

ТОМАС БАБИНГТОН МАКОЛЕЙ

THE HISTORY OF
ENGLAND, FROM THE
ACCESSION OF JAMES II —
VOLUME 2

Thomas Babington Macaulay

**The History of England, from the
Accession of James II — Volume 2**

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Baron Thomas Babington Macaulay

The History of England, from the Accession of James II — Volume 2

CHAPTER VI

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JAMES was now at the height of power and prosperity. Both in England and in Scotland he had vanquished his enemies, and had punished them with a severity which had indeed excited their bitterest hatred, but had, at the same time, effectually quelled their courage. The Whig party seemed extinct. The name of Whig was never used except as a term of reproach. The Parliament was devoted to the King; and it was in his power to keep that Parliament to the end of his reign. The Church was louder than ever in professions of attachment to him, and had, during the late insurrection, acted up to those professions. The Judges were his tools; and if they ceased to be so, it was in his power to remove them. The corporations were filled with his creatures. His revenues far exceeded those of his predecessors. His pride rose high. He was not the same man who, a few months before, in doubt whether his throne might not be overturned in a hour, had implored foreign help with unkingly supplications, and had accepted it with tears of gratitude. Visions of dominion and glory rose before him. He already saw himself, in imagination, the umpire of Europe, the champion of many states oppressed by one too powerful monarchy. So early as the month of June he had assured the United Provinces that, as soon as the affairs of England were settled, he would show the world how little he feared France. In conformity with these assurances, he, within a month after the battle of Sedgemoor, concluded with the States General a defensive treaty, framed in the very spirit of the Triple League. It was regarded, both at the Hague and at Versailles, as a most significant circumstance that Halifax, who was the constant and mortal enemy of French ascendancy, and who had scarcely ever before been consulted on any grave affair since the beginning of the reign, took the lead on this occasion, and seemed to have the royal ear. It was a circumstance not less significant that no previous communication was made to Barillon. Both he and his master were taken by surprise. Lewis was much troubled, and expressed great, and not unreasonable, anxiety as to the ulterior designs of the prince who had lately been his pensioner and vassal. There were strong rumours that William of Orange was busied in organizing a great confederacy, which was to include both branches of the House of Austria, the United Provinces, the kingdom of Sweden, and the electorate of Brandenburg. It now seemed that this confederacy would have at its head the King and Parliament of England.

In fact, negotiations tending to such a result were actually opened. Spain proposed to form a close alliance with James; and he listened to the proposition with favour, though it was evident that such an alliance would be little less than a declaration of war against France. But he postponed his final decision till after the Parliament should have reassembled. The fate of Christendom depended on the temper in which he might then find the Commons. If they were disposed to acquiesce in his plans of domestic government, there would be nothing to prevent him from interfering with vigour and authority in the great dispute which must soon be brought to an issue on the Continent. If they were refractory, he must relinquish all thought of arbitrating between contending nations, must again implore French assistance, must again submit to French dictation, must sink into a potentate of the third or fourth class, and must indemnify himself for the contempt with which he would be regarded abroad by triumphs over law and public opinion at home. [1](#)

It seemed, indeed, that it would not be easy for him to demand more than the Commons were disposed to give. Already they had abundantly proved that they were desirous to maintain his prerogatives unimpaired, and that they were by no means extreme to mark his encroachments on the rights of the people. Indeed, eleven twelfths of the members were either dependents of the court, or zealous Cavaliers from the country. There were few things which such an assembly could pertinaciously refuse to the Sovereign; and, happily for the nation, those few things were the very things on which James had set his heart.

One of his objects was to obtain a repeal of the Habeas Corpus Act, which he hated, as it was natural that a tyrant should hate the most stringent curb that ever legislation imposed on tyranny. This feeling remained deeply fixed in his mind to the last, and appears in the instructions which he drew up, in exile, for the guidance of his son. ² But the Habeas Corpus Act, though passed during the ascendancy of the Whigs, was not more dear to the Whigs than to the Tories. It is indeed not wonderful that this great law should be highly prized by all Englishmen without distinction of party: for it is a law which, not by circuitous, but by direct operation, adds to the security and happiness of every inhabitant of the realm. ³

James had yet another design, odious to the party which had set him on the throne and which had upheld him there. He wished to form a great standing army. He had taken advantage of the late insurrection to make large additions to the military force which his brother had left. The bodies now designated as the first six regiments of dragoon guards, the third and fourth regiments of dragoons, and the nine regiments of infantry of the line, from the seventh to the fifteenth inclusive, had just been raised. ⁴ The effect of these augmentations, and of the recall of the garrison of Tangier, was that the number of regular troops in England had, in a few months, been increased from six thousand to near twenty thousand. No English King had ever, in time of peace, had such a force at his command. Yet even with this force James was not content. He often repeated that no confidence could be placed in the fidelity of the train-bands, that they sympathized with all the passions of the class to which they belonged, that, at Sedgemoor, there had been more militia men in the rebel army than in the royal encampment, and that, if the throne had been defended only by the array of the counties, Monmouth would have marched in triumph from Lyme to London.

The revenue, large as it was when compared with that of former Kings, barely sufficed to meet this new charge. A great part of the produce of the new taxes was absorbed by the naval expenditure. At the close of the late reign the whole cost of the army, the Tangier regiments included, had been under three hundred thousand pounds a year. Six hundred thousand pounds a year would not now suffice. ⁵ If any further augmentation were made, it would be necessary to demand a supply from Parliament; and it was not likely that Parliament would be in a complying mood. The very name of standing army was hateful to the whole nation, and to no part of the nation more hateful than to the Cavalier gentlemen who filled the Lower House. In their minds a standing army was inseparably associated with the Rump, with the Protector, with the spoliation of the Church, with the purgation of the Universities, with the abolition of the peerage, with the murder of the King, with the sullen reign of the Saints, with cant and asceticism, with fines and sequestrations, with the insults which Major Generals, sprung from the dregs of the people, had offered to the oldest and most honourable families of the kingdom. There was, moreover, scarcely a baronet or a squire in the Parliament who did not owe part of his importance in his own county to his rank in the militia. If that national force were set aside, the gentry of England must lose much of their dignity and influence. It was therefore probable that the King would find it more difficult to obtain funds for the support of his army than even to obtain the repeal of the Habeas Corpus Act.

But both the designs which have been mentioned were subordinate to one great design on which the King's whole soul was bent, but which was abhorred by those Tory gentlemen who were ready to shed their blood for his rights, abhorred by that Church which had never, during three generations of civil discord, wavered in fidelity to his house, abhorred even by that army on which, in the last extremity, he must rely.

His religion was still under proscription. Many rigorous laws against Roman Catholics appeared on the Statute Book, and had, within no long time, been rigorously executed. The Test Act excluded from civil and military office all who dissented from the Church of England; and, by a subsequent Act, passed when the fictions of Oates had driven the nation wild, it had been provided that no person should sit in either House of Parliament without solemnly abjuring the doctrine of transubstantiation. That the King should wish to obtain for the Church to which he belonged a complete toleration was

natural and right; nor is there any reason to doubt that, by a little patience, prudence, and justice, such a toleration might have been obtained.

The extreme antipathy and dread with which the English people regarded his religion was not to be ascribed solely or chiefly to theological animosity. That salvation might be found in the Church of Rome, nay, that some members of that Church had been among the brightest examples of Christian virtue, was admitted by all divines of the Anglican communion and by the most illustrious Nonconformists. It is notorious that the penal laws against Popery were strenuously defended by many who thought Arianism, Quakerism, and Judaism more dangerous, in a spiritual point of view, than Popery, and who yet showed no disposition to enact similar laws against Arians, Quakers, or Jews.

It is easy to explain why the Roman Catholic was treated with less indulgence than was shown to men who renounced the doctrine of the Nicene fathers, and even to men who had not been admitted by baptism within the Christian pale. There was among the English a strong conviction that the Roman Catholic, where the interests of his religion were concerned, thought himself free from all the ordinary rules of morality, nay, that he thought it meritorious to violate those rules if, by so doing, he could avert injury or reproach from the Church of which he was a member.

Nor was this opinion destitute of a show of reason. It was impossible to deny that Roman Catholic casuists of great eminence had written in defence of equivocation, of mental reservation, of perjury, and even of assassination. Nor, it was said, had the speculations of this odious school of sophists been barren of results. The massacre of Saint Bartholomew, the murder of the first William of Orange, the murder of Henry the Third of France, the numerous conspiracies which had been formed against the life of Elizabeth, and, above all, the gunpowder treason, were constantly cited as instances of the close connection between vicious theory and vicious practice. It was alleged that every one of these crimes had been prompted or applauded by Roman Catholic divines. The letters which Everard Digby wrote in lemon juice from the Tower to his wife had recently been published, and were often quoted. He was a scholar and a gentleman, upright in all ordinary dealings, and strongly impressed with a sense of duty to God. Yet he had been deeply concerned in the plot for blowing up King, Lords, and Commons, and had, on the brink of eternity, declared that it was incomprehensible to him how any Roman Catholic should think such a design sinful. The inference popularly drawn from these things was that, however fair the general character of a Papist might be, there was no excess of fraud or cruelty of which he was not capable when the safety and honour of his Church were at stake.

The extraordinary success of the fables of Oates is to be chiefly ascribed to the prevalence of this opinion. It was to no purpose that the accused Roman Catholic appealed to the integrity, humanity, and loyalty which he had shown through the whole course of his life. It was to no purpose that he called crowds of respectable witnesses, of his own persuasion, to contradict monstrous romances invented by the most infamous of mankind. It was to no purpose that, with the halter round his neck, he invoked on himself the whole vengeance of the God before whom, in a few moments, he must appear, if he had been guilty of meditating any ill to his prince or to his Protestant fellow countrymen. The evidence which he produced in his favour proved only how little Popish oaths were worth. His very virtues raised a presumption of his guilt. That he had before him death and judgment in immediate prospect only made it more likely that he would deny what, without injury to the holiest of causes, he could not confess. Among the unhappy men who were convicted of the murder of Godfrey was one Protestant of no high character, Henry Berry. It is a remarkable and well attested circumstance, that Berry's last words did more to shake the credit of the plot than the dying declarations of all the pious and honourable Roman Catholics who underwent the same fate. [6](#)

It was not only by the ignorant populace, it was not only by zealots in whom fanaticism had extinguished all reason and charity, that the Roman Catholic was regarded as a man the very tenderness of whose conscience might make him a false witness, an incendiary, or a murderer, as a man who, where his Church was concerned, shrank from no atrocity and could be bound by no oath. If

there were in that age two persons inclined by their judgment and by their temper to toleration, those persons were Tillotson and Locke. Yet Tillotson, whose indulgence for various kinds of schismatics and heretics brought on him the reproach of heterodoxy, told the House of Commons from the pulpit that it was their duty to make effectual provision against the propagation of a religion more mischievous than irreligion itself, of a religion which demanded from its followers services directly opposed to the first principles of morality. His temper, he truly said, was prone to lenity; but his duty to the community forced him to be, in this one instance, severe. He declared that, in his judgment, Pagans who had never heard the name of Christ, and who were guided only by the light of nature, were more trustworthy members of civil society than men who had been formed in the schools of the Popish casuists. ⁷ Locke, in the celebrated treatise in which he laboured to show that even the grossest forms of idolatry ought not to be prohibited under penal sanctions, contended that the Church which taught men not to keep faith with heretics had no claim to toleration. ⁸

It is evident that, in such circumstances, the greatest service which an English Roman Catholic could render to his brethren in the faith was to convince the public that, whatever some rash men might, in times of violent excitement, have written or done, his Church did not hold that any end could sanctify means inconsistent with morality. And this great service it was in the power of James to render. He was King. He was more powerful than any English King had been within the memory of the oldest man. It depended on him whether the reproach which lay on his religion should be taken away or should be made permanent.

Had he conformed to the laws, had he fulfilled his promises, had he abstained from employing any unrighteous methods for the propagation of his own theological tenets, had he suspended the operation of the penal statutes by a large exercise of his unquestionable prerogative of mercy, but, at the same time, carefully abstained from violating the civil or ecclesiastical constitution of the realm, the feeling of his people must have undergone a rapid change. So conspicuous an example of good faith punctiliously observed by a Popish prince towards a Protestant nation would have quieted the public apprehensions. Men who saw that a Roman Catholic might safely be suffered to direct the whole executive administration, to command the army and navy, to convoke and dissolve the legislature, to appoint the Bishops and Deans of the Church of England, would soon have ceased to fear that any great evil would arise from allowing a Roman Catholic to be captain of a company or alderman of a borough. It is probable that, in a few years, the sect so long detested by the nation would, with general applause, have been admitted to office and to Parliament.

If, on the other hand, James should attempt to promote the interest of his Church by violating the fundamental laws of his kingdom and the solemn promises which he had repeatedly made in the face of the whole world, it could hardly be doubted that the charges which it had been the fashion to bring against the Roman Catholic religion would be considered by all Protestants as fully established. For, if ever a Roman Catholic could be expected to keep faith with heretics, James might have been expected to keep faith with the Anglican clergy. To them he owed his crown. But for their strenuous opposition to the Exclusion Bill he would have been a banished man. He had repeatedly and emphatically acknowledged his obligation to them, and had vowed to maintain them in all their legal rights. If he could not be bound by ties like these, it must be evident that, where his superstition was concerned, no tie of gratitude or of honour could bind him. To trust him would thenceforth be impossible; and, if his people could not trust him, what member of his Church could they trust? He was not supposed to be constitutionally or habitually treacherous. To his blunt manner, and to his want of consideration for the feelings of others, he owed a much higher reputation for sincerity than he at all deserved. His eulogists affected to call him James the Just. If then it should appear that, in turning Papist, he had also turned dissembler and promisebreaker, what conclusion was likely to be drawn by a nation already disposed to believe that Popery had a pernicious influence on the moral character?

On these grounds many of the most eminent Roman Catholics of that age, and among them the Supreme Pontiff, were of opinion that the interest of their Church in our island would be most

effectually promoted by a moderate and constitutional policy. But such reasoning had no effect on the slow understanding and imperious temper of James. In his eagerness to remove the disabilities under which the professors of his religion lay, he took a course which convinced the most enlightened and tolerant Protestants of his time that those disabilities were essential to the safety of the state. To his policy the English Roman Catholics owed three years of lawless and insolent triumph, and a hundred and forty years of subjection and degradation.

Many members of his Church held commissions in the newly raised regiments. This breach of the law for a time passed uncensured: for men were not disposed to note every irregularity which was committed by a King suddenly called upon to defend his crown and his life against rebels. But the danger was now over. The insurgents had been vanquished and punished. Their unsuccessful attempt had strengthened the government which they had hoped to overthrow. Yet still James continued to grant commissions to unqualified persons; and speedily it was announced that he was determined to be no longer bound by the Test Act, that he hoped to induce the Parliament to repeal that Act, but that, if the Parliament proved refractory, he would not the less have his own way.

As soon as this was known, a deep murmur, the forerunner of a tempest, gave him warning that the spirit before which his grandfather, his father, and his brother had been compelled to recede, though dormant, was not extinct. Opposition appeared first in the cabinet. Halifax did not attempt to conceal his disgust and alarm. At the Council board he courageously gave utterance to those feelings which, as it soon appeared, pervaded the whole nation. None of his colleagues seconded him; and the subject dropped. He was summoned to the royal closet, and had two long conferences with his master. James tried the effect of compliments and blandishments, but to no purpose. Halifax positively refused to promise that he would give his vote in the House of Lords for the repeal either of the Test Act or of the Habeas Corpus Act.

Some of those who were about the King advised him not, on the eve of the meeting of Parliament, to drive the most eloquent and accomplished statesman of the age into opposition. They represented that Halifax loved the dignity and emoluments of office, that, while he continued to be Lord President, it would be hardly possible for him to put forth his whole strength against the government, and that to dismiss him from his high post was to emancipate him from all restraint. The King was peremptory. Halifax was informed that his services were no longer needed; and his name was struck out of the Council-Book. [9](#)

His dismissal produced a great sensation not only in England, but also at Paris, at Vienna, and at the Hague: for it was well known, that he had always laboured to counteract the influence exercised by the court of Versailles on English affairs. Lewis expressed great pleasure at the news. The ministers of the United Provinces and of the House of Austria, on the other hand, extolled the wisdom and virtue of the discarded statesman in a manner which gave great offence at Whitehall. James was particularly angry with the secretary of the imperial legation, who did not scruple to say that the eminent service which Halifax had performed in the debate on the Exclusion Bill had been requited with gross ingratitude. [10](#)

It soon became clear that Halifax would have many followers. A portion of the Tories, with their old leader, Danby, at their head, began to hold Whiggish language. Even the prelates hinted that there was a point at which the loyalty due to the prince must yield to higher considerations. The discontent of the chiefs of the army was still more extraordinary and still more formidable. Already began to appear the first symptoms of that feeling which, three years later, impelled so many officers of high rank to desert the royal standard. Men who had never before had a scruple had on a sudden become strangely scrupulous. Churchill gently whispered that the King was going too far. Kirke, just returned from his western butchery, swore to stand by the Protestant religion. Even if he abjured the faith in which he had been bred, he would never, he said, become a Papist. He was already bespoken. If ever he did apostatize, he was bound by a solemn promise to the Emperor of Morocco to turn Mussulman. [11](#)

While the nation, agitated by many strong emotions, looked anxiously forward to the reassembling of the Houses, tidings, which increased the prevailing excitement, arrived from France.

The long and heroic struggle which the Huguenots had maintained against the French government had been brought to a final close by the ability and vigour of Richelieu. That great statesman vanquished them; but he confirmed to them the liberty of conscience which had been bestowed on them by the edict of Nantes. They were suffered, under some restraints of no galling kind, to worship God according to their own ritual, and to write in defence of their own doctrine. They were admissible to political and military employment; nor did their heresy, during a considerable time, practically impede their rise in the world. Some of them commanded the armies of the state; and others presided over important departments of the civil administration. At length a change took place. Lewis the Fourteenth had, from an early age, regarded the Calvinists with an aversion at once religious and political. As a zealous Roman Catholic, he detested their theological dogmas. As a prince fond of arbitrary power, he detested those republican theories which were intermingled with the Genevese divinity. He gradually retrenched all the privileges which the schismatics enjoyed. He interfered with the education of Protestant children, confiscated property bequeathed to Protestant consistories, and on frivolous pretexts shut up Protestant churches. The Protestant ministers were harassed by the tax gatherers. The Protestant magistrates were deprived of the honour of nobility. The Protestant officers of the royal household were informed that His Majesty dispensed with their services. Orders were given that no Protestant should be admitted into the legal profession. The oppressed sect showed some faint signs of that spirit which in the preceding century had bidden defiance to the whole power of the House of Valois. Massacres and executions followed. Dragoons were quartered in the towns where the heretics were numerous, and in the country seats of the heretic gentry; and the cruelty and licentiousness of these rude missionaries was sanctioned or leniently censured by the government. Still, however, the edict of Nantes, though practically violated in its most essential provisions, had not been formally rescinded; and the King repeatedly declared in solemn public acts that he was resolved to maintain it. But the bigots and flatterers who had his ear gave him advice which he was but too willing to take. They represented to him that his rigorous policy had been eminently successful, that little or no resistance had been made to his will, that thousands of Huguenots had already been converted, that, if he would take the one decisive step which yet remained, those who were still obstinate would speedily submit, France would be purged from the taint of heresy, and her prince would have earned a heavenly crown not less glorious than that of Saint Lewis. These arguments prevailed. The final blow was struck. The edict of Nantes was revoked; and a crowd of decrees against the sectaries appeared in rapid succession. Boys and girls were torn from their parents and sent to be educated in convents. All Calvinistic ministers were commanded either to abjure their religion or to quit their country within a fortnight. The other professors of the reformed faith were forbidden to leave the kingdom; and, in order to prevent them from making their escape, the outports and frontiers were strictly guarded. It was thought that the flocks, thus separated from the evil shepherds, would soon return to the true fold. But in spite of all the vigilance of the military police there was a vast emigration. It was calculated that, in a few months, fifty thousand families quitted France for ever. Nor were the refugees such as a country can well spare. They were generally persons of intelligent minds, of industrious habits, and of austere morals. In the list are to be found names eminent in war, in science, in literature, and in art. Some of the exiles offered their swords to William of Orange, and distinguished themselves by the fury with which they fought against their persecutor. Others avenged themselves with weapons still more formidable, and, by means of the presses of Holland, England, and Germany, inflamed, during thirty years, the public mind of Europe against the French government. A more peaceful class erected silk manufactories in the eastern suburb of London. One detachment of emigrants taught the Saxons to make the stuffs and hats of which France had hitherto enjoyed a monopoly. Another planted the first vines in the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope. [12](#)

In ordinary circumstances the courts of Spain and of Rome would have eagerly applauded a prince who had made vigorous war on heresy. But such was the hatred inspired by the injustice and haughtiness of Lewis that, when he became a persecutor, the courts of Spain and Rome took the side of religious liberty, and loudly reprobated the cruelty of turning a savage and licentious soldiery loose on an unoffending people. [13](#) One cry of grief and rage rose from the whole of Protestant Europe. The tidings of the revocation of the edict of Nantes reached England about a week before the day to which the Parliament stood adjourned. It was clear then that the spirit of Gardiner and of Alva was still the spirit of the Roman Catholic Church. Lewis was not inferior to James in generosity and humanity, and was certainly far superior to James in all the abilities and acquirements of a statesman. Lewis had, like James, repeatedly promised to respect the privileges of his Protestant subjects. Yet Lewis was now avowedly a persecutor of the reformed religion. What reason was there, then, to doubt that James waited only for an opportunity to follow the example? He was already forming, in defiance of the law, a military force officered to a great extent by Roman Catholics. Was there anything unreasonable in the apprehension that this force might be employed to do what the French dragoons had done?

James was almost as much disturbed as his subjects by the conduct of the court of Versailles. In truth, that court had acted as if it had meant to embarrass and annoy him. He was about to ask from a Protestant legislature a full toleration for Roman Catholics. Nothing, therefore, could be more unwelcome to him than the intelligence that, in a neighbouring country, toleration had just been withdrawn by a Roman Catholic government from Protestants. His vexation was increased by a speech which the Bishop of Valence, in the name of the Gallican clergy, addressed at this time to Lewis, the Fourteenth. The pious Sovereign of England, the orator said, looked to the most Christian King for support against a heretical nation. It was remarked that the members of the House of Commons showed particular anxiety to procure copies of this harangue, and that it was read by all Englishmen with indignation and alarm. [14](#) James was desirous to counteract the impression which these things had made, and was also at that moment by no means unwilling to let all Europe see that he was not the slave of France. He therefore declared publicly that he disapproved of the manner in which the Huguenots had been treated, granted to the exiles some relief from his privy purse, and, by letters under his great seal, invited his subjects to imitate his liberality. In a very few months it became clear that all this compassion was feigned for the purpose of cajoling his Parliament, that he regarded the refugees with mortal hatred, and that he regretted nothing so much as his own inability to do what Lewis had done.

On the ninth of November the Houses met. The Commons were summoned to the bar of the Lords; and the King spoke from the throne. His speech had been composed by himself. He congratulated his loving subjects on the suppression of the rebellion in the West: but he added that the speed with which that rebellion had risen to a formidable height, and the length of time during which it had continued to rage, must convince all men how little dependence could be placed on the militia. He had, therefore, made additions to the regular army. The charge of that army would henceforth be more than double of what it had been; and he trusted that the Commons would grant him the means of defraying the increased expense. He then informed his hearers that he had employed some officers who had not taken the test; but he knew them to be fit for public trust. He feared that artful men might avail themselves of this irregularity to disturb the harmony which existed between himself and his Parliament. But he would speak out. He was determined not to part with servants on whose fidelity he could rely, and whose help he might perhaps soon need. [15](#)

This explicit declaration that he had broken the laws which were regarded by the nation as the chief safeguards of the established religion, and that he was resolved to persist in breaking those laws, was not likely to soothe the excited feelings of his subjects. The Lords, seldom disposed to take the lead in opposition to a government, consented to vote him formal thanks for what he had said. But the Commons were in a less complying mood. When they had returned to their own House there was a long silence; and the faces of many of the most respectable members expressed deep concern. At

length Middleton rose and moved the House to go instantly into committee on the King's speech: but Sir Edmund Jennings, a zealous Tory from Yorkshire, who was supposed to speak the sentiments of Danby, protested against this course, and demanded time for consideration. Sir Thomas Clarges, maternal uncle of the Duke of Albemarle, and long distinguished in Parliament as a man of business and a vigilant steward of the public money, took the same side. The feeling of the House could not be mistaken. Sir John Ernley, Chancellor of the Exchequer, insisted that the delay should not exceed forty-eight hours; but he was overruled; and it was resolved that the discussion should be postponed for three days. [16](#)

The interval was well employed by those who took the lead against the court. They had indeed no light work to perform. In three days a country party was to be organized. The difficulty of the task is in our age not easily to be appreciated; for in our age all the nation may be said to assist at every deliberation of the Lords and Commons. What is said by the leaders of the ministry and of the opposition after midnight is read by the whole metropolis at dawn, by the inhabitants of Northumberland and Cornwall in the afternoon, and in Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland on the morrow. In our age, therefore, the stages of legislation, the rules of debate, the tactics of faction, the opinions, temper, and style of every active member of either House, are familiar to hundreds of thousands. Every man who now enters Parliament possesses what, in the seventeenth century, would have been called a great stock of parliamentary knowledge. Such knowledge was then to be obtained only by actual parliamentary service. The difference between an old and a new member was as great as the difference between a veteran soldier and a recruit just taken from the plough; and James's Parliament contained a most unusual proportion of new members, who had brought from their country seats to Westminster no political knowledge and many violent prejudices. These gentlemen hated the Papists, but hated the Whigs not less intensely, and regarded the King with superstitious veneration. To form an opposition out of such materials was a feat which required the most skilful and delicate management. Some men of great weight, however, undertook the work, and performed it with success. Several experienced Whig politicians, who had not seats in that Parliament, gave useful advice and information. On the day preceding that which had been fixed for the debate, many meetings were held at which the leaders instructed the novices; and it soon appeared that these exertions had not been thrown away. [17](#)

The foreign embassies were all in a ferment. It was well understood that a few days would now decide the great question, whether the King of England was or was not to be the vassal of the King of France. The ministers of the House of Austria were most anxious that James should give satisfaction to his Parliament. Innocent had sent to London two persons charged to inculcate moderation, both by admonition and by example. One of them was John Leyburn, an English Dominican, who had been secretary to Cardinal Howard, and who, with some learning and a rich vein of natural humour, was the most cautious, dexterous, and taciturn of men. He had recently been consecrated Bishop of Adrumetum, and named Vicar Apostolic in Great Britain. Ferdinand, Count of Adda, an Italian of no eminent abilities, but of mild temper and courtly manners, had been appointed Nuncio. These functionaries were eagerly welcomed by James. No Roman Catholic Bishop had exercised spiritual functions in the island during more than half a century. No Nuncio had been received here during the hundred and twenty-seven years which had elapsed since the death of Mary. Leyburn was lodged in Whitehall, and received a pension of a thousand pounds a year. Adda did not yet assume a public character. He passed for a foreigner of rank whom curiosity had brought to London, appeared daily at court, and was treated with high consideration. Both the Papal emissaries did their best to diminish, as much as possible, the odium inseparable from the offices which they filled, and to restrain the rash zeal of James. The Nuncio, in particular, declared that nothing could be more injurious to the interests of the Church of Rome than a rupture between the King and the Parliament. [18](#)

Barillon was active on the other side. The instructions which he received from Versailles on this occasion well deserve to be studied; for they furnish a key to the policy systematically pursued

by his master towards England during the twenty years which preceded our revolution. The advices from Madrid, Lewis wrote, were alarming. Strong hopes were entertained there that James would ally himself closely with the House of Austria, as soon as he should be assured that his Parliament would give him no trouble. In these circumstances, it was evidently the interest of France that the Parliament should prove refractory. Barillon was therefore directed to act, with all possible precautions against detection, the part of a makebate. At court he was to omit no opportunity of stimulating the religious zeal and the kingly pride of James; but at the same time it might be desirable to have some secret communication with the malecontents. Such communication would indeed be hazardous and would require the utmost adroitness; yet it might perhaps be in the power of the Ambassador, without committing himself or his government, to animate the zeal of the opposition for the laws and liberties of England, and to let it be understood that those laws and liberties were not regarded by his master with an unfriendly eye. [19](#)

Lewis, when he dictated these instructions, did not foresee how speedily and how completely his uneasiness would be removed by the obstinacy and stupidity of James. On the twelfth of November the House of Commons, resolved itself into a committee on the royal speech. The Solicitor General Heneage Finch, was in the chair. The debate was conducted by the chiefs of the new country party with rare tact and address. No expression indicating disrespect to the Sovereign or sympathy for rebels was suffered to escape. The western insurrection was always mentioned with abhorrence. Nothing was said of the barbarities of Kirke and Jeffreys. It was admitted that the heavy expenditure which had been occasioned by the late troubles justified the King in asking some further supply: but strong objections were made to the augmentation of the army and to the infraction of the Test Act.

