

# ТОМАС БАБИНГТОН МАКОЛЕЙ

THE HISTORY OF  
ENGLAND, FROM THE  
ACCESSION OF JAMES II —  
VOLUME 4

**Thomas Babington Macaulay**  
**The History of England, from the**  
**Accession of James II — Volume 4**

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The History of England, from the Accession of James II — Volume 4:*

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# Thomas Babington Macaulay

## The History of England, from the Accession of James II — Volume 4

### CHAPTER XVII

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ON the eighteenth of January 1691, the King, having been detained some days by adverse winds, went on board at Gravesend. Four yachts had been fitted up for him and for his retinue. Among his attendants were Norfolk, Ormond, Devonshire, Dorset, Portland, Monmouth, Zulestein, and the Bishop of London. Two distinguished admirals, Cloudesley Shovel and George Rooke, commanded the men of war which formed the convoy. The passage was tedious and disagreeable. During many hours the fleet was becalmed off the Godwin Sands; and it was not till the fifth day that the soundings proved

the coast of Holland to be near. The sea fog was so thick that no land could be seen; and it was not thought safe for the ships to proceed further in the darkness. William, tired out by the voyage, and impatient to be once more in his beloved country, determined to land in an open boat. The noblemen who were in his train tried to dissuade him from risking so valuable a life; but, when they found that his mind was made up, they insisted on sharing the danger. That danger proved more serious than they had expected. It had been supposed that in an hour the party would be on shore. But great masses of floating ice impeded the progress of the skiff; the night came on; the fog grew thicker; the waves broke over the King and the courtiers. Once the keel struck on a sand bank, and was with great difficulty got off. The hardiest mariners showed some signs of uneasiness. But William, through the whole night, was as composed as if he had been in the drawingroom at Kensington. "For shame," he said to one of the dismayed sailors "are you afraid to die in my company?" A bold Dutch seaman ventured to spring out, and, with great difficulty, swam and scrambled through breakers, ice and mud, to firm ground. Here he discharged a musket and lighted a fire as a signal that he was safe. None of his fellow passengers, however, thought it prudent to follow his example. They lay tossing in sight of the flame which he had kindled, till the first pale light of a January morning showed them that they were close to the island of Goree. The King and his Lords, stiff with cold and covered with icicles, gladly landed to warm and rest themselves. 1

After reposing some hours in the hut of a peasant, William proceeded to the Hague. He was impatiently expected there for, though the fleet which brought him was not visible from the shore, the royal salutes had been heard through the mist, and had apprised the whole coast of his arrival. Thousands had assembled at Honslaerdyk to welcome him with applause which came from their hearts and which went to his heart. That was one of the few white days of a life, beneficent indeed and glorious, but far from happy. After more than two years passed in a strange land, the exile had again set foot on his native soil. He heard again the language of his nursery. He saw again the scenery and the architecture which were inseparably associated in his mind with the recollections of childhood and the sacred feeling of home; the dreary mounds of sand, shells and weeds, on which the waves of the German Ocean broke; the interminable meadows intersected by trenches; the straight canals; the villas bright with paint and adorned with quaint images and inscriptions. He had lived during many weary months among a people who did not love him, who did not understand him, who could never forget that he was a foreigner. Those Englishmen who served him most faithfully served him without enthusiasm, without personal attachment, and merely from a sense of public duty. In their hearts they were sorry that they had no choice but between an English tyrant and a Dutch deliverer. All was now changed. William was among a population by which he was adored, as Elizabeth had been adored when she rode through her army at Tilbury, as Charles

the Second had been adored when he landed at Dover. It is true that the old enemies of the House of Orange had not been inactive during the absence of the Stadtholder. There had been, not indeed clamours, but mutterings against him. He had, it was said, neglected his native land for his new kingdom. Whenever the dignity of the English flag, whenever the prosperity of the English trade was concerned, he forgot that he was a Hollander. But, as soon as his well remembered face was again seen, all jealousy, all coldness, was at an end. There was not a boor, not a fisherman, not an artisan, in the crowds which lined the road from Honslaerdyk to the Hague, whose heart did not swell with pride at the thought that the first minister of Holland had become a great King, had freed the English, and had conquered the Irish. It would have been madness in William to travel from Hampton Court to Westminster without a guard; but in his own land he needed no swords or carbines to defend him. "Do not keep the people off;" he cried: "let them come close to me; they are all my good friends." He soon learned that sumptuous preparations were making for his entrance into the Hague. At first he murmured and objected. He detested, he said, noise and display. The necessary cost of the war was quite heavy enough. He hoped that his kind fellow townsmen would consider him as a neighbour, born and bred among them, and would not pay him so bad a compliment as to treat him ceremoniously. But all his expostulations were vain. The Hollanders, simple and parsimonious as their ordinary habits were, had set their hearts

on giving their illustrious countryman a reception suited to his dignity and to his merit; and he found it necessary to yield. On the day of his triumph the concourse was immense. All the wheeled carriages and horses of the province were too few for the multitude of those who flocked to the show. Many thousands came sliding or skating along the frozen canals from Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Leyden, Haarlem, Delft. At ten in the morning of the twenty-sixth of January, the great bell of the Town House gave the signal. Sixteen hundred substantial burghers, well armed, and clad in the finest dresses which were to be found in the recesses of their wardrobes, kept order in the crowded streets. Balconies and scaffolds, embowered in evergreens and hung with tapestry, hid the windows. The royal coach, escorted by an army of halberdiers and running footmen, and followed by a long train of splendid equipages, passed under numerous arches rich with carving and painting, amidst incessant shouts of "Long live the King our Stadtholder." The front of the Town House and the whole circuit of the marketplace were in a blaze with brilliant colours. Civic crowns, trophies, emblems of arts, of sciences, of commerce and of agriculture, appeared every where. In one place William saw portrayed the glorious actions of his ancestors. There was the silent prince, the founder of the Batavian commonwealth, passing the Meuse with his warriors. There was the more impetuous Maurice leading the charge at Nieuport. A little further on, the hero might retrace the eventful story of his own life. He was a child at his widowed mother's

knee. He was at the altar with Diary's hand in his. He was landing at Torbay. He was swimming through the Boyne. There, too, was a boat amidst the ice and the breakers; and above it was most appropriately inscribed, in the majestic language of Rome, the saying of the great Roman, "What dost thou fear? Thou hast Caesar on board." The task of furnishing the Latin mottoes had been intrusted to two men, who, till Bentley appeared, held the highest place among the classical scholars of that age. Spanheim, whose knowledge of the Roman medals was unrivalled, imitated, not unsuccessfully, the noble conciseness of those ancient legends which he had assiduously studied; and he was assisted by Graevius, who then filled a chair at Utrecht, and whose just reputation had drawn to that University multitudes of students from every part of Protestant Europe. [2](#) When the night came, fireworks were exhibited on the great tank which washes the walls of the Palace of the Federation. That tank was now as hard as marble; and the Dutch boasted that nothing had ever been seen, even on the terrace of Versailles, more brilliant than the effect produced by the innumerable cascades of flame which were reflected in the smooth mirror of ice. [3](#) The English Lords congratulated their master on his immense popularity. "Yes," said he; "but I am not the favourite. The shouting was nothing to what it would have been if Mary had been with me."

A few hours after the triumphal entry, the King attended a sitting of the States General. His last appearance among them had been on the day on which he embarked for England. He

had then, amidst the broken words and loud weeping of those grave Senators, thanked them for the kindness with which they had watched over his childhood, trained his young mind, and supported his authority in his riper years; and he had solemnly commended his beloved wife to their care. He now came back among them the King of three kingdoms, the head of the greatest coalition that Europe had seen during a hundred and eighty years; and nothing was heard in the hall but applause and congratulations. [4](#)

But this time the streets of the Hague were overflowing with the equipages and retinues of princes and ambassadors who came flocking to the great Congress. First appeared the ambitious and ostentatious Frederic, Elector of Brandenburg, who, a few years later, took the title of King of Prussia. Then arrived the young Elector of Bavaria, the Regent of Wirtemberg, the Landgraves of Hesse Cassel and Hesse Darmstadt, and a long train of sovereign princes, sprung from the illustrious houses of Brunswick, of Saxony, of Holstein, and of Nassau. The Marquess of Gastanaga, Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, repaired to the assembly from the viceregal Court of Brussels. Extraordinary ministers had been sent by the Emperor, by the Kings of Spain, Poland, Denmark, and Sweden, and by the Duke of Savoy. There was scarcely room in the town and the neighbourhood for the English Lords and gentlemen and the German Counts and Barons whom curiosity or official duty had brought to the place of meeting. The grave capital of the most thrifty and

industrious of nations was as gay as Venice in the Carnival. The walks cut among those noble limes and elms in which the villa of the Princes of Orange is embosomed were gay with the plumes, the stars, the flowing wigs, the embroidered coats and the gold hilted swords of gallants from London, Berlin and Vienna. With the nobles were mingled sharpers not less gorgeously attired than they. At night the hazard tables were thronged; and the theatre was filled to the roof. Princely banquets followed one another in rapid succession. The meats were served in gold; and, according to that old Teutonic fashion with which Shakspeare had made his countrymen familiar, as often as any of the great princes proposed a health, the kettle drums and trumpets sounded. Some English lords, particularly Devonshire, gave entertainments which vied with those of Sovereigns. It was remarked that the German potentates, though generally disposed to be litigious and punctilious about etiquette, associated, on this occasion, in an unceremonious manner, and seemed to have forgotten their passion for genealogical and heraldic controversy. The taste for wine, which was then characteristic of their nation, they had not forgotten. At the table of the Elector of Brandenburg much mirth was caused by the gravity of the statesmen of Holland, who, sober themselves, confuted out of Grotius and Puffendorf the nonsense stuttered by the tipsy nobles of the Empire. One of those nobles swallowed so many bumpers that he tumbled into the turf fire, and was not pulled out till his fine velvet suit had been burned. [5](#)

In the midst of all this revelry, business was not neglected. A formal meeting of the Congress was held at which William presided. In a short and dignified speech, which was speedily circulated throughout Europe, he set forth the necessity of firm union and strenuous exertion. The profound respect with which he was heard by that splendid assembly caused bitter mortification to his enemies both in England and in France. The German potentates were bitterly reviled for yielding precedence to an upstart. Indeed the most illustrious among them paid to him such marks of deference as they would scarcely have deigned to pay to the Imperial Majesty, mingled with the crowd in his antechamber, and at his table behaved as respectfully as any English lord in waiting. In one caricature the allied princes were represented as muzzled bears, some with crowns, some with caps of state. William had them all in a chain, and was teaching them to dance. In another caricature, he appeared taking his ease in an arm chair, with his feet on a cushion, and his hat on his head, while the Electors of Brandenburg and Bavaria, uncovered, occupied small stools on the right and left; the crowd of Landgraves and Sovereign dukes stood at humble distance; and Gastanaga, the unworthy successor of Alva, awaited the orders of the heretic tyrant on bended knee. [6](#)

It was soon announced by authority that, before the beginning of summer, two hundred and twenty thousand men would be in the field against France. [7](#) The contingent which each of the allied powers was to furnish was made known. Matters about

which it would have been inexpedient to put forth any declaration were privately discussed by the King of England with his allies. On this occasion, as on every other important occasion during his reign, he was his own minister for foreign affairs. It was necessary for the sake of form that he should be attended by a Secretary of State; and Nottingham had therefore followed him to Holland. But Nottingham, though, in matters concerning the internal government of England, he enjoyed a large share of his master's confidence, knew little more about the business of the Congress than what he saw in the Gazettes.

This mode of transacting business would now be thought most unconstitutional; and many writers, applying the standard of their own age to the transactions of a former age, have severely blamed William for acting without the advice of his ministers, and his ministers for submitting to be kept in ignorance of transactions which deeply concerned the honour of the Crown and the welfare of the nation. Yet surely the presumption is that what the most honest and honourable men of both parties, Nottingham, for example, among the Tories, and Somers among the Whigs, not only did, but avowed, cannot have been altogether inexcusable; and a very sufficient excuse will without difficulty be found.

The doctrine that the Sovereign is not responsible is doubtless as old as any part of our constitution. The doctrine that his ministers are responsible is also of immemorial antiquity. That where there is no responsibility there can be no trustworthy security against maladministration, is a doctrine which, in our

age and country, few people will be inclined to dispute. From these three propositions it plainly follows that the administration is likely to be best conducted when the Sovereign performs no public act without the concurrence and instrumentality of a minister. This argument is perfectly sound. But we must remember that arguments are constructed in one way, and governments in another. In logic, none but an idiot admits the premises and denies the legitimate conclusion. But in practice, we see that great and enlightened communities often persist, generation after generation, in asserting principles, and refusing to act upon those principles. It may be doubted whether any real polity that ever existed has exactly corresponded to the pure idea of that polity. According to the pure idea of constitutional royalty, the prince reigns and does not govern; and constitutional royalty, as it now exists in England, comes nearer than in any other country to the pure idea. Yet it would be a great error to imagine that our princes merely reign and never govern. In the seventeenth century, both Whigs and Tories thought it, not only the right, but the duty, of the first magistrate to govern. All parties agreed in blaming Charles the Second for not being his own Prime Minister; all parties agreed in praising James for being his own Lord High Admiral; and all parties thought it natural and reasonable that William should be his own Foreign Secretary.

It may be observed that the ablest and best informed of those who have censured the manner in which the negotiations of that

time were conducted are scarcely consistent with themselves. For, while they blame William for being his own Ambassador Plenipotentiary at the Hague, they praise him for being his own Commander in Chief in Ireland. Yet where is the distinction in principle between the two cases? Surely every reason which can be brought to prove that he violated the constitution, when, by his own sole authority, he made compacts with the Emperor and the Elector of Brandenburg, will equally prove that he violated the constitution, when, by his own sole authority, he ordered one column to plunge into the water at Oldbridge and another to cross the bridge of Slane. If the constitution gave him the command of the forces of the State, the constitution gave him also the direction of the foreign relations of the State. On what principle then can it be maintained that he was at liberty to exercise the former power without consulting any body, but that he was bound to exercise the latter power in conformity with the advice of a minister? Will it be said that an error in diplomacy is likely to be more injurious to the country than an error in strategy? Surely not. It is hardly conceivable that any blunder which William might have made at the Hague could have been more injurious to the public interests than a defeat at the Boyne. Or will it be said that there was greater reason for placing confidence in his military than in his diplomatic skill? Surely not. In war he showed some great moral and intellectual qualities; but, as a tactician, he did not rank high; and of his many campaigns only two were decidedly successful. In the talents of a negotiator, on the other

hand, he has never been surpassed. Of the interests and the tempers of the continental courts he knew more than all his Privy Council together. Some of his ministers were doubtless men of great ability, excellent orators in the House of Lords, and versed in our insular politics. But, in the deliberations of the Congress, Caermarthen and Nottingham would have been found as far inferior to him as he would have been found inferior to them in a parliamentary debate on a question purely English. The coalition against France was his work. He alone had joined together the parts of that great whole; and he alone could keep them together. If he had trusted that vast and complicated machine in the hands of any of his subjects, it would instantly have fallen to pieces.

Some things indeed were to be done which none of his subjects would have ventured to do. Pope Alexander was really, though not in name, one of the allies; it was of the highest importance to have him for a friend; and yet such was the temper of the English nation that an English minister might well shrink from having any dealings, direct or indirect, with the Vatican. The Secretaries of State were glad to leave a matter so delicate and so full of risk to their master, and to be able to protest with truth that not a line to which the most intolerant Protestant could object had ever gone out of their offices.

It must not be supposed however that William ever forgot that his especial, his hereditary, mission was to protect the Reformed Faith. His influence with Roman Catholic princes was constantly and strenuously exerted for the benefit of their

Protestant subjects. In the spring of 1691, the Waldensian shepherds, long and cruelly persecuted, and weary of their lives, were surprised by glad tidings. Those who had been in prison for heresy returned to their homes. Children, who had been taken from their parents to be educated by priests, were sent back. Congregations, which had hitherto met only by stealth and with extreme peril, now worshipped God without molestation in the face of day. Those simple mountaineers probably never knew that their fate had been a subject of discussion at the Hague, and that they owed the happiness of their firesides, and the security of their humble temples to the ascendancy which William exercised over the Duke of Savoy. 8

No coalition of which history has preserved the memory has had an abler chief than William. But even William often contended in vain against those vices which are inherent in the nature of all coalitions. No undertaking which requires the hearty and long continued cooperation of many independent states is likely to prosper. Jealousies inevitably spring up. Disputes engender disputes. Every confederate is tempted to throw on others some part of the burden which he ought himself to bear. Scarcely one honestly furnishes the promised contingent. Scarcely one exactly observes the appointed day. But perhaps no coalition that ever existed was in such constant danger of dissolution as the coalition which William had with infinite difficulty formed. The long list of potentates, who met in person or by their representatives at the Hague, looked well

in the Gazettes. The crowd of princely equipages, attended by manycoloured guards and lacqueys, looked well among the lime trees of the Voorhout. But the very circumstances which made the Congress more splendid than other congresses made the league weaker than other leagues. The more numerous the allies, the more numerous were the dangers which threatened the alliance. It was impossible that twenty governments, divided by quarrels about precedence, quarrels about territory, quarrels about trade, quarrels about religion, could long act together in perfect harmony. That they acted together during several years in imperfect harmony is to be ascribed to the wisdom, patience and firmness of William.

The situation of his great enemy was very different. The resources of the French monarchy, though certainly not equal to those of England, Holland, the House of Austria, and the Empire of Germany united, were yet very formidable; they were all collected in a central position; they were all under the absolute direction of a single mind. Lewis could do with two words what William could hardly bring about by two months of negotiation at Berlin, Munich, Brussels, Turin and Vienna. Thus France was found equal in effective strength to all the states which were combined against her. For in the political, as in the natural world, there may be an equality of momentum between unequal bodies, when the body which is inferior in weight is superior in velocity.

This was soon signally proved. In March the princes and ambassadors who had been assembled at the Hague separated

and scarcely had they separated when all their plans were disconcerted by a bold and skilful move of the enemy.

Lewis was sensible that the meeting of the Congress was likely to produce a great effect on the public mind of Europe. That effect he determined to counteract by striking a sudden and terrible blow. While his enemies were settling how many troops each of them should furnish, he ordered numerous divisions of his army to march from widely distant points towards Mons, one of the most important, if not the most important, of the fortresses which protected the Spanish Netherlands. His purpose was discovered only when it was all but accomplished. William, who had retired for a few days to Loo, learned, with surprise and extreme vexation, that cavalry, infantry, artillery, bridges of boats, were fast approaching the fated city by many converging routes. A hundred thousand men had been brought together. All the implements of war had been largely provided by Louvois, the first of living administrators. The command was entrusted to Luxemburg, the first of living generals. The scientific operations were directed by Vauban, the first of living engineers. That nothing might be wanting which could kindle emulation through all the ranks of a gallant and loyal army, the magnificent King himself had set out from Versailles for the camp. Yet William had still some faint hope that it might be possible to raise the siege. He flew to the Hague, put all the forces of the States General in motion, and sent pressing messages to the German Princes. Within three weeks after he had received the first hint

of the danger, he was in the neighbourhood of the besieged city, at the head of near fifty thousand troops of different nations. To attack a superior force commanded by such a captain as Luxemburg was a bold, almost a desperate, enterprise. Yet William was so sensible that the loss of Mons would be an almost irreparable disaster and disgrace that he made up his mind to run the hazard. He was convinced that the event of the siege would determine the policy of the Courts of Stockholm and Copenhagen. Those Courts had lately seemed inclined to join the coalition. If Mons fell, they would certainly remain neutral; they might possibly become hostile. "The risk," he wrote to Heinsius, "is great; yet I am not without hope. I will do what can be done. The issue is in the hands of God." On the very day on which this letter was written Mons fell. The siege had been vigorously pressed. Lewis himself, though suffering from the gout, had set the example of strenuous exertion. His household troops, the finest body of soldiers in Europe, had, under his eye, surpassed themselves. The young nobles of his court had tried to attract his notice by exposing themselves to the hottest fire with the same gay alacrity with which they were wont to exhibit their graceful figures at his balls. His wounded soldiers were charmed by the benignant courtesy with which he walked among their pallets, assisted while wounds were dressed by the hospital surgeons, and breakfasted on a porringer of the hospital broth. While all was obedience and enthusiasm among the besiegers, all was disunion and dismay among the besieged.

The duty of the French lines was so well performed that no messenger sent by William was able to cross them. The garrison did not know that relief was close at hand. The burghers were appalled by the prospect of those horrible calamities which befall cities taken by storm. Showers of shells and redhot bullets were falling in the streets. The town was on fire in ten places at once. The peaceful inhabitants derived an unwonted courage from the excess of their fear, and rose on the soldiers. Thenceforth resistance was impossible; and a capitulation was concluded. The armies then retired into quarters. Military operations were suspended during some weeks; Lewis returned in triumph to Versailles; and William paid a short visit to England, where his presence was much needed. [9](#)

He found the ministers still employed in tracing out the ramifications of the plot which had been discovered just before his departure. Early in January, Preston, Ashton and Elliot had been arraigned at the Old Bailey. They claimed the right of severing in their challenges. It was therefore necessary to try them separately. The audience was numerous and splendid. Many peers were present. The Lord President and the two Secretaries of State attended in order to prove that the papers produced in Court were the same which Billop had brought to Whitehall. A considerable number of judges appeared on the bench; and Holt presided. A full report of the proceedings has come down to us, and well deserves to be attentively studied, and to be compared with the reports of other trials which had not

long before taken place under the same roof. The whole spirit of the tribunal had undergone in a few months a change so complete that it might seem to have been the work of ages. Twelve years earlier, unhappy Roman Catholics, accused of wickedness which had never entered into their thoughts, had stood in that dock. The witnesses for the Crown had repeated their hideous fictions amidst the applauding hums of the audience. The judges had shared, or had pretended to share, the stupid credulity and the savage passions of the populace, had exchanged smiles and compliments with the perjured informers, had roared down the arguments feebly stammered forth by the prisoners, and had not been ashamed, in passing the sentence of death, to make ribald jests on purgatory and the mass. As soon as the butchery of Papists was over, the butchery of Whigs had commenced; and the judges had applied themselves to their new work with even more than their old barbarity. To these scandals the Revolution had put an end. Whoever, after perusing the trials of Ireland and Pickering, of Grove and Berry, of Sidney, Cornish and Alice Lisle, turns to the trials of Preston and Ashton, will be astonished by the contrast. The Solicitor General, Somers, conducted the prosecutions with a moderation and humanity of which his predecessors had left him no example. "I did never think," he said, "that it was the part of any who were of counsel for the King in cases of this nature to aggravate the crime of the prisoners, or to put false colours on the evidence." [10](#) Holt's conduct was faultless. Pollexfen, an older man than Holt or Somers, retained a

little,—and a little was too much,—of the tone of that bad school in which he had been bred. But, though he once or twice forgot the austere decorum of his place, he cannot be accused of any violation of substantial justice. The prisoners themselves seem to have been surprised by the fairness and gentleness with which they were treated. "I would not mislead the jury, I'll assure you," said Holt to Preston, "nor do Your Lordship any manner of injury in the world." "No, my Lord;" said Preston; "I see it well enough that Your Lordship would not." "Whatever my fate may be," said Ashton, "I cannot but own that I have had a fair trial for my life."

The culprits gained nothing by the moderation of the Solicitor General or by the impartiality of the Court; for the evidence was irresistible. The meaning of the papers seized by Billop was so plain that the dullest juryman could not misunderstand it. Of those papers part was fully proved to be in Preston's handwriting. Part was in Ashton's handwriting but this the counsel for the prosecution had not the means of proving. They therefore rested the case against Ashton on the indisputable facts that the treasonable packet had been found in his bosom, and that he had used language which was quite unintelligible except on the supposition that he had a guilty knowledge of the contents. [11](#)

Both Preston and Ashton were convicted and sentenced to death. Ashton was speedily executed. He might have saved his life by making disclosures. But though he declared that, if he were spared, he would always be a faithful subject of Their Majesties, he was fully resolved not to give up the names of

his accomplices. In this resolution he was encouraged by the nonjuring divines who attended him in his cell. It was probably by their influence that he was induced to deliver to the Sheriffs on the scaffold a declaration which he had transcribed and signed, but had not, it is to be hoped, composed or attentively considered. In this paper he was made to complain of the unfairness of a trial which he had himself in public acknowledged to have been eminently fair. He was also made to aver, on the word of a dying man, that he knew nothing of the papers which had been found upon him. Unfortunately his declaration, when inspected, proved to be in the same handwriting with one of the most important of those papers. He died with manly fortitude. [12](#)

Elliot was not brought to trial. The evidence against him was not quite so clear as that on which his associates had been convicted; and he was not worth the anger of the government. The fate of Preston was long in suspense. The Jacobites affected to be confident that the government would not dare to shed his blood. He was, they said, a favourite at Versailles, and his death would be followed by a terrible retaliation. They scattered about the streets of London papers in which it was asserted that, if any harm befell him, Mountjoy, and all the other Englishmen of quality who were prisoners in France, would be broken on the wheel. [13](#) These absurd threats would not have deferred the execution one day. But those who had Preston in their power were not unwilling to spare him on certain conditions. He was privy to all the counsels of the disaffected party, and could

furnish information of the highest value. He was informed that his fate depended on himself. The struggle was long and severe. Pride, conscience, party spirit, were on one side; the intense love of life on the other. He went during a time irresolutely to and fro. He listened to his brother Jacobites; and his courage rose. He listened to the agents of the government; and his heart sank within him. In an evening when he had dined and drunk his claret, he feared nothing. He would die like a man, rather than save his neck by an act of baseness. But his temper was very different when he woke the next morning, when the courage which he had drawn from wine and company had evaporated, when he was alone with the iron grates and stone walls, and when the thought of the block, the axe and the sawdust rose in his mind. During some time he regularly wrote a confession every forenoon when he was sober, and burned it every night when he was merry. [14](#) His nonjuring friends formed a plan for bringing Sancroft to visit the Tower, in the hope, doubtless, that the exhortations of so great a prelate and so great a saint would confirm the wavering virtue of the prisoner. [15](#) Whether this plan would have been successful may be doubted; it was not carried into effect; the fatal hour drew near; and the fortitude of Preston gave way. He confessed his guilt, and named Clarendon, Dartmouth, the Bishop of Ely and William Penn, as his accomplices. He added a long list of persons against whom he could not himself give evidence, but who, if he could trust to Penn's assurances, were friendly to King James. Among

these persons were Devonshire and Dorset. 16 There is not the slightest reason to believe that either of these great noblemen ever had any dealings, direct or indirect, with Saint Germain's. It is not, however, necessary to accuse Penn of deliberate falsehood. He was credulous and garrulous. The Lord Steward and the Lord Chamberlain had shared in the vexation with which their party had observed the leaning of William towards the Tories; and they had probably expressed that vexation unguardedly. So weak a man as Penn, wishing to find Jacobites every where, and prone to believe whatever he wished, might easily put an erroneous construction on invectives such as the haughty and irritable Devonshire was but too ready to utter, and on sarcasms such as, in moments of spleen, dropped but too easily from the lips of the keenwitted Dorset. Caermarthen, a Tory, and a Tory who had been mercilessly persecuted by the Whigs, was disposed to make the most of this idle hearsay. But he received no encouragement from his master, who, of all the great politicians mentioned in history, was the least prone to suspicion. When William returned to England, Preston was brought before him, and was commanded to repeat the confession which had already been made to the ministers. The King stood behind the Lord President's chair and listened gravely while Clarendon, Dartmouth, Turner and Penn were named. But as soon as the prisoner, passing from what he could himself testify, began to repeat the stories which Penn had told him, William touched Caermarthen on the shoulder and said, "My Lord, we have had

too much of this." [17](#) This judicious magnanimity had its proper reward. Devonshire and Dorset became from that day more zealous than ever in the cause of the master who, in spite of calumny for which their own indiscretion had perhaps furnished some ground, had continued to repose confidence in their loyalty. [18](#)

Even those who were undoubtedly criminal were generally treated with great lenity. Clarendon lay in the Tower about six months. His guilt was fully established; and a party among the Whigs called loudly and importunately for his head. But he was saved by the pathetic entreaties of his brother Rochester, by the good offices of the humane and generous Burnet, and by Mary's respect for the memory of her mother. The prisoner's confinement was not strict. He was allowed to entertain his friends at dinner. When at length his health began to suffer from restraint, he was permitted to go into the country under the care of a warder; the warder was soon removed; and Clarendon was informed that, while he led a quiet rural life, he should not be molested. [19](#)

The treason of Dartmouth was of no common dye. He was an English seaman; and he had laid a plan for betraying Portsmouth to the French, and had offered to take the command of a French squadron against his country. It was a serious aggravation of his guilt that he had been one of the very first persons who took the oaths to William and Mary. He was arrested and brought to the Council Chamber. A narrative of what passed there,

written by himself, has been preserved. In that narrative he admits that he was treated with great courtesy and delicacy. He vehemently asserted his innocence. He declared that he had never corresponded with Saint Germain, that he was no favourite there, and that Mary of Modena in particular owed him a grudge. "My Lords," he said, "I am an Englishman. I always, when the interest of the House of Bourbon was strongest here, shunned the French, both men and women. I would lose the last drop of my blood rather than see Portsmouth in the power of foreigners. I am not such a fool as to think that King Lewis will conquer us merely for the benefit of King James. I am certain that nothing can be truly imputed to me beyond some foolish talk over a bottle." His protestations seem to have produced some effect; for he was at first permitted to remain in the gentle custody of the Black Rod. On further inquiry, however, it was determined to send him to the Tower. After a confinement of a few weeks he died of apoplexy; but he lived long enough to complete his disgrace by offering his sword to the new government, and by expressing in fervent language his hope that he might, by the goodness of God and of Their Majesties, have an opportunity of showing how much he hated the French. [20](#)

Turner ran no serious risk; for the government was most unwilling to send to the scaffold one of the Seven who had signed the memorable petition. A warrant was however issued for his apprehension; and his friends had little hope that he would escape; for his nose was such as none who had seen it could

forget; and it was to little purpose that he put on a flowing wig and that he suffered his beard to grow. The pursuit was probably not very hot; for, after skulking a few weeks in England, he succeeded in crossing the Channel, and remained some time in France. [21](#)

A warrant was issued against Penn; and he narrowly escaped the messengers. It chanced that, on the day on which they were sent in search of him, he was attending a remarkable ceremony at some distance from his home. An event had taken place which a historian, whose object is to record the real life of a nation, ought not to pass unnoticed. While London was agitated by the news that a plot had been discovered, George Fox, the founder of the sect of Quakers, died.

