

# ТОМАС БАБИНГТОН МАКОЛЕЙ

THE HISTORY OF  
ENGLAND, FROM THE  
ACCESSION OF JAMES II —  
VOLUME 5



Томас Бабингтон Маколей

**The History of England, from the  
Accession of James II — Volume 5**

«Public Domain»



**Маколей Т.**

The History of England, from the Accession of James II — Volume 5 /  
Т. Маколей — «Public Domain»,



## Содержание

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH VOLUME	5
CHAPTER XXIII	6
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	36



# **Thomas Babington Macaulay**

## **The History of England, from the Accession of James II — Volume 5**

### **PREFACE TO THE FIFTH VOLUME**

I HAVE thought it right to publish that portion of the continuation of the "History of England" which was fairly transcribed and revised by Lord Macaulay. It is given to the world precisely as it was left: no connecting link has been added; no reference verified; no authority sought for or examined. It would indeed have been possible, with the help I might have obtained from his friends, to have supplied much that is wanting; but I preferred, and I believe the public will prefer, that the last thoughts of the great mind passed away from among us should be preserved sacred from any touch but his own. Besides the revised manuscript, a few pages containing the first rough sketch of the last two months of William's reign are all that is left. From this I have with some difficulty deciphered the account of the death of William. No attempt has been made to join it on to the preceding part, or to supply the corrections which would have been given by the improving hand of the author. But, imperfect as it must be, I believe it will be received with pleasure and interest as a fit conclusion to the life of his great hero.

I will only add my grateful thanks for the kind advice and assistance given me by his most dear and valued friends, Dean Milman and Mr. Ellis.



## CHAPTER XXIII

Standing Armies—Sunderland—Lord Spencer—Controversy touching Standing Armies—Meeting of Parliament—The King's Speech well received; Debate on a Peace Establishment—Sunderland attacked—The Nation averse to a Standing Army—Mutiny Act; the Navy Acts concerning High Treason—Earl of Clancarty—Ways and Means; Rights of the Sovereign in reference to Crown Lands—Proceedings in Parliament on Grants of Crown Lands—Montague accused of Peculation—Bill of Pains and Penalties against Duncombe—Dissension between the houses—Commercial Questions—Irish Manufactures—East India Companies—Fire at Whitehall—Visit of the Czar—Portland's Embassy to France—The Spanish Succession—The Count of Tallard's Embassy—Newmarket Meeting: the insecure State of the Roads—Further Negotiations relating to the Spanish Succession—The King goes to Holland—Portland returns from his Embassy—William is reconciled to Marlborough

THE rejoicings, by which London, on the second of December 1697, celebrated the return of peace and prosperity, continued till long after midnight. On the following morning the Parliament met; and one of the most laborious sessions of that age commenced.

Among the questions which it was necessary that the Houses should speedily decide, one stood forth preeminent in interest and importance. Even in the first transports of joy with which the bearer of the treaty of Ryswick had been welcomed to England, men had eagerly and anxiously asked one another what was to be done with that army which had been formed in Ireland and Belgium, which had learned, in many hard campaigns, to obey and to conquer, and which now consisted of eighty-seven thousand excellent soldiers. Was any part of this great force to be retained in the service of the State? And, if any part, what part? The last two kings had, without the consent of the legislature, maintained military establishments in time of peace. But that they had done this in violation of the fundamental laws of England was acknowledged by all jurists, and had been expressly affirmed in the Bill of Rights. It was therefore impossible for William, now that the country was threatened by no foreign and no domestic enemy, to keep up even a single battalion without the sanction of the Estates of the Realm; and it might well be doubted whether such a sanction would be given.

It is not easy for us to see this question in the light in which it appeared to our ancestors.

No man of sense has, in our days, or in the days of our fathers, seriously maintained that our island could be safe without an army. And, even if our island were perfectly secure from attack, an army would still be indispensably necessary to us. The growth of the empire has left us no choice. The regions which we have colonized or conquered since the accession of the House of Hanover contain a population exceeding twenty-fold that which the House of Stuart governed. There are now more English soldiers on the other side of the tropic of Cancer in time of peace than Cromwell had under his command in time of war. All the troops of Charles II. would not have been sufficient to garrison the posts which we now occupy in the Mediterranean Sea alone. The regiments which defend the remote dependencies of the Crown cannot be duly recruited and relieved, unless a force far larger than that which James collected in the camp at Hounslow for the purpose of overawing his capital be constantly kept up within the kingdom. The old national antipathy to permanent military establishments, an antipathy which was once reasonable and salutary, but which lasted some time after it had become unreasonable and noxious, has gradually yielded to the irresistible force of circumstances. We have made the discovery, that an army may be so constituted as to be in the highest degree efficient against an enemy, and yet obsequious to the civil magistrate. We have long ceased to apprehend danger to law and to freedom from the license of troops, and from the ambition of victorious generals. An alarmist



who should now talk such language, as was common five generations ago, who should call for the entire disbanding of the land force; of the realm, and who should gravely predict that the warriors of Inkerman and Delhi would depose the Queen, dissolve the Parliament, and plunder the Bank, would be regarded as fit only for a cell in Saint Luke's. But before the Revolution our ancestors had known a standing army only as an instrument of lawless power. Judging by their own experience, they thought it impossible that such an army should exist without danger to the rights both of the Crown and of the people. One class of politicians was never weary of repeating that an Apostolic Church, a loyal gentry, an ancient nobility, a sainted King, had been foully outraged by the Joyces and the Prides; another class recounted the atrocities committed by the Lambs of Kirke, and by the Beelzebubs and Lucifers of Dundee; and both classes, agreeing in scarcely any thing else, were disposed to agree in aversion to the red coats.

While such was the feeling of the nation, the King was, both as a statesman and as a general, most unwilling to see that superb body of troops which he had formed with infinite difficulty broken up and dispersed. But, as to this matter, he could not absolutely rely on the support of his ministers; nor could his ministers absolutely rely on the support of that parliamentary majority whose attachment had enabled them to confront enemies abroad and to crush traitors at home, to restore a debased currency, and to fix public credit on deep and solid foundations.

The difficulties of the King's situation are to be, in part at least, attributed to an error which he had committed in the preceding spring. The Gazette which announced that Sunderland been appointed Chamberlain of the Royal Household, sworn of the Privy Council, and named one of the Lords Justices who were to administer the government during the summer had caused great uneasiness among plain men who remembered all the windings and doublings of his long career. In truth, his countrymen were unjust to him. For they thought him, not only an unprincipled and faithless politician, which he was, but a deadly enemy of the liberties of the nation, which he was not. What he wanted was simply to be safe, rich and great. To these objects he had been constant through all the vicissitudes of his life. For these objects he had passed from Church to Church and from faction to faction, had joined the most turbulent of oppositions without any zeal for freedom, and had served the most arbitrary of monarchs without any zeal for monarchy; had voted for the Exclusion Bill without being a Protestant, and had adored the Host without being a Papist; had sold his country at once to both the great parties which divided the Continent; had taken money from France, and had sent intelligence to Holland. As far, however, as he could be said to have any opinions, his opinions were Whiggish. Since his return from exile, his influence had been generally exerted in favour of the Whig party. It was by his counsel that the Great Seal had been entrusted to Somers, that Nottingham had been sacrificed to Russell, and that Montague had been preferred to Fox. It was by his dexterous management that the Princess Anne had been detached from the opposition, and that Godolphin had been removed from the head of the hoard of Treasury. The party which Sunderland had done so much to serve now held a new pledge for his fidelity. His only son, Charles Lord Spencer, was just entering on public life. The precocious maturity of the young man's intellectual and moral character had excited hopes which were not destined to be realized. His knowledge of ancient literature, and his skill in imitating the styles of the masters of Roman eloquence, were applauded by veteran scholars. The sedateness of his deportment and the apparent regularity of his life delighted austere moralists. He was known indeed to have one expensive taste; but it was a taste of the most respectable kind. He loved books, and was bent on forming the most magnificent private library in England. While other heirs of noble houses were inspecting patterns of steinkirks and sword knots, dangling after actresses, or betting on fighting cocks, he was in pursuit of the Mentz editions of Tully's Offices, of the Parmesan Statius, and of the inestimable Virgil of Zarottus.<sup>1</sup> It was natural that high expectations

---

<sup>1</sup> Evelyn saw the Mentz edition of the Offices among Lord Spencer's books in April 1699. Markland in his preface to the Sylvae of Statius acknowledges his obligations to the very rare Parmesan edition in Lord Spencer's collection. As to the Virgil of Zarottus,



should be formed of the virtue and wisdom of a youth whose very luxury and prodigality had a grave and erudite air, and that even discerning men should be unable to detect the vices which were hidden under that show of premature sobriety.

Spencer was a Whig, unhappily for the Whig party, which, before the unhonoured and unlamented close of his life, was more than once brought to the verge of ruin by his violent temper and his crooked politics. His Whiggism differed widely from that of his father. It was not a languid, speculative, preference of one theory of government to another, but a fierce and dominant passion. Unfortunately, though an ardent, it was at the same time a corrupt and degenerate, Whiggism; a Whiggism so narrow and oligarchical as to be little, if at all, preferable to the worst forms of Toryism. The young lord's imagination had been fascinated by those swelling sentiments of liberty which abound in the Latin poets and orators; and he, like those poets and orators, meant by liberty something very different from the only liberty which is of importance to the happiness of mankind. Like them, he could see no danger to liberty except from kings. A commonwealth, oppressed and pillaged by such men as Opimius and Verres, was free, because it had no king. A member of the Grand Council of Venice, who passed his whole life under tutelage and in fear, who could not travel where he chose, or visit whom he chose, or invest his property as he chose, whose path was beset with spies, who saw at the corners of the streets the mouth of bronze gaping for anonymous accusations against him, and whom the Inquisitors of State could, at any moment, and for any or no reason, arrest, torture, fling into the Grand Canal, was free, because he had no king. To curtail, for the benefit of a small privileged class, prerogatives which the Sovereign possesses and ought to possess for the benefit of the whole nation, was the object on which Spencer's heart was set. During many years he was restrained by older and wiser men; and it was not till those whom he had early been accustomed to respect had passed away, and till he was himself at the head of affairs, that he openly attempted to obtain for the hereditary nobility a precarious and invidious ascendancy in the State, at the expense both of the Commons and of the Throne.

In 1695, Spencer had taken his seat in the House of Commons as member for Tiverton, and had, during two sessions, conducted himself as a steady and zealous Whig.

The party to which he had attached himself might perhaps have reasonably considered him as a hostage sufficient to ensure the good faith of his father; for the Earl was approaching that time of life at which even the most ambitious and rapacious men generally toil rather for their children than for themselves. But the distrust which Sunderland inspired was such as no guarantee could quiet. Many fancied that he was,—with what object they never took the trouble to inquire,—employing the same arts which had ruined James for the purpose of ruining William. Each prince had had his weak side. One was too much a Papist, and the other too much a soldier, for such a nation as this. The same intriguing sycophant who had encouraged the Papist in one fatal error was now encouraging the soldier in another. It might well be apprehended that, under the influence of this evil counsellor, the nephew might alienate as many hearts by trying to make England a military country as the uncle had alienated by trying to make her a Roman Catholic country.

The parliamentary conflict on the great question of a standing army was preceded by a literary conflict. In the autumn of 1697 began a controversy of no common interest and importance. The press was now free. An exciting and momentous political question could be fairly discussed. Those who held uncourtly opinions could express those opinions without resorting to illegal expedients and employing the agency of desperate men. The consequence was that the dispute was carried on, though with sufficient keenness, yet, on the whole, with a decency which would have been thought extraordinary in the days of the censorship.

On this occasion the Tories, though they felt strongly, wrote but little. The paper war was almost entirely carried on between two sections of the Whig party. The combatants on both sides were



generally anonymous. But it was well known that one of the foremost champions of the malecontent Whigs was John Trenchard, son of the late Secretary of State. Preeminent among the ministerial Whigs was one in whom admirable vigour and quickness of intellect were united to a not less admirable moderation and urbanity, one who looked on the history of past ages with the eye of a practical statesman, and on the events which were passing before him with the eye of a philosophical historian. It was not necessary for him to name himself. He could be none but Somers.

The pamphleteers who recommended the immediate and entire disbanding of the army had an easy task. If they were embarrassed, it was only by the abundance of the matter from which they had to make their selection. On their side were claptraps and historical commonplaces without number, the authority of a crowd of illustrious names, all the prejudices, all the traditions, of both the parties in the state. These writers laid it down as a fundamental principle of political science that a standing army and a free constitution could not exist together. What, they asked, had destroyed the noble commonwealths of Greece? What had enslaved the mighty Roman people? What had turned the Italian republics of the middle ages into lordships and duchies? How was it that so many of the kingdoms of modern Europe had been transformed from limited into absolute monarchies? The States General of France, the Cortes of Castile, the Grand Justiciary of Arragon, what had been fatal to them all? History was ransacked for instances of adventurers who, by the help of mercenary troops, had subjugated free nations or deposed legitimate princes; and such instances were easily found. Much was said about Pisistratus, Timophanes, Dionysius, Agathocles, Marius and Sylla, Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar, Carthage besieged by her own mercenaries, Rome put up to auction by her own Praetorian cohorts, Sultan Osman butchered by his own Janissaries, Lewis Sforza sold into captivity by his own Switzers. But the favourite instance was taken from the recent history of our own land. Thousands still living had seen the great usurper, who, strong in the power of the sword, had triumphed over both royalty and freedom. The Tories were reminded that his soldiers had guarded the scaffold before the Banqueting House. The Whigs were reminded that those same soldiers had taken the mace from the table of the House of Commons. From such evils, it was said, no country could be secure which was cursed with a standing army. And what were the advantages which could be set off against such evils? Invasion was the bugbear with which the Court tried to frighten the nation. But we were not children to be scared by nursery tales. We were at peace; and, even in time of war, an enemy who should attempt to invade us would probably be intercepted by our fleet, and would assuredly, if he reached our shores, be repelled by our militia. Some people indeed talked as if a militia could achieve nothing great. But that base doctrine was refuted by all ancient and all modern history. What was the Lacedaemonian phalanx in the best days of Lacedaemon? What was, the Roman legion in the best days of Rome? What were the armies which conquered at Cressy, at Poitiers, at Agincourt, at Halidon, or at Flodden? What was that mighty array which Elizabeth reviewed at Tilbury? In the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries Englishmen who did not live by the trade of war had made war with success and glory. Were the English of the seventeenth century so degenerate that they could not be trusted to play the men for their own homesteads and parish churches?

