomfiture of the Whigs and the triumph of the King complete, events took place elsewhere which William could not behold without extreme anxiety and alarm. The Turkish armies advanced to the suburbs of Vienna. The great Austrian monarchy, on the support of which the Prince had reckoned, seemed to be on the point of destruction. Bentinck was therefore sent in haste from the Hague to London, was charged to omit nothing which might be necessary to conciliate the English court, and was particularly instructed to express in the strongest terms the horror with which his master regarded the Whig conspiracy.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

During the eighteen months which followed, there was some hope that the influence of Halifax would prevail, and that the court of Whitehall would return to the policy of the Triple Alliance. To that hope William fondly clung. He spared no effort to propitiate Charles. The hospitality which Monmouth found at the Hague is chiefly to be ascribed to the Prince's anxiety to gratify the real wishes of Monmouth's father. As soon as Charles died, William, still adhering unchangeably to his object, again changed his course. He had sheltered Monmouth to please the late King. That the present King might have no reason to complain Monmouth was dismissed. We have seen that, when the Western insurrection broke out, the British regiments in the Dutch service were, by the active exertions of the Prince, sent over to their own country on the first requisition. Indeed William even offered to command in person against the rebels; and that the offer was made in perfect sincerity cannot be doubted by those who have perused his confidential letters to Bentinck.*

The Prince was evidently at this time inclined to hope that the great plan to which in his mind everything else was subordinate might obtain the approbation and support of his father-in-law. The high tone which James was then holding towards France, the readiness with which he consented to a defensive alliance with the United Provinces, the inclination which he showed to connect himself with the House of Austria, encouraged this expectation. But in a short time the prospect was darkened. The disgrace of Halifax, the breach between James and the Parliament, the prerogation, the announcement distinctly made by the King to the foreign ministers that continental politics should no longer divert his attention from internal measures tending to strengthen his prerogative and

* For example, "Je crois M. Feversham un très brave et honeste homme. Mais je doute s'il a assez d'expérience à diriger une si grande affaire qu'il a sur le bras. Dieu lui donne un succès prompt et heureux. Mais je ne suis pas hors d'inquiétude." July 7, 1685. Again, after he had received the news of the battle of Sedgemoor, "Dieu soit loué du bon succès que les troupes du Roy ont eu contre les rebelles. Je ne doute pas que cette affaire ne soit entièrement assoupie, et que le règne du Roy sera heureux, ce que Dieu veuille." July 10.

to promote the interest of his Church, put an end to the delusion. It was plain that, when the European crisis came, England would, if James were her master, either remain inactive or act in conjunction with France. And the European crisis was drawing near. The House of Austria had, by a succession of victories, been secured from danger on the side of Turkey, and was no longer under the necessity of submitting patiently to the encroachments and insults of Lewis. Accordingly, in July 1686, a treaty was signed at Augsburg Treaty of Augsburg. by which the Princes of the Empire bound themselves closely together for the purpose of mutual defence. The Kings of Spain and Sweden were parties to this compact, the King of Spain as sovereign of the provinces contained in the circle of Burgundy, and the King of Sweden as Duke of Pomerania. The confederates declared that they had no intention to attack and no wish to offend any power, but that they were determined to tolerate no infraction of those rights which the Germanic body held under the sanction of public law and public faith. They pledged themselves to stand by each other in case of need, and fixed the amount of force which each member of the league was to furnish if it should be necessary to repel aggression.* The name of William did not appear in this instrument: but all men knew that it was his work, and foresaw that he would in no long time be again the captain of a coalition against France. Between him and the vassal of France there could, in such circumstances, be no cordial good will. There was no open rupture, no interchange of menaces or reproaches. But the father-in-law and the son-in-law were separated completely and for ever.

At the very time at which the Prince was thus estranged from the English court, the causes which had hitherto produced a coolness between him and the two great sections of the English people disappeared. A large portion, perhaps a numerical majority, of the Whigs had favoured the pretensions of Monmouth: but Monmouth was now no more. The Tories, on the other hand, had entertained apprehensions that the interests of the Anglican Church might not be safe

William becomes the head of the English opposition.

* The treaty will be found in the *Recueil des Traités*, iv. No. 209.

CHAP. VII. 1687.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

under the rule of a man bred among Dutch Presbyterians, and well known to hold latitudinarian opinions about robes, ceremonies, and Bishops: but, since that beloved Church had been threatened by far more formidable dangers from a very different quarter, these apprehensions had lost almost all their power. Thus, at the same moment, both the great parties began to fix their hopes and their affections on the same leader. Old republicans could not refuse their confidence to one who had worthily filled, during many years, the highest magistracy of a republic. Old royalists conceived that they acted according to their principles in paying profound respect to a prince so near to the throne. At this conjuncture it was of the highest moment that there should be entire union between William and Mary. A misunderstanding between the presumptive heiress of the crown and her husband must have produced a schism in that vast mass which was from all quarters gathering round one common rallying point. Happily all risk of such misunderstanding was averted in the critical instant by the interposition of Burnet; and the Prince became the unquestioned chief of the whole of that party which was opposed to the government, a party almost coextensive with the nation.

There is not the least reason to believe that he at this time meditated the great enterprise to which a stern necessity afterwards drove him. He was aware that the public mind of England, though heated by grievances, was by no means ripe for revolution. He would doubtless gladly have avoided the scandal which must be the effect of a mortal quarrel between persons bound together by the closest ties of consanguinity and affinity. Even his ambition made him unwilling to owe to violence that greatness which might be his in the ordinary course of nature and of law. For he well knew that, if the crown descended to his wife regularly, all its prerogatives would descend unimpaired with it, and that, if it were obtained by election, it must be taken subject to such conditions as the electors might think fit to impose. He meant, therefore, as it appears, to wait with patience for the day when he might govern by an undisputed title, and to

content himself in the meantime with exercising a great influence on English affairs, as first Prince of the blood, and as head of the party which was decidedly preponderant in the nation, and which was certain, whenever a Parliament should meet, to be decidedly preponderant in both Houses.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

Already, it is true, he had been urged by an adviser, less sagacious and more impetuous than himself, to try a bolder course. This adviser was the young Lord Mordaunt. That age had produced no more inventive genius, and no more daring spirit. But, if a design was splendid, Mordaunt seldom inquired whether it were practicable. His life was a wild romance made up of mysterious intrigues, both political and amorous, of violent and rapid changes of scene and fortune, and of victories resembling those of Amadis and Launcelot rather than those of Luxemburg and Eugene. The episodes interspersed in this strange story were of a piece with the main plot. Among them were midnight encounters with generous robbers, and rescues of noble and beautiful ladies from ravishers. Mordaunt, having distinguished himself by the eloquence and audacity with which, in the House of Lords, he had opposed the court, repaired, soon after the prorogation, to the Hague, and strongly recommended an immediate descent on England. He had persuaded himself that it would be as easy to surprise three great kingdoms as he long afterwards found it to surprise Barcelona. William listened, meditated, and replied, in general terms, that he took a great interest in English affairs, and would keep his attention fixed on them.* Whatever his purpose had been, it is not likely that he would have chosen a rash and vain-glorious knight errant for his confidant. Between the two men there was nothing in common except personal courage, which rose in both to the height of fabulous heroism. Mordaunt wanted merely to enjoy the excitement of conflict, and to make men stare. William had one great end ever before him. Towards that end he was impelled by a strong passion which appeared to him under the guise of a sacred duty. Towards that end he toiled with a patience resembling,

Mordaunt proposes to William a descent on England.

William rejects the advice.

* Burnet, i. 762.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

as he once said, the patience with which he had seen a boatman on a canal strain against an adverse eddy, often swept back, but never ceasing to pull, and content if, by the labour of hours, a few yards could be gained.* Exploits which brought the Prince no nearer to his object, however glorious they might be in the estimation of the vulgar, were in his judgment boyish vanities, and no part of the real business of life.

He determined to reject Mordaunt's advice; and there can be no doubt that the determination was wise. Had William, in 1686, or even in 1687, attempted to do what he did with such signal success in 1688, it is probable that many Whigs would have risen in arms at his call. But he would have found that the nation was not yet prepared to welcome an armed deliverer from a foreign country, and that the Church had not yet been provoked and insulted into forgetfulness of the tenet which had long been her peculiar boast. The old Cavaliers would have flocked to the royal standard. There would probably have been in all the three kingdoms a civil war as long and fierce as that of the preceding generation. While that war was raging in the British Isles, what might not Lewis attempt on the Continent? And what hope would there be for Holland, drained of her troops and abandoned by her Stadtholder?

Discontent in England after the fall of the Hydes.

William therefore contented himself for the present with taking measures to unite and animate that mighty opposition of which he had become the head. This was not difficult. The fall of the Hydes had excited throughout England strange alarm and indignation. Men felt that the question now was, not whether Protestantism should be dominant, but whether it should be tolerated. The Treasurer had been succeeded by a board, of which a Papist was the head. The Privy Seal had been entrusted to a Papist. The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland had been succeeded by a man who had absolutely no claim to high place except that he was a Papist. The last person whom a government having in view the general interests of the empire would have sent to Dublin as Deputy

* Temple's Memoirs.

was Tyrconnel. His brutal manners made him unfit to represent the majesty of the crown. The feebleness of his understanding and the violence of his temper made him unfit to conduct grave business of state. The deadly animosity which he felt towards the possessors of the greater part of the soil of Ireland made him especially unfit to rule that kingdom. But the intemperance of his bigotry was thought amply to atone for the intemperance of all his other passions; and, in consideration of the hatred which he bore to the reformed faith, he was suffered to indulge without restraint his hatred of the English name. This, then, was the real meaning of his Majesty's respect for the rights of conscience. He wished his Parliament to remove all the disabilities which had been imposed on Papists, merely in order that he might himself impose disabilities equally galling on Protestants. It was plain that, under such a prince, apostasy was the only road to greatness. It was a road, however, which few ventured to take. For the spirit of the nation was thoroughly roused; and every renegade had to endure such an amount of public scorn and detestation, as cannot be altogether unfelt even by the most callous natures.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

It is true that several remarkable conversions had recently taken place; but they were such as did little credit to the Church of Rome. Two men of high rank had joined her communion; Henry Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, and James Cecil, Earl of Salisbury. But Peterborough, who had been an active soldier, courtier, and negotiator, was now broken down by years and infirmities; and those who saw him totter about the galleries of Whitehall, leaning on a stick and swathed up in flannels and plasters, comforted themselves for his defection by remarking that he had not changed his religion till he had outlived his faculties.* Salisbury was foolish to a proverb. His figure was so bloated by sensual indulgence as to be almost incapable of moving, and this sluggish body was the abode of an equally sluggish mind. He was represented in popular lampoons as a man made to be duped, as a man who had hitherto been the prey of gamesters, and who

Conversions to Popery.

Peterborough.
Salisbury.

* See the poems entitled *The Converts* and *The Delusion*.

CHAP. might as well be the prey of friars. A pasquinade, which,
 VII. about the time of Rochester's retirement, was fixed on the
 1687. door of Salisbury House in the Strand, described in coarse
 terms the horror with which the wise Robert Cecil, if he could
 rise from his grave, would see to what a creature his honours
 had descended.*

These were the highest in station among the proselytes of
 James. There were other renegades of a very different kind,
 needy men of parts who were destitute of principle and of all
 sense of personal dignity. There is reason to believe that
 among these was William Wycherley, the most licentious and
 hard-hearted writer of a singularly licentious and hard-hearted
 school.** It is certain that Matthew Tindal, who, at a later
 period, acquired great notoriety by writing against Christiani-
 ty, was at this time received into the bosom of the infallible
 Church, a fact which, as may easily be supposed, the divines
 with whom he was subsequently engaged in controversy did
 not suffer to sink into oblivion.*** A still more infamous apos-
 tate was Joseph Haines, whose name is now almost forgotten,
 but who was well known in his own time as an adventurer of
 versatile parts, sharper, coiner, false witness, sham bail,
 dancing master, buffoon, poet, comedian. Some of his pro-
 logues and epilogues were much admired by his contempora-
 ries; and his merit as an actor was universally acknowledged.
 This man professed himself a Roman Catholic, and went to
 Italy in the retinue of Castelmaine, but was soon dismissed
 for misconduct. If any credit is due to a tradition which was
 long preserved in the green room, Haines had the impudence
 to affirm that the Virgin Mary had appeared to him and called
 him to repentance. After the Revolution, he attempted to
 make his peace with the town by a penance more scandalous
 than his offence. One night, before he acted in a farce, he
 appeared on the stage in a white sheet with a torch in his hand,

* The lines are in the Collection of State Poems.

** Our information about Wycherley is very scanty; but two things are
 certain, that in his later years he called himself a Papist, and that he
 received money from James. I have very little doubt that he was a hired
 convert.

*** See the article on him in the Biographia Britannica.

Wycher-
 ley.

Tindal.

Haines.

and recited some profane and indecent doggerel, which he called his recantation.*

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

Dryden.

With the name of Haines was joined, in many libels, the name of a more illustrious renegade, John Dryden. Dryden was now approaching the decline of life. After many successes and many failures, he had at length attained, by general consent, the first place among living English poets. His claims on the gratitude of James were superior to those of any man of letters in the kingdom. But James cared little for verses and much for money. From the day of his accession he set himself to make small economical reforms, such as bringing on a government the reproach of meanness without producing any perceptible relief to the finances. One of the victims of his injudicious parsimony was the Poet Laureate. Orders were given that, in the new patent which the demise of the crown made necessary, the annual butt of sack, originally granted to Jonson, and continued to Jonson's successors, should be omitted.** This was the only notice which the King, during the first year of his reign, deigned to bestow on the mighty satirist who, in the very crisis of the great struggle of the Exclusion Bill, had spread terror through the Whig ranks. Dryden was poor and impatient of poverty. He knew little and cared little about religion. If any sentiment was deeply fixed in him, that sentiment was an aversion to priests of all persuasions, Levites, Augurs, Muftis, Roman Catholic divines, Presbyterian divines, divines of the Church of England. He was not naturally a man of high spirit; and his pursuits had been by no means such as were likely to give elevation or delicacy to his mind. He had, during many years, earned his daily bread by pandaring to the vicious taste of the pit, and by grossly flattering rich and noble patrons. Self-respect and a fine sense of the becoming were not to be expected from one who had led a life of mendicancy and

* See James Quin's account of Haines in Davies's *Miscellanies*; Tom Brown's *Works*; *Lives of Sharpers*; Dryden's *Epilogue to the Secular Masque*.

** This fact, which escaped the minute researches of Malone, appears from the *Treasury Letter Book of 1685*.

Macaulay, History. III.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

adulation. Finding that, if he continued to call himself a Protestant, his services would be overlooked, he declared himself a Papist. The King's parsimony instantly relaxed. Dryden was gratified with a pension of a hundred pounds a year, and was employed to defend his new religion both in prose and verse.