More than forty years had elapsed since Fox had begun to see visions and to cast out devils. [22](#) He was then a youth of pure morals and grave deportment, with a perverse temper, with the education of a labouring man, and with an intellect in the most unhappy of all states, that is to say, too much disordered for liberty, and not sufficiently disordered for Bedlam. The circumstances in which he was placed were such as could scarcely fail to bring out in the strongest form the constitutional diseases of his mind. At the time when his faculties were ripening, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, were striving for mastery, and were, in every corner of the realm, refuting and reviling each other. He wandered from congregation to congregation; he heard priests harangue against Puritans; he

heard Puritans harangue against priests; and he in vain applied for spiritual direction and consolation to doctors of both parties. One jolly old clergyman of the Anglican communion told him to smoke tobacco and sing psalms; another advised him to go and lose some blood. [23](#) The young inquirer turned in disgust from these advisers to the Dissenters, and found them also blind guides. [24](#) After some time he came to the conclusion that no human being was competent to instruct him in divine things, and that the truth had been communicated to him by direct inspiration from heaven. He argued that, as the division of languages began at Babel, and as the persecutors of Christ put on the cross an inscription in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, the knowledge of languages, and more especially of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, must be useless to a Christian minister. [25](#) Indeed, he was so far from knowing many languages, that he knew none; nor can the most corrupt passage in Hebrew be more unintelligible to the unlearned than his English often is to the most acute and attentive reader. [26](#) One of the precious truths which were divinely revealed to this new apostle was, that it was falsehood and adulation to use the second person plural instead of the second person singular. Another was, that to talk of the month of March was to worship the bloodthirsty god Mars, and that to talk of Monday was to pay idolatrous homage to the moon. To say Good morning or Good evening was highly reprehensible, for those phrases evidently imported that God had made bad days and bad nights. [27](#) A Christian was bound

to face death itself rather than touch his hat to the greatest of mankind. When Fox was challenged to produce any Scriptural authority for this dogma, he cited the passage in which it is written that Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace with their hats on; and, if his own narrative may be trusted, the Chief Justice of England was altogether unable to answer this argument except by crying out, "Take him away, gaoler." [28](#) Fox insisted much on the not less weighty argument that the Turks never show their bare heads to their superiors; and he asked, with great animation, whether those who bore the noble name of Christians ought not to surpass Turks in virtue. [29](#) Bowing he strictly prohibited, and, indeed, seemed to consider it as the effect of Satanical influence; for, as he observed, the woman in the Gospel, while she had a spirit of infirmity, was bowed together, and ceased to bow as soon as Divine power had liberated her from the tyranny of the Evil One. [30](#) His expositions of the sacred writings were of a very peculiar kind. Passages, which had been, in the apprehension of all the readers of the Gospels during sixteen centuries, figurative, he construed literally. Passages, which no human being before him had ever understood in any other than a literal sense, he construed figuratively. Thus, from those rhetorical expressions in which the duty of patience under injuries is enjoined he deduced the doctrine that selfdefence against pirates and assassins is unlawful. On the other hand, the plain commands to baptize with water, and to partake of bread and wine in commemoration of

the redemption of mankind, he pronounced to be allegorical. He long wandered from place to place, teaching this strange theology, shaking like an aspen leaf in his paroxysms of fanatical excitement, forcing his way into churches, which he nicknamed steeple houses interrupting prayers and sermons with clamour and scurrility, [31](#) and pestering rectors and justices with epistles much resembling burlesques of those sublime odes in which the Hebrew prophets foretold the calamities of Babylon and Tyre. [32](#) He soon acquired great notoriety by these feats. His strange face, his strange chant, his immovable hat and his leather breeches were known all over the country; and he boasts that, as soon as the rumour was heard, "The Man in Leather Breeches is coming," terror seized hypocritical professors, and hireling priests made haste to get out of his way. [33](#) He was repeatedly imprisoned and set in the stocks, sometimes justly, for disturbing the public worship of congregations, and sometimes unjustly, for merely talking nonsense. He soon gathered round him a body of disciples, some of whom went beyond himself in absurdity. He has told us that one of his friends walked naked through Skipton declaring the truth. [34](#) and that another was divinely moved to go naked during several years to marketplaces, and to the houses of gentlemen and clergymen. [35](#) Fox complains bitterly that these pious acts, prompted by the Holy Spirit, were requited by an untoward generation with hooting, pelting, coachwhipping and horsewhipping. But, though he applauded the zeal of the sufferers, he did not go quite to their lengths. He sometimes,

indeed, was impelled to strip himself partially. Thus he pulled off his shoes and walked barefoot through Lichfield, crying, "Woe to the bloody city." [36](#) But it does not appear that he ever thought it his duty to appear before the public without that decent garment from which his popular appellation was derived.

If we form our judgment of George Fox simply by looking at his own actions and writings, we shall see no reason for placing him, morally or intellectually, above Ludowick Muggleton or Joanna Southcote. But it would be most unjust to rank the sect which regards him as its founder with the Muggletonians or the Southcotians. It chanced that among the thousands whom his enthusiasm infected were a few persons whose abilities and attainments were of a very different order from his own. Robert Barclay was a man of considerable parts and learning. William Penn, though inferior to Barclay in both natural and acquired abilities, was a gentleman and a scholar. That such men should have become the followers of George Fox ought not to astonish any person who remembers what quick, vigorous and highly cultivated intellects were in our own times duped by the unknown tongues. The truth is that no powers of mind constitute a security against errors of this description. Touching God and His ways with man, the highest human faculties can discover little more than the meanest. In theology the interval is small indeed between Aristotle and a child, between Archimedes and a naked savage. It is not strange, therefore, that wise men, weary of investigation, tormented by uncertainty, longing to believe

something, and yet seeing objections to every thing, should submit themselves absolutely to teachers who, with firm and undoubting faith, lay claim to a supernatural commission. Thus we frequently see inquisitive and restless spirits take refuge from their own scepticism in the bosom of a church which pretends to infallibility, and, after questioning the existence of a Deity, bring themselves to worship a wafer. And thus it was that Fox made some converts to whom he was immeasurably inferior in every thing except the energy of his convictions. By these converts his rude doctrines were polished into a form somewhat less shocking to good sense and good taste. No proposition which he had laid down was retracted. No indecent or ridiculous act which he had done or approved was condemned; but what was most grossly absurd in his theories and practices was softened down, or at least not obtruded on the public; whatever could be made to appear specious was set in the fairest light; his gibberish was translated into English; meanings which he would have been quite unable to comprehend were put on his phrases; and his system, so much improved that he would not have known it again, was defended by numerous citations from Pagan philosophers and Christian fathers whose names he had never heard. [37](#) Still, however, those who had remodelled his theology continued to profess, and doubtless to feel, profound reverence for him; and his crazy epistles were to the last received and read with respect in Quaker meetings all over the country. His death produced a sensation which was not confined to his own disciples. On

the morning of the funeral a great multitude assembled round the meeting house in Gracechurch Street. Thence the corpse was borne to the burial ground of the sect near Bunhill Fields. Several orators addressed the crowd which filled the cemetery. Penn was conspicuous among those disciples who committed the venerable corpse to the earth. The ceremony had scarcely been finished when he learned that warrants were out against him. He instantly took flight, and remained many months concealed from the public eye. [38](#)

A short time after his disappearance, Sidney received from him a strange communication. Penn begged for an interview, but insisted on a promise that he should be suffered to return unmolested to his hiding place. Sidney obtained the royal permission to make an appointment on these terms. Penn came to the rendezvous, and spoke at length in his own defence. He declared that he was a faithful subject of King William and Queen Mary, and that, if he knew of any design against them, he would discover it. Departing from his Yea and Nay, he protested, as in the presence of God, that he knew of no plot, and that he did not believe that there was any plot, unless the ambitious projects of the French government might be called plots. Sidney, amazed probably by hearing a person, who had such an abhorrence of lies that he would not use the common forms of civility, and such an abhorrence of oaths that he would not kiss the book in a court of justice, tell something very like a lie, and confirm it by something very like an oath, asked how, if there were really no plot, the

letters and minutes which had been found on Ashton were to be explained. This question Penn evaded. "If," he said, "I could only see the King, I would confess every thing to him freely. I would tell him much that it would be important for him to know. It is only in that way that I can be of service to him. A witness for the Crown I cannot be for my conscience will not suffer me to be sworn." He assured Sidney that the most formidable enemies of the government were the discontented Whigs. "The Jacobites are not dangerous. There is not a man among them who has common understanding. Some persons who came over from Holland with the King are much more to be dreaded." It does not appear that Penn mentioned any names. He was suffered to depart in safety. No active search was made for him. He lay hid in London during some months, and then stole down to the coast of Sussex and made his escape to France. After about three years of wandering and lurking he, by the mediation of some eminent men, who overlooked his faults for the sake of his good qualities, made his peace with the government, and again ventured to resume his ministrations. The return which he made for the lenity with which he had been treated does not much raise his character. Scarcely had he again begun to harangue in public about the unlawfulness of war, when he sent a message earnestly exhorting James to make an immediate descent on England with thirty thousand men. [39](#)

Some months passed before the fate of Preston was decided. After several respites, the government, convinced that, though he

had told much, he could tell more, fixed a day for his execution, and ordered the sheriffs to have the machinery of death in readiness. [40](#) But he was again respited, and, after a delay of some weeks, obtained a pardon, which, however, extended only to his life, and left his property subject to all the consequences of his attainder. As soon as he was set at liberty he gave new cause of offence and suspicion, and was again arrested, examined and sent to prison. [41](#) At length he was permitted to retire, pursued by the hisses and curses of both parties, to a lonely manor house in the North Riding of Yorkshire. There, at least, he had not to endure the scornful looks of old associates who had once thought him a man of dauntless courage and spotless honour, but who now pronounced that he was at best a meanspirited coward, and hinted their suspicions that he had been from the beginning a spy and a trepan. [42](#) He employed the short and sad remains of his life in turning the Consolation of Boethius into English. The translation was published after the translator's death. It is remarkable chiefly on account of some very unsuccessful attempts to enrich our versification with new metres, and on account of the allusions with which the preface is filled. Under a thin veil of figurative language, Preston exhibited to the public compassion or contempt his own blighted fame and broken heart. He complained that the tribunal which had sentenced him to death had dealt with him more leniently than his former friends, and that many, who had never been tried by temptations like his, had very cheaply earned a reputation for courage by sneering at

his poltroonery, and by bidding defiance at a distance to horrors which, when brought near, subdue even a constant spirit.

The spirit of the Jacobites, which had been quelled for a time by the detection of Preston's plot, was revived by the fall of Mons. The joy of the whole party was boundless. The nonjuring priests ran backwards and forwards between Sam's Coffee House and Westminster Hall, spreading the praises of Lewis, and laughing at the miserable issue of the deliberations of the great Congress. In the Park the malecontents wore their biggest looks, and talked sedition in their loudest tones. The most conspicuous among these swaggerers was Sir John Fenwick, who had, in the late reign, been high in favour and in military command, and was now an indefatigable agitator and conspirator. In his exultation he forgot the courtesy which man owes to woman. He had more than once made himself conspicuous by his impertinence to the Queen. He now ostentatiously put himself in her way when she took her airing; and, while all around him uncovered and bowed low, gave her a rude stare and cocked his hat in her face. The affront was not only brutal, but cowardly. For the law had provided no punishment for mere impertinence, however gross; and the King was the only gentleman and soldier in the kingdom who could not protect his wife from contumely with his sword. All that the Queen could do was to order the parkkeepers not to admit Sir John again within the gates. But, long after her death, a day came when he had reason to wish that he had restrained his insolence. He found, by terrible proof, that of all the Jacobites,

the most desperate assassins not excepted, he was the only one for whom William felt an intense personal aversion. [43](#)

A few days after this event the rage of the malecontents began to flame more fiercely than ever. The detection of the conspiracy of which Preston was the chief had brought on a crisis in ecclesiastical affairs. The nonjuring bishops had, during the year which followed their deprivation, continued to reside in the official mansions which had once been their own. Burnet had, at Mary's request, laboured to effect a compromise. His direct interference would probably have done more harm than good. He therefore judiciously employed the agency of Rochester, who stood higher in the estimation of the nonjurors than any statesman who was not a nonjuror, and of Trevor, who, worthless as he was, had considerable influence with the High Church party. Sancroft and his brethren were informed that, if they would consent to perform their spiritual duty, to ordain, to institute, to confirm, and to watch over the faith and the morality of the priesthood, a bill should be brought into Parliament to excuse them from taking the oaths. [44](#) This offer was imprudently liberal; but those to whom it was made could not consistently accept it. For in the ordination service, and indeed in almost every service of the Church, William and Mary were designated as King and Queen. The only promise that could be obtained from the deprived prelates was that they would live quietly; and even this promise they had not all kept. One of them at least had been guilty of treason aggravated by

impiety. He had, under the strong fear of being butchered by the populace, declared that he abhorred the thought of calling in the aid of France, and had invoked God to attest the sincerity of this declaration. Yet, a short time after, he had been detected in plotting to bring a French army into England; and he had written to assure the Court of Saint Germain's that he was acting in concert with his brethren, and especially with Sancroft. The Whigs called loudly for severity. Even the Tory counsellors of William owned that indulgence had been carried to the extreme point. They made, however, a last attempt to mediate. "Will you and your brethren," said Trevor to Lloyd, the nonjuring Bishop of Norwich, "disown all connection with Doctor Turner, and declare that what he has in his letters imputed to you is false?" Lloyd evaded the question. It was now evident that William's forbearance had only emboldened the adversaries whom he had hoped to conciliate. Even Caermarthen, even Nottingham, declared that it was high time to fill the vacant sees. [45](#)

Tillotson was nominated to the Archbishopric, and was consecrated on Whitsunday, in the church of St. Mary Le Bow. Compton, cruelly mortified, refused to bear any part in the ceremony. His place was supplied by Mew, Bishop of Winchester, who was assisted by Burnet, Stillingfleet and Hough. The congregation was the most splendid that had been seen in any place of worship since the coronation. The Queen's drawingroom was, on that day, deserted. Most of the peers who were in town met in the morning at Bedford House, and went thence in

procession to Cheapside. Norfolk, Caermarthen and Dorset were conspicuous in the throng. Devonshire, who was impatient to see his woods at Chatsworth in their summer beauty, had deferred his departure in order to mark his respect for Tillotson. The crowd which lined the streets greeted the new Primate warmly. For he had, during many years, preached in the City; and his eloquence, his probity and the singular gentleness of his temper and manners, had made him the favourite of the Londoners.

46 But the congratulations and applauses of his friends could not drown the roar of execration which the Jacobites set up. According to them, he was a thief who had not entered by the door, but had climbed over the fences. He was a hireling whose own the sheep were not, who had usurped the crook of the good shepherd, and who might well be expected to leave the flock at the mercy of every wolf. He was an Arian, a Socinian, a Deist, an Atheist. He had cozened the world by fine phrases, and by a show of moral goodness: but he was in truth a far more dangerous enemy of the Church than he could have been if he had openly proclaimed himself a disciple of Hobbes, and had lived as loosely as Wilmot. He had taught the fine gentlemen and ladies who admired his style, and who were constantly seen round his pulpit, that they might be very good Christians, and yet might believe the account of the Fall in the book of Genesis to be allegorical. Indeed they might easily be as good Christians as he; for he had never been christened; his parents were Anabaptists; he had lost their religion when he was a boy; and he had never

found another. In ribald lampoons he was nicknamed Undipped John. The parish register of his baptism was produced in vain. His enemies still continued to complain that they had lived to see fathers of the Church who never were her children. They made up a story that the Queen had felt bitter remorse for the great crime by which she had obtained a throne, that in her agony she had applied to Tillotson, and that he had comforted her by assuring her that the punishment of the wicked in a future state would not be eternal. [47](#) The Archbishop's mind was naturally of almost feminine delicacy, and had been rather softened than braced by the habits of a long life, during which contending sects and factions had agreed in speaking of his abilities with admiration and of his character with esteem. The storm of obloquy which he had to face for the first time at more than sixty years of age was too much for him. His spirits declined; his health gave way; yet he neither flinched from his duty nor attempted to revenge himself on his persecutors. A few days after his consecration, some persons were seized while dispersing libels in which he was reviled. The law officers of the Crown proposed to institute prosecutions; but he insisted that nobody should be punished on his account. [48](#) Once, when he had company with him, a sealed packet was put into his hands; he opened it; and out fell a mask. His friends were shocked and incensed by this cowardly insult; but the Archbishop, trying to conceal his anguish by a smile, pointed to the pamphlets which covered his table, and said that the reproach which the emblem

of the mask was intended to convey might be called gentle when compared with other reproaches which he daily had to endure. After his death a bundle of the savage lampoons which the nonjurors had circulated against him was found among his papers with this indorsement: "I pray God forgive them; I do." [49](#)

The temper of the deposed primate was very different. He seems to have been under a complete delusion as to his own importance. The immense popularity which he had enjoyed three years before, the prayers and tears of the multitudes who had plunged into the Thames to implore his blessing, the enthusiasm with which the sentinels of the Tower had drunk his health under the windows of his prison, the mighty roar of joy which had risen from Palace Yard on the morning of his acquittal, the triumphant night when every window from Hyde Park to Mile End had exhibited seven candles, the midmost and tallest emblematical of him, were still fresh in his recollection; nor had he the wisdom to perceive that all this homage had been paid, not to his person, but to that religion and to those liberties of which he was, for a moment, the representative. The extreme tenderness with which the new government had long persisted in treating him seems to have confirmed him in his error. That a succession of conciliatory messages was sent to him from Kensington, that he was offered terms so liberal as to be scarcely consistent with the dignity of the Crown and the welfare of the State, that his cold and uncourteous answers could not tire out the royal indulgence, that, in spite of the loud clamours of the Whigs, and of the

provocations daily given by the Jacobites, he was residing, fifteen months after deprivation, in the metropolitan palace, these things seemed to him to indicate not the lenity but the timidity of the ruling powers. He appears to have flattered himself that they would not dare to eject him. The news, therefore, that his see had been filled threw him into a passion which lasted as long as his life, and which hurried him into many foolish and unseemly actions. Tillotson, as soon as he was appointed, went to Lambeth in the hope that he might be able, by courtesy and kindness, to soothe the irritation of which he was the innocent cause. He stayed long in the antechamber, and sent in his name by several servants; but Sancroft would not even return an answer. [50](#) Three weeks passed; and still the deprived Archbishop showed no disposition to move. At length he received an order intimating to him the royal pleasure that he should quit the dwelling which had long ceased to be his own, and in which he was only a guest. He resented this order bitterly, and declared that he would not obey it. He would stay till he was pulled out by the Sheriff's officers. He would defend himself at law as long as he could do so without putting in any plea acknowledging the authority of the usurpers. [51](#) The case was so clear that he could not, by any artifice of chicanery, obtain more than a short delay. When judgment had been given against him, he left the palace, but directed his steward to retain possession. The consequence was that the steward was taken into custody and heavily fined. Tillotson sent a kind message to assure his predecessor that the

fine should not be exacted. But Sancroft was determined to have a grievance, and would pay the money. [52](#)

From that time the great object of the narrowminded and peevish old man was to tear in pieces the Church of which he had been the chief minister. It was in vain that some of those nonjurors, whose virtue, ability and learning were the glory of their party, remonstrated against his design. "Our deprivation,"—such was the reasoning of Ken,— "is, in the sight of God, a nullity. We are, and shall be, till we die or resign, the true Bishops of our sees. Those who assume our titles and functions will incur the guilt of schism. But with us, if we act as becomes us, the schism will die; and in the next generation the unity of the Church will be restored. On the other hand, if we consecrate Bishops to succeed us, the breach may last through ages, and we shall be justly held accountable, not indeed for its origin, but for its continuance." These considerations ought, on Sancroft's own principles, to have had decisive weight with him; but his angry passions prevailed. Ken quietly retired from the venerable palace of Wells. He had done, he said, with strife, and should henceforth vent his feelings not in disputes but in hymns. His charities to the unhappy of all persuasions, especially to the followers of Monmouth and to the persecuted Huguenots, had been so large that his whole private fortune consisted of seven hundred pounds, and of a library which he could not bear to sell. But Thomas Thynne, Viscount Weymouth, though not a nonjuror, did himself honour by offering to the most virtuous

of the nonjurors a tranquil and dignified asylum in the princely mansion of Longleat. There Ken passed a happy and honoured old age, during which he never regretted the sacrifice which he had made to what he thought his duty, and yet constantly became more and more indulgent to those whose views of duty differed from his. [53](#)

Sancroft was of a very different temper. He had, indeed, as little to complain of as any man whom a revolution has ever hurled down from an exalted station. He had at Fressingfield, in Suffolk, a patrimonial estate, which, together with what he had saved during a primacy of twelve years, enabled him to live, not indeed as he had lived when he was the first peer of Parliament, but in the style of an opulent country gentleman. He retired to his hereditary abode; and there he passed the rest of his life in brooding over his wrongs. Aversion to the Established Church became as strong a feeling in him as it had been in Martin Marprelate. He considered all who remained in communion with her as heathens and publicans. He nicknamed Tillotson the Mufti. In the room which was used as a chapel at Fressingfield no person who had taken the oaths, or who attended the ministry of any divine who had taken the oaths, was suffered to partake of the sacred bread and wine. A distinction, however, was made between two classes of offenders. A layman who remained in communion with the Church was permitted to be present while prayers were read, and was excluded only from the highest of Christian mysteries. But with clergymen who

had sworn allegiance to the Sovereigns in possession Sancroft would not even pray. He took care that the rule which he had laid down should be widely known, and, both by precept and by example, taught his followers to look on the most orthodox, the most devout, the most virtuous of those who acknowledged William's authority with a feeling similar to that with which the Jew regarded the Samaritan. [54](#) Such intolerance would have been reprehensible, even in a man contending for a great principle. But Sancroft was contending merely for a name. He was the author of the scheme of Regency. He was perfectly willing to transfer the whole kingly power from James to William. The question which, to this smallest and sourest of minds, seemed important enough to justify the excommunicating of ten thousand priests and of five millions of laymen was, whether the magistrate to whom the whole kingly power was transferred should assume the kingly title. Nor could Sancroft bear to think that the animosity which he had excited would die with himself. Having done all that he could to make the feud bitter, he determined to make it eternal. A list of the divines who had been ejected from their benefices was sent by him to Saint Germain's with a request that James would nominate two who might keep up the episcopal succession. James, well pleased, doubtless, to see another sect added to that multitude of sects which he had been taught to consider as the reproach of Protestantism, named two fierce and uncompromising nonjurors, Hickes and Wagstaffe, the former recommended by Sancroft, the

latter recommended by Lloyd, the ejected Bishop of Norwich. [55](#) Such was the origin of a schismatical hierarchy, which, having, during a short time, excited alarm, soon sank into obscurity and contempt, but which, in obscurity and contempt, continued to drag on a languid existence during several generations. The little Church, without temples, revenues or dignities, was even more distracted by internal disputes than the great Church, which retained possession of cathedrals, tithes and peerages. Some nonjurors leaned towards the ceremonial of Rome; others would not tolerate the slightest departure from the Book of Common Prayer. Altar was set up against altar. One phantom prelate pronounced the consecration of another phantom prelate uncanonical. At length the pastors were left absolutely without flocks. One of these Lords spiritual very wisely turned surgeon; another left what he had called his see, and settled in Ireland; and at length, in 1805, the last Bishop of that society which had proudly claimed to be the only true Church of England dropped unnoticed into the grave. [56](#)

The places of the bishops who had been ejected with Sancroft were filled in a manner creditable to the government. Patrick succeeded the traitor Turner. Fowler went to Gloucester. Richard Cumberland, an aged divine, who had no interest at Court, and whose only recommendations were his piety and erudition, was astonished by learning from a newsletter which he found on the table of a coffeehouse that he had been nominated to the See of Peterborough. [57](#) Beveridge was selected to succeed

Ken; he consented; and the appointment was actually announced in the London Gazette. But Beveridge, though an honest, was not a strongminded man. Some Jacobites expostulated with him; some reviled him; his heart failed him; and he retracted. While the nonjurors were rejoicing in this victory, he changed his mind again; but too late. He had by his irresolution forfeited the favour of William, and never obtained a mitre till Anne was on the throne. [58](#) The bishopric of Bath and Wells was bestowed on Richard Kidder, a man of considerable attainments and blameless character, but suspected of a leaning towards Presbyterianism. About the same time Sharp, the highest churchman that had been zealous for the Comprehension, and the lowest churchman that felt a scruple about succeeding a deprived prelate, accepted the Archbishopric of York, vacant by the death of Lamplugh. [59](#)

In consequence of the elevation of Tillotson to the See of Canterbury, the Deanery of Saint Paul's became vacant. As soon as the name of the new Dean was known, a clamour broke forth such as perhaps no ecclesiastical appointment has ever produced, a clamour made up of yells of hatred, of hisses of contempt, and of shouts of triumphant and half insulting welcome; for the new Dean was William Sherlock.

The story of his conversion deserves to be fully told; for it throws great light on the character of the parties which then divided the Church and the State. Sherlock was, in influence and reputation, though not in rank, the foremost man among the

nonjurors. His authority and example had induced some of his brethren, who had at first wavered, to resign their benefices. The day of suspension came; the day of deprivation came; and still he was firm. He seemed to have found, in the consciousness of rectitude, and in meditation on the invisible world, ample compensation for all his losses. While excluded from the pulpit where his eloquence had once delighted the learned and polite inmates of the Temple, he wrote that celebrated Treatise on Death which, during many years, stood next to the Whole Duty of Man in the bookcases of serious Arminians. Soon, however, it began to be suspected that his resolution was giving way. He declared that he would be no party to a schism; he advised those who sought his counsel not to leave their parish churches; nay, finding that the law which had ejected him from his cure did not interdict him from performing divine service, he officiated at Saint Dunstan's, and there prayed for King William and Queen Mary. The apostolical injunction, he said, was that prayers should be made for all in authority, and William and Mary were visibly in authority. His Jacobite friends loudly blamed his inconsistency. How, they asked, if you admit that the Apostle speaks in this passage of actual authority, can you maintain that, in other passages of a similar kind, he speaks only of legitimate authority? Or how can you, without sin, designate as King, in a solemn address to God, one whom you cannot, without sin, promise to obey as King? These reasonings were unanswerable; and Sherlock soon began to think them so; but

the conclusion to which they led him was diametrically opposed to the conclusion to which they were meant to lead him. He hesitated, however, till a new light flashed on his mind from a quarter from which there was little reason to expect any thing but tenfold darkness. In the reign of James the First, Doctor John Overall, Bishop of Exeter, had written an elaborate treatise on the rights of civil and ecclesiastical governors. This treatise had been solemnly approved by the Convocations of Canterbury and York, and might therefore be considered as an authoritative exposition of the doctrine of the Church of England. A copy of the manuscript was in Sancroft's possession; and he, soon after the Revolution, sent it to the press. He hoped, doubtless, that the publication would injure the new government; but he was lamentably disappointed. The book indeed condemned all resistance in terms as strong as he could himself have used; but one passage which had escaped his notice was decisive against himself and his fellow schismatics. Overall, and the two Convocations which had given their sanction to Overall's teaching, pronounced that a government, which had originated in rebellion, ought, when thoroughly settled, to be considered as ordained by God and to be obeyed by Christian men. 60 Sherlock read, and was convinced. His venerable mother the Church had spoken; and he, with the docility of a child, accepted her decree. The government which had sprung from the Revolution might, at least since the battle of the Boyne and the flight of James from Ireland, be fairly called a settled government, and ought

therefore to be passively obeyed till it should be subverted by another revolution and succeeded by another settled government.

Sherlock took the oaths, and speedily published, in justification of his conduct, a pamphlet entitled *The Case of Allegiance to Sovereign Powers* stated. The sensation produced by this work was immense. Dryden's *Hind and Panther* had not raised so great an uproar. Halifax's *Letter to a Dissenter* had not called forth so many answers. The replies to the Doctor, the vindications of the Doctor, the pasquinades on the Doctor, would fill a library. The clamour redoubled when it was known that the convert had not only been reappointed Master of the Temple, but had accepted the Deanery of Saint Paul's, which had become vacant in consequence of the deprivation of Sancroft and the promotion of Tillotson. The rage of the nonjurors amounted almost to frenzy. Was it not enough, they asked, to desert the true and pure Church, in this her hour of sorrow and peril, without also slandering her? It was easy to understand why a greedy, cowardly hypocrite should refuse to take the oaths to the usurper as long as it seemed probable that the rightful King would be restored, and should make haste to swear after the battle of the Boyne. Such tergiversation in times of civil discord was nothing new. What was new was that the turncoat should try to throw his own guilt and shame on the Church of England, and should proclaim that she had taught him to turn against the weak who were in the right, and to cringe to the powerful who were in the wrong. Had such indeed been her doctrine or her

practice in evil days? Had she abandoned her Royal Martyr in the prison or on the scaffold? Had she enjoined her children to pay obedience to the Rump or to the Protector? Yet was the government of the Rump or of the Protector less entitled to be called a settled government than the government of William and Mary? Had not the battle of Worcester been as great a blow to the hopes of the House of Stuart as the battle of the Boyne? Had not the chances of a Restoration seemed as small in 1657 as they could seem to any judicious man in 1691? In spite of invectives and sarcasms, however, there was Overall's treatise; there were the approving votes of the two Convocations; and it was much easier to rail at Sherlock than to explain away either the treatise or the votes. One writer maintained that by a thoroughly settled government must have been meant a government of which the title was uncontested. Thus, he said, the government of the United Provinces became a settled government when it was recognised by Spain, and, but for that recognition, would never have been a settled government to the end of time. Another casuist, somewhat less austere, pronounced that a government, wrongful in its origin, might become a settled government after the lapse of a century. On the thirteenth of February 1789, therefore, and not a day earlier, Englishmen would be at liberty to swear allegiance to a government sprung from the Revolution. The history of the chosen people was ransacked for precedents. Was Eglon's a settled government when Ehud stabbed him? Was Joram's a settled government when Jehe shot him? But

the leading case was that of Athaliah. It was indeed a case which furnished the malecontents with many happy and pungent allusions; a kingdom treacherously seized by an usurper near in blood to the throne; the rightful prince long dispossessed; a part of the sacerdotal order true, through many disastrous years, to the Royal House; a counterrevolution at length effected by the High Priest at the head of the Levites. Who, it was asked, would dare to blame the heroic pontiff who had restored the heir of David? Yet was not the government of Athaliah as firmly settled as that of the Prince of Orange?