For such reasons as these the disbanding of the forces was strongly recommended. Parliament, it was said, might perhaps, from respect and tenderness for the person of His Majesty, permit him to have guards enough to escort his coach and to pace the rounds before his palace. But this was the very utmost that it would be right to concede. The defence of the realm ought to be confided to the sailors and the militia. Even the Tower ought to have no garrison except the trainbands of the Tower Hamlets.

It must be evident to every intelligent and dispassionate man that these declaimers contradicted themselves. If an army composed of regular troops really was far more efficient than an army composed of husbandmen taken from the plough and burghers taken from the counter, how could the country be safe with no defenders but husbandmen and burghers, when a great prince, who was our nearest neighbour, who had a few months before been our enemy, and who might, in a few months, be our enemy again, kept up not less than a hundred and fifty thousand regular troops? If, on the other



hand, the spirit of the English people was such that they would, with little or no training, encounter and defeat the most formidable array of veterans from the continent, was it not absurd to apprehend that such a people could be reduced to slavery by a few regiments of their own countrymen? But our ancestors were generally so much blinded by prejudice that this inconsistency passed unnoticed. They were secure where they ought to have been wary, and timorous where they might well have been secure. They were not shocked by hearing the same man maintain, in the same breath, that, if twenty thousand professional soldiers were kept up, the liberty and property of millions of Englishmen would be at the mercy of the Crown, and yet that those millions of Englishmen, fighting for liberty and property, would speedily annihilate an invading army composed of fifty or sixty thousand of the conquerors of Steinkirk and Landen. Whoever denied the former proposition was called a tool of the Court. Whoever denied the latter was accused of insulting and slandering the nation.

Somers was too wise to oppose himself directly to the strong current of popular feeling. With rare dexterity he took the tone, not of an advocate, but of a judge. The danger which seemed so terrible to many honest friends of liberty he did not venture to pronounce altogether visionary. But he reminded his countrymen that a choice between dangers was sometimes all that was left to the wisest of mankind. No lawgiver had ever been able to devise a perfect and immortal form of government. Perils lay thick on the right and on the left; and to keep far from one evil was to draw near to another. That which, considered merely with reference to the internal polity of England, might be, to a certain extent, objectionable, might be absolutely essential to her rank among European Powers, and even to her independence. All that a statesman could do in such a case was to weigh inconveniences against each other, and carefully to observe which way the scale leaned. The evil of having regular soldiers, and the evil of not having them, Somers set forth and compared in a little treatise, which was once widely renowned as the *Balancing Letter*, and which was admitted, even by the malecontents, to be an able and plausible composition. He well knew that mere names exercise a mighty influence on the public mind; that the most perfect tribunal which a legislator could construct would be unpopular if it were called the *Star Chamber*; that the most judicious tax which a financier could devise would excite murmurs if it were called the *Shipmoney*; and that the words *Standing Army* then had to English ears a sound as unpleasing as either *Shipmoney* or *Star Chamber*. He declared therefore that he abhorred the thought of a standing army. What he recommended was, not a standing, but a temporary army, an army of which Parliament would annually fix the number, an army for which Parliament would annually frame a military code, an army which would cease to exist as soon as either the Lords or the Commons should think that its services were not needed. From such an army surely the danger to public liberty could not by wise men be thought serious. On the other hand, the danger to which the kingdom would be exposed if all the troops were disbanded was such as might well disturb the firmest mind. Suppose a war with the greatest power in Christendom to break out suddenly, and to find us without one battalion of regular infantry, without one squadron of regular cavalry; what disasters might we not reasonably apprehend? It was idle to say that a descent could not take place without ample notice, and that we should have time to raise and discipline a great force. An absolute prince, whose orders, given in profound secrecy, were promptly obeyed at once by his captains on the Rhine and on the Scheld, and by his admirals in the Bay of Biscay and in the Mediterranean, might be ready to strike a blow long before we were prepared to parry it. We might be appalled by learning that ships from widely remote parts, and troops from widely remote garrisons, had assembled at a single point within sight of our coast. To trust to our fleet was to trust to the winds and the waves. The breeze which was favourable to the invader might prevent our men of war from standing out to sea. Only nine years ago this had actually happened. The Protestant wind, before which the Dutch armament had run full sail down the Channel, had driven King James's navy back into the Thames. It must then be acknowledged to be not improbable that the enemy might land. And, if he landed, what would he find? An open country; a rich country; provisions everywhere; not a river but which could be forded; no natural fastnesses such as protect the fertile plains of Italy; no artificial fastnesses such as, at every



step, impede the progress of a conqueror in the Netherlands. Every thing must then be staked on the steadiness of the militia; and it was pernicious flattery to represent the militia as equal to a conflict in the field with veterans whose whole life had been a preparation for the day of battle. The instances which it was the fashion to cite of the great achievements of soldiers taken from the threshing floor and the shopboard were fit only for a schoolboy's theme. Somers, who had studied ancient literature like a man,—a rare thing in his time,—said that those instances refuted the doctrine which they were meant to prove. He disposed of much idle declamation about the Lacedaemonians by saying, most concisely, correctly and happily, that the Lacedaemonian commonwealth really was a standing army which threatened all the rest of Greece. In fact, the Spartan had no calling except war. Of arts, sciences and letters he was ignorant. The labour of the spade and of the loom, and the petty gains of trade, he contemptuously abandoned to men of a lower caste. His whole existence from childhood to old age was one long military training. Meanwhile the Athenian, the Corinthian, the Argive, the Theban, gave his chief attention to his oliveyard or his vineyard, his warehouse or his workshop, and took up his shield and spear only for short terms and at long intervals. The difference therefore between a Lacedaemonian phalanx and any other phalanx was long as great as the difference between a regiment of the French household troops and a regiment of the London trainbands. Lacedaemon consequently continued to be dominant in Greece till other states began to employ regular troops. Then her supremacy was at an end. She was great while she was a standing army among militias. She fell when she had to contend with other standing armies. The lesson which is really to be learned from her ascendancy and from her decline is this, that the occasional soldier is no match for the professional soldier.<sup>2</sup>

The same lesson Somers drew from the history of Rome; and every scholar who really understands that history will admit that he was in the right. The finest militia that ever existed was probably that of Italy in the third century before Christ. It might have been thought that seven or eight hundred thousand fighting men, who assuredly wanted neither natural courage nor public spirit, would have been able to protect their own hearths and altars against an invader. An invader came, bringing with him an army small and exhausted by a march over the snows of the Alps, but familiar with battles and sieges. At the head of this army he traversed the peninsula to and fro, gained a succession of victories against immense numerical odds, slaughtered the hardy youth of Latium like sheep, by tens of thousands, encamped under the walls of Rome, continued during sixteen years to maintain himself in a hostile country, and was never dislodged till he had by a cruel discipline gradually taught his adversaries how to resist him.

---

<sup>2</sup> The more minutely we examine the history of the decline and fall of Lacedaemon, the more reason we shall find to admire the sagacity of Somers. The first great humiliation which befel the Lacedaemonians was the affair of Sphacteria. It is remarkable that on this occasion they were vanquished by men who made a trade of war. The force which Cleon carried out with him from Athens to the Bay of Pyles, and to which the event of the conflict is to be chiefly ascribed, consisted entirely of mercenaries, archers from Scythia and light infantry from Thrace. The victory gained by the Lacedaemonians over a great confederate army at Tegea retrieved that military reputation which the disaster of Sphacteria had impaired. Yet even at Tegea it was signally proved that the Lacedaemonians, though far superior to occasional soldiers, were not equal to professional soldiers. On every point but one the allies were put to rout; but on one point the Lacedaemonians gave way; and that was the point where they were opposed to a brigade of a thousand Argives, picked men, whom the state to which they belonged had during many years trained to war at the public charge, and who were, in fact a standing army. After the battle of Tegea, many years elapsed before the Lacedaemonians sustained a defeat. At length a calamity befel them which astonished all their neighbours. A division of the army of Agesilaus was cut off and destroyed almost to a man; and this exploit, which seemed almost portentous to the Greeks of that age, was achieved by Iphicrates, at the head of a body of mercenary light infantry. But it was from the day of Leuctya that the fall of Sparta became rapid and violent. Some time before that day the Thebans had resolved to follow the example set many years before by the Argives. Some hundreds of athletic youths, carefully selected, were set apart, under the names of the City Band and the Sacred Band, to form a standing army. Their business was war. They encamped in the citadel; they were supported at the expense of the community; and they became, under assiduous training, the first soldiers in Greece. They were constantly victorious till they were opposed to Philip's admirably disciplined phalanx at Charonea; and even at Chaeronea they were not defeated but slain in their ranks, fighting to the last. It was this band, directed by the skill of great captains, which gave the decisive blow to the Lacedaemonian power. It is to be observed that there was no degeneracy among the Lacedaemonians. Even down to the time of Pyrrhus they seem to have been in all military qualities equal to their ancestors who conquered at Plataea. But their ancestors at Plataea had not such enemies to encounter.



It was idle to repeat the names of great battles won, in the middle ages, by men who did not make war their chief calling; those battles proved only that one militia might beat another, and not that a militia could beat a regular army. As idle was it to declaim about the camp at Tilbury. We had indeed reason to be proud of the spirit which all classes of Englishmen, gentlemen and yeomen, peasants and burgesses, had so signally displayed in the great crisis of 1588. But we had also reason to be thankful that, with all their spirit, they were not brought face to face with the Spanish battalions. Somers related an anecdote, well worthy to be remembered, which had been preserved by tradition in the noble house of De Vere. One of the most illustrious men of that house, a captain who had acquired much experience and much fame in the Netherlands, had, in the crisis of peril, been summoned back to England by Elizabeth, and rode with her through the endless ranks of shouting pikemen. She asked him what he thought of the army. "It is," he said, "a brave army." There was something in his tone or manner which showed that he meant more than his words expressed. The Queen insisted on his speaking out. "Madam," he said, "Your Grace's army is brave indeed. I have not in the world the name of a coward, and yet I am the greatest coward here. All these fine fellows are praying that the enemy may land, and that there may be a battle; and I, who know that enemy well, cannot think of such a battle without dismay." De Vere was doubtless in the right. The Duke of Parma, indeed, would not have subjected our country; but it is by no means improbable that, if he had effected a landing, the island would have been the theatre of a war greatly resembling that which Hannibal waged in Italy, and that the invaders would not have been driven out till many cities had been sacked, till many counties had been wasted, and till multitudes of our stout-hearted rustics and artisans had perished in the carnage of days not less terrible than those of Thrasymene and Cannae.

While the pamphlets of Trenchard and Somers were in every hand, the Parliament met.

The words with which the King opened the session brought the great question to a speedy issue. "The circumstances," he said, "of affairs abroad are such, that I think myself obliged to tell you my opinion, that, for the present, England cannot be safe without a land force; and I hope we shall not give those that mean us ill the opportunity of effecting that under the notion of a peace which they could not bring to pass by war."

The speech was well received; for that Parliament was thoroughly well affected to the Government. The members had, like the rest of the community, been put into high good humour by the return of peace and by the revival of trade. They were indeed still under the influence of the feelings of the preceding day; and they had still in their ears the thanksgiving sermons and thanksgiving anthems; all the bonfires had hardly burned out; and the rows of lamps and candles had hardly been taken down. Many, therefore, who did not assent to all that the King had said, joined in a loud hum of approbation when he concluded.<sup>3</sup> As soon as the Commons had retired to their own chamber, they resolved to present an address assuring His Majesty that they would stand by him in peace as firmly as they had stood by him in war. Seymour, who had, during the autumn, been going from shire to shire, for the purpose of inflaming the country gentlemen against the ministry, ventured to make some uncourtly remarks; but he gave so much offence that he was hissed down, and did not venture to demand a division.<sup>4</sup>

The friends of the Government were greatly elated by the proceedings of this day. During the following week hopes were entertained that the Parliament might be induced to vote a peace establishment of thirty thousand men. But these hopes were delusive. The hum with which William's speech had been received, and the hiss which had drowned the voice of Seymour, had been misunderstood. The Commons were indeed warmly attached to the King's person and government, and quick to resent any disrespectful mention of his name. But the members who were disposed to let him have even half as many troops as he thought necessary were a minority. On the tenth of December

---

<sup>3</sup> L'Hermitage, Dec. 3/13 7/17, 1697.