Two eminent men, Samuel Johnson and Walter Scott, have done their best to persuade themselves and others that this memorable conversion was sincere. It was natural that they should be desirous to remove a disgraceful stain from the memory of one whose genius they justly admired, and with whose political feelings they strongly sympathized; but the impartial historian must with regret pronounce a very different judgment. There will always be a strong presumption against the sincerity of a conversion by which the convert is directly a gainer. In the case of Dryden there is nothing to countervail this presumption. His theological writings abundantly prove that he had never sought with diligence and anxiety to learn the truth, and that his knowledge both of the Church which he quitted and of the Church which he entered was of the most superficial kind. Nor was his subsequent conduct that of a man whom a strong sense of duty had constrained to take a step of awful importance. Had he been such a man, the same conviction which had led him to join the Church of Rome would surely have prevented him from violating grossly and habitually rules which that Church, in common with every other Christian society, recognises as binding. There would have been a marked distinction between his earlier and his later compositions, He would have looked back with remorse on a literary life of near thirty years, during which his rare powers of diction and versification had been systematically employed in spreading moral corruption. Not a line tending to make virtue contemptible, or to inflame licentious desire, would thenceforward have proceeded from his pen. The truth unhappily is that the dramas which he wrote after his pretended conversion are in no respect less impure or profane than those of his youth. Even when he professed to translate he constantly wandered from his originals in search of images

which, if he had found them in his originals, he ought to have shunned. What was bad became worse in his versions. What was innocent contracted a taint from passing through his mind. He made the grossest satires of Juvenal more gross, interpolated loose descriptions in the tales of Boccaccio, and polluted the sweet and limpid poetry of the Georgics with filth which would have moved the loathing of Virgil.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

The help of Dryden was welcome to those Roman Catholic divines who were painfully sustaining a conflict against all that was most illustrious in the Established Church. They could not disguise from themselves the fact that their style, disfigured with foreign idioms which had been picked up at Rome and Douay, appeared to little advantage when compared with the eloquence of Tillotson and Sherlock. It seemed that it was no light thing to have secured the cooperation of the greatest living master of the English language. The first service which he was required to perform in return for his pension was to defend his Church in prose against Stillingfleet. But the art of saying things well is useless to a man who has nothing to say; and this was Dryden's case. He soon found himself unequally paired with an antagonist whose whole life had been one long training for controversy. The veteran gladiator disarmed the novice, inflicted a few contemptuous scratches, and turned away to encounter more formidable combatants. Dryden then betook himself to a weapon at The Hind which he was not likely to find his match. He retired for a and Panther. time from the bustle of coffee-houses and theatres to a quiet retreat in Huntingdonshire, and there composed, with unwonted care and labour, his celebrated poem on the points in dispute between the Churches of Rome and England. The Church of Rome he represented under the similitude of a milk-white hind, ever in peril of death, yet fated not to die. The beasts of the field were bent on her destruction. The quaking hare, indeed, observed a timorous neutrality: but the Socinian fox, the Presbyterian wolf, the Independent bear, the Anabaptist boar, glared fiercely at the spotless creature. Yet she could venture to drink with them at the common watering place under the protection of her friend,

CHAP. VII.
1657. the kingly lion. The Church of England was typified by the panther, spotted indeed, but beautiful, too beautiful for a beast of prey. The hind and the panther, equally hated by the ferocious population of the forest, conferred apart on their common danger. They then proceeded to discuss the points on which they differed, and, while wagging their tails and licking their jaws, hold a long dialogue touching the real presence, the authority of Popes and Councils, the penal laws, the Test Act, Oates's perjuries, Butler's unrequited services to the Cavalier party, Stillingfleet's pamphlets, and Burnet's broad shoulders and fortunate matrimonial speculations.

The absurdity of this plan is obvious. In truth the allegory could not be preserved unbroken through ten lines together. No art of execution could redeem the faults of such a design. Yet the Fable of the Hind and Panther is undoubtedly the most valuable addition which was made to English literature during the short and troubled reign of James the Second. In none of Dryden's works can be found passages more pathetic and magnificent, greater ductility and energy of language, or a more pleasing and various music.

The poem appeared with every advantage which royal patronage could give. A superb edition was printed for Scotland at the Roman Catholic press established in Holyrood House. But men were in no humour to be charmed by the transparent style and melodious numbers of the apostate. The disgust excited by his venality, the alarm excited by the policy of which he was the eulogist, were not to be sung to sleep. The just indignation of the public was inflamed by many who were smarting from his ridicule, and by many who were envious of his renown. In spite of all the restraints under which the press lay, attacks on his life and writings appeared daily. Sometimes he was Bayes, sometimes Poet Squab. He was reminded that in his youth he had paid to the House of Cromwell the same servile court which he was now paying to the House of Stuart. One set of his assailants maliciously reprinted the sarcastic verses which he had written against Popery in days when he could have got nothing by being a Papist. Of the many satirical pieces which appeared on this occasion, the

most successful was the joint work of two young men who had lately completed their studies at Cambridge, and had been welcomed as promising novices in the literary coffee-houses of London, Charles Montague and Matthew Prior. Montague was of noble descent; the origin of Prior was so obscure that no biographer has been able to trace it: but both the adventurers were poor and aspiring; both had keen and vigorous minds; both afterwards climbed high; both united in a remarkable degree the love of letters with skill in those departments of business for which men of letters generally have a strong distaste. Of the fifty poets whose lives Johnson has written, Montague and Prior were the only two who were distinguished by an intimate knowledge of trade and finance. Soon their paths diverged widely. Their early friendship was dissolved. One of them became the chief of the Whig party, and was impeached by the Tories. The other was entrusted with all the mysteries of Tory diplomacy, and was long kept close prisoner by the Whigs. At length, after many eventful years, the associates, so long parted, were reunited in Westminster Abbey.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

Whoever has read the tale of the Hind and Panther with attention must have perceived that, while that work was in progress, a great alteration took place in the views of those who used Dryden as their interpreter. At first the Church of England is mentioned with tenderness and respect, and is exhorted to ally herself with the Roman Catholics against the Puritan sects: but at the close of the poem, and in the preface, which was written after the poem had been finished, the Protestant Dissenters are invited to make common cause with the Roman Catholics against the Church of England.

Change in
the policy
of the
court to-
wards the
Puritans.

This change in the language of the court poet was indicative of a great change in the policy of the court. The original purpose of James had been to obtain for the Church of which he was a member, not only complete immunity from all penalties and from all civil disabilities, but also an ample share of ecclesiastical and academical endowments, and at the same time to enforce with rigour the laws against the Puritan sects. All the special dispensations which he had granted had been

CHAP. VII.
1687.

granted to Roman Catholics. All the laws which bore hardest on the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, had been for a time severely executed by him. While Hales commanded a regiment, while Powis sate at the Council board, while Massey held a deanery, while breviaries and mass books were printed at Oxford under a royal license, while the host was publicly exposed in London under the protection of the pikes and muskets of the foot-guards, while friars and monks walked the streets of London in their robes, Baxter was in gaol; Howe was in exile; the Five Mile Act and the Conventicle Act were in full vigour; Puritan writers were compelled to resort to foreign or to secret presses; Puritan congregations could meet only by night or in waste places, and Puritan ministers were forced to preach in the garb of colliers or of sailors. In Scotland the King, while he spared no exertion to extort from the Estates full relief for Roman Catholics, had demanded and obtained new statutes of unprecedented severity against the Presbyterians. His conduct to the exiled Huguenots had not less clearly indicated his feelings. We have seen that, when the public munificence had placed in his hands a large sum for the relief of those unhappy men, he, in violation of every law of hospitality and good faith, required them to renounce the Calvinistic ritual to which they were strongly attached, and to conform to the Church of England, before he would dole out to them any portion of the alms which had been entrusted to his care.

Such had been his policy as long as he could cherish any hope that the Church of England would consent to share ascendancy with the Church of Rome. That hope at one time amounted to confidence. The enthusiasm with which the Tories had hailed his accession, the elections, the dutiful language and ample grants of his Parliament, the suppression of the Western insurrection, the complete prostration of the party which had attempted to exclude him from the crown, elated him beyond the bounds of reason. He felt an assurance that every obstacle would give way before his power and his resolution. His Parliament withstood him. He tried the effects of frowns and menaces. Frowns and menaces failed. He tried

the effect of prorogation. From the day of the prorogation the opposition to his designs had been growing stronger and stronger. It seemed clear that, if he effected his purpose, he must effect it in defiance of that great party which had given such signal proofs of fidelity to his office, to his family, and to his person. The whole Anglican priesthood, the whole Cavalier gentry, were against him. In vain had he, by virtue of his ecclesiastical supremacy, enjoined the clergy to abstain from discussing controverted points. Every parish in the nation was warned every Sunday against the errors of Rome; and these warnings were only the more effective, because they were accompanied by professions of reverence for the Sovereign, and of a determination to endure with patience whatever it might be his pleasure to inflict. The royalist knights and esquires who, through forty-five years of war and faction, had stood so manfully by the throne, now expressed in no measured phrase, their resolution to stand as manfully by the Church. Dull as was the intellect of James, despotic as was his temper, he felt that he must change his course. He could not safely venture to outrage all his Protestant subjects at once. If he could bring himself to make concessions to the party which predominated in both Houses, if he could bring himself to leave to the established religion all its dignities, emoluments, and privileges unimpaired, he might still break up Presbyterian meetings, and fill the gaols with Baptist preachers. But if he was determined to plunder the hierarchy, he must make up his mind to forego the luxury of persecuting the Dissenters. If he was henceforward to be at feud with his old friends, he must take a truce with his old enemies. He could overpower the Anglican Church only by forming against her an extensive coalition, including sects which, though they differed in doctrine and government far more widely from each other than from her, might yet be induced, by their common jealousy of her greatness, and by their common dread of her intolerance, to suspend their animosities till she was no longer able to oppress them.

This plan seemed to him to have one strong recommendation. If he could only succeed in conciliating the Protestant

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

CHAP. VII. 1687. Nonconformists he might flatter himself that he was secure against all chance of rebellion. According to the Anglican divines, no subject could by any provocation be justified in withstanding the Lord's anointed by force. The theory of the Puritan sectaries was very different. Those sectaries had no scruple about smiting tyrants with the sword of Gideon. Many of them did not shrink from using the dagger of Ehud. They were probably even now meditating another Western insurrection, or another Rye House Plot. James, therefore, conceived that he might safely persecute the Church if he could only gain the Dissenters. The party whose principles afforded him no guarantee would be attached to him by interest. The party whose interests he attacked would be restrained from insurrection by principle.

Influenced by such considerations as these, James, from the time at which he parted in anger with his Parliament, began to meditate a general league of all Nonconformists, Catholic and Protestant, against the established religion. So early as Christmas 1685, the agents of the United Provinces informed the States General that the plan of a general toleration had been arranged and would soon be disclosed.* The reports which had reached the Dutch embassy proved to be premature. The separatists appear, however, to have been treated with more lenity during the year 1686 than during the year 1685. But it was only by slow degrees and after many struggles that the King could prevail on himself to form an alliance with all that he most abhorred. He had to overcome an animosity, not slight or capricious, not of recent origin or hasty growth, but hereditary in his line, strengthened by great wrongs inflicted and suffered through a hundred and twenty eventful years, and intertwined with all his feelings, religious, political, domestic, and personal. Four generations of Stuarts had waged a war to the death with four generations of Puritans; and, through that long war, there had been no Stuart who had hated the Puritans so much, or who had been so much hated by them, as himself. They had

* Lecuwen, Dec. 25.
Jan. 4. 1688.

tried to blast his honour and to exclude him from his birth-right; they had called him incendiary, cut-throat, poisoner; they had driven him from the Admiralty and the Privy Council; they had repeatedly chased him into banishment; they had plotted his assassination; they had risen against him in arms by thousands. He had avenged himself on them by havoc such as England had never before seen. Their heads and quarters were still rotting on poles in all the market places of Somersetshire and Dorsetshire. Aged women held in high honour among the sectaries for piety and charity had, for offences which no good prince would have thought deserving even of a severe reprimand, been beheaded and burned alive. Such had been, even in England, the relations between the King and the Puritans; and in Scotland the tyranny of the King and the fury of the Puritans had been such as Englishmen could hardly conceive. To forget an enmity so long and so deadly was no light task for a nature singularly harsh and implacable.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

The conflict in the royal mind did not escape the eye of Barillon. At the end of January, 1687, he sent a remarkable letter to Versailles. The King, — such was the substance of this document, — had almost convinced himself that he could not obtain entire liberty for Roman Catholics and yet maintain the laws against Protestant Dissenters. He leaned, therefore, to the plan of a general indulgence; but at heart he would be far better pleased if he could, even now, divide his protection and favour between the Church of Rome and the Church of England, to the exclusion of all other religious persuasions.*

A very few days after this despatch had been written, James made his first hesitating and ungracious advances towards the Puritans. He had determined to begin with Scotland, where his power to dispense with acts of parliament had been admitted by the obsequious Estates. On the twelfth

Partial
toleration
granted in
Scotland.

* Barillon, Jan. 31. 1687. "Je crois que, dans le fond, si on ne pouvoit laisser que la religion Anglicane et la Catholique établies par les loix, le Roy d'Angleterre en seroit bien plus content."

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

of February, accordingly, was published at Edinburgh a proclamation granting relief to scrupulous consciences.* This proclamation fully proves the correctness of Barillon's judgment. Even in the very act of making concessions to the Presbyterians, James could not conceal the loathing with which he regarded them. The toleration given to the Catholics was complete. The Quakers had little reason to complain. But the indulgence vouchsafed to the Presbyterians, who constituted the great body of the Scottish people, was clogged by conditions which made it almost worthless. For the old test, which excluded Catholics and Presbyterians alike from office, was substituted a new test, which admitted the Catholics, but excluded most of the Presbyterians. The Catholics were allowed to build chapels, and even to carry the host in procession anywhere except in the high streets of royal burghs: the Quakers were suffered to assemble in public edifices: but the Presbyterians were interdicted from worshipping God anywhere but in private dwellings: they were not to presume to build meeting houses: they were not even to use a barn or an outhouse for religious exercises: and it was distinctly notified to them that, if they dared to hold conventicles in the open air, the law, which denounced death against both preachers and hearers, should be enforced without mercy. Any Catholic priest might say mass: any Quaker might harangue his brethren: but the Privy Council was directed to see that no Presbyterian minister presumed to preach without a special license from the government. Every line of this instrument, and of the letters by which it was accompanied, shows how much it cost the King to relax in the smallest degree the rigour with which he had ever treated the old enemies of his house.**

There is reason, indeed, to believe that, when he published this proclamation, he had by no means fully made up his mind to a coalition with the Puritans, and that his object was to grant just so much favour to them as might suffice to frighten the Churchmen into submission. He therefore

* It will be found in Wodrow, Appendix, vol. ii. No. 129.

** Wodrow, Appendix, vol. ii. Nos. 128, 129, 132.

waited a month, in order to see what effect the edict put forth at Edinburgh would produce in England. That month he employed assiduously, by Petre's advice, in what was called closeting. London was very full. It was expected that the Parliament would shortly meet for the dispatch of business; and many members were in town. The King set himself to canvass them man by man. He flattered himself that zealous Tories, — and of such, with few exceptions, the House of Commons consisted, — would find it difficult to resist his earnest request, addressed to them, not collectively, but separately, not from the throne, but in the familiarity of conversation. The members, therefore, who came to pay their duty at Whitehall were taken aside, and honoured with long private interviews. The King pressed them, as they were loyal gentlemen, to gratify him in the one thing on which his heart was fixed. The question, he said, touched his personal honour. The laws enacted in the late reign by factious Parliaments against the Roman Catholics had really been aimed at himself. Those laws had put a stigma on him, had driven him from the Admiralty, had driven him from the Council Board. He had a right to expect that in the repeal of those laws all who loved and revered him would concur. When he found his hearers obdurate to exhortation, he resorted to intimidation and corruption. Those who refused to pleasure him in this matter were plainly told that they must not expect any mark of his favour. Penurious as he was, he opened and distributed his hoards. Several of those who had been invited to confer with him left his bed-chamber carrying with them money received from the royal hand. The Judges, who were at this time on their spring circuits, were directed by the King to see those members who remained in the country, and to ascertain the intentions of each. The result of this investigation was, that a great majority of the House of Commons seemed fully determined to oppose the measures of the court.* Among those whose firmness excited general ad-

CHAP.
VII.
—
1687.