Hundreds of pages written at this time about the rights of Joash and the bold enterprise of Jehoiada are mouldering in the ancient bookcases of Oxford and Cambridge. While Sherlock was thus fiercely attacked by his old friends, he was not left unmolested by his old enemies. Some vehement Whigs, among whom Julian Johnson was conspicuous, declared that Jacobitism itself was respectable when compared with the vile doctrine which had been discovered in the Convocation Book. That passive obedience was due to Kings was doubtless an absurd and pernicious notion. Yet it was impossible not to respect the consistency and fortitude of men who thought themselves bound to bear true allegiance, at all hazards, to an unfortunate, a deposed, an exiled oppressor. But the theory which Sherlock had learned from Overall was unmixed baseness and wickedness. A cause was to be abandoned, not because it was unjust, but because it was unprosperous. Whether James had been a tyrant

or had been the father of his people was quite immaterial. If he had won the battle of the Boyne we should have been bound as Christians to be his slaves. He had lost it; and we were bound as Christians to be his foes. Other Whigs congratulated the proselyte on having come, by whatever road, to a right practical conclusion, but could not refrain from sneering at the history which he gave of his conversion. He was, they said, a man of eminent learning and abilities. He had studied the question of allegiance long and deeply. He had written much about it. Several months had been allowed him for reading, prayer and reflection before he incurred suspension, several months more before he incurred deprivation. He had formed an opinion for which he had declared himself ready to suffer martyrdom; he had taught that opinion to others; and he had then changed that opinion solely because he had discovered that it had been, not refuted, but dogmatically pronounced erroneous by the two Convocations more than eighty years before. Surely, this was to renounce all liberty of private judgment, and to ascribe to the Synods of Canterbury and York an infallibility which the Church of England had declared that even Oecumenical Councils could not justly claim. If, it was sarcastically said, all our notions of right and wrong, in matters of vital importance to the well being of society, are to be suddenly altered by a few lines of manuscript found in a corner of the library at Lambeth, it is surely much to be wished, for the peace of mind of humble Christians, that all the documents to which this sort of authority belongs should

be rummaged out and sent to the press as soon as possible; for, unless this be done, we may all, like the Doctor when he refused the oaths last year, be committing sins in the full persuasion that we are discharging duties. In truth, it is not easy to believe that the Convocation Book furnished Sherlock with any thing more than a pretext for doing what he had made up his mind to do. The united force of reason and interest had doubtless convinced him that his passions and prejudices had led him into a great error. That error he determined to recant; and it cost him less to say that his opinion had been changed by newly discovered evidence, than that he had formed a wrong judgment with all the materials for the forming of a right judgment before him. The popular belief was that his retraction was the effect of the tears, expostulations and reproaches of his wife. The lady's spirit was high; her authority in the family was great; and she cared much more about her house and her carriage, the plenty of her table and the prospects of her children, than about the patriarchal origin of government or the meaning of the word Abdication. She had, it was asserted, given her husband no peace by day or by night till he had got over his scruples. In letters, fables, songs, dialogues without number, her powers of seduction and intimidation were malignantly extolled. She was Xanthippe pouring water on the head of Socrates. She was Dalilah shearing Samson. She was Eve forcing the forbidden fruit into Adam's mouth. She was Job's wife, imploring her ruined lord, who sate scraping himself among the ashes, not to curse and die,

but to swear and live. While the ballad makers celebrated the victory of Mrs. Sherlock, another class of assailants fell on the theological reputation of her spouse. Till he took the oaths, he had always been considered as the most orthodox of divines. But the captious and malignant criticism to which his writings were now subjected would have found heresy in the Sermon on the Mount; and he, unfortunately, was rash enough to publish, at the very moment when the outcry against his political tergiversation was loudest, his thoughts on the mystery of the Trinity. It is probable that, at another time, his work would have been hailed by good Churchmen as a triumphant answer to the Socinians and Sabellians. But, unhappily, in his zeal against Socinians and Sabellians, he used expressions which might be construed into Tritheism. Candid judges would have remembered that the true path was closely pressed on the right and on the left by error, and that it was scarcely possible to keep far enough from danger on one side without going very close to danger on the other. But candid judges Sherlock was not likely to find among the Jacobites. His old allies affirmed that he had incurred all the fearful penalties denounced in the Athanasian Creed against those who divide the substance. Bulky quartos were written to prove that he held the existence of three distinct Deities; and some facetious malecontents, who troubled themselves very little about the Catholic verity, amused the town by lampoons in English and Latin on his heterodoxy. "We," said one of these jesters, "plight our faith to one King, and call one God to attest

our promise. We cannot think it strange that there should be more than one King to whom the Doctor has sworn allegiance, when we consider that the Doctor has more Gods than one to swear by." [61](#)

Sherlock would, perhaps, have doubted whether the government to which he had submitted was entitled to be called a settled government, if he had known all the dangers by which it was threatened. Scarcely had Preston's plot been detected; when a new plot of a very different kind was formed in the camp, in the navy, in the treasury, in the very bedchamber of the King. This mystery of iniquity has, through five generations, been gradually unveiling, but is not yet entirely unveiled. Some parts which are still obscure may possibly, by the discovery of letters or diaries now reposing under the dust of a century and a half, be made clear to our posterity. The materials, however, which are at present accessible, are sufficient for the construction of a narrative not to be read without shame and loathing. [62](#)

We have seen that, in the spring of 1690, Shrewsbury, irritated by finding his counsels rejected, and those of his Tory rivals followed, suffered himself, in a fatal hour, to be drawn into a correspondence with the banished family. We have seen also by what cruel sufferings of body and mind he expiated his fault. Tortured by remorse, and by disease the effect of remorse, he had quitted the Court; but he had left behind him men whose principles were not less lax than his, and whose hearts were far harder and colder.

Early in 1691, some of these men began to hold secret communication with Saint Germain's. Wicked and base as their conduct was, there was in it nothing surprising. They did after their kind. The times were troubled. A thick cloud was upon the future. The most sagacious and experienced politician could not see with any clearness three months before him. To a man of virtue and honour, indeed, this mattered little. His uncertainty as to what the morrow might bring forth might make him anxious, but could not make him perfidious. Though left in utter darkness as to what concerned his interests, he had the sure guidance of his principles. But, unhappily, men of virtue and honour were not numerous among the courtiers of that age. Whitehall had been, during thirty years, a seminary of every public and private vice, and swarmed with lowminded, doubledealing, selfseeking politicians. These politicians now acted as it was natural that men profoundly immoral should act at a crisis of which none could predict the issue. Some of them might have a slight predilection for William; others a slight predilection for James; but it was not by any such predilection that the conduct of any of the breed was guided. If it had seemed certain that William would stand, they would all have been for William. If it had seemed certain that James would be restored, they would all have been for James. But what was to be done when the chances appeared to be almost exactly balanced? There were honest men of one party who would have answered, To stand by the true King and the true Church, and, if necessary, to die for them like Laud. There were

honest men of the other party who would have answered, To stand by the liberties of England and the Protestant religion, and, if necessary, to die for them like Sidney. But such consistency was unintelligible to many of the noble and the powerful. Their object was to be safe in every event. They therefore openly took the oath of allegiance to one King, and secretly plighted their word to the other. They were indefatigable in obtaining commissions, patents of peerage, pensions, grants of crown land, under the great seal of William; and they had in their secret drawers promises of pardon in the handwriting of James.

Among those who were guilty of this wickedness three men stand preeminent, Russell, Godolphin and Marlborough. No three men could be, in head and heart, more unlike to one another; and the peculiar qualities of each gave a peculiar character to his villany. The treason of Russell is to be attributed partly to fractiousness; the treason of Godolphin is to be attributed altogether to timidity; the treason of Marlborough was the treason of a man of great genius and boundless ambition.

It may be thought strange that Russell should have been out of humour. He had just accepted the command of the united naval forces of England and Holland with the rank of Admiral of the Fleet. He was Treasurer of the Navy. He had a pension of three thousand pounds a year. Crown property near Charing Cross, to the value of eighteen thousand pounds, had been bestowed on him. His indirect gains must have been immense. But he was still dissatisfied. In truth, with undaunted courage, with considerable

talents both for war and for administration, and with a certain public spirit, which showed itself by glimpses even in the very worst parts of his life, he was emphatically a bad man, insolent, malignant, greedy, faithless. He conceived that the great services which he had performed at the time of the Revolution had not been adequately rewarded. Every thing that was given to others seemed to him to be pillaged from himself. A letter is still extant which he wrote to William about this time. It is made up of boasts, reproaches and sneers. The Admiral, with ironical professions of humility and loyalty, begins by asking permission to put his wrongs on paper, because his bashfulness would not suffer him to explain himself by word of mouth. His grievances were intolerable. Other people got grants of royal domains; but he could get scarcely any thing. Other people could provide for their dependants; but his recommendations were uniformly disregarded. The income which he derived from the royal favour might seem large; but he had poor relations; and the government, instead of doing its duty by them, had most unhandsomely left them to his care. He had a sister who ought to have a pension; for, without one, she could not give portions to her daughters. He had a brother who, for want of a place, had been reduced to the melancholy necessity of marrying an old woman for her money. Russell proceeded to complain bitterly that the Whigs were neglected, that the Revolution had aggrandised and enriched men who had made the greatest efforts to avert it. And there is reason to believe that this complaint

came from his heart. For, next to his own interests, those of his party were dear to him; and, even when he was most inclined to become a Jacobite, he never had the smallest disposition to become a Tory. In the temper which this letter indicates, he readily listened to the suggestions of David Lloyd, one of the ablest and most active emissaries who at this time were constantly plying between France and England. Lloyd conveyed to James assurances that Russell would, when a favourable opportunity should present itself, try to effect by means of the fleet what Monk had effected in the preceding generation by means of the army. [63](#) To what extent these assurances were sincere was a question about which men who knew Russell well, and who were minutely informed as to his conduct, were in doubt. It seems probable that, during many months, he did not know his own mind. His interest was to stand well, as long as possible, with both Kings. His irritable and imperious nature was constantly impelling him to quarrel with both. His spleen was excited one week by a dry answer from William, and the next week by an absurd proclamation from James. Fortunately the most important day of his life, the day from which all his subsequent years took their colour, found him out of temper with the banished King.

Godolphin had not, and did not pretend to have, any cause of complaint against the government which he served. He was First Commissioner of the Treasury. He had been protected, trusted, caressed. Indeed the favour shown to him had excited many murmurs. Was it fitting, the Whigs had indignantly asked,

that a man who had been high in office through the whole of the late reign, who had promised to vote for the Indulgence, who had sate in the Privy Council with a Jesuit, who had sate at the Board of Treasury with two Papists, who had attended an idolatress to her altar, should be among the chief ministers of a Prince whose title to the throne was derived from the Declaration of Rights? But on William this clamour had produced no effect; and none of his English servants seems to have had at this time a larger share of his confidence than Godolphin.

Nevertheless, the Jacobites did not despair. One of the most zealous among them, a gentleman named Bulkeley, who had formerly been on terms of intimacy with Godolphin, undertook to see what could be done. He called at the Treasury, and tried to draw the First Lord into political talk. This was no easy matter; for Godolphin was not a man to put himself lightly into the power of others. His reserve was proverbial; and he was especially renowned for the dexterity with which he, through life, turned conversation away from matters of state to a main of cocks or the pedigree of a racehorse. The visit ended without his uttering a word indicating that he remembered the existence of King James.

Bulkeley, however, was not to be so repulsed. He came again, and introduced the subject which was nearest his heart. Godolphin then asked after his old master and mistress in the mournful tone of a man who despaired of ever being reconciled to them. Bulkeley assured him that King James was ready to

forgive all the past. "May I tell His Majesty that you will try to deserve his favour?" At this Godolphin rose, said something about the trammels of office and his wish to be released from them, and put an end to the interview.

Bulkeley soon made a third attempt. By this time Godolphin had learned some things which shook his confidence in the stability of the government which he served. He began to think, as he would himself have expressed it, that he had betted too deep on the Revolution, and that it was time to hedge. Evasions would no longer serve his turn. It was necessary to speak out. He spoke out, and declared himself a devoted servant of King James. "I shall take an early opportunity of resigning my place. But, till then, I am under a tie. I must not betray my trust." To enhance the value of the sacrifice which he proposed to make, he produced a most friendly and confidential letter which he had lately received from William. "You see how entirely the Prince of Orange trusts me. He tells me that he cannot do without me, and that there is no Englishman for whom he has so great a kindness; but all this weighs nothing with me in comparison of my duty to my lawful King."

If the First Lord of the Treasury really had scruples about betraying his trust, those scruples were soon so effectually removed that he very complacently continued, during six years, to eat the bread of one master, while secretly sending professions of attachment and promises of service to another.

The truth is that Godolphin was under the influence of a

mind far more powerful and far more depraved than his own. His perplexities had been imparted to Marlborough, to whom he had long been bound by such friendship as two very unprincipled men are capable of feeling for each other, and to whom he was afterwards bound by close domestic ties.

Marlborough was in a very different situation from that of William's other servants. Lloyd might make overtures to Russell, and Bulkeley to Godolphin. But all the agents of the banished Court stood aloof from the traitor of Salisbury. That shameful night seemed to have for ever separated the perjured deserter from the Prince whom he had ruined. James had, even in the last extremity, when his army was in full retreat, when his whole kingdom had risen against him, declared that he would never pardon Churchill, never, never. By all the Jacobites the name of Churchill was held in peculiar abhorrence; and, in the prose and verse which came forth daily from their secret presses, a precedence in infamy, among all the many traitors of the age, was assigned to him. In the order of things which had sprung from the Revolution, he was one of the great men of England, high in the state, high in the army. He had been created an Earl. He had a large share in the military administration. The emoluments, direct and indirect, of the places and commands which he held under the Crown were believed at the Dutch Embassy to amount to twelve thousand pounds a year. In the event of a counterrevolution it seemed that he had nothing in prospect but a garret in Holland, or a scaffold on Tower Hill. It

might therefore have been expected that he would serve his new master with fidelity, not indeed with the fidelity of Nottingham, which was the fidelity of conscientiousness, not with the fidelity of Portland, which was the fidelity of affection, but with the not less stubborn fidelity of despair.

Those who thought thus knew but little of Marlborough. Confident in his own powers of deception, he resolved, since the Jacobite agents would not seek him, to seek them. He therefore sent to beg an interview with Colonel Edward Sackville.

Sackville was astonished and not much pleased by the message. He was a sturdy Cavalier of the old school. He had been persecuted in the days of the Popish plot for manfully saying what he thought, and what every body now thinks, about Oates and Bedloe. [64](#) Since the Revolution he had put his neck in peril for King James, had been chased by officers with warrants, and had been designated as a traitor in a proclamation to which Marlborough himself had been a party. [65](#) It was not without reluctance that the stanch royalist crossed the hated threshold of the deserter. He was repaid for his effort by the edifying spectacle of such an agony of repentance as he had never before seen. "Will you," said Marlborough, "be my intercessor with the King? Will you tell him what I suffer? My crimes now appear to me in their true light; and I shrink with horror from the contemplation. The thought of them is with me day and night. I sit down to table; but I cannot eat. I throw myself on my bed; but I cannot sleep. I am ready to sacrifice every thing, to brave every thing,

to bring utter ruin on my fortunes, if only I may be free from the misery of a wounded spirit." If appearances could be trusted, this great offender was as true a penitent as David or as Peter. Sackville reported to his friends what had passed. They could not but acknowledge that, if the arch traitor, who had hitherto opposed to conscience and to public opinion the same cool and placid hardihood which distinguished him on fields of battle, had really begun to feel remorse, it would be absurd to reject, on account of his unworthiness, the inestimable services which it was in his power to render to the good cause. He sate in the interior council; he held high command in the army; he had been recently entrusted, and would doubtless again be entrusted, with the direction of important military operations. It was true that no man had incurred equal guilt; but it was true also that no man had it in his power to make equal reparation. If he was sincere, he might doubtless earn the pardon which he so much desired. But was he sincere? Had he not been just as loud in professions of loyalty on the very eve of his crime? It was necessary to put him to the test. Several tests were applied by Sackville and Lloyd. Marlborough was required to furnish full information touching the strength and the distribution of all the divisions of the English army; and he complied. He was required to disclose the whole plan of the approaching campaign; and he did so. The Jacobite leaders watched carefully for inaccuracies in his reports, but could find none. It was thought a still stronger proof of his fidelity that he gave valuable intelligence about what

was doing in the office of the Secretary of State. A deposition had been sworn against one zealous royalist. A warrant was preparing against another. These intimations saved several of the malecontents from imprisonment, if not from the gallows; and it was impossible for them not to feel some relenting towards the awakened sinner to whom they owed so much.

He however, in his secret conversations with his new allies, laid no claim to merit. He did not, he said, ask for confidence. How could he, after the villanies which he had committed against the best of Kings, hope ever to be trusted again? It was enough for a wretch like him to be permitted to make, at the cost of his life, some poor atonement to the gracious master, whom he had indeed basely injured, but whom he had never ceased to love. It was not improbable that, in the summer, he might command the English forces in Flanders. Was it wished that he should bring them over in a body to the French camp? If such were the royal pleasure, he would undertake that the thing should be done. But on the whole he thought that it would be better to wait till the next session of Parliament. And then he hinted at a plan which he afterwards more fully matured, for expelling the usurper by means of the English legislature and the English army. In the meantime he hoped that James would command Godolphin not to quit the Treasury. A private man could do little for the good cause. One who was the director of the national finances, and the depository of the gravest secrets of state, might render inestimable services.

Marlborough's pretended repentance imposed so completely on those who managed the affairs of James in London that they sent Lloyd to France, with the cheering intelligence that the most depraved of all rebels had been wonderfully transformed into a loyal subject. The tidings filled James with delight and hope. Had he been wise, they would have excited in him only aversion and distrust. It was absurd to imagine that a man really heartbroken by remorse and shame for one act of perfidy would determine to lighten his conscience by committing a second act of perfidy as odious and as disgraceful as the first. The promised atonement was so wicked and base that it never could be made by any man sincerely desirous to atone for past wickedness and baseness. The truth was that, when Marlborough told the Jacobites that his sense of guilt prevented him from swallowing his food by day and taking his rest at night, he was laughing at them. The loss of half a guinea would have done more to spoil his appetite and to disturb his slumbers than all the terrors of an evil conscience. What his offers really proved was that his former crime had sprung, not from an ill regulated zeal for the interests of his country and his religion, but from a deep and incurable moral disease which had infected the whole man. James, however, partly from dulness and partly from selfishness, could never see any immorality in any action by which he was benefited. To conspire against him, to betray him, to break an oath of allegiance sworn to him, were crimes for which no punishment here or hereafter could be too severe. But to murder his enemies, to break faith with his enemies

was not only innocent but laudable. The desertion at Salisbury had been the worst of crimes; for it had ruined him. A similar desertion in Flanders would be an honourable exploit; for it might restore him.

The penitent was informed by his Jacobite friends that he was forgiven. The news was most welcome; but something more was necessary to restore his lost peace of mind. Might he hope to have, in the royal handwriting, two lines containing a promise of pardon? It was not, of course, for his own sake that he asked this. But he was confident that, with such a document in his hands, he could bring back to the right path some persons of great note who adhered to the usurper, only because they imagined that they had no mercy to expect from the legitimate King. They would return to their duty as soon as they saw that even the worst of all criminals had, on his repentance, been generously forgiven. The promise was written, sent, and carefully treasured up. Marlborough had now attained one object, an object which was common to him with Russell and Godolphin. But he had other objects which neither Russell nor Godolphin had ever contemplated. There is, as we shall hereafter see, strong reason to believe that this wise, brave, wicked man, was meditating a plan worthy of his fertile intellect and daring spirit, and not less worthy of his deeply corrupted heart, a plan which, if it had not been frustrated by strange means, would have ruined William without benefiting James, and would have made the successful traitor master of England and arbiter of Europe.

Thus things stood, when, in May 1691, William, after a short and busy sojourn in England, set out again for the Continent, where the regular campaign was about to open. He took with him Marlborough, whose abilities he justly appreciated, and of whose recent negotiations with Saint Germain's he had not the faintest suspicion. At the Hague several important military and political consultations were held; and, on every occasion, the superiority of the accomplished Englishman was felt by the most distinguished soldiers and statesmen of the United Provinces. Heinsius, long after, used to relate a conversation which took place at this time between William and the Prince of Vaudemont, one of the ablest commanders in the Dutch service. Vaudemont spoke well of several English officers, and among them of Talmash and Mackay, but pronounced Marlborough superior beyond comparison to the rest. "He has every quality of a general. His very look shows it. He cannot fail to achieve something great." "I really believe, cousin," answered the King, "that my Lord will make good every thing that you have said of him."

There was still a short interval before the commencement of military operations. William passed that interval in his beloved park at Loo. Marlborough spent two or three days there, and was then despatched to Flanders with orders to collect all the English forces, to form a camp in the neighbourhood of Brussels, and to have every thing in readiness for the King's arrival.

And now Marlborough had an opportunity of proving the sincerity of those professions by which he had obtained from

a heart, well described by himself as harder than a marble chimneypiece, the pardon of an offence such as might have moved even a gentle nature to deadly resentment. He received from Saint Germain a message claiming the instant performance of his promise to desert at the head of his troops. He was told that this was the greatest service which he could render to the Crown. His word was pledged; and the gracious master who had forgiven all past errors confidently expected that it would be redeemed. The hypocrite evaded the demand with characteristic dexterity. In the most respectful and affectionate language he excused himself for not immediately obeying the royal commands. The promise which he was required to fulfil had not been quite correctly understood. There had been some misapprehension on the part of the messengers. To carry over a regiment or two would do more harm than good. To carry over a whole army was a business which would require much time and management. 66

While James was murmuring over these apologies, and wishing that he had not been quite so placable, William arrived at the head quarters of the allied forces, and took the chief command. The military operations in Flanders recommenced early in June and terminated at the close of September. No important action took place. The two armies marched and countermarched, drew near and receded. During some time they confronted each other with less than a league between them. But neither William nor Luxemburg would fight except at an advantage; and neither gave the other any advantage. Languid as the campaign was, it

is on one account remarkable. During more than a century our country had sent no great force to make war by land out of the British isles. Our aristocracy had therefore long ceased to be a military class. The nobles of France, of Germany, of Holland, were generally soldiers. It would probably have been difficult to find in the brilliant circle which surrounded Lewis at Versailles a single Marquess or Viscount of forty who had not been at some battle or siege. But the immense majority of our peers, baronets and opulent esquires had never served except in the trainbands, and had never borne a part in any military exploit more serious than that of putting down a riot or of keeping a street clear for a procession. The generation which had fought at Edgehill and Lansdowne had nearly passed away. The wars of Charles the Second had been almost entirely maritime. During his reign therefore the sea service had been decidedly more the mode than the land service; and, repeatedly, when our fleet sailed to encounter the Dutch, such multitudes of men of fashion had gone on board that the parks and the theatres had been left desolate. In 1691 at length, for the first time since Henry the Eighth laid siege to Boulogne, an English army appeared on the Continent under the command of an English king. A camp, which was also a court, was irresistibly attractive to many young patricians full of natural intrepidity, and ambitious of the favour which men of distinguished bravery have always found in the eyes of women. To volunteer for Flanders became the rage among the fine gentlemen who combed their flowing wigs and exchanged

their richly perfumed snuffs at the Saint James's Coffeehouse. William's headquarters were enlivened by a crowd of splendid equipages and by a rapid succession of sumptuous banquets. For among the high born and high spirited youths who repaired to his standard were some who, though quite willing to face a battery, were not at all disposed to deny themselves the luxuries with which they had been surrounded in Soho Square. In a few months Shadwell brought these valiant fops and epicures on the stage. The town was made merry with the character of a courageous but prodigal and effeminate coxcomb, who is impatient to cross swords with the best men in the French household troops, but who is much dejected by learning that he may find it difficult to have his champagne iced daily during the summer. He carries with him cooks, confectioners and laundresses, a waggonload of plate, a wardrobe of laced and embroidered suits, and much rich tent furniture, of which the patterns have been chosen by a committee of fine ladies. [67](#)

While the hostile armies watched each other in Flanders, hostilities were carried on with somewhat more vigour in other parts of Europe. The French gained some advantages in Catalonia and in Piedmont. Their Turkish allies, who in the east menaced the dominions of the Emperor, were defeated by Lewis of Baden in a great battle. But nowhere were the events of the summer so important as in Ireland.

From October 1690 till May 1691, no military operation on a large scale was attempted in that kingdom. The area of the island

was, during the winter and spring, not unequally divided between the contending races. The whole of Ulster, the greater part of Leinster and about one third of Munster had submitted to the English. The whole of Connaught, the greater part of Munster, and two or three counties of Leinster were held by the Irish. The tortuous boundary formed by William's garrisons ran in a north eastern direction from the bay of Castlehaven to Mallow, and then, inclining still further eastward, proceeded to Cashel. From Cashel the line went to Mullingar, from Mullingar to Longford, and from Longford to Cavan, skirted Lough Erne on the west, and met the ocean again at Ballyshannon. [68](#)

On the English side of this pale there was a rude and imperfect order. Two Lords Justices, Coningsby and Porter, assisted by a Privy Council, represented King William at Dublin Castle. Judges, Sheriffs and Justices of the Peace had been appointed; and assizes were, after a long interval, held in several county towns. The colonists had meanwhile been formed into a strong militia, under the command of officers who had commissions from the Crown. The trainbands of the capital consisted of two thousand five hundred foot, two troops of horse and two troops of dragoons, all Protestants and all well armed and clad. [69](#) On the fourth of November, the anniversary of William's birth, and on the fifth, the anniversary of his landing at Torbay, the whole of this force appeared in all the pomp of war. The vanquished and disarmed natives assisted, with suppressed grief and anger, at the triumph of the caste which they had, five months before,

oppressed and plundered with impunity. The Lords Justices went in state to Saint Patrick's Cathedral; bells were rung; bonfires were lighted; hogsheds of ale and claret were set abroad in the streets; fireworks were exhibited on College Green; a great company of nobles and public functionaries feasted at the Castle, and, as the second course came up, the trumpets sounded, and Ulster King at Arms proclaimed, in Latin, French and English, William and Mary, by the grace of God, King and Queen of Great Britain, France, and Ireland. [70](#)

Within the territory where the Saxon race was dominant, trade and industry had already begun to revive. The brazen counters which bore the image and superscription of James gave place to silver. The fugitives who had taken refuge in England came back in multitudes; and, by their intelligence, diligence and thrift, the devastation caused by two years of confusion and robbery was soon in part repaired. Merchantmen heavily laden were constantly passing and repassing Saint George's Channel. The receipts of the custom houses on the eastern coast, from Cork to Londonderry, amounted in six months to sixty-seven thousand five hundred pounds, a sum such as would have been thought extraordinary even in the most prosperous times. [71](#)

The Irish who remained within the English pale were, one and all, hostile to the English domination. They were therefore subjected to a rigorous system of police, the natural though lamentable effect of extreme danger and extreme provocation. A Papist was not permitted to have a sword or a gun. He was

not permitted to go more than three miles out of his parish except to the market town on the market day. Lest he should give information or assistance to his brethren who occupied the western half of the island, he was forbidden to live within ten miles of the frontier. Lest he should turn his house into a place of resort for malecontents, he was forbidden to sell liquor by retail. One proclamation announced that, if the property of any Protestant should be injured by marauders, his loss should be made good at the expense of his Popish neighbours. Another gave notice that, if any Papist who had not been at least three months domiciled in Dublin should be found there, he should be treated as a spy. Not more than five Papists were to assemble in the capital or its neighbourhood on any pretext. Without a protection from the government no member of the Church of Rome was safe; and the government would not grant a protection to any member of the Church of Rome who had a son in the Irish army.

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In spite of all precautions and severities, however, the Celt found many opportunities of taking a sly revenge. Houses and barns were frequently burned; soldiers were frequently murdered; and it was scarcely possible to obtain evidence against the malefactors, who had with them the sympathies of the whole population. On such occasions the government sometimes ventured on acts which seemed better suited to a Turkish than to an English administration. One of these acts became a favourite theme of Jacobite pamphleteers, and was

the subject of a serious parliamentary inquiry at Westminster. Six musketeers were found butchered only a few miles from Dublin. The inhabitants of the village where the crime had been committed, men, women, and children, were driven like sheep into the Castle, where the Privy Council was sitting. The heart of one of the assassins, named Gafney, failed him. He consented to be a witness, was examined by the Board, acknowledged his guilt, and named some of his accomplices. He was then removed in custody; but a priest obtained access to him during a few minutes. What passed during those few minutes appeared when he was a second time brought before the Council. He had the effrontery to deny that he had owned any thing or accused any body. His hearers, several of whom had taken down his confession in writing, were enraged at his impudence. The Lords justices broke out; "You are a rogue; You are a villain; You shall be hanged; Where is the Provost Marshal?" The Provost Marshal came. "Take that man," said Coningsby, pointing to Gafney; "take that man, and hang him." There was no gallows ready; but the carriage of a gun served the purpose; and the prisoner was instantly tied up without a trial, without even a written order for the execution; and this though the courts of law were sitting at the distance of only a few hundred yards. The English House of Commons, some years later, after a long discussion, resolved, without a division, that the order for the execution of Gafney was arbitrary and illegal, but that Coningsby's fault was so much extenuated by the circumstances in which he was placed that it

was not a proper subject for impeachment. [73](#)

It was not only by the implacable hostility of the Irish that the Saxon of the pale was at this time harassed. His allies caused him almost as much annoyance as his helots. The help of troops from abroad was indeed necessary to him; but it was dearly bought. Even William, in whom the whole civil and military authority was concentrated, had found it difficult to maintain discipline in an army collected from many lands, and composed in great part of mercenaries accustomed to live at free quarters. The powers which had been united in him were now divided and subdivided. The two Lords justices considered the civil administration as their province, and left the army to the management of Ginkell, who was General in Chief. Ginkell kept excellent order among the auxiliaries from Holland, who were under his more immediate command. But his authority over the English and the Danes was less entire; and unfortunately their pay was, during part of the winter, in arrear. They indemnified themselves by excesses and exactions for the want of that which was their due; and it was hardly possible to punish men with severity for not choosing to starve with arms in their hands. At length in the spring large supplies of money and stores arrived; arrears were paid up; rations were plentiful; and a more rigid discipline was enforced. But too many traces of the bad habits which the soldiers had contracted were discernible till the close of the war. [74](#)

In that part of Ireland, meanwhile, which still acknowledged

James as King, there could hardly be said to be any law, any property, or any government. The Roman Catholics of Ulster and Leinster had fled westward by tens of thousands, driving before them a large part of the cattle which had escaped the havoc of two terrible years. The influx of food into the Celtic region, however, was far from keeping pace with the influx of consumers. The necessaries of life were scarce. Conveniences to which every plain farmer and burgess in England was accustomed could hardly be procured by nobles and generals. No coin was to be seen except lumps of base metal which were called crowns and shillings. Nominal prices were enormously high. A quart of ale cost two and sixpence, a quart of brandy three pounds. The only towns of any note on the western coast were Limerick and Galway; and the oppression which the shopkeepers of those towns underwent was such that many of them stole away with the remains of their stocks to the English territory, where a Papist, though he had to endure much restraint and much humiliation, was allowed to put his own price on his goods, and received that price in silver. Those traders who remained within the unhappy region were ruined. Every warehouse that contained any valuable property was broken open by ruffians who pretended that they were commissioned to procure stores for the public service; and the owner received, in return for bales of cloth and hogsheads of sugar, some fragments of old kettles and saucepans, which would not in London or Paris have been taken by a beggar.