<sup>4</sup> Commons' Journals, Dec. 3. 1697. L'Hermitage, Dec 7/17.



his speech was considered in a Committee of the whole House; and Harley came forward as the chief of the opposition. He did not, like some hot headed men, among both the Whigs and the Tories, contend that there ought to be no regular soldiers. But he maintained that it was unnecessary to keep up, after the peace of Ryswick, a larger force than had been kept up after the peace of Nimeguen. He moved, therefore, that the military establishment should be reduced to what it had been in the year 1680. The Ministers found that, on this occasion, neither their honest nor their dishonest supporters could be trusted. For, in the minds of the most respectable men, the prejudice against standing armies was of too long growth and too deep root to be at once removed; and those means by which the Court might, at another time, have secured the help of venal politicians were, at that moment, of less avail than usual. The Triennial Act was beginning to produce its effects. A general election was at hand. Every member who had constituents was desirous to please them; and it was certain that no member would please his constituents by voting for a standing army; and the resolution moved by Harvey was strongly supported by Howe, was carried, was reported to the House on the following day, and, after a debate in which several orators made a great display of their knowledge of ancient and modern history, was confirmed by one hundred and eighty-five votes to one hundred and forty-eight.<sup>5</sup>

In this debate the fear and hatred with which many of the best friends of the Government regarded Sunderland were unequivocally manifested. "It is easy," such was the language of several members, "it is easy to guess by whom that unhappy sentence was inserted in the speech from the Throne. No person well acquainted with the disastrous and disgraceful history of the last two reigns can doubt who the minister is, who is now whispering evil counsel in the ear of a third master." The Chamberlain, thus fiercely attacked, was very feebly defended. There was indeed in the House of Commons a small knot of his creatures; and they were men not destitute of a certain kind of ability; but their moral character was as bad as his. One of them was the late Secretary of the Treasury, Guy, who had been turned out of his place for corruption. Another was the late Speaker, Trevor, who had, from the chair, put the question whether he was or was not a rogue, and had been forced to pronounce that the Ayes had it. A third was Charles Duncombe, long the greatest goldsmith of Lombard Street, and now one of the greatest landowners of the North Riding of Yorkshire. Possessed of a private fortune equal to that of any duke, he had not thought it beneath him to accept the place of Cashier of the Excise, and had perfectly understood how to make that place lucrative; but he had recently been ejected from office by Montague, who thought, with good reason, that he was not a man to be trusted. Such advocates as Trevor, Guy and Duncombe could do little for Sunderland in debate. The statesmen of the junto would do nothing for him. They had undoubtedly owed much to him. His influence, cooperating with their own great abilities and with the force of circumstances, had induced the King to commit the direction of the internal administration of the realm to a Whig Cabinet. But the distrust which the old traitor and apostate inspired was not to be overcome. The ministers could not be sure that he was not, while smiling on them, whispering in confidential tones to them, pouring out, as it might seem, all his heart to them, really calumniating them in the closet or suggesting to the opposition some ingenious mode of attacking them. They had very recently been thwarted by him. They were bent on making Wharton a Secretary of State, and had therefore looked forward with impatience to the retirement of Trumball, who was indeed hardly equal to the duties of his great place. To their surprise and mortification they learned, on the eve of the meeting of Parliament, that Trumball had suddenly resigned, and Vernon, the Under Secretary, had been summoned to Kensington, and had returned thence with the seals. Vernon was a zealous Whig, and not personally unacceptable to the chiefs of his party. But the Lord Chancellor, the First Lord of the Treasury, and the First Lord of the Admiralty, might not unnaturally think it strange that a post of the highest importance should have been filled up in opposition to their known wishes, and with a haste and a secrecy which plainly showed that the King did not wish to be annoyed by their remonstrances. The Lord Chamberlain

---

<sup>5</sup> L'Hermitage, Dec. 15/24., Dec. 14/24., Journals.



pretended that he had done all in his power to serve Wharton. But the Whig chiefs were not men to be duped by the professions of so notorious a liar. Montague bitterly described him as a fireship, dangerous at best, but on the whole most dangerous as a consort, and least dangerous when showing hostile colours. Smith, who was the most efficient of Montague's lieutenants, both in the Treasury and in the Parliament, cordially sympathised with his leader. Sunderland was therefore left undefended. His enemies became bolder and more vehement every day. Sir Thomas Dyke, member for Grinstead, and Lord Norris, son of the Earl of Abingdon, talked of moving an address requesting the King to banish for ever from the Court and the Council that evil adviser who had misled His Majesty's royal uncles, had betrayed the liberties of the people, and had abjured the Protestant religion.

Sunderland had been uneasy from the first moment at which his name had been mentioned in the House of Commons. He was now in an agony of terror. The whole enigma of his life, an enigma of which many unsatisfactory and some absurd explanations have been propounded, is at once solved if we consider him as a man insatiably greedy of wealth and power, and yet nervously apprehensive of danger. He rushed with ravenous eagerness at every bait which was offered to his cupidity. But any ominous shadow, any threatening murmur, sufficed to stop him in his full career, and to make him change his course or bury himself in a hiding place. He ought to have thought himself fortunate indeed, when, after all the crimes which he had committed, he found himself again enjoying his picture gallery and his woods at Althorpe, sitting in the House of Lords, admitted to the royal closet, pensioned from the Privy Purse, consulted about the most important affairs of state. But his ambition and avarice would not suffer him to rest till he held a high and lucrative office, till he was a regent of the kingdom. The consequence was, as might have been expected, a violent clamour; and that clamour he had not the spirit to face.

His friends assured him that the threatened address would not be carried. Perhaps a hundred and sixty members might vote for it; but hardly more. "A hundred and sixty!" he cried: "No minister can stand against a hundred and sixty. I am sure that I will not try." It must be remembered that a hundred and sixty votes in a House of five hundred and thirteen members would correspond to more than two hundred votes in the present House of Commons; a very formidable minority on the unfavourable side of a question deeply affecting the personal character of a public man. William, unwilling to part with a servant whom he knew to be unprincipled, but whom he did not consider as more unprincipled than many other English politicians, and in whom he had found much of a very useful sort of knowledge, and of a very useful sort of ability, tried to induce the ministry to come to the rescue. It was particularly important to soothe Wharton, who had been exasperated by his recent disappointment, and had probably exasperated the other members of the junto. He was sent for to the palace. The King himself intreated him to be reconciled to the Lord Chamberlain, and to prevail on the Whig leaders in the Lower House to oppose any motion which Dyke or Norris might make. Wharton answered in a manner which made it clear that from him no help was to be expected. Sunderland's terrors now became insupportable. He had requested some of his friends to come to his house that he might consult them; they came at the appointed hour, but found that he had gone to Kensington, and had left word that he should soon be back. When he joined them, they observed that he had not the gold key which is the badge of the Lord Chamberlain, and asked where it was. "At Kensington," answered Sunderland. They found that he had tendered his resignation, and that it had been, after a long struggle, accepted. They blamed his haste, and told him that, since he had summoned them to advise him on that day, he might at least have waited till the morrow. "To morrow," he exclaimed, "would have ruined me. To night has saved me."

Meanwhile, both the disciples of Somers and the disciples of Trenchard were grumbling at Harley's resolution. The disciples of Somers maintained that, if it was right to have an army at all, it must be right to have an efficient army. The disciples of Trenchard complained that a great principle had been shamefully given up. On the vital issue, Standing Army or no Standing Army, the Commons had pronounced an erroneous, a fatal decision. Whether that army should consist of five regiments or



of fifteen was hardly worth debating. The great dyke which kept out arbitrary power had been broken. It was idle to say that the breach was narrow; for it would soon be widened by the flood which would rush in. The war of pamphlets raged more fiercely than ever. At the same time alarming symptoms began to appear among the men of the sword. They saw themselves every day described in print as the scum of society, as mortal enemies of the liberties of their country. Was it reasonable,—such was the language of some scribblers,—that an honest gentleman should pay a heavy land tax, in order to support in idleness and luxury a set of fellows who requited him by seducing his dairy maids and shooting his partridges? Nor was it only in Grub Street tracts that such reflections were to be found. It was known all over the town that uncivil things had been said of the military profession in the House of Commons, and that Jack Howe, in particular, had, on this subject, given the rein to his wit and to his ill nature. Some rough and daring veterans, marked with the scars of Steinkirk and singed with the smoke of Namur, threatened vengeance for these insults. The writers and speakers who had taken the greatest liberties went in constant fear of being accosted by fierce-looking captains, and required to make an immediate choice between fighting and being caned. One gentleman, who had made himself conspicuous by the severity of his language, went about with pistols in his pockets. Howe, whose courage was not proportionate to his malignity and petulance, was so much frightened, that he retired into the country. The King, well aware that a single blow given, at that critical conjuncture, by a soldier to a member of Parliament might produce disastrous consequences, ordered the officers of the army to their quarters, and, by the vigorous exertion of his authority and influence, succeeded in preventing all outrage.<sup>6</sup>

All this time the feeling in favour of a regular force seemed to be growing in the House of Commons. The resignation of Sunderland had put many honest gentlemen in good humour. The Whig leaders exerted themselves to rally their followers, held meetings at the "Rose," and represented strongly the dangers to which the country would be exposed, if defended only by a militia. The opposition asserted that neither bribes nor promises were spared. The ministers at length flattered themselves that Harley's resolution might be rescinded. On the eighth of January they again tried their strength, and were again defeated, though by a smaller majority than before. A hundred and sixty-four members divided with them. A hundred and eighty-eight were for adhering to the vote of the eleventh of December. It was remarked that on this occasion the naval men, with Rooke at their head, voted against the Government.<sup>7</sup>

It was necessary to yield. All that remained was to put on the words of the resolution of the eleventh of December the most favourable sense that they could be made to bear. They did indeed admit of very different interpretations. The force which was actually in England in 1680 hardly amounted to five thousand men. But the garrison of Tangier and the regiments in the pay of the Batavian federation, which, as they were available for the defence of England against a foreign or domestic enemy, might be said to be in some sort part of the English army, amounted to at least five thousand more. The construction which the ministers put on the resolution of the eleventh of December was, that the army was to consist of ten thousand men; and in this construction the House acquiesced. It was not held to be necessary that the Parliament should, as in our time, fix the amount of the land force. The Commons thought that they sufficiently limited the number of soldiers by limiting the sum which was to be expended in maintaining soldiers. What that sum should be was a question which raised much debate. Harley was unwilling to give more than three hundred thousand pounds.

---

<sup>6</sup> The first act of Farquhar's Trip to the Jubilee, the passions which about his time agitated society are exhibited with much spirit. Alderman Smuggler sees Colonel Standard and exclaims, "There's another plague of the nation a red coat and feather." "I'm disbanded," says the Colonel. "This very morning, in Hyde Park, my brave regiment, a thousand men that looked like lions yesterday, were scattered and looked as poor and simple as the herd of deer that grazed beside them." "Fal al deral!" cries the Alderman: "I'll have a bonfire this night, as high as the monument." "A bonfire!" answered the soldier; "then dry, withered, ill nature! had not those brave fellows' swords' defended you, your house had been a bonfire ere this about your ears."

<sup>7</sup> L'Hermitage, January 11/21



Montague struggled for four hundred thousand. The general sense of the House was that Harley offered too little, and that Montague demanded too much. At last, on the fourteenth of January, a vote was taken for three hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Four days later the House resolved to grant half-pay to the disbanded officers till they should be otherwise provided for. The half-pay was meant to be a retainer as well as a reward. The effect of this important vote therefore was that, whenever a new war should break out, the nation would be able to command the services of many gentlemen of great military experience. The ministry afterwards succeeded in obtaining, much against the will of a portion of the opposition, a separate vote for three thousand marines.

A Mutiny Act, which had been passed in 1697, expired in the spring of 1698. As yet no such Act had been passed except in time of war; and the temper of the Parliament and of the nation was such that the ministers did not venture to ask, in time of peace, for a renewal of powers unknown to the constitution. For the present, therefore, the soldier was again, as in the times which preceded the Revolution, subject to exactly the same law which governed the citizen.

It was only in matters relating to the army that the government found the Commons unmanageable. Liberal provision was made for the navy. The number of seamen was fixed at ten thousand, a great force, according to the notions of that age, for a time of peace. The funds assigned some years before for the support of the civil list had fallen short of the estimate. It was resolved that a new arrangement should be made, and that a certain income should be settled on the King. The amount was fixed, by an unanimous vote, at seven hundred thousand pounds; and the Commons declared that, by making this ample provision for his comfort and dignity, they meant to express their sense of the great things which he had done for the country. It is probable, however, that so large a sum would not have been given without debates and divisions, had it not been understood that he meant to take on himself the charge of the Duke of Gloucester's establishment, and that he would in all probability have to pay fifty thousand pounds a year to Mary of Modena. The Tories were unwilling to disoblige the Princess of Denmark; and the Jacobites abstained from offering any opposition to a grant in the benefit of which they hoped that the banished family would participate.

It was not merely by pecuniary liberality that the Parliament testified attachment to the Sovereign. A bill was rapidly passed which withheld the benefit of the Habeas Corpus Act, during twelve months more, from Bernardi and some other conspirators who had been concerned in the Assassination Plot, but whose guilt, though demonstrated to the conviction of every reasonable man, could not be proved by two witnesses. At the same time new securities were provided against a new danger which threatened the government. The peace had put an end to the apprehension that the throne of William might be subverted by foreign arms, but had, at the same time, facilitated domestic treason. It was no longer necessary for an agent from Saint Germain's to cross the sea in a fishing boat, under the constant dread of being intercepted by a cruiser. It was no longer necessary for him to land on a desolate beach, to lodge in a thatched hovel, to dress himself like a carter, or to travel up to town on foot. He came openly by the Calais packet, walked into the best inn at Dover, and ordered posthorses for London. Meanwhile young Englishmen of quality and fortune were hastening in crowds to Paris. They would naturally wish to see him who had once been their king; and this curiosity, though in itself innocent, might have evil consequences. Artful tempters would doubtless be on the watch for every such traveller; and many such travellers might be well pleased to be courteously accosted, in a foreign land, by Englishmen of honourable name, distinguished appearance, and insinuating address. It was not to be expected that a lad fresh from the university would be able to refute all the sophisms and calumnies which might be breathed in his ear by dexterous and experienced seducers. Nor would it be strange if he should, in no long time, accept an invitation to a private audience at Saint Germain's, should be charmed by the graces of Mary of Modena, should find something engaging in the childish innocence of the Prince of Wales, should kiss the hand of James, and should return home an ardent Jacobite. An Act was therefore passed forbidding English subjects to hold any intercourse orally, or by writing, or by message, with the exiled family. A day was fixed after which no English subject,



who had, during the late war, gone into France without the royal permission or borne arms against his country was to be permitted to reside in this kingdom, except under a special license from the King. Whoever infringed these rules incurred the penalties of high treason.