Closeting.

It is un-
successful.

* Barillon, Feb. 28. 1685; Citters, Feb. 13.; Resesby's Memoirs; Bonrepaux, May 25. 1687.
June 1.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.
Admiral
Herbert.

miration was Arthur Herbert, brother of the Chief Justice, member for Dover, Master of the Robes, and Rear Admiral of England. Arthur Herbert was much loved by the sailors, and was reputed one of the best of the aristocratical class of naval officers. It had been generally supposed that he would readily comply with the royal wishes: for he was heedless of religion; he was fond of pleasure and expense; he had no private estate; his places brought him in four thousand pounds a year; and he had long been reckoned among the most devoted personal adherents of James. When, however, the Rear Admiral was closeted, and required to promise that he would vote for the repeal of the Test Act, his answer was, that his honour and conscience would not permit him to give any such pledge. "Nobody doubts your honour," said the King; "but a man who lives as you do ought not to talk about his conscience." To this reproach, a reproach which came with a bad grace from the lover of Catharine Sedley, Herbert manfully replied, "I have my faults, Sir: but I could name people who talk much more about conscience than I am in the habit of doing, and yet lead lives as loose as mine." He was dismissed from all his places; and the account of what he had disbursed and received as Master of the Robes was scrutinised with great and, as he complained, with unjust severity.*

It was now evident that all hope of an alliance between the Churches of England and of Rome, for the purpose of sharing offices and emoluments, and of crushing the Puritan sects, must be abandoned. Nothing remained but to try a coalition between the Church of Rome and the Puritan sects against the Church of England.

On the eighteenth of March the King informed the Privy Council that he had determined to prorogue the Parliament till the end of November, and to grant, by his own authority, entire liberty of conscience to all his subjects.** On the fourth of April appeared the memorable Declaration of Indulgence.

Declara-
tion of In-
dulgence.

* Barillon, March 14, 1687; Lady Russell to Dr. Fitzwilliam, April 4.; Burnet, i. 671. 762. The conversation is somewhat differently related in Clarke's Life of James, ii. 204. But that passage is not part of the King's own memoirs.

** London Gazette, March 21, 1685.

In this Declaration the King avowed that it was his earnest wish to see his people members of that Church to which he himself belonged. But, since that could not be, he announced his intention to protect them in the free exercise of their religion. He repeated all those phrases which, eight years before, when he was himself an oppressed man, had been familiar to his lips, but which he had ceased to use from the day on which a turn of fortune had put it into his power to be an oppressor. He had long been convinced, he said, that conscience was not to be forced, that persecution was unfavourable to population and to trade, and that it never attained the ends which persecutors had in view. He repeated his promise, already often repeated and often violated, that he would protect the Established Church in the enjoyment of her legal rights. He then proceeded to annul, by his own sole authority, a long series of statutes. He suspended all penal laws against all classes of Nonconformists. He authorised both Roman Catholics and Protestant Dissenters to perform their worship publicly. He forbade his subjects, on pain of his highest displeasure, to molest any religious assembly. He also abrogated all those acts which imposed any religious test as a qualification for any civil or military office.*

That the Declaration of Indulgence was unconstitutional is a point on which both the great English parties have always been entirely agreed. Every person capable of reasoning on a political question must perceive that a monarch who is competent to issue such a declaration is nothing less than an absolute monarch. Nor is it possible to urge in defence of this act of James those pleas by which many arbitrary acts of the Stuarts have been vindicated or excused. It cannot be said that he mistook the bounds of his prerogative because they had not been accurately ascertained. For the truth is that he trespassed with a recent landmark full in his view. Fifteen years before that time, a Declaration of Indulgence had been put forth by his brother with the advice of the Cabal. That Declaration, when compared with the Declaration of James, might be called modest and cautious. The Declaration of

* London Gazette, April 7, 1687.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

Charles dispensed only with penal laws. The Declaration of James dispensed also with all religious tests. The Declaration of Charles permitted the Roman Catholics to celebrate their worship in private dwellings only. Under the Declaration of James they might build and decorate temples, and even walk in procession along Fleet Street with crosses, images, and censers. Yet the Declaration of Charles had been pronounced illegal in the most formal manner. The Commons had resolved that the King had no power to dispense with statutes in matters ecclesiastical. Charles had ordered the obnoxious instrument to be cancelled in his presence, had torn off the seal with his own hand, and had, both by message under his sign manual, and with his own lips from his throne in full Parliament, distinctly promised the two Houses that the step which had given so much offence should never be drawn into precedent. The two Houses had then, without one dissentient voice, joined in thanking him for this compliance with their wishes. No constitutional question had ever been decided more deliberately, more clearly, or with more harmonious consent.

The defenders of James have frequently pleaded in his excuse the judgment of the Court of King's Bench, on the information collusively laid against Sir Edward Hales: but the plea is of no value. That judgment James had notoriously obtained by solicitation, by threats, by dismissing scrupulous magistrates, and by placing on the bench other magistrates more courtly. And yet that judgment, though generally regarded by the bar and by the nation as unconstitutional, went only to this extent, that the Sovereign might, for special reasons of state, grant to individuals by name exemptions from disabling statutes. That he could by one sweeping edict authorise all his subjects to disobey whole volumes of laws, no tribunal had ventured, in the face of the solemn parliamentary decision of 1673, to affirm.

Feeling
of the
Protes-
tant Dis-
senters.

Such, however, was the position of parties that James's Declaration of Indulgence, though the most audacious of all the attacks made by the Stuarts on public freedom, was well calculated to please that very portion of the community by

which all the other attacks of the Stuarts on public freedom had been most strenuously resisted. It could scarcely be hoped that the Protestant Nonconformist, separated from his countrymen by a harsh code harshly enforced, would be inclined to dispute the validity of a decree which relieved him from intolerable grievances. A cool and philosophical observer would undoubtedly have pronounced that all the evil arising from all the intolerant laws which Parliaments had framed was not to be compared to the evil which would be produced by a transfer of the legislative power from the Parliament to the Sovereign. But such coolness and philosophy are not to be expected from men who are smarting under present pain, and who are tempted by the offer of immediate ease. A Puritan divine could not indeed deny that the dispensing power now claimed by the crown was inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the constitution. But he might perhaps be excused if he asked, What was the constitution to him? The Act of Uniformity had ejected him, in spite of royal promises, from a benefice which was his freehold, and had reduced him to beggary and dependence. The Five Mile Act had banished him from his dwelling, from his relations, from his friends, from almost all places of public resort. Under the Conventicle Act his goods had been distrained; and he had been flung into one noisome gaol after another among highwaymen and housebreakers. Out of prison he had constantly had the officers of justice on his track; he had been forced to pay hush-money to informers; he had stolen, in ignominious disguises, through windows and trap-doors, to meet his flock, and had, while pouring the baptismal water, or distributing the eucharistic bread, been anxiously listening for the signal that the tipstaves were approaching. Was it not mockery to call on a man thus plundered and oppressed to suffer martyrdom for the property and liberty of his plunderers and oppressors? The Declaration, despotic as it might seem to his prosperous neighbours, brought deliverance to him. He was called upon to make his choice, not between freedom and slavery, but between two

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

Feeling
of the
Church
of Eng-
land.

yokes; and he might not unnaturally think the yoke of the King lighter than that of the Church.

While thoughts like these were working in the minds of many Dissenters, the Anglican party was in amazement and terror. This new turn in affairs was indeed alarming. The House of Stuart leagued with republican and regicide sects against the old Cavaliers of England; Popery leagued with Puritanism against an ecclesiastical system with which the Puritans had no quarrel, except that it had retained too much that was Popish; these were portents which confounded all the calculations of statesmen. The Church was then to be attacked at once on every side; and the attack was to be under the direction of him who, by her constitution, was her head. She might well be struck with surprise and dismay. And mingled with surprise and dismay came other bitter feelings; resentment against the perjured Prince whom she had served too well, and remorse for the cruelties in which he had been her accomplice, and for which he was now, as it seemed, about to be her punisher. Her chastisement was just. She reaped that which she had sown. After the Restoration, when her power was at the height, she had breathed nothing but vengeance. She had encouraged, urged, almost compelled the Stuarts to requite with perfidious ingratitude the recent services of the Presbyterians. Had she, in that season of her prosperity, pleaded, as became her, for her enemies, she might now, in her distress, have found them her friends. Perhaps it was not yet too late. Perhaps she might still be able to turn the tactics of her faithless oppressor against himself. There was among the Anglican clergy a moderate party which had always felt kindly towards the Protestant Dissenters. That party was not large; but the abilities, acquirements, and virtues of those who belonged to it made it respectable. It had been regarded with little favour by the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries, and had been mercilessly reviled by bigots of the school of Laud: but, from the day on which the Declaration of Indulgence appeared to the day on which the power of James ceased to inspire

terror, the whole Church seemed to be animated by the spirit, and guided by the counsels, of the calumniated Latitudinarians.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

Then followed an auction, the strangest that history has recorded. On one side the King, on the other the Church, began to bid eagerly against each other for the favour of those whom up to that time King and Church had combined to oppress. The Protestant Dissenters, who, a few months before, had been a despised and proscribed class, now held the balance of power. The harshness with which they had been treated was universally condemned. The court tried to throw all the blame on the hierarchy. The hierarchy flung it back on the court. The King declared that he had unwillingly persecuted the separatists only because his affairs had been in such a state that he could not venture to disoblige the established clergy. The established clergy protested that they had borne a part in severity uncongenial to their feelings only from deference to the authority of the King. The King got together a collection of stories about rectors and vicars who had by threats of prosecution wrung money out of Protestant Dissenters. He talked on this subject much and publicly, threatened to institute an inquiry which would exhibit the parsons in their true character to the whole world, and actually issued several commissions empowering agents on whom he thought that he could depend to ascertain the amount of the sums extorted in different parts of the country by professors of the dominant religion from sectaries. The advocates of the Church, on the other hand, cited instances of honest parish priests who had been reprimanded and menaced by the court for recommending toleration in the pulpit, and for refusing to spy out and hunt down little congregations of Nonconformists. The King asserted that some of the Churchmen whom he had closeted had offered to make large concessions to the Catholics, on condition that the persecution of the Puritans might go on. The accused Churchmen vehemently denied the truth of this charge; and alleged that, if they would have complied with what he demanded for his own religion, he would most

The Court
and the
Church.

CHAP.
vii.
1687.

gladly have suffered them to indemnify themselves by harassing and pillaging Protestant Dissenters.*

The court had changed its face. The scarf and cassock could hardly appear there without calling forth sneers and malicious whispers. Maids of honour forbore to giggle, and Lords of the Bedchamber bowed low, when the Puritanical visage and the Puritanical garb, so long the favourite subjects of mockery in fashionable circles, were seen in the galleries. Taunton, which had been during two generations the stronghold of the Roundhead party in the West, which had twice resolutely repelled the armies of Charles the First, which had risen as one man to support Monmouth, and which had been turned into a shambles by Kirke and Jeffreys, seemed to have suddenly succeeded to the place which Oxford had once occupied in the royal favour.** The King constrained himself to show even fawning courtesy to eminent Dissenters. To some he offered money, to some municipal honours, to some pardons for their relations and friends who, having been implicated in the Rye House Plot, or having joined the standard of Monmouth, were now wandering on the Continent, or toiling among the sugar canes of Barbadoes. He affected even to sympathize with the kindness which the English Puritans felt for their foreign brethren. A second and a third proclamation were published at Edinburgh, which greatly extended the nugatory toleration granted to the Presbyterians by the edict of February.*** The banished Huguenots, on whom the King had frowned during many months, and whom he had defrauded of the alms contributed by the nation, were now relieved and caressed. An Order in Council was issued, appealing again in their behalf to the public

* Warrant Book of the Treasury. See particularly the instructions dated March 8. 1687; Burnet, i. 715.; Reflections on his Majesty's Proclamation for a Toleration in Scotland; Letters containing some Reflections on his Majesty's Declaration for Liberty of Conscience; Apology for the Church of England with relation to the spirit of Persecution for which she is accused, 1687. But it is impossible for me to cite all the pamphlets from which I have formed my notion of the state of parties at this time.

** Letter to a Dissenter.

*** Wodrow, Appendix, vol. ii. Nos. 132. 134.

liberality. The rule which required them to qualify themselves for the receipt of charity, by conforming to the Anglican worship, seems to have been at this time silently abrogated; and the defenders of the King's policy had the effrontery to affirm that this rule, which, as we know from the best evidence, was really devised by himself in concert with Barillon, had been adopted at the instance of the prelates of the Established Church.*

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

While the King was thus courting his old adversaries, the friends of the Church were not less active. Of the acrimony and scorn with which prelates and priests had, since the Restoration, been in the habit of treating the sectaries scarcely a trace was discernible. Those who had lately been designated as schismatics and fanatics were now dear fellow Protestants, weak brethren it might be, but still brethren, whose scruples were entitled to tender regard. If they would but be true at this crisis to the cause of the English constitution and of the reformed religion, their generosity should be speedily and largely rewarded. They should have, instead of an indulgence which was of no legal validity, a real indulgence, secured by Act of Parliament. Nay, many Churchmen, who had hitherto been distinguished by their inflexible attachment to every gesture and every word prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, now declared themselves favourable, not only to toleration, but even to comprehension. The dispute, they said, about surplices and attitudes, had too long divided those who were agreed as to the essentials of religion. When the struggle for life and death against the common enemy was over, it would be found that the Anglican clergy would be ready to make every fair concession. If the Dissenters would demand only what was reasonable, not only civil but ecclesiastical dignities would be open to them; and Baxter and Howe would be able, without any stain on their honour or their conscience, to sit on the episcopal bench.

* London Gazette, April 24. 1687; Animadversions on a late paper entitled A Letter to a Dissenter, by H. C. (Henry Care), 1687.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.
Letter to
a Dis-
senter.

Of the numerous pamphlets in which the cause of the Court and the cause of the Church were at this time eagerly and anxiously pleaded before the Puritan, now, by a strange turn of fortune, the arbiter of the fate of his persecutors, one only is still remembered, the Letter to a Dissenter. In this masterly little tract, all the arguments which could convince a Nonconformist that it was his duty and his interest to prefer an alliance with the Church to an alliance with the Court, were condensed into the smallest compass, arranged in the most perspicuous order, illustrated with lively wit, and enforced by an eloquence earnest indeed, yet never in its utmost vehemence transgressing the limits of exact good sense and good breeding. The effect of this paper was immense; for, as it was only a single sheet, more than twenty thousand copies were circulated by the post; and there was no corner of the kingdom in which the effect was not felt. Twenty-four answers were published, but the town pronounced that they were all bad, and that Lestrangle's was the worst of the twenty-four.* The government was greatly irritated, and spared no pains to discover the author of the Letter: but it was found impossible to procure legal evidence against him. Some imagined that they recognised the sentiments and diction of Temple.** But in truth that amplitude and acuteness of intellect, that vivacity of fancy, that terse and energetic style, that placid dignity, half courtly half philosophical, which the utmost excitement of conflict could not for a moment derange, belonged to Halifax, and to Halifax alone.