As soon as a merchant ship arrived in the bay of Galway or

in the Shannon, she was boarded by these robbers. The cargo was carried away; and the proprietor was forced to content himself with such a quantity of cowhides, of wool and of tallow as the gang which had plundered him chose to give him. The consequence was that, while foreign commodities were pouring fast into the harbours of Londonderry, Carrickfergus, Dublin, Waterford and Cork, every mariner avoided Limerick and Galway as nests of pirates. [75](#)

The distinction between the Irish foot soldier and the Irish Rapparee had never been very strongly marked. It now disappeared. Great part of the army was turned loose to live by marauding. An incessant predatory war raged along the line which separated the domain of William from that of James. Every day companies of freebooters, sometimes wrapped in twisted straw which served the purpose of armour, stole into the English territory, burned, sacked, pillaged, and hastened back to their own ground. To guard against these incursions was not easy; for the peasantry of the plundered country had a strong fellow feeling with the plunderers. To empty the granary, to set fire to the dwelling, to drive away the cows, of a heretic was regarded by every squalid inhabitant of a mud cabin as a good work. A troop engaged in such a work might confidently expect to fall in, notwithstanding all the proclamations of the Lords justices, with some friend who would indicate the richest booty, the shortest road, and the safest hiding place. The English complained that it was no easy matter to catch a Rapparee. Sometimes, when he

saw danger approaching, he lay down in the long grass of the bog; and then it was as difficult to find him as to find a hare sitting. Sometimes he sprang into a stream, and lay there, like an otter, with only his mouth and nostrils above the water. Nay, a whole gang of banditti would, in the twinkling of an eye, transform itself into a crowd of harmless labourers. Every man took his gun to pieces, hid the lock in his clothes, stuck a cork in the muzzle, stopped the touch hole with a quill, and threw the weapon into the next pond. Nothing was to be seen but a train of poor rustics who had not so much as a cudgel among them, and whose humble look and crouching walk seemed to show that their spirit was thoroughly broken to slavery. When the peril was over, when the signal was given, every man flew to the place where he had hid his arms; and soon the robbers were in full march towards some Protestant mansion. One band penetrated to Clonmel, another to the vicinity of Maryborough; a third made its den in a woody islet of firm ground, surrounded by the vast bog of Allen, harried the county of Wicklow, and alarmed even the suburbs of Dublin. Such expeditions indeed were not always successful. Sometimes the plunderers fell in with parties of militia or with detachments from the English garrisons, in situations in which disguise, flight and resistance were alike impossible. When this happened every kerne who was taken was hanged, without any ceremony, on the nearest tree. 76

At the head quarters of the Irish army there was, during the winter, no authority capable of exacting obedience even

within a circle of a mile. Tyrconnel was absent at the Court of France. He had left the supreme government in the hands of a Council of Regency composed of twelve persons. The nominal command of the army he had confided to Berwick; but Berwick, though, as was afterwards proved, a man of no common courage and capacity, was young and inexperienced. His powers were unsuspected by the world and by himself; [77](#) and he submitted without reluctance to the tutelage of a Council of War nominated by the Lord Lieutenant. Neither the Council of Regency nor the Council of War was popular at Limerick. The Irish complained that men who were not Irish had been entrusted with a large share in the administration. The cry was loudest against an officer named Thomas Maxwell. For it was certain that he was a Scotchman; it was doubtful whether he was a Roman Catholic; and he had not concealed the dislike which he felt for that Celtic Parliament which had repealed the Act of Settlement and passed the Act of Attainder. [78](#) The discontent, fomented by the arts of intriguers, among whom the cunning and unprincipled Henry Luttrell seems to have been the most active, soon broke forth into open rebellion. A great meeting was held. Many officers of the army, some peers, some lawyers of high note and some prelates of the Roman Catholic Church were present. It was resolved that the government set up by the Lord Lieutenant was unknown to the constitution. Ireland, it was said, could be legally governed, in the absence of the King, only by a Lord Lieutenant, by a Lord Deputy or by Lords Justices. The

King was absent. The Lord Lieutenant was absent. There was no Lord Deputy. There were no Lords Justices. The Act by which Tyrconnel had delegated his authority to a junto composed of his creatures was a mere nullity. The nation was therefore left without any legitimate chief, and might, without violating the allegiance due to the Crown, make temporary provision for its own safety. A deputation was sent to inform Berwick that he had assumed a power to which he had no right, but that nevertheless the army and people of Ireland would willingly acknowledge him as their head if he would consent to govern by the advice of a council truly Irish. Berwick indignantly expressed his wonder that military men should presume to meet and deliberate without the permission of their general. They answered that there was no general, and that, if His Grace did not choose to undertake the administration on the terms proposed, another leader would easily be found. Berwick very reluctantly yielded, and continued to be a puppet in a new set of hands. [79](#)

Those who had effected this revolution thought it prudent to send a deputation to France for the purpose of vindicating their proceedings. Of the deputation the Roman Catholic Bishop of Cork and the two Luttrells were members. In the ship which conveyed them from Limerick to Brest they found a fellow passenger whose presence was by no means agreeable to them, their enemy, Maxwell. They suspected, and not without reason, that he was going, like them, to Saint Germain, but on a very different errand. The truth was that Berwick had sent Maxwell to

watch their motions and to traverse their designs. Henry Luttrell, the least scrupulous of men, proposed to settle the matter at once by tossing the Scotchman into the sea. But the Bishop, who was a man of conscience, and Simon Luttrell, who was a man of honour, objected to this expedient. [80](#)

Meanwhile at Limerick the supreme power was in abeyance. Berwick, finding that he had no real authority, altogether neglected business, and gave himself up to such pleasures as that dreary place of banishment afforded. There was among the Irish chiefs no man of sufficient weight and ability to control the rest. Sarsfield for a time took the lead. But Sarsfield, though eminently brave and active in the field, was little skilled in the administration of war, and still less skilled in civil business. Those who were most desirous to support his authority were forced to own that his nature was too unsuspecting and indulgent for a post in which it was hardly possible to be too distrustful or too severe. He believed whatever was told him. He signed whatever was set before him. The commissaries, encouraged by his lenity, robbed and embezzled more shamelessly than ever. They sallied forth daily, guarded by pikes and firelocks, to seize, nominally for the public service, but really for themselves, wool, linen, leather, tallow, domestic utensils, instruments of husbandry, searched every pantry, every wardrobe, every cellar, and even laid sacrilegious hands on the property of priests and prelates. [81](#)

Early in the spring the government, if it is to be so called,

of which Berwick was the ostensible head, was dissolved by the return of Tyrconnel. The Luttrells had, in the name of their countrymen, implored James not to subject so loyal a people to so odious and incapable a viceroy. Tyrconnel, they said, was old; he was infirm; he needed much sleep; he knew nothing of war; he was dilatory; he was partial; he was rapacious; he was distrusted and hated by the whole nation. The Irish, deserted by him, had made a gallant stand, and had compelled the victorious army of the Prince of Orange to retreat. They hoped soon to take the field again, thirty thousand strong; and they adjured their King to send them some captain worthy to command such a force. Tyrconnel and Maxwell, on the other hand, represented the delegates as mutineers, demagogues, traitors, and pressed James to send Henry Luttrell to keep Mountjoy company in the Bastille. James, bewildered by these criminations and recriminations, hesitated long, and at last, with characteristic wisdom, relieved himself from trouble by giving all the quarrellers fair words and by sending them all back to have their fight out in Ireland. Berwick was at the same time recalled to France. [82](#)

Tyrconnel was received at Limerick, even by his enemies, with decent respect. Much as they hated him, they could not question the validity of his commission; and, though they still maintained that they had been perfectly justified in annulling, during his absence, the unconstitutional arrangements which he had made, they acknowledged that, when he was present, he was their lawful governor. He was not altogether unprovided with the

means of conciliating them. He brought many gracious messages and promises, a patent of peerage for Sarsfield, some money which was not of brass, and some clothing, which was even more acceptable than money. The new garments were not indeed very fine. But even the generals had long been out at elbows; and there were few of the common men whose habiliments would have been thought sufficient to dress a scarecrow in a more prosperous country. Now, at length, for the first time in many months, every private soldier could boast of a pair of breeches and a pair of brogues. The Lord Lieutenant had also been authorised to announce that he should soon be followed by several ships, laden with provisions and military stores. This announcement was most welcome to the troops, who had long been without bread, and who had nothing stronger than water to drink. [83](#)

During some weeks the supplies were impatiently expected. At last, Tyrconnel was forced to shut himself up; for, whenever he appeared in public, the soldiers ran after him clamouring for food. Even the beef and mutton, which, half raw, half burned, without vegetables, without salt, had hitherto supported the army, had become scarce; and the common men were on rations of horseflesh when the promised sails were seen in the mouth of the Shannon. [84](#)

A distinguished French general, named Saint Ruth, was on board with his staff. He brought a commission which appointed him commander in chief of the Irish army. The commission did not expressly declare that he was to be independent of

the viceregal authority; but he had been assured by James that Tyrconnel should have secret instructions not to intermeddle in the conduct of the war. Saint Ruth was assisted by another general officer named D'Usson. The French ships brought some arms, some ammunition, and a plentiful supply of corn and flour. The spirits of the Irish rose; and the Te Deum was chaunted with fervent devotion in the cathedral of Limerick. [85](#)

Tyrconnel had made no preparations for the approaching campaign. But Saint Ruth, as soon as he had landed, exerted himself strenuously to redeem the time which had been lost. He was a man of courage, activity and resolution, but of a harsh and imperious nature. In his own country he was celebrated as the most merciless persecutor that had ever dragooned the Huguenots to mass. It was asserted by English Whigs that he was known in France by the nickname of the Hangman; that, at Rome, the very cardinals had shown their abhorrence of his cruelty; and that even Queen Christina, who had little right to be squeamish about bloodshed, had turned away from him with loathing. He had recently held a command in Savoy. The Irish regiments in the French service had formed part of his army, and had behaved extremely well. It was therefore supposed that he had a peculiar talent for managing Irish troops. But there was a wide difference between the well clad, well armed and well drilled Irish, with whom he was familiar, and the ragged marauders whom he found swarming in the alleys of Limerick. Accustomed to the splendour and the discipline of French camps

and garrisons, he was disgusted by finding that, in the country to which he had been sent, a regiment of infantry meant a mob of people as naked, as dirty and as disorderly as the beggars, whom he had been accustomed to see on the Continent besieging the door of a monastery or pursuing a diligence up him. With ill-concealed contempt, however, he addressed himself vigorously to the task of disciplining these strange soldiers, and was day and night in the saddle, galloping from post to post, from Limerick to Athlone, from Athlone to the northern extremity of Lough Rea, and from Lough Rea back to Limerick. [86](#)

It was indeed necessary that he should bestir himself; for, a few days after his arrival, he learned that, on the other side of the Pale, all was ready for action. The greater part of the English force was collected, before the close of May, in the neighbourhood of Mullingar. Ginkell commanded in chief. He had under him the two best officers, after Marlborough, of whom our island could then boast, Talmash and Mackay. The Marquess of Ruvigny, the hereditary chief of the refugees, and elder brother of the brave Caillemot, who had fallen at the Boyne, had joined the army with the rank of major general. The Lord Justice Coningsby, though not by profession a soldier, came down from Dublin, to animate the zeal of the troops. The appearance of the camp showed that the money voted by the English Parliament had not been spared. The uniforms were new; the ranks were one blaze of scarlet; and the train of artillery was such as had never before been seen in Ireland. [87](#)

On the sixth of June Ginkell moved his head quarters from Mullingar. On the seventh he reached Ballymore. At Ballymore, on a peninsula almost surrounded by something between a swamp and a lake, stood an ancient fortress, which had recently been fortified under Sarsfield's direction, and which was defended by above a thousand men. The English guns were instantly planted. In a few hours the besiegers had the satisfaction of seeing the besieged running like rabbits from one shelter to another. The governor, who had at first held high language, begged piteously for quarter, and obtained it. The whole garrison were marched off to Dublin. Only eight of the conquerors had fallen. [88](#)

Ginkell passed some days in reconstructing the defences of Ballymore. This work had scarcely been performed when he was joined by the Danish auxiliaries under the command of the Duke of Wirtemberg. The whole army then moved westward, and, on the nineteenth of June, appeared before the walls of Athlone. [89](#)

Athlone was perhaps, in a military point of view, the most important place in the island. Rosen, who understood war well, had always maintained that it was there that the Irishry would, with most advantage, make a stand against the Englishry. [90](#) The town, which was surrounded by ramparts of earth, lay partly in Leinster and partly in Connaught. The English quarter, which was in Leinster, had once consisted of new and handsome houses, but had been burned by the Irish some months before, and now lay in heaps of ruin. The Celtic quarter, which was in Connaught,

was old and meanly built. [91](#) The Shannon, which is the boundary of the two provinces, rushed through Athlone in a deep and rapid stream, and turned two large mills which rose on the arches of a stone bridge. Above the bridge, on the Connaught side, a castle, built, it was said, by King John, towered to the height of seventy feet, and extended two hundred feet along the river. Fifty or sixty yards below the bridge was a narrow ford. [92](#)

During the night of the nineteenth the English placed their cannon. On the morning of the twentieth the firing began. At five in the afternoon an assault was made. A brave French refugee with a grenade in his hand was the first to climb the breach, and fell, cheering his countrymen to the onset with his latest breath. Such were the gallant spirits which the bigotry of Lewis had sent to recruit, in the time of his utmost need, the armies of his deadliest enemies. The example was not lost. The grenades fell thick. The assailants mounted by hundreds. The Irish gave way and ran towards the bridge. There the press was so great that some of the fugitives were crushed to death in the narrow passage, and others were forced over the parapets into the waters which roared among the mill wheels below. In a few hours Ginkell had made himself master of the English quarter of Athlone; and this success had cost him only twenty men killed and forty wounded. [93](#)

But his work was only begun. Between him and the Irish town the Shannon ran fiercely. The bridge was so narrow that a few resolute men might keep it against an army. The mills which

stood on it were strongly guarded; and it was commanded by the guns of the castle. That part of the Connaught shore where the river was fordable was defended by works, which the Lord Lieutenant had, in spite of the murmurs of a powerful party, forced Saint Ruth to entrust to the care of Maxwell. Maxwell had come back from France a more unpopular man than he had been when he went thither. It was rumoured that he had, at Versailles, spoken opprobriously of the Irish nation; and he had, on this account, been, only a few days before, publicly affronted by Sarsfield. [94](#) On the twenty-first of June the English were busied in flinging up batteries along the Leinster bank. On the twenty-second, soon after dawn, the cannonade began. The firing continued all that day and all the following night. When morning broke again, one whole side of the castle had been beaten down; the thatched lanes of the Celtic town lay in ashes; and one of the mills had been burned with sixty soldiers who defended it. [95](#)

Still however the Irish defended the bridge resolutely. During several days there was sharp fighting hand to hand in the strait passage. The assailants gained ground, but gained it inch by inch. The courage of the garrison was sustained by the hope of speedy succour. Saint Ruth had at length completed his preparations; and the tidings that Athlone was in danger had induced him to take the field in haste at the head of an army, superior in number, though inferior in more important elements of military strength, to the army of Ginkell. The French general seems to have thought that the bridge and the ford might easily be defended, till the

autumnal rains and the pestilence which ordinarily accompanied them should compel the enemy to retire. He therefore contented himself with sending successive detachments to reinforce the garrison. The immediate conduct of the defence he entrusted to his second in command, D'Usson, and fixed his own headquarters two or three miles from the town. He expressed his astonishment that so experienced a commander as Ginkell should persist in a hopeless enterprise. "His master ought to hang him for trying to take Athlone; and mine ought to hang me if I lose it." 96

Saint Ruth, however, was by no means at ease. He had found, to his great mortification, that he had not the full authority which the promises made to him at Saint Germain had entitled him to expect. The Lord Lieutenant was in the camp. His bodily and mental infirmities had perceptibly increased within the last few weeks. The slow and uncertain step with which he, who had once been renowned for vigour and agility, now tottered from his easy chair to his couch, was no unapt type of the sluggish and wavering movement of that mind which had once pursued its objects with a vehemence restrained neither by fear nor by pity, neither by conscience nor by shame. Yet, with impaired strength, both physical and intellectual, the broken old man clung pertinaciously to power. If he had received private orders not to meddle with the conduct of the war, he disregarded them. He assumed all the authority of a sovereign, showed himself ostentatiously to the troops as their supreme chief, and affected

to treat Saint Ruth as a lieutenant. Soon the interference of the Viceroy excited the vehement indignation of that powerful party in the army which had long hated him. Many officers signed an instrument by which they declared that they did not consider him as entitled to their obedience in the field. Some of them offered him gross personal insults. He was told to his face that, if he persisted in remaining where he was not wanted, the ropes of his pavilion should be cut. He, on the other hand, sent his emissaries to all the camp fires, and tried to make a party among the common soldiers against the French general. 97

The only thing in which Tyrconnel and Saint Ruth agreed was in dreading and disliking Sarsfield. Not only was he popular with the great body of his countrymen; he was also surrounded by a knot of retainers whose devotion to him resembled the devotion of the Ismailite murderers to the Old Man of the Mountain. It was known that one of these fanatics, a colonel, had used language which, in the mouth of an officer so high in rank, might well cause uneasiness. "The King," this man had said, "is nothing to me. I obey Sarsfield. Let Sarsfield tell me to kill any man in the whole army; and I will do it." Sarsfield was, indeed, too honourable a gentleman to abuse his immense power over the minds of his worshippers. But the Viceroy and the Commander in Chief might not unnaturally be disturbed by the thought that Sarsfield's honour was their only guarantee against mutiny and assassination. The consequence was that, at the crisis of the fate of Ireland, the services of the first of Irish soldiers were not used,

or were used with jealous caution, and that, if he ventured to offer a suggestion, it was received with a sneer or a frown. [98](#)

A great and unexpected disaster put an end to these disputes. On the thirtieth of June Ginkell called a council of war. Forage began to be scarce; and it was absolutely necessary that the besiegers should either force their way across the river or retreat. The difficulty of effecting a passage over the shattered remains of the bridge seemed almost insuperable. It was proposed to try the ford. The Duke of Wirtemberg, Talmash, and Ruvigny gave their voices in favour of this plan; and Ginkell, with some misgivings, consented. [99](#)

It was determined that the attempt should be made that very afternoon. The Irish, fancying that the English were about to retreat, kept guard carelessly. Part of the garrison was idling, part dosing. D'Usson was at table. Saint Ruth was in his tent, writing a letter to his master filled with charges against Tyrconnel. Meanwhile, fifteen hundred grenadiers; each wearing in his hat a green bough, were mustered on the Leinster bank of the Shannon. Many of them doubtless remembered that on that day year they had, at the command of King William, put green boughs in their hats on the banks of the Boyne. Guineas had been liberally scattered among these picked men; but their alacrity was such as gold cannot purchase. Six battalions were in readiness to support the attack. Mackay commanded. He did not approve of the plan; but he executed it as zealously and energetically as if he had himself been the author of it. The Duke of Wirtemberg,

Talmash, and several other gallant officers, to whom no part in the enterprise had been assigned, insisted on serving that day as private volunteers; and their appearance in the ranks excited the fiercest enthusiasm among the soldiers.

It was six o'clock. A peal from the steeple of the church gave the signal. Prince George of Hesse Darmstadt, and Gustavus Hamilton, the brave chief of the Enniskilleners, descended first into the Shannon. Then the grenadiers lifted the Duke of Wirtemberg on their shoulders, and, with a great shout, plunged twenty abreast up to their cravats in water. The stream ran deep and strong; but in a few minutes the head of the column reached dry land. Talmash was the fifth man that set foot on the Connaught shore. The Irish, taken unprepared, fired one confused volley and fled, leaving their commander, Maxwell, a prisoner. The conquerors clambered up the bank over the remains of walls shattered by a cannonade of ten days. Mackay heard his men cursing and swearing as they stumbled among the rubbish. "My lads," cried the stout old Puritan in the midst of the uproar, "you are brave fellows; but do not swear. We have more reason to thank God for the goodness which He has shown us this day than to take His name in vain." The victory was complete. Planks were placed on the broken arches of the bridge and pontoons laid on the river, without any opposition on the part of the terrified garrison. With the loss of twelve men killed and about thirty wounded the English had, in a few minutes, forced their way into Connaught. [100](#)

At the first alarm D'Usson hastened towards the river; but he was met, swept away, trampled down, and almost killed by the torrent of fugitives. He was carried to the camp in such a state that it was necessary to bleed him. "Taken!" cried Saint Ruth, in dismay. "It cannot be. A town taken, and I close by with an army to relieve it!" Cruelly mortified, he struck his tents under cover of the night, and retreated in the direction of Galway. At dawn the English saw far off, from the top of King John's ruined castle, the Irish army moving through the dreary region which separates the Shannon from the Suck. Before noon the rearguard had disappeared. [101](#)

Even before the loss of Athlone the Celtic camp had been distracted by factions. It may easily be supposed, therefore, that, after so great a disaster, nothing was to be heard but crimination and recrimination. The enemies of the Lord Lieutenant were more clamorous than ever. He and his creatures had brought the kingdom to the verge of perdition. He would meddle with what he did not understand. He would overrule the plans of men who were real soldiers. He would entrust the most important of all posts to his tool, his spy, the wretched Maxwell, not a born Irishman, not a sincere Catholic, at best a blunderer, and too probably a traitor. Maxwell, it was affirmed, had left his men unprovided with ammunition. When they had applied to him for powder and ball, he had asked whether they wanted to shoot larks. Just before the attack he had told them to go to their supper and to take their rest, for that nothing more would be done that

day. When he had delivered himself up a prisoner, he had uttered some words which seemed to indicate a previous understanding with the conquerors. The Lord Lieutenant's few friends told a very different story. According to them, Tyrconnel and Maxwell had suggested precautions which would have made a surprise impossible. The French General, impatient of all interference, had omitted to take those precautions. Maxwell had been rudely told that, if he was afraid, he had better resign his command. He had done his duty bravely. He had stood while his men fled. He had consequently fallen into the hands of the enemy; and he was now, in his absence, slandered by those to whom his captivity was justly imputable. [102](#) On which side the truth lay it is not easy, at this distance of time, to pronounce. The cry against Tyrconnel was, at the moment, so loud, that he gave way and sullenly retired to Limerick. D'Usson, who had not yet recovered from the hurts inflicted by his own runaway troops, repaired to Galway. [103](#)

Saint Ruth, now left in undisputed possession of the supreme command, was bent on trying the chances of a battle. Most of the Irish officers, with Sarsfield at their head, were of a very different mind. It was, they said, not to be dissembled that, in discipline, the army of Ginkell was far superior to theirs. The wise course, therefore, evidently was to carry on the war in such a manner that the difference between the disciplined and the undisciplined soldier might be as small as possible. It was well known that raw recruits often played their part well in a foray, in a street fight or in the defence of a rampart; but that, on a pitched field, they had

little chance against veterans. "Let most of our foot be collected behind the walls of Limerick and Galway. Let the rest, together with our horse, get in the rear of the enemy, and cut off his supplies. If he advances into Connaught, let us overrun Leinster. If he sits down before Galway, which may well be defended, let us make a push for Dublin, which is altogether defenceless."

104 Saint Ruth might, perhaps, have thought this advice good, if his judgment had not been biassed by his passions. But he was smarting from the pain of a humiliating defeat. In sight of his tent, the English had passed a rapid river, and had stormed a strong town. He could not but feel that, though others might have been to blame, he was not himself blameless. He had, to say the least, taken things too easily. Lewis, accustomed to be served during many years by commanders who were not in the habit of leaving to chance any thing which could be made secure by wisdom, would hardly think it a sufficient excuse that his general had not expected the enemy to make so bold and sudden an attack. The Lord Lieutenant would, of course, represent what had passed in the most unfavourable manner; and whatever the Lord Lieutenant said James would echo. A sharp reprimand, a letter of recall, might be expected. To return to Versailles a culprit; to approach the great King in an agony of distress; to see him shrug his shoulders, knit his brow and turn his back; to be sent, far from courts and camps, to languish at some dull country seat; this was too much to be borne; and yet this might well be apprehended. There was one escape; to fight, and to conquer or

to perish.

In such a temper Saint Ruth pitched his camp about thirty miles from Athlone on the road to Galway, near the ruined castle of Aghrim, and determined to await the approach of the English army.

His whole deportment was changed. He had hitherto treated the Irish soldiers with contemptuous severity. But now that he had resolved to stake life and fame on the valour of the despised race, he became another man. During the few days which remained to him he exerted himself to win by indulgence and caresses the hearts of all who were under his command. [105](#) He, at the same time, administered to his troops moral stimulants of the most potent kind. He was a zealous Roman Catholic; and it is probable that the severity with which he had treated the Protestants of his own country ought to be partly ascribed to the hatred which he felt for their doctrines. He now tried to give to the war the character of a crusade. The clergy were the agents whom he employed to sustain the courage of his soldiers. The whole camp was in a ferment with religious excitement. In every regiment priests were praying, preaching, shriving, holding up the host and the cup. While the soldiers swore on the sacramental bread not to abandon their colours, the General addressed to the officers an appeal which might have moved the most languid and effeminate natures to heroic exertion. They were fighting, he said, for their religion, their liberty and their honour. Unhappy events, too widely celebrated, had brought a reproach on the

national character. Irish soldiery was every where mentioned with a sneer. If they wished to retrieve the fame of their country, this was the time and this the place. [106](#)

The spot on which he had determined to bring the fate of Ireland to issue seems to have been chosen with great judgment. His army was drawn up on the slope of a hill, which was almost surrounded by red bog. In front, near the edge of the morass, were some fences out of which a breastwork was without difficulty constructed.

On the eleventh of July, Ginkell, having repaired the fortifications of Athlone and left a garrison there, fixed his headquarters at Ballinasloe, about four miles from Aghrim, and rode forward to take a view of the Irish position. On his return he gave orders that ammunition should be served out, that every musket and bayonet should be got ready for action, and that early on the morrow every man should be under arms without beat of drum. Two regiments were to remain in charge of the camp; the rest, unincumbered by baggage, were to march against the enemy.

Soon after six, the next morning, the English were on the way to Aghrim. But some delay was occasioned by a thick fog which hung till noon over the moist valley of the Suck; a further delay was caused by the necessity of dislodging the Irish from some outposts; and the afternoon was far advanced when the two armies at length confronted each other with nothing but the bog and the breastwork between them. The English and their

allies were under twenty thousand; the Irish above twenty-five thousand.

Ginkell held a short consultation with his principal officers. Should he attack instantly, or wait till the next morning? Mackay was for attacking instantly; and his opinion prevailed. At five the battle began. The English foot, in such order as they could keep on treacherous and uneven ground, made their way, sinking deep in mud at every step, to the Irish works. But those works were defended with a resolution such as extorted some words of ungracious eulogy even from men who entertained the strongest prejudices against the Celtic race. [107](#) Again and again the assailants were driven back. Again and again they returned to the struggle. Once they were broken, and chased across the morass; but Talmash rallied them, and forced the pursuers to retire. The fight had lasted two hours; the evening was closing in; and still the advantage was on the side of the Irish. Ginkell began to meditate a retreat. The hopes of Saint Ruth rose high. "The day is ours, my boys," he cried, waving his hat in the air. "We will drive them before us to the walls of Dublin." But fortune was already on the turn. Mackay and Ruvigny, with the English and Huguenot cavalry, had succeeded in passing the bog at a place where two horsemen could scarcely ride abreast. Saint Ruth at first laughed when he saw the Blues, in single file, struggling through the morass under a fire which every moment laid some gallant hat and feather on the earth. "What do they mean?" he asked; and then he swore that it was pity to see such fine fellows

rushing to certain destruction. "Let them cross, however;" he said. "The more they are, the more we shall kill." But soon he saw them laying hurdles on the quagmire. A broader and safer path was formed; squadron after squadron reached firm ground: the flank of the Irish army was speedily turned. The French general was hastening to the rescue when a cannon ball carried off his head. Those who were about him thought that it would be dangerous to make his fate known. His corpse was wrapped in a cloak, carried from the field, and laid, with all secrecy, in the sacred ground among the ruins of the ancient monastery of Loughrea. Till the fight was over neither army was aware that he was no more. To conceal his death from the private soldiers might perhaps have been prudent. To conceal it from his lieutenants was madness. The crisis of the battle had arrived; and there was none to give direction. Sarsfield was in command of the reserve. But he had been strictly enjoined by Saint Ruth not to stir without orders; and no orders came. Mackay and Ruvigny with their horse charged the Irish in flank. Talmash and his foot returned to the attack in front with dogged determination. The breastwork was carried. The Irish, still fighting, retreated from inclosure to inclosure. But, as inclosure after inclosure was forced, their efforts became fainter and fainter. At length they broke and fled. Then followed a horrible carnage. The conquerors were in a savage mood. For a report had been spread among them that, during the early part of the battle, some English captives who had been admitted to quarter had been put to the sword. Only

four hundred prisoners were taken. The number of the slain was, in proportion to the number engaged, greater than in any other battle of that age. But for the coming on of a moonless night, made darker by a misty rain, scarcely a man would have escaped. The obscurity enabled Sarsfield, with a few squadrons which still remained unbroken, to cover the retreat. Of the conquerors six hundred were killed, and about a thousand wounded.