The subject of the Test Act the courtiers appear to have carefully avoided. They harangued, however, with some force on the great superiority of a regular army to a militia. One of them tauntingly asked whether the defence of the kingdom was to be entrusted to the beefeaters. Another said that he should be glad to know how the Devonshire trainbands, who had fled in confusion before Monmouth's scythemen, would have faced the household troops of Lewis. But these arguments had little effect on Cavaliers who still remembered with bitterness the stern rule of the Protector. The general feeling was forcibly expressed by the first of the Tory country gentlemen of England, Edward Seymour. He admitted that the militia was not in a satisfactory state, but maintained that it might be remodelled. The remodelling might require money; but, for his own part, he would rather give a million to keep up a force from which he had nothing to fear, than half a million to keep up a force of which he must ever be afraid. Let the trainbands be disciplined; let the navy be strengthened; and the country would be secure. A standing army was at best a mere drain on the public resources. The soldier was withdrawn from all useful labour. He produced nothing: he consumed the fruits of the industry of other men; and he domineered over those by whom he was supported. But the nation was now threatened, not only with a standing army, but with a Popish standing army, with a standing army officered by men who might be very amiable and honourable, but who were on principle enemies to the constitution of the realm. Sir William Twisden, member for the county of Kent, spoke on the same side with great keenness and loud applause. Sir Richard Temple, one of the few Whigs who had a seat in that Parliament, dexterously accommodating his speech to the temper of his audience, reminded the House that a standing army had been found, by experience, to be as dangerous to the just authority of princes as to the liberty of nations. Sir John Maynard, the most learned lawyer of his time, took part in the debate. He was now more than eighty years old, and could well remember the political contests of the reign of James the First. He had sate in the Long Parliament, and had taken part with the Roundheads, but had always been for lenient counsels, and had laboured to bring about a general reconciliation. His abilities, which age had not impaired, and his professional knowledge, which had long overawed all Westminster Hall, commanded the ear of the House of Commons. He, too, declared himself against the augmentation of the regular forces.

After much debate, it was resolved that a supply should be granted to the crown; but it was also resolved that a bill should be brought in for making the militia more efficient. This last resolution was tantamount to a declaration against the standing army. The King was greatly displeased; and it was whispered that, if things went on thus, the session would not be of long duration. [20](#)

On the morrow the contention was renewed. The language of the country party was perceptibly bolder and sharper than on the preceding day. That paragraph of the King's speech which related to supply preceded the paragraph which related to the test. On this ground Middleton proposed that the paragraph relating to supply should be first considered in committee. The opposition moved the previous question. They contended that the reasonable and constitutional practice was to grant no money till grievances had been redressed, and that there would be an end of this practice if the House thought itself bound servilely to follow the order in which matters were mentioned by the King from the throne.

The division was taken on the question whether Middletons motion should be put. The Noes were ordered by the Speaker to go forth into the lobby. They resented this much, and complained loudly of his servility and partiality: for they conceived that, according to the intricate and subtle rule which was then in force, and which, in our time, was superseded by a more rational and convenient practice, they were entitled to keep their seats; and it was held by all the Parliamentary tacticians of that age that the party which stayed in the House had an advantage over the party which went out; for the accommodation on the benches was then so deficient that no person who had been fortunate enough to get a good seat was willing to lose it. Nevertheless, to the dismay of the ministers, many persons on whose votes the court had absolutely depended were seen moving towards the door. Among them was Charles Fox, Paymaster of the Forces, and son of Sir Stephen Fox, Clerk of the Green Cloth. The Paymaster had been induced by his friends to absent himself during part of the discussion. But his anxiety had become insupportable. He came down to the Speaker's chamber, heard part of the debate, withdrew, and, after hesitating for an hour or two between conscience and five thousand pounds a year, took a manly resolution and rushed into the House just in time to vote. Two officers of the army, Colonel John Darcy, son of the Lord Conyers, and Captain James Kendall, withdrew to the lobby. Middleton went down to the bar and expostulated warmly with them. He particularly addressed himself to Kendall, a needy retainer of the court, who had, in obedience to the royal mandate, been sent to Parliament by a packed corporation in Cornwall, and who had recently obtained a grant of a hundred head of rebels sentenced to transportation. "Sir," said Middleton, "have not you a troop of horse in His Majesty's service?" "Yes, my Lord," answered Kendall: "but my elder brother is just dead, and has left me seven hundred a year."

When the tellers had done their office it appeared that the Ayes were one hundred and eighty-two, and the Noes one and eighty-three. In that House of Commons which had been brought together by the unscrupulous use of chicanery, of corruption, and of violence, in that House of Commons of which James had said that more than eleven twelfths of the members were such as he would himself have nominated, the court had sustained a defeat on a vital question. [21](#)

In consequence of this vote the expressions which the King had used respecting the test were, on the thirteenth of November, taken into consideration. It was resolved, after much discussion, that an address should be presented to him, reminding him that he could not legally continue to employ officers who refused to qualify, and pressing him to give such directions as might quiet the apprehensions and jealousies of his people. [22](#)

A motion was then made that the Lords should be requested to join in the address. Whether this motion was honestly made by the opposition, in the hope that the concurrence of the peers would add weight to the remonstrance, or artfully made by the courtiers, in the hope that a breach between the Houses might be the consequence, it is now impossible to discover. The proposition was rejected. [23](#)

The House then resolved itself into a committee, for the purpose of considering the amount of supply to be granted. The King wanted fourteen hundred thousand pounds: but the ministers saw

that it would be vain to ask for so large a sum. The Chancellor of the Exchequer mentioned twelve hundred thousand pounds. The chiefs of the opposition replied that to vote for such a grant would be to vote for the permanence of the present military establishment: they were disposed to give only so much as might suffice to keep the regular troops on foot till the militia could be remodelled and they therefore proposed four hundred thousand pounds. The courtiers exclaimed against this motion as unworthy of the House and disrespectful to the King: but they were manfully encountered. One of the western members, John Windham, who sat for Salisbury, especially distinguished himself. He had always, he said, looked with dread and aversion on standing armies; and recent experience had strengthened those feelings. He then ventured to touch on a theme which had hitherto been studiously avoided. He described the desolation of the western counties. The people, he said, were weary of the oppression of the troops, weary of free quarters, of depredations, of still fouler crimes which the law called felonies, but for which, when perpetrated by this class of felons, no redress could be obtained. The King's servants had indeed told the House that excellent rules had been laid down for the government of the army; but none could venture to say that these rules had been observed. What, then, was the inevitable inference? Did not the contrast between the paternal injunctions issued from the throne and the insupportable tyranny of the soldiers prove that the army was even now too strong for the prince as well as for the people? The Commons might surely, with perfect consistency, while they reposed entire confidence in the intentions of His Majesty, refuse to make any addition to a force which it was clear that His Majesty could not manage.

The motion that the sum to be granted should not exceed four hundred thousand pounds, was lost by twelve votes. This victory of the ministers was little better than a defeat. The leaders of the country party, nothing disheartened, retreated a little, made another stand, and proposed the sum of seven hundred thousand pounds. The committee divided again, and the courtiers were beaten by two hundred and twelve votes to one hundred and seventy. [24](#)

On the following day the Commons went in procession to Whitehall with their address on the subject of the test. The King received them on his throne. The address was drawn up in respectful and affectionate language; for the great majority of those who had voted for it were zealously and even superstitiously loyal, and had readily agreed to insert some complimentary phrases, and to omit every word which the courtiers thought offensive. The answer of James was a cold and sullen reprimand. He declared himself greatly displeased and amazed that the Commons should have profited so little by the admonition which he had given them. "But," said he, "however you may proceed on your part, I will be very steady in all the promises which I have made to you." [25](#)

The Commons reassembled in their chamber, discontented, yet somewhat overawed. To most of them the King was still an object of filial reverence. Three more years filled with injuries, and with insults more galling than injuries, were scarcely sufficient to dissolve the ties which bound the Cavalier gentry to the throne.

The Speaker repeated the substance of the King's reply. There was, for some time, a solemn stillness; then the order of the day was read in regular course; and the House went into committee on the bill for remodelling the militia.

In a few hours, however, the spirit of the opposition revived. When, at the close of the day, the Speaker resumed the chair, Wharton, the boldest and most active of the Whigs, proposed that a time should be appointed for taking His Majesty's answer into consideration. John Coke, member for Derby, though a noted Tory, seconded Wharton. "I hope," he said, "that we are all Englishmen, and that we shall not be frightened from our duty by a few high words."

It was manfully, but not wisely, spoken. The whole House was in a tempest. "Take down his words," "To the bar," "To the Tower," resounded from every side. Those who were most lenient proposed that the offender should be reprimanded: but the ministers vehemently insisted that he should be sent to prison. The House might pardon, they said, offences committed against itself, but had no right to pardon an insult offered to the crown. Coke was sent to the Tower. The indiscretion of

one man had deranged the whole system of tactics which had been so ably concerted by the chiefs of the opposition. It was in vain that, at that moment, Edward Seymour attempted to rally his followers, exhorted them to fix a day for discussing the King's answer, and expressed his confidence that the discussion would be conducted with the respect due from subjects to the sovereign. The members were so much cowed by the royal displeasure, and so much incensed by the rudeness of Coke, that it would not have been safe to divide. [26](#)

The House adjourned; and the ministers flattered themselves that the spirit of opposition was quelled. But on the morrow, the nineteenth of November, new and alarming symptoms appeared. The time had arrived for taking into consideration the petitions which had been presented from all parts of England against the late elections. When, on the first meeting of the Parliament, Seymour had complained of the force and fraud by which the government had prevented the sense of constituent bodies from being fairly taken, he had found no seconder. But many who had then flinched from his side had subsequently taken heart, and, with Sir John Lowther, member for Cumberland, at their head, had, before the recess, suggested that there ought to be an enquiry into the abuses which had so much excited the public mind. The House was now in a much more angry temper; and many voices were boldly raised in menace and accusation. The ministers were told that the nation expected, and should have, signal redress. Meanwhile it was dexterously intimated that the best atonement which a gentleman who had been brought into the House by irregular means could make to the public was to use his ill acquired power in defence of the religion and liberties of his country. No member who, in that crisis, did his duty had anything to fear. It might be necessary to unseat him; but the whole influence of the opposition should be employed to procure his reelection. [27](#)

On the same day it became clear that the spirit of opposition had spread from the Commons to the Lords, and even to the episcopal bench. William Cavendish, Earl of Devonshire, took the lead in the Upper House; and he was well qualified to do so. In wealth and influence he was second to none of the English nobles; and the general voice designated him as the finest gentleman of his time. His magnificence, his taste, his talents, his classical learning, his high spirit, the grace and urbanity of his manners, were admitted by his enemies. His eulogists, unhappily, could not pretend that his morals had escaped untainted from the widespread contagion of that age. Though an enemy of Popery and of arbitrary power, he had been averse to extreme courses, had been willing, when the Exclusion Bill was lost, to agree to a compromise, and had never been concerned in the illegal and imprudent schemes which had brought discredit on the Whig party. But, though regretting part of the conduct of his friends, he had not, on that account, failed to perform zealously the most arduous and perilous duties of friendship. He had stood near Russell at the bar, had parted from him on the sad morning of the execution with close embraces and with many bitter tears, nay, had offered to manage an escape at the hazard of his own life. [28](#) This great nobleman now proposed that a day should be fixed for considering the royal speech. It was contended, on the other side, that the Lords, by voting thanks for the speech, had precluded themselves from complaining of it. But this objection was treated with contempt by Halifax. "Such thanks," he said with the sarcastic pleasantry in which he excelled, "imply no approbation. We are thankful whenever our gracious Sovereign deigns to speak to us. Especially thankful are we when, as on the present occasion, he speaks out, and gives us fair warning of what we are to suffer." [29](#) Doctor Henry Compton, Bishop of London, spoke strongly for the motion. Though not gifted with eminent abilities, nor deeply versed in the learning of his profession, he was always heard by the House with respect; for he was one of the few clergymen who could, in that age, boast of noble blood. His own loyalty, and the loyalty of his family, had been signally proved. His father, the second Earl of Northampton, had fought bravely for King Charles the First, and, surrounded by the parliamentary soldiers, had fallen, sword in hand, refusing to give or take quarter. The Bishop himself, before he was ordained, had borne arms in the Guards; and, though he generally did his best to preserve the gravity and sobriety befitting a prelate, some flashes of his military spirit would, to the last, occasionally break forth. He had been entrusted with the religious education of the two

Princesses, and had acquitted himself of that important duty in a manner which had satisfied all good Protestants, and had secured to him considerable influence over the minds of his pupils, especially of the Lady Anne. [30](#) He now declared that he was empowered to speak the sense of his brethren, and that, in their opinion and in his own, the whole civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the realm was in danger.

One of the most remarkable speeches of that day was made by a young man, whose eccentric career was destined to amaze Europe. This was Charles Mordaunt, Viscount Mordaunt, widely renowned, many years later, as Earl of Peterborough. Already he had given abundant proofs of his courage, of his capacity, and of that strange unsoundness of mind which made his courage and capacity almost useless to his country. Already he had distinguished himself as a wit and a scholar, as a soldier and a sailor. He had even set his heart on rivalling Bourdaloue and Bossuet. Though an avowed freethinker, he had sat up all night at sea to compose sermons, and had with great difficulty been prevented from edifying the crew of a man of war with his pious oratory. [31](#) He now addressed the House of Peers, for the first time, with characteristic eloquence, sprightliness, and audacity. He blamed the Commons for not having taken a bolder line. "They have been afraid," he said, "to speak out. They have talked of apprehensions and jealousies. What have apprehension and jealousy to do here? Apprehension and jealousy are the feelings with which we regard future and uncertain evils. The evil which we are considering is neither future nor uncertain. A standing army exists. It is officered by Papists. We have no foreign enemy. There is no rebellion in the land. For what, then, is this force maintained, except for the purpose of subverting our laws and establishing that arbitrary power which is so justly abhorred by Englishmen?" [32](#)

Jeffreys spoke against the motion in the coarse and savage style of which he was a master; but he soon found that it was not quite so easy to browbeat the proud and powerful barons of England in their own hall, as to intimidate advocates whose bread depended on his favour or prisoners whose necks were at his mercy. A man whose life has been passed in attacking and domineering, whatever may be his talents and courage, generally makes a mean figure when he is vigorously assailed, for, being unaccustomed to stand on the defensive, he becomes confused; and the knowledge that all those whom he has insulted are enjoying his confusion confuses him still more. Jeffreys was now, for the first time since he had become a great man, encountered on equal terms by adversaries who did not fear him. To the general delight, he passed at once from the extreme of insolence to the extreme of meanness, and could not refrain from weeping with rage and vexation. [33](#) Nothing indeed was wanting to his humiliation; for the House was crowded by about a hundred peers, a larger number than had voted even on the great day of the Exclusion Bill. The King, too, was present. His brother had been in the habit of attending the sittings of the Lords for amusement, and used often to say that a debate was as entertaining as a comedy. James came, not to be diverted, but in the hope that his presence might impose some restraint on the discussion. He was disappointed. The sense of the House was so strongly manifested that, after a closing speech, of great keenness, from Halifax, the courtiers did not venture to divide. An early day was fixed for taking the royal speech into consideration; and it was ordered that every peer who was not at a distance from Westminster should be in his place. [34](#)

On the following morning the King came down, in his robes, to the House of Lords. The Usher of the Black Rod summoned the Commons to the bar; and the Chancellor announced that the Parliament was prorogued to the tenth of February. [35](#) The members who had voted against the court were dismissed from the public service. Charles Fox quitted the Pay Office. The Bishop of London ceased to be Dean of the Chapel Royal, and his name was struck out of the list of Privy Councillors.

The effect of the prorogation was to put an end to a legal proceeding of the highest importance. Thomas Grey, Earl of Stamford, sprung from one of the most illustrious houses of England, had been recently arrested and committed close prisoner to the Tower on a charge of high treason. He was accused of having been concerned in the Rye House Plot. A true bill had been found against him by the grand jury of the City of London, and had been removed into the House of Lords, the

only court before which a temporal peer can, during a session of Parliament, be arraigned for any offence higher than a misdemeanour. The first of December had been fixed for the trial; and orders had been given that Westminster Hall should be fitted up with seats and hangings. In consequence of the prorogation, the hearing of the cause was postponed for an indefinite period; and Stamford soon regained his liberty. [36](#)

Three other Whigs of great eminence were in confinement when the session closed, Charles Gerard, Lord Gerard of Brandon, eldest son of the Earl of Macclesfield, John Hampden, grandson of the renowned leader of the Long Parliament, and Henry Booth, Lord Delamere. Gerard and Hampden were accused of having taken part in the Rye House Plot: Delamere of having abetted the Western insurrection.

It was not the intention of the government to put either Gerard or Hampden to death. Grey had stipulated for their lives before he consented to become a witness against them. [37](#) But there was a still stronger reason for sparing them. They were heirs to large property: but their fathers were still living. The court could therefore get little in the way of forfeiture, and might get much in the way of ransom. Gerard was tried, and, from the very scanty accounts which have come down to us, seems to have defended himself with great spirit and force. He boasted of the exertions and sacrifices made by his family in the cause of Charles the First, and proved Rumsey, the witness who had murdered Russell by telling one story and Cornish by telling another, to be utterly undeserving of credit. The jury, with some hesitation, found a verdict of Guilty. After long imprisonment Gerard was suffered to redeem himself. [38](#) Hampden had inherited the political opinions and a large share of the abilities of his grandfather, but had degenerated from the uprightness and the courage by which his grandfather had been distinguished. It appears that the prisoner was, with cruel cunning, long kept in an agony of suspense, in order that his family might be induced to pay largely for mercy. His spirit sank under the terrors of death. When brought to the bar of the Old Bailey he not only pleaded guilty, but disgraced the illustrious name which he bore by abject submissions and entreaties. He protested that he had not been privy to the design of assassination; but he owned that he had meditated rebellion, professed deep repentance for his offence, implored the intercession of the Judges, and vowed that, if the royal clemency were extended to him, his whole life should be passed in evincing his gratitude for such goodness. The Whigs were furious at his pusillanimity, and loudly declared him to be far more deserving of blame than Grey, who, even in turning King's evidence, had preserved a certain decorum. Hampden's life was spared; but his family paid several thousand pounds to the Chancellor. Some courtiers of less note succeeded in extorting smaller sums. The unhappy man had spirit enough to feel keenly the degradation to which he had stooped. He survived the day of his ignominy several years. He lived to see his party triumphant, to be once more an important member of it, to rise high in the state, and to make his persecutors tremble in their turn. But his prosperity was embittered by one insupportable recollection. He never regained his cheerfulness, and at length died by his own hand. [39](#)

That Delamere, if he had needed the royal mercy, would have found it is not very probable. It is certain that every advantage which the letter of the law gave to the government was used against him without scruple or shame. He was in a different situation from that in which Stamford stood. The indictment against Stamford had been removed into the House of Lords during the session of Parliament, and therefore could not be prosecuted till the Parliament should reassemble. All the peers would then have voices, and would be judges as well of law as of fact. But the bill against Delamere was not found till after the prorogation. [40](#) He was therefore within the jurisdiction of the Court of the Lord High Steward. This court, to which belongs, during a recess of Parliament, the cognizance of treasons and felonies committed by temporal peers, was then so constituted that no prisoner charged with a political offence could expect an impartial trial. The King named a Lord High Steward. The Lord High Steward named, at his discretion, certain peers to sit on their accused brother. The number to be summoned was indefinite. No challenge was allowed. A simple majority, provided that it consisted of twelve, was sufficient to convict. The High Steward was sole judge of

the law; and the Lords Triers formed merely a jury to pronounce on the question of fact. Jeffreys was appointed High Steward. He selected thirty Triers; and the selection was characteristic of the man and of the times. All the thirty were in politics vehemently opposed to the prisoner. Fifteen of them were colonels of regiments, and might be removed from their lucrative commands at the pleasure of the King. Among the remaining fifteen were the Lord Treasurer, the principal Secretary of State, the Steward of the Household, the Comptroller of the Household, the Captain of the Band of Gentlemen Pensioners, the Queen's Chamberlain, and other persons who were bound by strong ties of interest to the court. Nevertheless, Delamere had some great advantages over the humbler culprits who had been arraigned at the Old Bailey. There the jurymen, violent partisans, taken for a single day by courtly Sheriffs from the mass of society and speedily sent back to mingle with that mass, were under no restraint of shame, and being little accustomed to weigh evidence, followed without scruple the directions of the bench. But in the High Steward's Court every Trier was a man of some experience in grave affairs. Every Trier filled a considerable space in the public eye. Every Trier, beginning from the lowest, had to rise separately and to give in his verdict, on his honour, before a great concourse. That verdict, accompanied with his name, would go to every part of the world, and would live in history. Moreover, though the selected nobles were all Tories, and almost all placemen, many of them had begun to look with uneasiness on the King's proceedings, and to doubt whether the case of Delamere might not soon be their own.

Jeffreys conducted himself, as was his wont, insolently and unjustly. He had indeed an old grudge to stimulate his zeal. He had been Chief Justice of Chester when Delamere, then Mr. Booth, represented that county in Parliament. Booth had bitterly complained to the Commons that the dearest interests of his constituents were intrusted to a drunken jackpudding. [41](#) The revengeful judge was now not ashamed to resort to artifices which even in an advocate would have been culpable. He reminded the Lords Triers, in very significant language, that Delamere had, in Parliament, objected to the bill for attainting Monmouth, a fact which was not, and could not be, in evidence. But it was not in the power of Jeffreys to overawe a synod of peers as he had been in the habit of overawing common juries. The evidence for the crown would probably have been thought amply sufficient on the Western Circuit or at the City Sessions, but could not for a moment impose on such men as Rochester, Godolphin, and Churchill; nor were they, with all their faults, depraved enough to condemn a fellow creature to death against the plainest rules of justice. Grey, Wade, and Goodenough were produced, but could only repeat what they had heard said by Monmouth and by Wildman's emissaries. The principal witness for the prosecution, a miscreant named Saxton, who had been concerned in the rebellion, and was now labouring to earn his pardon by swearing against all who were obnoxious to the government, who proved by overwhelming evidence to have told a series of falsehoods. All the Triers, from Churchill who, as junior baron, spoke first, up to the Treasurer, pronounced, on their honour, that Delamere was not guilty. The gravity and pomp of the whole proceeding made a deep impression even on the Nuncio, accustomed as he was to the ceremonies of Rome, ceremonies which, in solemnity and splendour, exceed all that the rest of the world can show. [42](#) The King, who was present, and was unable to complain of a decision evidently just, went into a rage with Saxton, and vowed that the wretch should first be pilloried before Westminster Hall for perjury, and then sent down to the West to be hanged, drawn, and quartered for treason. [43](#)

The public joy at the acquittal of Delamere was great. The reign of terror was over. The innocent began to breathe freely, and false accusers to tremble. One letter written on this occasion is scarcely to be read without tears. The widow of Russell, in her retirement, learned the good news with mingled feelings. "I do bless God," she wrote, "that he has caused some stop to be put to the shedding of blood in this poor land. Yet when I should rejoice with them that do rejoice, I seek a corner to weep in. I find I am capable of no more gladness; but every new circumstance, the very comparing my night of sorrow after such a day, with theirs of joy, does, from a reflection of one kind or another, rack my

uneasy mind. Though I am far from wishing the close of theirs like mine, yet I cannot refrain giving some time to lament mine was not like theirs." [44](#)

And now the tide was on the turn. The death of Stafford, witnessed with signs of tenderness and remorse by the populace to whose rage he was sacrificed, marks the close of one proscription. The acquittal of Delamere marks the close of another. The crimes which had disgraced the stormy tribuneship of Shaftesbury had been fearfully expiated. The blood of innocent Papists had been avenged more than tenfold by the blood of zealous Protestants. Another great reaction had commenced. Factions were fast taking new forms. Old allies were separating. Old enemies were uniting. Discontent was spreading fast through all the ranks of the party lately dominant. A hope, still indeed faint and indefinite, of victory and revenge, animated the party which had lately seemed to be extinct. Amidst such circumstances the eventful and troubled year 1685 terminated, and the year 1686 began.

The prorogation had relieved the King from the gentle remonstrances of the Houses: but he had still to listen to remonstrances, similar in effect, though uttered in a tone even more cautious and subdued. Some men who had hitherto served him but too strenuously for their own fame and for the public welfare had begun to feel painful misgivings, and occasionally ventured to hint a small part of what they felt.