The dismay was at first great among the malecontents. For English and Irish Jacobites, who had served under the standards of Lewis or hung about the Court of Saint Germain, had, since the peace, come over in multitudes to England. It was computed that thousands were within the scope of the new Act. But the severity of that Act was mitigated by a beneficent administration. Some fierce and stubborn non-jurors who would not debase themselves by asking for any indulgence, and some conspicuous enemies of the government who had asked for indulgence in vain, were under the necessity of taking refuge on the Continent. But the great majority of those offenders who promised to live peaceably under William's rule obtained his permission to remain in their native land.

In the case of one great offender there were some circumstances which attracted general interest, and which might furnish a good subject to a novelist or a dramatist. Near fourteen years before this time, Sunderland, then Secretary of State to Charles the Second, had married his daughter Lady Elizabeth Spencer to Donough Macarthy, Earl of Clancarty, the lord of an immense domain in Munster. Both the bridegroom and the bride were mere children, the bridegroom only fifteen, the bride only eleven. After the ceremony they were separated; and many years full of strange vicissitudes elapsed before they again met. The boy soon visited his estates in Ireland. He had been bred a member of the Church of England; but his opinions and his practice were loose. He found himself among kinsmen who were zealous Roman Catholics. A Roman Catholic king was on the throne. To turn Roman Catholic was the best recommendation to favour both at Whitehall and at Dublin Castle. Clancarty speedily changed his religion, and from a dissolute Protestant became a dissolute Papist. After the Revolution he followed the fortunes of James; sate in the Celtic Parliament which met at the King's Inns; commanded a regiment in the Celtic army; was forced to surrender himself to Marlborough at Cork; was sent to England, and was imprisoned in the Tower. The Clancarty estates, which were supposed to yield a rent of not much less than ten thousand a year, were confiscated. They were charged with an annuity to the Earl's brother, and with another annuity to his wife; but the greater part was bestowed by the King on Lord Woodstock, the eldest son of Portland; During some time, the prisoner's life was not safe. For the popular voice accused him of outrages for which the utmost license of civil war would not furnish a plea. It is said that he was threatened with an appeal of murder by the widow of a Protestant clergyman who had been put to death during the troubles. After passing three years in confinement, Clancarty made his escape to the Continent, was graciously received at St. Germain, and was entrusted with the command of a corps of Irish refugees. When the treaty of Ryswick had put an end to the hope that the banished dynasty would be restored by foreign arms, he flattered himself that he might be able to make his peace with the English Government. But he was grievously disappointed. The interest of his wife's family was undoubtedly more than sufficient to obtain a pardon for him. But on that interest he could not reckon. The selfish, base, covetous, father-in-law was not at all desirous to have a highborn beggar and the posterity of a highborn beggar to maintain. The ruling passion of the brother-in-law was a stern and acrimonious party spirit. He could not bear to think that he was so nearly connected with an enemy of the Revolution and of the Bill of Rights, and would with pleasure have seen the odious tie severed even by the hand of the executioner. There was one, however, from whom the ruined, expatriated, proscribed young nobleman might hope to find a kind reception. He stole across the Channel in disguise, presented himself at Sunderland's door, and requested to see Lady Clancarty. He was charged, he said, with a message to her from her mother, who was then lying on a sick bed at Windsor. By this fiction he obtained admission, made himself known to his wife, whose thoughts had probably been constantly fixed on him during many years, and prevailed on her to give him the most tender proofs of an affection sanctioned by the laws both of God and of man. The secret was soon discovered and betrayed by a waiting woman. Spencer learned that very night that his sister had admitted her husband to her apartment. The fanatical young



Whig, burning with animosity which he mistook for virtue, and eager to emulate the Corinthian who assassinated his brother, and the Roman who passed sentence of death on his son, flew to Vernon's office, gave information that the Irish rebel, who had once already escaped from custody, was in hiding hard by, and procured a warrant and a guard of soldiers. Clancarty was found in the arms of his wife, and dragged to the Tower. She followed him and implored permission to partake his cell. These events produced a great stir throughout the society of London. Sunderland professed everywhere that he heartily approved of his son's conduct; but the public had made up its mind about Sunderland's veracity, and paid very little attention to his professions on this or on any other subject. In general, honourable men of both parties, whatever might be their opinion of Clancarty, felt great compassion for his mother who was dying of a broken heart, and his poor young wife who was begging piteously to be admitted within the Traitor's Gate. Devonshire and Bedford joined with Ormond to ask for mercy. The aid of a still more powerful intercessor was called in. Lady Russell was esteemed by the King as a valuable friend; she was venerated by the nation generally as a saint, the widow of a martyr; and, when she deigned to solicit favours, it was scarcely possible that she should solicit in vain. She naturally felt a strong sympathy for the unhappy couple, who were parted by the walls of that gloomy old fortress in which she had herself exchanged the last sad endearments with one whose image was never absent from her. She took Lady Clancarty with her to the palace, obtained access to William, and put a petition into his hand. Clancarty was pardoned on condition that he should leave the kingdom and never return to it. A pension was granted to him, small when compared with the magnificent inheritance which he had forfeited, but quite sufficient to enable him to live like a gentleman on the Continent. He retired, accompanied by his Elizabeth, to Altona.

All this time the ways and means for the year were under consideration. The Parliament was able to grant some relief to the country. The land tax was reduced from four shillings in the pound to three. But nine expensive campaigns had left a heavy arrear behind them; and it was plain that the public burdens must, even in the time of peace, be such as, before the Revolution, would have been thought more than sufficient to support a vigorous war. A country gentleman was in no very good humour, when he compared the sums which were now exacted from him with those which he had been in the habit of paying under the last two kings; his discontent became stronger when he compared his own situation with that of courtiers, and above all of Dutch courtiers, who had been enriched by grants of Crown property; and both interest and envy made him willing to listen to politicians who assured him that, if those grants were resumed, he might be relieved from another shilling.

The arguments against such a resumption were not likely to be heard with favour by a popular assembly composed of taxpayers, but to statesmen and legislators will seem unanswerable.

There can be no doubt that the Sovereign was, by the old polity of the realm, competent to give or let the domains of the Crown in such manner as seemed good to him. No statute defined the length of the term which he might grant, or the amount of the rent which he must reserve. He might part with the fee simple of a forest extending over a hundred square miles in consideration of a tribute of a brace of hawks to be delivered annually to his falconer, or of a napkin of fine linen to be laid on the royal table at the coronation banquet. In fact, there had been hardly a reign since the Conquest, in which great estates had not been bestowed by our princes on favoured subjects. Anciently, indeed, what had been lavishly given was not seldom violently taken away. Several laws for the resumption of Crown lands were passed by the Parliaments of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Of those laws the last was that which, in the year 1485, immediately after the battle of Bosworth, annulled the donations of the kings of the House of York. More than two hundred years had since elapsed without any Resumption Act. An estate derived from the royal liberality had long been universally thought as secure as an estate which had descended from father to son since the compilation of Domesday Book. No title was considered as more perfect than that of the Russells to Woburn, given by Henry the Eighth to the first Earl of Bedford, or than that of the Cecils to Hatfield, purchased from the Crown for less than a third of the real value by the first Earl of Salisbury. The Long Parliament did not,



even in that celebrated instrument of nineteen articles, which was framed expressly for the purpose of making the King a mere Doge, propose to restrain him from dealing according to his pleasure with his parks and his castles, his fisheries and his mines. After the Restoration, under the government of an easy prince, who had indeed little disposition to give, but who could not bear to refuse, many noble private fortunes were carved out of the property of the Crown. Some of the persons who were thus enriched, Albemarle, for example, Sandwich and Clarendon, might be thought to have fairly earned their master's favour by their services. Others had merely amused his leisure or pandered to his vices. His mistresses were munificently rewarded. Estates sufficient to support the highest rank in the peerage were distributed among his illegitimate children. That these grants, however prodigal, were strictly legal, was tacitly admitted by the Estates of the Realm, when, in 1689, they recounted and condemned the unconstitutional acts of the kings of the House of Stuart. Neither in the Declaration of Right nor in the Bill of Rights is there a word on the subject. William, therefore, thought himself at liberty to give away his hereditary domains as freely as his predecessors had given away theirs. There was much murmuring at the profusion with which he rewarded his Dutch favourites; and we have seen that, on one occasion in the year 1696, the House of Commons interfered for the purpose of restraining his liberality. An address was presented requesting him not to grant to Portland an extensive territory in North Wales. But it is to be observed that, though in this address a strong opinion was expressed that the grant would be mischievous, the Commons did not deny, and must therefore be considered as having admitted, that it would be perfectly legal. The King, however, yielded; and Portland was forced to content himself with ten or twelve manors scattered over various counties from Cumberland to Sussex.

It seems, therefore, clear that our princes were, by the law of the land, competent to do what they would with their hereditary estates. It is perfectly true that the law was defective, and that the profusion with which mansions, abbeys, chaces, warrens, beds of ore, whole streets, whole market towns, had been bestowed on courtiers was greatly to be lamented. Nothing could have been more proper than to pass a prospective statute tying up in strict entail the little which still remained of the Crown property. But to annul by a retrospective statute patents, which in Westminster Hall were held to be legally valid, would have been simply robbery. Such robbery must necessarily have made all property insecure; and a statesman must be short-sighted indeed who imagines that what makes property insecure can really make society prosperous.

But it is vain to expect that men who are inflamed by anger, who are suffering distress, and who fancy that it is in their power to obtain immediate relief from their distresses at the expense of those who have excited their anger, will reason as calmly as the historian who, biassed neither by interest nor passion, reviews the events of a past age. The public burdens were heavy. To whatever extent the grants of royal domains were revoked, those burdens would be lightened. Some of the recent grants had undoubtedly been profuse. Some of the living grantees were unpopular. A cry was raised which soon became formidably loud. All the Tories, all the malecontent Whigs, and multitudes who, without being either Tories or malecontent Whigs, disliked taxes and disliked Dutchmen, called for a resumption of all the Crown property which King William had, as it was phrased, been deceived into giving away.

On the seventh of February 1698, this subject, destined to irritate the public mind at intervals during many years, was brought under the consideration of the House of Commons. The opposition asked leave to bring in a bill vacating all grants of Crown property which had been made since the Revolution. The ministers were in a great strait; the public feeling was strong; a general election was approaching; it was dangerous and it would probably be vain to encounter the prevailing sentiment directly. But the shock which could not be resisted might be eluded. The ministry accordingly professed to find no fault with the proposed bill, except that it did not go far enough, and moved for leave to bring in two more bills, one for annulling the grants of James the Second, the other for annulling the grants of Charles the Second. The Tories were caught in their own snare. For most of the



grants of Charles and James had been made to Tories; and a resumption of those grants would have reduced some of the chiefs of the Tory party to poverty. Yet it was impossible to draw a distinction between the grants of William and those of his two predecessors. Nobody could pretend that the law had been altered since his accession. If, therefore, the grants of the Stuarts were legal, so were his; if his grants were illegal, so were the grants of his uncles. And, if both his grants and the grants of his uncles were illegal, it was absurd to say that the mere lapse of time made a difference. For not only was it part of the alphabet of the law that there was no prescription against the Crown, but the thirty-eight years which had elapsed since the Restoration would not have sufficed to bar a writ of right brought by a private demandant against a wrongful tenant. Nor could it be pretended that William had bestowed his favours less judiciously than Charles and James. Those who were least friendly to the Dutch would hardly venture to say that Portland, Zulestein and Ginkell was less deserving of the royal bounty than the Duchess of Cleveland and the Duchess of Portsmouth, than the progeny of Nell Gwynn, than the apostate Arlington or the butcher Jeffreys. The opposition, therefore, sullenly assented to what the ministry proposed. From that moment the scheme was doomed. Everybody affected to be for it; and everybody was really against it. The three bills were brought in together, read a second time together, ordered to be committed together, and were then, first mutilated, and at length quietly dropped.