The English slept that night on the field of battle. On the following day they buried their companions in arms, and then marched westward. The vanquished were left unburied, a strange and ghastly spectacle. Four thousand Irish corpses were counted on the field of battle. A hundred and fifty lay in one small inclosure, a hundred and twenty in another. But the slaughter had not been confined to the field of battle. One who was there tells us that, from the top of the hill on which the Celtic camp had been pitched, he saw the country, to the distance of near four miles, white with the naked bodies of the slain. The plain looked, he said, like an immense pasture covered by flocks of sheep. As usual, different estimates were formed even by eyewitnesses. But it seems probable that the number of the Irish who fell was not less than seven thousand. Soon a multitude of dogs came to feast on the carnage. These beasts became so fierce, and acquired such a taste for human flesh, that it was long dangerous for men to travel this road otherwise than in companies. [108](#)

The beaten army had now lost all the appearance of an army, and resembled a rabble crowding home from a fair after a faction

fight. One great stream of fugitives ran towards Galway, another towards Limerick. The roads to both cities were covered with weapons which had been flung away. Ginkell offered sixpence for every musket. In a short time so many waggon loads were collected that he reduced the price to twopence; and still great numbers of muskets came in. [109](#)

The conquerors marched first against Galway. D'Usson was there, and had under him seven regiments, thinned by the slaughter of Aghrim and utterly disorganized and disheartened. The last hope of the garrison and of the Roman Catholic inhabitants was that Baldearg O'Donnel, the promised deliverer of their race, would come to the rescue. But Baldearg O'Donnel was not duped by the superstitious veneration of which he was the object. While there remained any doubt about the issue of the conflict between the Englishry and the Irishry, he had stood aloof. On the day of the battle he had remained at a safe distance with his tumultuary army; and, as soon as he had learned that his countrymen had been put to rout, he fled, plundering and burning all the way, to the mountains of Mayo. Thence he sent to Ginkell offers of submission and service. Ginkell gladly seized the opportunity of breaking up a formidable band of marauders, and of turning to good account the influence which the name of a Celtic dynasty still exercised over the Celtic race. The negotiation however was not without difficulties. The wandering adventurer at first demanded nothing less than an earldom. After some haggling he consented to sell the love of a whole people, and his

pretensions to regal dignity, for a pension of five hundred pounds a year. Yet the spell which bound his followers to hire was not altogether broken. Some enthusiasts from Ulster were willing to fight under the O'Donnel against their own language and their own religion. With a small body of these devoted adherents, he joined a division of the English army, and on several occasions did useful service to William. [110](#)

When it was known that no succour was to be expected from the hero whose advent had been foretold by so many seers, the Irish who were shut up in Galway lost all heart. D'Usson had returned a stout answer to the first summons of the besiegers; but he soon saw that resistance was impossible, and made haste to capitulate. The garrison was suffered to retire to Limerick with the honours of war. A full amnesty for past offences was granted to the citizens; and it was stipulated that, within the walls, the Roman Catholic priests should be allowed to perform in private the rites of their religion. On these terms the gates were thrown open. Ginkell was received with profound respect by the Mayor and Aldermen, and was complimented in a set speech by the Recorder. D'Usson, with about two thousand three hundred men, marched unmolested to Limerick. [111](#)

At Limerick, the last asylum of the vanquished race, the authority of Tyrconnel was supreme. There was now no general who could pretend that his commission made him independent of the Lord Lieutenant; nor was the Lord Lieutenant now so unpopular as he had been a fortnight earlier. Since the battle

there had been a reflux of public feeling. No part of that great disaster could be imputed to the Viceroy. His opinion indeed had been against trying the chances of a pitched field, and he could with some plausibility assert that the neglect of his counsels had caused the ruin of Ireland. [112](#)

He made some preparations for defending Limerick, repaired the fortifications, and sent out parties to bring in provisions. The country, many miles round, was swept bare by these detachments, and a considerable quantity of cattle and fodder was collected within the walls. There was also a large stock of biscuit imported from France. The infantry assembled at Limerick were about fifteen thousand men. The Irish horse and dragoons, three or four thousand in number, were encamped on the Clare side of the Shannon. The communication between their camp and the city was maintained by means of a bridge called the Thomond Bridge, which was protected by a fort. These means of defence were not contemptible. But the fall of Athlone and the slaughter of Aghrim had broken the spirit of the army. A small party, at the head of which were Sarsfield and a brave Scotch officer named Wauchop, cherished a hope that the triumphant progress of Ginkell might be stopped by those walls from which William had, in the preceding year, been forced to retreat. But many of the Irish chiefs loudly declared that it was time to think of capitulating. Henry Luttrell, always fond of dark and crooked politics, opened a secret negotiation with the English. One of his letters was intercepted; and he was put under arrest; but many

who blamed his perfidy agreed with him in thinking that it was idle to prolong the contest. Tyrconnel himself was convinced that all was lost. His only hope was that he might be able to prolong the struggle till he could receive from Saint Germain's permission to treat. He wrote to request that permission, and prevailed, with some difficulty, on his desponding countrymen to bind themselves by an oath not to capitulate till an answer from James should arrive. [113](#)

A few days after the oath had been administered, Tyrconnel was no more. On the eleventh of August he dined with D'Usson. The party was gay. The Lord Lieutenant seemed to have thrown off the load which had bowed down his body and mind; he drank; he jested; he was again the Dick Talbot who had dined and revelled with Grammont. Soon after he had risen from table, an apoplectic stroke deprived him of speech and sensation. On the fourteenth he breathed his last. The wasted remains of that form which had once been a model for statuary were laid under the pavement of the Cathedral; but no inscription, no tradition, preserves the memory of the spot. [114](#)

As soon as the Lord Lieutenant was no more, Plowden, who had superintended the Irish finances while there were any Irish finances to superintend, produced a commission under the great seal of James. This commission appointed Plowden himself, Fitton and Nagle, Lords justices in the event of Tyrconnel's death. There was much murmuring when the names were made known. For both Plowden and Fitton were Saxons. The

commission, however, proved to be a mere nullity. For it was accompanied by instructions which forbade the Lords justices to interfere in the conduct of the war; and, within the narrow space to which the dominions of James were now reduced, war was the only business. The government was, therefore, really in the hands of D'Usson and Sarsfield. [115](#)

On the day on which Tyrconnel died, the advanced guard of the English army came within sight of Limerick. Ginkell encamped on the same ground which William had occupied twelve months before. The batteries, on which were planted guns and bombs, very different from those which William had been forced to use, played day and night; and soon roofs were blazing and walls crashing in every corner of the city. Whole streets were reduced to ashes. Meanwhile several English ships of war came up the Shannon and anchored about a mile below the city. [116](#)

Still the place held out; the garrison was, in numerical strength, little inferior to the besieging army; and it seemed not impossible that the defence might be prolonged till the equinoctial rains should a second time compel the English to retire. Ginkell determined on striking a bold stroke. No point in the whole circle of the fortifications was more important, and no point seemed to be more secure, than the Thomond Bridge, which joined the city to the camp of the Irish horse on the Clare bank of the Shannon. The Dutch General's plan was to separate the infantry within the ramparts from the cavalry without; and this plan he executed with great skill, vigour and

success. He laid a bridge of tin boats on the river, crossed it with a strong body of troops, drove before him in confusion fifteen hundred dragoons who made a faint show of resistance, and marched towards the quarters of the Irish horse. The Irish horse sustained but ill on this day the reputation which they had gained at the Boyne. Indeed, that reputation had been purchased by the almost entire destruction of the best regiments. Recruits had been without much difficulty found. But the loss of fifteen hundred excellent soldiers was not to be repaired. The camp was abandoned without a blow. Some of the cavalry fled into the city. The rest, driving before them as many cattle as could be collected in that moment of panic, retired to the hills. Much beef, brandy and harness was found in the magazines; and the marshy plain of the Shannon was covered with firelocks and grenades which the fugitives had thrown away. [117](#)

The conquerors returned in triumph to their camp. But Ginkell was not content with the advantage which he had gained. He was bent on cutting off all communication between Limerick and the county of Clare. In a few days, therefore, he again crossed the river at the head of several regiments, and attacked the fort which protected the Thomond Bridge. In a short time the fort was stormed. The soldiers who had garrisoned it fled in confusion to the city. The Town Major, a French officer, who commanded at the Thomond Gate, afraid that the pursuers would enter with the fugitives, ordered that part of the bridge which was nearest to the city to be drawn up. Many of the Irish went headlong into the

stream and perished there. Others cried for quarter, and held up handkerchiefs in token of submission. But the conquerors were mad with rage; their cruelty could not be immediately restrained; and no prisoners were made till the heaps of corpses rose above the parapets. The garrison of the fort had consisted of about eight hundred men. Of these only a hundred and twenty escaped into Limerick. [118](#)

This disaster seemed likely to produce a general mutiny in the besieged city. The Irish clamoured for the blood of the Town Major who had ordered the bridge to be drawn up in the face of their flying countrymen. His superiors were forced to promise that he should be brought before a court martial. Happily for him, he had received a mortal wound, in the act of closing the Thomond Gate, and was saved by a soldier's death from the fury of the multitude. [119](#) The cry for capitulation became so loud and importunate that the generals could not resist it. D'Usson informed his government that the fight at the bridge had so effectually cowed the spirit of the garrison that it was impossible to continue the struggle. [120](#) Some exception may perhaps be taken to the evidence of D'Usson; for undoubtedly he, like every Frenchman who had held any command in the Irish army, was weary of his banishment, and impatient to see Paris again. But it is certain that even Sarsfield had lost heart. Up to this time his voice had been for stubborn resistance. He was now not only willing, but impatient to treat. [121](#) It seemed to him that the city was doomed. There was no hope of succour, domestic or foreign.

In every part of Ireland the Saxons had set their feet on the necks of the natives. Sligo had fallen. Even those wild islands which intercept the huge waves of the Atlantic from the bay of Galway had acknowledged the authority of William. The men of Kerry, reputed the fiercest and most ungovernable part of the aboriginal population, had held out long, but had at length been routed, and chased to their woods and mountains. [122](#) A French fleet, if a French fleet were now to arrive on the coast of Munster, would find the mouth of the Shannon guarded by English men of war. The stock of provisions within Limerick was already running low. If the siege were prolonged, the town would, in all human probability, be reduced either by force or by blockade. And, if Ginkell should enter through the breach, or should be implored by a multitude perishing with hunger to dictate his own terms, what could be expected but a tyranny more inexorably severe than that of Cromwell? Would it not then be wise to try what conditions could be obtained while the victors had still something to fear from the rage and despair of the vanquished; while the last Irish army could still make some show of resistance behind the walls of the last Irish fortress?

On the evening of the day which followed the fight at the Thomond Gate, the drums of Limerick beat a parley; and Wauchop, from one of the towers, hailed the besiegers, and requested Ruvigny to grant Sarsfield an interview. The brave Frenchman who was an exile on account of his attachment to one religion, and the brave Irishman who was about to become an

exile on account of his attachment to another, met and conferred, doubtless with mutual sympathy and respect. [123](#) Ginkell, to whom Ruvigny reported what had passed, willingly consented to an armistice. For, constant as his success had been, it had not made him secure. The chances were greatly on his side. Yet it was possible that an attempt to storm the city might fail, as a similar attempt had failed twelve months before. If the siege should be turned into a blockade, it was probable that the pestilence which had been fatal to the army of Schomberg, which had compelled William to retreat, and which had all but prevailed even against the genius and energy of Marlborough, might soon avenge the carnage of Aghrim. The rains had lately been heavy. The whole plain might shortly be an immense pool of stagnant water. It might be necessary to move the troops to a healthier situation than the bank of the Shannon, and to provide for them a warmer shelter than that of tents. The enemy would be safe till the spring. In the spring a French army might land in Ireland; the natives might again rise in arms from Donegal to Kerry; and the war, which was now all but extinguished, might blaze forth fiercer than ever.

A negotiation was therefore opened with a sincere desire on both sides to put an end to the contest. The chiefs of the Irish army held several consultations at which some Roman Catholic prelates and some eminent lawyers were invited to assist. A preliminary question, which perplexed tender consciences, was submitted by the Bishops. The late Lord Lieutenant had

persuaded the officers of the garrison to swear that they would not surrender Limerick till they should receive an answer to the letter in which their situation had been explained to James. The Bishops thought that the oath was no longer binding. It had been taken at a time when the communications with France were open, and in the full belief that the answer of James would arrive within three weeks. More than twice that time had elapsed. Every avenue leading to the city was strictly guarded by the enemy. His Majesty's faithful subjects, by holding out till it had become impossible for him to signify his pleasure to them, had acted up to the spirit of their promise. [124](#)

The next question was what terms should be demanded. A paper, containing propositions which statesmen of our age will think reasonable, but which to the most humane and liberal English Protestants of the seventeenth century appeared extravagant, was sent to the camp of the besiegers. What was asked was that all offences should be covered with oblivion, that perfect freedom of worship should be allowed to the native population, that every parish should have its priest, and that Irish Roman Catholics should be capable of holding all offices, civil and military, and of enjoying all municipal privileges. [125](#)

Ginkell knew little of the laws and feelings of the English; but he had about him persons who were competent to direct him. They had a week before prevented him from breaking a Rapparee on the wheel; and they now suggested an answer to the propositions of the enemy. "I am a stranger here," said Ginkell;

"I am ignorant of the constitution of these kingdoms; but I am assured that what you ask is inconsistent with that constitution; and therefore I cannot with honour consent." He immediately ordered a new battery to be thrown up, and guns and mortars to be planted on it. But his preparations were speedily interrupted by another message from the city. The Irish begged that, since he could not grant what they had demanded, he would tell them what he was willing to grant. He called his advisers round him, and, after some consultation, sent back a paper containing the heads of a treaty, such as he had reason to believe that the government which he served would approve. What he offered was indeed much less than what the Irish desired, but was quite as much as, when they considered their situation and the temper of the English nation, they could expect. They speedily notified their assent. It was agreed that there should be a cessation of arms, not only by land, but in the ports and bays of Munster, and that a fleet of French transports should be suffered to come up the Shannon in peace and to depart in peace. The signing of the treaty was deferred till the Lords justices, who represented William at Dublin, should arrive at Ginkell's quarters. But there was during some days a relaxation of military vigilance on both sides. Prisoners were set at liberty. The outposts of the two armies chatted and messed together. The English officers rambled into the town. The Irish officers dined in the camp. Anecdotes of what passed at the friendly meetings of these men, who had so lately been mortal enemies, were widely circulated.

One story, in particular, was repeated in every part of Europe. "Has not this last campaign," said Sarsfield to some English officers, "raised your opinion of Irish soldiers?" "To tell you the truth," answered an Englishman, "we think of them much as we always did." "However meanly you may think of us," replied Sarsfield, "change Kings with us, and we will willingly try our luck with you again." He was doubtless thinking of the day on which he had seen the two Sovereigns at the head of two great armies, William foremost in the charge, and James foremost in the flight. [126](#)

On the first of October, Coningsby and Porter arrived at the English headquarters. On the second the articles of capitulation were discussed at great length and definitely settled. On the third they were signed. They were divided into two parts, a military treaty and a civil treaty. The former was subscribed only by the generals on both sides. The Lords justices set their names to the latter. [127](#)

By the military treaty it was agreed that such Irish officers and soldiers as should declare that they wished to go to France should be conveyed thither, and should, in the meantime, remain under the command of their own generals. Ginkell undertook to furnish a considerable number of transports. French vessels were also to be permitted to pass and repass freely between Brittany and Munster. Part of Limerick was to be immediately delivered up to the English. But the island on which the Cathedral and the Castle stand was to remain, for the present, in the keeping of the Irish.

The terms of the civil treaty were very different from those which Ginkell had sternly refused to grant. It was not stipulated that the Roman Catholics of Ireland should be competent to hold any political or military office, or that they should be admitted into any corporation. But they obtained a promise that they should enjoy such privileges in the exercise of their religion as were consistent with the law, or as they had enjoyed in the reign of Charles the Second.

To all inhabitants of Limerick, and to all officers and soldiers in the Jacobite army, who should submit to the government and notify their submission by taking the oath of allegiance, an entire amnesty was promised. They were to retain their property; they were to be allowed to exercise any profession which they had exercised before the troubles; they were not to be punished for any treason, felony, or misdemeanour committed since the accession of the late King; nay, they were not to be sued for damages on account of any act of spoliation or outrage which they might have committed during the three years of confusion. This was more than the Lords justices were constitutionally competent to grant. It was therefore added that the government would use its utmost endeavours to obtain a Parliamentary ratification of the treaty. [128](#)

As soon as the two instruments had been signed, the English entered the city, and occupied one quarter of it. A narrow, but deep branch of the Shannon separated them from the quarter which was still in the possession of the Irish. [129](#)

In a few hours a dispute arose which seemed likely to produce a renewal of hostilities. Sarsfield had resolved to seek his fortune in the service of France, and was naturally desirous to carry with him to the Continent such a body of troops as would be an important addition to the army of Lewis. Ginkell was as naturally unwilling to send thousands of men to swell the forces of the enemy. Both generals appealed to the treaty. Each construed it as suited his purpose, and each complained that the other had violated it. Sarsfield was accused of putting one of his officers under arrest for refusing to go to the Continent. Ginkell, greatly excited, declared that he would teach the Irish to play tricks with him, and began to make preparations for a cannonade. Sarsfield came to the English camp, and tried to justify what he had done. The altercation was sharp. "I submit," said Sarsfield, at last: "I am in your power." "Not at all in my power," said Ginkell, "go back and do your worst." The imprisoned officer was liberated; a sanguinary contest was averted; and the two commanders contented themselves with a war of words. [130](#) Ginkell put forth proclamations assuring the Irish that, if they would live quietly in their own land, they should be protected and favoured, and that if they preferred a military life, they should be admitted into the service of King William. It was added that no man, who chose to reject this gracious invitation and to become a soldier of Lewis, must expect ever again to set foot on the island. Sarsfield and Wauchop exerted their eloquence on the other side. The present aspect of affairs, they said, was doubtless gloomy; but there was

bright sky beyond the cloud. The banishment would be short. The return would be triumphant. Within a year the French would invade England. In such an invasion the Irish troops, if only they remained unbroken, would assuredly bear a chief part. In the meantime it was far better for them to live in a neighbouring and friendly country, under the parental care of their own rightful King, than to trust the Prince of Orange, who would probably send them to the other end of the world to fight for his ally the Emperor against the Janissaries.

The help of the Roman Catholic clergy was called in. On the day on which those who had made up their minds to go to France were required to announce their determination, the priests were indefatigable in exhorting. At the head of every regiment a sermon was preached on the duty of adhering to the cause of the Church, and on the sin and danger of consorting with unbelievers. [131](#) Whoever, it was said, should enter the service of the usurpers would do so at the peril of his soul. The heretics affirmed that, after the peroration, a plentiful allowance of brandy was served out to the audience, and that, when the brandy had been swallowed, a Bishop pronounced a benediction. Thus duly prepared by physical and moral stimulants, the garrison, consisting of about fourteen thousand infantry, was drawn up in the vast meadow which lay on the Clare bank of the Shannon. Here copies of Ginkell's proclamation were profusely scattered about; and English officers went through the ranks imploring the men not to ruin themselves, and explaining to them the

advantages which the soldiers of King William enjoyed. At length the decisive moment came. The troops were ordered to pass in review. Those who wished to remain in Ireland were directed to file off at a particular spot. All who passed that spot were to be considered as having made their choice for France. Sarsfield and Wauchop on one side, Porter, Coningsby and Ginkell on the other, looked on with painful anxiety. D'Usson and his countrymen, though not uninterested in the spectacle, found it hard to preserve their gravity. The confusion, the clamour, the grotesque appearance of an army in which there could scarcely be seen a shirt or a pair of pantaloons, a shoe or a stocking, presented so ludicrous a contrast to the orderly and brilliant appearance of their master's troops, that they amused themselves by wondering what the Parisians would say to see such a force mustered on the plain of Grenelle. [132](#)

First marched what was called the Royal regiment, fourteen hundred strong. All but seven went beyond the fatal point. Ginkell's countenance showed that he was deeply mortified. He was consoled, however, by seeing the next regiment, which consisted of natives of Ulster, turn off to a man. There had arisen, notwithstanding the community of blood, language and religion, an antipathy between the Celts of Ulster and those of the other three provinces; nor is it improbable that the example and influence of Baldearg O'Donnell may have had some effect on the people of the land which his forefathers had ruled. [133](#) In most of the regiments there was a division of opinion; but a great

majority declared for France. Henry Luttrell was one of those who turned off. He was rewarded for his desertion, and perhaps for other services, with a grant of the large estate of his elder brother Simon, who firmly adhered to the cause of James, with a pension of five hundred pounds a year from the Crown, and with the abhorrence of the Roman Catholic population. After living in wealth, luxury and infamy, during a quarter of a century, Henry Luttrell was murdered while going through Dublin in his sedan chair; and the Irish House of Commons declared that there was reason to suspect that he had fallen by the revenge of the Papists. [134](#) Eighty years after his death his grave near Luttrellstown was violated by the descendants of those whom he had betrayed, and his skull was broken to pieces with a pickaxe. [135](#) The deadly hatred of which he was the object descended to his son and to his grandson; and, unhappily, nothing in the character either of his son or of his grandson tended to mitigate the feeling which the name of Luttrell excited. [136](#)

When the long procession had closed, it was found that about a thousand men had agreed to enter into William's service. About two thousand accepted passes from Ginkell, and went quietly home. About eleven thousand returned with Sarsfield to the city. A few hours after the garrison had passed in review, the horse, who were encamped some miles from the town, were required to make their choice; and most of them volunteered for France. [137](#)

Sarsfield considered the troops who remained with him as under an irrevocable obligation to go abroad; and, lest they

should be tempted to retract their consent, he confined them within the ramparts, and ordered the gates to be shut and strongly guarded. Ginkell, though in his vexation he muttered some threats, seems to have felt that he could not justifiably interfere. But the precautions of the Irish general were far from being completely successful. It was by no means strange that a superstitious and excitable kerne, with a sermon and a dram in his head, should be ready to promise whatever his priests required; neither was it strange that, when he had slept off his liquor, and when anathemas were no longer ringing in his ears, he should feel painful misgivings. He had bound himself to go into exile, perhaps for life, beyond that dreary expanse of waters which impressed his rude mind with mysterious terror. His thoughts ran on all that he was to leave, on the well known peat stack and potatoe ground, and on the mud cabin, which, humble as it was, was still his home. He was never again to see the familiar faces round the turf fire, or to hear the familiar notes of the old Celtic songs. The ocean was to roll between him and the dwelling of his greyheaded parents and his blooming sweetheart. Here were some who, unable to bear the misery of such a separation, and, finding it impossible to pass the sentinels who watched the gates, sprang into the river and gained the opposite bank. The number of these daring swimmers, however, was not great; and the army would probably have been transported almost entire if it had remained at Limerick till the day of embarkation. But many of the vessels in which the voyage was to be performed

lay at Cork; and it was necessary that Sarsfield should proceed thither with some of his best regiments. It was a march of not less than four days through a wild country. To prevent agile youths, familiar with all the shifts of a vagrant and predatory life, from stealing off to the bogs, and woods under cover of the night, was impossible.

Indeed, many soldiers had the audacity to run away by broad daylight before they were out of sight of Limerick Cathedral. The Royal regiment, which had, on the day of the review, set so striking an example of fidelity to the cause of James, dwindled from fourteen hundred men to five hundred. Before the last ships departed, news came that those who had sailed by the first ships had been ungraciously received at Brest. They had been scantily fed; they had been able to obtain neither pay nor clothing; though winter was setting in, they slept in the fields with no covering but the hedges. Many had been heard to say that it would have been far better to die in old Ireland than to live in the inhospitable country to which they had been banished. The effect of those reports was that hundreds, who had long persisted in their intention of emigrating, refused at the last moment to go on board, threw down their arms, and returned to their native villages. [138](#)

Sarsfield perceived that one chief cause of the desertion which was thinning his army was the natural unwillingness of the men to leave their families in a state of destitution. Cork and its neighbourhood were filled with the kindred of those who were

going abroad. Great numbers of women, many of them leading, carrying, suckling their infants, covered all the roads which led to the place of embarkation. The Irish general, apprehensive of the effect which the entreaties and lamentations of these poor creatures could not fail to produce, put forth a proclamation, in which he assured his soldiers that they should be permitted to carry their wives and families to France. It would be injurious to the memory of so brave and loyal a gentleman to suppose that when he made this promise he meant to break it. It is much more probable that he had formed an erroneous estimate of the number of those who would demand a passage, and that he found himself, when it was too late to alter his arrangements, unable to keep his word. After the soldiers had embarked, room was found for the families of many. But still there remained on the water side a great multitude clamouring piteously to be taken on board. As the last boats put off there was a rush into the surf. Some women caught hold of the ropes, were dragged out of their depth, clung till their fingers were cut through, and perished in the waves. The ships began to move. A wild and terrible wail rose from the shore, and excited unwonted compassion in hearts steeled by hatred of the Irish race and of the Romish faith. Even the stern Cromwellian, now at length, after a desperate struggle of three years, left the undisputed lord of the bloodstained and devastated island, could not hear unmoved that bitter cry, in which was poured forth all the rage and all the sorrow of a conquered nation.

The sails disappeared. The emaciated and brokenhearted crowd of those whom a stroke more cruel than that of death had made widows and orphans dispersed, to beg their way home through a wasted land, or to lie down and die by the roadside of grief and hunger. The exiles departed, to learn in foreign camps that discipline without which natural courage is of small avail, and to retrieve on distant fields of battle the honour which had been lost by a long series of defeats at home. In Ireland there was peace. The domination of the colonists was absolute. The native population was tranquil with the ghastly tranquillity of exhaustion and of despair. There were indeed outrages, robberies, fireraisings, assassinations. But more than a century passed away without one general insurrection. During that century, two rebellions were raised in Great Britain by the adherents of the House of Stuart. But neither when the elder Pretender was crowned at Scone, nor when the younger held his court at Holyrood, was the standard of that House set up in Connaught or Munster. In 1745, indeed, when the Highlanders were marching towards London, the Roman Catholics of Ireland were so quiet that the Lord Lieutenant could, without the smallest risk, send several regiments across Saint George's Channel to recruit the army of the Duke of Cumberland. Nor was this submission the effect of content, but of mere stupefaction and brokenness of heart. The iron had entered into the soul. The memory of past defeats, the habit of daily enduring insult and oppression, had cowed the spirit of the unhappy nation. There

were indeed Irish Roman Catholics of great ability, energy and ambition; but they were to be found every where except in Ireland, at Versailles and at Saint Ildefonso, in the armies of Frederic and in the armies of Maria Theresa. One exile became a Marshal of France. Another became Prime Minister of Spain. If he had staid in his native land he would have been regarded as an inferior by all the ignorant and worthless squireens who drank the glorious and immortal memory. In his palace at Madrid he had the pleasure of being assiduously courted by the ambassador of George the Second, and of bidding defiance in high terms to the ambassador of George the Third. [140](#) Scattered over all Europe were to be found brave Irish generals, dexterous Irish diplomatists, Irish Counts, Irish Barons, Irish Knights of Saint Lewis and of Saint Leopold, of the White Eagle and of the Golden Fleece, who, if they had remained in the house of bondage, could not have been ensigns of marching regiments or freemen of petty corporations. These men, the natural chiefs of their race, having been withdrawn, what remained was utterly helpless and passive. A rising of the Irishry against the Englishry was no more to be apprehended than a rising of the women and children against the men. [141](#)

There were indeed, in those days, fierce disputes between the mother country and the colony; but in those disputes the aboriginal population had no more interest than the Red Indians in the dispute between Old England and New England about the Stamp Act. The ruling few, even when in mutiny against the

government, had no mercy for any thing that looked like mutiny on the part of the subject many. None of those Roman patriots, who poniarded Julius Caesar for aspiring to be a king, would have had the smallest scruple about crucifying a whole school of gladiators for attempting to escape from the most odious and degrading of all kinds of servitude. None of those Virginian patriots, who vindicated their separation from the British empire by proclaiming it to be a selfevident truth that all men were endowed by the Creator with an unalienable right to liberty, would have had the smallest scruple about shooting any negro slave who had laid claim to that unalienable right.

And, in the same manner, the Protestant masters of Ireland, while ostentatiously professing the political doctrines of Locke and Sidney, held that a people who spoke the Celtic tongue and heard mass could have no concern in those doctrines. Molyneux questioned the supremacy of the English legislature. Swift assailed, with the keenest ridicule and invective, every part of the system of government. Lucas disquieted the administration of Lord Harrington. Boyle overthrew the administration of the Duke of Dorset. But neither Molyneux nor Swift, neither Lucas nor Boyle, ever thought of appealing to the native population. They would as soon have thought of appealing to the swine. [142](#) At a later period Henry Flood excited the dominant class to demand a Parliamentary reform, and to use even revolutionary means for the purpose of obtaining that reform. But neither he, nor those who looked up to him as their chief, and who went close

to the verge of treason at his bidding, would consent to admit the subject class to the smallest share of political power. The virtuous and accomplished Charlemont, a Whig of the Whigs, passed a long life in contending for what he called the freedom of his country. But he voted against the law which gave the elective franchise to Roman Catholic freeholders; and he died fixed in the opinion that the Parliament House ought to be kept pure from Roman Catholic members. Indeed, during the century which followed the Revolution, the inclination of an English Protestant to trample on the Irishry was generally proportioned to the zeal which he professed for political liberty in the abstract. If he uttered any expression of compassion for the majority oppressed by the minority, he might be safely set down as a bigoted Tory and High Churchman. [143](#)

All this time hatred, kept down by fear, festered in the hearts of the children of the soil. They were still the same people that had sprung to arms in 1641 at the call of O'Neill, and in 1689 at the call of Tyrconnel. To them every festival instituted by the State was a day of mourning, and every public trophy set up by the State was a memorial of shame. We have never known, and can but faintly conceive, the feelings of a nation doomed to see constantly in all its public places the monuments of its subjugation. Such monuments every where met the eye of the Irish Roman Catholics. In front of the Senate House of their country, they saw the statue of their conqueror. If they entered, they saw the walls tapestried with the defeats of their

fathers. At length, after a hundred years of servitude, endured without one vigorous or combined struggle for emancipation, the French revolution awakened a wild hope in the bosoms of the oppressed. Men who had inherited all the pretensions and all the passions of the Parliament which James had held at the Kings Inns could not hear unmoved of the downfall of a wealthy established Church, of the flight of a splendid aristocracy, of the confiscation of an immense territory. Old antipathies, which had never slumbered, were excited to new and terrible energy by the combination of stimulants which, in any other society, would have counteracted each other. The spirit of Popery and the spirit of Jacobinism, irreconcilable antagonists every where else, were for once mingled in an unnatural and portentous union. Their joint influence produced the third and last rising up of the aboriginal population against the colony. The greatgrandsons of the soldiers of Galmoy and Sarsfield were opposed to the greatgrandsons of the soldiers of Wolseley and Mitchelburn. The Celt again looked impatiently for the sails which were to bring succour from Brest; and the Saxon was again backed by the whole power of England. Again the victory remained with the well educated and well organized minority. But, happily, the vanquished people found protection in a quarter from which they would once have had to expect nothing but implacable severity. By this time the philosophy of the eighteenth century had purified English Whiggism from that deep taint of intolerance which had been contracted during a long and close alliance with the

Puritanism of the seventeenth century. Enlightened men had begun to feel that the arguments by which Milton and Locke, Tillotson and Burnet, had vindicated the rights of conscience might be urged with not less force in favour of the Roman Catholic than in favour of the Independent or the Baptist. The great party which traces its descent through the Exclusionists up to the Roundheads continued during thirty years, in spite of royal frowns and popular clamours, to demand a share in all the benefits of our free constitution for those Irish Papists whom the Roundheads and the Exclusionists had considered merely as beasts of chase or as beasts of burden. But it will be for some other historian to relate the vicissitudes of that great conflict, and the late triumph of reason and humanity. Unhappily such a historian will have to relate that the triumph won by such exertions and by such sacrifices was immediately followed by disappointment; that it proved far less easy to eradicate evil passions than to repeal evil laws; and that, long after every trace of national and religious animosity had been obliterated from the Statute Book, national and religious animosities continued to rankle in the bosoms of millions. May he be able also to relate that wisdom, justice and time gradually did in Ireland what they had done in Scotland, and that all the races which inhabit the British isles were at length indissolubly blended into one people!