During many years the zeal of the English Tory for hereditary monarchy and his zeal for the established religion had grown up together and had strengthened each other. It had never occurred to him that the two sentiments, which seemed inseparable and even identical, might one day be found to be not only distinct but incompatible. From the commencement of the strife between the Stuarts and the Commons, the cause of the crown and the cause of the hierarchy had, to all appearance, been one. Charles the First was regarded by the Church as her martyr. If Charles the Second had plotted against her, he had plotted in secret. In public he had ever professed himself her grateful and devoted son, had knelt at her altars, and, in spite of his loose morals, had succeeded in persuading the great body of her adherents that he felt a sincere preference for her. Whatever conflicts, therefore, the honest Cavalier might have had to maintain against Whigs and Roundheads he had at least been hitherto undisturbed by conflict in his own mind. He had seen the path of duty plain before him. Through good and evil he was to be true to Church and King. But, if those two august and venerable powers, which had hitherto seemed to be so closely connected that those who were true to one could not be false to the other, should be divided by a deadly enmity, what course was the orthodox Royalist to take? What situation could be more trying than that in which he would be placed, distracted between two duties equally sacred, between two affections equally ardent? How was he to give to Caesar all that was Caesar's, and yet to withhold from God no part of what was God's? None who felt thus could have watched, without deep concern and gloomy forebodings, the dispute between the King and the Parliament on the subject of the test. If James could even now be induced to reconsider his course, to let the Houses reassemble, and to comply with their wishes, all might yet be well.

Such were the sentiments of the King's two kinsmen, the Earls of Clarendon and Rochester. The power and favour of these noblemen seemed to be great indeed. The younger brother was Lord Treasurer and prime minister; and the elder, after holding the Privy Seal during some months, had been appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The venerable Ormond took the same side. Middleton and Preston, who, as managers of the House of Commons, had recently learned by proof how dear the established religion was to the loyal gentry of England, were also for moderate counsels.

At the very beginning of the new year these statesmen and the great party which they represented had to suffer a cruel mortification. That the late King had been at heart a Roman Catholic had been, during some months, suspected and whispered, but not formally announced. The disclosure, indeed, could not be made without great scandal. Charles had, times without number, declared himself a Protestant, and had been in the habit of receiving the Eucharist from the Bishops of the Established Church. Those Protestants who had stood by him in his difficulties, and who still

cherished an affectionate remembrance of him, must be filled with shame and indignation by learning that his whole life had been a lie, that, while he professed to belong to their communion, he had really regarded them as heretics, and that the demagogues who had represented him as a concealed Papist had been the only people who had formed a correct judgment of his character. Even Lewis understood enough of the state of public feeling in England to be aware that the divulging of the truth might do harm, and had, of his own accord, promised to keep the conversion of Charles strictly secret. ⁴⁵ James, while his power was still new, had thought that on this point it was advisable to be cautious, and had not ventured to inter his brother with the rites of the Church of Rome. For a time, therefore, every man was at liberty to believe what he wished. The Papists claimed the deceased prince as their proselyte. The Whigs execrated him as a hypocrite and a renegade. The Tories regarded the report of his apostasy as a calumny which Papists and Whigs had, for very different reasons, a common interest in circulating. James now took a step which greatly disconcerted the whole Anglican party. Two papers, in which were set forth very concisely the arguments ordinarily used by Roman Catholics in controversy with Protestants, had been found in Charles's strong box, and appeared to be in his handwriting. These papers James showed triumphantly to several Protestants, and declared that, to his knowledge, his brother had lived and died a Roman Catholic. ⁴⁶ One of the persons to whom the manuscripts were exhibited was Archbishop Sancroft. He read them with much emotion, and remained silent. Such silence was only the natural effect of a struggle between respect and vexation. But James supposed that the Primate was struck dumb by the irresistible force of reason, and eagerly challenged his Grace to produce, with the help of the whole episcopal bench, a satisfactory reply. "Let me have a solid answer, and in a gentlemanlike style; and it may have the effect which you so much desire of bringing me over to your Church." The Archbishop mildly said that, in his opinion, such an answer might, without much difficulty, be written, but declined the controversy on the plea of reverence for the memory of his deceased master. This plea the King considered as the subterfuge of a vanquished disputant. ⁴⁷ Had he been well acquainted with the polemical literature of the preceding century and a half, he would have known that the documents to which he attached so much value might have been composed by any lad of fifteen in the college of Douay, and contained nothing which had not, in the opinion of all Protestant divines, been ten thousand times refuted. In his ignorant exultation he ordered these tracts to be printed with the utmost pomp of typography, and appended to them a declaration attested by his sign manual, and certifying that the originals were in his brother's own hand. James himself distributed the whole edition among his courtiers and among the people of humbler rank who crowded round his coach. He gave one copy to a young woman of mean condition whom he supposed to be of his own religious persuasion, and assured her that she would be greatly edified and comforted by the perusal. In requital of his kindness she delivered to him, a few days later, an epistle adjuring him to come out of the mystical Babylon and to dash from his lips the cup of fornications. ⁴⁸

These things gave great uneasiness to Tory churchmen. Nor were the most respectable Roman Catholic noblemen much better pleased. They might indeed have been excused if passion had, at this conjuncture, made them deaf to the voice of prudence and justice: for they had suffered much. Protestant jealousy had degraded them from the rank to which they were born, had closed the doors of the Parliament House on the heirs of barons who had signed the Charter, had pronounced the command of a company of foot too high a trust for the descendants of the generals who had conquered at Flodden and Saint Quentin. There was scarcely one eminent peer attached to the old faith whose honour, whose estate, whose life had not been in jeopardy, who had not passed months in the Tower, who had not often anticipated for himself the fate of Stafford. Men who had been so long and cruelly oppressed might have been pardoned if they had eagerly seized the first opportunity of obtaining at once greatness and revenge. But neither fanaticism nor ambition, neither resentment for past wrongs nor the intoxication produced by sudden good fortune, could prevent the most eminent Roman Catholics from perceiving that the prosperity which they at length enjoyed was only temporary, and,

unless wisely used, might be fatal to them. They had been taught, by a cruel experience, that the antipathy of the nation to their religion was not a fancy which would yield to the mandate of a prince, but a profound sentiment, the growth of five generations, diffused through all ranks and parties, and intertwined not less closely with the principles of the Tory than with the principles of the Whig. It was indeed in the power of the King, by the exercise of his prerogative of mercy, to suspend the operation of the penal laws. It might hereafter be in his power, by discreet management, to obtain from the Parliament a repeal of the acts which imposed civil disabilities on those who professed his religion. But, if he attempted to subdue the Protestant feeling of England by rude means, it was easy to see that the violent compression of so powerful and elastic a spring would be followed by as violent a recoil. The Roman Catholic peers, by prematurely attempting to force their way into the Privy Council and the House of Lords, might lose their mansions and their ample estates, and might end their lives as traitors on Tower Hill, or as beggars at the porches of Italian convents.

Such was the feeling of William Herbert, Earl of Powis, who was generally regarded as the chief of the Roman Catholic aristocracy, and who, according to Oates, was to have been prime minister if the Popish plot had succeeded. John Lord Bellasyse took the same view of the state of affairs. In his youth he had fought gallantly for Charles the First, had been rewarded after the Restoration with high honours and commands, and had quitted them when the Test Act was passed. With these distinguished leaders all the noblest and most opulent members of their church concurred, except Lord Arundell of Wardour, an old man fast sinking into second childhood.

But there was at the court a small knot of Roman Catholics whose hearts had been ulcerated by old injuries, whose heads had been turned by recent elevation, who were impatient to climb to the highest honours of the state, and who, having little to lose, were not troubled by thoughts of the day of reckoning. One of these was Roger Palmer, Earl of Castelmaine in Ireland, and husband of the Duchess of Cleveland. His title had notoriously been purchased by his wife's dishonour and his own. His fortune was small. His temper, naturally ungentle, had been exasperated by his domestic vexations, by the public reproaches, and by what he had undergone in the days of the Popish plot. He had been long a prisoner, and had at length been tried for his life. Happily for him, he was not put to the bar till the first burst of popular rage had spent itself, and till the credit of the false witnesses had been blown upon. He had therefore escaped, though very narrowly. [49](#) With Castelmaine was allied one of the most favoured of his wife's hundred lovers, Henry Jermyn, whom James had lately created a peer by the title of Lord Dover. Jermyn had been distinguished more than twenty years before by his vagrant amours and his desperate duels. He was now ruined by play, and was eager to retrieve his fallen fortunes by means of lucrative posts from which the laws excluded him. [50](#) To the same party belonged an intriguing pushing Irishman named White, who had been much abroad, who had served the House of Austria as something between an envoy and a spy, and who had been rewarded for his services with the title of Marquess of Albeville. [51](#)

Soon after the prorogation this reckless faction was strengthened by an important reinforcement. Richard Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnel, the fiercest and most uncompromising of all those who hated the liberties and religion of England, arrived at court from Dublin.

Talbot was descended from an old Norman family which had been long settled in Leinster, which had there sunk into degeneracy, which had adopted the manners of the Celts, which had, like the Celts, adhered to the old religion, and which had taken part with the Celts in the rebellion of 1641. In his youth he had been one of the most noted sharpers and bullies of London. He had been introduced to Charles and James when they were exiles in Flanders, as a man fit and ready for the infamous service of assassinating the Protector. Soon after the Restoration, Talbot attempted to obtain the favour of the royal family by a service more infamous still. A plea was wanted which might justify the Duke of York in breaking that promise of marriage by which he had obtained from Anne Hyde the last proof of female affection. Such a plea Talbot, in concert with some of his dissolute companions, undertook to furnish. They agreed to describe the poor young lady as a creature without

virtue, shame, or delicacy, and made up long romances about tender interviews and stolen favours. Talbot in particular related how, in one of his secret visits to her, he had unluckily overturned the Chancellor's inkstand upon a pile of papers, and how cleverly she had averted a discovery by laying the blame of the accident on her monkey. These stories, which, if they had been true, would never have passed the lips of any but the basest of mankind, were pure inventions. Talbot was soon forced to own that they were so; and he owned it without a blush. The injured lady became Duchess of York. Had her husband been a man really upright and honourable, he would have driven from his presence with indignation and contempt the wretches who had slandered her. But one of the peculiarities of James's character was that no act, however wicked and shameful, which had been prompted by a desire to gain his favour, ever seemed to him deserving of disapprobation. Talbot continued to frequent the court, appeared daily with brazen front before the princess whose ruin he had plotted, and was installed into the lucrative post of chief pandar to her husband. In no long time Whitehall was thrown into confusion by the news that Dick Talbot, as he was commonly called, had laid a plan to murder the Duke of Ormond. The bravo was sent to the Tower: but in a few days he was again swaggering about the galleries, and carrying billets backward and forward between his patron and the ugliest maids of honour. It was in vain that old and discreet counsellors implored the royal brothers not to countenance this bad man, who had nothing to recommend him except his fine person and his taste in dress. Talbot was not only welcome at the palace when the bottle or the dicebox was going round, but was heard with attention on matters of business. He affected the character of an Irish patriot, and pleaded, with great audacity, and sometimes with success, the cause of his countrymen whose estates had been confiscated. He took care, however, to be well paid for his services, and succeeded in acquiring, partly by the sale of his influence, partly by gambling, and partly by pimping, an estate of three thousand pounds a year. For under an outward show of levity, profusion, improvidence, and eccentric impudence, he was in truth one of the most mercenary and crafty of mankind. He was now no longer young, and was expiating by severe sufferings the dissoluteness of his youth: but age and disease had made no essential change in his character and manners. He still, whenever he opened his mouth, ranted, cursed and swore with such frantic violence that superficial observers set him down for the wildest of libertines. The multitude was unable to conceive that a man who, even when sober, was more furious and boastful than others when they were drunk, and who seemed utterly incapable of disguising any emotion or keeping any secret, could really be a coldhearted, farsighted, scheming sycophant. Yet such a man was Talbot. In truth his hypocrisy was of a far higher and rarer sort than the hypocrisy which had flourished in Barebone's Parliament. For the consummate hypocrite is not he who conceals vice behind the semblance of virtue, but he who makes the vice which he has no objection to show a stalking horse to cover darker and more profitable vice which it is for his interest to hide.

Talbot, raised by James to the earldom of Tyrconnel, had commanded the troops in Ireland during the nine months which elapsed between the death of Charles and the commencement of the viceroyalty of Clarendon. When the new Lord Lieutenant was about to leave London for Dublin, the General was summoned from Dublin to London. Dick Talbot had long been well known on the road which he had now to travel. Between Chester and the capital there was not an inn where he had not been in a brawl. Wherever he came he pressed horses in defiance of law, swore at the cooks and postilions, and almost raised mobs by his insolent rodomontades. The Reformation, he told the people, had ruined everything. But fine times were coming. The Catholics would soon be uppermost. The heretics should pay for all. Raving and blaspheming incessantly, like a demoniac, he came to the court. [52](#) As soon as he was there, he allied himself closely with Castelmaine, Dover, and Albeville. These men called with one voice for war on the constitution of the Church and the State. They told their master that he owed it to his religion and to the dignity of his crown to stand firm against the outcry of heretical demagogues, and to let the Parliament see from the first that he would be master in spite of opposition, and that the only effect of opposition would be to make him a hard master.

Each of the two parties into which the court was divided had zealous foreign allies. The ministers of Spain, of the Empire, and of the States General were now as anxious to support Rochester as they had formerly been to support Halifax. All the influence of Barillon was employed on the other side; and Barillon was assisted by another French agent, inferior to him in station, but far superior in abilities, Bonrepaux. Barillon was not without parts, and possessed in large measure the graces and accomplishments which then distinguished the French gentry. But his capacity was scarcely equal to what his great place required. He had become sluggish and self indulgent, liked the pleasures of society and of the table better than business, and on great emergencies generally waited for admonitions and even for reprimands from Versailles before he showed much activity. [53](#) Bonrepaux had raised himself from obscurity by the intelligence and industry which he had exhibited as a clerk in the department of the marine, and was esteemed an adept in the mystery of mercantile politics. At the close of the year 1685, he was sent to London, charged with several special commissions of high importance. He was to lay the ground for a treaty of commerce; he was to ascertain and report the state of the English fleets and dockyards; and he was to make some overtures to the Huguenot refugees, who, it was supposed, had been so effectually tamed by penury and exile, that they would thankfully accept almost any terms of reconciliation. The new Envoy's origin was plebeian, his stature was dwarfish, his countenance was ludicrously ugly, and his accent was that of his native Gascony: but his strong sense, his keen penetration, and his lively wit eminently qualified him for his post. In spite of every disadvantage of birth and figure he was soon known as a most pleasing companion and as a most skilful diplomatist. He contrived, while flirting with the Duchess of Mazarin, discussing literary questions with Waller and Saint Evremond, and corresponding with La Fontaine, to acquire a considerable knowledge of English politics. His skill in maritime affairs recommended him to James, who had, during many years, paid close attention to the business of the Admiralty, and understood that business as well as he was capable of understanding anything. They conversed every day long and freely about the state of the shipping and the dock-yards. The result of this intimacy was, as might have been expected, that the keen and vigilant Frenchman conceived a great contempt for the King's abilities and character. The world, he said, had much overrated His Britannic Majesty, who had less capacity than Charles, and not more virtues. [54](#)

The two envoys of Lewis, though pursuing one object, very judiciously took different paths. They made a partition of the court. Bonrepaux lived chiefly with Rochester and Rochester's adherents. Barillon's connections were chiefly with the opposite faction. The consequence was that they sometimes saw the same event in different points of view. The best account now extant of the contest which at this time agitated Whitehall is to be found in their despatches.

As each of the two parties at the Court of James had the support of foreign princes, so each had also the support of an ecclesiastical authority to which the King paid great deference. The Supreme Pontiff was for legal and moderate courses; and his sentiments were expressed by the Nuncio and by the Vicar Apostolic. [55](#) On the other side was a body of which the weight balanced even the weight of the Papacy, the mighty Order of Jesus.

That at this conjuncture these two great spiritual powers, once, as it seemed, inseparably allied, should have been opposed to each other, is a most important and remarkable circumstance. During a period of little less than a thousand years the regular clergy had been the chief support of the Holy See. By that See they had been protected from episcopal interference; and the protection which they had received had been amply repaid. But for their exertions it is probable that the Bishop of Rome would have been merely the honorary president of a vast aristocracy of prelates. It was by the aid of the Benedictines that Gregory the Seventh was enabled to contend at once against the Franconian Caesars and against the secular priesthood. It was by the aid of the Dominicans and Franciscans that Innocent the Third crushed the Albigensian sectaries. In the sixteenth century the Pontificate exposed to new dangers more formidable than had ever before threatened it, was saved by a new religious order, which was animated by intense enthusiasm and organized with exquisite skill. When the Jesuits

came to the rescue of the Papacy, they found it in extreme peril: but from that moment the tide of battle turned. Protestantism, which had, during a whole generation, carried all before it, was stopped in its progress, and rapidly beaten back from the foot of the Alps to the shores of the Baltic. Before the Order had existed a hundred years, it had filled the whole world with memorials of great things done and suffered for the faith. No religious community could produce a list of men so variously distinguished:—none had extended its operations over so vast a space; yet in none had there ever been such perfect unity of feeling and action. There was no region of the globe, no walk of speculative or of active life, in which Jesuits were not to be found. They guided the counsels of Kings. They deciphered Latin inscriptions. They observed the motions of Jupiter's satellites. They published whole libraries, controversy, casuistry, history, treatises on optics, Alcaic odes, editions of the fathers, madrigals, catechisms, and lampoons. The liberal education of youth passed almost entirely into their hands, and was conducted by them with conspicuous ability. They appear to have discovered the precise point to which intellectual culture can be carried without risk of intellectual emancipation. Enmity itself was compelled to own that, in the art of managing and forming the tender mind, they had no equals. Meanwhile they assiduously and successfully cultivated the eloquence of the pulpit. With still greater assiduity and still greater success they applied themselves to the ministry of the confessional. Throughout Catholic Europe the secrets of every government and of almost every family of note were in their keeping. They glided from one Protestant country to another under innumerable disguises, as gay Cavaliers, as simple rustics, as Puritan preachers. They wandered to countries which neither mercantile avidity nor liberal curiosity had ever impelled any stranger to explore. They were to be found in the garb of Mandarins, superintending the observatory at Pekin. They were to be found, spade in hand, teaching the rudiments of agriculture to the savages of Paraguay. Yet, whatever might be their residence, whatever might be their employment, their spirit was the same, entire devotion to the common cause, implicit obedience to the central authority. None of them had chosen his dwelling place or his vocation for himself. Whether the Jesuit should live under the arctic circle or under the equator, whether he should pass his life in arranging gems and collating manuscripts at the Vatican or in persuading naked barbarians in the southern hemisphere not to eat each other, were matters which he left with profound submission to the decision of others. If he was wanted at Lima, he was on the Atlantic in the next fleet. If he was wanted at Bagdad, he was toiling through the desert with the next caravan. If his ministry was needed in some country where his life was more insecure than that of a wolf, where it was a crime to harbour him, where the heads and quarters of his brethren, fixed in the public places, showed him what he had to expect, he went without remonstrance or hesitation to his doom. Nor is this heroic spirit yet extinct. When, in our own time, a new and terrible pestilence passed round the globe, when, in some great cities, fear had dissolved all the ties which hold society together, when the secular clergy had deserted their flocks, when medical succour was not to be purchased by gold, when the strongest natural affections had yielded to the love of life, even then the Jesuit was found by the pallet which bishop and curate, physician and nurse, father and mother, had deserted, bending over infected lips to catch the faint accents of confession, and holding up to the last, before the expiring penitent, the image of the expiring Redeemer.

But with the admirable energy, disinterestedness, and self-devotion which were characteristic of the Society, great vices were mingled. It was alleged, and not without foundation, that the ardent public spirit which made the Jesuit regardless of his ease, of his liberty, and of his life, made him also regardless of truth and of mercy; that no means which could promote the interest of his religion seemed to him unlawful, and that by the interest of his religion he too often meant the interest of his Society. It was alleged that, in the most atrocious plots recorded in history, his agency could be distinctly traced; that, constant only in attachment to the fraternity to which he belonged, he was in some countries the most dangerous enemy of freedom, and in others the most dangerous enemy of order. The mighty victories which he boasted that he had achieved in the cause of the Church were, in the judgment of many illustrious members of that Church, rather apparent than real. He

had indeed laboured with a wonderful show of success to reduce the world under her laws; but he had done so by relaxing her laws to suit the temper of the world. Instead of toiling to elevate human nature to the noble standard fixed by divine precept and example, he had lowered the standard till it was beneath the average level of human nature. He gloried in multitudes of converts who had been baptized in the remote regions of the East: but it was reported that from some of those converts the facts on which the whole theology of the Gospel depends had been cunningly concealed, and that others were permitted to avoid persecution by bowing down before the images of false gods, while internally repeating Paters and Ayes. Nor was it only in heathen countries that such arts were said to be practised. It was not strange that people of all ranks, and especially of the highest ranks, crowded to the confessionals in the Jesuit temples; for from those confessionals none went discontented away. There the priest was all things to all men. He showed just so much rigour as might not drive those who knelt at his spiritual tribunal to the Dominican or the Franciscan church. If he had to deal with a mind truly devout, he spoke in the saintly tones of the primitive fathers, but with that very large part of mankind who have religion enough to make them uneasy when they do wrong, and not religion enough to keep them from doing wrong, he followed a very different system. Since he could not reclaim them from guilt, it was his business to save them from remorse. He had at his command an immense dispensary of anodynes for wounded consciences. In the books of casuistry which had been written by his brethren, and printed with the approbation of his superiors, were to be found doctrines consolatory to transgressors of every class. There the bankrupt was taught how he might, without sin, secrete his goods from his creditors. The servant was taught how he might, without sin, run off with his master's plate. The pandar was assured that a Christian man might innocently earn his living by carrying letters and messages between married women and their gallants. The high spirited and punctilious gentlemen of France were gratified by a decision in favour of duelling. The Italians, accustomed to darker and baser modes of vengeance, were glad to learn that they might, without any crime, shoot at their enemies from behind hedges. To deceit was given a license sufficient to destroy the whole value of human contracts and of human testimony. In truth, if society continued to hold together, if life and property enjoyed any security, it was because common sense and common humanity restrained men from doing what the Society of Jesus assured them that they might with a safe conscience do.

So strangely were good and evil intermixed in the character of these celebrated brethren; and the intermixture was the secret of their gigantic power. That power could never have belonged to mere hypocrites. It could never have belonged to rigid moralists. It was to be attained only by men sincerely enthusiastic in the pursuit of a great end, and at the same time unscrupulous as to the choice of means.

From the first the Jesuits had been bound by a peculiar allegiance to the Pope. Their mission had been not less to quell all mutiny within the Church than to repel the hostility of her avowed enemies. Their doctrine was in the highest degree what has been called on our side of the Alps Ultramontane, and differed almost as much from the doctrine of Bossuet as from that of Luther. They condemned the Gallican liberties, the claim of oecumenical councils to control the Holy See, and the claim of Bishops to an independent commission from heaven. Lainez, in the name of the whole fraternity, proclaimed at Trent, amidst the applause of the creatures of Pius the Fourth, and the murmurs of French and Spanish prelates, that the government of the faithful had been committed by Christ to the Pope alone, that in the Pope alone all sacerdotal authority was concentrated, and that through the Pope alone priests and bishops derived whatever divine authority they possessed. ⁵⁶ During many years the union between the Supreme Pontiffs and the Order had continued unbroken. Had that union been still unbroken when James the Second ascended the English throne, had the influence of the Jesuits as well as the influence of the Pope been exerted in favour of a moderate and constitutional policy, it is probable that the great revolution which in a short time changed the whole state of European affairs would never have taken place. But, even before the middle of the seventeenth century, the Society, proud of its services and confident in its strength, had become impatient of the yoke. A generation

of Jesuits sprang up, who looked for protection and guidance rather to the court of France than to the court of Rome; and this disposition was not a little strengthened when Innocent the Eleventh was raised to the papal throne.

The Jesuits were, at that time, engaged in a war to the death against an enemy whom they had at first disdained, but whom they had at length been forced to regard with respect and fear. Just when their prosperity was at the height, they were braved by a handful of opponents, who had indeed no influence with the rulers of this world, but who were strong in religious faith and intellectual energy. Then followed a long, a strange, a glorious conflict of genius against power. The Jesuit called cabinets, tribunals, universities to his aid; and they responded to the call. Port Royal appealed, not in vain, to the hearts and to the understandings of millions. The dictators of Christendom found themselves, on a sudden, in the position of culprits. They were arraigned on the charge of having systematically debased the standard of evangelical morality, for the purpose of increasing their own influence; and the charge was enforced in a manner which at once arrested the attention of the whole world: for the chief accuser was Blaise Pascal. His intellectual powers were such as have rarely been bestowed on any of the children of men; and the vehemence of the zeal which animated him was but too well proved by the cruel penances and vigils under which his macerated frame sank into an early grave. His spirit was the spirit of Saint Bernard: but the delicacy of his wit, the purity, the energy, the simplicity of his rhetoric, had never been equalled, except by the great masters of Attic eloquence. All Europe read and admired, laughed and wept. The Jesuits attempted to reply: but their feeble answers were received by the public with shouts of mockery. They wanted, it is true, no talent or accomplishment into which men can be drilled by elaborate discipline; but such discipline, though it may bring out the powers of ordinary minds, has a tendency to suffocate, rather than to develop, original genius. It was universally acknowledged that, in the literary contest, the Jansenists were completely victorious. To the Jesuits nothing was left but to oppress the sect which they could not confute. Lewis the Fourteenth was now their chief support. His conscience had, from boyhood, been in their keeping; and he had learned from them to abhor Jansenism quite as much as he abhorred Protestantism, and very much more than he abhorred Atheism. Innocent the Eleventh, on the other hand, leaned to the Jansenist opinions. The consequence was, that the Society found itself in a situation never contemplated by its founder. The Jesuits were estranged from the Supreme Pontiff; and they were closely allied with a prince who proclaimed himself the champion of the Gallican liberties and the enemy of Ultramontane pretensions. Thus the Order became in England an instrument of the designs of Lewis, and laboured, with a success which the Roman Catholics afterwards long and bitterly deplored, to widen the breach between the King and the Parliament, to thwart the Nuncio, to undermine the power of the Lord Treasurer, and to support the most desperate schemes of Tyrconnel.

Thus on one side were the Hydes and the whole body of Tory churchmen, Powis and all the most respectable noblemen and gentlemen of the King's own faith, the States General, the House of Austria, and the Pope. On the other side were a few Roman Catholic adventurers, of broken fortune and tainted reputation, backed by France and by the Jesuits.

The chief representative of the Jesuits at Whitehall was an English brother of the Order, who had, during some time, acted as Viceprovincial, who had been long regarded by James with peculiar favour, and who had lately been made Clerk of the Closet. This man, named Edward Petre, was descended from an honourable family. His manners were courtly: his speech was flowing and plausible; but he was weak and vain, covetous and ambitious. Of all the evil counsellors who had access to the royal ear, he bore, perhaps, the largest part in the ruin of the House of Stuart.