Conduct
of the
Dissen-
ters.

The Dissenters wavered; nor is it any reproach to them that they did so. They were suffering, and the King had given them relief. Some eminent pastors had emerged from confinement; others had ventured to return from exile. Congregations, which had hitherto met only by stealth and in darkness, now assembled at noonday, and sang psalms aloud

* Lestrangle's Answer to a Letter to a Dissenter; Care's Animadversions on A Letter to a Dissenter; Dialogue between Harry and Roger; that is to say, Harry Care and Roger Lestrangle.

** The Letter was signed T. W. Care says, in his Animadversions, "This Sir Politic T. W., or W. T.; for some critics think that the truer reading."

in the hearing of magistrates, churchwardens, and constables. Modest buildings for the worship of God after the Puritan fashion began to rise all over England. An observant traveller will still remark the date of 1687 on some of the oldest meeting houses. Nevertheless the offers of the Church were, to a prudent Dissenter, far more attractive than those of the King. The Declaration was, in the eye of the law, a nullity. It suspended the penal statutes against nonconformity only for so long a time as the fundamental principles of the constitution and the rightful authority of the legislature should remain suspended. What was the value of privileges which must be held by a tenure at once so ignominious and so insecure? There might soon be a demise of the crown. A sovereign attached to the established religion might sit on the throne. A Parliament composed of Churchmen might be assembled. How deplorable would then be the situation of Dissenters who had been in league with Jesuits against the constitution! The Church offered an indulgence very different from that granted by James, an indulgence as valid and as sacred as the Great Charter. Both the contending parties promised religious liberty to the separatist: but one party required him to purchase it by sacrificing civil liberty; the other party invited him to enjoy civil and religious liberty together.

For these reasons, even if it could be believed that the Court was sincere, a Dissenter might reasonably have determined to cast in his lot with the Church. But what guarantee was there for the sincerity of the Court? All men knew what the conduct of James had been up to that very time. It was not impossible, indeed, that a persecutor might be convinced by argument and by experience of the advantages of toleration. But James did not pretend to have been recently convinced. On the contrary, he omitted no opportunity of protesting that he had, during many years, been, on principle, adverse to all intolerance. Yet, within a few months, he had persecuted men, women, young girls, to the death for their religion. Had he been acting against light and against the convictions of his conscience then? Or was he uttering a deliberate falsehood now? From this dilemma there was no

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

escape; and either of the two suppositions was fatal to the King's character for honesty. It was notorious also that he had been completely subjugated by the Jesuits. Only a few days before the publication of the Indulgence, that Order had been honoured, in spite of the well known wishes of the Holy See, with a new mark of his confidence and approbation. His confessor, Father Mansuete, a Franciscan, whose mild temper and irreproachable life commanded general respect, but who had long been hated by Tyrconnel and Petre, had been discarded. The vacant place had been filled by an Englishman named Warner, who had apostatized from the religion of his country and had turned Jesuit. To the moderate Roman Catholics and to the Nuncio this change was far from agreeable. By every Protestant it was regarded as a proof that the dominion of the Jesuits over the royal mind was absolute.* Whatever praises those fathers might justly claim, flattery itself could not ascribe to them either wide liberality or strict veracity. That they had never scrupled, when the interest of their faith or of their Order was at stake, to call in the aid of the civil sword, or to violate the laws of truth and of good faith, had been proclaimed to the world, not only by Protestant accusers, but by men whose virtue and genius were the glory of the Church of Rome. It was incredible that a devoted disciple of the Jesuits should be on principle zealous for freedom of conscience: but it was neither incredible nor improbable that he might think himself justified in disguising his real sentiments, in order to render a service to his religion. It was certain that the King at heart preferred the Churchmen to the Puritans. It was certain that, while he had any hope of gaining the Churchmen, he had never shown the smallest kindness to the Puritans. Could it then be doubted that, if the Churchmen would even now comply with his wishes, he would willingly sacrifice the Puritans? His word, repeatedly pledged, had not restrained him from

* Ellis Correspondence, March 15. July 27. 1686; Barillon, ^{Feb. 28.} _{Mar. 10.} March $\frac{1}{2}$, March $\frac{1}{6}$. 1687; Ronquillo, March $\frac{1}{5}$. 1687, in the Mackintosh Collection.

invading the legal rights of that clergy which had given such signal proofs of affection and fidelity to his house. What security then could his word afford to sects divided from him by the recollection of a thousand inexpressible wounds inflicted and endured?

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

When the first agitation produced by the publication of the Indulgence had subsided, it appeared that a breach had taken place in the Puritan party. The minority, headed by a few busy men whose judgment was defective or was biased by interest, supported the King. Henry Care, who had long been the bitterest and most active pamphleteer among the Nonconformists, and who had, in the days of the Popish plot, assailed James with the utmost fury in a weekly journal entitled the *Packet of Advice from Rome*, was now as loud in adulation, as he had formerly been in calumny and insult.* The chief agent who was employed by the government to manage the Presbyterians was Vincent Alsop, a divine of some note both as a preacher and as a writer. His son, who had incurred the penalties of treason, received a pardon; and the whole influence of the father was thus engaged on the side of the Court.** With Alsop was joined Thomas Rosewell. Rosewell had, during that persecution of the Dissenters which followed the detection of the Rye House Plot, been falsely accused of preaching against the government, had been tried for his life by Jeffreys, and had, in defiance of the clearest evidence, been convicted by a packed jury. The injustice of the verdict was so gross that the very courtiers cried shame. One Tory gentleman who had heard the trial went instantly to Charles, and declared that the neck of the most loyal subject in England would not be safe if Rosewell suffered. The jury-men themselves were stung by remorse when they thought over what they had done, and exerted themselves to save the life of the prisoner. At length a pardon was granted; but

Some of
them side
with the
Court.

Care.

Alsop.

Rosewell.

* Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses*; *Observer*; *Heraclitus Ridens*, *passim*. But Care's own writings furnish the best materials for an estimate of his character.

** Galamy's *Account of the Ministers ejected or silenced after the Restoration*, Northamptonshire; Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses*; *Biographia Britannica*.

CHAP. VII.
1687. Rosewell remained bound under heavy recognisances to good behaviour during life, and to periodical appearance in the Court of King's Bench. His recognisances were now discharged by the royal command; and in this way his services were secured.*

Lobb. The business of gaining the Independents was principally intrusted to one of their ministers named Stephen Lobb. Lobb was a weak, violent, and ambitious man. He had gone such lengths in opposition to the government, that he had been by name proscribed in several proclamations. He now made his peace, and went as far in servility as he had ever done in faction. He joined the Jesuitical cabal, and eagerly recommended measures from which the wisest and most honest Roman Catholics recoiled. It was remarked that he was constantly at the palace and frequently in the closet, that he lived with a splendour to which the Puritan divines were little accustomed, and that he was perpetually surrounded by suitors imploring his interest to procure them offices or pardons.**

Penn. With Lobb was closely connected William Penn. Penn had never been a strong-headed man: the life which he had been leading during two years had not a little impaired his moral sensibility; and, if his conscience ever reproached him, he comforted himself by repeating that he had a good and noble end in view, and that he was not paid for his services in money.

By the influence of these men, and of others less conspicuous, addresses of thanks to the King were procured from several bodies of Dissenters. Tory writers have with justice remarked that the language of these compositions was as fulsomely servile as anything that could be found in the most florid eulogies pronounced by Bishops on the Stuarts. But, on close inquiry, it will appear that the disgrace belongs to but a small part of the Puritan party. There was scarcely

* State Trials; Samuel Rosewell's Life of Thomas Rosewell, 1748; Calamy's Account.

** London Gazette, March 15. 1687; Nichols's Defence of the Church of England; Pierce's Vindication of the Dissenters.

a market town in England without at least a knot of separatists. No exertion was spared to induce them to express their gratitude for the Indulgence. Circular letters, imploring them to sign, were sent to every corner of the kingdom in such numbers that the mail bags, it was sportively said, were too heavy for the post-horses. Yet all the addresses which could be obtained from all the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists scattered over England did not in six months amount to sixty; nor is there any reason to believe that these addresses were numerously signed.*

CHAP.
VII.
—
1687.

The great body of Protestant Nonconformists, firmly attached to civil liberty, and distrusting the promises of the King and of the Jesuits, steadily refused to return thanks for a favour which, it might well be suspected, concealed a snare. This was the temper of all the most illustrious chiefs of the party. One of these was Baxter. He had, as we have seen, been brought to trial soon after the accession of James, had been brutally insulted by Jeffreys, and had been convicted by a jury, such as the courtly Sheriffs of those times were in the habit of selecting. Baxter had been about a year and a half in prison when the court began to think seriously of gaining the Nonconformists. He was not only set at liberty, but was informed that, if he chose to reside in London, he might do so without fearing that the Five Mile Act would be enforced against him. The government probably hoped that the recollection of past sufferings and the sense of present ease would produce the same effect on him as on Rosewell and Lobb. The hope was disappointed. Baxter was neither to be corrupted nor to be deceived. He refused to join in any address of thanks for the Indulgence, and exerted all his influence to promote good feeling between the Church and the Presbyterians.**

The majority of the Puritans are against the Court.

Baxter.

If any man stood higher than Baxter in the estimation of the Protestant Dissenters, that man was John Howe. Howe had, like Baxter, been personally a gainer by the recent change of policy. The same tyranny which had flung Baxter

Howe.

* The Addresses will be found in the London Gazettes.

** Calamy's Life of Baxter.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

into gaol had driven Howe into banishment; and, soon after Baxter had been let out of the King's Bench prison, Howe returned from Utrecht to England. It was expected at Whitehall that Howe would exert in favour of the Court all the authority which he possessed over his brethren. The King himself condescended to ask the help of the subject whom he had oppressed. Howe appears to have hesitated: but the influence of the Hampdens, with whom he was on terms of close intimacy, kept him steady to the cause of the constitution. A meeting of Presbyterian ministers was held at his house, to consider the state of affairs, and to determine on the course to be adopted. There was great anxiety at the palace to know the result. Two royal messengers were in attendance during the discussion. They carried back the unwelcome news that Howe had declared himself decidedly adverse to the dispensing power, and that he had, after long debate, carried with him the majority of the assembly.*

Bunyan.

To the names of Baxter and Howe must be added the name of a man far below them in station and in acquired knowledge, but in virtue their equal, and in genius their superior, John Bunyan. Bunyan had been bred a tinker, and had served as a private soldier in the parliamentary army. Early in his life he had been fearfully tortured by remorse for his youthful sins, the worst of which seem, however, to have been such as the world thinks venial. His keen sensibility and his powerful imagination made his internal conflicts singularly terrible. He fancied that he was under sentence of reprobation, that he had committed blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, that he had sold Christ, that he was actually possessed by a demon. Sometimes loud voices from heaven cried out to warn him. Sometimes fiends whispered impious suggestions in his ear. He saw visions of distant mountain tops, on which the sun shone brightly, but from which he was separated by a waste of snow. He felt the Devil

* Calamy's Life of Howe. The share which the Hampden family had in the matter I learned from a letter of Johnstone of Waristoun, dated June 13. 1688.

behind him pulling his clothes. He thought that the brand of Cain had been set upon him. He feared that he was about to burst asunder like Judas. His mental agony disordered his health. One day he shook like a man in the palsy. On another day he felt a fire within his breast. It is difficult to understand how he survived sufferings so intense, and so long continued. At length the clouds broke. From the depths of despair, the penitent passed to a state of serene felicity. An irresistible impulse now urged him to impart to others the blessing of which he was himself possessed.* He joined the Baptists, and became a preacher and writer. His education had been that of a mechanic. He knew no language but the English, as it was spoken by the common people. He had studied no great model of composition, with the exception, an important exception undoubtedly, of our noble translation of the Bible. His spelling was bad. He frequently transgressed the rules of grammar. Yet his native force of genius, and his experimental knowledge of all the religious passions, from despair to ecstasy, amply supplied in him the want of learning. His rude oratory roused and melted hearers who listened without interest to the laboured discourses of great logicians and Hebraists. His works were widely circulated among the humbler classes. One of them, the Pilgrim's Progress, was, in his own lifetime, translated into several foreign languages. It was, however, scarcely known to the learned and polite, and had been, during near a century, the delight of pious cottagers and artisans before it was publicly commended by any man of high literary eminence. At length critics condescended to inquire where the secret of so wide and so durable a popularity lay. They were compelled to own that the ignorant multitude had judged more correctly than the learned, and that the despised little book was really a masterpiece. Bunyan is indeed as decidedly the first of allegorists, as Demosthenes is the first of orators, or Shakspeare the first of dramatists. Other allegorists have shown equal ingenuity; but no other alle-

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

* Bunyan's Grace Abounding.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

gorist has ever been able to touch the heart, and to make abstractions objects of terror, of pity, and of love.*

It may be doubted whether any English Dissenter had suffered more severely under the penal laws than John Bunyan. Of the twenty-seven years which had elapsed since the Restoration, he had passed twelve in confinement. He still persisted in preaching; but, that he might preach, he was under the necessity of disguising himself like a carter. He was often introduced into meetings through back doors, with a smock frock on his back, and a whip in his hand. If he had thought only of his own ease and safety, he would have hailed the Indulgence with delight. He was now, at length, free to pray and exhort in open day. His congregation rapidly increased: thousands hung upon his words; and at Bedford, where he ordinarily resided, money was plentifully contributed to build a meeting house for him. His influence among the common people was such that the government would willingly have bestowed on him some municipal office: but his vigorous understanding and his stout English heart were proof against all delusion and all temptation. He felt assured that the proffered toleration was merely a bait intended to lure the Puritan party to destruction; nor would he, by accepting a place for which he was not legally qualified, recognise the validity of the dispensing power. One of the last acts of his virtuous life was to decline an interview to which he was invited by an agent of the government.**

Kiffin.

Great as was the authority of Bunyan with the Baptists, that of William Kiffin was still greater. Kiffin was the first man among them in wealth and station. He was in the habit of exercising his spiritual gifts at their meetings: but he did

* Young classes Bunyan's prose with Durfey's poetry. The people of fashion in the Spiritual Quixote rank the Pilgrim's Progress with Jack the Giantkiller. Late in the eighteenth century Cowper did not venture to do more than allude to the great allegorist:

"I name thee not, lest so despis'd a name
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame."