## CHAPTER XVIII

Opening of the Parliament—Debates on the Salaries and Fees of Official Men—Act excluding Papists from Public Trust in Ireland—Debates on the East India Trade—Debates on the Bill for regulating Trials in Cases of High Treason—Plot formed by Marlborough against the Government of William—Marlborough's Plot disclosed by the Jacobites—Disgrace of Marlborough; Various Reports touching the Cause of Marlborough's Disgrace.—Rupture between Mary and Anne—Fuller's Plot—Close of the Session; Bill for ascertaining the Salaries of the Judges rejected—Ministerial Changes in England—Ministerial Changes in Scotland—State of the Highlands—Breadalbane employed to negotiate with the Rebel Clans—Glencoe—William goes to the Continent; Death of Louvois—The French Government determines to send an Expedition against England—James believes that the English Fleet is friendly to him—Conduct of Russell—A Daughter born to James—Preparations made in England to repel Invasion—James goes down to his Army at La Hogue—James's Declaration—Effect produced by James's Declaration—The English and Dutch Fleets join; Temper of the English Fleet—Battle of La Hogue—Rejoicings in England—Young's Plot

ON the nineteenth of October 1691, William arrived at

Kensington from the Netherlands. [144](#) Three days later he opened the Parliament. The aspect of affairs was, on the whole, cheering. By land there had been gains and losses; but the balance was in favour of England. Against the fall of Mons might well be set off the taking of Athlone, the victory of Aghrim, the surrender of Limerick and the pacification of Ireland. At sea there had been no great victory; but there had been a great display of power and of activity; and, though many were dissatisfied because more had not been done, none could deny that there had been a change for the better. The ruin caused by the foibles and vices of Torrington had been repaired; the fleet had been well equipped; the rations had been abundant and wholesome; and the health of the crews had consequently been, for that age, wonderfully good. Russell, who commanded the naval forces of the allies, had in vain offered battle to the French. The white flag, which, in the preceding year, had ranged the Channel unresisted from the Land's End to the Straits of Dover, now, as soon as our topmasts were descried twenty leagues off, abandoned the open sea, and retired into the depths of the harbour of Brest. The appearance of an English squadron in the estuary of the Shannon had decided the fate of the last fortress which had held out for King James; and a fleet of merchantmen from the Levant, valued at four millions sterling, had, through dangers which had caused many sleepless nights to the underwriters of Lombard Street, been convoyed safe into the Thames. [145](#) The Lords and Commons listened with signs of satisfaction to a speech in

which the King congratulated them on the event of the war in Ireland, and expressed his confidence that they would continue to support him in the war with France. He told them that a great naval armament would be necessary, and that, in his opinion, the conflict by land could not be effectually maintained with less than sixty-five thousand men. [146](#)

He was thanked in affectionate terms; the force which he asked was voted; and large supplies were granted with little difficulty. But when the Ways and Means were taken into consideration, symptoms of discontent began to appear. Eighteen months before, when the Commons had been employed in settling the Civil List, many members had shown a very natural disposition to complain of the amount of the salaries and fees received by official men. Keen speeches had been made, and, what was much less usual, had been printed; there had been much excitement out of doors; but nothing had been done. The subject was now revived. A report made by the Commissioners who had been appointed in the preceding year to examine the public accounts disclosed some facts which excited indignation, and others which raised grave suspicion. The House seemed fully determined to make an extensive reform; and, in truth, nothing could have averted such a reform except the folly and violence of the reformers. That they should have been angry is indeed not strange. The enormous gains, direct and indirect, of the servants of the public went on increasing, while the gains of every body else were diminishing. Rents were falling;

trade was languishing; every man who lived either on what his ancestors had left him or on the fruits of his own industry was forced to retrench. The placeman alone throve amidst the general distress. "Look," cried the incensed squires, "at the Comptroller of the Customs. Ten years ago, he walked, and we rode. Our incomes have been curtailed; his salary has been doubled; we have sold our horses; he has bought them; and now we go on foot, and are splashed by his coach and six." Lowther vainly endeavoured to stand up against the storm. He was heard with little favour by the country gentlemen who had not long before looked up to him as one of their leaders. He had left them; he had become a courtier; he had two good places, one in the Treasury, the other in the household. He had recently received from the King's own hand a gratuity of two thousand guineas. [147](#) It seemed perfectly natural that he should defend abuses by which he profited. The taunts and reproaches with which he was assailed were insupportable to his sensitive nature. He lost his head, almost fainted away on the floor of the House, and talked about righting himself in another place. [148](#) Unfortunately no member rose at this conjuncture to propose that the civil establishment of the kingdom should be carefully revised, that sinecures should be abolished, that exorbitant official incomes should be reduced, and that no servant of the State should be allowed to exact, under any pretence, any thing beyond his known and lawful remuneration. In this way it would have been possible to diminish the public burdens, and at the same time to increase

the efficiency of every public department. But unfortunately those who were loudest in clamouring against the prevailing abuses were utterly destitute of the qualities necessary for the work of reform. On the twelfth of December, some foolish man, whose name has not come down to us, moved that no person employed in any civil office, the Speaker, Judges and Ambassadors excepted, should receive more than five hundred pounds a year; and this motion was not only carried, but carried without one dissentient voice. [149](#)

Those who were most interested in opposing it doubtless saw that opposition would, at that moment, only irritate the majority, and reserved themselves for a more favourable time. The more favourable time soon came. No man of common sense could, when his blood had cooled, remember without shame that he had voted for a resolution which made no distinction between sinecurists and laborious public servants, between clerks employed in copying letters and ministers on whose wisdom and integrity the fate of the nation might depend. The salary of the Doorkeeper of the Excise Office had been, by a scandalous job, raised to five hundred a year. It ought to have been reduced to fifty. On the other hand, the services of a Secretary of State who was well qualified for his post would have been cheap at five thousand. If the resolution of the Commons had been carried into effect, both the salary which ought not to have exceeded fifty pounds, and the salary which might without impropriety have amounted to five thousand, would have been fixed at five

hundred. Such absurdity must have shocked even the roughest and plainest foxhunter in the House. A reaction took place; and when, after an interval of a few weeks, it was proposed to insert in a bill of supply a clause in conformity with the resolution of the twelfth of December, the Noes were loud; the Speaker was of opinion that they had it; the Ayes did not venture to dispute his opinion; the senseless plan which had been approved without a division was rejected without a division; and the subject was not again mentioned. Thus a grievance so scandalous that none of those who profited by it dared to defend it was perpetuated merely by the imbecility and intemperance of those who attacked it. [150](#)

Early in the Session the Treaty of Limerick became the subject of a grave and earnest discussion. The Commons, in the exercise of that supreme power which the English legislature possessed over all the dependencies of England, sent up to the Lords a bill providing that no person should sit in the Irish Parliament, should hold any Irish office, civil, military or ecclesiastical, or should practise law or medicine in Ireland, till he had taken the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and subscribed the Declaration against Transubstantiation. The Lords were not more inclined than the Commons to favour the Irish. No peer was disposed to entrust Roman Catholics with political power. Nay, it seems that no peer objected to the principle of the absurd and cruel rule which excluded Roman Catholics from the liberal professions. But it was thought

that this rule, though unobjectionable in principle, would, if adopted without some exceptions, be a breach of a positive compact. Their Lordships called for the Treaty of Limerick, ordered it to be read at the table, and proceeded to consider whether the law framed by the Lower House was consistent with the engagements into which the government had entered. One discrepancy was noticed. It was stipulated by the second civil article, that every person actually residing in any fortress occupied by an Irish garrison, should be permitted, on taking the Oath of Allegiance, to resume any calling which he had exercised before the Revolution. It would, beyond all doubt, have been a violation of this covenant to require that a lawyer or a physician, who had been within the walls of Limerick during the siege, should take the Oath of Supremacy and subscribe the Declaration against Transubstantiation, before he could receive fees. Holt was consulted, and was directed to prepare clauses in conformity with the terms of the capitulation.

The bill, as amended by Holt, was sent back to the Commons. They at first rejected the amendment, and demanded a conference. The conference was granted. Rochester, in the Painted Chamber, delivered to the managers of the Lower House a copy of the Treaty of Limerick, and earnestly represented the importance of preserving the public faith inviolate. This appeal was one which no honest man, though inflamed by national and religious animosity, could resist. The Commons reconsidered the subject, and, after hearing the Treaty read, agreed, with some

slight modifications, to what the Lords had proposed. [151](#)

The bill became a law. It attracted, at the time, little notice, but was, after the lapse of several generations, the subject of a very acrimonious controversy. Many of us can well remember how strongly the public mind was stirred, in the days of George the Third and George the Fourth, by the question whether Roman Catholics should be permitted to sit in Parliament. It may be doubted whether any dispute has produced stranger perversions of history. The whole past was falsified for the sake of the present. All the great events of three centuries long appeared to us distorted and discoloured by a mist sprung from our own theories and our own passions. Some friends of religious liberty, not content with the advantage which they possessed in the fair conflict of reason with reason, weakened their case by maintaining that the law which excluded Irish Roman Catholics from Parliament was inconsistent with the civil Treaty of Limerick. The First article of that Treaty, it was said, guaranteed to the Irish Roman Catholic such privileges in the exercise of his religion as he had enjoyed in the time of Charles the Second. In the time of Charles the Second no test excluded Roman Catholics from the Irish Parliament. Such a test could not therefore, it was argued, be imposed without a breach of public faith. In the year 1828, especially, this argument was put forward in the House of Commons as if it had been the main strength of a cause which stood in need of no such support. The champions of Protestant ascendancy were well pleased to see the

debate diverted from a political question about which they were in the wrong, to a historical question about which they were in the right. They had no difficulty in proving that the first article, as understood by all the contracting parties, meant only that the Roman Catholic worship should be tolerated as in time past. That article was drawn up by Ginkell; and, just before he drew it up, he had declared that he would rather try the chance of arms than consent that Irish Papists should be capable of holding civil and military offices, of exercising liberal professions, and of becoming members of municipal corporations. How is it possible to believe that he would, of his own accord, have promised that the House of Lords and the House of Commons should be open to men to whom he would not open a guild of skimmers or a guild of cordwainers? How, again, is it possible to believe that the English Peers would, while professing the most punctilious respect for public faith, while lecturing the Commons on the duty of observing public faith, while taking counsel with the most learned and upright jurist of the age as to the best mode of maintaining public faith, have committed a flagrant violation of public faith and that not a single lord should have been so honest or so factious as to protest against an act of monstrous perfidy aggravated by hypocrisy? Or, if we could believe this, how can we believe that no voice would have been raised in any part of the world against such wickedness; that the Court of Saint Germain's and the Court of Versailles would have remained profoundly silent; that no Irish exile, no English malecontent,

would have uttered a murmur; that not a word of invective or sarcasm on so inviting a subject would have been found in the whole compass of the Jacobite literature; and that it would have been reserved for politicians of the nineteenth century to discover that a treaty made in the seventeenth century had, a few weeks after it had been signed, been outrageously violated in the sight of all Europe? [152](#)

On the same day on which the Commons read for the first time the bill which subjected Ireland to the absolute dominion of the Protestant minority, they took into consideration another matter of high importance. Throughout the country, but especially in the capital, in the seaports and in the manufacturing towns, the minds of men were greatly excited on the subject of the trade with the East Indies; a fierce paper war had during some time been raging; and several grave questions, both constitutional and commercial, had been raised, which the legislature only could decide.

It has often been repeated, and ought never to be forgotten, that our polity differs widely from those politics which have, during the last eighty years, been methodically constructed, digested into articles, and ratified by constituent assemblies. It grew up in a rude age. It is not to be found entire in any formal instrument. All along the line which separates the functions of the prince from those of the legislator there was long a disputed territory. Encroachments were perpetually committed, and, if not very outrageous, were often tolerated. Trespass, merely as

trespass, was commonly suffered to pass unresented. It was only when the trespass produced some positive damage that the aggrieved party stood on his right, and demanded that the frontier should be set out by metes and bounds, and that the landmarks should thenceforward be punctiliously respected.

Many of those points which had occasioned the most violent disputes between our Sovereigns and their Parliaments had been finally decided by the Bill of Rights. But one question, scarcely less important than any of the questions which had been set at rest for ever, was still undetermined. Indeed, that question was never, as far as can now be ascertained, even mentioned in the Convention. The King had undoubtedly, by the ancient laws of the realm, large powers for the regulation of trade; but the ablest judge would have found it difficult to say what was the precise extent of those powers. It was universally acknowledged that it belonged to the King to prescribe weights and measures, and to coin money; that no fair or market could be held without authority from him; that no ship could unload in any bay or estuary which he had not declared to be a port. In addition to his undoubted right to grant special commercial privileges to particular places, he long claimed a right to grant special commercial privileges to particular societies and to particular individuals; and our ancestors, as usual, did not think it worth their while to dispute this claim, till it produced serious inconvenience. At length, in the reign of Elizabeth, the power of creating monopolies began to be grossly abused; and, as soon

as it began to be grossly abused, it began to be questioned. The Queen wisely declined a conflict with a House of Commons backed by the whole nation. She frankly acknowledged that there was reason for complaint; she cancelled the patents which had excited the public clamours; and her people, delighted by this concession, and by the gracious manner in which it had been made, did not require from her an express renunciation of the disputed prerogative.

The discontents which her wisdom had appeased were revived by the dishonest and pusillanimous policy which her successor called Kingcraft. He readily granted oppressive patents of monopoly. When he needed the help of his Parliament, he as readily annulled them. As soon as the Parliament had ceased to sit, his Great Seal was put to instruments more odious than those which he had recently cancelled. At length that excellent House of Commons which met in 1623 determined to apply a strong remedy to the evil. The King was forced to give his assent to a law which declared monopolies established by royal authority to be null and void. Some exceptions, however, were made, and, unfortunately, were not very clearly defined. It was especially provided that every Society of Merchants which had been instituted for the purpose of carrying on any trade should retain all its legal privileges. [153](#) The question whether a monopoly granted by the Crown to such a company were or were not a legal privilege was left unsettled, and continued to exercise, during many years, the ingenuity of lawyers. [154](#) The nation,

however, relieved at once from a multitude of impositions and vexations which were painfully felt every day at every fireside, was in no humour to dispute the validity of the charters under which a few companies to London traded with distant parts of the world.

Of these companies by far the most important was that which had been, on the last day of the sixteenth century, incorporated by Queen Elizabeth under the name of the Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading to the East Indies. When this celebrated body began to exist, the Mogul monarchy was at the zenith of power and glory. Akbar, the ablest and best of the princes of the House of Tamerlane, had just been borne, full of years and honours, to a mausoleum surpassing in magnificence any that Europe could show. He had bequeathed to his posterity an empire containing more than twenty times the population and yielding more than twenty times the revenue of the England which, under our great Queen, held a foremost place among European powers. It is curious and interesting to consider how little the two countries, destined to be one day so closely connected, were then known to each other. The most enlightened Englishmen looked on India with ignorant admiration. The most enlightened natives of India were scarcely aware that England existed. Our ancestors had a dim notion of endless bazaars, swarming with buyers and sellers, and blazing with cloth of gold, with variegated silks and with precious stones; of treasuries where diamonds were piled in heaps and sequins in mountains;

of palaces, compared with which Whitehall and Hampton Court were hovels; of armies ten times as numerous as that which they had seen assembled at Tilbury to repel the Armada. On the other hand, it was probably not known to one of the statesmen in the Durbar of Agra that there was near the setting sun a great city of infidels, called London, where a woman reigned, and that she had given to an association of Frank merchants the exclusive privilege of freighting ships from her dominions to the Indian seas. That this association would one day rule all India, from the ocean to the everlasting snow, would reduce to profound obedience great provinces which had never submitted to Akbar's authority, would send Lieutenant Governors to preside in his capital, and would dole out a monthly pension to his heir, would have seemed to the wisest of European or of Oriental politicians as impossible as that inhabitants of our globe should find an empire in Venus or Jupiter.

Three generations passed away; and still nothing indicated that the East India Company would ever become a great Asiatic potentate. The Mogul empire, though undermined by internal causes of decay, and tottering to its fall, still presented to distant nations the appearance of undiminished prosperity and vigour. Aurengzebe, who, in the same month in which Oliver Cromwell died, assumed the magnificent title of Conqueror of the World, continued to reign till Anne had been long on the English throne. He was the sovereign of a larger territory than had obeyed any of his predecessors. His name was great

in the farthest regions of the West. Here he had been made by Dryden the hero of a tragedy which would alone suffice to show how little the English of that age knew about the vast empire which their grandchildren were to conquer and to govern. The poet's Mussulman princes make love in the style of Amadis, preach about the death of Socrates, and embellish their discourse with allusions to the mythological stories of Ovid. The Brahminical metempsychosis is represented as an article of the Mussulman creed; and the Mussulman Sultanas burn themselves with their husbands after the Brahminical fashion. This drama, once rapturously applauded by crowded theatres, and known by heart to fine gentlemen and fine ladies, is now forgotten. But one noble passage still lives, and is repeated by thousands who know not whence it comes. [155](#)

Though nothing yet indicated the high political destiny of the East India Company, that body had a great sway in the City of London. The offices, which stood on a very small part of the ground which the present offices cover, had escaped the ravages of the fire. The India House of those days was a building of timber and plaster, rich with the quaint carving and lattice-work of the Elizabethan age. Above the windows was a painting which represented a fleet of merchantmen tossing on the waves. The whole edifice was surmounted by a colossal wooden seaman, who, from between two dolphins, looked down on the crowds of Leadenhall Street. [156](#) In this abode, narrow and humble indeed when compared with the vast labyrinth of passages and chambers

which now bears the same name, the Company enjoyed, during the greater part of the reign of Charles the Second, a prosperity to which the history of trade scarcely furnishes any parallel, and which excited the wonder, the cupidity and the envious animosity of the whole capital. Wealth and luxury were then rapidly increasing. The taste for the spices, the tissues and the jewels of the East became stronger day by day. Tea, which, at the time when Monk brought the army of Scotland to London, had been handed round to be stared at and just touched with the lips, as a great rarity from China, was, eight years later, a regular article of import, and was soon consumed in such quantities that financiers began to consider it as a fit subject for taxation. The progress which was making in the art of war had created an unprecedented demand for the ingredients of which gunpowder is compounded. It was calculated that all Europe would hardly produce in a year saltpetre enough for the siege of one town fortified on the principles of Vauban. [157](#) But for the supplies from India, it was said, the English government would be unable to equip a fleet without digging up the cellars of London in order to collect the nitrous particles from the walls. [158](#) Before the Restoration scarcely one ship from the Thames had ever visited the Delta of the Ganges. But, during the twenty-three years which followed the Restoration, the value of the annual imports from that rich and populous district increased from eight thousand pounds to three hundred thousand.

The gains of the body which had the exclusive possession

of this fast growing trade were almost incredible. The capital which had been actually paid up did not exceed three hundred and seventy thousand pounds; but the Company could, without difficulty, borrow money at six per cent., and the borrowed money, thrown into the trade, produced, it was rumoured, thirty per cent. The profits were such that, in 1676, every proprietor received as a bonus a quantity of stock equal to that which he held. On the capital, thus doubled, were paid, during five years, dividends amounting on an average to twenty per cent. annually. There had been a time when a hundred pounds of the stock could be purchased for sixty. Even in 1664 the price in the market was only seventy. But in 1677 the price had risen to two hundred and forty-five; in 1681 it was three hundred; it subsequently rose to three hundred and sixty; and it is said that some sales were effected at five hundred. [159](#)

The enormous gains of the Indian trade might perhaps have excited little murmuring if they had been distributed among numerous proprietors. But while the value of the stock went on increasing, the number of stockholders went on diminishing. At the time when the prosperity of the Company reached the highest point, the management was entirely in the hands of a few merchants of enormous wealth. A proprietor then had a vote for every five hundred pounds of stock that stood in his name. It is asserted in the pamphlets of that age that five persons had a sixth part, and fourteen persons a third part of the votes. [160](#) More than one fortunate speculator was said

to derive an annual income of ten thousand pounds from the monopoly; and one great man was pointed out on the Royal Exchange as having, by judicious or lucky purchases of stock, created in no long time an estate of twenty thousand a year. This commercial grandee, who in wealth and in the influence which attends wealth vied with the greatest nobles of his time, was Sir Josiah Child. There were those who still remembered him an apprentice, sweeping one of the counting houses of the City. But from a humble position his abilities had raised him rapidly to opulence, power and fame. At the time of the Restoration he was highly considered in the mercantile world. Soon after that event he published his thoughts on the philosophy of trade. His speculations were not always sound; but they were the speculations of an ingenious and reflecting man. Into whatever errors he may occasionally have fallen as a theorist, it is certain that, as a practical man of business, he had few equals. Almost as soon as he became a member of the committee which directed the affairs of the Company, his ascendancy was felt. Soon many of the most important posts, both in Leadenhall Street and in the factories of Bombay and Bengal, were filled by his kinsmen and creatures. His riches, though expended with ostentatious profusion, continued to increase and multiply. He obtained a baronetcy; he purchased a stately seat at Wanstead; and there he laid out immense sums in excavating fishponds, and in planting whole square miles of barren land with walnut trees. He married his daughter to the eldest son of the Duke of Beaufort, and paid

down with her a portion of fifty thousand pounds. [161](#)

But this wonderful prosperity was not uninterrupted. Towards the close of the reign of Charles the Second the Company began to be fiercely attacked from without, and to be at the same time distracted by internal dissensions. The profits of the Indian trade were so tempting, that private adventurers had often, in defiance of the royal charter, fitted out ships for the Eastern seas. But the competition of these interlopers did not become really formidable till the year 1680. The nation was then violently agitated by the dispute about the Exclusion Bill. Timid men were anticipating another civil war. The two great parties, newly named Whigs and Tories, were fiercely contending in every county and town of England; and the feud soon spread to every corner of the civilised world where Englishmen were to be found.

The Company was popularly considered as a Whig body. Among the members of the directing committee were some of the most vehement Exclusionists in the City. Indeed two of them, Sir Samuel Barnardistone and Thomas Papillon, drew on themselves a severe persecution by their zeal against Popery and arbitrary power. [162](#) Child had been originally brought into the direction by these men; he had long acted in concert with them; and he was supposed to hold their political opinions. He had, during many years, stood high in the esteem of the chiefs of the parliamentary opposition, and had been especially obnoxious to the Duke of York. [163](#) The interlopers therefore determined to affect the character of loyal men, who were determined to

stand by the throne against the insolent tribunes of the City. They spread, at all the factories in the East, reports that England was in confusion, that the sword had been drawn or would immediately be drawn, and that the Company was forward in the rebellion against the Crown. These rumours, which, in truth, were not improbable, easily found credit among people separated from London by what was then a voyage of twelve months. Some servants of the Company who were in ill humour with their employers, and others who were zealous royalists, joined the private traders. At Bombay, the garrison and the great body of the English inhabitants declared that they would no longer obey any body who did not obey the King; they imprisoned the Deputy Governor; and they proclaimed that they held the island for the Crown. At Saint Helena there was a rising. The insurgents took the name of King's men, and displayed the royal standard. They were, not without difficulty, put down; and some of them were executed by martial law. [164](#)

If the Company had still been a Whig Company when the news of these commotions reached England, it is probable that the government would have approved of the conduct of the mutineers, and that the charter on which the monopoly depended would have had the fate which about the same time befell so many other charters. But while the interlopers were, at a distance of many thousands of miles, making war on the Company in the name of the King, the Company and the King had been reconciled. When the Oxford Parliament had been

dissolved, when many signs indicated that a strong reaction in favour of prerogative was at hand, when all the corporations which had incurred the royal displeasure were beginning to tremble for their franchises, a rapid and complete revolution took place at the India House. Child, who was then Governor, or, in the modern phrase, Chairman, separated himself from his old friends, excluded them from the direction, and negotiated a treaty of peace and of close alliance with the Court. [165](#) It is not improbable that the near connection into which he had just entered with the great Tory house of Beaufort may have had something to do with this change in his politics. Papillon, Barnardistone, and their adherents, sold their stock; their places in the committee were supplied by persons devoted to Child; and he was thenceforth the autocrat of the Company. The treasures of the Company were absolutely at his disposal. The most important papers of the Company were kept, not in the muniment room of the office in Leadenhall Street, but in his desk at Wanstead. The boundless power which he exercised at the India House enabled him to become a favourite at Whitehall; and the favour which he enjoyed at Whitehall confirmed his power at the India House. A present of ten thousand guineas was graciously received from him by Charles. Ten thousand more were accepted by James, who readily consented to become a holder of stock. All who could help or hurt at Court, ministers, mistresses, priests, were kept in good humour by presents of shawls and silks, birds' nests and atar of roses, bulses of diamonds and bags of guineas. [166](#)

Of what the Dictator expended no account was asked by his colleagues; and in truth he seems to have deserved the confidence which they reposed in him. His bribes, distributed with judicious prodigality, speedily produced a large return. Just when the Court became all powerful in the State, he became all powerful at the Court. Jeffreys pronounced a decision in favour of the monopoly, and of the strongest acts which had been done in defence of the monopoly. James ordered his seal to be put to a new charter which confirmed and extended all the privileges bestowed on the Company by his predecessors. All captains of Indiamen received commissions from the Crown, and were permitted to hoist the royal ensigns. [167](#) John Child, brother of Sir Josiah, and Governor of Bombay, was created a baronet by the style of Sir John Child of Surat: he was declared General of all the English forces in the East; and he was authorised to assume the title of Excellency. The Company, on the other hand, distinguished itself among many servile corporations by obsequious homage to the throne, and set to all the merchants of the kingdom the example of readily and even eagerly paying those customs which James, at the commencement of his reign, exacted without the authority of Parliament. [168](#)

It seemed that the private trade would now be utterly crushed, and that the monopoly, protected by the whole strength of the royal prerogative, would be more profitable than ever. But unfortunately just at this moment a quarrel arose between the agents of the Company in India and the Mogul Government.

Where the fault lay is a question which was vehemently disputed at the time, and which it is now impossible to decide. The interlopers threw all the blame on the Company. The Governor of Bombay, they affirmed, had always been grasping and violent; but his baronetcy and his military commission had completely turned his head. The very natives who were employed about the factory had noticed the change, and had muttered, in their broken English, that there must be some strange curse attending the word Excellency; for that, ever since the chief of the strangers was called Excellency, every thing had gone to ruin. Meanwhile, it was said, the brother in England had sanctioned all the unjust and impolitic acts of the brother in India, till at length insolence and rapine, disgraceful to the English nation and to the Christian religion, had roused the just resentment of the native authorities. The Company warmly recriminated. The story told at the India House was that the quarrel was entirely the work of the interlopers, who were now designated not only as interlopers but as traitors. They had, it was alleged, by flattery, by presents, and by false accusations, induced the viceroys of the Mogul to oppress and persecute the body which in Asia represented the English Crown. And indeed this charge seems not to have been altogether without foundation. It is certain that one of the most pertinacious enemies of the Childs went up to the Court of Aurengzebe, took his station at the palace gate, stopped the Great King who was in the act of mounting on horseback, and, lifting a petition high in the air, demanded justice in the name of

the common God of Christians and Mussulmans. [169](#) Whether Aurengzebe paid much attention to the charges brought by infidel Franks against each other may be doubted. But it is certain that a complete rupture took place between his deputies and the servants of the Company. On the sea the ships of his subjects were seized by the English. On land the English settlements were taken and plundered. The trade was suspended; and, though great annual dividends were still paid in London, they were no longer paid out of annual profits.

Just at this conjuncture, while every Indiaman that arrived in the Thames was bringing unwelcome news from the East, all the politics of Sir Josiah were utterly confounded by the Revolution. He had flattered himself that he had secured the body of which he was the chief against the machinations of interlopers, by uniting it closely with the strongest government that had existed within his memory. That government had fallen; and whatever had leaned on the ruined fabric began to totter. The bribes had been thrown away. The connections which had been the strength and boast of the corporation were now its weakness and its shame. The King who had been one of its members was an exile. The judge by whom all its most exorbitant pretensions had been pronounced legitimate was a prisoner. All the old enemies of the Company, reinforced by those great Whig merchants whom Child had expelled from the direction, demanded justice and vengeance from the Whig House of Commons, which had just placed William and Mary on the throne. No voice was louder

in accusation than that of Papillon, who had, some years before, been more zealous for the charter than any man in London. [170](#) The Commons censured in severe terms the persons who had inflicted death by martial law at Saint Helena, and even resolved that some of those offenders should be excluded from the Act of Indemnity. [171](#) The great question, how the trade with the East should for the future be carried on, was referred to a Committee. The report was to have been made on the twenty-seventh of January 1690; but on that very day the Parliament ceased to exist.

The first two sessions of the succeeding Parliament were so short and so busy that little was said about India in either House. But, out of Parliament, all the arts both of controversy and of intrigue were employed on both sides. Almost as many pamphlets were published about the India trade as about the oaths. The despot of Leadenhall Street was libelled in prose and verse. Wretched puns were made on his name. He was compared to Cromwell, to the King of France, to Goliath of Gath, to the Devil. It was vehemently declared to be necessary that, in any Act which might be passed for the regulation of our traffic with the Eastern seas, Sir Josiah should be by name excluded from all trust. [172](#)

There were, however, great differences of opinion among those who agreed in hating Child and the body of which he was the head. The manufacturers of Spitalfields, of Norwich, of Yorkshire, and of the Western counties, considered the trade with the Eastern seas as rather injurious than beneficial to the

kingdom. The importation of Indian spices, indeed, was admitted to be harmless, and the importation of Indian saltpetre to be necessary. But the importation of silks and of Bengals, as shawls were then called, was pronounced to be a curse to the country. The effect of the growing taste for such frippery was that our gold and silver went abroad, and that much excellent English drapery lay in our warehouses till it was devoured by the moths. Those, it was said, were happy days for the inhabitants both of our pasture lands and of our manufacturing towns, when every gown, every hanging, every bed, was made of materials which our own flocks had furnished to our own looms. Where were now the brave old hangings of arras which had adorned the walls of lordly mansions in the days of Elizabeth? And was it not a shame to see a gentleman, whose ancestors had worn nothing but stuffs made by English workmen out of English fleeces, flaunting in a calico shirt and a pair of silk stockings? Clamours such as these had, a few years before, extorted from Parliament the Act which required that the dead should be wrapped in woollen; and some sanguine clothiers hoped that the legislature would, by excluding all Indian textures from our ports, impose the same necessity on the living. [173](#)

But this feeling was confined to a minority. The public was, indeed, inclined rather to overrate than to underrate the benefits which might be derived by England from the Indian trade. What was the most effectual mode of extending that trade was a question which excited general interest, and which was answered

in very different ways.

A small party, consisting chiefly of merchants resident at Bristol and other provincial seaports, maintained that the best way to extend trade was to leave it free. They urged the well known arguments which prove that monopoly is injurious to commerce; and, having fully established the general law, they asked why the commerce between England and India was to be considered as an exception to that law. Any trader ought, they said, to be permitted to send from any port a cargo to Surat or Canton as freely as he now sent a cargo to Hamburg or Lisbon. 174 In our time these doctrines may probably be considered, not only as sound, but as trite and obvious. In the seventeenth century, however, they were thought paradoxical. It was then generally held to be a certain, and indeed an almost selfevident truth, that our trade with the countries lying beyond the Cape of Good Hope could be advantageously carried on only by means of a great Joint Stock Company. There was no analogy, it was said, between our European trade and our Indian trade. Our government had diplomatic relations with the European States. If necessary, a maritime force could easily be sent from hence to the mouth of the Elbe or of the Tagus. But the English Kings had no envoy at the Court of Agra or Peking. There was seldom a single English man of war within ten thousand miles of the Bay of Bengal or of the Gulf of Siam. As our merchants could not, in those remote seas, be protected by their Sovereign, they must protect themselves, and must, for that end, exercise some

of the rights of sovereignty. They must have forts, garrisons and armed ships. They must have power to send and receive embassies, to make a treaty of alliance with one Asiatic prince, to wage war on another. It was evidently impossible that every merchant should have this power independently of the rest. The merchants trading to India must therefore be joined together in a corporation which could act as one man. In support of these arguments the example of the Dutch was cited, and was generally considered as decisive. For in that age the immense prosperity of Holland was every where regarded with admiration, not the less earnest because it was largely mingled with envy and hatred. In all that related to trade, her statesmen were considered as oracles, and her institutions as models.