The obstinate and imperious nature of the King gave great advantages to those who advised him to be firm, to yield nothing, and to make himself feared. One state maxim had taken possession of his small understanding, and was not to be dislodged by reason. To reason, indeed, he was not in the habit of attending. His mode of arguing, if it is to be so called, was one not uncommon among dull and stubborn persons, who are accustomed to be surrounded by their inferiors. He asserted a proposition;

and, as often as wiser people ventured respectfully to show that it was erroneous, he asserted it again, in exactly the same words, and conceived that, by doing so, he at once disposed of all objections. [57](#) "I will make no concession," he often repeated; "my father made concessions, and he was beheaded." [58](#) If it were true that concession had been fatal to Charles the First, a man of sense would have known that a single experiment is not sufficient to establish a general rule even in sciences much less complicated than the science of government; that, since the beginning of the world, no two political experiments were ever made of which all the conditions were exactly alike; and that the only way to learn civil prudence from history is to examine and compare an immense number of cases. But, if the single instance on which the King relied proved anything, it proved that he was in the wrong. There can be little doubt that, if Charles had frankly made to the Short Parliament, which met in the spring of 1640, but one half of the concessions which he made, a few months later, to the Long Parliament, he would have lived and died a powerful King. On the other hand, there can be no doubt whatever that, if he had refused to make any concession to the Long Parliament, and had resorted to arms in defence of the ship money and of the Star Chamber, he would have seen, in the hostile ranks, Hyde and Falkland side by side with Hollis and Hampden. But, in truth, he would not have been able to resort to arms; for nor twenty Cavaliers would have joined his standard. It was to his large concessions alone that he owed the support of that great body of noblemen and gentlemen who fought so long and so gallantly in his cause. But it would have been useless to represent these things to James.

Another fatal delusion had taken possession of his mind, and was never dispelled till it had ruined him. He firmly believed that, do what he might, the members of the Church of England would act up to their principles. It had, he knew, been proclaimed from ten thousand pulpits, it had been solemnly declared by the University of Oxford, that even tyranny as frightful as that of the most depraved of the Caesars did not justify subjects in resisting the royal authority; and hence he was weak enough to conclude that the whole body of Tory gentlemen and clergymen would let him plunder, oppress, and insult them without lifting an arm against him. It seems strange that any man should have passed his fiftieth year without discovering that people sometimes do what they think wrong; and James had only to look into his own heart for abundant proof that even a strong sense of religious duty will not always prevent frail human beings from indulging their passions in defiance of divine laws, and at the risk of awful penalties. He must have been conscious that, though he thought adultery sinful, he was an adulterer: but nothing could convince him that any man who professed to think rebellion sinful would ever, in any extremity, be a rebel. The Church of England was, in his view, a passive victim, which he might, without danger, outrage and torture at his pleasure; nor did he ever see his error till the Universities were preparing to coin their plate for the purpose of supplying the military chest of his enemies, and till a Bishop, long renowned for loyalty, had thrown aside his cassock, girt on a sword, and taken the command of a regiment of insurgents.

In these fatal follies the King was artfully encouraged by a minister who had been an Exclusionist, and who still called himself a Protestant, the Earl of Sunderland. The motives and conduct of this unprincipled politician have often been misrepresented. He was, in his own lifetime, accused by the Jacobites of having, even before the beginning of the reign of James, determined to bring about a revolution in favour of the Prince of Orange, and of having, with that view, recommended a succession of outrages on the civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the realm. This idle story has been repeated down to our own days by ignorant writers. But no well informed historian, whatever might be his prejudices, has condescended to adopt it: for it rests on no evidence whatever; and scarcely any evidence would convince reasonable men that Sunderland deliberately incurred guilt and infamy in order to bring about a change by which it was clear that he could not possibly be a gainer, and by which, in fact, he lost immense wealth and influence. Nor is there the smallest reason for resorting to so strange a hypothesis. For the truth lies on the surface. Crooked as this man's course was, the law which determined it was simple. His conduct is to be ascribed to the alternate influence of cupidity and fear on a mind highly susceptible of both those passions, and quicksighted rather than

farsighted. He wanted more power and more money. More power he could obtain only at Rochester's expense; and the obvious way to obtain power at Rochester's expense was to encourage the dislike which the King felt for Rochester's moderate counsels. Money could be most easily and most largely obtained from the court of Versailles; and Sunderland was eager to sell himself to that court. He had no jovial generous vices. He cared little for wine or for beauty: but he desired riches with an ungovernable and insatiable desire. The passion for play raged in him without measure, and had not been tamed by ruinous losses. His hereditary fortune was ample. He had long filled lucrative posts, and had neglected no art which could make them more lucrative: but his ill luck at the hazard table was such that his estates were daily becoming more and more encumbered. In the hope of extricating himself from his embarrassments, he betrayed to Barillon all the schemes adverse to France which had been meditated in the English cabinet, and hinted that a Secretary of State could in such times render services for which it might be wise in Lewis to pay largely. The Ambassador told his master that six thousand guineas was the smallest gratification that could be offered to so important a minister. Lewis consented to go as high as twenty-five thousand crowns, equivalent to about five thousand six hundred pounds sterling. It was agreed that Sunderland should receive this sum yearly, and that he should, in return, exert all his influence to prevent the reassembling of the Parliament. [59](#) He joined himself therefore to the Jesuitical cabal, and made so dexterous an use of the influence of that cabal that he was appointed to succeed Halifax in the high dignity of Lord President without being required to resign the far more active and lucrative post of Secretary. [60](#) He felt, however, that he could never hope to obtain paramount influence in the court while he was supposed to belong to the Established Church. All religions were the same to him. In private circles, indeed, he was in the habit of talking with profane contempt of the most sacred things. He therefore determined to let the King have the delight and glory of effecting a conversion. Some management, however, was necessary. No man is utterly without regard for the opinion of his fellow creatures; and even Sunderland, though not very sensible to shame, flinched from the infamy of public apostasy. He played his part with rare adroitness. To the world he showed himself as a Protestant. In the royal closet he assumed the character of an earnest inquirer after truth, who was almost persuaded to declare himself a Roman Catholic, and who, while waiting for fuller illumination, was disposed to render every service in his power to the professors of the old faith. James, who was never very discerning, and who in religious matters was absolutely blind, suffered himself, notwithstanding all that he had seen of human knavery, of the knavery of courtiers as a class, and of the knavery of Sunderland in particular, to be duped into the belief that divine grace had touched the most false and callous of human hearts. During many months the wily minister continued to be regarded at court as a promising catechumen, without exhibiting himself to the public in the character of a renegade. [61](#)

He early suggested to the King the expediency of appointing a secret committee of Roman Catholics to advise on all matters affecting the interests of their religion. This committee met sometimes at Chiffinch's lodgings, and sometimes at the official apartments of Sunderland, who, though still nominally a Protestant, was admitted to all its deliberations, and soon obtained a decided ascendancy over the other members. Every Friday the Jesuitical cabal dined with the Secretary. The conversation at table was free; and the weaknesses of the prince whom the confederates hoped to manage were not spared. To Petre Sunderland promised a Cardinal's hat; to Castelmaine a splendid embassy to Rome; to Dover a lucrative command in the Guards; and to Tyrconnel high employment in Ireland. Thus hound together by the strongest ties of interest, these men addressed themselves to the task of subverting the Treasurer's power. [62](#)

There were two Protestant members of the cabinet who took no decided part in the struggle. Jeffreys was at this time tortured by a cruel internal malady which had been aggravated by intemperance. At a dinner which a wealthy Alderman gave to some of the leading members of the government, the Lord Treasurer and the Lord Chancellor were so drunk that they stripped themselves almost stark naked, and were with difficulty prevented from climbing up a signpost to drink His

Majesty's health. The pious Treasurer escaped with nothing but the scandal of the debauch: but the Chancellor brought on a violent fit of his complaint. His life was for some time thought to be in serious danger. James expressed great uneasiness at the thought of losing a minister who suited him so well, and said, with some truth, that the loss of such a man could not be easily repaired. Jeffreys, when he became convalescent, promised his support to both the contending parties, and waited to see which of them would prove victorious. Some curious proofs of his duplicity are still extant. It has been already said that the two French agents who were then resident in London had divided the English court between them. Bonrepaux was constantly with Rochester; and Barillon lived with Sunderland. Lewis was informed in the same week by Bonrepaux that the Chancellor was entirely with the Treasurer, and by Barillon that the Chancellor was in league with the Secretary. [63](#)

Godolphin, cautious and taciturn, did his best to preserve neutrality. His opinions and wishes were undoubtedly with Rochester; but his office made it necessary for him to be in constant attendance on the Queen; and he was naturally unwilling to be on bad terms with her. There is indeed reason to believe that he regarded her with an attachment more romantic than often finds place in the hearts of veteran statesmen; and circumstances, which it is now necessary to relate, had thrown her entirely into the hands of the Jesuitical cabal. [64](#)

The King, stern as was his temper and grave as was his deportment, was scarcely less under the influence of female attractions than his more lively and amiable brother had been. The beauty, indeed, which distinguished the favourite ladies of Charles was not necessary to James. Barbara Palmer, Eleanor Gwynn, and Louisa de Querouaille were among the finest women of their time. James, when young, had surrendered his liberty, descended below his rank, and incurred the displeasure of his family for the coarse features of Anne Hyde. He had soon, to the great diversion of the whole court, been drawn away from his plain consort by a plainer mistress, Arabella Churchill. His second wife, though twenty years younger than himself, and of no unpleasing face or figure, had frequent reason to complain of his inconstancy. But of all his illicit attachments the strongest was that which bound him to Catharine Sedley.

This woman was the daughter of Sir Charles Sedley, one of the most brilliant and profligate wits of the Restoration. The licentiousness of his writings is not redeemed by much grace or vivacity; but the charms of his conversation were acknowledged even by sober men who had no esteem for his character. To sit near him at the theatre, and to hear his criticisms on a new play, was regarded as a privilege. [65](#) Dryden had done him the honour to make him a principal interlocutor in the Dialogue on Dramatic Poesy. The morals of Sedley were such as, even in that age, gave great scandal. He on one occasion, after a wild revel, exhibited himself without a shred of clothing in the balcony of a tavern near Covent Garden, and harangued the people who were passing in language so indecent and profane that he was driven in by a shower of brickbats, was prosecuted for a misdemeanour, was sentenced to a heavy fine, and was reprimanded by the Court of King's Bench in the most cutting terms. [66](#) His daughter had inherited his abilities and his impudence. Personal charms she had none, with the exception of two brilliant eyes, the lustre of which, to men of delicate taste, seemed fierce and unfeminine. Her form was lean, her countenance haggard. Charles, though he liked her conversation, laughed at her ugliness, and said that the priests must have recommended her to his brother by way of penance. She well knew that she was not handsome, and jested freely on her own homeliness. Yet, with strange inconsistency, she loved to adorn herself magnificently, and drew on herself much keen ridicule by appearing in the theatre and the ring plastered, painted, clad in Brussels lace, glittering with diamonds, and affecting all the graces of eighteen. [67](#)

The nature of her influence over James is not easily to be explained. He was no longer young. He was a religious man; at least he was willing to make for his religion exertions and sacrifices from which the great majority of those who are called religious men would shrink. It seems strange that any attractions should have drawn him into a course of life which he must have regarded as highly criminal; and in this case none could understand where the attraction lay. Catharine herself was

astonished by the violence of his passion. "It cannot be my beauty," she said; "for he must see that I have none; and it cannot be my wit, for he has not enough to know that I have any."

At the moment of the King's accession a sense of the new responsibility which lay on him made his mind for a time peculiarly open to religious impressions. He formed and announced many good resolutions, spoke in public with great severity of the impious and licentious manners of the age, and in private assured his Queen and his confessor that he would see Catharine Sedley no more. He wrote to his mistress entreating her to quit the apartments which she occupied at Whitehall, and to go to a house in Saint James's Square which had been splendidly furnished for her at his expense. He at the same time promised to allow her a large pension from his privy purse. Catharine, clever, strongminded, intrepid, and conscious of her power, refused to stir. In a few months it began to be whispered that the services of Chiffinch were again employed, and that the mistress frequently passed and repassed through that private door through which Father Huddleston had borne the host to the bedside of Charles. The King's Protestant ministers had, it seems, conceived a hope that their master's infatuation for this woman might cure him of the more pernicious infatuation which impelled him to attack their religion. She had all the talents which could qualify her to play on his feelings, to make game of his scruples, to set before him in a strong light the difficulties and dangers into which he was running headlong. Rochester, the champion of the Church, exerted himself to strengthen her influence. Ormond, who is popularly regarded as the personification of all that is pure and highminded in the English Cavalier, encouraged the design. Even Lady Rochester was not ashamed to cooperate, and that in the very worst way. Her office was to direct the jealousy of the injured wife towards a young lady who was perfectly innocent. The whole court took notice of the coldness and rudeness with which the Queen treated the poor girl on whom suspicion had been thrown: but the cause of Her Majesty's ill humour was a mystery. For a time the intrigue went on prosperously and secretly. Catharine often told the King plainly what the Protestant Lords of the Council only dared to hint in the most delicate phrases. His crown, she said, was at stake: the old dotard Arundell and the blustering Tyrconnel would lead him to his ruin. It is possible that her caresses might have done what the united exhortations of the Lords and the Commons, of the House of Austria and the Holy See, had failed to do, but for a strange mishap which changed the whole face of affairs. James, in a fit of fondness, determined to make his mistress Countess of Dorchester in her own right. Catharine saw all the peril of such a step, and declined the invidious honour. Her lover was obstinate, and himself forced the patent into her hands. She at last accepted it on one condition, which shows her confidence in her own power and in his weakness. She made him give her a solemn promise, not that he would never quit her, but that, if he did so, he would himself announce his resolution to her, and grant her one parting interview.

As soon as the news of her elevation got abroad, the whole palace was in an uproar. The warm blood of Italy boiled in the veins of the Queen. Proud of her youth and of her charms, of her high rank and of her stainless chastity, she could not without agonies of grief and rage see herself deserted and insulted for such a rival. Rochester, perhaps remembering how patiently, after a short struggle, Catharine of Braganza had consented to treat the mistresses of Charles with politeness, had expected that, after a little complaining and pouting, Mary of Modena would be equally submissive. It was not so. She did not even attempt to conceal from the eyes of the world the violence of her emotions. Day after day the courtiers who came to see her dine observed that the dishes were removed untasted from the table. She suffered the tears to stream down her cheeks unconcealed in the presence of the whole circle of ministers and envoys. To the King she spoke with wild vehemence. "Let me go," she cried. "You have made your woman a Countess: make her a Queen. Put my crown on her head. Only let me hide myself in some convent, where I may never see her more." Then, more soberly, she asked him how he reconciled his conduct to his religious professions. "You are ready," she said, "to put your kingdom to hazard for the sake of your soul; and yet you are throwing away your soul for the sake of that creature." Father Petre, on bended knees, seconded these remonstrances. It was his duty to do so;

and his duty was not the less strenuously performed because it coincided with his interest. The King went on for a time sinning and repenting. In his hours of remorse his penances were severe. Mary treasured up to the end of her life, and at her death bequeathed to the convent of Chaillot, the scourge with which he had vigorously avenged her wrongs upon his own shoulders. Nothing but Catharine's absence could put an end to this struggle between an ignoble love and an ignoble superstition. James wrote, imploring and commanding her to depart. He owned that he had promised to bid her farewell in person. "But I know too well," he added, "the power which you have over me. I have not strength of mind enough to keep my resolution if I see you." He offered her a yacht to convey her with all dignity and comfort to Flanders, and threatened that if she did not go quietly she should be sent away by force. She at one time worked on his feelings by pretending to be ill. Then she assumed the airs of a martyr, and impudently proclaimed herself a sufferer for the Protestant religion. Then again she adopted the style of John Hampden. She defied the King to remove her. She would try the right with him. While the Great Charter and the Habeas Corpus Act were the law of the land, she would live where she pleased. "And Flanders," she cried; "never! I have learned one thing from my friend the Duchess of Mazarin; and that is never to trust myself in a country where there are convents." At length she selected Ireland as the place of her exile, probably because the brother of her patron Rochester was viceroy there. After many delays she departed, leaving the victory to the Queen. [68](#)

The history of this extraordinary intrigue would be imperfect, if it were not added that there is still extant a religious meditation, written by the Treasurer, with his own hand, on the very same day on which the intelligence of his attempt to govern his master by means of a concubine was despatched by Bonrepaux to Versailles. No composition of Ken or Leighton breathes a spirit of more fervent and exalted piety than this effusion. Hypocrisy cannot be suspected: for the paper was evidently meant only for the writer's own eye, and was not published till he had been more than a century in his grave. So much is history stranger than fiction; and so true is it that nature has caprices which art dares not imitate. A dramatist would scarcely venture to bring on the stage a grave prince, in the decline of life, ready to sacrifice his crown in order to serve the interests of his religion, indefatigable in making proselytes, and yet deserting and insulting a wife who had youth and beauty for the sake of a profligate paramour who had neither. Still less, if possible, would a dramatist venture to introduce a statesman stooping to the wicked and shameful part of a procurer, and calling in his wife to aid him in that dishonourable office, yet, in his moments of leisure, retiring to his closet, and there secretly pouring out his soul to his God in penitent tears and devout ejaculations. [69](#)

The Treasurer soon found that, in using scandalous means for the purpose of obtaining a laudable end, he had committed, not only a crime, but a folly. The Queen was now his enemy. She affected, indeed, to listen with civility while the Hydes excused their recent conduct as well as they could; and she occasionally pretended to use her influence in their favour: but she must have been more or less than woman if she had really forgiven the conspiracy which had been formed against her dignity and her domestic happiness by the family of her husband's first wife. The Jesuits strongly represented to the King the danger which he had so narrowly escaped. His reputation, they said, his peace, his soul, had been put in peril by the machinations of his prime minister. The Nuncio, who would gladly have counteracted the influence of the violent party, and cooperated with the moderate members of the cabinet, could not honestly or decently separate himself on this occasion from Father Petre. James himself, when parted by the sea from the charms which had so strongly fascinated him, could not but regard with resentment and contempt those who had sought to govern him by means of his vices. What had passed must have had the effect of raising his own Church in his esteem, and of lowering the Church of England. The Jesuits, whom it was the fashion to represent as the most unsafe of spiritual guides, as sophists who refined away the whole system of evangelical morality, as sycophants who owed their influence chiefly to the indulgence with which they treated the sins of the great, had reclaimed him from a life of guilt by rebukes as sharp and bold as those which David had heard from Nathan and Herod from the Baptist. On the other hand, zealous Protestants,

whose favourite theme was the laxity of Popish casuists and the wickedness of doing evil that good might come, had attempted to obtain advantages for their own Church in a way which all Christians regarded as highly criminal. The victory of the cabal of evil counsellors was therefore complete. The King looked coldly on Rochester. The courtiers and foreign ministers soon perceived that the Lord Treasurer was prime minister only in name. He continued to offer his advice daily, and had the mortification to find it daily rejected. Yet he could not prevail on himself to relinquish the outward show of power and the emoluments which he directly and indirectly derived from his great place. He did his best, therefore, to conceal his vexations from the public eye. But his violent passions and his intemperate habits disqualified him for the part of a dissembler. His gloomy looks, when he came out of the council chamber, showed how little he was pleased with what had passed at the board; and, when the bottle had gone round freely, words escaped him which betrayed his uneasiness. [70](#)

He might, indeed, well be uneasy. Indiscreet and unpopular measures followed each other in rapid succession. All thought of returning to the policy of the Triple Alliance was abandoned. The King explicitly avowed to the ministers of those continental powers with which he had lately intended to ally himself, that all his views had undergone a change, and that England was still to be, as she had been under his grandfather, his father, and his brother, of no account in Europe. "I am in no condition," he said to the Spanish Ambassador, "to trouble myself about what passes abroad. It is my resolution to let foreign affairs take their course, to establish my authority at home, and to do something for my religion." A few days later he announced the same intentions to the States General. [71](#) From that time to the close of his ignominious reign, he made no serious effort to escape from vassalage, though, to the last, he could never hear, without transports of rage, that men called him a vassal.

The two events which proved to the public that Sunderland and Sunderland's party were victorious were the prorogation of the Parliament from February to May, and the departure of Castelmaine for Rome with the appointments of an Ambassador of the highest rank. [72](#)

Hitherto all the business of the English government at the papal court had been transacted by John Caryl. This gentleman was known to his contemporaries as a man of fortune and fashion, and as the author of two successful plays, a tragedy in rhyme which had been made popular by the action and recitation of Betterton, and a comedy which owes all its value to scenes borrowed from Moliere. These pieces have long been forgotten; but what Caryl could not do for himself has been done for him by a more powerful genius. Half a line in the Rape of the Lock has made his name immortal.

Caryl, who was, like all the other respectable Roman Catholics, an enemy to violent courses, had acquitted himself of his delicate errand at Rome with good sense and good feeling. The business confided to him was well done; but he assumed no public character, and carefully avoided all display. His mission, therefore, put the government to scarcely any charge, and excited scarcely any murmurs. His place was now most unwisely supplied by a costly and ostentatious embassy, offensive in the highest degree to the people of England, and by no means welcome to the court of Rome. Castelmaine had it in charge to demand a Cardinal's hat for his confederate Petre.

About the same time the King began to show, in an unequivocal manner, the feeling which he really entertained towards the banished Huguenots. While he had still hoped to cajole his Parliament into submission and to become the head of an European coalition against France, he had affected to blame the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and to pity the unhappy men whom persecution had driven from their country. He had caused it to be announced that, at every church in the kingdom, a collection would be made under his sanction for their benefit. A proclamation on this subject had been drawn up in terms which might have wounded the pride of a sovereign less sensitive and vainglorious than Lewis. But all was now changed. The principles of the treaty of Dover were again the principles of the foreign policy of England. Ample apologies were therefore made for the discourtesy with which the English government had acted towards France in showing favour to exiled Frenchmen. The proclamation which had displeased Lewis was recalled. [73](#) The Huguenot ministers were admonished

to speak with reverence of their oppressor in their public discourses, as they would answer it at their peril. James not only ceased to express commiseration for the sufferers, but declared that he believed them to harbour the worst designs, and owned that he had been guilty of an error in countenancing them. One of the most eminent of the refugees, John Claude, had published on the Continent a small volume in which he described with great force the sufferings of his brethren. Barillon demanded that some opprobrious mark should be put on his book. James complied, and in full council declared it to be his pleasure that Claude's libel should be burned by the hangman before the Royal Exchange. Even Jeffreys was startled, and ventured to represent that such a proceeding was without example, that the book was written in a foreign tongue, that it had been printed at a foreign press, that it related entirely to transactions which had taken place in a foreign country, and that no English government had ever animadverted on such works. James would not suffer the question to be discussed. "My resolution," he said, "is taken. It has become the fashion to treat Kings disrespectfully; and they must stand by each other. One King should always take another's part: and I have particular reasons for showing this respect to the King of France." There was silence at the board. The order was forthwith issued; and Claude's pamphlet was committed to the flames, not without the deep murmurs of many who had always been reputed steady loyalists. [74](#)

The promised collection was long put off under various pretexts. The King would gladly have broken his word; but it was pledged so solemnly that he could not for very shame retract. [75](#) Nothing, however, which could cool the zeal of congregations was omitted. It had been expected that, according to the practice usual on such occasions, the people would be exhorted to liberality from the pulpits. But James was determined not to tolerate declamations against his religion and his ally. The Archbishop of Canterbury was therefore commanded to inform the clergy that they must merely read the brief, and must not presume to preach on the sufferings of the French Protestants. [76](#) Nevertheless the contributions were so large that, after all deductions, the sum of forty thousand pounds was paid into the Chamber of London. Perhaps none of the munificent subscriptions of our own age has borne so great a proportion to the means of the nation. [77](#)

The King was bitterly mortified by the large amount of the collection which had been made in obedience to his own call. He knew, he said, what all this liberality meant. It was mere Whiggish spite to himself and his religion. [78](#) He had already resolved that the money should be of no use to those whom the donors wished to benefit. He had been, during some weeks, in close communication with the French embassy on this subject, and had, with the approbation of the court of Versailles, determined on a course which it is not very easy to reconcile with those principles of toleration to which he afterwards pretended to be attached. The refugees were zealous for the Calvinistic discipline and worship. James therefore gave orders that none should receive a crust of bread or a basket of coals who did not first take the sacrament according to the Anglican ritual. [79](#) It is strange that this inhospitable rule should have been devised by a prince who affected to consider the Test Act as an outrage on the rights of conscience: for, however unjustifiable it may be to establish a sacramental test for the purpose of ascertaining whether men are fit for civil and military office, it is surely much more unjustifiable to establish a sacramental test for the purpose of ascertaining whether, in their extreme distress, they are fit objects of charity. Nor had James the plea which may be urged in extenuation of the guilt of almost all other persecutors: for the religion which he commanded the refugees to profess, on pain of being left to starve, was not his own religion. His conduct towards them was therefore less excusable than that of Lewis: for Lewis oppressed them in the hope of bringing them over from a damnable heresy to the true Church: James oppressed them only for the purpose of forcing them to apostatize from one damnable heresy to another.

Several Commissioners, of whom the Chancellor was one, had been appointed to dispense the public alms. When they met for the first time, Jeffreys announced the royal pleasure. The refugees, he said, were too generally enemies of monarchy and episcopacy. If they wished for relief, they must become members of the Church of England, and must take the sacrament from the hands of his

chaplain. Many exiles, who had come full of gratitude and hope to apply for succour, heard their sentence, and went brokenhearted away. [80](#)

May was now approaching; and that month had been fixed for the meeting of the Houses: but they were again prorogued to November. [81](#) It was not strange that the King did not wish to meet them: for he had determined to adopt a policy which he knew to be, in the highest degree, odious to them. From his predecessors he had inherited two prerogatives, of which the limits had never been defined with strict accuracy, and which, if exerted without any limit, would of themselves have sufficed to overturn the whole polity of the State and of the Church. These were the dispensing power and the ecclesiastical supremacy. By means of the dispensing power the King purposed to admit Roman Catholics, not merely to civil and military, but to spiritual, offices. By means of the ecclesiastical supremacy he hoped to make the Anglican clergy his instruments for the destruction of their own religion.

This scheme developed itself by degrees. It was not thought safe to begin by granting to the whole Roman Catholic body a dispensation from all statutes imposing penalties and tests. For nothing was more fully established than that such a dispensation was illegal. The Cabal had, in 1672, put forth a general Declaration of Indulgence. The Commons, as soon as they met, had protested against it. Charles the Second had ordered it to be cancelled in his presence, and had, both by his own mouth and by a written message, assured the Houses that the step which had caused so much complaint should never be drawn into precedent. It would have been difficult to find in all the Inns of Court a barrister of reputation to argue in defence of a prerogative which the Sovereign, seated on his throne in full Parliament, had solemnly renounced a few years before. But it was not quite so clear that the King might not, on special grounds, grant exemptions to individuals by name. The first object of James, therefore, was to obtain from the courts of common law an acknowledgment that, to this extent at least, he possessed the dispensing power.