* The continuation of Bunyan's Life appended to his Grace Abounding.

not live by preaching. He traded largely; his credit on the Exchange of London stood high; and he had accumulated an ample fortune. Perhaps no man could, at that conjuncture, have rendered more valuable services to the Court. But between him and the Court was interposed the remembrance of one terrible event. He was the grandfather of the two Hewlings, those gallant youths who, of all the victims of the Bloody Assizes, had been the most generally lamented. For the sad fate of one of them James was in a peculiar manner responsible. Jeffreys had respited the younger brother. The poor lad's sister had been ushered by Churchill into the royal presence, and had begged for mercy; but the King's heart had been obdurate. The misery of the whole family had been great: but Kiffin was most to be pitied. He was seventy years old when he was left desolate, the survivor of those who should have survived him. The heartless and venal sycophants of Whitehall, judging by themselves, thought that the old man would be easily propitiated by an Alderman's gown, and by some compensation in money for the property which his grandsons had forfeited. Penn was employed in the work of seduction, but to no purpose. The King determined to try what effect his own civilities would produce. Kiffin was ordered to attend at the palace. He found a brilliant circle of noblemen and gentlemen assembled. James immediately came to him, spoke to him very graciously, and concluded by saying, "I have put you down, Mr. Kiffin, for an Alderman of London." The old man looked fixedly at the King, burst into tears, and made answer, "Sir, I am worn out, I am unfit to serve your Majesty or the City. And, Sir, the death of my poor boys broke my heart. That wound is as fresh as ever. I shall carry it to my grave." The King stood silent for a minute in some confusion, and then said, "Mr. Kiffin, I will find a balsam for that sore." Assuredly James did not mean to say anything cruel or insolent: on the contrary, he seems to have been in an unusually gentle mood. Yet no speech that is recorded of him gives so unfavourable a notion of his character as these few words. They are the words of a hard-hearted and low-minded man, unable to con-

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

CHAP. VII.
1687. ceive any laceration of the affections for which a place or a pension would not be a full compensation.*

That section of the dissenting body which was favourable to the King's new policy had from the first been a minority, and soon began to diminish. For the Nonconformists perceived in no long time that their spiritual privileges had been abridged rather than extended by the Indulgence. The chief characteristic of the Puritan was abhorrence of the peculiarities of the Church of Rome. He had quitted the Church of England only because he conceived that she too much resembled her superb and voluptuous sister, the sorceress of the golden cup and of the scarlet robe. He now found that one of the implied conditions of that alliance which some of his pastors had formed with the Court was that the religion of the Court should be respectfully and tenderly treated. He soon began to regret the days of persecution. While the penal laws were enforced, he had heard the words of life in secret and at his peril: but still he had heard them. When the brethren were assembled in the inner chamber, when the sentinels had been posted, when the doors had been locked, when the preacher, in the garb of a butcher or a drayman, had come in over the tiles, then at least God was truly worshipped. No portion of divine truth was suppressed or softened down for any worldly object. All the distinctive doctrines of the Puritan theology were fully, and even coarsely, set forth. To the Church of Rome no quarter was given. The Beast, the Antichrist, the Man of Sin, the mystical Jezebel, the mystical Babylon, were the phrases ordinarily employed to describe that august and fascinating superstition. Such had been once the style of Alsop, of Lobb, of Rosewell, and of other ministers who had of late been well received at the palace: but such was now their style no longer. Divines who aspired to a high place in the King's favour and confidence could not venture to speak with asperity of the King's religion. Congregations therefore complained loudly that, since the appearance of the Declara-

* Kiffin's Memoirs; Luson's Letter to Brooke, May 14. 1773, in the Hughes Correspondence.

tion which purported to give them entire freedom of conscience, they had never once heard the Gospel boldly and faithfully preached. Formerly they had been forced to snatch their spiritual nutriment by stealth; but, when they had snatched it, they had found it seasoned exactly to their taste. They were now at liberty to feed: but their food had lost all its savour. They met by daylight, and in commodious edifices: but they heard discourses far less to their taste than they would have heard from the rector. At the parish church the will worship and idolatry of Rome were every Sunday attacked with energy: but, at the meeting house, the pastor, who had a few months before reviled the established clergy as little better than Papists, now carefully abstained from censuring Popery, or conveyed his censures in language too delicate to shock even the ears of Father Petre. Nor was it possible to assign any creditable reason for this change. The Roman Catholic doctrines had undergone no alteration. Within living memory never had Roman Catholic priests been so active in the work of making proselytes: never had so many Roman Catholic publications issued from the press; never had the attention of all who cared about religion been so closely fixed on the dispute between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. What could be thought of the sincerity of theologians who had never been weary of railing at Popery when Popery was comparatively harmless and helpless, and who now, when a time of real danger to the reformed faith had arrived, studiously avoided uttering one word which could give offence to a Jesuit? Their conduct was indeed easily explained. It was known that some of them had obtained pardons. It was suspected that others had obtained money. Their prototype might be found in that weak apostle who from fear denied the Master to whom he had boastfully professed the firmest attachment, or in that baser apostle who sold his Lord for a handful of silver.*

Thus the dissenting ministers who had been gained by the Court were rapidly losing the influence which they had once

* See, among other contemporary pamphlets, one entitled a Representation of the threatening Dangers impending over Protestants.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

possessed over their brethren. On the other hand, the sectaries found themselves attracted by a strong religious sympathy towards those prelates and priests of the Church of England who, in spite of royal mandates, of threats, and of promises, were waging vigorous war with the Church of Rome. The Anglican body and the Puritan body, so long separated by a mortal enmity, were daily drawing nearer to each other, and every step which they made towards union increased the influence of him who was their common head. William was in all things fitted to be a mediator between these two great sections of the English nation. He could not be said to be a member of either. Yet neither, when in a reasonable mood, could refuse to regard him as a friend. His system of theology agreed with that of the Puritans. At the same time, he regarded episcopacy, not indeed as a divine institution, but as a perfectly lawful and an eminently useful form of church government. Questions respecting postures, robes, festivals and liturgies, he considered as of no vital importance. A simple worship, such as that to which he had been early accustomed, would have been most to his personal taste. But he was prepared to conform to any ritual which might be acceptable to the nation, and insisted only that he should not be required to persecute his brother Protestants whose consciences did not permit them to follow his example. Two years earlier he would have been pronounced by numerous bigots on both sides a mere Laodicean, neither cold nor hot, and fit only to be spewed out. But the zeal which had inflamed Churchmen against Dissenters and Dissenters against Churchmen had been so tempered by common adversity and danger that the lukewarmness which had once been imputed to him as a crime was now reckoned among his chief virtues.

The Prince and Princess of Orange hostile to the Declaration of Indulgence.

All men were anxious to know what he thought of the Declaration of Indulgence. For a time hopes were entertained at Whitehall that his known respect for the rights of conscience would at least prevent him from publicly expressing disapprobation of a policy which had a specious show of liberality. Penn sent copious disquisitions to the Hague, and

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

even went thither, in the hope that his eloquence, of which he had a high opinion, would prove irresistible. But, though he harangued on his favourite theme with a copiousness which tired his hearers out, and though he assured them that the approach of a golden age of religious liberty had been revealed to him by a man who was permitted to converse with angels, no impression was made on the Prince.* "You ask me," said William to one of the King's agents, "to countenance an attack on my own religion. I cannot with a safe conscience do it, and I will not, no, not for the crown of England, nor for the empire of the world." These words were reported to the King and disturbed him greatly.** He wrote urgent letters with his own hand. Sometimes he took the tone of an injured man. He was the head of the royal family; he was as such entitled to expect the obedience of the younger branches; and it was very hard that he was to be crossed in a matter on which his heart was set. At other times a bait which was thought irresistible was offered. If William would but give way on this one point, the English government would, in return, cooperate with him strenuously against France. He was not to be so deluded. He knew that James, without the support of a Parliament, would, even if not unwilling, be unable to render effectual service to the common cause of Europe; and there could be no doubt that, if a Parliament were assembled, the first demand of both Houses would be that the Declaration should be cancelled.

The Princess assented to all that was suggested by her husband. Their joint opinion was conveyed to the King in firm but temperate terms. They declared that they deeply regretted the course which His Majesty had adopted. They were convinced that he had usurped a prerogative which did

* Burnet, i. 693, 694.

** "Le Prince d'Orange, qui avoit éludé jusqu'alors de faire une réponse positive, dit . . . qu'il ne consentira jamais à la suppression de ces loix qui avoient été établies pour le maintien et la surêté de la religion Protestante, et que sa conscience ne le lui permettoit point, non seulement pour la succession du royaume d'Angleterre, mais même pour l'empire du monde; en sorte que le roi d'Angleterre est plus aigri contre lui qu'il n'a jamais été." — Bonrepaux, June 11. 1687.

Macaulay, History. III.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

not by law belong to him. Against that usurpation they protested, not only as friends to civil liberty, but as members of the royal house, who had a deep interest in maintaining the rights of that crown which they might one day wear. For experience had shown that in England arbitrary government could not fail to produce a reaction even more pernicious than itself; and it might reasonably be feared that the nation, alarmed and incensed by the prospect of despotism, might conceive a disgust even for constitutional monarchy. The advice, therefore, which they tendered to the King was that he would in all things govern according to law. They readily admitted that the law might with advantage be altered by competent authority, and that some part of his Declaration well deserved to be embodied in an Act of Parliament. They were not persecutors. They should with pleasure see Roman Catholics as well as Protestant Dissenters relieved in a proper manner from all penal statutes. They should with pleasure see Protestant Dissenters admitted in a proper manner to civil office. At that point their Highnesses must stop. They could not but entertain grave apprehensions that, if Roman Catholics were made capable of public trust, great evil would ensue; and it was intimated not obscurely that these apprehensions arose chiefly from the conduct of James.*

Their
views re-
specting
the
English
Roman
Catholics
vindicated.

The opinion expressed by the Prince and Princess respecting the disabilities to which the Roman Catholics were subject was that of almost all the statesmen and philosophers who were then zealous for political and religious freedom. In our age, on the contrary, enlightened men have often pronounced, with regret, that, on this one point, William appears to disadvantage when compared with his father-in-law. The truth is that some considerations which are necessary to the forming of a correct judgment seem to have escaped the notice of many writers of the nineteenth century.

There are two opposite errors into which those who study the annals of our country are in constant danger of falling, the error of judging the present by the past, and the error of

* Burnet, i. 710. Bonrepaux, ^{May 24.} June 4. 1687.

judging the past by the present. The former is the error of minds prone to reverence whatever is old, the latter of minds readily attracted by whatever is new. The former error may perpetually be observed in the reasonings of conservative politicians on the questions of their own day. The latter error perpetually infects the speculations of writers of the liberal school when they discuss the transactions of an earlier age. The former error is the more pernicious in a statesman, and the latter in a historian.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

It is not easy for any person who, in our time, undertakes to treat of the revolution which overthrew the Stuarts, to preserve with steadiness the happy mean between these two extremes. The question whether members of the Roman Catholic Church could be safely admitted to Parliament and to office convulsed our country during the reign of James the Second, was set at rest by his downfall, and, having slept during more than a century, was revived by that great stirring of the human mind which followed the meeting of the National Assembly of France. During thirty years the contest went on in both Houses of Parliament, in every constituent body, in every social circle. It destroyed administrations, broke up parties, made all government in one part of the empire impossible, and at length brought us to the verge of civil war. Even when the struggle had terminated, the passions to which it had given birth still continued to rage. It was scarcely possible for any man whose mind was under the influence of those passions to see the events of the years 1687 and 1688 in a perfectly correct light.

One class of politicians, starting from the true proposition that the Revolution had been a great blessing to our country, arrived at the false conclusion that no test which the statesmen of the Revolution had thought necessary for the protection of our religion and our freedom could be safely abolished. Another class, starting from the true proposition that the disabilities imposed on the Roman Catholics had long been productive of nothing but mischief, arrived at the false conclusion that there never could have been a time when those disabilities could have been useful and necessary. The

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

former fallacy pervaded the speeches of the acute and learned Eldon. The latter was not altogether without influence even on an intellect so calm and philosophical as that of Mackintosh.

Perhaps, however, it will be found on examination that we may vindicate the course which was unanimously approved by all the great English statesmen of the seventeenth century, without questioning the wisdom of the course which was as unanimously approved by all the great English statesmen of our own time.

Undoubtedly it is an evil that any citizen should be excluded from civil employment on account of his religious opinions: but a choice between evils is sometimes all that is left to human wisdom. A nation may be placed in such a situation that the majority must either impose disabilities or submit to them, and that what would, under ordinary circumstances, be justly condemned as persecution, may fall within the bounds of legitimate self-defence: and such was in the year 1687 the situation of England.

According to the constitution of the realm, James possessed the right of naming almost all public functionaries, political, judicial, ecclesiastical, military, and naval. In the exercise of this right he was not, as our sovereigns now are, under the necessity of acting in conformity with the advice of ministers approved by the House of Commons. It was evident therefore that, unless he were strictly bound by law to bestow office on none but Protestants, it would be in his power to bestow office on none but Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholics were few in number; and among them was not a single man whose services could be seriously missed by the commonwealth. The proportion which they bore to the population of England was very much smaller than at present. For at present a constant stream of emigration runs from Ireland to our great towns: but in the seventeenth century there was not even in London an Irish colony. Forty-nine fiftieths of the inhabitants of the kingdom, forty-nine fiftieths of the property of the kingdom, almost all the political, legal, and military ability and knowledge to be found in the kingdom, were Protestant. Nevertheless the King, under a strong infatuation, had de-

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

terminated to use his vast patronage as a means of making proselytes. To be of his Church was, in his view, the first of all qualifications for office. To be of the national Church was a positive disqualification. He reprobated, it is true, in language which has been applauded by some credulous friends of religious liberty, the monstrous injustice of that test which excluded a small minority of the nation from public trust: but he was at the same time instituting a test which excluded the majority. He thought it hard that a man who was a good financier and a loyal subject should be excluded from the post of Lord Treasurer merely for being a Papist. But he had himself turned out a Lord Treasurer whom he admitted to be a good financier and a loyal subject merely for being a Protestant. He had repeatedly and distinctly declared his resolution never to put the white staff in the hands of any heretic. With many other great offices of state he had dealt in the same way. Already the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal, the Lord Chamberlain, the Groom of the Stole, the First Lord of the Treasury, a Secretary of State, the Lord High Commissioner of Scotland, the Chancellor of Scotland, the Secretary of Scotland, were, or pretended to be, Roman Catholics. Most of these functionaries had been bred Churchmen, and had been guilty of apostasy, open or secret, in order to obtain or to keep their high places. Every Protestant who still held an important post in the government held it in constant uncertainty and fear. It would be endless to recount the situations of a lower rank which were filled by the favoured class. Roman Catholics already swarmed in every department of the public service. They were Lords Lieutenants, Deputy Lieutenants, Judges, Justices of the Peace, Commissioners of the Customs, Envoys to foreign courts, Colonels of regiments, Governors of fortresses. The share which in a few months they had obtained of the temporal patronage of the crown was much more than ten times as great as they would have had under an impartial system. Yet this was not the worst. They were made rulers of the Church of England. Men who had assured the King that they held his faith safe in the High Commission, and exercised supreme jurisdiction in spiritual things over all

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

the prelates and priests of the established religion. Ecclesiastical benefices of great dignity had been bestowed, some on avowed Papists, and some on half concealed Papists. And all this had been done while the laws against Popery were still unrepealed, and while James had still a strong interest in affecting respect for the rights of conscience. What then was his conduct likely to be, if his subjects consented to free him, by a legislative act, from even the shadow of restraint? Is it possible to doubt that Protestants would have been as effectually excluded from employment, by a strictly legal use of the royal prerogative, as ever Roman Catholics had been by Act of Parliament?