In the history of the financial legislation of this session, there were some episodes which deserve to be related. Those members, a numerous body, who envied and dreaded Montague readily became the unconscious tools of the cunning malice of Sunderland, whom Montague had refused to defend in Parliament, and who, though detested by the opposition, contrived to exercise some influence over that party through the instrumentality of Charles Duncombe. Duncombe indeed had his own reasons for hating Montague, who had turned him out of the place of Cashier of the Excise. A serious charge was brought against the Board of Treasury, and especially against its chief. He was the inventor of Exchequer Bills; and they were popularly called Montague's notes. He had induced the Parliament to enact that those bills, even when at a discount in the market, should be received at par by the collectors of the revenue. This enactment, if honestly carried into effect, would have been unobjectionable. But it was strongly rumoured that there had been foul play, speculation, even forgery. Duncombe threw the most serious imputations on the Board of Treasury, and pretended that he had been put out of his office only because he was too shrewd to be deceived, and too honest to join in deceiving the public. Tories and malecontent Whigs, elated by the hope that Montague might be convicted of malversation, eagerly called for inquiry. An inquiry was instituted; but the result not only disappointed but utterly confounded the accusers. The persecuted minister obtained both a complete acquittal, and a signal revenge. Circumstances were discovered which seemed to indicate that Duncombe himself was not blameless. The clue was followed; he was severely cross-examined; he lost his head; made one unguarded admission after another, and was at length compelled to confess, on the floor of the House, that he had been guilty of an infamous fraud, which, but for his own confession, it would have been scarcely possible to bring home to him. He had been ordered by the Commissioners of the Excise to pay ten thousand pounds into the Exchequer for the public service. He had in his hands, as cashier, more than double that sum in good milled silver. With some of this money he bought Exchequer Bills which were then at a considerable discount; he paid those bills in; and he pocketed the discount, which amounted to about four hundred pounds. Nor was this all. In order to make it appear that the depreciated paper, which he had fraudulently substituted for silver, had been received by him in payment of taxes, he had employed a knavish Jew to forge endorsements of names, some real and some imaginary. This scandalous story, wrung out of his own lips, was heard by the opposition with consternation and shame, by the ministers and their friends with vindictive exultation. It was resolved, without any division, that he should be sent to the Tower, that he should be kept close prisoner there, that he should be expelled from the House. Whether any further punishment could be inflicted on him was a perplexing question. The English law touching forgery became, at a later period, barbarously



severe; but, in 1698, it was absurdly lax. The prisoner's offence was certainly not a felony; and lawyers apprehended that there would be much difficulty in convicting him even of a misdemeanour. But a recent precedent was fresh in the minds of all men. The weapon which had reached Fenwick might reach Duncombe. A bill of pains and penalties was brought in, and carried through the earlier stages with less opposition than might have been expected. Some Noes might perhaps be uttered; but no members ventured to say that the Noes had it. The Tories were mad with shame and mortification, at finding that their rash attempt to ruin an enemy had produced no effect except the ruin of a friend. In their rage, they eagerly caught at a new hope of revenge, a hope destined to end, as their former hope had ended, in discomfiture and disgrace. They learned, from the agents of Sunderland, as many people suspected, but certainly from informants who were well acquainted with the offices about Whitehall, that some securities forfeited to the Crown in Ireland had been bestowed by the King ostensibly on one Thomas Railton, but really on the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The value of these securities was about ten thousand pounds. On the sixteenth of February this transaction was brought without any notice under the consideration of the House of Commons by Colonel Granville, a Tory member, nearly related to the Earl of Bath. Montague was taken completely by surprise, but manfully avowed the whole truth, and defended what he had done. The orators of the opposition declaimed against him with great animation and asperity. "This gentleman," they said, "has at once violated three distinct duties. He is a privy councillor, and, as such, is bound to advise the Crown with a view, not to his own selfish interests, but to the general good. He is the first minister of finance, and is, as such, bound to be a thrifty manager of the royal treasure. He is a member of this House, and is, as such, bound to see that the burdens borne by his constituents are not made heavier by rapacity and prodigality. To all these trusts he has been unfaithful. The advice of the privy councillor to his master is, 'Give me money.' The first Lord of the Treasury signs a warrant for giving himself money out of the Treasury. The member for Westminster puts into his pocket money which his constituents must be taxed to replace." The surprise was complete; the onset was formidable; but the Whig majority, after a moment of dismay and wavering, rallied firmly round their leader. Several speakers declared that they highly approved of the prudent liberality with which His Majesty had requited the services of a most able, diligent and trusty counsellor. It was miserable economy indeed to grudge a reward of a few thousands to one who had made the State richer by millions. Would that all the largesses of former kings had been as well bestowed! How those largesses had been bestowed none knew better than some of the austere patriots who harangued so loudly against the avidity of Montague. If there is, it was said, a House in England which has been gorged with undeserved riches by the prodigality of weak sovereigns, it is the House of Bath. Does it lie in the mouth of a son of that house to blame the judicious munificence of a wise and good King? Before the Granvilles complain that distinguished merit has been rewarded with ten thousand pounds, let them refund some part of the hundreds of thousands which they have pocketed without any merit at all.

The rule was, and still is, that a member against whom a charge is made must be heard in his own defence, and must then leave the House. The Opposition insisted that Montague should retire. His friends maintained that this case did not fall within the rule. Distinctions were drawn; precedents were cited; and at length the question was put, that Mr. Montague do withdraw. The Ayes were only ninety-seven; the Noes two hundred and nine. This decisive result astonished both parties. The Tories lost heart and hope. The joy of the Whigs was boundless. It was instantly moved that the Honourable Charles Montague, Esquire, Chancellor of the Exchequer, for his good services to this Government does deserve His Majesty's favour. The Opposition, completely cowed, did not venture to demand another division. Montague scornfully thanked them for the inestimable service which they had done him. But for their malice he never should have had the honour and happiness of being solemnly pronounced by the Commons of England a benefactor of his country. As to the grant which had been the subject of debate, he was perfectly ready to give it up, if his accusers would engage to follow his example.



Even after this defeat the Tories returned to the charge. They pretended that the frauds which had been committed with respect to the Exchequer Bills had been facilitated by the mismanagement of the Board of Treasury, and moved a resolution which implied a censure on that Board, and especially on its chief. This resolution was rejected by a hundred and seventy votes to eighty-eight. It was remarked that Spencer, as if anxious to show that he had taken no part in the machinations of which his father was justly or unjustly suspected, spoke in this debate with great warmth against Duncombe and for Montague.

A few days later, the bill of pains and penalties against Duncombe passed the Commons. It provided that two thirds of his enormous property, real and personal, should be confiscated and applied to the public service. Till the third reading there was no serious opposition. Then the Tories mustered their strength. They were defeated by a hundred and thirty-eight votes to a hundred and three; and the bill was carried up to the Lords by the Marquess of Hartington, a young nobleman whom the great body of Whigs respected as one of their hereditary chiefs, as the heir of Devonshire, and as the son in law of Russell.

That Duncombe had been guilty of shameful dishonesty was acknowledged by all men of sense and honour in the party to which he belonged. He had therefore little right to expect indulgence from the party which he had unfairly and malignantly assailed. Yet it is not creditable to the Whigs that they should have been so much disgusted by his frauds, or so much irritated by his attacks, as to have been bent on punishing him in a manner inconsistent with all the principles which governments ought to hold most sacred.

Those who concurred in the proceeding against Duncombe tried to vindicate their conduct by citing as an example the proceeding against Fenwick. So dangerous is it to violate, on any pretence, those principles which the experience of ages has proved to be the safeguards of all that is most precious to a community. Twelve months had hardly elapsed since the legislature had, in very peculiar circumstances, and for very plausible reasons, taken upon itself to try and to punish a great criminal whom it was impossible to reach in the ordinary course of justice; and already the breach then made in the fences which protect the dearest rights of Englishmen was widening fast. What had last year been defended only as a rare exception seemed now to be regarded as the ordinary rule. Nay, the bill of pains and penalties which now had an easy passage through the House of Commons was infinitely more objectionable than the bill which had been so obstinately resisted at every stage in the preceding session.

The writ of attainder against Fenwick was not, as the vulgar imagined and still imagine, objectionable because it was retrospective. It is always to be remembered that retrospective legislation is bad in principle only when it affects the substantive law. Statutes creating new crimes or increasing the punishment of old crimes ought in no case to be retrospective. But statutes which merely alter the procedure, if they are in themselves good statutes, ought to be retrospective. To take examples from the legislation of our own time, the Act passed in 1845, for punishing the malicious destruction of works of art with whipping, was most properly made prospective only. Whatever indignation the authors of that Act might feel against the ruffian who had broken the Barberini Vase, they knew that they could not, without the most serious detriment to the commonwealth, pass a law for scourging him. On the other hand the Act which allowed the affirmation of a Quaker to be received in criminal cases allowed, and most justly and reasonably, such affirmation to be received in the case of a past as well as of a future misdemeanour or felony. If we try the Act which attainted Fenwick by these rules we shall find that almost all the numerous writers who have condemned it have condemned it on wrong grounds. It made no retrospective change in the substantive law. The crime was not new. It was high treason as defined by the Statute of Edward the Third. The punishment was not new. It was the punishment which had been inflicted on traitors of ten generations. All that was new was the procedure; and, if the new procedure had been intrinsically better than the old procedure, the new procedure might with perfect propriety have been employed. But the procedure employed



in Fenwick's case was the worst possible, and would have been the worst possible if it had been established from time immemorial. However clearly political crime may have been defined by ancient laws, a man accused of it ought not to be tried by a crowd of five hundred and thirteen eager politicians, of whom he can challenge none even with cause, who have no judge to guide them, who are allowed to come in and go out as they choose, who hear as much or as little as they choose of the accusation and of the defence, who are exposed, during the investigation, to every kind of corrupting influence, who are inflamed by all the passions which animated debates naturally excite, who cheer one orator and cough down another, who are roused from sleep to cry Aye or No, or who are hurried half drunk from their suppers to divide. For this reason, and for no other, the attainder of Fenwick is to be condemned. It was unjust and of evil example, not because it was a retrospective Act, but because it was an act essentially judicial, performed by a body destitute of all judicial qualities.

The bill for punishing Duncombe was open to all the objections which can be urged against the bill for punishing Fenwick, and to other objections of even greater weight. In both cases the judicial functions were usurped by a body unfit to exercise such functions. But the bill against Duncombe really was, what the bill against Fenwick was not, objectionable as a retrospective bill. It altered the substantive criminal law. It visited an offence with a penalty of which the offender, at the time when he offended, had no notice.

It may be thought a strange proposition that the bill against Duncombe was a worse bill than the bill against Fenwick, because the bill against Fenwick struck at life, and the bill against Duncombe struck only at property. Yet this apparent paradox is a sober truth. Life is indeed more precious than property. But the power of arbitrarily taking away the lives of men is infinitely less likely to be abused than the power of arbitrarily taking away their property. Even the lawless classes of society generally shrink from blood. They commit thousands of offences against property to one murder; and most of the few murders which they do commit are committed for the purpose of facilitating or concealing some offence against property. The unwillingness of juries to find a fellow creature guilty of a capital felony even on the clearest evidence is notorious; and it may well be suspected that they frequently violate their oaths in favour of life. In civil suits, on the other hand, they too often forget that their duty is merely to give the plaintiff a compensation for evil suffered; and, if the conduct of the defendant has moved their indignation and his fortune is known to be large, they turn themselves into a criminal tribunal, and, under the name of damages, impose a large fine. As housebreakers are more likely to take plate and jewellery than to cut throats; as juries are far more likely to err on the side of pecuniary severity in assessing damages than to send to the gibbet any man who has not richly deserved it; so a legislature, which should be so unwise as to take on itself the functions properly belonging to the Courts of Law, would be far more likely to pass Acts of Confiscation than Acts of Attainder. We naturally feel pity even for a bad man whose head is about to fall. But, when a bad man is compelled to disgorge his ill-gotten gains, we naturally feel a vindictive pleasure, in which there is much danger that we may be tempted to indulge too largely.

The hearts of many stout Whigs doubtless bled at the thought of what Fenwick must have suffered, the agonizing struggle, in a mind not of the firmest temper, between the fear of shame and the fear of death, the parting from a tender wife, and all the gloomy solemnity of the last morning. But whose heart was to bleed at the thought that Charles Duncombe, who was born to carry parcels and to sweep down a counting-house, was to be punished for his knavery by having his income reduced to eight thousand a year, more than most earls then possessed?

His judges were not likely to feel compassion for him; and they all had strong selfish reasons to vote against him. They were all in fact bribed by the very bill by which he would be punished.

His property was supposed to amount to considerably more than four hundred thousand pounds. Two thirds of that property were equivalent to about sevenpence in the pound on the rental of the kingdom as assessed to the land tax. If, therefore, two thirds of that property could have been brought into the Exchequer, the land tax for 1699, a burden most painfully felt by the class which had the



chief power in England, might have been reduced from three shillings to two and fivepence. Every squire of a thousand a year in the House of Commons would have had thirty pounds more to spend; and that sum might well have made to him the whole difference between being at ease and being pinched during twelve months. If the bill had passed, if the gentry and yeomanry of the kingdom had found that it was possible for them to obtain a welcome remission of taxation by imposing on a Shylock or an Overreach, by a retrospective law, a fine not heavier than his misconduct might, in a moral view, seem to have deserved, it is impossible to believe that they would not soon have recurred to so simple and agreeable a resource. In every age it is easy to find rich men who have done bad things for which the law has provided no punishment or an inadequate punishment. The estates of such men would soon have been considered as a fund applicable to the public service. As often as it was necessary to vote an extraordinary supply to the Crown, the Committee of Ways and Means would have looked about for some unpopular capitalist to plunder. Appetite would have grown with indulgence. Accusations would have been eagerly welcomed. Rumours and suspicions would have been received as proofs. The wealth of the great goldsmiths of the Royal Exchange would have become as insecure as that of a Jew under the Plantagenets, as that of a Christian under a Turkish Pasha. Rich men would have tried to invest their acquisitions in some form in which they could lie closely hidden and could be speedily removed. In no long time it would have been found that of all financial resources the least productive is robbery, and that the public had really paid far more dearly for Duncombe's hundreds of thousands than if it had borrowed them at fifty per cent.