But, though his pretensions were moderate when compared with those which he put forth a few months later, he soon found that he had against him almost the whole sense of Westminster Hall. Four of the Judges gave him to understand that they could not, on this occasion, serve his purpose; and it is remarkable that all the four were violent Tories, and that among them were men who had accompanied Jeffreys on the Bloody Circuit, and who had consented to the death of Cornish and of Elizabeth Gaunt. Jones, the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, a man who had never before shrunk from any drudgery, however cruel or servile, now held in the royal closet language which might have become the lips of the purest magistrates in our history. He was plainly told that he must either give up his opinion or his place. "For my place," he answered, "I care little. I am old and worn out in the service of the crown; but I am mortified to find that your Majesty thinks me capable of giving a judgment which none but an ignorant or a dishonest man could give." "I am determined," said the King, "to have twelve Judges who will be all of my mind as to this matter." "Your Majesty," answered Jones, "may find twelve Judges of your mind, but hardly twelve lawyers." [82](#) He was dismissed together with Montague, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and two puisne Judges, Neville and Charlton. One of the new Judges was Christopher Milton, younger brother of the great poet. Of Christopher little is known except that, in the time of the civil war, he had been a Royalist, and that he now, in his old age, leaned towards Popery. It does not appear that he was ever formally reconciled to the Church of Rome: but he certainly had scruples about communicating with the Church of England, and had therefore a strong interest in supporting the dispensing power. [83](#)

The King found his counsel as refractory as his Judges. The first barrister who learned that he was expected to defend the dispensing power was the Solicitor General, Heneage Finch. He peremptorily refused, and was turned out of office on the following day. [84](#) The Attorney General, Sawyer, was ordered to draw warrants authorising members of the Church of Rome to hold benefices belonging to the Church of England. Sawyer had been deeply concerned in some of the harshest and most unjustifiable prosecutions of that age; and the Whigs abhorred him as a man stained with the

blood of Russell and Sidney: but on this occasion he showed no want of honesty or of resolution. "Sir," said he, "this is not merely to dispense with a statute; it is to annul the whole statute law from the accession of Elizabeth to this day. I dare not do it; and I implore your Majesty to consider whether such an attack upon the rights of the Church be in accordance with your late gracious promises."

[85](#) Sawyer would have been instantly dismissed as Finch had been, if the government could have found a successor: but this was no easy matter. It was necessary for the protection of the rights of the crown that one at least of the crown lawyers should be a man of learning, ability, and experience; and no such man was willing to defend the dispensing power. The Attorney General was therefore permitted to retain his place during some months. Thomas Powis, an insignificant man, who had no qualification for high employment except servility, was appointed Solicitor.

The preliminary arrangements were now complete. There was a Solicitor General to argue for the dispensing power, and twelve Judges to decide in favour of it. The question was therefore speedily brought to a hearing. Sir Edward Hales, a gentleman of Kent, had been converted to Popery in days when it was not safe for any man of note openly to declare himself a Papist. He had kept his secret, and, when questioned, had affirmed that he was a Protestant with a solemnity which did little credit to his principles. When James had ascended the throne, disguise was no longer necessary. Sir Edward publicly apostatized, and was rewarded with the command of a regiment of foot. He had held his commission more than three months without taking the sacrament. He was therefore liable to a penalty of five hundred pounds, which an informer might recover by action of debt. A menial servant was employed to bring a suit for this sum in the Court of King's Bench. Sir Edward did not dispute the facts alleged against him, but pleaded that he had letters patent authorising him to hold his commission notwithstanding the Test Act. The plaintiff demurred, that is to say, admitted Sir Edward's plea to be true in fact, but denied that it was a sufficient answer. Thus was raised a simple issue of law to be decided by the court. A barrister, who was notoriously a tool of the government, appeared for the mock plaintiff, and made some feeble objections to the defendant's plea. The new Solicitor General replied. The Attorney General took no part in the proceedings. Judgment was given by the Lord Chief Justice, Sir Edward Herbert. He announced that he had submitted the question to all the twelve Judges, and that, in the opinion of eleven of them, the King might lawfully dispense with penal statutes in particular cases, and for special reasons of grave importance. The single dissentient, Baron Street, was not removed from his place. He was a man of morals so bad that his own relations shrank from him, and that the Prince of Orange, at the time of the Revolution, was advised not to see him. The character of Street makes it impossible to believe that he would have been more scrupulous than his brethren. The character of James makes it impossible to believe that a refractory Baron of the Exchequer would have been permitted to retain his post. There can be no reasonable doubt that the dissenting Judge was, like the plaintiff and the plaintiff's counsel, acting collusively. It was important that there should be a great preponderance of authority in favour of the dispensing power; yet it was important that the bench, which had been carefully packed for the occasion, should appear to be independent. One Judge, therefore, the least respectable of the twelve, was permitted, or more probably commanded, to give his voice against the prerogative. [86](#)

The power which the courts of law had thus recognised was not suffered to lie idle. Within a month after the decision of the King's Bench had been pronounced, four Roman Catholic Lords were sworn of the Privy Council. Two of these, Powis and Bellasyse, were of the moderate party, and probably took their seats with reluctance and with many sad forebodings. The other two, Arundell and Dover, had no such misgivings. [87](#)

The dispensing power was, at the same time, employed for the purpose of enabling Roman Catholics to hold ecclesiastical preferment. The new Solicitor readily drew the warrants in which Sawyer had refused to be concerned. One of these warrants was in favour of a wretch named Edward Sclater, who had two livings which he was determined to keep at all costs and through all changes. He administered the sacrament to his parishioners according to the rites of the Church of England on

Palm Sunday 1686. On Easter Sunday, only seven days later, he was at mass. The royal dispensation authorised him to retain the emoluments of his benefices. To the remonstrances of the patrons from whom he had received his preferment he replied in terms of insolent defiance, and, while the Roman Catholic cause prospered, put forth an absurd treatise in defence of his apostasy. But, a very few weeks after the Revolution, a great congregation assembled at Saint Mary's in the Savoy, to see him received again into the bosom of the Church which he had deserted. He read his recantation with tears flowing from his eyes, and pronounced a bitter invective against the Popish priests whose arts had seduced him. [88](#)

Scarcely less infamous was the conduct of Obadiah Walker. He was an aged priest of the Church of England, and was well known in the University of Oxford as a man of learning. He had in the late reign been suspected of leaning towards Popery, but had outwardly conformed to the established religion, and had at length been chosen Master of University College. Soon after the accession of James, Walker determined to throw off the disguise which he had hitherto worn. He absented himself from the public worship of the Church of England, and, with some fellows and undergraduates whom he had perverted, heard mass daily in his own apartments. One of the first acts performed by the new Solicitor General was to draw up an instrument which authorised Walker and his proselytes to hold their benefices, notwithstanding their apostasy. Builders were immediately employed to turn two sets of rooms into an oratory. In a few weeks the Roman Catholic rites were publicly performed in University College. A Jesuit was quartered there as chaplain. A press was established there under royal license for the printing of Roman Catholic tracts. During two years and a half, Walker continued to make war on Protestantism with all the rancour of a renegade: but when fortune turned he showed that he wanted the courage of a martyr. He was brought to the bar of the House of Commons to answer for his conduct, and was base enough to protest that he had never changed his religion, that he had never cordially approved of the doctrines of the Church of Rome, and that he had never tried to bring any other person within the pale of that Church. It was hardly worth while to violate the most sacred obligations of law and of plighted faith, for the purpose of making such converts as these. [89](#)

In a short time the King went a step further. Sclater and Walker had only been permitted to keep, after they became Papists, the preferment which had been bestowed on them while they passed for Protestants. To confer a high office in the Established Church on an avowed enemy of that Church was a far bolder violation of the laws and of the royal word. But no course was too bold for James. The Deanery of Christchurch became vacant. That office was, both in dignity and in emolument, one of the highest in the University of Oxford. The Dean was charged with the government of a greater number of youths of high connections and of great hopes than could then be found in any other college. He was also the head of a Cathedral. In both characters it was necessary that he should be a member of the Church of England. Nevertheless John Massey, who was notoriously a member of the Church of Rome, and who had not one single recommendation, except that he was a member of the Church of Rome, was appointed by virtue of the dispensing power; and soon within the walls of Christchurch an altar was decked, at which mass was daily celebrated. [90](#) To the Nuncio the King said that what had been done at Oxford should very soon be done at Cambridge. [91](#)

Yet even this was a small evil compared with that which Protestants had good ground to apprehend. It seemed but too probable that the whole government of the Anglican Church would shortly pass into the hands of her deadly enemies. Three important sees had lately become vacant, that of York, that of Chester, and that of Oxford. The Bishopric of Oxford was given to Samuel Parker, a parasite, whose religion, if he had any religion, was that of Rome, and who called himself a Protestant only because he was encumbered with a wife. "I wished," the King said to Adda, "to appoint an avowed Catholic: but the time is not come. Parker is well inclined to us; he is one of us in feeling; and by degrees he will bring round his clergy." [92](#) The Bishopric of Chester, vacant by the death of John Pearson, a great name both in philology and in divinity, was bestowed on Thomas Cartwright, a still viler sycophant than Parker. The Archbishopric of York remained several years

vacant. As no good reason could be found for leaving so important a place unfilled, men suspected that the nomination was delayed only till the King could venture to place the mitre on the head of an avowed Papist. It is indeed highly probable that the Church of England was saved from this outrage by the good sense and good feeling of the Pope. Without a special dispensation from Rome no Jesuit could be a Bishop; and Innocent could not be induced to grant such a dispensation to Petre.

James did not even make any secret of his intention to exert vigorously and systematically for the destruction of the Established Church all the powers which he possessed as her head. He plainly said that, by a wise dispensation of Providence, the Act of Supremacy would be the means of healing the fatal breach which it had caused. Henry and Elizabeth had usurped a dominion which rightfully belonged to the Holy See. That dominion had, in the course of succession, descended to an orthodox prince, and would be held by him in trust for the Holy See. He was authorised by law to repress spiritual abuses; and the first spiritual abuse which he would repress should be the liberty which the Anglican clergy assumed of defending their own religion and of attacking the doctrines of Rome. [93](#)

But he was met by a great difficulty. The ecclesiastical supremacy which had devolved on him, was by no means the same great and terrible prerogative which Elizabeth, James the First, and Charles the First had possessed. The enactment which annexed to the crown an almost boundless visitatorial authority over the Church, though it had never been formally repealed, had really lost a great part of its force. The substantive law remained; but it remained unaccompanied by any formidable sanction or by any efficient system of procedure, and was therefore little more than a dead letter.

The statute, which restored to Elizabeth the spiritual dominion assumed by her father and resigned by her sister, contained a clause authorising the sovereign to constitute a tribunal which might investigate, reform, and punish all ecclesiastical delinquencies. Under the authority given by this clause, the Court of High Commission was created. That court was, during many years, the terror of Nonconformists, and, under the harsh administration of Laud, became an object of fear and hatred even to those who most loved the Established Church. When the Long Parliament met, the High Commission was generally regarded as the most grievous of the many grievances under which the nation laboured. An act was therefore somewhat hastily passed, which not only took away from the Crown the power of appointing visitors to superintend the Church, but abolished all ecclesiastical courts without distinction.

After the Restoration, the Cavaliers who filled the House of Commons, zealous as they were for the prerogative, still remembered with bitterness the tyranny of the High Commission, and were by no means disposed to revive an institution so odious. They at the same time thought, and not without reason, that the statute which had swept away all the courts Christian of the realm, without providing any substitute, was open to grave objection. They accordingly repealed that statute, with the exception of the part which related to the High Commission. Thus, the Archidiaconal Courts, the Consistory Courts, the Court of Arches, the Court of Peculiars, and the Court of Delegates were revived: but the enactment by which Elizabeth and her successors had been empowered to appoint Commissioners with visitatorial authority over the Church was not only not revived, but was declared, with the utmost strength of language, to be completely abrogated. It is therefore as clear as any point of constitutional law can be that James the Second was not competent to appoint a Commission with power to visit and govern the Church of England. [94](#) But, if this were so, it was to little purpose that the Act of Supremacy, in high sounding words, empowered him to amend what was amiss in that Church. Nothing but a machinery as stringent as that which the Long Parliament had destroyed could force the Anglican clergy to become his agents for the destruction of the Anglican doctrine and discipline. He therefore, as early as the month of April 1686, determined to create a new Court of High Commission. This design was not immediately executed. It encountered the opposition of every minister who was not devoted to France and to the Jesuits. It was regarded by lawyers as an outrageous violation of the law, and by Churchmen as a direct attack upon the Church. Perhaps the contest might have lasted longer, but for an event which wounded the pride and inflamed the rage of the King. He

had, as supreme ordinary, put forth directions, charging the clergy of the establishment to abstain from touching in their discourses on controverted points of doctrine. Thus, while sermons in defence of the Roman Catholic religion were preached on every Sunday and holiday within the precincts of the royal palaces, the Church of the state, the Church of the great majority of the nation, was forbidden to explain and vindicate her own principles. The spirit of the whole clerical order rose against this injustice. William Sherlock, a divine of distinguished abilities, who had written with sharpness against Whigs and Dissenters, and had been rewarded by the government with the Mastership of the Temple and with a pension, was one of the first who incurred the royal displeasure. His pension was stopped, and he was severely reprimanded. [95](#) John Sharp, Dean of Norwich and Rector of St. Giles's in the Fields, soon gave still greater offence. He was a man of learning and fervent piety, a preacher of great fame, and an exemplary parish priest. In politics he was, like most of his brethren, a Tory, and had just been appointed one of the royal chaplains. He received an anonymous letter which purported to come from one of his parishioners who had been staggered by the arguments of Roman Catholic theologians, and who was anxious to be satisfied that the Church of England was a branch of the true Church of Christ. No divine, not utterly lost to all sense of religious duty and of professional honour, could refuse to answer such a call. On the following Sunday Sharp delivered an animated discourse against the high pretensions of the see of Rome. Some of his expressions were exaggerated, distorted, and carried by talebearers to Whitehall. It was falsely said that he had spoken with contumely of the theological disquisitions which had been found in the strong box of the late King, and which the present King had published. Compton, the Bishop of London, received orders from Sunderland to suspend Sharp till the royal pleasure should be further known. The Bishop was in great perplexity. His recent conduct in the House of Lords had given deep offence to the court. Already his name had been struck out of the list of Privy Councillors. Already he had been dismissed from his office in the royal chapel. He was unwilling to give fresh provocation but the act which he was directed to perform was a judicial act. He felt that it was unjust, and he was assured by the best advisers that it was also illegal, to inflict punishment without giving any opportunity for defence. He accordingly, in the humblest terms, represented his difficulties to the King, and privately requested Sharp not to appear in the pulpit for the present. Reasonable as were Compton's scruples, obsequious as were his apologies, James was greatly incensed. What insolence to plead either natural justice or positive law in opposition to an express command of the Sovereign Sharp was forgotten. The Bishop became a mark for the whole vengeance of the government. [96](#) The King felt more painfully than ever the want of that tremendous engine which had once coerced refractory ecclesiastics. He probably knew that, for a few angry words uttered against his father's government, Bishop Williams had been suspended by the High Commission from all ecclesiastical dignities and functions. The design of reviving that formidable tribunal was pushed on more eagerly than ever. In July London was alarmed by the news that the King had, in direct defiance of two acts of Parliament drawn in the strongest terms, entrusted the whole government of the Church to seven Commissioners. [97](#) The words in which the jurisdiction of these officers was described were loose, and might be stretched to almost any extent. All colleges and grammar schools, even those founded by the liberality of private benefactors, were placed under the authority of the new board. All who depended for bread on situations in the Church or in academical institutions, from the Primate down to the youngest curate, from the Vicechancellors of Oxford and Cambridge down to the humblest pedagogue who taught Corderius, were at the royal mercy. If any one of those many thousands was suspected of doing or saying anything distasteful to the government, the Commissioners might cite him before them. In their mode of dealing with him they were fettered by no rules. They were themselves at once prosecutors and judges. The accused party was furnished with no copy of the charge. He was examined and crossexamined. If his answers did not give satisfaction, he was liable to be suspended from his office, to be ejected from it, to be pronounced incapable of holding any preferment in future. If he were contumacious, he might be excommunicated, or, in other words, be deprived of all civil rights and imprisoned for life. He might also, at the discretion of

the court, be loaded with all the costs of the proceeding by which he had been reduced to beggary. No appeal was given. The Commissioners were directed to execute their office notwithstanding any law which might be, or might seem to be, inconsistent with these regulations. Lastly, lest any person should doubt that it was intended to revive that terrible court from which the Long Parliament had freed the nation, the new tribunal was directed to use a seal bearing exactly the same device and the same superscription with the seal of the old High Commission. [98](#)

The chief Commissioner was the Chancellor. His presence and assent were necessary to every proceeding. All men knew how unjustly, insolently, and barbarously he had acted in courts where he had been, to a certain extent, restrained by the known laws of England. It was, therefore, not difficult to foresee how he would conduct himself in a situation in which he was at entire liberty to make forms of procedure and rules of evidence for himself.

Of the other six Commissioners three were prelates and three laymen. The name of Archbishop Sancroft stood first. But he was fully convinced that the court was illegal, that all its judgments would be null, and that by sitting in it he should incur a serious responsibility. He therefore determined not to comply with the royal mandate. He did not, however, act on this occasion with that courage and sincerity which he showed when driven to extremity two years later. He begged to be excused on the plea of business and ill health. The other members of the board, he added, were men of too much ability to need his assistance. These disingenuous apologies ill became the Primate of all England at such a crisis; nor did they avert the royal displeasure. Sancroft's name was not indeed struck out of the list of Privy Councillors: but, to the bitter mortification of the friends of the Church, he was no longer summoned on Council days. "If," said the King, "he is too sick or too busy to go to the Commission, it is a kindness to relieve him from attendance at Council." [99](#)

The government found no similar difficulty with Nathaniel Crewe, Bishop of the great and opulent see of Durham, a man nobly born, and raised so high in his profession that he could scarcely wish to rise higher, but mean, vain, and cowardly. He had been made Dean of the Chapel Royal when the Bishop of London was banished from the palace. The honour of being an Ecclesiastical Commissioner turned Crewe's head. It was to no purpose that some of his friends represented to him the risk which he ran by sitting in an illegal tribunal. He was not ashamed to answer that he could not live out of the royal smile, and exultingly expressed his hope that his name would appear in history, a hope which has not been altogether disappointed. [100](#)

Thomas Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, was the third clerical Commissioner. He was a man to whose talents posterity has scarcely done justice. Unhappily for his fame, it has been usual to print his verses in collections of the British poets; and those who judge of him by his verses must consider him as a servile imitator, who, without one spark of Cowley's admirable genius, mimicked whatever was least commendable in Cowley's manner: but those who are acquainted with Sprat's prose writings will form a very different estimate of his powers. He was indeed a great master of our language, and possessed at once the eloquence of the orator, of the controversialist, and of the historian. His moral character might have passed with little censure had he belonged to a less sacred profession; for the worst that can be said of him is that he was indolent, luxurious, and worldly: but such failings, though not commonly regarded as very heinous in men of secular callings, are scandalous in a prelate. The Archbishopric of York was vacant; Sprat hoped to obtain it, and therefore accepted a seat at the ecclesiastical board: but he was too goodnatured a man to behave harshly; and he was too sensible a man not to know that he might at some future time be called to a serious account by a Parliament. He therefore, though he consented to act, tried to do as little mischief, and to make as few enemies, as possible. [101](#)

The three remaining Commissioners were the Lord Treasurer, the Lord President, and the Chief Justice of the King's Bench. Rochester, disapproving and murmuring, consented to serve. Much as he had to endure at the court, he could not bear to quit it. Much as he loved the Church, he could not bring himself to sacrifice for her sake his white staff, his patronage, his salary of eight thousand

pounds a year, and the far larger indirect emoluments of his office. He excused his conduct to others, and perhaps to himself, by pleading that, as a Commissioner, he might be able to prevent much evil, and that, if he refused to act, some person less attached to the Protestant religion would be found to replace him. Sunderland was the representative of the Jesuitical cabal. Herbert's recent decision on the question of the dispensing power seemed to prove that he would not flinch from any service which the King might require.

As soon as the Commission had been opened, the Bishop of London was cited before the new tribunal. He appeared. "I demand of you," said Jeffreys, "a direct and positive answer. Why did not you suspend Dr. Sharp?"

The Bishop requested a copy of the Commission in order that he might know by what authority he was thus interrogated. "If you mean," said Jeffreys, "to dispute our authority, I shall take another course with you. As to the Commission, I do not doubt that you have seen it. At all events you may see it in any coffeehouse for a penny." The insolence of the Chancellor's reply appears to have shocked the other Commissioners, and he was forced to make some awkward apologies. He then returned to the point from which he had started. "This," he said, "is not a court in which written charges are exhibited. Our proceedings are summary, and by word of mouth. The question is a plain one. Why did you not obey the King?" With some difficulty Compton obtained a brief delay, and the assistance of counsel. When the case had been heard, it was evident to all men that the Bishop had done only what he was bound to do. The Treasurer, the Chief Justice, and Sprat were for acquittal. The King's wrath was moved. It seemed that his Ecclesiastical Commission would fail him as his Tory Parliament had failed him. He offered Rochester a simple choice, to pronounce the Bishop guilty, or to quit the Treasury. Rochester was base enough to yield. Compton was suspended from all spiritual functions; and the charge of his great diocese was committed to his judges, Sprat and Crewe. He continued, however, to reside in his palace and to receive his revenues; for it was known that, had any attempt been made to deprive him of his temporalities, he would have put himself under the protection of the common law; and Herbert himself declared that, at common law, judgment must be given against the crown. This consideration induced the King to pause. Only a few weeks had elapsed since he had packed the courts of Westminster Hall in order to obtain a decision in favour of his dispensing power. He now found that, unless he packed them again, he should not be able to obtain a decision in favour of the proceedings of his Ecclesiastical Commission. He determined, therefore, to postpone for a short time the confiscation of the freehold property of refractory clergymen. [102](#)

The temper of the nation was indeed such as might well make him hesitate. During some months discontent had been steadily and rapidly increasing. The celebration of the Roman Catholic worship had long been prohibited by Act of Parliament. During several generations no Roman Catholic clergyman had dared to exhibit himself in any public place with the badges of his office. Against the regular clergy, and against the restless and subtle Jesuits by name, had been enacted a succession of rigorous statutes. Every Jesuit who set foot in this country was liable to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. A reward was offered for his detection. He was not allowed to take advantage of the general rule, that men are not bound to accuse themselves. Whoever was suspected of being a Jesuit might be interrogated, and, if he refused to answer, might be sent to prison for life. [103](#) These laws, though they had not, except when there was supposed to be some peculiar danger, been strictly executed, and though they had never prevented Jesuits from resorting to England, had made disguise necessary. But all disguise was now thrown off. Injudicious members of the King's Church, encouraged by him, took a pride in defying statutes which were still of undoubted validity, and feelings which had a stronger hold of the national mind than at any former period. Roman Catholic chapels rose all over the country. Cowls, girdles of ropes, and strings of beads constantly appeared in the streets, and astonished a population, the oldest of whom had never seen a conventual garb except on the stage. A convent rose at Clerkenwell on the site of the ancient cloister of Saint John. The Franciscans occupied a mansion in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The Carmelites were quartered in the City. A society of

Benedictine monks was lodged in Saint James's Palace. In the Savoy a spacious house, including a church and a school, was built for the Jesuits. [104](#) The skill and care with which those fathers had, during several generations, conducted the education of youth, had drawn forth reluctant praises from the wisest Protestants. Bacon had pronounced the mode of instruction followed in the Jesuit colleges to be the best yet known in the world, and had warmly expressed his regret that so admirable a system of intellectual and moral discipline should be subservient to the interests of a corrupt religion. [105](#) It was not improbable that the new academy in the Savoy might, under royal patronage, prove a formidable rival to the great foundations of Eton, Westminster, and Winchester. Indeed, soon after the school was opened, the classes consisted of four hundred boys, about one half of whom were Protestants. The Protestant pupils were not required to attend mass: but there could be no doubt that the influence of able preceptors, devoted to the Roman Catholic Church, and versed in all the arts which win the confidence and affection of youth, would make many converts.

These things produced great excitement among the populace, which is always more moved by what impresses the senses than by what is addressed to the reason. Thousands of rude and ignorant men, to whom the dispensing power and the Ecclesiastical Commission were words without a meaning, saw with dismay and indignation a Jesuit college rising on the banks of the Thames, friars in hoods and gowns walking in the Strand, and crowds of devotees pressing in at the doors of temples where homage was paid to graven images. Riots broke out in several parts of the country. At Coventry and Worcester the Roman Catholic worship was violently interrupted. [106](#) At Bristol the rabble, countenanced, it was said, by the magistrates, exhibited a profane and indecent pageant, in which the Virgin Mary was represented by a buffoon, and in which a mock host was carried in procession. The garrison was called out to disperse the mob. The mob, then and ever since one of the fiercest in the kingdom, resisted. Blows were exchanged, and serious hurts inflicted. [107](#) The agitation was great in the capital, and greater in the City, properly so called, than at Westminster. For the people of Westminster had been accustomed to see among them the private chapels of Roman Catholic Ambassadors: but the City had not, within living memory, been polluted by any idolatrous exhibition. Now, however, the resident of the Elector Palatine, encouraged by the King, fitted up a chapel in Lime Street. The heads of the corporation, though men selected for office on account of their known Toryism, protested against this proceeding, which, as they said, the ablest gentlemen of the long robe regarded as illegal. The Lord Mayor was ordered to appear before the Privy Council. "Take heed what you do," said the King. "Obey me; and do not trouble yourself either about gentlemen of the long robe or gentlemen of the short robe." The Chancellor took up the word, and reprimanded the unfortunate magistrate with the genuine eloquence of the Old Bailey bar. The chapel was opened. All the neighbourhood was soon in commotion. Great crowds assembled in Cheapside to attack the new mass house. The priests were insulted. A crucifix was taken out of the building and set up on the parish pump. The Lord Mayor came to quell the tumult, but was received with cries of "No wooden gods." The trainbands were ordered to disperse the crowd: but they shared in the popular feeling; and murmurs were heard from the ranks, "We cannot in conscience fight for Popery." [108](#)

The Elector Palatine was, like James, a sincere and zealous Catholic, and was, like James, the ruler of a Protestant people; but the two princes resembled each other little in temper and understanding. The Elector had promised to respect the rights of the Church which he found established in his dominions. He had strictly kept his word, and had not suffered himself to be provoked to any violence by the indiscretion of preachers who, in their antipathy to his faith, occasionally forgot the respect which they owed to his person. [109](#) He learned, with concern, that great offence had been given to the people of London by the injudicious act of his representative, and, much to his honour, declared that he would forego the privilege to which, as a sovereign prince, he was entitled, rather than endanger the peace of a great city. "I, too," he wrote to James, "have Protestant subjects; and I know with how much caution and delicacy it is necessary that a Catholic prince so situated should act." James, instead of expressing gratitude for this humane and considerate

conduct, turned the letter into ridicule before the foreign ministers. It was determined that the Elector should have a chapel in the City whether he would or not, and that, if the trainbands refused to do their duty, their place should be supplied by the Guards. [110](#)

The effect of these disturbances on trade was serious. The Dutch minister informed the States General that the business of the Exchange was at a stand. The Commissioners of the Customs reported to the King that, during the month which followed the opening of Lime Street Chapel, the receipt in the port of the Thames had fallen off by some thousands of pounds. [111](#) Several Aldermen, who, though zealous royalists appointed under the new charter, were deeply interested in the commercial prosperity of their city, and loved neither Popery nor martial law, tendered their resignations. But the King was resolved not to yield. He formed a camp on Hounslow Heath, and collected there, within a circumference of about two miles and a half, fourteen battalions of foot and thirty-two squadrons of horse, amounting to thirteen thousand fighting men. Twenty-six pieces of artillery, and many wains laden with arms and ammunition, were dragged from the Tower through the City to Hounslow. [112](#) The Londoners saw this great force assembled in their neighbourhood with a terror which familiarity soon diminished. A visit to Hounslow became their favourite amusement on holidays. The camp presented the appearance of a vast fair. Mingled with the musketeers and dragoons, a multitude of fine gentlemen and ladies from Soho Square, sharpers and painted women from Whitefriars, invalids in sedans, monks in hoods and gowns, lacqueys in rich liveries, pedlars, orange girls, mischievous apprentices and gaping clowns, was constantly passing and repassing through the long lanes of tents. From some pavilions were heard the noises of drunken revelry, from others the curses of gamblers. In truth the place was merely a gay suburb of the capital. The King, as was amply proved two years later, had greatly miscalculated. He had forgotten that vicinity operates in more ways than one. He had hoped that his army would overawe London: but the result of his policy was that the feelings and opinions of London took complete possession of his army. [113](#)

Scarcely indeed had the encampment been formed when there were rumours of quarrels between the Protestant and Popish soldiers. [114](#) A little tract, entitled A humble and hearty Address to all English Protestants in the Army, had been actively circulated through the ranks. The writer vehemently exhorted the troops to use their arms in defence, not of the mass book, but of the Bible, of the Great Charter, and of the Petition of Right. He was a man already under the frown of power. His character was remarkable, and his history not uninteresting.