How obstinately James was determined to bestow on the members of his own Church a share of patronage altogether out of proportion to their numbers and importance is proved by the instructions which, in exile and old age, he drew up for the guidance of his son. It is impossible to read without mingled pity and derision those effusions of a mind on which all the discipline of experience and adversity had been exhausted in vain. The Pretender is advised, if ever he should reign in England, to make a partition of offices, and carefully to reserve for the members of the Church of Rome a portion which might have sufficed for them if they had been one half instead of one fiftieth part of the nation. One Secretary of State, one Commissioner of the Treasury, the Secretary of War, the majority of the great dignitaries of the household, the majority of the officers of the army, are always to be Catholics. Such were the designs of James after his perverse bigotry had drawn on him a punishment which had appalled the whole world. Is it then possible to doubt what his conduct would have been if his people, deluded by the empty name of religious liberty, had suffered him to proceed without any check?

Even Penn, intemperate and undiscerning as was his zeal for the Declaration, seems to have felt that the partiality with which honours and emoluments were heaped on Roman Catholics might not unnaturally excite the jealousy of the nation. He owned that, if the Test Act were repealed, the Protestants

were entitled to an equivalent, and went so far as to suggest several equivalents. During some weeks the word equivalent, then lately imported from France, was in the mouths of all the coffee-house orators; but at length a few pages of keen logic and polished sarcasm written by Halifax put an end to these idle projects. One of Penn's schemes was that a law should be passed dividing the patronage of the crown into three equal parts; and that to one only of those parts members of the Church of Rome should be admitted. Even under such an arrangement the members of the Church of Rome would have obtained near twenty times their fair portion of official appointments; and yet there is no reason to believe that even to such an arrangement the King would have consented. But, had he consented, what guarantee could he give that he would adhere to his bargain? The dilemma propounded by Halifax was unanswerable. If laws are binding on you, observe the law which now exists. If laws are not binding on you, it is idle to offer us a law as a security.*

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

It is clear, therefore, that the point at issue was not whether secular offices should be thrown open to all sects indifferently. While James was King it was inevitable that there should be exclusion; and the only question was who should be excluded, Papists or Protestants, the few or the many, a hundred thousand Englishmen or five millions.

Such are the weighty arguments by which the conduct of the Prince of Orange towards the English Roman Catholics may be reconciled with the principles of religious liberty. These arguments, it will be observed, have no reference to any part of the Roman Catholic theology. It will also be observed that they ceased to have any force when the crown had been settled on a race of Protestant sovereigns, and when the power of the House of Commons in the state had become so decidedly preponderant that no sovereign, whatever might have been his opinions or his inclinations, could have imitated the example of James. The nation, however, after its terrors, its struggles, its narrow escape, was in a suspicious and vindictive mood. Means of defence therefore which necessity

* Johnstone, Jan. 13. 1688; Halifax's Anatomy of an Equivalent.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

had once justified, and which necessity alone could justify, were obstinately used long after the necessity had ceased to exist, and were not abandoned till vulgar prejudice had maintained a contest of many years against reason. But in the time of James reason and vulgar prejudice were on the same side. The fanatical and ignorant wished to exclude the Roman Catholic from office because he worshipped stocks and stones, because he had the mark of the Beast, because he had burned down London, because he had strangled Sir Edmondsbury Godfrey; and the most judicious and tolerant statesman, while smiling at the delusions which imposed on the populace, was led, by a very different road, to the same conclusion.

The great object of William now was to unite in one body the numerous sections of the community which regarded him as their common head. In this work he had several able and trusty coadjutors, among whom two were preeminently useful, Burnet and Dykvelt.

Enmity of
James to
Burnet.

The services of Burnet indeed it was necessary to employ with some caution. The kindness with which he had been welcomed at the Hague had excited the rage of James. Mary received from her father two letters filled with invectives against the insolent and seditious divine whom she protected. But these accusations had so little effect on her that she sent back answers dictated by Burnet himself. At length, in January 1687, the King had recourse to stronger measures. Skelton, who had represented the English government in the United Provinces, was removed to Paris, and was succeeded by Albeville, the weakest and basest of all the members of the Jesuitical cabal. Money was Albeville's one object; and he took it from all who offered it. He was paid at once by France and by Holland. Nay, he stooped below even the miserable dignity of corruption, and accepted bribes so small that they seemed better suited to a porter or a lacquey than to an Envoy who had been honoured with an English baronetcy and a foreign marquisate. On one occasion he pocketed very complacently a gratuity of fifty pistoles as the price of a service which he had rendered to the States General. This man had

it in charge to demand that Burnet should no longer be countenanced at the Hague. William, who was not inclined to part with a valuable friend, answered at first with his usual coldness; "I am not aware, Sir, that, since the Doctor has been here, he has done or said anything of which His Majesty can justly complain." But James was peremptory; the time for an open rupture had not arrived; and it was necessary to give way. During more than eighteen months Burnet never came into the presence of either the Prince or the Princess: but he resided near them; he was fully informed of all that was passing; his advice was constantly asked; his pen was employed on all important occasions; and many of the sharpest and most effective tracts which about that time appeared in London were justly attributed to him.

The rage of James flamed high. He had always been more than sufficiently prone to the angry passions. But none of his enemies, not even those who had conspired against his life, not even those who had attempted by perjury to load him with the guilt of treason and assassination, had ever been regarded by him with such animosity as he now felt for Burnet. His Majesty railed daily at the Doctor in unkingly language, and meditated plans of unlawful revenge. Even blood would not slake that frantic hatred. The insolent divine must be tortured before he was permitted to die. Fortunately he was by birth a Scot; and in Scotland, before he was gibbeted in the Grassmarket, his legs might be dislocated in the boot. Proceedings were accordingly instituted against him at Edinburgh: but he had been naturalised in Holland: he had married a woman of fortune who was a native of that province: and it was certain that his adopted country would not deliver him up. It was therefore determined to kidnap him. Ruffians were hired with great sums of money for this perilous and infamous service. An order for three thousand pounds on this account was actually drawn up for signature in the office of the Secretary of State. Lewis was apprised of the design, and took a warm interest in it. He would lend, he said, his best assistance to convey the villain to England, and would undertake that the ministers of the vengeance of James should

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

find a secure asylum in France. Burnet was well aware of his danger: but timidity was not among his faults. He published a courageous answer to the charges which had been brought against him at Edinburgh. He knew, he said, that it was intended to execute him without a trial: but his trust was in the King of Kings, to whom innocent blood would not cry in vain, even against the mightiest princes of the earth. He gave a farewell dinner to some friends, and, after the meal, took solemn leave of them, as a man who was doomed to death, and with whom they could not longer safely converse. Nevertheless he continued to show himself in all the public places of the Hague so boldly that his friends reproached him bitterly with his fool-hardiness.*

Mission of
Dykvelt to
England.

While Burnet was William's secretary for English affairs in Holland, Dykvelt had been not less usefully employed in London. Dykvelt was one of a remarkable class of public men who, having been bred to politics in the noble school of John De Witt, had, after the fall of that great minister, thought that they should best discharge their duty to the commonwealth by rallying round the Prince of Orange. Of the diplomatists in the service of the United Provinces none was, in dexterity, temper, and manners, superior to Dykvelt. In

* Burnet, i. 726—731.; Answer to the Criminal Letters issued out against Dr. Burnet; Avaux Neg., July 17. 13., ^{July 28.} Aug. 7. 1687, Jan. 13. 1688; Lewis to Barillon, ^{Dec. 30. 1687.} Jan. 9. 1688.; Johnstone of Waristoun, Feb. 21. 1688; Lady Russell to Dr. Fitzwilliam, Oct. 5. 1687. As it has been suspected that Burnet, who certainly was not in the habit of underrating his own importance, exaggerated the danger to which he was exposed, I will give the words of Lewis and of Johnstone. "Qui que ce soit," says Lewis, "qui entreprenne de l'enlever en Hollande trouvera non seulement une retraite assurée et une entière protection dans mes états, mais aussi toute l'assistance qu'il pourra désirer pour faire conduire sûrement ce scélérat en Angleterre." "The business of Bamfield (Burnet) is certainly true," says Johnstone. "No man doubts of it here, and some concerned do not deny it. His friends say they hear he takes no care of himself, but out of vanity, to show his courage, shows his folly; so that, if ill happen on it, all people will laugh at it. Pray tell him so much from Jones (Johnstone). If some could be caught making their coup d'essai on him, it will do much to frighten them from making any attempt on Ogle (the Prince)."

knowledge of English affairs none seems to have been his equal. A pretence was found for despatching him, early in the year 1687, to England on a special mission with credentials from the States General. But in truth his embassy was not to the government, but to the opposition; and his conduct was guided by private instructions which had been drawn by Burnet, and approved by William.*

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

Dykvelt reported that James was bitterly mortified by the conduct of the Prince and Princess. "My nephew's duty," said the King, "is to strengthen my hands. But he has always taken a pleasure in crossing me." Dykvelt answered that in matters of private concern His Highness had shown, and was ready to show, the greatest deference to the King's wishes; but that it was scarcely reasonable to expect the aid of a Protestant prince against the Protestant religion.** The King was silenced, but not appeased. He saw, with ill humour which he could not disguise, that Dykvelt was mustering and drilling all the various divisions of the opposition with a skill which would have been creditable to the ablest English statesman, and which was marvellous in a foreigner. The clergy were told that they would find the Prince a friend to episcopacy and to the Book of Common Prayer. The Nonconformists were encouraged to expect from him, not only toleration, but also comprehension. Even the Roman Catholics were conciliated; and some of the most respectable among them declared, to the King's face, that they were satisfied with what Dykvelt proposed, and that they would rather have a toleration, secured by statute, than an illegal and precarious ascendancy.*** The chiefs of all the important sections of the nation had frequent conferences in the presence of the dexterous Envoy. At these meetings the sense of the Tory party was chiefly spoken by the Earls of Danby and Nottingham. Though more

Negotiations of Dykvelt with English statesmen.

Danby.

* Burnet, i. 708.; Avaux Neg., Jan. 13, Feb. 6, 1687; Van Kampen, Karakterkunde der Vaterlandsche Geschiedenis.

** Burnet, i. 711. Dykvelt's despatches to the States General contain, as far as I have seen or can learn, not a word about the real object of his mission. His correspondence with the Prince of Orange was strictly private.

*** Bonrepaux, Sept. 12, 1687.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

than eight years had elapsed since Danby had fallen from power, his name was still great among the old Cavaliers of England; and many even of those Whigs who had formerly persecuted him were now disposed to admit that he had suffered for faults not his own, and that his zeal for the prerogative, though it had often misled him, had been tempered by two feelings which did him honour, zeal for the established religion, and zeal for the dignity and independence of his country. He was also highly esteemed at the Hague, where it was never forgotten that he was the person who, in spite of the influence of France and of the Papists, had induced Charles to bestow the hand of the Lady Mary on her cousin.

Notting-
ham.

Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham, a nobleman whose name will frequently recur in the history of three eventful reigns, sprang from a family of unrivalled forensic eminence. One of his kinsmen had borne the seal of Charles the First, had prostituted eminent parts and learning to evil purposes, and had been pursued by the vengeance of the Commons of England with Falkland at their head. A more honourable renown had in the succeeding generation been obtained by Heneage Finch. He had immediately after the Restoration been appointed Solicitor General. He had subsequently risen to be Attorney General, Lord Keeper, Lord Chancellor, Baron Finch, and Earl of Nottingham. Through this prosperous career he had always held the prerogative as high as he honestly or decently could; but he had never been concerned in any machinations against the fundamental laws of the realm. In the midst of a corrupt court he had kept his personal integrity unsullied. He had enjoyed high fame as an orator, though his diction, formed on models anterior to the civil wars, was, towards the close of his life, pronounced stiff and pedantic by the wits of the rising generation. In Westminster Hall he is still mentioned with respect as the man who first educed out of the chaos anciently called by the name of equity a new system of jurisprudence, as regular and complete as that which is administered by the Judges of the Common Law.* A considerable part of the moral and intellectual

* See Lord Campbell's Life of him.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

character of this great magistrate had descended with the title of Nottingham to his eldest son. This son, Earl Daniel, was an honourable and virtuous man. Though enslaved by some absurd prejudices, and though liable to strange fits of caprice, he cannot be accused of having deviated from the path of right in search either of unlawful gain or of unlawful pleasure. Like his father he was a distinguished speaker, impressive, but prolix, and too monotonously solemn. The person of the orator was in perfect harmony with his oratory. His attitude was rigidly erect; his complexion so dark that he might have passed for a native of a warmer climate than ours; and his harsh features were composed to an expression resembling that of a chief mourner at a funeral. It was commonly said that he looked rather like a Spanish grandee than like an English gentleman. The nicknames of Dismal, Don Dismallo, and Don Diego, were fastened on him by jesters, and are not yet forgotten. He had paid much attention to the science by which his family had been raised to greatness, and was, for a man born to rank and wealth, wonderfully well read in the laws of his country. He was a devoted son of the Church, and showed his respect for her in two ways not usual among those Lords who in his time boasted that they were her especial friends, by writing tracts in defence of her dogmas, and by shaping his private life according to her precepts. Like other zealous churchmen, he had, till recently, been a strenuous supporter of monarchical authority. But to the policy which had been pursued since the suppression of the Western insurrection he was bitterly hostile, and not the less so because his younger brother Heneage had been turned out of the office of Solicitor General for refusing to defend the King's dispensing power.*

With these two great Tory Earls was now united Halifax, ^{Halifax,} the accomplished chief of the Trimmers. Over the mind of Nottingham indeed Halifax appears to have had at this time a great ascendancy. Between Halifax and Danby there was an

* Johnstone's Correspondence; Mackay's Memoirs; Arbuthnot's John Bull; Swift's writings from 1710 to 1714, *passim*; Whiston's Letter to the Earl of Nottingham, and the Earl's answer.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

enmity which began in the court of Charles, and which, at a later period, disturbed the court of William, but which, like many other enmities, remained suspended during the tyranny of James. The foes frequently met in the councils held by Dykvelt, and agreed in expressing dislike of the policy of the government and reverence for the Prince of Orange. The different characters of the two statesmen appeared strongly in their dealings with the Dutch envoy. Halifax showed an admirable talent for disquisition, but shrank from coming to any bold and irrevocable decision. Danby, far less subtle and eloquent, displayed more energy, resolution, and practical sagacity.

Devon-
shire.