The great majority, therefore, of those who assailed the Company assailed it, not because it traded on joint funds and possessed exclusive privileges, but because it was ruled by one man, and because his rule had been mischievous to the public, and beneficial only to himself and his creatures. The obvious remedy, it was said, for the evils which his maladministration had produced was to transfer the monopoly to a new corporation so constituted as to be in no danger of falling under the dominion either of a despot or of a narrow oligarchy. Many persons who were desirous to be members of such a corporation, formed themselves into a society, signed an engagement, and entrusted the care of their interests to a committee which contained some of the chief traders of the City. This society, though it had,

in the eye of the law, no personality, was early designated, in popular speech, as the New Company; and the hostilities between the New Company and the Old Company soon caused almost as much excitement and anxiety, at least in that busy hive of which the Royal Exchange was the centre, as the hostilities between the Allies and the French King. The headquarters of the younger association were in Dowgate; the Skinners lent their stately hall; and the meetings were held in a parlour renowned for the fragrance which exhaled from a magnificent wainscot of cedar. [175](#)

While the contention was hottest, important news arrived from India, and was announced in the London Gazette as in the highest degree satisfactory. Peace had been concluded between the great Mogul and the English. That mighty potentate had not only withdrawn his troops from the factories, but had bestowed on the Company privileges such as it had never before enjoyed. Soon, however, appeared a very different version of the story. The enemies of Child had, before this time, accused him of systematically publishing false intelligence. He had now, they said, outlied himself. They had obtained a true copy of the Firman which had put an end to the war; and they printed a translation of it. It appeared that Aurengzebe had contemptuously granted to the English, in consideration of their penitence and of a large tribute, his forgiveness for their past delinquency, had charged them to behave themselves better for the future, and had, in the tone of a master, laid on

them his commands to remove the principal offender, Sir John Child, from power and trust. The death of Sir John occurred so seasonably that these commands could not be obeyed. But it was only too evident that the pacification which the rulers of the India House had represented as advantageous and honourable had really been effected on terms disgraceful to the English name. [176](#)

During the summer of 1691, the controversy which raged on this subject between the Leadenhall Street Company and the Dowgate Company kept the City in constant agitation. In the autumn, the Parliament had no sooner met than both the contending parties presented petitions to the House of Commons. [177](#) The petitions were immediately taken into serious consideration, and resolutions of grave importance were passed. The first resolution was that the trade with the East Indies was beneficial to the kingdom; the second was that the trade with the East Indies would be best carried on by a joint stock company possessed of exclusive privileges. [178](#) It was plain, therefore, that neither those manufacturers who wished to prohibit the trade, nor those merchants at the outports who wished to throw it open, had the smallest chance of attaining their objects. The only question left was the question between the Old and the New Company. Seventeen years elapsed before that question ceased to disturb both political and commercial circles. It was fatal to the honour and power of one great minister, and to the peace and prosperity of many private families. The

tracts which the rival bodies put forth against each other were innumerable. If the drama of that age may be trusted, the feud between the India House and Skinners' Hall was sometimes as serious an impediment to the course of true love in London as the feud of the Capulets and Montagues had been at Verona. [179](#)

Which of the two contending parties was the stronger it is not easy to say. The New Company was supported by the Whigs, the Old Company by the Tories. The New Company was popular; for it promised largely, and could not be accused of having broken its promises; it made no dividends, and therefore was not envied; it had no power to oppress, and had therefore been guilty of no oppression. The Old Company, though generally regarded with little favour by the public, had the immense advantage of being in possession, and of having only to stand on the defensive. The burden of framing a plan for the regulation of the India trade, and of proving that plan to be better than the plan hitherto followed, lay on the New Company. The Old Company had merely to find objections to every change that was proposed; and such objections there was little difficulty in finding. The members of the New Company were ill provided with the means of purchasing support at Court and in Parliament. They had no corporate existence, no common treasury. If any of them gave a bribe, he gave it out of his own pocket, with little chance of being reimbursed. But the Old Company, though surrounded by dangers, still held its exclusive privileges, and still made its enormous profits. Its stock had indeed gone down greatly in

value since the golden days of Charles the Second; but a hundred pounds still sold for a hundred and twenty-two. [180](#) After a large dividend had been paid to the proprietors, a surplus remained amply sufficient, in those days, to corrupt half a cabinet; and this surplus was absolutely at the disposal of one able, determined and unscrupulous man, who maintained the fight with wonderful art and pertinacity.

The majority of the Commons wished to effect a compromise, to retain the Old Company, but to remodel it, to impose on it new conditions, and to incorporate with it the members of the New Company. With this view it was, after long and vehement debates and close divisions, resolved that the capital should be increased to a million and a half. In order to prevent a single person or a small junto from domineering over the whole society, it was determined that five thousand pounds of stock should be the largest quantity that any single proprietor could hold, and that those who held more should be required to sell the overplus at any price not below par. In return for the exclusive privilege of trading to the Eastern seas, the Company was to be required to furnish annually five hundred tons of saltpetre to the Crown at a low price, and to export annually English manufactures to the value of two hundred thousand pounds. [181](#)

A bill founded on these resolutions was brought in, read twice, and committed, but was suffered to drop in consequence of the positive refusal of Child and his associates to accept the offered terms. He objected to every part of the plan; and his

objections are highly curious and amusing. The great monopolist took his stand on the principles of free trade. In a luminous and powerfully written paper he exposed the absurdity of the expedients which the House of Commons had devised. To limit the amount of stock which might stand in a single name would, he said, be most unreasonable. Surely a proprietor whose whole fortune was staked on the success of the Indian trade was far more likely to exert all his faculties vigorously for the promotion of that trade than a proprietor who had risked only what it would be no great disaster to lose. The demand that saltpetre should be furnished to the Crown for a fixed sum Child met by those arguments, familiar to our generation, which prove that prices should be left to settle themselves. To the demand that the Company should bind itself to export annually two hundred thousand pounds' worth of English manufactures he very properly replied that the Company would most gladly export two millions' worth if the market required such a supply, and that, if the market were overstocked, it would be mere folly to send good cloth half round the world to be eaten by white ants. It was never, he declared with much spirit, found politic to put trade into straitlaced bodices, which, instead of making it grow upright and thrive, must either kill it or force it awry.

The Commons, irritated by Child's obstinacy, presented an address requesting the King to dissolve the Old Company, and to grant a charter to a new Company on such terms as to His Majesty's wisdom might seem fit. [182](#) It is plainly implied in

the terms of this address that the Commons thought the King constitutionally competent to grant an exclusive privilege of trading to the East Indies.

The King replied that the subject was most important, that he would consider it maturely, and that he would, at a future time, give the House a more precise answer. [183](#) In Parliament nothing more was said on the subject during that session; but out of Parliament the war was fiercer than ever; and the belligerents were by no means scrupulous about the means which they employed. The chief weapons of the New Company were libels; the chief weapons of the Old Company were bribes.

In the same week in which the bill for the regulation of the Indian trade was suffered to drop, another bill which had produced great excitement and had called forth an almost unprecedented display of parliamentary ability, underwent the same fate.

During the eight years which preceded the Revolution, the Whigs had complained bitterly, and not more bitterly than justly, of the hard measure dealt out to persons accused of political offences. Was it not monstrous, they asked, that a culprit should be denied a sight of his indictment? Often an unhappy prisoner had not known of what he was accused till he had held up his hand at the bar. The crime imputed to him might be plotting to shoot the King; it might be plotting to poison the King. The more innocent the defendant was, the less likely he was to guess the nature of the charge on which he was to be tried; and how

could he have evidence ready to rebut a charge the nature of which he could not guess? The Crown had power to compel the attendance of witnesses. The prisoner had no such power. If witnesses voluntarily came forward to speak in his favour, they could not be sworn. Their testimony therefore made less impression on a jury than the testimony of the witnesses for the prosecution, whose veracity was guaranteed by the most solemn sanctions of law and of religion. The juries, carefully selected by Sheriffs whom the Crown had named, were men animated by the fiercest party spirit, men who had as little tenderness for an Exclusionist of a Dissenter as for a mad dog. The government was served by a band of able, experienced and unprincipled lawyers, who could, by merely glancing over a brief, distinguish every weak and every strong point of a case, whose presence of mind never failed them, whose flow of speech was inexhaustible, and who had passed their lives in dressing up the worse reason so as to make it appear the better. Was it not horrible to see three or four of these shrewd, learned and callous orators arrayed against one poor wretch who had never in his life uttered a word in public, who was ignorant of the legal definition of treason and of the first principles of the law of evidence, and whose intellect, unequal at best to a fencing match with professional gladiators, was confused by the near prospect of a cruel and ignominious death? Such however was the rule; and even for a man so much stupefied by sickness that he could not hold up his hand or make his voice heard, even for a poor old woman

who understood nothing of what was passing except that she was going to be roasted alive for doing an act of charity, no advocate was suffered to utter a word. That a state trial so conducted was little better than a judicial murder had been, during the proscription of the Whig party, a fundamental article of the Whig creed. The Tories, on the other hand, though they could not deny that there had been some hard cases, maintained that, on the whole, substantial justice had been done. Perhaps a few seditious persons who had gone very near to the frontier of treason, but had not actually passed that frontier, might have suffered as traitors. But was that a sufficient reason for enabling the chiefs of the Rye House Plot and of the Western Insurrection to elude, by mere chicanery, the punishment of their guilt? On what principle was the traitor to have chances of escape which were not allowed to the felon? The culprit who was accused of larceny was subject to all the same disadvantages which, in the case of regicides and rebels, were thought so unjust; ye nobody pitied him. Nobody thought it monstrous that he should not have time to study a copy of his indictment, that his witnesses should be examined without being sworn, that he should be left to defend himself, without the help of counsel against the best abilities which the Inns of Court could furnish. The Whigs, it seemed, reserved all their compassion for those crimes which subvert government and dissolve the whole frame of human society. Guy Faux was to be treated with an indulgence which was not to be extended to a shoplifter. Bradshaw was to have privileges which were refused

to a boy who had robbed a henroost.

The Revolution produced, as was natural, some change in the sentiments of both the great parties. In the days when none but Roundheads and Nonconformists were accused of treason, even the most humane and upright Cavaliers were disposed to think that the laws which were the safeguard of the throne could hardly be too severe. But, as soon as loyal Tory gentlemen and venerable fathers of the Church were in danger of being called in question for corresponding with Saint Germain, a new light flashed on many understandings which had been unable to discover the smallest injustice in the proceedings against Algernon Sidney and Alice Lisle. It was no longer thought utterly absurd to maintain that some advantages which were withheld from a man accused of felony might reasonably be allowed to a man accused of treason. What probability was there that any sheriff would pack a jury, that any barrister would employ all the arts of sophistry and rhetoric, that any judge would strain law and misrepresent evidence, in order to convict an innocent person of burglary or sheep stealing? But on a trial for high treason a verdict of acquittal must always be considered as a defeat of the government; and there was but too much reason to fear that many sheriffs, barristers and judges might be impelled by party spirit, or by some baser motive, to do any thing which might save the government from the inconvenience and shame of a defeat. The cry of the whole body of Tories was that the lives of good Englishmen who happened to be obnoxious to the ruling powers

were not sufficiently protected; and this cry was swelled by the voices of some lawyers who had distinguished themselves by the malignant zeal and dishonest ingenuity with which they had conducted State prosecutions in the days of Charles and James.

The feeling of the Whigs, though it had not, like the feeling of the Tories, undergone a complete change, was yet not quite what it had been. Some, who had thought it most unjust that Russell should have no counsel and that Cornish should have no copy of his indictment, now began to mutter that the times had changed; that the dangers of the State were extreme; that liberty, property, religion, national independence, were all at stake; that many Englishmen were engaged in schemes of which the object was to make England the slave of France and of Rome; and that it would be most unwise to relax, at such a moment, the laws against political offences. It was true that the injustice with which, in the late reigns, State trials had been conducted, had given great scandal. But this injustice was to be ascribed to the bad kings and bad judges with whom the nation had been cursed. William was now on the throne; Holt was seated for life on the bench; and William would never exact, nor would Holt ever perform, services so shameful and wicked as those for which the banished tyrant had rewarded Jeffreys with riches and titles. This language however was at first held but by few. The Whigs, as a party, seem to have felt that they could not honourably defend, in the season of their prosperity, what, in the time of their adversity, they had always designated as a crying grievance. A bill for regulating

trials in cases of high treason was brought into the House of Commons, and was received with general applause. Treby had the courage to make some objections; but no division took place. The chief enactments were that no person should be convicted of high treason committed more than three years before the indictment was found; that every person indicted for high treason should be allowed to avail himself of the assistance of counsel, and should be furnished, ten days before the trial, with a copy of the indictment, and with a list of the freeholders from among whom the jury was to be taken; that his witnesses should be sworn, and that they should be cited by the same process by which the attendance of the witnesses against him was secured.

The Bill went to the Upper House, and came back with an important amendment. The Lords had long complained of the anomalous and iniquitous constitution of that tribunal which had jurisdiction over them in cases of life and death. When a grand jury has found a bill of indictment against a temporal peer for any offence higher than a misdemeanour, the Crown appoints a Lord High Steward; and in the Lord High Steward's Court the case is tried. This Court was anciently composed in two very different ways. It consisted, if Parliament happened to be sitting, of all the members of the Upper House. When Parliament was not sitting, the Lord High Steward summoned any twelve or more peers at his discretion to form a jury. The consequence was that a peer accused of high treason during a recess was tried by a jury which his prosecutors had packed. The Lords now

demanded that, during a recess as well as during a session, every peer accused of high treason should be tried by the whole body of the peerage.

The demand was resisted by the House of Commons with a vehemence and obstinacy which men of the present generation may find it difficult to understand. The truth is that some invidious privileges of peerage which have since been abolished, and others which have since fallen into entire desuetude, were then in full force, and were daily used. No gentleman who had had a dispute with a nobleman could think, without indignation, of the advantages enjoyed by the favoured caste. If His Lordship were sued at law, his privilege enabled him to impede the course of justice. If a rude word were spoken of him, such a word as he might himself utter with perfect impunity, he might vindicate his insulted dignity both by civil and criminal proceedings. If a barrister, in the discharge of his duty to a client, spoke with severity of the conduct of a noble seducer, if an honest squire on the racecourse applied the proper epithets to the tricks of a noble swindler, the affronted patrician had only to complain to the proud and powerful body of which he was a member. His brethren made his cause their own. The offender was taken into custody by Black Rod, brought to the bar, flung into prison, and kept there till he was glad to obtain forgiveness by the most degrading submissions. Nothing could therefore be more natural than that an attempt of the Peers to obtain any new advantage for their order should be regarded by the Commons with extreme

jealousy. There is strong reason to suspect that some able Whig politicians, who thought it dangerous to relax, at that moment, the laws against political offences, but who could not, without incurring the charge of inconsistency, declare themselves adverse to any relaxation, had conceived a hope that they might, by fomenting the dispute about the Court of the Lord High Steward, defer for at least a year the passing of a bill which they disliked, and yet could not decently oppose. If this really was their plan, it succeeded perfectly. The Lower House rejected the amendment; the Upper House persisted; a free conference was held; and the question was argued with great force and ingenuity on both sides.

The reasons in favour of the amendment are obvious, and indeed at first sight seem unanswerable. It was surely difficult to defend a system under which the Sovereign nominated a conclave of his own creatures to decide the fate of men whom he regarded as his mortal enemies. And could any thing be more absurd than that a nobleman accused of high treason should be entitled to be tried by the whole body of his peers if his indictment happened to be brought into the House of Lords the minute before a prorogation, but that, if the indictment arrived a minute after the prorogation, he should be at the mercy of a small junto named by the very authority which prosecuted him? That any thing could have been said on the other side seems strange; but those who managed the conference for the Commons were not ordinary men, and seem on this occasion to have put forth all their powers. Conspicuous among them

was Charles Montague, who was rapidly attaining a foremost rank among the orators of that age. To him the lead seems on this occasion to have been left; and to his pen we owe an account of the discussion, which gives a very high notion of his talents for debate. "We have framed"—such was in substance his reasoning,—"we have framed a law which has in it nothing exclusive, a law which will be a blessing to every class, from the highest to the lowest. The new securities, which we propose to give to innocence oppressed by power, are common between the premier peer and the humblest day labourer. The clause which establishes a time of limitation for prosecutions protects us all alike. To every Englishman accused of the highest crime against the state, whatever be his rank, we give the privilege of seeing his indictment, the privilege of being defended by counsel, the privilege of having his witnesses summoned by writ of subpoena and sworn on the Holy Gospels. Such is the bill which we sent up to your Lordships; and you return it to us with a clause of which the effect is to give certain advantages to your noble order at the expense of the ancient prerogatives of the Crown. Surely before we consent to take away from the King any power which his predecessors have possessed for ages, and to give it to your Lordships, we ought to be satisfied that you are more likely to use it well than he. Something we must risk; somebody we must trust; and; since we are forced, much against our will, to institute what is necessarily an invidious comparison, we must own ourselves unable to discover any reason for believing that a prince is less

to be trusted than an aristocracy.

"Is it reasonable, you ask, that you should be tried for your lives before a few members of your House, selected by the Crown? Is it reasonable, we ask in our turn, that you should have the privilege of being tried by all the members of your House, that is to say, by your brothers, your uncles, your first cousins, your second cousins, your fathers in law, your brothers in law, your most intimate friends? You marry so much into each other's families, you live so much in each other's society, that there is scarcely a nobleman who is not connected by consanguinity or affinity with several others, and who is not on terms of friendship with several more. There have been great men whose death put a third or fourth part of the baronage of England into mourning. Nor is there much danger that even those peers who may be unconnected with an accused lord will be disposed to send him to the block if they can with decency say 'Not Guilty, upon my honour.' For the ignominious death of a single member of a small aristocratical body necessarily leaves a stain on the reputation of his fellows. If, indeed, your Lordships proposed that every one of your body should be compelled to attend and vote, the Crown might have some chance of obtaining justice against a guilty peer, however strongly connected. But you propose that attendance shall be voluntary. Is it possible to doubt what the consequence will be? All the prisoner's relations and friends will be in their places to vote for him. Good nature and the fear of making powerful enemies will keep away many who, if

they voted at all, would be forced by conscience and honour to vote against him. The new system which you propose would therefore evidently be unfair to the Crown; and you do not show any reason for believing that the old system has been found in practice unfair to yourselves. We may confidently affirm that, even under a government less just and merciful than that under which we have the happiness to live, an innocent peer has little to fear from any set of peers that can be brought together in Westminster Hall to try him. How stands the fact? In what single case has a guiltless head fallen by the verdict of this packed jury? It would be easy to make out a long list of squires, merchants, lawyers, surgeons, yeomen, artisans, ploughmen, whose blood, barbarously shed during the late evil times, cries for vengeance to heaven. But what single member of your House, in our days, or in the days of our fathers, or in the days of our grandfathers, suffered death unjustly by sentence of the Court of the Lord High Steward? Hundreds of the common people were sent to the gallows by common juries for the Rye House Plot and the Western Insurrection. One peer, and one alone, my Lord Delamere, was brought at that time before the Court of the Lord High Steward; and he was acquitted. But, it is said, the evidence against him was legally insufficient. Be it so. So was the evidence against Sidney, against Cornish, against Alice Lisle; yet it sufficed to destroy them. But, it is said, the peers before whom my Lord Delamere was brought were selected with shameless unfairness by King James and by Jeffreys. Be it so. But this

only proves that, under the worst possible King, and under the worst possible High Steward, a lord tried by lords has a better chance for life than a commoner who puts himself on his country. We cannot, therefore, under the mild government which we now possess, feel much apprehension for the safety of any innocent peer. Would that we felt as little apprehension for the safety of that government! But it is notorious that the settlement with which our liberties are inseparably bound up is attacked at once by foreign and by domestic enemies. We cannot consent at such a crisis to relax the restraints which have, it may well be feared, already proved too feeble to prevent some men of high rank from plotting the ruin of their country. To sum up the whole, what is asked of us is that we will consent to transfer a certain power from their Majesties to your Lordships. Our answer is that, at this time, in our opinion, their Majesties have not too much power, and your Lordships have quite power enough."

These arguments, though eminently ingenious, and not without real force, failed to convince the Upper House. The Lords insisted that every peer should be entitled to be a Trier. The Commons were with difficulty induced to consent that the number of Triers should never be less than thirty-six, and positively refused to make any further concession. The bill was therefore suffered to drop. [184](#)

It is certain that those who in the conference on this bill represented the Commons, did not exaggerate the dangers to which the government was exposed. While the constitution of the

Court which was to try peers for treason was under discussion, a treason planned with rare skill by a peer was all but carried into execution.

Marlborough had never ceased to assure the Court of Saint Germain's that the great crime which he had committed was constantly present to his thoughts, and that he lived only for the purpose of repentance and reparation. Not only had he been himself converted; he had also converted the Princess Anne. In 1688, the Churchills had, with little difficulty, induced her to fly from her father's palace. In 1691, they, with as little difficulty, induced her to copy out and sign a letter expressing her deep concern for his misfortunes and her earnest wish to atone for her breach of duty. [185](#) At the same time Marlborough held out hopes that it might be in his power to effect the restoration of his old master in the best possible way, without the help of a single foreign soldier or sailor, by the votes of the English Lords and Commons, and by the support of the English army. We are not fully informed as to all the details of his plan. But the outline is known to us from a most interesting paper written by James, of which one copy is in the Bodleian Library, and another among the archives of the French Foreign Office.

The jealousy with which the English regarded the Dutch was at this time intense. There had never been a hearty friendship between the nations. They were indeed near of kin to each other. They spoke two dialects of one widespread language. Both boasted of their political freedom. Both were attached to the

reformed faith. Both were threatened by the same enemy, and would be safe only while they were united. Yet there was no cordial feeling between them. They would probably have loved each other more, if they had, in some respects, resembled each other less. They were the two great commercial nations, the two great maritime nations. In every sea their flags were found together, in the Baltic and in the Mediterranean, in the Gulf of Mexico and in the Straits of Malacca. Every where the merchant of London and the merchant of Amsterdam were trying to forestall each other and to undersell each other. In Europe the contest was not sanguinary. But too often, in barbarous countries, where there was no law but force, the competitors had met, burning with cupidity, burning with animosity, armed for battle, each suspecting the other of hostile designs and each resolved to give the other no advantage. In such circumstances it is not strange that many violent and cruel acts should have been perpetrated. What had been done in those distant regions could seldom be exactly known in Europe. Every thing was exaggerated and distorted by vague report and by national prejudice. Here it was the popular belief that the English were always blameless, and that every quarrel was to be ascribed to the avarice and inhumanity of the Dutch. Lamentable events which had taken place in the Spice Islands were repeatedly brought on our stage. The Englishmen were all saints and heroes; the Dutchmen all fiends in human shape, lying, robbing, ravishing, murdering, torturing. The angry passions which these pieces indicated had

more than once found vent in war. Thrice in the lifetime of one generation the two nations had contended, with equal courage and with various fortune, for the sovereignty of the German Ocean. The tyranny of James, as it had reconciled Tories to Whigs and Churchmen to Nonconformists, had also reconciled the English to the Dutch. While our ancestors were looking to the Hague for deliverance, the massacre of Amboyna and the great humiliation of Chatham had seemed to be forgotten. But since the Revolution the old feeling had revived. Though England and Holland were now closely bound together by treaty, they were as far as ever from being bound together by affection. Once, just after the battle of Beachy Head, our countrymen had seemed disposed to be just; but a violent reaction speedily followed. Torrington, who deserved to be shot, became a popular favourite; and the allies whom he had shamefully abandoned were accused of persecuting him without a cause. The partiality shown by the King to the companions of his youth was the favourite theme of the sewers of sedition. The most lucrative posts in his household, it was said, were held by Dutchmen; the House of Lords was fast filling with Dutchmen; the finest manors of the Crown were given to Dutchmen; the army was commanded by Dutchmen. That it would have been wise in William to exhibit somewhat less obtrusively his laudable fondness for his native country, and to remunerate his early friends somewhat more sparingly, is perfectly true. But it will not be easy to prove that, on any important occasion during his whole reign, he sacrificed the

interests of our island to the interests of the United Provinces. The English, however, were on this subject prone to fits of jealousy which made them quite incapable of listening to reason. One of the sharpest of those fits came on in the autumn of 1691. The antipathy to the Dutch was at that time strong in all classes, and nowhere stronger than in the Parliament and in the army. [186](#)

Of that antipathy Marlborough determined to avail himself for the purpose, as he assured James and James's adherents, of effecting a restoration. The temper of both Houses was such that they might not improbably be induced by skilful management to present a joint address requesting that all foreigners might be dismissed from the service of their Majesties. Marlborough undertook to move such an address in the Lords; and there would have been no difficulty in finding some gentleman of great weight to make a similar motion in the Commons.

If the address should be carried, what could William do? Would he yield? Would he discard all his dearest, his oldest, his most trusty friends? It was hardly possible to believe that he would make so painful, so humiliating a concession. If he did not yield, there would be a rupture between him and the Parliament; and the Parliament would be backed by the people. Even a King reigning by a hereditary title might well shrink from such a contest with the Estates of the Realm. But to a King whose title rested on a resolution of the Estates of the Realm such a contest must almost necessarily be fatal. The last hope of William would be in the army. The army Marlborough undertook

to manage; and it is highly probable that what he undertook he could have performed. His courage, his abilities, his noble and winning manners, the splendid success which had attended him on every occasion on which he had been in command, had made him, in spite of his sordid vices, a favourite with his brethren in arms. They were proud of having one countryman who had shown that he wanted nothing but opportunity to vie with the ablest Marshal of France. The Dutch were even more disliked by the English troops than by the English nation generally. Had Marlborough therefore, after securing the cooperation of some distinguished officers, presented himself at the critical moment to those regiments which he had led to victory in Flanders and in Ireland, had he called on them to rally round him, to protect the Parliament, and to drive out the aliens, there is strong reason to think that the call would have been obeyed. He would then have had it in his power to fulfil the promises which he had so solemnly made to his old master.

Of all the schemes ever formed for the restoration of James or of his descendants, this scheme promised the fairest. That national pride, that hatred of arbitrary power, which had hitherto been on William's side, would now be turned against him. Hundreds of thousands who would have put their lives in jeopardy to prevent a French army from imposing a government on the English, would have felt no disposition to prevent an English army from driving out the Dutch. Even the Whigs could scarcely, without renouncing their old doctrines, support a prince

who obstinately refused to comply with the general wish of his people signified to him by his Parliament. The plot looked well. An active canvass was made. Many members of the House of Commons, who did not at all suspect that there was any ulterior design, promised to vote against the foreigners. Marlborough was indefatigable in inflaming the discontents of the army. His house was constantly filled with officers who heated each other into fury by talking against the Dutch. But, before the preparations were complete, a strange suspicion rose in the minds of some of the Jacobites. That the author of this bold and artful scheme wished to pull down the existing government there could be little doubt. But was it quite certain what government he meant to set up? Might he not depose William without restoring James? Was it not possible that a man so wise, so aspiring, and so wicked, might be meditating a double treason, such as would have been thought a masterpiece of statecraft by the great Italian politicians of the fifteenth century, such as Borgia would have envied, such as Machiavel would have extolled to the skies?

What if this consummate dissembler should cheat both the rival kings? What if, when he found himself commander of the army and protector of the Parliament, he should proclaim Queen Anne? Was it not possible that the weary and harassed nation might gladly acquiesce in such a settlement? James was unpopular because he was a Papist, influenced by Popish priests. William was unpopular because he was a foreigner, attached to foreign favourites. Anne was at once a Protestant and an

Englishwoman. Under her government the country would be in no danger of being overrun either by Jesuits or by Dutchmen. That Marlborough had the strongest motives for placing her on the throne was evident. He could never, in the court of her father, be more than a repentant criminal, whose services were overpaid by a pardon. In her court the husband of her adored friend would be what Pepin Heristal and Charles Martel had been to the Chilperics and Childeberts. He would be the chief director of the civil and military government. He would wield the whole power of England. He would hold the balance of Europe. Great kings and commonwealths would bid against each other for his favour, and exhaust their treasuries in the vain hope of satiating his avarice. The presumption was, therefore, that, if he had the English crown in his hands, he would put it on the head of the Princess. What evidence there was to confirm this presumption is not known; but it is certain that something took place which convinced some of the most devoted friends of the exiled family that he was meditating a second perfidy, surpassing even the feat which he had performed at Salisbury. They were afraid that if, at that moment, they succeeded in getting rid of William, the situation of James would be more hopeless than ever. So fully were they persuaded of the duplicity of their accomplice, that they not only refused to proceed further in the execution of the plan which he had formed, but disclosed his whole scheme to Portland.

William seems to have been alarmed and provoked by this

intelligence to a degree very unusual with him. In general he was indulgent, nay, wilfully blind to the baseness of the English statesmen whom he employed. He suspected, indeed he knew, that some of his servants were in correspondence with his competitor; and yet he did not punish them, did not disgrace them, did not even frown on them. He thought meanly, and he had but too good reason for thinking meanly, of the whole of that breed of public men which the Restoration had formed and had bequeathed to the Revolution. He knew them too well to complain because he did not find in them veracity, fidelity, consistency, disinterestedness. The very utmost that he expected from them was that they would serve him as far as they could serve him without serious danger to themselves. If he learned that, while sitting in his council and enriched by his bounty, they were trying to make for themselves at Saint Germain's an interest which might be of use to them in the event of a counterrevolution he was more inclined to bestow on them the contemptuous commendation which was bestowed of old on the worldly wisdom of the unjust steward than to call them to a severe account. But the crime of Marlborough was of a very different kind. His treason was not that of a fainthearted man desirous to keep a retreat open for himself in every event, but that of a man of dauntless courage, profound policy and measureless ambition. William was not prone to fear; but, if there was anything on earth that he feared, it was Marlborough. To treat the criminal as he deserved was indeed impossible; for those by whom his

designs had been made known to the government would never have consented to appear against him in the witness box. But to permit him to retain high command in that army which he was then engaged in seducing would have been madness.

Late in the evening of the ninth of January the Queen had a painful explanation with the Princess Anne. Early the next morning Marlborough was informed that their Majesties had no further occasion for his services, and that he must not presume to appear in the royal presence. He had been loaded with honours, and with what he loved better, riches. All was at once taken away.