His name was Samuel Johnson. He was a priest of the Church of England, and had been chaplain to Lord Russell. Johnson was one of those persons who are mortally hated by their opponents, and less loved than respected by their allies. His morals were pure, his religious feelings ardent, his learning and abilities not contemptible, his judgment weak, his temper acrimonious, turbulent, and unconquerably stubborn. His profession made him peculiarly odious to the zealous supporters of monarchy; for a republican in holy orders was a strange and almost an unnatural being. During the late reign Johnson had published a book entitled Julian the Apostate. The object of this work was to show that the Christians of the fourth century did not hold the doctrine of nonresistance. It was easy to produce passages from Chrysostom and Jerome written in a spirit very different from that of the Anglican divines who preached against the Exclusion Bill. Johnson, however, went further. He attempted to revive the odious imputation which had, for very obvious reasons, been thrown by Libanius on the Christian soldiers of Julian, and insinuated that the dart which slew the imperial renegade came, not from the enemy, but from some Rumbold or Ferguson in the Roman ranks. A hot controversy followed. Whig and Tory disputants wrangled fiercely about an obscure passage, in which Gregory of Nazianzus praises a pious Bishop who was going to bastinado somebody. The Whigs maintained that the holy man was going to bastinado the Emperor; the Tories that, at the worst, he was only going to bastinado a captain of the guard. Johnson prepared a reply to his assailants, in which he drew an elaborate parallel between Julian and James, then Duke of York, Julian had, during many years, pretended to abhor idolatry, while in heart an idolater. Julian had, to serve a

turn, occasionally affected respect for the rights of conscience. Julian had punished cities which were zealous for the true religion, by taking away their municipal privileges. Julian had, by his flatterers, been called the Just. James was provoked beyond endurance. Johnson was prosecuted for a libel, convicted, and condemned to a fine which he had no means of paying. He was therefore kept in gaol; and it seemed likely that his confinement would end only with his life. [115](#)

Over the room which he occupied in the King's Bench prison lodged another offender whose character well deserves to be studied. This was Hugh Speke, a young man of good family, but of a singularly base and depraved nature. His love of mischief and of dark and crooked ways amounted almost to madness. To cause confusion without being found out was his business and his pastime; and he had a rare skill in using honest enthusiasts as the instruments of his coldblooded malice. He had attempted, by means of one of his puppets, to fasten on Charles and James the crime of murdering Essex in the Tower. On this occasion the agency of Speke had been traced and, though he succeeded in throwing the greater part of the blame on his dupe, he had not escaped with impunity. He was now a prisoner; but his fortune enabled him to live with comfort; and he was under so little restraint that he was able to keep up regular communication with one of his confederates who managed a secret press.

Johnson was the very man for Speke's purposes, zealous and intrepid, a scholar and a practised controversialist, yet as simple as a child. A close intimacy sprang up between the two fellow prisoners. Johnson wrote a succession of bitter and vehement treatises which Speke conveyed to the printer. When the camp was formed at Hounslow, Speke urged Johnson to compose an address which might excite the troops to mutiny. The paper was instantly drawn up. Many thousands of copies were struck off and brought to Speke's room, whence they were distributed over the whole country, and especially among the soldiers. A milder government than that which then ruled England would have been moved to high resentment by such a provocation. Strict search was made. A subordinate agent who had been employed to circulate the address saved himself by giving up Johnson; and Johnson was not the man to save himself by giving up Speke. An information was filed, and a conviction obtained without difficulty. Julian Johnson, as he was popularly called, was sentenced to stand thrice in the pillory, and to be whipped from Newgate to Tyburn. The Judge, Sir Francis Withins, told the criminal to be thankful for the great lenity of the Attorney General, who might have treated the case as one of high treason. "I owe him no thanks," answered Johnson, dauntlessly. "Am I, whose only crime is that I have defended the Church and the laws, to be grateful for being scourged like a dog, while Popish scribblers are suffered daily to insult the Church and to violate the laws with impunity?" The energy with which he spoke was such that both the Judges and the crown lawyers thought it necessary to vindicate themselves, and protested that they knew of no Popish publications such as those to which the prisoner alluded. He instantly drew from his pocket some Roman Catholic books and trinkets which were then freely exposed for sale under the royal patronage, read aloud the titles of the books, and threw a rosary across the table to the King's counsel. "And now," he cried with a loud voice, "I lay this information before God, before this court, and before the English people. We shall soon see whether Mr. Attorney will do his duty."

It was resolved that, before the punishment was inflicted, Johnson should be degraded from the priesthood. The prelates who had been charged by the Ecclesiastical Commission with the care of the diocese of London cited him before them in the chapter house of Saint Paul's Cathedral. The manner in which he went through the ceremony made a deep impression on many minds. When he was stripped of his sacred robe he exclaimed, "You are taking away my gown because I have tried to keep your gowns on your backs." The only part of the formalities which seemed to distress him was the plucking of the Bible out of his hand. He made a faint struggle to retain the sacred book, kissed it, and burst into tears. "You cannot," he said, "deprive me of the hopes which I owe to it." Some attempts were made to obtain a remission of the flogging. A Roman Catholic priest offered to intercede in consideration of a bribe of two hundred pounds. The money was raised; and the priest did his best, but in vain.

"Mr. Johnson," said the King, "has the spirit of a martyr; and it is fit that he should be one." William the Third said, a few years later, of one of the most acrimonious and intrepid Jacobites, "He has set his heart on being a martyr, and I have set mine on disappointing him." These two speeches would alone suffice to explain the widely different fates of the two princes.

The day appointed for the flogging came. A whip of nine lashes was used. Three hundred and seventeen stripes were inflicted; but the sufferer never winced. He afterwards said that the pain was cruel, but that, as he was dragged at the tail of the cart, he remembered how patiently the cross had been borne up Mount Calvary, and was so much supported by the thought that, but for the fear of incurring the suspicion of vain glory, he would have sung a psalm with as firm and cheerful a voice as if he had been worshipping God in the congregation. It is impossible not to wish that so much heroism had been less alloyed by intemperance and intolerance. [116](#)

Among the clergy of the Church of England Johnson found no sympathy. He had attempted to justify rebellion; he had even hinted approbation of regicide; and they still, in spite of much provocation, clung to the doctrine of nonresistance. But they saw with alarm and concern the progress of what they considered as a noxious superstition, and, while they abjured all thought of defending their religion by the sword, betook themselves manfully to weapons of a different kind. To preach against the errors of Popery was now regarded by them as a point of duty and a point of honour. The London clergy, who were then in abilities and influence decidedly at the head of their profession, set an example which was bravely followed by their ruder brethren all over the country. Had only a few bold men taken this freedom, they would probably have been at once cited before the Ecclesiastical Commission; but it was hardly possible to punish an offence which was committed every Sunday by thousands of divines, from Berwick to Penzance. The presses of the capital, of Oxford, and of Cambridge, never rested. The act which subjected literature to a censorship did not seriously impede the exertions of Protestant controversialists; for it contained a proviso in favour of the two Universities, and authorised the publication of theological works licensed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was therefore out of the power of the government to silence the defenders of the established religion. They were a numerous, an intrepid, and a well appointed band of combatants. Among them were eloquent declaimers, expert dialecticians, scholars deeply read in the writings of the fathers and in all parts of ecclesiastical history. Some of them, at a later period, turned against one another the formidable arms which they had wielded against the common enemy, and by their fierce contentions and insolent triumphs brought reproach on the Church which they had saved. But at present they formed an united phalanx. In the van appeared a rank of steady and skilful veterans, Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Sherlock, Prideaux, Whitby, Patrick, Tenison, Wake. The rear was brought up by the most distinguished bachelors of arts who were studying for deacon's orders. Conspicuous amongst the recruits whom Cambridge sent to the field was a distinguished pupil of the great Newton, Henry Wharton, who had, a few months before, been senior wrangler of his year, and whose early death was soon after deplored by men of all parties as an irreparable loss to letters. [117](#) Oxford was not less proud of a youth, whose great powers, first essayed in this conflict, afterwards troubled the Church and the State during forty eventful years, Francis Atterbury. By such men as these every question in issue between the Papists and the Protestants was debated, sometimes in a popular style which boys and women could comprehend, sometimes with the utmost subtlety of logic, and sometimes with an immense display of learning. The pretensions of the Holy See, the authority of tradition, purgatory, transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, the adoration of the host, the denial of the cup to the laity, confession, penance, indulgences, extreme unction, the invocation of saints, the adoration of images, the celibacy of the clergy, the monastic vows, the practice of celebrating public worship in a tongue unknown to the multitude, the corruptions of the court of Rome, the history of the Reformation, the characters of the chief reformers, were copiously discussed. Great numbers of absurd legends about miracles wrought by saints and relics were translated from the Italian and published as specimens of the priestcraft by which the greater part of Christendom had been fooled.

Of the tracts put forth on these subjects by Anglican divines during the short reign of James the Second many have probably perished. Those which may still be found in our great libraries make up a mass of near twenty thousand pages. [118](#)

The Roman Catholics did not yield the victory without a struggle. One of them, named Henry Hills, had been appointed printer to the royal household and chapel, and had been placed by the King at the head of a great office in London from which theological tracts came forth by hundreds. Obadiah Walker's press was not less active at Oxford. But, with the exception of some bad translations of Bossuet's admirable works, these establishments put forth nothing of the smallest value. It was indeed impossible for any intelligent and candid Roman Catholic to deny that the champions of his Church were, in every talent and acquirement, completely over-matched. The ablest of them would not, on the other side, have been considered as of the third rate. Many of them, even when they had something to say, knew not how to say it. They had been excluded by their religion from English schools and universities; nor had they ever, till the accession of James, found England an agreeable, or even a safe, residence. They had therefore passed the greater part of their lives on the Continent, and had almost unlearned their mother tongue. When they preached, their outlandish accent moved the derision of the audience. They spelt like washerwomen. Their diction was disfigured by foreign idioms; and, when they meant to be eloquent, they imitated, as well as they could, what was considered as fine writing in those Italian academies where rhetoric had then reached the last stage of corruption. Disputants labouring under these disadvantages would scarcely, even with truth on their side, have been able to make head against men whose style is eminently distinguished by simple purity and grace. [119](#)

The situation of England in the year 1686 cannot be better described than in the words of the French Ambassador. "The discontent," he wrote, "is great and general: but the fear of incurring still worse evils restrains all who have anything to lose. The King openly expresses his joy at finding himself in a situation to strike bold strokes. He likes to be complimented on this subject. He has talked to me about it, and has assured me that he will not flinch." [120](#)

Meanwhile in other parts of the empire events of grave importance had taken place. The situation of the episcopalian Protestants of Scotland differed widely from that in which their English brethren stood. In the south of the island the religion of the state was the religion of the people, and had a strength altogether independent of the strength derived from the support of the government. The sincere conformists were far more numerous than the Papists and the Protestant Dissenters taken together. The Established Church of Scotland was the Church of a small minority. The majority of the lowland population was firmly attached to the Presbyterian discipline. Prelacy was abhorred by the great body of Scottish Protestants, both as an unscriptural and as a foreign institution. It was regarded by the disciples of Knox as a relic of the abominations of Babylon the Great. It painfully reminded a people proud of the memory of Wallace and Bruce that Scotland, since her sovereigns had succeeded to a fairer inheritance, had been independent in name only. The episcopal polity was also closely associated in the public mind with all the evils produced by twenty-five years of corrupt and cruel maladministration. Nevertheless this polity stood, though on a narrow basis and amidst fearful storms, tottering indeed, yet upheld by the civil magistrate, and leaning for support, whenever danger became serious, on the power of England. The records of the Scottish Parliament were thick set with laws denouncing vengeance on those who in any direction strayed from the prescribed pale. By an Act passed in the time of Knox, and breathing his spirit, it was a high crime to hear mass, and the third offence was capital. [121](#) An Act recently passed, at the instance of James, made it death to preach in any Presbyterian conventicle whatever, and even to attend such a conventicle in the open air. [122](#) The Eucharist was not, as in England, degraded into a civil test; but no person could hold any office, could sit in Parliament, or could even vote for a member of Parliament, without subscribing, under the sanction of an oath, a declaration which condemned in the strongest terms the principles both of the Papists and of the Covenanters. [123](#)

In the Privy Council of Scotland there were two parties corresponding to the two parties which were contending against each other at Whitehall. William Douglas, Duke of Queensberry, was Lord Treasurer, and had, during some years, been considered as first minister. He was nearly connected by affinity, by similarity of opinions, and by similarity of temper, with the Treasurer of England. Both were Tories: both were men of hot temper and strong prejudices; both were ready to support their master in any attack on the civil liberties of his people; but both were sincerely attached to the Established Church. Queensberry had early notified to the court that, if any innovation affecting that Church were contemplated, to such innovation he could be no party. But among his colleagues were several men not less unprincipled than Sunderland. In truth the Council chamber at Edinburgh had been, during a quarter of a century, a seminary of all public and private vices; and some of the politicians whose character had been formed there had a peculiar hardness of heart and forehead to which Westminster, even in that bad age, could hardly show anything quite equal. The Chancellor, James Drummond, Earl of Perth, and his brother, the Secretary of State, John Lord Melfort, were bent on supplanting Queensberry. The Chancellor had already an unquestionable title to the royal favour. He had brought into use a little steel thumbscrew which gave such exquisite torment that it had wrung confessions even out of men on whom His Majesty's favourite boot had been tried in vain. [124](#) But it was well known that even barbarity was not so sure a way to the heart of James as apostasy. To apostasy, therefore, Perth and Melfort resorted with a certain audacious baseness which no English statesman could hope to emulate. They declared that the papers found in the strong box of Charles the Second had converted them both to the true faith; and they began to confess and to hear mass. [125](#) How little conscience had to do with Perth's change of religion he amply proved by taking to wife, a few weeks later, in direct defiance of the laws of the Church which he had just joined, a lady who was his cousin german, without waiting for a dispensation. When the good Pope learned this, he said, with scorn and indignation which well became him, that this was a strange sort of conversion. [126](#) But James was more easily satisfied. The apostates presented themselves at Whitehall, and there received such assurances of his favour, that they ventured to bring direct charges against the Treasurer. Those charges, however, were so evidently frivolous that James was forced to acquit the accused minister; and many thought that the Chancellor had ruined himself by his malignant eagerness to ruin his rival. There were a few, however, who judged more correctly. Halifax, to whom Perth expressed some apprehensions, answered with a sneer that there was no danger. "Be of good cheer, my Lord; thy faith hath made thee whole." The prediction was correct. Perth and Melfort went back to Edinburgh, the real heads of the government of their country. [127](#) Another member of the Scottish Privy Council, Alexander Stuart, Earl of Murray, the descendant and heir of the Regent, abjured the religion of which his illustrious ancestor had been the foremost champion, and declared himself a member of the Church of Rome. Devoted as Queensberry had always been to the cause of prerogative, he could not stand his ground against competitors who were willing to pay such a price for the favour of the court. He had to endure a succession of mortifications and humiliations similar to those which, about the same time, began to embitter the life of his friend Rochester. Royal letters came down authorising Papists to hold offices without taking the test. The clergy were strictly charged not to reflect on the Roman Catholic religion in their discourses. The Chancellor took on himself to send the macers of the Privy Council round to the few printers and booksellers who could then be found in Edinburgh, charging them not to publish any work without his license. It was well understood that this order was intended to prevent the circulation of Protestant treatises. One honest stationer told the messengers that he had in his shop a book which reflected in very coarse terms on Popery, and begged to know whether he might sell it. They asked to see it; and he showed them a copy of the Bible. [128](#) A cargo of images, beads, crosses and censers arrived at Leith directed to Lord Perth. The importation of such articles had long been considered as illegal; but now the officers of the customs allowed the superstitious garments and trinkets to pass. [129](#) In a short time it was known that a Popish chapel had been fitted up in the Chancellor's house, and that mass was regularly said there. The mob rose.

The mansion where the idolatrous rites were celebrated was fiercely attacked. The iron bars which protected the windows were wrenched off. Lady Perth and some of her female friends were pelted with mud. One rioter was seized, and ordered by the Privy Council to be whipped. His fellows rescued him and beat the hangman. The city was all night in confusion. The students of the University mingled with the crowd and animated the tumult. Zealous burghers drank the health of the college lads and confusion to Papists, and encouraged each other to face the troops. The troops were already under arms. They were received with a shower of stones, which wounded an officer. Orders were given to fire; and several citizens were killed. The disturbance was serious; but the Drummonds, inflamed by resentment and ambition, exaggerated it strangely. Queensberry observed that their reports would lead any person, who had not been a witness of the tumult, to believe that a sedition as formidable as that of Masaniello had been raging at Edinburgh. They in return accused the Treasurer, not only of extenuating the crime of the insurgents, but of having himself prompted it, and did all in their power to obtain evidence of his guilt. One of the ringleaders, who had been taken, was offered a pardon if he would own that Queensberry had set him on; but the same religious enthusiasm, which had impelled the unhappy prisoner to criminal violence, prevented him from purchasing his life by a calumny. He and several of his accomplices were hanged. A soldier, who was accused of exclaiming, during the affray, that he should like to run his sword through a Papist, was shot; and Edinburgh was again quiet: but the sufferers were regarded as martyrs; and the Popish Chancellor became an object of mortal hatred, which in no long time was largely gratified. [130](#)

The King was much incensed. The news of the tumult reached him when the Queen, assisted by the Jesuits, had just triumphed over Lady Dorchester and her Protestant allies. The malecontents should find, he declared, that the only effect of the resistance offered to his will was to make him more and more resolute. [131](#) He sent orders to the Scottish Council to punish the guilty with the utmost severity, and to make unsparing use of the boot. [132](#) He pretended to be fully convinced of the Treasurer's innocence, and wrote to that minister in gracious words; but the gracious words were accompanied by ungracious acts. The Scottish Treasury was put into commission in spite of the earnest remonstrances of Rochester, who probably saw his own fate prefigured in that of his kinsman. [133](#) Queensberry was, indeed, named First Commissioner, and was made President of the Privy Council: but his fall, though thus broken, was still a fall. He was also removed from the government of the castle of Edinburgh, and was succeeded in that confidential post by the Duke of Gordon, a Roman Catholic. [134](#)

And now a letter arrived from London, fully explaining to the Scottish Privy Council the intentions of the King. What he wanted was that the Roman Catholics should be exempted from all laws imposing penalties and disabilities on account of nonconformity, but that the persecution of the Covenanters should go on without mitigation. [135](#) This scheme encountered strenuous opposition in the Council. Some members were unwilling to see the existing laws relaxed. Others, who were by no means averse to some relaxation, yet felt that it would be monstrous to admit Roman Catholics to the highest honours of the state, and yet to leave unrepealed the Act which made it death to attend a Presbyterian conventicle. The answer of the board was, therefore, less obsequious than usual. The King in reply sharply reprimanded his undutiful Councillors, and ordered three of them, the Duke of Hamilton, Sir George Lockhart, and General Drummond, to attend him at Westminster. Hamilton's abilities and knowledge, though by no means such as would have sufficed to raise an obscure man to eminence, appeared highly respectable in one who was premier peer of Scotland. Lockhart had long been regarded as one of the first jurists, logicians, and orators that his country had produced, and enjoyed also that sort of consideration which is derived from large possessions; for his estate was such as at that time very few Scottish nobles possessed. [136](#) He had been lately appointed President of the Court of Session. Drummond, a younger brother of Perth and Melfort, was commander of the forces in Scotland. He was a loose and profane man: but a sense of honour which his two kinsmen

wanted restrained him from a public apostasy. He lived and died, in the significant phrase of one of his countrymen, a bad Christian, but a good Protestant. [137](#)

James was pleased by the dutiful language which the three Councillors used when first they appeared before him. He spoke highly of them to Barillon, and particularly extolled Lockhart as the ablest and most eloquent Scotchman living. They soon proved, however, less tractable than had been expected; and it was rumoured at court that they had been perverted by the company which they had kept in London. Hamilton lived much with zealous churchmen; and it might be feared that Lockhart, who was related to the Wharton family, had fallen into still worse society. In truth it was natural that statesmen fresh from a country where opposition in any other form than that of insurrection and assassination had long been almost unknown, and where all that was not lawless fury was abject submission, should have been struck by the earnest and stubborn, yet sober, discontent which pervaded England, and should have been emboldened to try the experiment of constitutional resistance to the royal will. They indeed declared themselves willing to grant large relief to the Roman Catholics; but on two conditions; first, that similar indulgence should be extended to the Calvinistic sectaries; and, secondly, that the King should bind himself by a solemn promise not to attempt anything to the prejudice of the Protestant religion.

Both conditions were highly distasteful to James. He reluctantly agreed, however, after a dispute which lasted several days, that some indulgence should be granted to the Presbyterians but he would by no means consent to allow them the full liberty which he demanded for members of his own communion. [138](#) To the second condition proposed by the three Scottish Councillors he positively refused to listen. The Protestant religion, he said, was false and he would not give any guarantee that he would not use his power to the prejudice of a false religion. The altercation was long, and was not brought to a conclusion satisfactory to either party. [139](#)

The time fixed for the meeting of the Scottish Estates drew near; and it was necessary that the three Councillors should leave London to attend their parliamentary duty at Edinburgh. On this occasion another affront was offered to Queensberry. In the late session he had held the office of Lord High Commissioner, and had in that capacity represented the majesty of the absent King. This dignity, the greatest to which a Scottish noble could aspire, was now transferred to the renegade Murray.

On the twenty-ninth of April the Parliament met at Edinburgh. A letter from the King was read. He exhorted the Estates to give relief to his Roman Catholic subjects, and offered in return a free trade with England and an amnesty for political offences. A committee was appointed to draw up an answer. That committee, though named by Murray, and composed of Privy Councillors and courtiers, framed a reply, full indeed of dutiful and respectful expressions, yet clearly indicating a determination to refuse what the King demanded. The Estates, it was said, would go as far as their consciences would allow to meet His Majesty's wishes respecting his subjects of the Roman Catholic religion. These expressions were far from satisfying the Chancellor; yet, such as they were, he was forced to content himself with them, and even had some difficulty in persuading the Parliament to adopt them. Objection was taken by some zealous Protestants to the mention made of the Roman Catholic religion. There was no such religion. There was an idolatrous apostasy, which the laws punished with the halter, and to which it did not become Christian men to give flattering titles. To call such a superstition Catholic was to give up the whole question which was at issue between Rome and the reformed Churches. The offer of a free trade with England was treated as an insult. "Our fathers," said one orator, "sold their King for southern gold; and we still lie under the reproach of that foul bargain. Let it not be said of us that we have sold our God!" Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, one of the Senators of the College of Justice, suggested the words, "the persons commonly called Roman Catholics." "Would you nickname His Majesty?" exclaimed the Chancellor. The answer drawn by the committee was carried; but a large and respectable minority voted against the proposed words as too courtly. [140](#) It was remarked that the representatives of the towns were, almost to a man, against the government. Hitherto those members had been of small account in the Parliament, and

had generally, been considered as the retainers of powerful noblemen. They now showed, for the first time, an independence, a resolution, and a spirit of combination which alarmed the court. [141](#)

The answer was so unpleasing to James that he did not suffer it to be printed in the Gazette. Soon he learned that a law, such as he wished to see passed, would not even be brought in. The Lords of Articles, whose business was to draw up the acts on which the Estates were afterwards to deliberate, were virtually nominated by himself. Yet even the Lords of Articles proved refractory. When they met, the three Privy Councillors who had lately returned from London took the lead in opposition to the royal will. Hamilton declared plainly that he could not do what was asked. He was a faithful and loyal subject; but there was a limit imposed by conscience. "Conscience!" said the Chancellor: "conscience is a vague word, which signifies any thing or nothing." Lockhart, who sat in Parliament as representative of the great county of Lanark, struck in. "If conscience," he said, "be a word without meaning, we will change it for another phrase which, I hope, means something. For conscience let us put the fundamental laws of Scotland." These words raised a fierce debate. General Drummond, who represented Perthshire, declared that he agreed with Hamilton and Lockhart. Most of the Bishops present took the same side. [142](#)

It was plain that, even in the Committee of Articles, James could not command a majority. He was mortified and irritated by the tidings. He held warm and menacing language, and punished some of his mutinous servants, in the hope that the rest would take warning. Several persons were dismissed from the Council board. Several were deprived of pensions, which formed an important part of their income. Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh was the most distinguished victim. He had long held the office of Lord Advocate, and had taken such a part in the persecution of the Covenanters that to this day he holds, in the estimation of the austere and godly peasantry of Scotland, a place not far removed from the unenviable eminence occupied by Claverhouse. The legal attainments of Mackenzie were not of the highest order: but, as a scholar, a wit, and an orator, he stood high in the opinion of his countrymen; and his renown had spread even to the coffeehouses of London and the cloisters of Oxford. The remains of his forensic speeches prove him to have been a man of parts, but are somewhat disfigured by what he doubtless considered as Ciceronian graces, interjections which show more art than passion, and elaborate amplifications, in which epithet rises above epithet in wearisome climax. He had now, for the first time, been found scrupulous. He was, therefore, in spite of all his claims on the gratitude of the government, deprived of his office. He retired into the country, and soon after went up to London for the purpose of clearing himself, but was refused admission to the royal presence. [143](#) While the King was thus trying to terrify the Lords of Articles into submission, the popular voice encouraged them to persist. The utmost exertions of the Chancellor could not prevent the national sentiment from expressing itself through the pulpit and the press. One tract, written with such boldness and acrimony that no printer dared to put it in type, was widely circulated in manuscript. The papers which appeared on the other side of the question had much less effect, though they were disseminated at the public charge, and though the Scottish defenders of the government were assisted by an English auxiliary of great note, Lestranger, who had been sent down to Edinburgh, and had apartments in Holyrood House. [144](#)

At length, after three weeks of debate, the Lords of Articles came to a decision. They proposed merely that Roman Catholics should be permitted to worship God in private houses without incurring any penalty; and it soon appeared that, far as this measure was from coming up to the King's demands and expectations, the Estates either would not pass it at all, or would pass it with great restrictions and modifications.