Several eminent Whigs were in constant communication with Dykvelt: but the heads of the great houses of Cavendish and Russel could not take quite so active and prominent a part as might have been expected from their station and their opinions. The fame and fortunes of Devonshire were at that moment under a cloud. He had an unfortunate quarrel with the court, arising, not from a public and honourable cause, but from a private brawl in which even his warmest friends could not pronounce him altogether blameless. He had gone to Whitehall to pay his duty, and had there been insulted by a man named Colepepper, one of a set of bravoes who infested the purlieus of the court, and who attempted to curry favour with the government by affronting members of the opposition. The King himself expressed great indignation at the manner in which one of his most distinguished peers had been treated under the royal roof; and Devonshire was pacified by an intimation that the offender should never again be admitted into the palace. The interdict, however, was soon taken off. The Earl's resentment revived. His servants took up his cause. Hostilities such as seemed to belong to a ruder age disturbed the streets of Westminster. The time of the Privy Council was occupied by the criminations and recriminations of the adverse parties. Colepepper's wife declared that she and her husband went in danger of their lives, and that their house had been assaulted by ruffians in the Cavendish livery. Devonshire replied that he had been fired at from Colepepper's windows. This was

vehemently denied. A pistol, it was owned, loaded with gunpowder, had been discharged. But this had been done in a moment of terror merely for the purpose of alarming the Guards. While this feud was at the height the Earl met Colepepper in the drawing-room at Whitehall, and fancied that he saw triumph and defiance in the bully's countenance. Nothing unseemly passed in the royal sight; but, as soon as the enemies had left the presence chamber, Devonshire proposed that they should instantly decide their dispute with their swords. This challenge was refused. Then the high spirited peer forgot the respect which he owed to the place where he stood and to his own character, and struck Colepepper in the face with a cane. All classes agreed in condemning this act as most indiscreet and indecent; nor could Devonshire himself, when he had cooled, think of it without vexation and shame. The government, however, with its usual folly, treated him so severely that in a short time the public sympathy was all on his side. A criminal information was filed in the King's Bench. The defendant took his stand on the privileges of the peerage; but on this point a decision was promptly given against him; nor is it possible to deny that the decision, whether it were or were not according to the technical rules of English law, was in strict conformity with the great principles on which all laws ought to be framed. Nothing was then left to him but to plead guilty. The tribunal had, by successive dismissals, been reduced to such complete subjection, that the government which had instituted the prosecution was allowed to prescribe the punishment. The Judges waited in a body on Jeffreys, who insisted that they should impose a fine of not less than thirty thousand pounds. Thirty thousand pounds, when compared with the revenues of the English grandees of that age, may be considered as equivalent to a hundred and fifty thousand pounds in the nineteenth century. In the presence of the Chancellor not a word of disapprobation was uttered: but, when the Judges had retired, Sir John Powell, in whom all the little honesty of the bench was concentrated, muttered that the proposed penalty was enormous, and that one tenth part would

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

be amply sufficient. His brethren did not agree with him; nor did he, on this occasion, show the courage by which, on a memorable day some months later, he signally retrieved his fame. The Earl was accordingly condemned to a fine of thirty thousand pounds, and to imprisonment till payment should be made. Such a sum could not then be raised at a day's notice even by the greatest of the nobility. The sentence of imprisonment, however, was more easily pronounced than executed. Devonshire had retired to Chatsworth, where he was employed in turning the old Gothic mansion of his family into an edifice worthy of Palladio. The Peak was in those days almost as rude a district as Connemara now is, and the Sheriff found, or pretended, that it was difficult to arrest the lord of so wild a region in the midst of a devoted household and tenantry. Some days were thus gained: but at last both the Earl and the Sheriff were lodged in prison. Meanwhile a crowd of intercessors exerted their influence. The story ran that the Countess Dowager of Devonshire had obtained admittance to the royal closet, that she had reminded James how her brother-in-law, the gallant Charles Cavendish, had fallen at Gainsborough fighting for the crown, and that she had produced notes, written by Charles the First and Charles the Second, in acknowledgment of great sums lent by her Lord during the civil troubles. Those loans had never been repaid, and, with the interest, amounted, it was said, to more even than the immense fine which the Court of King's Bench had imposed. There was another consideration which seems to have had more weight with the King than the memory of former services. It might be necessary to call a Parliament. Whenever that event took place it was believed that Devonshire would bring a writ of error. The point on which he meant to appeal from the judgment of the King's Bench related to the privileges of peerage. The tribunal before which the appeal must come was the House of Peers. On such an occasion the Court could not be certain of the support even of the most courtly nobles. There was little doubt that the sentence would be annulled, and that, by grasping at too much, the government would lose all. James was therefore

disposed to a compromise. Devonshire was informed that, if he would give a bond for the whole fine, and thus preclude himself from the advantage which he might derive from a writ of error, he should be set at liberty. Whether the bond should be enforced or not would depend on his subsequent conduct. If he would support the dispensing power nothing would be exacted from him. If he was bent on popularity he must pay thirty thousand pounds for it. He refused, during some time, to consent to these terms; but confinement was insupportable to him. He signed the bond, and was let out of prison: but, though he consented to lay this heavy burden on his estate, nothing could induce him to promise that he would abandon his principles and his party. He was still entrusted with all the secrets of the opposition: but during some months his political friends thought it best for himself and for the cause that he should remain in the background.*

The Earl of Bedford had never recovered from the effects of the great calamity which, four years before, had almost broken his heart. From private as well as from public feelings he was adverse to the Court: but he was not active in concerting measures against it. His place in the meetings of the malecontents was supplied by his nephew. This was the celebrated Edward Russell, a man of undoubted courage and capacity, but of loose principles and turbulent temper. He was a sailor, had distinguished himself in his profession, and had in the late reign held an office in the palace. But all the ties which bound him to the royal family had been sundered by the death of his cousin William. The daring, unquiet, and vindictive seaman now sate in the councils called by the Dutch envoy as the representative of the boldest and most

Edward
Russell.

* Kennet's funeral sermon on the Duke of Devonshire, and Memoirs of the family of Cavendish; State Trials; Privy Council Book, March 5. 1688; Barillon, ^{June 30.} 1687; Johnstone, Dec. 1st. 1687; Lords' Journals, May 6. 1689. "Ses amis et ses proches," says Barillon, "lui conseillent de prendre le bon parti, mais il persiste jusqu'à présent à ne se point soumettre. S'il vouloit se bien conduire et renoncer à être populaire, il ne payeroit pas l'amende, mais s'il opiniâtre, il lui en coûtera trente mille pièces, et il demeurera prisonnier jusqu'à l'actuel payement."

Macaulay, History. III.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

eager section of the opposition, of those men who, under the names of Roundheads, Exclusionists, and Whigs, had maintained with various fortune a contest of five and forty years against three successive Kings. This party, lately prostrate and almost extinct, but now again full of life and rapidly rising to ascendancy, was troubled by none of the scruples which still impeded the movements of Tories and Trimmers, and was prepared to draw the sword against the tyrant on the first day on which the sword could be drawn with reasonable hope of success.

Three men are yet to be mentioned with whom Dykvelt was in confidential communication, and by whose help he hoped to secure the good will of three great professions. Bishop Compton was the agent employed to manage the clergy: Admiral Herbert undertook to exert all his influence over the navy; and an interest was established in the army by the instrumentality of Churchill.

The conduct of Compton and Herbert requires no explanation. Having, in all things secular, served the crown with zeal and fidelity, they had incurred the royal displeasure by refusing to be employed as tools for the destruction of their own religion. Both of them had learned by experience how soon James forgot obligations, and how bitterly he remembered what it pleased him to consider as wrongs. The Bishop had by an illegal sentence been suspended from his episcopal functions. The Admiral had in one hour been reduced from opulence to penury. The situation of Churchill was widely different. He had been raised by the royal bounty from obscurity to eminence, and from poverty to wealth. Having started in life a needy ensign, he was now, in his thirty-seventh year, a Major General, a peer of Scotland, a peer of England: he commanded a troop of Life Guards: he had been appointed to several honourable and lucrative offices; and as yet there was no sign that he had lost any part of the favour to which he owed so much. He was bound to James, not only by the common obligations of allegiance, but by military honour, by personal gratitude, and, as appeared to superficial observers, by the strongest ties of interest. But

Churchill himself was no superficial observer. He knew exactly what his interest really was. If his master were once at full liberty to employ Papists, not a single Protestant would be employed. For a time a few highly favoured servants of the crown might possibly be exempted from the general proscription in the hope that they would be induced to change their religion. But even these would, after a short respite, fall one by one, as Rochester had already fallen. Churchill might indeed secure himself from this danger, and might raise himself still higher in the royal favour, by conforming to the Church of Rome; and it might seem that one who was not less distinguished by avarice and baseness than by capacity and valour was not likely to be shocked at the thought of hearing a mass. But so inconsistent is human nature that there are tender spots even in seared consciences. And thus this man, who had owed his rise to his sister's dishonour, who had been kept by the most profuse, imperious, and shameless of harlots, and whose public life, to those who can look steadily through the dazzling blaze of genius and glory, will appear a prodigy of turpitude, believed implicitly in the religion which he had learned as a boy, and shuddered at the thought of formally abjuring it. A terrible alternative was before him. The earthly evil which he most dreaded was poverty. The one crime from which his heart recoiled was apostasy. And, if the designs of the Court succeeded, he could not doubt that between poverty and apostasy he must soon make his choice. He therefore determined to cross those designs; and it soon appeared that there was no guilt and no disgrace which he was not ready to incur, in order to escape from the necessity of parting either with his places or with his religion.*

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

* The motive which determined the conduct of the Churchills is shortly and plainly set forth in the Duchess of Marlborough's Vindication. "It was," she says, "evident to all the world that, as things were carried on by King James, everybody sooner or later must be ruined, who would not become a Roman Catholic. This consideration made me very well pleased at the Prince of Orange's undertaking to rescue us from such slavery."

CHAP.
VII.
—1687.
Lady
Churchill
and the
Princess
Anne.

It was not only as a military commander, high in rank, and distinguished by skill and courage, that Churchill was able to render services to the opposition. It was, if not absolutely essential, yet most important, to the success of William's plans that his sister-in-law, who, in the order of succession to the English throne, stood between his wife and himself, should act in cordial union with him. All his difficulties would have been greatly augmented if Anne had declared herself favourable to the Indulgence. Which side she might take depended on the will of others. For her understanding was sluggish; and, though there was latent in her character a hereditary wilfulness and stubbornness which, many years later, great power and great provocations developed, she was as yet a willing slave to a nature far more vivacious and imperious than her own. The person by whom she was absolutely governed was the wife of Churchill, a woman who afterwards exercised a great influence on the fate of England and of Europe.

The name of this celebrated favourite was Sarah Jennings. Her elder sister, Frances, had been distinguished by beauty and levity even among the crowd of beautiful faces and light characters which adorned and disgraced Whitehall during the wild carnival of the Restoration. On one occasion Frances dressed herself like an orange girl and cried fruit about the streets.* Sober people predicted that a girl of so little discretion and delicacy would not easily find a husband. She was however twice married, and was now the wife of Tyrconnel. Sarah, less regularly beautiful, was perhaps more attractive. Her face was expressive: her form wanted no feminine charm; and the profusion of her fine hair, not yet disguised by powder according to that barbarous fashion which she lived to see introduced, was the delight of numerous admirers. Among the gallants who sued for her favour, Colonel Churchill, young, handsome, graceful, insinuating, eloquent and brave, obtained the preference. He must have been enamoured indeed. For he had little property except the annuity which he had bought with the in-

* Grammont's Memoirs; Pepys's Diary, Feb. 21. 1685.

famous wages bestowed on him by the Duchess of Cleveland: he was insatiable of riches: Sarah was poor; and a plain girl with a large fortune was proposed to him. His love, after a struggle, prevailed over his avarice: marriage only strengthened his passion; and, to the last hour of his life, Sarah enjoyed the pleasure and distinction of being the one human being who was able to mislead that far-sighted and sure-footed judgment, who was fervently loved by that cold heart, and who was servilely feared by that intrepid spirit.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

In a worldly sense the fidelity of Churchill's love was amply rewarded. His bride, though slenderly portioned, brought with her a dowry which, judiciously employed, made him at length a Duke of England, a Prince of the Empire, the captain general of a great coalition, the arbiter between mighty princes, and, what he valued more, the wealthiest subject in Europe. She had been brought up from childhood with the Princess Anne; and a close friendship had arisen between the girls. In character they resembled each other very little. Anne was slow and taciturn. To those whom she loved she was meek. The form which her anger assumed was sullenness. She had a strong sense of religion, and was attached even with bigotry to the rites and government of the Church of England. Sarah was lively and voluble, domineered over those whom she regarded with most kindness, and, when she was offended, vented her rage in tears and tempestuous reproaches. To sanctity she made no pretence, and, indeed, narrowly escaped the imputation of irreligion. She was not yet what she became when one class of vices had been fully developed in her by prosperity, and another by adversity, when her brain had been turned by success and flattery, when her heart had been ulcerated by disasters and mortifications. She lived to be that most odious and miserable of human beings, an ancient crone at war with her whole kind, at war with her own children and grandchildren, great indeed and rich, but valuing greatness and riches chiefly because they enabled her to brave public opinion and to indulge without restraint her hatred to the living and the dead.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

In the reign of James she was regarded as nothing worse than a fine high-spirited young woman, who could now and then be cross and arbitrary, but whose flaws of temper might well be pardoned in consideration of her charms.

It is a common observation that differences of taste, understanding, and disposition, are no impediments to friendship, and that the closest intimacies often exist between minds each of which supplies what is wanting to the other. Lady Churchill was loved and even worshipped by Anne. The Princess could not live apart from the object of her romantic fondness. She married, and was a faithful and even an affectionate wife. But Prince George, a dull man whose chief pleasures were derived from his dinner and his bottle, acquired over her no influence comparable to that exercised by her female friend, and soon gave himself up with stupid patience to the dominion of that vehement and commanding spirit by which his wife was governed. Children were born to the royal pair: and Anne was by no means without the feelings of a mother. But the tenderness which she felt for her offspring was languid when compared with her devotion to the companion of her early years. At length the Princess became impatient of the restraint which etiquette imposed on her. She could not bear to hear the words Madam and Royal Highness from the lips of one who was more to her than a sister. Such words were indeed necessary in the gallery or the drawing-room; but they were disused in the closet. Anne was Mrs. Morley: Lady Churchill was Mrs. Freeman; and under these childish names was carried on during twenty years a correspondence on which at last the fate of administrations and dynasties depended. But as yet Anne had no political power and little patronage. Her friend attended her as first Lady of the Bed-chamber, with a salary of only four hundred pounds a year. There is reason, however, to believe that, even at this time, Churchill was able to gratify his ruling passion by means of his wife's influence. The Princess, though her income was large and her tastes simple, contracted debts which her father, not without some murmurs, discharged: and it was rumoured

that her embarrassments had been caused by her prodigal bounty to her favourite.*

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

At length the time had arrived when this singular friendship was to exercise a great influence on public affairs. What part Anne would take in the contest which distracted England was matter of deep anxiety. Filial duty was on one side. The interests of the religion to which she was sincerely attached were on the other. A less inert nature might well have remained long in suspense when drawn in opposite directions by motives so strong and so respectable. But the influence of the Churchills decided the question; and their patroness became an important member of that extensive league of which the Prince of Orange was the head.

In June 1687 Dykvelt returned to the Hague. He presented to the States General a royal epistle filled with eulogies of his conduct during his residence in London. These eulogies however were merely formal. James, in private communications written with his own hand, bitterly complained that the Envoy had lived in close intimacy with the most factious men in the realm, and had encouraged them in all their evil purposes. Dykvelt carried with him also a packet of letters from the most eminent of those with whom he had conferred during his stay in England. The writers generally expressed unbounded reverence and affection for William, and referred him to the bearer for fuller information as to their views. Halifax discussed the state and prospects of the country with his usual subtlety and vivacity, but took care not to pledge himself to any perilous line of conduct. Danby wrote in a bolder and more determined tone, and could not refrain from slyly sneering at the fears and scruples of his accomplished rival. But the most remarkable letter was from Churchill. It was written with that natural eloquence which, illiterate as he was, he never wanted on great occasions, and with an air of magnanimity which, perfidious as he was, he

Dykvelt returns to the Hague with letters from many eminent Englishmen.