These considerations had more weight with the Lords than with the Commons. Indeed one of the principal uses of the Upper House is to defend the vested rights of property in cases in which those rights are unpopular, and are attacked on grounds which to shortsighted politicians seem valid. An assembly composed of men almost all of whom have inherited opulence, and who are not under the necessity of paying court to constituent bodies, will not easily be hurried by passion or seduced by sophistry into robbery. As soon as the bill for punishing Duncombe had been read at the table of the Peers, it became clear that there would be a sharp contest. Three great Tory noblemen, Rochester, Nottingham and Leeds, headed the opposition; and they were joined by some who did not ordinarily act with them. At an early stage of the proceedings a new and perplexing question was raised. How did it appear that the facts set forth in the preamble were true, that Duncombe had committed the frauds for which it was proposed to punish him in so extraordinary a manner? In the House of Commons, he had been taken by surprise; he had made admissions of which he had not foreseen the consequences; and he had then been so much disconcerted by the severe manner in which he had been interrogated that he had at length avowed everything. But he had now had time to prepare himself; he had been furnished with advice by counsel; and, when he was placed at the bar of the Peers, he refused to criminate himself and defied his persecutors to prove him guilty. He was sent back to the Tower. The Lords acquainted the Commons with the difficulty which had arisen. A conference was held in the Painted Chamber; and there Hartington, who appeared for the Commons, declared that he was authorized, by those who had sent him, to assure the Lords that Duncombe had, in his place in Parliament, owned the misdeeds which he now challenged his accusers to bring home to him. The Lords, however, rightly thought that it would be a strange and a dangerous thing to receive a declaration of the House of Commons in its collective character as conclusive evidence of the fact that a man had committed a crime. The House of Commons was under none of those restraints which were thought necessary in ordinary cases to protect innocent defendants against false witnesses. The House of Commons could not be sworn, could not be cross-examined, could not be indicted, imprisoned, pilloried, mutilated, for perjury. Indeed the testimony of the House of Commons in its collective character was of less value than the uncontradicted testimony of a single member. For it was only the testimony of the majority of the House. There might be a large respectable minority whose recollections might materially differ from the recollections of the majority. This indeed was actually the case. For there had been a dispute among those who had heard Duncombe's confession



as to the precise extent of what he had confessed; and there had been a division; and the statement which the Upper House was expected to receive as decisive on the point of fact had been at last carried only by ninety votes to sixty-eight. It should seem therefore that, whatever moral conviction the Lords might feel of Duncombe's guilt, they were bound, as righteous judges, to absolve him.

After much animated debate, they divided; and the bill was lost by forty-eight votes to forty-seven. It was proposed by some of the minority that proxies should be called; but this scandalous proposition was strenuously resisted; and the House, to its great honour, resolved that on questions which were substantially judicial, though they might be in form legislative, no peer who was absent should be allowed to have a voice.

Many of the Whig Lords protested. Among them were Orford and Wharton. It is to be lamented that Burnet, and the excellent Hough, who was now Bishop of Oxford, should have been impelled by party spirit to record their dissent from a decision which all sensible and candid men will now pronounce to have been just and salutary. Somers was present; but his name is not attached to the protest which was subscribed by his brethren of the junto. We may therefore not unreasonably infer that, on this as on many other occasions, that wise and virtuous statesman disapproved of the violence of his friends.

In rejecting the bill, the Lords had only exercised their indisputable right. But they immediately proceeded to take a step of which the legality was not equally clear. Rochester moved that Duncombe should be set at liberty. The motion was carried; a warrant for the discharge of the prisoner was sent to the Tower, and was obeyed without hesitation by Lord Lucas, who was Lieutenant of that fortress. As soon as this was known, the anger of the Commons broke forth with violence. It was by their order that the upstart Duncombe had been put in ward. He was their prisoner; and it was monstrous insolence in the Peers to release him. The Peers defended what they had done by arguments which must be allowed to have been ingenious, if not satisfactory. It was quite true that Duncombe had originally been committed to the Tower by the Commons. But, it was said, the Commons, by sending a penal bill against him to the Lords, did, by necessary implication, send him also to the Lords. For it was plainly impossible for the Lords to pass the bill without hearing what he had to say against it. The Commons had felt this, and had not complained when he had, without their consent, been brought from his place of confinement, and set at the bar of the Peers. From that moment he was the prisoner of the Peers. He had been taken back from the bar to the Tower, not by virtue of the Speaker's warrant, of which the force was spent, but by virtue of their order which had remanded him. They, therefore, might with perfect propriety discharge him.

Whatever a jurist might have thought of these arguments, they had no effect on the Commons. Indeed, violent as the spirit of party was in those times, it was less violent than the spirit of caste. Whenever a dispute arose between the two Houses, many members of both forgot that they were Whigs or Tories, and remembered only that they were Patricians or Plebeians. On this occasion nobody was louder in asserting the privileges of the representatives of the people in opposition to the encroachments of the nobility than Harley. Duncombe was again arrested by the Serjeant at Arms, and remained in confinement till the end of the session. Some eager men were for addressing the King to turn Lucas out of office. This was not done; but during several days the ill humour of the Lower House showed itself by a studied discourtesy. One of the members was wanted as a witness in a matter which the Lords were investigating. They sent two judges with a message requesting the permission of the Commons to examine him. At any other time the judges would have been called in immediately, and the permission would have been granted as of course. But on this occasion the judges were kept waiting some hours at the door; and such difficulties were made about the permission that the Peers desisted from urging a request which seemed likely to be ungraciously refused.

The attention of the Parliament was, during the remainder of the session, chiefly occupied by commercial questions. Some of those questions required so much investigation, and gave occasion to so much dispute, that the prorogation did not take place till the fifth of July. There was consequently



some illness and much discontent among both Lords and Commons. For, in that age, the London season usually ended soon after the first notes of the cuckoo had been heard, and before the poles had been decked for the dances and mummeries which welcomed the genial May day of the ancient calendar. Since the year of the Revolution, a year which was an exception to all ordinary rules, the members of the two Houses had never been detained from their woods and haycocks even so late as the beginning of June.

The Commons had, soon after they met, appointed a Committee to enquire into the state of trade, and had referred to this Committee several petitions from merchants and manufacturers who complained that they were in danger of being undersold, and who asked for additional protection.

A highly curious report on the importation of silks and the exportation of wool was soon presented to the House. It was in that age believed by all but a very few speculative men that the sound commercial policy was to keep out of the country the delicate and brilliantly tinted textures of southern looms, and to keep in the country the raw material on which most of our own looms were employed. It was now fully proved that, during eight years of war, the textures which it was thought desirable to keep out had been constantly coming in, and the material which it was thought desirable to keep in had been constantly going out. This interchange, an interchange, as it was imagined, pernicious to England, had been chiefly managed by an association of Huguenot refugees, residing in London. Whole fleets of boats with illicit cargoes had been passing and repassing between Kent and Picardy. The loading and unloading had taken place sometimes in Romney Marsh, sometimes on the beach under the cliffs between Dover and Folkstone. All the inhabitants of the south eastern coast were in the plot. It was a common saying among them that, if a gallows were set up every quarter of a mile along the coast, the trade would still go on briskly. It had been discovered, some years before, that the vessels and the hiding places which were necessary to the business of the smuggler had frequently afforded accommodation to the traitor. The report contained fresh evidence upon this point. It was proved that one of the contrabandists had provided the vessel in which the ruffian O'Brien had carried Scum Goodman over to France.

The inference which ought to have been drawn from these facts was that the prohibitory system was absurd. That system had not destroyed the trade which was so much dreaded, but had merely called into existence a desperate race of men who, accustomed to earn their daily bread by the breach of an unreasonable law, soon came to regard the most reasonable laws with contempt, and, having begun by eluding the custom house officers, ended by conspiring against the throne. And, if, in time of war, when the whole Channel was dotted with our cruisers, it had been found impossible to prevent the regular exchange of the fleeces of Cotswold for the alamodes of Lyons, what chance was there that any machinery which could be employed in time of peace would be more efficacious? The politicians of the seventeenth century, however, were of opinion that sharp laws sharply administered could not fail to save Englishmen from the intolerable grievance of selling dear what could be best produced by themselves, and of buying cheap what could be best produced by others. The penalty for importing French silks was made more severe. An Act was passed which gave to a joint stock company an absolute monopoly of lustrings for a term of fourteen years. The fruit of these wise counsels was such as might have been foreseen. French silks were still imported; and, long before the term of fourteen years had expired, the funds of the Lustring Company had been spent, its offices had been shut up, and its very name had been forgotten at Jonathan's and Garraway's.

Not content with prospective legislation, the Commons unanimously determined to treat the offences which the Committee had brought to light as high crimes against the State, and to employ against a few cunning mercers in Nicholas Lane and the Old Jewry all the gorgeous and cumbrous machinery which ought to be reserved for the delinquencies of great Ministers and Judges. It was resolved, without a division, that several Frenchmen and one Englishman who had been deeply concerned in the contraband trade should be impeached. Managers were appointed; articles were drawn up; preparations were made for fitting up Westminster Hall with benches and scarlet hangings;



and at one time it was thought that the trials would last till the partridge shooting began. But the defendants, having little hope of acquittal, and not wishing that the Peers should come to the business of fixing the punishment in the temper which was likely to be the effect of an August passed in London, very wisely declined to give their lordships unnecessary trouble, and pleaded guilty. The sentences were consequently lenient. The French offenders were merely fined; and their fines probably did not amount to a fifth part of the sums which they had realised by unlawful traffic. The Englishman who had been active in managing the escape of Goodman was both fined and imprisoned.

The progress of the woollen manufactures of Ireland excited even more alarm and indignation than the contraband trade with France. The French question indeed had been simply commercial. The Irish question, originally commercial, became political. It was not merely the prosperity of the clothiers of Wiltshire and of the West Riding that was at stake; but the dignity of the Crown, the authority of the Parliament, and the unity of the empire. Already might be discerned among the Englishry, who were now, by the help and under the protection of the mother country, the lords of the conquered island, some signs of a spirit, feeble indeed, as yet, and such as might easily be put down by a few resolute words, but destined to revive at long intervals, and to be stronger and more formidable at every revival.

The person who on this occasion came forward as the champion of the colonists, the forerunner of Swift and of Grattan, was William Molyneux. He would have rejected the name of Irishman as indignantly as a citizen of Marseilles or Cyrene, proud of his pure Greek blood, and fully qualified to send a chariot to the Olympic race course, would have rejected the name of Gaul or Libyan. He was, in the phrase of that time, an English gentleman of family and fortune born in Ireland. He had studied at the Temple, had travelled on the Continent, had become well known to the most eminent scholars and philosophers of Oxford and Cambridge, had been elected a member of the Royal Society of London, and had been one of the founders of the Royal Society of Dublin. In the days of Popish ascendancy he had taken refuge among his friends here; he had returned to his home when the ascendancy of his own caste had been reestablished; and he had been chosen to represent the University of Dublin in the House of Commons. He had made great efforts to promote the manufactures of the kingdom in which he resided; and he had found those efforts impeded by an Act of the English Parliament which laid severe restrictions on the exportation of woollen goods from Ireland. In principle this Act was altogether indefensible. Practically it was altogether unimportant. Prohibitions were not needed to prevent the Ireland of the seventeenth century from being a great manufacturing country; nor could the most liberal bounties have made her so. The jealousy of commerce, however, is as fanciful and unreasonable as the jealousy of love. The clothiers of Wilts and Yorkshire were weak enough to imagine that they should be ruined by the competition of a half barbarous island, an island where there was far less capital than in England, where there was far less security for life and property than in England, and where there was far less industry and energy among the labouring classes than in England. Molyneux, on the other hand, had the sanguine temperament of a projector. He imagined that, but for the tyrannical interference of strangers, a Ghent would spring up in Connemara, and a Bruges in the Bog of Allen. And what right had strangers to interfere? Not content with showing that the law of which he complained was absurd and unjust, he undertook to prove that it was null and void. Early in the year 1698 he published and dedicated to the King a treatise in which it was asserted in plain terms that the English Parliament had no authority over Ireland.

Whoever considers without passion or prejudice the great constitutional question which was thus for the first time raised will probably be of opinion that Molyneux was in error. The right of the Parliament of England to legislate for Ireland rested on the broad general principle that the paramount authority of the mother country extends over all colonies planted by her sons in all parts of the world. This principle was the subject of much discussion at the time of the American troubles, and was then maintained, without any reservation, not only by the English Ministers, but by Burke and all the adherents of Rockingham, and was admitted, with one single reservation, even by the Americans



themselves. Down to the moment of separation the Congress fully acknowledged the competency of the King, Lords and Commons to make laws, of any kind but one, for Massachusetts and Virginia. The only power which such men as Washington and Franklin denied to the Imperial legislature was the power of taxing. Within living memory, Acts which have made great political and social revolutions in our Colonies have been passed in this country; nor has the validity of those Acts ever been questioned; and conspicuous among them were the law of 1807 which abolished the slave trade, and the law of 1833 which abolished slavery.

The doctrine that the parent state has supreme power over the colonies is not only borne out by authority and by precedent, but will appear, when examined, to be in entire accordance with justice and with policy. During the feeble infancy of colonies independence would be pernicious, or rather fatal, to them. Undoubtedly, as they grow stronger and stronger, it will be wise in the home government to be more and more indulgent. No sensible parent deals with a son of twenty in the same way as with a son of ten. Nor will any government not infatuated treat such a province as Canada or Victoria in the way in which it might be proper to treat a little band of emigrants who have just begun to build their huts on a barbarous shore, and to whom the protection of the flag of a great nation is indispensably necessary. Nevertheless, there cannot really be more than one supreme power in a society. If, therefore, a time comes at which the mother country finds it expedient altogether to abdicate her paramount authority over a colony, one of two courses ought to be taken. There ought to be complete incorporation, if such incorporation be possible. If not, there ought to be complete separation. Very few propositions in politics can be so perfectly demonstrated as this, that parliamentary government cannot be carried on by two really equal and independent parliaments in one empire.