While the contest lasted the anxiety in London was intense. Every report, every line, from Edinburgh was eagerly devoured. One day the story ran that Hamilton had given way and that the government would carry every point. Then came intelligence that the opposition had rallied and was more obstinate than ever. At the most critical moment orders were sent to the post-office that the bags from Scotland should be transmitted to Whitehall. During a whole week not a single private letter

from beyond the Tweed was delivered in London. In our age such an interruption of communication would throw the whole island into confusion: but there was then so little trade and correspondence between England and Scotland that the inconvenience was probably much smaller than has been often occasioned in our own time by a short delay in the arrival of the Indian mail. While the ordinary channels of information were thus closed, the crowd in the galleries of Whitehall observed with attention the countenances of the King and his ministers. It was noticed, with great satisfaction, that, after every express from the North, the enemies of the Protestant religion looked more and more gloomy. At length, to the general joy, it was announced that the struggle was over, that the government had been unable to carry its measures, and that the Lord High Commissioner had adjourned the Parliament. [145](#)

If James had not been proof to all warning, these events would have sufficed to warn him. A few months before this time the most obsequious of English Parliaments had refused to submit to his pleasure. But the most obsequious of English Parliaments might be regarded as an independent and high spirited assembly when compared with any Parliament that had ever sate in Scotland; and the servile spirit of Scottish Parliaments was always to be found in the highest perfection, extracted and condensed, among the Lords of Articles. Yet even the Lords of Articles had been refractory. It was plain that all those classes, all those institutions, which, up to this year, had been considered as the strongest supports of monarchical power, must, if the King persisted in his insane policy, be reckoned as parts of the strength of the opposition. All these signs, however, were lost upon him. To every expostulation he had one answer: he would never give way; for concession had ruined his father; and his unconquerable firmness was loudly applauded by the French embassy and by the Jesuitical cabal.

He now proclaimed that he had been only too gracious when he had condescended to ask the assent of the Scottish Estates to his wishes. His prerogative would enable him not only to protect those whom he favoured, but to punish those who had crossed him. He was confident that, in Scotland, his dispensing power would not be questioned by any court of law. There was a Scottish Act of Supremacy which gave to the sovereign such a control over the Church as might have satisfied Henry the Eighth. Accordingly Papists were admitted in crowds to offices and honours. The Bishop of Dunkeld, who, as a Lord of Parliament, had opposed the government, was arbitrarily ejected from his see, and a successor was appointed. Queensberry was stripped of all his employments, and was ordered to remain at Edinburgh till the accounts of the Treasury during his administration had been examined and approved. [146](#) As the representatives of the towns had been found the most unmanageable part of the Parliament, it was determined to make a revolution in every burgh throughout the kingdom. A similar change had recently been effected in England by judicial sentences: but in Scotland a simple mandate of the prince was thought sufficient. All elections of magistrates and of town councils were prohibited; and the King assumed to himself the right of filling up the chief municipal offices. [147](#) In a formal letter to the Privy Council he announced his intention to fit up a Roman Catholic chapel in his palace of Holyrood; and he gave orders that the Judges should be directed to treat all the laws against Papists as null, on pain of his high displeasure. He however comforted the Protestant Episcopalians by assuring them that, though he was determined to protect the Roman Catholic Church against them, he was equally determined to protect them against any encroachment on the part of the fanatics. To this communication Perth proposed an answer couched in the most servile terms. The Council now contained many Papists; the Protestant members who still had seats had been cowed by the King's obstinacy and severity; and only a few faint murmurs were heard. Hamilton threw out against the dispensing power some hints which he made haste to explain away. Lockhart said that he would lose his head rather than sign such a letter as the Chancellor had drawn, but took care to say this in a whisper which was heard only by friends. Perth's words were adopted with inconsiderable modifications; and the royal commands were obeyed; but a sullen discontent spread through that minority of the Scottish nation by the aid of which the government had hitherto held the majority down. [148](#)

When the historian of this troubled reign turns to Ireland, his task becomes peculiarly difficult and delicate. His steps,—to borrow the fine image used on a similar occasion by a Roman poet,—are on the thin crust of ashes, beneath which the lava is still glowing. The seventeenth century has, in that unhappy country, left to the nineteenth a fatal heritage of malignant passions. No amnesty for the mutual wrongs inflicted by the Saxon defenders of Londonderry, and by the Celtic defenders of Limerick, has ever been granted from the heart by either race. To this day a more than Spartan haughtiness alloys the many noble qualities which characterize the children of the victors, while a Helot feeling, compounded of awe and hatred, is but too often discernible in the children of the vanquished. Neither of the hostile castes can justly be absolved from blame; but the chief blame is due to that shortsighted and headstrong prince who, placed in a situation in which he might have reconciled them, employed all his power to inflame their animosity, and at length forced them to close in a grapple for life and death.

The grievances under which the members of his Church laboured in Ireland differed widely from those which he was attempting to remove in England and Scotland. The Irish Statute Book, afterwards polluted by intolerance as barbarous as that of the dark ages, then contained scarce a single enactment, and not a single stringent enactment, imposing any penalty on Papists as such. On our side of Saint George's Channel every priest who received a neophyte into the bosom of the Church of Rome was liable to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. On the other side he incurred no such danger. A Jesuit who landed at Dover took his life in his hand; but he walked the streets of Dublin in security. Here no man could hold office, or even earn his livelihood as a barrister or a schoolmaster, without previously taking the oath of supremacy, but in Ireland a public functionary was not held to be under the necessity of taking that oath unless it were formally tendered to him. [149](#) It therefore did not exclude from employment any person whom the government wished to promote. The sacramental test and the declaration against transubstantiation were unknown nor was either House of Parliament closed against any religious sect.

It might seem, therefore, that the Irish Roman Catholic was in a situation which his English and Scottish brethren in the faith might well envy. In fact, however, his condition was more pitiable and irritating than theirs. For, though not persecuted as a Roman Catholic, he was oppressed as an Irishman. In his country the same line of demarcation which separated religions separated races; and he was of the conquered, the subjugated, the degraded race. On the same soil dwelt two populations, locally intermixed, morally and politically sundered. The difference of religion was by no means the only difference, and was perhaps not even the chief difference, which existed between them. They sprang from different stocks. They spoke different languages. They had different national characters as strongly opposed as any two national characters in Europe. They were in widely different stages of civilisation. Between two such populations there could be little sympathy; and centuries of calamities and wrongs had generated a strong antipathy. The relation in which the minority stood to the majority resembled the relation in which the followers of William the Conqueror stood to the Saxon churls, or the relation in which the followers of Cortes stood to the Indians of Mexico.

The appellation of Irish was then given exclusively to the Celts and to those families which, though not of Celtic origin, had in the course of ages degenerated into Celtic manners. These people, probably somewhat under a million in number, had, with few exceptions, adhered to the Church of Rome. Among them resided about two hundred thousand colonists, proud of their Saxon blood and of their Protestant faith. [150](#)

The great preponderance of numbers on one side was more than compensated by a great superiority of intelligence, vigour, and organization on the other. The English settlers seem to have been, in knowledge, energy, and perseverance, rather above than below the average level of the population of the mother country. The aboriginal peasantry, on the contrary, were in an almost savage state. They never worked till they felt the sting of hunger. They were content with accommodation inferior to that which, in happier countries, was provided for domestic cattle. Already the potato,

a root which can be cultivated with scarcely any art, industry, or capital, and which cannot be long stored, had become the food of the common people. [151](#) From a people so fed diligence and forethought were not to be expected. Even within a few miles of Dublin, the traveller, on a soil the richest and most verdant in the world, saw with disgust the miserable burrows out of which squalid and half naked barbarians stared wildly at him as he passed. [152](#)

The aboriginal aristocracy retained in no common measure the pride of birth, but had lost the influence which is derived from wealth and power. Their lands had been divided by Cromwell among his followers. A portion, indeed, of the vast territory which he had confiscated had, after the restoration of the House of Stuart, been given back to the ancient proprietors. But much the greater part was still held by English emigrants under the guarantee of an Act of Parliament. This act had been in force a quarter of a century; and under it mortgages, settlements, sales, and leases without number had been made. The old Irish gentry were scattered over the whole world. Descendants of Milesian chieftains swarmed in all the courts and camps of the Continent. Those despoiled proprietors who still remained in their native land, brooded gloomily over their losses, pined for the opulence and dignity of which they had been deprived, and cherished wild hopes of another revolution. A person of this class was described by his countrymen as a gentleman who would be rich if justice were done, as a gentleman who had a fine estate if he could only get it. [153](#) He seldom betook himself to any peaceful calling. Trade, indeed, he thought a far more disgraceful resource than marauding. Sometimes he turned freebooter. Sometimes he contrived, in defiance of the law, to live by coshering, that is to say, by quartering himself on the old tenants of his family, who, wretched as was their own condition, could not refuse a portion of their pittance to one whom they still regarded as their rightful lord. [154](#) The native gentleman who had been so fortunate as to keep or to regain some of his land too often lived like the petty prince of a savage tribe, and indemnified himself for the humiliations which the dominant race made him suffer by governing his vassals despotically, by keeping a rude harem, and by maddening or stupefying himself daily with strong drink. [155](#) Politically he was insignificant. No statute, indeed, excluded him from the House of Commons: but he had almost as little chance of obtaining a seat there as a man of colour has of being chosen a Senator of the United States. In fact only one Papist had been returned to the Irish Parliament since the Restoration. The whole legislative and executive power was in the hands of the colonists; and the ascendancy of the ruling caste was upheld by a standing army of seven thousand men, on whose zeal for what was called the English interest full reliance could be placed. [156](#)

On a close scrutiny it would have been found that neither the Irishry nor the Englishry formed a perfectly homogeneous body. The distinction between those Irish who were of Celtic blood, and those Irish who sprang from the followers of Strong-bow and De Burgh, was not altogether effaced. The Fitzes sometimes permitted themselves to speak with scorn of the Os and Macs; and the Os and Macs sometimes repaid that scorn with aversion. In the preceding generation one of the most powerful of the O'Neills refused to pay any mark of respect to a Roman Catholic gentleman of old Norman descent. "They say that the family has been here four hundred years. No matter. I hate the clown as if he had come yesterday." [157](#) It seems, however, that such feelings were rare, and that the feud which had long raged between the aboriginal Celts and the degenerate English had nearly given place to the fiercer feud which separated both races from the modern and Protestant colony.

The colony had its own internal disputes, both national and religious. The majority was English; but a large minority came from the south of Scotland. One half of the settlers belonged to the Established Church; the other half were Dissenters. But in Ireland Scot and Southron were strongly bound together by their common Saxon origin. Churchman and Presbyterian were strongly bound together by their common Protestantism. All the colonists had a common language and a common pecuniary interest. They were surrounded by common enemies, and could be safe only by means of common precautions and exertions. The few penal laws, therefore, which had been made in Ireland against Protestant Nonconformists, were a dead letter. [158](#) The bigotry of the most sturdy churchman

would not bear exportation across St. George's Channel. As soon as the Cavalier arrived in Ireland, and found that, without the hearty and courageous assistance of his Puritan neighbours, he and all his family would run imminent risk of being murdered by Popish marauders, his hatred of Puritanism, in spite of himself, began to languish and die away. It was remarked by eminent men of both parties that a Protestant who, in Ireland, was called a high Tory would in England have been considered as a moderate Whig. [159](#)

The Protestant Nonconformists, on their side, endured, with more patience than could have been expected, the sight of the most absurd ecclesiastical establishment that the world has ever seen. Four Archbishops and eighteen Bishops were employed in looking after about a fifth part of the number of churchmen who inhabited the single diocese of London. Of the parochial clergy a large proportion were pluralists and resided at a distance from their cures. There were some who drew from their benefices incomes of little less than a thousand a year, without ever performing any spiritual function. Yet this monstrous institution was much less disliked by the Puritans settled in Ireland than the Church of England by the English sectaries. For in Ireland religious divisions were subordinate to national divisions; and the Presbyterian, while, as a theologian, he could not but condemn the established hierarchy, yet looked on that hierarchy with a sort of complacency when he considered it as a sumptuous and ostentatious trophy of the victory achieved by the great race from which he sprang. [160](#)

Thus the grievances of the Irish Roman Catholic had hardly anything in common with the grievances of the English Roman Catholic. The Roman Catholic of Lancashire or Staffordshire had only to turn Protestant; and he was at once, in all respects, on a level with his neighbours: but, if the Roman Catholics of Munster and Connaught had turned Protestants, they would still have continued to be a subject people. Whatever evils the Roman Catholic suffered in England were the effects of harsh legislation, and might have been remedied by a more liberal legislation. But between the two populations which inhabited Ireland there was an inequality which legislation had not caused and could not remove. The dominion which one of those populations exercised over the other was the dominion of wealth over poverty, of knowledge over ignorance, of civilised over uncivilised man.

James himself seemed, at the commencement of his reign, to be perfectly aware of these truths. The distractions of Ireland, he said, arose, not from the differences between the Catholics and the Protestants, but from the differences between the Irish and the English. [161](#) The consequences which he should have drawn from this just proposition were sufficiently obvious; but unhappily for himself and for Ireland he failed to perceive them.

If only national animosity could be allayed, there could be little doubt that religious animosity, not being kept alive, as in England, by cruel penal acts and stringent test acts, would of itself fade away. To allay a national animosity such as that which the two races inhabiting Ireland felt for each other could not be the work of a few years. Yet it was a work to which a wise and good prince might have contributed much; and James would have undertaken that work with advantages such as none of his predecessors or successors possessed. At once an Englishman and a Roman Catholic, he belonged half to the ruling and half to the subject caste, and was therefore peculiarly qualified to be a mediator between them. Nor is it difficult to trace the course which he ought to have pursued. He ought to have determined that the existing settlement of landed property should be inviolable; and he ought to have announced that determination in such a manner as effectually to quiet the anxiety of the new proprietors, and to extinguish any wild hopes which the old proprietors might entertain. Whether, in the great transfer of estates, injustice had or had not been committed, was immaterial. That transfer, just or unjust, had taken place so long ago, that to reverse it would be to unfix the foundations of society. There must be a time of limitation to all rights. After thirty-five years of actual possession, after twenty-five years of possession solemnly guaranteed by statute, after innumerable leases and releases, mortgages and devises, it was too late to search for flaws in titles. Nevertheless something might have been done to heal the lacerated feelings and to raise the fallen fortunes of the

Irish gentry. The colonists were in a thriving condition. They had greatly improved their property by building, planting, and fencing. The rents had almost doubled within a few years; trade was brisk; and the revenue, amounting to about three hundred thousand pounds a year, more than defrayed all the charges of the local government, and afforded a surplus which was remitted to England. There was no doubt that the next Parliament which should meet at Dublin, though representing almost exclusively the English interest, would, in return for the King's promise to maintain that interest in all its legal rights, willingly grant to him a very considerable sum for the purpose of indemnifying, at least in part, such native families as had been wrongfully despoiled. It was thus that in our own time the French government put an end to the disputes engendered by the most extensive confiscation that ever took place in Europe. And thus, if James had been guided by the advice of his most loyal Protestant counsellors, he would have at least greatly mitigated one of the chief evils which afflicted Ireland. [162](#)

Having done this, he should have laboured to reconcile the hostile races to each other by impartially protecting the rights and restraining the excesses of both. He should have punished with equal severity the native who indulged in the license of barbarism, and the colonist who abused the strength of civilisation. As far as the legitimate authority of the crown extended,—and in Ireland it extended far,—no man who was qualified for office by integrity and ability should have been considered as disqualified by extraction or by creed for any public trust. It is probable that a Roman Catholic King, with an ample revenue absolutely at his disposal, would, without much difficulty, have secured the cooperation of the Roman Catholic prelates and priests in the great work of reconciliation. Much, however, must still have been left to the healing influence of time. The native race would still have had to learn from the colonists industry and forethought, the arts of life, and the language of England. There could not be equality between men who lived in houses and men who lived in sties, between men who were fed on bread and men who were fed on potatoes, between men who spoke the noble tongue of great philosophers and poets and men who, with a perverted pride, boasted that they could not writh their mouths into chattering such a jargon as that in which the *Advancement of Learning* and the *Paradise Lost* were written. [163](#) Yet it is not unreasonable to believe that, if the gentle policy which has been described had been steadily followed by the government, all distinctions would gradually have been effaced, and that there would now have been no more trace of the hostility which has been the curse of Ireland than there is of the equally deadly hostility which once raged between the Saxons and the Normans in England.

Unhappily James, instead of becoming a mediator became the fiercest and most reckless of partisans. Instead of allaying the animosity of the two populations, he inflamed it to a height before unknown. He determined to reverse their relative position, and to put the Protestant colonists under the feet of the Popish Celts. To be of the established religion, to be of the English blood, was, in his view, a disqualification for civil and military employment. He meditated the design of again confiscating and again portioning out the soil of half the island, and showed his inclination so clearly that one class was soon agitated by terrors which he afterwards vainly wished to soothe, and the other by hopes which he afterwards vainly wished to restrain. But this was the smallest part of his guilt and madness. He deliberately resolved, not merely to give to the aboriginal inhabitants of Ireland the entire possession of their own country, but also to use them as his instruments for setting up arbitrary government in England. The event was such as might have been foreseen. The colonists turned to bay with the stubborn hardihood of their race. The mother country justly regarded their cause as her own. Then came a desperate struggle for a tremendous stake. Everything dear to nations was wagered on both sides: nor can we justly blame either the Irishman or the Englishman for obeying, in that extremity, the law of self-preservation. The contest was terrible, but short. The weaker went down. His fate was cruel; and yet for the cruelty with which he was treated there was, not indeed a defence, but an excuse: for, though he suffered all that tyranny could inflict, he suffered nothing that he would not himself have inflicted. The effect of the insane attempt to subjugate England by means of Ireland was that the Irish became hewers of wood and drawers of water to the English. The

old proprietors, by their effort to recover what they had lost, lost the greater part of what they had retained. The momentary ascendancy of Popery produced such a series of barbarous laws against Popery as made the statute book of Ireland a proverb of infamy throughout Christendom. Such were the bitter fruits of the policy of James.

We have seen that one of his first acts, after he became King, was to recall Ormond from Ireland. Ormond was the head of the English interest in that kingdom: he was firmly attached to the Protestant religion; and his power far exceeded that of an ordinary Lord Lieutenant, first, because he was in rank and wealth the greatest of the colonists, and, secondly, because he was not only the chief of the civil administration, but also commander of the forces. The King was not at that time disposed to commit the government wholly to Irish hands. He had indeed been heard to say that a native viceroy would soon become an independent sovereign. [164](#) For the present, therefore, he determined to divide the power which Ormond had possessed, to entrust the civil administration to an English and Protestant Lord Lieutenant, and to give the command of the army to an Irish and Roman Catholic General. The Lord Lieutenant was Clarendon; the General was Tyrconnel.

Tyrconnel sprang, as has already been said, from one of those degenerate families of the Pale which were popularly classed with the aboriginal population of Ireland. He sometimes, indeed, in his rants, talked with Norman haughtiness of the Celtic barbarians: [165](#) but all his sympathies were really with the natives. The Protestant colonists he hated; and they returned his hatred. Clarendon's inclinations were very different: but he was, from temper, interest, and principle, an obsequious courtier. His spirit was mean; his circumstances were embarrassed; and his mind had been deeply imbued with the political doctrines which the Church of England had in that age too assiduously taught. His abilities, however, were not contemptible; and, under a good King, he would probably have been a respectable viceroy.

About three quarters of a year elapsed between the recall of Ormond and the arrival of Clarendon at Dublin. During that interval the King was represented by a board of Lords Justices: but the military administration was in Tyrconnel's hands. Already the designs of the court began gradually to unfold themselves. A royal order came from Whitehall for disarming the population. This order Tyrconnel strictly executed as respected the English. Though the country was infested by predatory bands, a Protestant gentleman could scarcely obtain permission to keep a brace of pistols. The native peasantry, on the other hand, were suffered to retain their weapons. [166](#) The joy of the colonists was therefore great, when at length, in December 1685, Tyrconnel was summoned to London and Clarendon set out for Dublin. But it soon appeared that the government was really directed, not at Dublin, but in London. Every mail that crossed St. George's Channel brought tidings of the boundless influence which Tyrconnel exercised on Irish affairs. It was said that he was to be a Marquess, that he was to be a Duke, that he was to have the command of the forces, that he was to be entrusted with the task of remodelling the army and the courts of justice. [167](#) Clarendon was bitterly mortified at finding himself a subordinate in embryo of that administration of which he had expected to be the head. He complained that whatever he did was misrepresented by his detractors, and that the gravest resolutions touching the country which he governed were adopted at Westminster, made known to the public, discussed at coffee houses, communicated in hundreds of private letters, some weeks before one hint had been given to the Lord Lieutenant. His own personal dignity, he said, mattered little: but it was no light thing that the representative of the majesty of the throne should be made an object of contempt to the people. [168](#) Panic spread fast among the English when they found that the viceroy, their fellow countryman and fellow Protestant, was unable to extend to them the protection which they had expected from him. They began to know by bitter experience what it is to be a subject caste. They were harassed by the natives with accusations of treason and sedition. This Protestant had corresponded with Monmouth: that Protestant had said something disrespectful of the King four or five years ago, when the Exclusion Bill was under discussion; and the evidence of the most infamous of mankind was ready to substantiate every charge. The Lord Lieutenant expressed his apprehension

that, if these practices were not stopped, there would soon be at Dublin a reign of terror similar to that which he had seen in London, when every man held his life and honour at the mercy of Oates and Bedloe. [169](#)

Clarendon was soon informed, by a concise despatch from Sunderland, that it had been resolved to make without delay a complete change in both the civil and the military government of Ireland, and to bring a large number of Roman Catholics instantly into office. His Majesty, it was most ungraciously added, had taken counsel on these matters with persons more competent to advise him than his inexperienced Lord Lieutenant could possibly be. [170](#)

Before this letter reached the viceroy the intelligence which it contained had, through many channels, arrived in Ireland. The terror of the colonists was extreme. Outnumbered as they were by the native population, their condition would be pitiable indeed if the native population were to be armed against them with the whole power of the state; and nothing less than this was threatened. The English inhabitants of Dublin passed each other in the streets with dejected looks. On the Exchange business was suspended. Landowners hastened to sell their estates for whatever could be got, and to remit the purchase money to England. Traders began to call in their debts and to make preparations for retiring from business. The alarm soon affected the revenue. [171](#) Clarendon attempted to inspire the dismayed settlers with a confidence which he was himself far from feeling. He assured them that their property would be held sacred, and that, to his certain knowledge, the King was fully determined to maintain the act of settlement which guaranteed their right to the soil. But his letters to England were in a very different strain. He ventured even to expostulate with the King, and, without blaming His Majesty's intention of employing Roman Catholics, expressed a strong opinion that the Roman Catholics who might be employed should be Englishmen. [172](#)

The reply of James was dry and cold. He declared that he had no intention of depriving the English colonists of their land, but that he regarded a large portion of them as his enemies, and that, since he consented to leave so much property in the hands of his enemies, it was the more necessary that the civil and military administration should be in the hands of his friends. [173](#)

Accordingly several Roman Catholics were sworn of the Privy Council; and orders were sent to corporations to admit Roman Catholics to municipal advantages. [174](#) Many officers of the army were arbitrarily deprived of their commissions and of their bread. It was to no purpose that the Lord Lieutenant pleaded the cause of some whom he knew to be good soldiers and loyal subjects. Among them were old Cavaliers, who had fought bravely for monarchy, and who bore the marks of honourable wounds. Their places were supplied by men who had no recommendation but their religion. Of the new Captains and Lieutenants, it was said, some had been cow-herds, some footmen, some noted marauders; some had been so used to wear brogues that they stumbled and shuffled about strangely in their military jack boots. Not a few of the officers who were discarded took refuge in the Dutch service, and enjoyed, four years later, the pleasure of driving their successors before them in ignominious rout through the waters of the Boyne. [175](#)

The distress and alarm of Clarendon were increased by news which reached him through private channels. Without his approbation, without his knowledge, preparations were making for arming and drilling the whole Celtic population of the country of which he was the nominal governor. Tyrconnel from London directed the design; and the prelates of his Church were his agents. Every priest had been instructed to prepare an exact list of all his male parishioners capable of bearing arms, and to forward it to his Bishop. [176](#)

It had already been rumoured that Tyrconnel would soon return to Dublin armed with extraordinary and independent powers; and the rumour gathered strength daily. The Lord Lieutenant, whom no insult could drive to resign the pomp and emoluments of his place, declared that he should submit cheerfully to the royal pleasure, and approve himself in all things a faithful and obedient subject. He had never, he said, in his life, had any difference with Tyrconnel, and he trusted that no difference would now arise. [177](#) Clarendon appears not to have recollected that there had once been

a plot to ruin the fame of his innocent sister, and that in that plot Tyrconnel had borne a chief part. This is not exactly one of the injuries which high spirited men most readily pardon. But, in the wicked court where the Hydes had long been pushing their fortunes, such injuries were easily forgiven and forgotten, not from magnanimity or Christian charity, but from mere baseness and want of moral sensibility. In June 1686, Tyrconnel came. His commission authorised him only to command the troops, but he brought with him royal instructions touching all parts of the administration, and at once took the real government of the island into his own hands. On the day after his arrival he explicitly said that commissions must be largely given to Roman Catholic officers, and that room must be made for them by dismissing more Protestants. He pushed on the remodelling of the army eagerly and indefatigably. It was indeed the only part of the functions of a Commander in Chief which he was competent to perform; for, though courageous in brawls and duels, he knew nothing of military duty. At the very first review which he held, it was evident to all who were near to him that he did not know how to draw up a regiment. [178](#) To turn Englishmen out and to put Irishmen in was, in his view, the beginning and the end of the administration of war. He had the insolence to cashier the Captain of the Lord Lieutenant's own Body Guard: nor was Clarendon aware of what had happened till he saw a Roman Catholic, whose face was quite unknown to him, escorting the state coach. [179](#) The change was not confined to the officers alone. The ranks were completely broken up and recomposed. Four or five hundred soldiers were turned out of a single regiment chiefly on the ground that they were below the proper stature. Yet the most unpractised eye at once perceived that they were taller and better made men than their successors, whose wild and squalid appearance disgusted the beholders. [180](#) Orders were given to the new officers that no man of the Protestant religion was to be suffered to enlist. The recruiting parties, instead of beating their drums for volunteers at fairs and markets, as had been the old practice, repaired to places to which the Roman Catholics were in the habit of making pilgrimages for purposes of devotion. In a few weeks the General had introduced more than two thousand natives into the ranks; and the people about him confidently affirmed that by Christmas day not a man of English race would be left in the whole army. [181](#)

On all questions which arose in the Privy Council, Tyrconnel showed similar violence and partiality. John Keating, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, a man distinguished by ability, integrity, and loyalty, represented with great mildness that perfect equality was all that the General could reasonably ask for his own Church. The King, he said, evidently meant that no man fit for public trust should be excluded because he was a Roman Catholic, and that no man unfit for public trust should be admitted because he was a Protestant. Tyrconnel immediately began to curse and swear. "I do not know what to say to that; I would have all Catholics in." [182](#) The most judicious Irishmen of his own religious persuasion were dismayed at his rashness, and ventured to remonstrate with him; but he drove them from him with imprecations. [183](#) His brutality was such that many thought him mad. Yet it was less strange than the shameless volubility with which he uttered falsehoods. He had long before earned the nickname of Lying Dick Talbot; and, at Whitehall, any wild fiction was commonly designated as one of Dick Talbot's truths. He now daily proved that he was well entitled to this unenviable reputation. Indeed in him mendacity was almost a disease. He would, after giving orders for the dismissal of English officers, take them into his closet, assure them of his confidence and friendship, and implore heaven to confound him, sink him, blast him, if he did not take good care of their interests. Sometimes those to whom he had thus perjured himself learned, before the day closed, that he had cashiered them. [184](#)

On his arrival, though he swore savagely at the Act of Settlement, and called the English interest a foul thing, a roguish thing, and a damned thing, he yet intended to be convinced that the distribution of property could not, after the lapse of so many years, be altered. [185](#) But, when he had been a few weeks at Dublin, his language changed. He began to harangue vehemently at the Council board on the necessity of giving back the land to the old owners. He had not, however, as yet, obtained his master's sanction to this fatal project. National feeling still struggled feebly against superstition

in the mind of James. He was an Englishman: he was an English King; and he could not, without some misgivings, consent to the destruction of the greatest colony that England had ever planted. The English Roman Catholics with whom he was in the habit of taking counsel were almost unanimous in favour of the Act of Settlement. Not only the honest and moderate Powis, but the dissolute and headstrong Dover, gave judicious and patriotic advice. Tyrconnel could hardly hope to counteract at a distance the effect which such advice must produce on the royal mind. He determined to plead the cause of his caste in person; and accordingly he set out, at the end of August, for England.