* It would be endless to recount all the books from which I have formed my estimate of the duchess's character. Her own letters, her own vindication, and the replies which it called forth, have been my chief materials.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

could with singular dexterity assume. The Princess Anne, he said, had commanded him to assure her illustrious relatives at the Hague that she was fully resolved by God's help rather to lose her life than to be guilty of apostasy. As for himself, his places and the royal favour were as nothing to him in comparison with his religion. He concluded by declaring in lofty language that, though he could not pretend to have lived the life of a saint, he should be found ready, on occasion, to die the death of a martyr.*

Zule-
stein's
mission.

Dykvelt's mission had succeeded so well that a pretence was soon found for sending another agent to continue the work which had been so auspiciously commenced. The new Envoy, afterwards the founder of a noble English house which became extinct in our own time, was an illegitimate cousin german of William; and bore a title taken from the lordship of Zulestein. Zulestein's relationship to the House of Orange gave him importance in the public eye. His bearing was that of a gallant soldier. He was indeed in diplomatic talents and knowledge far inferior to Dykvelt: but even this inferiority had its advantages. A military man, who had never appeared to trouble himself about political affairs, could, without exciting any suspicion, hold with the English aristocracy an intercourse which, if he had been a noted master of state craft, would have been jealously watched. Zulestein, after a short absence, returned to his country charged with letters and verbal messages not less important than those which had been entrusted to his predecessor. A regular correspondence was from this time established between the Prince and the opposition. Agents of various ranks passed and repassed between the Thames and the Hague. Among these a Scotchman, of some parts and great activity, named Johnstone, was the most useful. He was cousin of Burnet, and son of an eminent covenanter who had, soon after the Restoration, been put to death for treason, and who was honoured by his party as a martyr.

* The formal epistle which Dykvelt carried back to the States is in the Archives at the Hague. The other letters mentioned in this paragraph are given by Dalrymple. App. to Book V.

The estrangement between the King of England and the Prince of Orange became daily more complete. A serious dispute had arisen concerning the six British regiments which were in the pay of the United Provinces. The King wished to put these regiments under the command of Roman Catholic officers. The Prince resolutely opposed this design. The King had recourse to his favourite commonplaces about toleration. The Prince replied that he only followed his Majesty's example. It was notorious that loyal and able men had been turned out of office in England merely for being Protestants. It was then surely competent to the Stadtholder and the States General to withhold high public trusts from Papists. This answer provoked James to such a degree that, in his rage, he lost sight of veracity and common sense. It was false, he vehemently said, that he had ever turned out any body on religious grounds. And if he had, what was that to the Prince or to the States? Were they his masters? Were they to sit in judgment on the conduct of foreign sovereigns? From that time he became desirous to recall his subjects who were in the Dutch service. By bringing them over to England he should, he conceived, at once strengthen himself, and weaken his worst enemies. But there were financial difficulties which it was impossible for him to overlook. The number of troops already in his service was as great as his revenue, though large beyond all precedent and though parsimoniously administered, would support. If the battalions now in Holland were added to the existing establishment, the Treasury would be bankrupt. Perhaps Lewis might be induced to take them into his service. They would in that case be removed from a country where they were exposed to the corrupting influence of a republican government and a Calvinistic worship, and would be placed in a country where none ventured to dispute the mandates of the sovereign or the doctrines of the true Church. The soldiers would soon unlearn every political and religious heresy. Their native prince might always, at short notice, command their help, and would, on any emergency, be able to rely on their fidelity.

CHAP.

VII.

1687.

Growing
enmity
between
James
and
William.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

A negotiation on this subject was opened between Whitehall and Versailles. Lewis had as many soldiers as he wanted; and, had it been otherwise, he would not have been disposed to take Englishmen into his service; for the pay of England, low as it must seem to our generation, was much higher than the pay of France. At the same time, it was a great object to deprive William of so fine a brigade. After some weeks of correspondence, Barillon was authorised to promise that, if James would recall the British troops from Holland, Lewis would bear the charge of supporting two thousand of them in England. This offer was accepted by James with warm expressions of gratitude. Having made these arrangements, he requested the States General to send back the six regiments. The States General, completely governed by William, answered that such a demand, in such circumstances, was not authorised by the existing treaties, and positively refused to comply. It is remarkable that Amsterdam, which had voted for keeping these troops in Holland when James needed their help against the Western insurgents, now contended vehemently that his request ought to be granted. On both occasions, the sole object of those who ruled that great city was to cross the Prince of Orange.*

Influence
of the
Dutch
press.

The Dutch arms, however, were scarcely so formidable to James as the Dutch presses. English books and pamphlets against his government were daily printed at the Hague; nor could any vigilance prevent copies from being smuggled, by tens of thousands, into the counties bordering on the German Ocean. Among these publications, one was distinguished by its importance, and by the immense effect which it produced. The opinion which the Prince and Princess of Orange held respecting the Indulgence was well known to all who were conversant with public affairs. But, as no offi-

* Sunderland to William, Aug. 24. 1686; William to Sunderland, Sept. 7. 1686; Barillon, May 16. ^{May 26.} June 5. Oct. 13. ^{Nov. 28.} Dec. 8. 1687; Lewis to Barillon, Oct. 13. 1687; Memorial of Albeville, Dec. 22. 1687; James to William, Jan. 17. Feb. 16. March 2. 13. 1688; Avaux Neg., March 11. 16. 17. April 1. 1688.

cial announcement of that opinion had appeared, many persons who had not access to good private sources of information were deceived or perplexed by the confidence with which the partisans of the Court asserted that their Highnesses approved of the King's late acts. To contradict those assertions publicly would have been a simple and obvious course, if the sole object of William had been to strengthen his interest in England. But he considered England chiefly as an instrument necessary to the execution of his great European design. Towards that design he hoped to obtain the cooperation of both branches of the House of Austria, of the Italian princes, and even of the Sovereign Pontiff. There was reason to fear that any declaration which was satisfactory to British Protestants would excite alarm and disgust at Madrid, Vienna, Turin, and Rome. For this reason the Prince long abstained from formally expressing his sentiments. At length it was represented to him that his continued silence had excited much uneasiness and distrust among his wellwishers, and that it was time to speak out. He therefore determined to explain himself.

A Scotch Whig, named James Stewart, had fled, some years before, to Holland, in order to avoid the boot and the gallows, and had become intimate with the Grand Pensionary Fagel, who enjoyed a large share of the Stadtholder's confidence and favour. By Stewart had been drawn up the violent and acrimonious manifesto of Argyle. When the Indulgence appeared, Stewart conceived that he had an opportunity of obtaining, not only pardon, but reward. He offered his services to the government of which he had been the enemy: they were accepted; and he addressed to Fagel a letter, purporting to have been written by the direction of James. In that letter the Pensionary was exhorted to use all his influence with the Prince and Princess, for the purpose of inducing them to support their father's policy. After some delay Fagel transmitted a reply, deeply meditated, and drawn up with exquisite art. No person who studies that remarkable document can fail to perceive that, though it is framed in a manner well calculated to reassure and delight

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

Corre-
spon-
dence of
Stewart
and
Fagel.

CHAP. VII.
1687.

English Protestants, it contains not a word which could give offence, even at the Vatican. It was announced that William and Mary would, with pleasure, assist in abolishing every law which made any Englishman liable to punishment for his religious opinions. But between punishments and disabilities a distinction was taken. To admit Roman Catholics to office would, in the judgment of their Highnesses, be neither for the general interest of England nor even for the interest of the Roman Catholics themselves. This manifesto was translated into several languages, and circulated widely on the Continent. Of the English version, carefully prepared by Burnet, near fifty thousand copies were introduced into the eastern shires, and rapidly distributed over the whole kingdom. No state paper was ever more completely successful. The Protestants of our island applauded the manly firmness with which William declared that he could not consent to entrust Papists with any share in the government. The Roman Catholic princes, on the other hand, were pleased by the mild and temperate style in which his resolution was expressed, and by the hope which he held out that, under his administration, no member of their Church would be molested on account of religion.

Castel-
maine's
embassy
to Rome.

It is probable that the Pope himself was among those who read this celebrated letter with pleasure. He had some months before dismissed Castelmaine in a manner which showed little regard for the feelings of Castelmaine's master. Innocent thoroughly disliked the whole domestic and foreign policy of the English government. He saw that the unjust and impolitic measures of the Jesuitical cabal were far more likely to make the penal laws perpetual than to bring about an abolition of the test. His quarrel with the court of Versailles was every day becoming more and more serious; nor could he, either in his character of temporal prince or in his character of Sovereign Pontiff, feel cordial friendship for a vassal of that court. Castelmaine was ill qualified to remove these disgusts. He was indeed well acquainted with Rome, and was, for a layman, deeply read in theological controversy.*

* Adda, Nov. 1685.

But he had none of the address which his post required; and, even had he been a diplomatist of the greatest ability, there was a circumstance which would have disqualified him for the particular mission on which he had been sent. He was known all over Europe as the husband of the most shameless of women; and he was known in no other way. It was impossible to speak to him or of him without remembering in what manner the very title by which he was called had been acquired. This circumstance would have mattered little if he had been accredited to some dissolute court, such as that in which the Duchess of Montespan had lately been dominant. But there was an obvious impropriety in sending him on an embassy rather of a spiritual than of a secular nature to a pontiff of primitive austerity. The Protestants all over Europe sneered; and Innocent, already unfavourably disposed to the English government, considered the compliment which had been paid him, at so much risk and at so heavy a cost, as little better than an affront. The salary of the Ambassador was fixed at a hundred pounds a week. Castelmaine complained that this was too little. Thrice the sum, he said, would hardly suffice. For at Rome the ministers of all the great continental powers exerted themselves to surpass one another in splendour, under the eyes of a people whom the habit of seeing magnificent buildings, decorations, and ceremonies had made fastidious. He always declared that he had been a loser by his mission. He was accompanied by several young gentlemen of the best Roman Catholic families in England, Ratcliffes, Arundells and Tichbornes. At Rome he was lodged in the palace of the house of Pamfili on the south of the stately Place of Navona. He was early admitted to a private interview with Innocent: but the public audience was long delayed. Indeed Castelmaine's preparations for that great occasion were so sumptuous that, though commenced at Easter 1686, they were not complete till the following November; and in November the Pope had, or pretended to have, an attack of gout which caused another postponement. In January 1687, at length, the solemn introduction and homage were performed with unusual pomp.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

The state coaches, which had been built at Rome for the pageant, were so superb that they were thought worthy to be transmitted to posterity in fine engravings and to be celebrated by poets in several languages.* The front of the Ambassador's palace was decorated on this great day with absurd allegorical paintings of gigantic size. There was Saint George with his foot on the neck of Titus Oates, and Hercules with his club crushing Colledge, the Protestant joiner, who in vain attempted to defend himself with his flail. After this public appearance Castelmaine invited all the persons of note then assembled at Rome to a banquet in that gay and splendid gallery which is adorned with paintings of subjects from the *Æneid* by Peter of Cortona. The whole city crowded to the show; and it was with difficulty that a company of Swiss guards could keep order among the spectators. The nobles of the Pontifical state in return gave costly entertainments to the Ambassador; and poets and wits were employed to lavish on him and on his master insipid and hyperbolical adulation such as flourishes most when genius and taste are in the deepest decay. Foremost among the flatterers was a crowned head. More than thirty years had elapsed since Christina, the daughter of the great Gustavus, had voluntarily descended from the Swedish throne. After long wanderings, in the course of which she had committed many follies and crimes, she had finally taken up her abode at Rome, where she busied herself with astrological calculations and with the intrigues of the conclave, and amused herself

* The Professor of Greek in the College De Propaganda Fide expressed his admiration in some detestable hexameters and pentameters, of which the following specimen may suffice:—

Ρωγερίον δὴ σπεσόμενος λαμπροῦ θριάμβον,

Ἦκα μάλ' ἤϊσεν καὶ θεῖον ὄχλος ἅπας·

Θαυμάζουσα δὲ τὴν πομπὴν, παγχρόστια τ' αὐτοῦ

Ἄρματα, τοὺς δ' ἔπλους, τοιαδὲ Πώμη ἔφη.

The Latin verses are a little better. Nahum Tate responded in English:

“His glorious train and passing pomp to view,
A pomp that even to Rome itself was new,
Each age, each sex, the Latian turrets filled,
Each age and sex in tears of joy distilled.”

with pictures, gems, manuscripts, and medals. She now composed some Italian stanzas in honour of the English prince who, sprung, like herself, from a race of Kings heretofore regarded as the champions of the Reformation, had, like herself, been reconciled to the ancient Church. A splendid assembly met in her palace. Her verses, set to music, were sung with universal applause: and one of her literary dependents pronounced an oration on the same subject in a style so florid that it seems to have offended the taste of the English hearers. The Jesuits, hostile to the Pope, devoted to the interests of France and disposed to pay every honour to James, received the English embassy with the utmost pomp in that princely house where the remains of Ignatius Loyola lie enshrined in lazulite and gold. Sculpture, painting, poetry, and eloquence were employed to compliment the strangers: but all these arts had sunk into deep degeneracy. There was a great display of turgid and impure Latinity unworthy of so erudite an order; and some of the inscriptions which adorned the walls had a fault more serious than even a bad style. It was said in one place that James had sent his brother as his messenger to heaven, and in another that James had furnished the wings with which his brother had soared to a higher region. There was a still more unfortunate distich, which at the time attracted little notice, but which, a few months later, was remembered and malignantly interpreted. "O King," said the poet, "cease to sigh for a son. Though nature may refuse your wish, the stars will find a way to grant it."

In the midst of these festivities Castelmaine had to suffer cruel mortifications and humiliations. The Pope treated him with extreme coldness and reserve. As often as the Ambassador pressed for an answer to the request which he had been instructed to make in favour of Petre, Innocent was taken with a violent fit of coughing, which put an end to the conversation. The fame of these singular audiences spread over Rome. Pasquin was not silent. All the curious and tattling population of the idlest of cities, the Jesuits and the prelates of the French faction only excepted, laughed at Castelmaine's

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

CHAP.
VII.
1687.

discomfiture. His temper, naturally unamiable, was soon exasperated to violence; and he circulated a memorial reflecting on the Pope. He had now put himself in the wrong. The sagacious Italian had got the advantage, and took care to keep it. He positively declared that the rule which excluded Jesuits from ecclesiastical preferment should not be relaxed in favour of Father Petre. Castelmaine, much provoked, threatened to leave Rome. Innocent replied, with a meek impertinence which was the more provoking because it could scarcely be distinguished from simplicity, that his Excellency might go if he liked. "But if we must lose him," added the venerable Pontiff, "I hope that he will take care of his health on the road. English people do not know how dangerous it is in this country to travel in the heat of the day. The best way is to start before dawn, and to take some rest at noon." With this salutary advice and with a string of beads, the unfortunate Ambassador was dismissed. In a few months appeared, both in the Italian and in the English tongue, a pompous history of the mission, magnificently printed in folio, and illustrated with plates. The frontispiece, to the great scandal of all Protestants, represented Castelmaine in the robes of a Peer, with his coronet in his hand, kissing the toe of Innocent.*

* Correspondence of James and Innocent, in the British Museum; Burnet, i. 703—705; Welwood's Memoirs; Commons' Journals, Oct. 25. 1689; An Account of his Excellency Roger Earl of Castelmaine's Embassy, by Michael Wright, chief steward of his Excellency's house at Rome, 1688.