And, if we admit the general rule to be that the English parliament is competent to legislate for colonies planted by English subjects, what reason was there for considering the case of the colony in Ireland as an exception? For it is to be observed that the whole question was between the mother country and the colony. The aboriginal inhabitants, more than five sixths of the population, had no more interest in the matter than the swine or the poultry; or, if they had an interest, it was for their interest that the caste which domineered over them should not be emancipated from all external control. They were no more represented in the parliament which sate at Dublin than in the parliament which sate at Westminster. They had less to dread from legislation at Westminster than from legislation at Dublin. They were, indeed, likely to obtain but a very scanty measure of justice from the English Tories, a more scanty measure still from the English Whigs; but the most acrimonious English Whig did not feel towards them that intense antipathy, compounded of hatred, fear and scorn, with which they were regarded by the Cromwellian who dwelt among them.<sup>8</sup> For the Irishry Molyneux, though boasting that he was the champion of liberty, though professing to have learned his political principles from Locke's writings, and though confidently expecting Locke's applause, asked nothing but a more cruel and more hopeless slavery. What he claimed was that, as respected the colony to which he belonged, England should forego rights which she has exercised and is still exercising over every other colony that she has ever planted. And what reason could be given for making such a distinction? No colony had owed so much to England. No colony stood in such need of the support of England. Twice, within the memory of men then living, the natives had attempted to throw off the alien yoke; twice the intruders had been in imminent danger of extirpation; twice

---

<sup>8</sup> That a portion at least of the native population of Ireland looked to the Parliament at Westminster for protection against the tyranny of the Parliament at Dublin appears from a paper entitled *The Case of the Roman Catholic Nation of Ireland*. This paper, written in 1711 by one of the oppressed race and religion, is in a MS. belonging to Lord Fingall. The Parliament of Ireland is accused of treating the Irish worse than the Turks treat the Christians, worse than the Egyptians treated the Israelites. "Therefore," says the writer, "they (the Irish) apply themselves to the present Parliament of Great Britain as a Parliament of nice honour and stanch justice... Their request then is that this great Parliament may make good the Treaty of Limerick in all the Civil Articles." In order to propitiate those to whom he makes this appeal, he accuses the Irish Parliament of encroaching on the supreme authority of the English Parliament, and charges the colonists generally with ingratitude to the mother country to which they owe so much.



England had come to the rescue, and had put down the Celtic population under the feet of her own progeny. Millions of English money had been expended in the struggle. English blood had flowed at the Boyne and at Athlone, at Aghrim and at Limerick. The graves of thousands of English soldiers had been dug in the pestilential morass of Dundalk. It was owing to the exertions and sacrifices of the English people that, from the basaltic pillars of Ulster to the lakes of Kerry, the Saxon settlers were trampling on the children of the soil. The colony in Ireland was therefore emphatically a dependency; a dependency, not merely by the common law of the realm, but by the nature of things. It was absurd to claim independence for a community which could not cease to be dependent without ceasing to exist.

Molyneux soon found that he had ventured on a perilous undertaking. A member of the English House of Commons complained in his place that a book which attacked the most precious privileges of the supreme legislature was in circulation. The volume was produced; some passages were read; and a Committee was appointed to consider the whole subject. The Committee soon reported that the obnoxious pamphlet was only one of several symptoms which indicated a spirit such as ought to be suppressed. The Crown of Ireland had been most improperly described in public instruments as an imperial Crown. The Irish Lords and Commons had presumed, not only to reenact an English Act passed expressly for the purpose of binding them, but to reenact it with alterations. The alterations were indeed small; but the alteration even of a letter was tantamount to a declaration of independence. Several addresses were voted without a division. The King was entreated to discourage all encroachments of subordinate powers on the supreme authority of the English legislature, to bring to justice the pamphleteer who had dared to question that authority, to enforce the Acts which had been passed for the protection of the woollen manufactures of England, and to direct the industry and capital of Ireland into the channel of the linen trade, a trade which might grow and flourish in Leinster and Ulster without exciting the smallest jealousy at Norwich or at Halifax.

The King promised to do what the Commons asked; but in truth there was little to be done. The Irish, conscious of their impotence, submitted without a murmur. The Irish woollen manufacture languished and disappeared, as it would, in all probability, have languished and disappeared if it had been left to itself. Had Molyneux lived a few months longer he would probably have been impeached. But the close of the session was approaching; and before the Houses met again a timely death had snatched him from their vengeance; and the momentous question which had been first stirred by him slept a deep sleep till it was revived in a more formidable shape, after the lapse of twenty-six years, by the fourth letter of *The Drapier*.

Of the commercial questions which prolonged this session far into the summer the most important respected India. Four years had elapsed since the House of Commons had decided that all Englishmen had an equal right to traffic in the Asiatic Seas, unless prohibited by Parliament; and in that decision the King had thought it prudent to acquiesce. Any merchant of London or Bristol might now fit out a ship for Bengal or for China, without the least apprehension of being molested by the Admiralty or sued in the Courts of Westminster. No wise man, however, was disposed to stake a large sum on such a venture. For the vote which protected him from annoyance here left him exposed to serious risks on the other side of the Cape of Good Hope. The Old Company, though its exclusive privileges were no more, and though its dividends had greatly diminished, was still in existence, and still retained its castles and warehouses, its fleet of fine merchantmen, and its able and zealous factors, thoroughly qualified by a long experience to transact business both in the palaces and in the bazaars of the East, and accustomed to look for direction to the India House alone. The private trader therefore still ran great risk of being treated as a smuggler, if not as a pirate. He might indeed, if he was wronged, apply for redress to the tribunals of his country. But years must elapse before his cause could be heard; his witnesses must be conveyed over fifteen thousand miles of sea; and in the meantime he was a ruined man. The experiment of free trade with India had therefore been tried under every disadvantage, or, to speak more correctly, had not been tried at all. The general opinion had always been that some restriction was necessary; and that opinion had been confirmed by all that



had happened since the old restrictions had been removed. The doors of the House of Commons were again besieged by the two great contending factions of the City. The Old Company offered, in return for a monopoly secured by law, a loan of seven hundred thousand pounds; and the whole body of Tories was for accepting the offer. But those indefatigable agitators who had, ever since the Revolution, been striving to obtain a share in the trade of the Eastern seas exerted themselves at this conjuncture more strenuously than ever, and found a powerful patron in Montague.

That dexterous and eloquent statesman had two objects in view. One was to obtain for the State, as the price of the monopoly, a sum much larger than the Old Company was able to give. The other was to promote the interest of his own party. Nowhere was the conflict between Whigs and Tories sharper than in the City of London; and the influence of the City of London was felt to the remotest corner of the realm. To elevate the Whig section of that mighty commercial aristocracy which congregated under the arches of the Royal Exchange, and to depress the Tory section, had long been one of Montague's favourite schemes. He had already formed one citadel in the heart of that great emporium; and he now thought that it might be in his power to erect and garrison a second stronghold in a position scarcely less commanding. It had often been said, in times of civil war, that whoever was master of the Tower and of Tilbury Fort was master of London. The fastnesses by means of which Montague proposed to keep the capital obedient in times of peace and of constitutional government were of a different kind. The Bank was one of his fortresses; and he trusted that a new India House would be the other.

The task which he had undertaken was not an easy one. For, while his opponents were united, his adherents were divided. Most of those who were for a New Company thought that the New Company ought, like the Old Company, to trade on a joint stock. But there were some who held that our commerce with India would be best carried on by means of what is called a regulated Company. There was a Turkey Company, the members of which contributed to a general fund, and had in return the exclusive privilege of trafficking with the Levant; but those members trafficked, each on his own account; they forestalled each other; they undersold each other; one became rich; another became bankrupt. The Corporation meanwhile watched over the common interest of all the members, furnished the Crown with the means of maintaining an embassy at Constantinople, and placed at several important ports consuls and vice-consuls, whose business was to keep the Pacha and the Cadi in good humour, and to arbitrate in disputes among Englishmen. Why might not the same system be found to answer in regions lying still further to the east? Why should not every member of the New Company be at liberty to export European commodities to the countries beyond the Cape, and to bring back shawls, saltpetre and bohea to England, while the Company, in its collective capacity, might treat with Asiatic potentates, or exact reparation from them, and might be entrusted with powers for the administration of justice and for the government of forts and factories?

Montague tried to please all those whose support was necessary to him; and this he could effect only by bringing forward a plan so intricate that it cannot without some pains be understood. He wanted two millions to extricate the State from its financial embarrassments. That sum he proposed to raise by a loan at eight per cent. The lenders might be either individuals or corporations. But they were all, individuals and corporations, to be united in a new corporation, which was to be called the General Society. Every member of the General Society, whether individual or corporation, might trade separately with India to an extent not exceeding the amount which such member had advanced to the government. But all the members or any of them might, if they so thought fit, give up the privilege of trading separately, and unite themselves under a royal Charter for the purpose of trading in common. Thus the General Society was, by its original constitution, a regulated company; but it was provided that either the whole Society or any part of it might become a joint stock company.

The opposition to the scheme was vehement and pertinacious. The Old Company presented petition after petition. The Tories, with Seymour at their head, appealed both to the good faith and to the compassion of Parliament. Much was said about the sanctity of the existing Charter, and much



about the tenderness due to the numerous families which had, in reliance on that Charter, invested their substance in India stock. On the other side there was no want of plausible topics or of skill to use them. Was it not strange that those who talked so much about the Charter should have altogether overlooked the very clause of the Charter on which the whole question turned? That clause expressly reserved to the government power of revocation, after three years' notice, if the Charter should not appear to be beneficial to the public. The Charter had not been found beneficial to the public; the three years' notice should be given; and in the year 1701 the revocation would take effect. What could be fairer? If anybody was so weak as to imagine that the privileges of the Old Company were perpetual, when the very instrument which created those privileges expressly declared them to be terminable, what right had he to blame the Parliament, which was bound to do the best for the State, for not saving him, at the expense of the State, from the natural punishment of his own folly? It was evident that nothing was proposed inconsistent with strict justice. And what right had the Old Company to more than strict justice? These petitioners who implored the legislature to deal indulgently with them in their adversity, how had they used their boundless prosperity? Had not the India House recently been the very den of corruption, the tainted spot from which the plague had spread to the Court and the Council, to the House of Commons and the House of Lords? Were the disclosures of 1695 forgotten, the eighty thousand pounds of secret service money disbursed in one year, the enormous bribes direct and indirect, Seymour's saltpetre contracts, Leeds's bags of golds? By the malpractices which the inquiry in the Exchequer Chamber then brought to light, the Charter had been forfeited; and it would have been well if the forfeiture had been immediately enforced. "Had not time then pressed," said Montague, "had it not been necessary that the session should close, it is probable that the petitioners, who now cry out that they cannot get justice, would have got more justice than they desired. If they had been called to account for great and real wrong in 1695, we should not have had them here complaining of imaginary wrong in 1698."

The fight was protracted by the obstinacy and dexterity of the Old Company and its friends from the first week of May to the last week in June. It seems that many even of Montague's followers doubted whether the promised two millions would be forthcoming. His enemies confidently predicted that the General Society would be as complete a failure as the Land Bank had been in the year before the last, and that he would in the autumn find himself in charge of an empty exchequer. His activity and eloquence, however, prevailed. On the twenty-sixth of June, after many laborious sittings, the question was put that this Bill do pass, and was carried by one hundred and fifteen votes to seventy-eight. In the upper House, the conflict was short and sharp. Some peers declared that, in their opinion, the subscription to the proposed loan, far from amounting to the two millions which the Chancellor of the Exchequer expected, would fall far short of one million. Others, with much reason, complained that a law of such grave importance should have been sent up to them in such a shape that they must either take the whole or throw out the whole. The privilege of the Commons with respect to money bills had of late been grossly abused. The Bank had been created by one money bill; this General Society was to be created by another money bill. Such a bill the Lords could not amend; they might indeed reject it; but to reject it was to shake the foundations of public credit and to leave the kingdom defenceless. Thus one branch of the legislature was systematically put under duress by the other, and seemed likely to be reduced to utter insignificance. It was better that the government should be once pinched for money than that the House of Peers should cease to be part of the Constitution. So strong was this feeling that the Bill was carried only by sixty-five to forty-eight. It received the royal sanction on the fifth of July. The King then spoke from the throne. This was the first occasion on which a King of England had spoken to a Parliament of which the existence was about to be terminated, not by his own act, but by the act of the law. He could not, he said, take leave of the Lords and Gentlemen before him without publicly acknowledging the great things which they had done for his dignity and for the welfare of the nation. He recounted the chief services which they had, during three eventful sessions, rendered to the country. "These things will," he said, "give a lasting



reputation to this Parliament, and will be a subject of emulation to Parliaments which shall come after." The Houses were then prorogued.