His presence and his absence were equally dreaded by the Lord Lieutenant. It was, indeed, painful to be daily browbeaten by an enemy: but it was not less painful to know that an enemy was daily breathing calumny and evil counsel in the royal ear. Clarendon was overwhelmed by manifold vexations. He made a progress through the country, and found that he was everywhere treated by the Irish population with contempt. The Roman Catholic priests exhorted their congregations to withhold from him all marks of honour. The native gentry, instead of coming to pay their respects to him, remained at their houses. The native peasantry everywhere sang Erse songs in praise of Tyrconnel, who would, they doubted not, soon reappear to complete the humiliation of their oppressors. [186](#) The viceroy had scarcely returned to Dublin, from his unsatisfactory tour, when he received letters which informed him that he had incurred the King's serious displeasure. His Majesty—so these letters ran—expected his servants not only to do what he commanded, but to do it from the heart, and with a cheerful countenance. The Lord Lieutenant had not, indeed, refused to cooperate in the reform of the army and of the civil administration; but his cooperation had been reluctant and perfunctory: his looks had betrayed his feelings; and everybody saw that he disapproved of the policy which he was employed to carry into effect. [187](#) In great anguish of mind he wrote to defend himself; but he was sternly told that his defence was not satisfactory. He then, in the most abject terms, declared that he would not attempt to justify himself, that he acquiesced in the royal judgment, be it what it might, that he prostrated himself in the dust, that he implored pardon, that of all penitents he was the most sincere, that he should think it glorious to die in his Sovereign's cause, but found it impossible to live under his Sovereign's displeasure. Nor was this mere interested hypocrisy, but, at least in part, unaffected slavishness and poverty of spirit; for in confidential letters, not meant for the royal eye, he bemoaned himself to his family in the same strain. He was miserable; he was crushed; the wrath of the King was insupportable; if that wrath could not be mitigated, life would not be worth having. [188](#) The poor man's terror increased when he learned that it had been determined at Whitehall to recall him, and to appoint, as his successor, his rival and calumniator, Tyrconnel. [189](#) Then for a time the prospect seemed to clear; the King was in better humour; and during a few days Clarendon flattered himself that his brother's intercession had prevailed, and that the crisis was passed. [190](#)

In truth the crisis was only beginning. While Clarendon was trying to lean on Rochester, Rochester was unable longer to support himself. As in Ireland the elder brother, though retaining the guard of honour, the sword of state, and the title of Excellency, had really been superseded by the Commander of the Forces, so in England, the younger brother, though holding the white staff, and walking, by virtue of his high office, before the greatest hereditary nobles, was fast sinking into a mere financial clerk. The Parliament was again prorogued to a distant day, in opposition to the Treasurer's known wishes. He was not even told that there was to be another prorogation, but was left to learn the news from the Gazette. The real direction of affairs had passed to the cabal which dined with Sunderland on Fridays. The cabinet met only to hear the despatches from foreign courts read: nor did those despatches contain anything which was not known on the Royal Exchange; for all the English Envoys had received orders to put into the official letters only the common talk of antechambers, and to reserve important secrets for private communications which were addressed to James himself, to Sunderland, or to Petre. [191](#) Yet the victorious faction was not content. The King was assured by those whom he most trusted that the obstinacy with which the nation opposed his designs was really to be imputed to Rochester. How could the people believe that their Sovereign was

unalterably resolved to persevere in the course on which he had entered, when they saw at his right hand, ostensibly first in power and trust among his counsellors, a man who notoriously regarded that course with strong disapprobation? Every step which had been taken with the object of humbling the Church of England, and of elevating the Church of Rome, had been opposed by the Treasurer. True it was that, when he had found opposition vain, he had gloomily submitted, nay, that he had sometimes even assisted in carrying into effect the very plans against which he had most earnestly contended. True it was that, though he disliked the Ecclesiastical Commission, he had consented to be a Commissioner. True it was that he had, while declaring that he could see nothing blamable in the conduct of the Bishop of London, voted sullenly and reluctantly for the sentence of deprivation. But this was not enough. A prince, engaged in an enterprise so important and arduous as that on which James was bent, had a right to expect from his first minister, not unwilling and ungracious acquiescence, but zealous and strenuous cooperation. While such advice was daily given to James by those in whom he reposed confidence, he received, by the penny post, many anonymous letters filled with calumnies against the Lord Treasurer. This mode of attack had been contrived by Tyrconnel, and was in perfect harmony with every part of his infamous life. [192](#)

The King hesitated. He seems, indeed, to have really regarded his brother in law with personal kindness, the effect of near affinity, of long and familiar intercourse, and of many mutual good offices. It seemed probable that, as long as Rochester continued to submit himself, though tardily and with murmurs, to the royal pleasure, he would continue to be in name prime minister. Sunderland, therefore, with exquisite cunning, suggested to his master the propriety of asking the only proof of obedience which it was quite certain that Rochester never would give. At present,—such was the language of the artful Secretary,—it was impossible to consult with the first of the King's servants respecting the object nearest to the King's heart. It was lamentable to think that religious prejudices should, at such a conjuncture, deprive the government of such valuable assistance. Perhaps those prejudices might not prove insurmountable. Then the deceiver whispered that, to his knowledge, Rochester had of late had some misgivings about the points in dispute between the Protestants and Catholics. [193](#) This was enough. The King eagerly caught at the hint. He began to flatter himself that he might at once escape from the disagreeable necessity of removing a friend, and secure an able coadjutor for the great work which was in progress. He was also elated by the hope that he might have the merit and the glory of saving a fellow creature from perdition. He seems, indeed, about this time, to have been seized with an unusually violent fit of zeal for his religion; and this is the more remarkable, because he had just relapsed, after a short interval of selfrestraint, into debauchery which all Christian divines condemn as sinful, and which, in an elderly man married to an agreeable young wife, is regarded even by people of the world as disreputable. Lady Dorchester had returned from Dublin, and was again the King's mistress. Her return was politically of no importance. She had learned by experience the folly of attempting to save her lover from the destruction to which he was running headlong. She therefore suffered the Jesuits to guide his political conduct and they, in return, suffered her to wheedle him out of money; She was, however, only one of several abandoned women who at this time shared, with his beloved Church, the dominion over his mind. [194](#) He seems to have determined to make some amends for neglecting the welfare of his own soul by taking care of the souls of others. He set himself, therefore, to labour, with real good will, but with the good will of a coarse, stern, and arbitrary mind, for the conversion of his kinsman. Every audience which the Treasurer obtained was spent in arguments about the authority of the Church and the worship of images. Rochester was firmly resolved not to abjure his religion; but he had no scruple about employing in selfdefence artifices as discreditable as those which had been used against him. He affected to speak like a man whose mind was not made up, professed himself desirous to be enlightened if he was in error, borrowed Popish books, and listened with civility to Popish divines. He had several interviews with Leyburn, the Vicar Apostolic, with Godden, the chaplain and almoner of the Queen Dowager, and with Bonaventure Giffard, a theologian trained to polemics in the schools

of Douay. It was agreed that there should be a formal disputation between these doctors and some Protestant clergymen. The King told Rochester to choose any ministers of the Established Church, with two exceptions. The proscribed persons were Tillotson and Stillingfleet. Tillotson, the most popular preacher of that age, and in manners the most inoffensive of men, had been much connected with some leading Whigs; and Stillingfleet, who was renowned as a consummate master of all the weapons of controversy, had given still deeper offence by publishing an answer to the papers which had been found in the strong box of Charles the Second. Rochester took the two royal chaplains who happened to be in waiting. One of them was Simon Patrick, whose commentaries on the Bible still form a part of theological libraries; the other was Jane, a vehement Tory, who had assisted in drawing up that decree by which the University of Oxford had solemnly adopted the worst follies of Filmer. The conference took place at Whitehall on the thirtieth of November. Rochester, who did not wish it to be known that he had even consented to hear the arguments of Popish priests, stipulated for secrecy. No auditor was suffered to be present except the King. The subject discussed was the real presence. The Roman Catholic divines took on themselves the burden of the proof. Patrick and Jane said little; nor was it necessary that they should say much; for the Earl himself undertook to defend the doctrine of his Church, and, as was his habit, soon warmed with conflict, lost his temper, and asked with great vehemence whether it was expected that he should change his religion on such frivolous grounds. Then he remembered how much he was risking, began again to dissemble, complimented the disputants on their skill and learning, and asked time to consider what had been said. [195](#)

Slow as James was, he could not but see that this was mere trifling. He told Barillon that Rochester's language was not that of a man honestly desirous of arriving at the truth. Still the King did not like to propose directly to his brother in law the simple choice, apostasy or dismissal: but, three days after the conference, Barillon waited on the Treasurer, and, with much circumlocution and many expressions of friendly concern, broke the unpleasant truth. "Do you mean," said Rochester, bewildered by the involved and ceremonious phrases in which the intimation was made, "that, if I do not turn Catholic, the consequence will be that I shall lose my place?" "I say nothing about consequences," answered the wary diplomatist. "I only come as a friend to express a hope that you will take care to keep your place." "But surely," said Rochester, "the plain meaning of all this is that I must turn Catholic or go out." He put many questions for the purpose of ascertaining whether the communication was made by authority, but could extort only vague and mysterious replies. At last, affecting a confidence which he was far from feeling, he declared that Barillon must have been imposed upon by idle or malicious reports. "I tell you," he said, "that the King will not dismiss me, and I will not resign. I know him: he knows me; and I fear nobody." The Frenchman answered that he was charmed, that he was ravished to hear it, and that his only motive for interfering was a sincere anxiety for the prosperity and dignity of his excellent friend the Treasurer. And thus the two statesmen parted, each flattering himself that he had duped the other. [196](#)

Meanwhile, in spite of all injunctions of secrecy, the news that the Lord Treasurer had consented to be instructed in the doctrines of Popery had spread fast through London. Patrick and Jane had been seen going in at that mysterious door which led to Chiffinch's apartments. Some Roman Catholics about the court had, indiscreetly or artfully, told all, and more than all, that they knew. The Tory churchmen waited anxiously for fuller information. They were mortified to think that their leader should even have pretended to waver in his opinion; but they could not believe that he would stoop to be a renegade. The unfortunate minister, tortured at once by his fierce passions and his low desires, annoyed by the censures of the public, annoyed by the hints which he had received from Barillon, afraid of losing character, afraid of losing office, repaired to the royal closet. He was determined to keep his place, if it could be kept by any villany but one. He would pretend to be shaken in his religious opinions, and to be half a convert: he would promise to give strenuous support to that policy which he had hitherto opposed: but, if he were driven to extremity, he would refuse to change his religion. He began, therefore, by telling the King that the business in which His Majesty took so much

interest was not sleeping, that Jane and Giffard were engaged in consulting books on the points in dispute between the Churches, and that, when these researches were over, it would be desirable to have another conference. Then he complained bitterly that all the town was apprised of what ought to have been carefully concealed, and that some persons, who, from their station, might be supposed to be well informed, reported strange things as to the royal intentions. "It is whispered," he said, "that, if I do not do as your Majesty would have me, I shall not be suffered to continue in my present station." The King said, with some general expressions of kindness, that it was difficult to prevent people from talking, and that loose reports were not to be regarded. These vague phrases were not likely to quiet the perturbed mind of the minister. His agitation became violent, and he began to plead for his place as if he had been pleading for his life. "Your Majesty sees that I do all in my power to obey you. Indeed I will do all that I can to obey you in every thing. I will serve you in your own way. Nay," he cried, in an agony of baseness, "I will do what I can to believe as you would have me. But do not let me be told, while I am trying to bring my mind to this, that, if I find it impossible to comply, I must lose all. For I must needs tell your Majesty that there are other considerations." "Oh, you must needs," exclaimed the King, with an oath. For a single word of honest and manly sound, escaping in the midst of all this abject supplication, was sufficient to move his anger. "I hope, sir," said poor Rochester, "that I do not offend you. Surely your Majesty could not think well of me if I did not say so." The King recollected himself protested that he was not offended, and advised the Treasurer to disregard idle rumours, and to confer again with Jane and Giffard. [197](#)

After this conversation, a fortnight elapsed before the decisive blow fell. That fortnight Rochester passed in intriguing and imploring. He attempted to interest in his favour those Roman Catholics who had the greatest influence at court. He could not, he said, renounce his own religion: but, with that single reservation, he would do all that they could desire. Indeed, if he might only keep his place, they should find that he could be more useful to them as a Protestant than as one of their own communion. [198](#) His wife, who was on a sick bed, had already, it was said, solicited the honour of a visit from the much injured Queen, and had attempted to work on Her Majesty's feelings of compassion. [199](#) But the Hydes abased themselves in vain. Petre regarded them with peculiar malevolence, and was bent on their ruin. [200](#) On the evening of the seventeenth of December the Earl was called into the royal closet. James was unusually discomposed, and even shed tears. The occasion, indeed, could not but call up some recollections which might well soften even a hard heart. He expressed his regret that his duty made it impossible for him to indulge his private partialities. It was absolutely necessary, he said, that those who had the chief direction of his affairs should partake his opinions and feelings. He owned that he had very great personal obligations to Rochester, and that no fault could be found with the way in which the financial business had lately been done: but the office of Lord Treasurer was of such high importance that, in general, it ought not to be entrusted to a single person, and could not safely be entrusted by a Roman Catholic King to a person zealous for the Church of England. "Think better of it, my Lord," he continued. "Read again the papers from my brother's box. I will give you a little more time for consideration, if you desire it." Rochester saw that all was over, and that the wisest course left to him was to make his retreat with as much money and as much credit as possible. He succeeded in both objects. He obtained a pension of four thousand pounds a year for two lives on the post office. He had made great sums out of the estates of traitors, and carried with him in particular Grey's bond for forty thousand pounds, and a grant of all the estate which the crown had in Grey's extensive property. [201](#) No person had ever quitted office on terms so advantageous. To the applause of the sincere friends of the Established Church Rochester had, indeed, very slender claims. To save his place he had sate in that tribunal which had been illegally created for the purpose of persecuting her. To save his place he had given a dishonest vote for degrading one of her most eminent ministers, had affected to doubt her orthodoxy, had listened with the outward show of docility to teachers who called her schismatical and heretical, and had offered to cooperate strenuously with her deadliest enemies in their designs against her. The

highest praise to which he was entitled was this, that he had shrunk from the exceeding wickedness and baseness of publicly abjuring, for lucre, the religion in which he had been brought up, which he believed to be true, and of which he had long made an ostentatious profession. Yet he was extolled by the great body of Churchmen as if he had been the bravest and purest of martyrs. The Old and New Testaments, the Martyrologies of Eusebius and of Fox, were ransacked to find parallels for his heroic piety. He was Daniel in the den of lions, Shadrach in the fiery furnace, Peter in the dungeon of Herod, Paul at the bar of Nero, Ignatius in the amphitheatre, Latimer at the stake. Among the many facts which prove that the standard of honour and virtue among the public men of that age was low, the admiration excited by Rochester's constancy is, perhaps, the most decisive.

In his fall he dragged down Clarendon. On the seventh of January 1687, the Gazette announced to the people of London that the Treasury was put into commission. On the eighth arrived at Dublin a despatch formally signifying that in a month Tyrconnel would assume the government of Ireland. It was not without great difficulty that this man had surmounted the numerous impediments which stood in the way of his ambition. It was well known that the extermination of the English colony in Ireland was the object on which his heart was set. He had, therefore, to overcome some scruples in the royal mind. He had to surmount the opposition, not merely of all the Protestant members of the government, not merely of the moderate and respectable heads of the Roman Catholic body, but even of several members of the jesuitical cabal. [202](#) Sunderland shrank from the thought of an Irish revolution, religious, political, and social. To the Queen Tyrconnel was personally an object of aversion. Powis was therefore suggested as the man best qualified for the viceroyalty. He was of illustrious birth: he was a sincere Roman Catholic: and yet he was generally allowed by candid Protestants to be an honest man and a good Englishman. All opposition, however, yielded to Tyrconnel's energy and cunning. He fawned, bullied, and bribed indefatigably. Petre's help was secured by flattery. Sunderland was plied at once with promises and menaces. An immense price was offered for his support, no less than an annuity of five thousand pounds a year from Ireland, redeemable by payment of fifty thousand pounds down. If this proposal were rejected, Tyrconnel threatened to let the King know that the Lord President had, at the Friday dinners, described His Majesty as a fool who must be governed either by a woman or by a priest. Sunderland, pale and trembling, offered to procure for Tyrconnel supreme military command, enormous appointments, anything but the viceroyalty: but all compromise was rejected; and it was necessary to yield. Mary of Modena herself was not free from suspicion of corruption. There was in London a renowned chain of pearls which was valued at ten thousand pounds. It had belonged to Prince Rupert; and by him it had been left to Margaret Hughes, a courtesan who, towards the close of his life, had exercised a boundless empire over him. Tyrconnel loudly boasted that with this chain he had purchased the support of the Queen. There were those, however, who suspected that this story was one of Dick Talbot's truths, and that it had no more foundation than the calumnies which, twenty-six years before, he had invented to blacken the fame of Anne Hyde. To the Roman Catholic courtiers generally he spoke of the uncertain tenure by which they held offices, honours, and emoluments. The King might die tomorrow, and might leave them at the mercy of a hostile government and a hostile rabble. But, if the old faith could be made dominant in Ireland, if the Protestant interest in that country could be destroyed, there would still be, in the worst event, an asylum at hand to which they might retreat, and where they might either negotiate or defend themselves with advantage. A Popish priest was hired with the promise of the mitre of Waterford to preach at Saint James's against the Act of Settlement; and his sermon, though heard with deep disgust by the English part of the auditory, was not without its effect. The struggle which patriotism had for a time maintained against bigotry in the royal mind was at an end. "There is work to be done in Ireland," said James, "which no Englishman will do." [203](#)

All obstacles were at length removed; and in February 1687, Tyrconnel began to rule his native country with the power and appointments of Lord Lieutenant, but with the humbler title of Lord Deputy.

His arrival spread dismay through the whole English population. Clarendon was accompanied, or speedily followed, across St. George's Channel, by a large proportion of the most respectable inhabitants of Dublin, gentlemen, tradesmen, and artificers. It was said that fifteen hundred families emigrated in a few days. The panic was not unreasonable. The work of putting the colonists down under the feet of the natives went rapidly on. In a short time almost every Privy Councillor, Judge, Sheriff, Mayor, Alderman, and Justice of the Peace was a Celt and a Roman Catholic. It seemed that things would soon be ripe for a general election, and that a House of Commons bent on abrogating the Act of Settlement would easily be assembled. [204](#) Those who had lately been the lords of the island now cried out, in the bitterness of their souls, that they had become a prey and a laughingstock to their own serfs and menials; that houses were burnt and cattle stolen with impunity; that the new soldiers roamed the country, pillaging, insulting, ravishing, maiming, tossing one Protestant in a blanket, tying up another by the hair and scourging him; that to appeal to the law was vain; that Irish Judges, Sheriffs, juries, and witnesses were all in a league to save Irish criminals; and that, even without an Act of Parliament, the whole soil would soon change hands; for that, in every action of ejectment tried under the administration of Tyrconnel, judgment had been given for the native against the Englishman. [205](#)

While Clarendon was at Dublin the Privy Seal had been in the hands of Commissioners. His friends hoped that it would, on his return to London, be again delivered to him. But the King and the Jesuitical cabal had determined that the disgrace of the Hydes should be complete. Lord Arundell of Wardour, a Roman Catholic, received the Privy Seal. Bellasyse, a Roman Catholic, was made First Lord of the Treasury; and Dover, another Roman Catholic, had a seat at the board. The appointment of a ruined gambler to such a trust would alone have sufficed to disgust the public. The dissolute Etherege, who then resided at Ratisbon as English envoy, could not refrain from expressing, with a sneer, his hope that his old boon companion, Dover, would keep the King's money better than his own. In order that the finances might not be ruined by incapable and inexperienced Papists, the obsequious, diligent and silent Godolphin was named a Commissioner of the Treasury, but continued to be Chamberlain to the Queen. [206](#)

The dismissal of the two brothers is a great epoch in the reign of James. From that time it was clear that what he really wanted was not liberty of conscience for the members of his own church, but liberty to persecute the members of other churches. Pretending to abhor tests, he had himself imposed a test. He thought it hard, he thought it monstrous, that able and loyal men should be excluded from the public service solely for being Roman Catholics. Yet he had himself turned out of office a Treasurer, whom he admitted to be both loyal and able, solely for being a Protestant. The cry was that a general proscription was at hand, and that every public functionary must make up his mind to lose his soul or to lose his place. [207](#) Who indeed could hope to stand where the Hydes had fallen? They were the brothers in law of the King, the uncles and natural guardians of his children, his friends from early youth, his steady adherents in adversity and peril, his obsequious servants since he had been on the throne. Their sole crime was their religion; and for this crime they had been discarded. In great perturbation men began to look round for help; and soon all eyes were fixed on one whom a rare concurrence both of personal qualities and of fortuitous circumstances pointed out as the deliverer.

CHAPTER VII

William, Prince of Orange; his Appearance—His early Life and Education—His Theological Opinions—His Military Qualifications—His Love of Danger; his bad Health—Coldness of his Manners and Strength of his Emotions; his Friendship for Bentinck—Mary, Princess of Orange—Gilbert Burnet—He brings about a good Understanding between the Prince and Princess—Relations between William and English Parties—His Feelings towards England—His Feelings towards Holland and France—His Policy consistent throughout—Treaty of Augsburg—William becomes the Head of the English Opposition—Mordaunt proposes to William a Descent on England—William rejects the Advice—Discontent in England after the Fall of the Hydes—Conversions to Popery; Peterborough; Salisbury—Wycherley; Tindal; Haines—Dryden—The Hind and Panther—Change in the Policy of the Court towards the Puritans—Partial Toleration granted in Scotland—Closeting—It is unsuccessful—Admiral Herbert—Declaration of Indulgence—Feeling of the Protestant Dissenters—Feeling of the Church of England—The Court and the Church—Letter to a Dissenter; Conduct of the Dissenters—Some of the Dissenters side with the Court; Care; Alsop—Rosewell; Lobb—Venn—The Majority of the Puritans are against the Court; Baxter;

Howe,—Banyan—Kiffin—The Prince and Princess of Orange hostile to the Declaration of Indulgence—Their Views respecting the English Roman Catholics vindicated—Enmity of James to Burnet—Mission of Dykvelt to England; Negotiations of Dykvelt with English Statesmen—Danby—Nottingham—Halifax—Devonshire—Edward Russell;

Compton; Herbert—Churchill—Lady Churchill and the Princess Anne—Dykvelt returns to the Hague with Letters from many eminent Englishmen—Zulestein's Mission—Growing Enmity between James and William—Influence of the Dutch Press—Correspondence of Stewart and Fagel—Castelmaine's embassy to Rome

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. [208](#)

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, an 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 goodhumoured man. But it indicates 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 perfection 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 hornwork. 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 inexactly, 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.

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 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.

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 unfailing 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 Conde 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 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 adamant 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. [209](#) 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 Conde, 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 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. [210](#)

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 fatigued 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.

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 coldblooded 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 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 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." [211](#) 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. [212](#) 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. [213](#) 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." [214](#) There 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.

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 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. ²¹⁵ He was indeed ashamed of his errors, and spared no pains to conceal them: but, in spite of all his precautions, Mary well knew that he was not strictly faithful to her. Spies and talebearers, 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. ²¹⁶ 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 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.

The fame of Burnet has been attacked with singular malice and pertinacity. 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 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. [217](#) 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. [218](#) 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 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.

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, 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 selfcomplacency, his animal spirits, and his want of tact, were such that, though he frequently gave offence, he never took it.

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