During the week which followed there was some anxiety as to the result of the subscription for the stock of the General Society. If that subscription failed, there would be a deficit; public credit would be shaken; and Montague would be regarded as a pretender who had owed his reputation to a mere run of good luck, and who had tempted chance once too often. But the event was such as even his sanguine spirit had scarcely ventured to anticipate. At one in the afternoon of the 14th of July the books were opened at the Hall of the Company of Mercers in Cheapside. An immense crowd was already collected in the street. As soon as the doors were flung wide, wealthy citizens, with their money in their hands, pressed in, pushing and elbowing each other. The guineas were paid down faster than the clerks could count them. Before night six hundred thousand pounds had been subscribed. The next day the throng was as great. More than one capitalist put down his name for thirty thousand pounds. To the astonishment of those ill boding politicians who were constantly repeating that the war, the debt, the taxes, the grants to Dutch courtiers, had ruined the kingdom, the sum, which it had been doubted whether England would be able to raise in many weeks, was subscribed by London in a few hours. The applications from the provincial towns and rural districts came too late. The merchants of Bristol had intended to take three hundred thousand pounds of the stock, but had waited to learn how the subscription went on before they gave their final orders; and, by the time that the mail had gone down to Bristol and returned, there was no more stock to be had.

This was the moment at which the fortunes of Montague reached the meridian. The decline was close at hand. His ability and his constant success were everywhere talked of with admiration and envy. That man, it was commonly said, has never wanted, and never will want, an expedient.

During the long and busy session which had just closed, some interesting and important events had taken place which may properly be mentioned here. One of those events was the destruction of the most celebrated palace in which the sovereigns of England have ever dwelt. On the evening of the 4th of January, a woman,—the patriotic journalists and pamphleteers of that time did not fail to note that she was a Dutchwoman,—who was employed as a laundress at Whitehall, lighted a charcoal fire in her room and placed some linen round it. The linen caught fire and burned furiously. The tapestry, the bedding, the wainscots were soon in a blaze. The unhappy woman who had done the mischief perished. Soon the flames burst out of the windows. All Westminster, all the Strand, all the river were in commotion. Before midnight the King's apartments, the Queen's apartments, the Wardrobe, the Treasury, the office of the Privy Council, the office of the Secretary of State, had been destroyed. The two chapels perished together; that ancient chapel where Wolsey had heard mass in the midst of gorgeous copes, golden candlesticks, and jewelled crosses, and that modern edifice which had been erected for the devotions of James and had been embellished by the pencil of Verrio and the chisel of Gibbons. Meanwhile a great extent of building had been blown up; and it was hoped that by this expedient a stop had been put to the conflagration. But early in the morning a new fire broke out of the heaps of combustible matter which the gunpowder had scattered to right and left. The guard room was consumed. No trace was left of that celebrated gallery which had witnessed so many balls and pageants, in which so many maids of honour had listened too easily to the vows and flatteries of gallants, and in which so many bags of gold had changed masters at the hazard table. During some time men despaired of the Banqueting House. The flames broke in on the south of that beautiful hall, and were with great difficulty extinguished by the exertions of the guards, to whom Cutts, mindful of his honourable nickname of the Salamander, set as good an example on this night of terror as he had set in the breach of Namur. Many lives were lost, and many grievous wounds were inflicted by the falling masses of stone and timber, before the fire was effectually subdued. When day broke, the heaps of smoking ruins spread from Scotland Yard to the Bowling Green, where the mansion of the Duke of Buccleuch now stands. The Banqueting House was safe; but the graceful columns and festoons designed by Inigo were so much defaced and blackened that their form could hardly be discerned.



There had been time to move the most valuable effects which were moveable. Unfortunately some of Holbein's finest pictures were painted on the walls, and are consequently known to us only by copies and engravings. The books of the Treasury and of the Privy Council were rescued, and are still preserved. The Ministers whose offices had been burned down were provided with new offices in the neighbourhood. Henry the Eighth had built, close to St. James's Park, two appendages to the Palace of Whitehall, a cockpit and a tennis court. The Treasury now occupies the site of the cockpit, the Privy Council Office the site of the tennis court.

Notwithstanding the many associations which make the name of Whitehall still interesting to an Englishman, the old building was little regretted. It was spacious indeed and commodious, but mean and inelegant. The people of the capital had been annoyed by the scoffing way in which foreigners spoke of the principal residence of our sovereigns, and often said that it was a pity that the great fire had not spared the old portico of St. Paul's and the stately arcades of Gresham's Bourse, and taken in exchange that ugly old labyrinth of dingy brick and plastered timber. It might now be hoped that we should have a Louvre. Before the ashes of the old palace were cold, plans for a new palace were circulated and discussed. But William, who could not draw his breath in the air of Westminster, was little disposed to expend a million on a house which it would have been impossible for him to inhabit. Many blamed him for not restoring the dwelling of his predecessors; and a few Jacobites, whom evil temper and repeated disappointments had driven almost mad, accused him of having burned it down. It was not till long after his death that Tory writers ceased to call for the rebuilding of Whitehall, and to complain that the King of England had no better town house than St. James's, while the delightful spot where the Tudors and the Stuarts had held their councils and their revels was covered with the mansions of his jobbing courtiers.<sup>9</sup>

In the same week in which Whitehall perished, the Londoners were supplied with a new topic of conversation by a royal visit, which, of all royal visits, was the least pompous and ceremonious and yet the most interesting and important. On the 10th of January a vessel from Holland anchored off Greenwich and was welcomed with great respect. Peter the First, Czar of Muscovy, was on board. He took boat with a few attendants and was rowed up the Thames to Norfolk Street, where a house overlooking the river had been prepared for his reception.

His journey is an epoch in the history, not only of his own country, but of our's, and of the world. To the polished nations of Western Europe, the empire which he governed had till then been what Bokhara or Siam is to us. That empire indeed, though less extensive than at present, was the most extensive that had ever obeyed a single chief. The dominions of Alexander and of Trajan were small when compared with the immense area of the Scythian desert. But in the estimation of statesmen that boundless expanse of larch forest and morass, where the snow lay deep during eight months of every year, and where a wretched peasantry could with difficulty defend their hovels against troops of famished wolves, was of less account than the two or three square miles into which were crowded the counting houses, the warehouses, and the innumerable masts of Amsterdam. On the Baltic Russia had not then a single port. Her maritime trade with the other rations of Christendom was entirely carried on at Archangel, a place which had been created and was supported by adventurers from our island. In the days of the Tudors, a ship from England, seeking a north east passage to the land of silk and spice, had discovered the White Sea. The barbarians who dwelt on the shores of that dreary gulf had never before seen such a portent as a vessel of a hundred and sixty tons burden. They fled in terror; and, when they were pursued and overtaken, prostrated themselves before the chief

---

<sup>9</sup> London Gazette, Jan 6. 1697/8; Postman of the same date; Van Cleverskirke, Jan. 7/17; L'Hermitage, Jan. 4/14/, 7/17; Evelyn's Diary; Ward's London Spy; William to Heinsius, Jan. 7/17. "The loss," the King writes, "is less to me than it would be to another person, for I cannot live there. Yet it is serious." So late as 1758 Johnson described a furious Jacobite as firmly convinced that William burned down Whitehall in order to steal the furniture. Idler, No. 10. Pope, in Windsor Forest, a poem which has a stronger tinge of Toryism than anything else that he ever wrote, predicts the speedy restoration of the fallen palace. "I see, I see, where two fair cities bend their ample bow, a new Whitehall ascend." See Ralph's bitter remarks on the fate of Whitehall.



of the strangers and kissed his feet. He succeeded in opening a friendly communication with them; and from that time there had been a regular commercial intercourse between our country and the subjects of the Czar. A Russia Company was incorporated in London. An English factory was built at Archangel. That factory was indeed, even in the latter part of the seventeenth century, a rude and mean building. The walls consisted of trees laid one upon another; and the roof was of birch bark. This shelter, however, was sufficient in the long summer day of the Arctic regions. Regularly at that season several English ships cast anchor in the bay. A fair was held on the beach. Traders came from a distance of many hundreds of miles to the only mart where they could exchange hemp and tar, hides and tallow, wax and honey, the fur of the sable and the wolverine, and the roe of the sturgeon of the Volga, for Manchester stuffs, Sheffield knives, Birmingham buttons, sugar from Jamaica and pepper from Malabar. The commerce in these articles was open. But there was a secret traffic which was not less active or less lucrative, though the Russian laws had made it punishable, and though the Russian divines pronounced it damnable. In general the mandates of princes and the lessons of priests were received by the Muscovite with profound reverence. But the authority of his princes and of his priests united could not keep him from tobacco. Pipes he could not obtain; but a cow's horn perforated served his turn. From every Archangel fair rolls of the best Virginia speedily found their way to Novgorod and Tobolsk.

The commercial intercourse between England and Russia made some diplomatic intercourse necessary. The diplomatic intercourse however was only occasional. The Czar had no permanent minister here. We had no permanent minister at Moscow; and even at Archangel we had no consul. Three or four times in a century extraordinary embassies were sent from Whitehall to the Kremlin and from the Kremlin to Whitehall.

The English embassies had historians whose narratives may still be read with interest. Those historians described vividly, and sometimes bitterly, the savage ignorance and the squalid poverty of the barbarous country in which they had sojourned. In that country, they said, there was neither literature nor science, neither school nor college. It was not till more than a hundred years after the invention of printing that a single printing press had been introduced into the Russian empire; and that printing press had speedily perished in a fire which was supposed to have been kindled by the priests. Even in the seventeenth century the library of a prelate of the first dignity consisted of a few manuscripts. Those manuscripts too were in long rolls; for the art of bookbinding was unknown. The best educated men could barely read and write. It was much if the secretary to whom was entrusted the direction of negotiations with foreign powers had a sufficient smattering of Dog Latin to make himself understood. The arithmetic was the arithmetic of the dark ages. The denary notation was unknown. Even in the Imperial Treasury the computations were made by the help of balls strung on wires. Round the person of the Sovereign there was a blaze of gold and jewels; but even in his most splendid palaces were to be found the filth and misery of an Irish cabin. So late as the year 1663 the gentlemen of the retinue of the Earl of Carlisle were, in the city of Moscow, thrust into a single bedroom, and were told that, if they did not remain together, they would be in danger of being devoured by rats.

Such was the report which the English legations made of what they had seen and suffered in Russia; and their evidence was confirmed by the appearance which the Russian legations made in England. The strangers spoke no civilised language. Their garb, their gestures, their salutations, had a wild and barbarous character. The ambassador and the grandees who accompanied him were so gorgeous that all London crowded to stare at them, and so filthy that nobody dared to touch them. They came to the court balls dropping pearls and vermin. It was said that one envoy cudgelled the lords of his train whenever they soiled or lost any part of their finery, and that another had with difficulty been prevented from putting his son to death for the crime of shaving and dressing after the French fashion.



Our ancestors therefore were not a little surprised to learn that a young barbarian, who had, at seventeen years of age, become the autocrat of the immense region stretching from the confines of Sweden to those of China, and whose education had been inferior to that of an English farmer or shopman, had planned gigantic improvements, had learned enough of some languages of Western Europe to enable him to communicate with civilised men, had begun to surround himself with able adventurers from various parts of the world, had sent many of his young subjects to study languages, arts and sciences in foreign cities, and finally had determined to travel as a private man, and to discover, by personal observation, the secret of the immense prosperity and power enjoyed by some communities whose whole territory was far less than the hundredth part of his dominions.

It might have been expected that France would have been the first object of his curiosity. For the grace and dignity of the French King, the splendour of the French Court, the discipline of the French armies, and the genius and learning of the French writers, were then renowned all over the world. But the Czar's mind had early taken a strange ply which it retained to the last. His empire was of all empires the least capable of being made a great naval power. The Swedish provinces lay between his States and the Baltic. The Bosphorus and the Dardanelles lay between his States and the Mediterranean. He had access to the ocean only in a latitude in which navigation is, during a great part of every year, perilous and difficult. On the ocean he had only a single port, Archangel; and the whole shipping of Archangel was foreign. There did not exist a Russian vessel larger than a fishing-boat. Yet, from some cause which cannot now be traced, he had a taste for maritime pursuits which amounted to a passion, indeed almost to a monomania. His imagination was full of sails, yardarms, and rudders. That large mind, equal to the highest duties of the general and the statesman, contracted itself to the most minute details of naval architecture and naval discipline. The chief ambition of the great conqueror and legislator was to be a good boatswain and a good ship's carpenter. Holland and England therefore had for him an attraction which was wanting to the galleries and terraces of Versailles. He repaired to Amsterdam, took a lodging in the dockyard, assumed the garb of a pilot, put down his name on the list of workmen, wielded with his own hand the caulking iron and the mallet, fixed the pumps, and twisted the ropes. Ambassadors who came to pay their respects to him were forced, much against their will, to clamber up the rigging of a man of war, and found him enthroned on the cross trees.

Such was the prince whom the populace of London now crowded to behold. His stately form, his intellectual forehead, his piercing black eyes, his Tartar nose and mouth, his gracious smile, his frown black with all the stormy rage and hate of a barbarian tyrant, and above all a strange nervous convulsion which sometimes transformed his countenance during a few moments, into an object on which it was impossible to look without terror, the immense quantities of meat which he devoured, the pints of brandy which he swallowed, and which, it was said, he had carefully distilled with his own hands, the fool who jabbered at his feet, the monkey which grinned at the back of his chair, were, during some weeks, popular topics of conversation. He meanwhile shunned the public gaze with a haughty shyness which inflamed curiosity. He went to a play; but, as soon as he perceived that pit, boxes and galleries were staring, not at the stage, but at him, he retired to a back bench where he was screened from observation by his attendants. He was desirous to see a sitting of the House of Lords; but, as he was determined not to be seen, he was forced to climb up to the leads, and to peep through a small window. He heard with great interest the royal assent given to a bill for raising fifteen hundred thousand pounds by land tax, and learned with amazement that this sum, though larger by one half than the whole revenue which he could wring from the population of the immense empire of which he was absolute master, was but a small part of what the Commons of England voluntarily granted every year to their constitutional King.



## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.