The real history of these events was known to very few. Evelyn, who had in general excellent sources of information, believed that the corruption and extortion of which Marlborough was notoriously guilty had roused the royal indignation. The Dutch ministers could only tell the States General that six different stories were spread abroad by Marlborough's enemies. Some said that he had indiscreetly suffered an important military secret to escape him; some that he had spoken disrespectfully of their Majesties; some that he had done ill offices between the Queen and the Princess; some that he had been forming cabals in the army; some that he had carried on an unauthorised correspondence with the Danish government about the general politics of Europe; and some that he had been trafficking with the agents of the Court of Saint Germain's. [187](#) His friends contradicted every one of these stories, and affirmed that his only crime was his dislike of the foreigners who were lording

it over his countrymen, and that he had fallen a victim to the machinations of Portland, whom he was known to dislike, and whom he had not very politely described as a wooden fellow. The mystery, which from the first overhung the story of Marlborough's disgrace, was darkened, after the lapse of fifty years, by the shameless mendacity of his widow. The concise narrative of James dispels the mystery, and makes it clear, not only why Marlborough was disgraced, but also how several of the reports about the cause of his disgrace originated. [188](#)

Though William assigned to the public no reason for exercising his undoubted prerogative by dismissing his servant, Anne had been informed of the truth; and it had been left to her to judge whether an officer who had been guilty of a foul treason was a fit inmate of the palace. Three weeks passed. Lady Marlborough still retained her post and her apartments at Whitehall. Her husband still resided with her; and still the King and Queen gave no sign of displeasure. At length the haughty and vindictive Countess, emboldened by their patience, determined to brave them face to face, and accompanied her mistress one evening to the drawingroom at Kensington. This was too much even for the gentle Mary. She would indeed have expressed her indignation before the crowd which surrounded the card tables, had she not remembered that her sister was in a state which entitles women to peculiar indulgence. Nothing was said that night; but on the following day a letter from the Queen was delivered to the Princess. Mary declared that she

was unwilling to give pain to a sister whom she loved, and in whom she could easily pass over any ordinary fault; but this was a serious matter. Lady Marlborough must be dismissed. While she lived at Whitehall her lord would live there. Was it proper that a man in his situation should be suffered to make the palace of his injured master his home? Yet so unwilling was His Majesty to deal severely with the worst offenders, that even this had been borne, and might have been borne longer, had not Anne brought the Countess to defy the King and Queen in their own presence chamber. "It was unkind," Mary wrote, "in a sister; it would have been uncivil in an equal; and I need not say that I have more to claim." The Princess, in her answer, did not attempt to exculpate or excuse Marlborough, but expressed a firm conviction that his wife was innocent, and implored the Queen not to insist on so heartrending a separation. "There is no misery," Anne wrote, "that I cannot resolve to suffer rather than the thoughts of parting from her."

The Princess sent for her uncle Rochester, and implored him to carry her letter to Kensington, and to be her advocate there. Rochester declined the office of messenger, and, though he tried to restore harmony between his kinswomen, was by no means disposed to plead the cause of the Churchills. He had indeed long seen with extreme uneasiness the absolute dominion exercised over his younger niece by that unprincipled pair. Anne's expostulation was sent to the Queen by a servant. The only reply was a message from the Lord Chamberlain,

Dorset, commanding Lady Marlborough to leave the palace. Mrs. Morley would not be separated from Mrs. Freeman. As to Mr. Morley, all places where he could have his three courses and his three bottles were alike to him. The Princess and her whole family therefore retired to Sion House, a villa belonging to the Duke of Somerset, and situated on the margin of the Thames. In London she occupied Berkeley House, which stood in Piccadilly, on the site now covered by Devonshire House. [189](#) Her income was secured by Act of Parliament; but no punishment which it was in the power of the Crown to inflict on her was spared. Her guard of honour was taken away. The foreign ministers ceased to wait upon her. When she went to Bath the Secretary of State wrote to request the Mayor of that city not to receive her with the ceremonial with which royal visitors were usually welcomed. When she attended divine service at Saint James's Church she found that the rector had been forbidden to show her the customary marks of respect, to bow to her from his pulpit, and to send a copy of his text to be laid on her cushion. Even the bellman of Piccadilly, it was said, perhaps falsely, was ordered not to chaunt her praises in his doggrel verse under the windows of Berkeley House. [190](#)

That Anne was in the wrong is clear; but it is not equally clear that the King and Queen were in the right. They should have either dissembled their displeasure, or openly declared the true reasons for it. Unfortunately, they let every body see the punishment, and they let scarcely any body know the

provocation. They should have remembered that, in the absence of information about the cause of a quarrel, the public is naturally inclined to side with the weaker party, and that this inclination is likely to be peculiarly strong when a sister is, without any apparent reason, harshly treated by a sister. They should have remembered, too, that they were exposing to attack what was unfortunately the one vulnerable part of Mary's character. A cruel fate had put enmity between her and her father. Her detractors pronounced her utterly destitute of natural affection; and even her eulogists, when they spoke of the way in which she had discharged the duties of the filial relation, were forced to speak in a subdued and apologetic tone. Nothing therefore could be more unfortunate than that she should a second time appear unmindful of the ties of consanguinity. She was now at open war with both the two persons who were nearest to her in blood. Many who thought that her conduct towards her parent was justified by the extreme danger which had threatened her country and her religion, were unable to defend her conduct towards her sister. While Mary, who was really guilty in this matter of nothing more than imprudence, was regarded by the world as an oppressor, Anne, who was as culpable as her small faculties enabled her to be, assumed the interesting character of a meek, resigned sufferer. In those private letters, indeed, to which the name of Morley was subscribed, the Princess expressed the sentiments of a fury in the style of a fishwoman, railed savagely at the whole Dutch nation, and called her brother in

law sometimes the abortion, sometimes the monster, sometimes Caliban. [191](#) But the nation heard nothing of her language and saw nothing of her deportment but what was decorous and submissive. The truth seems to have been that the rancorous and coarseminded Countess gave the tone to Her Highness's confidential correspondence, while the graceful, serene and politic Earl was suffered to prescribe the course which was to be taken before the public eye. During a short time the Queen was generally blamed. But the charm of her temper and manners was irresistible; and in a few months she regained the popularity which she had lost. [192](#)

It was a most fortunate circumstance for Marlborough that, just at the very time when all London was talking about his disgrace, and trying to guess at the cause of the King's sudden anger against one who had always seemed to be a favourite, an accusation of treason was brought by William Fuller against many persons of high consideration, was strictly investigated, and was proved to be false and malicious. The consequence was that the public, which rarely discriminates nicely, could not, at that moment, be easily brought to believe in the reality of any Jacobite conspiracy.

That Fuller's plot is less celebrated than the Popish plot is rather the fault of the historians than of Fuller, who did all that man could do to secure an eminent place among villains. Every person well read in history must have observed that depravity has its temporary modes, which come in and go out like modes of

dress and upholstery. It may be doubted whether, in our country, any man ever before the year 1678 invented and related on oath a circumstantial history, altogether fictitious, of a treasonable plot, for the purpose of making himself important by destroying men who had given him no provocation. But in the year 1678 this execrable crime became the fashion, and continued to be so during the twenty years which followed. Preachers designated it as our peculiar national sin, and prophesied that it would draw on us some awful national judgment. Legislators proposed new punishments of terrible severity for this new atrocity. [193](#) It was not however found necessary to resort to those punishments. The fashion changed; and during the last century and a half there has perhaps not been a single instance of this particular kind of wickedness.

The explanation is simple. Oates was the founder of a school. His success proved that no romance is too wild to be received with faith by understandings which fear and hatred have disordered. His slanders were monstrous; but they were well timed; he spoke to a people made credulous by their passions; and thus, by impudent and cruel lying, he raised himself in a week from beggary and obscurity to luxury, renown and power. He had once eked out the small tithes of a miserable vicarage by stealing the pigs and fowls of his parishioners. [194](#) He was now lodged in a palace; he was followed by admiring crowds; he had at his mercy the estates and lives of Howards and Herberts. A crowd of imitators instantly appeared. It seemed that much more might be

got, and that much less was risked, by testifying to an imaginary conspiracy than by robbing on the highway or clipping the coin. Accordingly the Bedloes, Dangerfields, Dugdales, Turberviles, made haste to transfer their industry to an employment at once more profitable and less perilous than any to which they were accustomed. Till the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament Popish plots were the chief manufacture. Then, during seven years, Whig plots were the only plots which paid. After the Revolution Jacobite plots came in; but the public had become cautious; and though the new false witnesses were in no respect less artful than their predecessors, they found much less encouragement. The history of the first great check given to the practices of this abandoned race of men well deserves to be circumstantially related.

In 1689, and in the beginning of 1690, William Fuller had rendered to the government service such as the best governments sometimes require, and such as none but the worst men ever perform. His useful treachery had been rewarded by his employers, as was meet, with money and with contempt. Their liberality enabled him to live during some months like a fine gentleman. He called himself a Colonel, hired servants, clothed them in gorgeous liveries, bought fine horses, lodged in Pall Mall, and showed his brazen forehead, overtopped by a wig worth fifty guineas, in the antechambers of the palace and in the stage box at the theatre. He even gave himself the airs of a favourite of royalty, and, as if he thought that William could

not live without him, followed His Majesty first to Ireland, and then to the Congress of Princes at the Hague. Fuller afterwards boasted that, at the Hague, he appeared with a retinue fit for an ambassador, that he gave ten guineas a week for an apartment, and that the worst waistcoat which he condescended to wear was of silver stuff at forty shillings a yard. Such profusion, of course, brought him to poverty. Soon after his return to England he took refuge from the bailiffs in Axe Yard, a place lying within the verge of Whitehall. His fortunes were desperate; he owed great sums; on the government he had no claim; his past services had been overpaid; no future service was to be expected from him having appeared in the witness box as evidence for the Crown, he could no longer be of any use as a spy on the Jacobites; and by all men of virtue and honour, to whatever party they might belong, he was abhorred and shunned.

Just at this time, when he was in the frame of mind in which men are open to the worst temptations, he fell in with the worst of tempters, in truth, with the Devil in human shape. Oates had obtained his liberty, his pardon, and a pension which made him a much richer man than nineteen twentieths of the members of that profession of which he was the disgrace. But he was still unsatisfied. He complained that he had now less than three hundred a year. In the golden days of the Plot he had been allowed three times as much, had been sumptuously lodged in the palace, had dined on plate and had been clothed in silk. He clamoured for an increase of his stipend. Nay, he was

even impudent enough to aspire to ecclesiastical preferment, and thought it hard that, while so many mitres were distributed, he could not get a deanery, a prebend, or even a living. He missed no opportunity of urging his pretensions. He haunted the public offices and the lobbies of the Houses of Parliament. He might be seen and heard every day, hurrying, as fast as his uneven legs would carry him, between Charing Cross and Westminster Hall, puffing with haste and self importance, chattering about what he had done for the good cause, and reviling, in the style of the boatmen on the river, all the statesmen and divines whom he suspected of doing him ill offices at Court, and keeping him back from a bishopric. When he found that there was no hope for him in the Established Church, he turned to the Baptists. They, at first, received him very coldly; but he gave such touching accounts of the wonderful work of grace which had been wrought in his soul, and vowed so solemnly, before Jehovah and the holy angels, to be thenceforth a burning and shining light, that it was difficult for simple and well meaning people to think him altogether insincere. He mourned, he said, like a turtle. On one Lord's day he thought he should have died of grief at being shut out from fellowship with the saints. He was at length admitted to communion; but before he had been a year among his new friends they discovered his true character, and solemnly cast him out as a hypocrite. Thenceforth he became the mortal enemy of the leading Baptists, and persecuted them with the same treachery, the same mendacity, the same effrontery, the

same black malice which had many years before wrought the destruction of more celebrated victims. Those who had lately been edified by his account of his blessed experiences stood aghast to hear him crying out that he would be revenged, that revenge was God's own sweet morsel, that the wretches who had excommunicated him should be ruined, that they should be forced to fly their country, that they should be stripped to the last shilling. His designs were at length frustrated by a righteous decree of the Court of Chancery, a decree which would have left a deep stain on the character of an ordinary man, but which makes no perceptible addition to the infamy of Titus Oates. [195](#) Through all changes, however, he was surrounded by a small knot of hotheaded and foulmouthed agitators, who, abhorred and despised by every respectable Whig, yet called themselves Whigs, and thought themselves injured because they were not rewarded for scurrility and slander with the best places under the Crown.

In 1691, Titus, in order to be near the focal point of political intrigue and faction, had taken a house within the precinct of Whitehall. To this house Fuller, who lived hard by, found admission. The evil work which had been begun in him, when he was still a child, by the memoirs of Dangerfield, was now completed by the conversation of Oates. The Salamanca Doctor was, as a witness, no longer formidable; but he was impelled, partly by the savage malignity which he felt towards all whom he considered as his enemies, and partly by mere

monkeylike restlessness and love of mischief, to do, through the instrumentality of others, what he could no longer do in person. In Fuller he had found the corrupt heart, the ready tongue and the unabashed front which are the first qualifications for the office of a false accuser. A friendship, if that word may be so used, sprang up between the pair. Oates opened his house and even his purse to Fuller. The veteran sinner, both directly and through the agency of his dependents, intimated to the novice that nothing made a man so important as the discovering of a plot, and that these were times when a young fellow who would stick at nothing and fear nobody might do wonders. The Revolution,—such was the language constantly held by Titus and his parasites,—had produced little good. The brisk boys of Shaftesbury had not been recompensed according to their merits. Even the Doctor, such was the ingratitude of men, was looked on coldly at the new Court. Tory rogues sate at the council board, and were admitted to the royal closet. It would be a noble feat to bring their necks to the block. Above all, it would be delightful to see Nottingham's long solemn face on Tower Hill. For the hatred with which these bad men regarded Nottingham had no bounds, and was probably excited less by his political opinions, in which there was doubtless much to condemn, than by his moral character, in which the closest scrutiny will detect little that is not deserving of approbation. Oates, with the authority which experience and success entitle a preceptor to assume, read his pupil a lecture on the art of bearing false witness. "You ought," he said, with many

oaths and curses, "to have made more, much more, out of what you heard and saw at Saint Germain's. Never was there a finer foundation for a plot. But you are a fool; you are a coxcomb; I could beat you; I would not have done so. I used to go to Charles and tell him his own. I called Lauderdale rogue to his face. I made King, Ministers, Lords, Commons, afraid of me. But you young men have no spirit." Fuller was greatly edified by these exhortations. It was, however, hinted to him by some of his associates that, if he meant to take up the trade of swearing away lives, he would do well not to show himself so often at coffeehouses in the company of Titus. "The Doctor," said one of the gang, "is an excellent person, and has done great things in his time; but many people are prejudiced against him; and, if you are really going to discover a plot, the less you are seen with him the better." Fuller accordingly ceased to frequent Oates's house, but still continued to receive his great master's instructions in private.

To do Fuller justice, he seems not to have taken up the trade of a false witness till he could no longer support himself by begging or swindling. He lived for a time on the charity of the Queen. He then levied contributions by pretending to be one of the noble family of Sidney. He wheedled Tillotson out of some money, and requited the good Archbishop's kindness by passing himself off as His Grace's favourite nephew. But in the autumn of 1691 all these shifts were exhausted. After lying in several spunging houses, Fuller was at length lodged in the King's Bench prison, and he now thought it time to announce that he had discovered

a plot. [196](#)

He addressed himself first to Tillotson and Portland; but both Tillotson and Portland soon perceived that he was lying. What he said was, however, reported to the King, who, as might have been expected, treated the information and the informant with cold contempt. All that remained was to try whether a flame could be raised in the Parliament.

Soon after the Houses met, Fuller petitioned the Commons to hear what he had to say, and promised to make wonderful disclosures. He was brought from his prison to the bar of the House; and he there repeated a long romance. James, he said, had delegated the regal authority to six commissioners, of whom Halifax was first. More than fifty lords and gentlemen had signed an address to the French King, imploring him to make a great effort for the restoration of the House of Stuart. Fuller declared that he had seen this address, and recounted many of the names appended to it. Some members made severe remarks on the improbability of the story and on the character of the witness. He was, they said, one of the greatest rogues on the face of the earth; and he told such things as could scarcely be credited if he were an angel from heaven. Fuller audaciously pledged himself to bring proofs which would satisfy the most incredulous. He was, he averred, in communication with some agents of James. Those persons were ready to make reparation to their country. Their testimony would be decisive; for they were in possession of documentary evidence which would confound

the guilty. They held back only because they saw some of the traitors high in office and near the royal person, and were afraid of incurring the enmity of men so powerful and so wicked. Fuller ended by asking for a sum of money, and by assuring the Commons that he would lay it out to good account. [197](#) Had his impudent request been granted, he would probably have paid his debts, obtained his liberty, and absconded; but the House very wisely insisted on seeing his witnesses first. He then began to shuffle. The gentlemen were on the Continent, and could not come over without passports. Passports were delivered to him; but he complained that they were insufficient. At length the Commons, fully determined to get at the truth, presented an address requesting the King to send Fuller a blank safe conduct in the largest terms. [198](#) The safe conduct was sent. Six weeks passed, and nothing was heard of the witnesses. The friends of the lords and gentlemen who had been accused represented strongly that the House ought not to separate for the summer without coming to some decision on charges so grave. Fuller was ordered to attend. He pleaded sickness, and asserted, not for the first time, that the Jacobites had poisoned him. But all his plans were confounded by the laudable promptitude and vigour with which the Commons acted. A Committee was sent to his bedside, with orders to ascertain whether he really had any witnesses, and where those witnesses resided. The members who were deputed for this purpose went to the King's Bench prison, and found him suffering under a disorder, produced, in

all probability, by some emetic which he had swallowed for the purpose of deceiving them. In answer to their questions he said that two of his witnesses, Delaval and Hayes, were in England, and were lodged at the house of a Roman Catholic apothecary in Holborn. The Commons, as soon as the Committee had reported, sent some members to the house which he had indicated. That house and all the neighbouring houses were searched. Delaval and Hayes were not to be found, nor had any body in the vicinity ever seen such men or heard of them. The House, therefore, on the last day of the session, just before Black Rod knocked at the door, unanimously resolved that William Fuller was a cheat and a false accuser; that he had insulted the Government and the Parliament; that he had calumniated honourable men, and that an address should be carried up to the throne, requesting that he might be prosecuted for his villany. [199](#) He was consequently tried, convicted, and sentenced to fine, imprisonment and the pillory. The exposure, more terrible than death to a mind not lost to all sense of shame, he underwent with a hardihood worthy of his two favourite models, Dangerfield and Oates. He had the impudence to persist, year after year, in affirming that he had fallen a victim to the machinations of the late King, who had spent six thousand pounds in order to ruin him. Delaval and Hayes—so this fable ran—had been instructed by James in person. They had, in obedience to his orders, induced Fuller to pledge his word for their appearance, and had then absented themselves, and left him exposed to the resentment of the House

of Commons. 200 The story had the reception which it deserved, and Fuller sank into an obscurity from which he twice or thrice, at long intervals, again emerged for a moment into infamy.

On the twenty-fourth of February 1692, about an hour after the Commons had voted Fuller an impostor, they were summoned to the chamber of the Lords. The King thanked the Houses for their loyalty and liberality, informed them that he must soon set out for the Continent, and commanded them to adjourn themselves. He gave his assent on that day to many bills, public and private; but when the title of one bill, which had passed the Lower House without a single division and the Upper House without a single protest, had been read by the Clerk of the Crown, the Clerk of the Parliaments declared, according to the ancient form, that the King and the Queen would consider of the matter. Those words had very rarely been pronounced before the accession of William. They have been pronounced only once since his death. But by him the power of putting a Veto on laws which had been passed by the Estates of the Realm was used on several important occasions. His detractors truly asserted that he rejected a greater number of important bills than all the Kings of the House of Stuart put together, and most absurdly inferred that the sense of the Estates of the Realm was much less respected by him than by his uncles and his grandfather. A judicious student of history will have no difficulty in discovering why William repeatedly exercised a prerogative to which his predecessors very seldom had recourse, and which his successors have suffered to

fall into utter desuetude.

His predecessors passed laws easily because they broke laws easily. Charles the First gave his assent to the Petition of Right, and immediately violated every clause of that great statute. Charles the Second gave his assent to an Act which provided that a Parliament should be held at least once in three years; but when he died the country had been near four years without a Parliament. The laws which abolished the Court of High Commission, the laws which instituted the Sacramental Test, were passed without the smallest difficulty; but they did not prevent James the Second from reestablishing the Court of High Commission, and from filling the Privy Council, the public offices, the courts of justice, and the municipal corporations with persons who had never taken the Test. Nothing could be more natural than that a King should not think it worth while to withhold his assent from a statute with which he could dispense whenever he thought fit.

The situation of William was very different. He could not, like those who had ruled before him, pass an Act in the spring and violate it in the summer. He had, by assenting to the Bill of Rights, solemnly renounced the dispensing power; and he was restrained, by prudence as well as by conscience and honour, from breaking the compact under which he held his crown. A law might be personally offensive to him; it might appear to him to be pernicious to his people; but, as soon as he had passed it, it was, in his eyes, a sacred thing. He had therefore a motive,

which preceding Kings had not, for pausing before he passed such a law. They gave their word readily, because they had no scruple about breaking it. He gave his word slowly, because he never failed to keep it.

But his situation, though it differed widely from that of the princes of the House of Stuart, was not precisely that of the princes of the House of Brunswick. A prince of the House of Brunswick is guided, as to the use of every royal prerogative, by the advice of a responsible ministry; and this ministry must be taken from the party which predominates in the two Houses, or, at least, in the Lower House. It is hardly possible to conceive circumstances in which a Sovereign so situated can refuse to assent to a bill which has been approved by both branches of the legislature. Such a refusal would necessarily imply one of two things, that the Sovereign acted in opposition to the advice of the ministry, or that the ministry was at issue, on a question of vital importance, with a majority both of the Commons and of the Lords. On either supposition the country would be in a most critical state, in a state which, if long continued, must end in a revolution. But in the earlier part of the reign of William there was no ministry. The heads of the executive departments had not been appointed exclusively from either party. Some were zealous Whigs, others zealous Tories. The most enlightened statesmen did not hold it to be unconstitutional that the King should exercise his highest prerogatives on the most important occasions without any other guidance than that of his own judgment. His refusal,

therefore, to assent to a bill which had passed both Houses indicated, not, as a similar refusal would now indicate, that the whole machinery of government was in a state of fearful disorder, but merely that there was a difference of opinion between him and the two other branches of the legislature as to the expediency of a particular law. Such a difference of opinion might exist, and, as we shall hereafter see, actually did exist, at a time when he was, not merely on friendly, but on most affectionate terms with the Estates of the Realm.

The circumstances under which he used his Veto for the first time have never yet been correctly stated. A well meant but unskilful attempt had been made to complete a reform which the Bill of Rights had left imperfect. That great law had deprived the Crown of the power of arbitrarily removing the judges, but had not made them entirely independent. They were remunerated partly by fees and partly by salaries. Over the fees the King had no control; but the salaries he had full power to reduce or to withhold. That William had ever abused this power was not pretended; but it was undoubtedly a power which no prince ought to possess; and this was the sense of both Houses. A bill was therefore brought in by which a salary of a thousand a year was strictly secured to each of the twelve judges. Thus far all was well. But unfortunately the salaries were made a charge on the hereditary revenue. No such proposition would now be entertained by the House of Commons, without the royal consent previously signified by a Privy Councillor. But this wholesome

rule had not then been established; and William could defend the proprietary rights of the Crown only by putting his negative on the bill. At the time there was, as far as can now be ascertained, no outcry. Even the Jacobite libellers were almost silent. It was not till the provisions of the bill had been forgotten, and till nothing but its title was remembered, that William was accused of having been influenced by a wish to keep the judges in a state of dependence. 201

The Houses broke up; and the King prepared to set out for the Continent. Before his departure he made some changes in his household and in several departments of the government; changes, however, which did not indicate a very decided preference for either of the great political parties. Rochester was sworn of the Council. It is probable that he had earned this mark of royal favour by taking the Queen's side in the unhappy dispute between her and her sister. Pembroke took charge of the Privy Seal, and was succeeded at the Board of Admiralty by Charles Lord Cornwallis, a moderate Tory; Lowther accepted a seat at the same board, and was succeeded at the Treasury by Sir Edward Seymour. Many Tory country gentlemen, who had looked on Seymour as their leader in the war against placemen and Dutchmen, were moved to indignation by learning that he had become a courtier. They remembered that he had voted for a Regency, that he had taken the oaths with no good grace, that he had spoken with little respect of the Sovereign whom he was now ready to serve for the sake of emoluments hardly worthy

of the acceptance of a man of his wealth and parliamentary interest. It was strange that the haughtiest of human beings should be the meanest, that one who seethed to reverence nothing on earth but himself should abase himself for the sake of quarter day. About such reflections he troubled himself very little. He found, however, that there was one disagreeable circumstance connected with his new office. At the Board of Treasury he must sit below the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The First Lord, Godolphin, was a peer of the realm; and his right to precedence, according to the rules of the heralds, could not be questioned. But every body knew who was the first of English commoners. What was Richard Hampden that he should take the place of a Seymour, of the head of the Seymours? With much difficulty, the dispute was compromised. Many concessions were made to Sir Edward's punctilious pride. He was sworn of the Council. He was appointed one of the Cabinet. The King took him by the hand and presented him to the Queen. "I bring you," said William, "a gentleman who will in my absence be a valuable friend." In this way Sir Edward was so much soothed and flattered that he ceased to insist on his right to thrust himself between the First Lord and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In the same Commission of Treasury in which the name of Seymour appeared, appeared also the name of a much younger politician, who had during the late session raised himself to high distinction in the House of Commons, Charles Montague. This appointment gave great satisfaction to the Whigs, in whose

esteem Montague now stood higher than their veteran chiefs Sacheverell and Littleton, and was indeed second to Somers alone.

Sidney delivered up the seals which he had held during more than a year, and was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Some months elapsed before the place which he had quitted was filled up; and during this interval the whole business which had ordinarily been divided between two Secretaries of State was transacted by Nottingham. [202](#)

While these arrangements were in progress, events had taken place in a distant part of the island which were not, till after the lapse of many months, known in the best informed circles of London, but which gradually obtained a fearful notoriety, and which, after the lapse of more than a hundred and sixty years, are never mentioned without horror.

Soon after the Estates of Scotland had separated in the autumn of 1690, a change was made in the administration of that kingdom. William was not satisfied with the way in which he had been represented in the Parliament House. He thought that the rabbled curates had been hardly treated. He had very reluctantly suffered the law which abolished patronage to be touched with his sceptre. But what especially displeased him was that the Acts which established a new ecclesiastical polity had not been accompanied by an Act granting liberty of conscience to those who were attached to the old ecclesiastical polity. He had directed his Commissioner Melville to obtain

for the Episcopalians of Scotland an indulgence similar to that which Dissenters enjoyed in England. [203](#) But the Presbyterian preachers were loud and vehement against lenity to Amalekites. Melville, with useful talents, and perhaps with fair intentions, had neither large views nor an intrepid spirit. He shrank from uttering a word so hateful to the theological demagogues of his country as Toleration. By obsequiously humouring their prejudices he quelled the clamour which was rising at Edinburgh; but the effect of his timid caution was that a far more formidable clamour soon rose in the south of the island against the bigotry of the schismatics who domineered in the north, and against the pusillanimity of the government which had not dared to withstand that bigotry. On this subject the High Churchman and the Low Churchman were of one mind, or rather the Low Churchman was the more angry of the two. A man like South, who had during many years been predicting that, if ever the Puritans ceased to be oppressed, they would become oppressors, was at heart not ill pleased to see his prophecy fulfilled. But in a man like Burnet, the great object of whose life had been to mitigate the animosity which the ministers of the Anglican Church felt towards the Presbyterians, the intolerant conduct of the Presbyterians could awaken no feeling but indignation, shame and grief. There was, therefore, at the English Court nobody to speak a good word for Melville. It was impossible that in such circumstances he should remain at the head of the Scottish administration. He was, however, gently let down from

his high position. He continued during more than a year to be Secretary of State; but another Secretary was appointed, who was to reside near the King, and to have the chief direction of affairs. The new Prime Minister for Scotland was the able, eloquent and accomplished Sir John Dalrymple. His father, the Lord President of the Court of Session, had lately been raised to the peerage by the title of Viscount Stair; and Sir John Dalrymple was consequently, according to the ancient usage of Scotland, designated as the Master of Stair. In a few months Melville resigned his secretaryship, and accepted an office of some dignity and emolument, but of no political importance. [204](#)

The Lowlands of Scotland were, during the year which followed the parliamentary session of 1690, as quiet as they had ever been within the memory of man; but the state of the Highlands caused much anxiety to the government. The civil war in that wild region, after it had ceased to flame, had continued during some time to smoulder. At length, early in the year 1691, the rebel chiefs informed the Court of Saint Germain that, pressed as they were on every side, they could hold out no longer without succour from France. James had sent them a small quantity of meal, brandy and tobacco, and had frankly told them that he could do nothing more. Money was so scarce among them that six hundred pounds sterling would have been a most acceptable addition to their funds, but even such a sum he was unable to spare. He could scarcely, in such circumstances, expect them to defend his cause against a government which had

a regular army and a large revenue. He therefore informed them that he should not take it ill of them if they made their peace with the new dynasty, provided always that they were prepared to rise in insurrection as soon as he should call on them to do so. [205](#)

Meanwhile it had been determined at Kensington, in spite of the opposition of the Master of Stair, to try the plan which Tarbet had recommended two years before, and which, if it had been tried when he recommended it, would probably have prevented much bloodshed and confusion. It was resolved that twelve or fifteen thousand pounds should be laid out in quieting the Highlands. This was a mass of treasure which to an inhabitant of Appin or Lochaber seemed almost fabulous, and which indeed bore a greater proportion to the income of Keppoch or Glengarry than fifteen hundred thousand pounds bore to the income of Lord Bedford or Lord Devonshire. The sum was ample; but the King was not fortunate in the choice of an agent. [206](#)

John Earl of Breadalbane, the head of a younger branch of the great House of Campbell, ranked high among the petty princes of the mountains. He could bring seventeen hundred claymores into the field; and, ten years before the Revolution, he had actually marched into the Lowlands with this great force for the purpose of supporting the prelatical tyranny. [207](#) In those days he had affected zeal for monarchy and episcopacy; but in truth he cared for no government and no religion. He seems to have united two different sets of vices, the growth of two different regions, and of two different stages in the progress of society. In his castle

among the hills he had learned the barbarian pride and ferocity of a Highland chief. In the Council Chamber at Edinburgh he had contracted the deep taint of treachery and corruption. After the Revolution he had, like too many of his fellow nobles, joined and betrayed every party in turn, had sworn fealty to William and Mary, and had plotted against them. To trace all the turns and doublings of his course, during the year 1689 and the earlier part of 1690, would be wearisome. [208](#) That course became somewhat less tortuous when the battle of the Boyne had cowed the spirit of the Jacobites. It now seemed probable that the Earl would be a loyal subject of their Majesties, till some great disaster should befall them. Nobody who knew him could trust him; but few Scottish statesmen could then be trusted; and yet Scottish statesmen must be employed. His position and connections marked him out as a man who might, if he would, do much towards the work of quieting the Highlands; and his interest seemed to be a guarantee for his zeal. He had, as he declared with every appearance of truth, strong personal reasons for wishing to see tranquillity restored. His domains were so situated that, while the civil war lasted, his vassals could not tend their herds or sow their oats in peace. His lands were daily ravaged; his cattle were daily driven away; one of his houses had been burned down. It was probable, therefore, that he would do his best to put an end to hostilities. [209](#)

He was accordingly commissioned to treat with the Jacobite chiefs, and was entrusted with the money which was to be

distributed among them. He invited them to a conference at his residence in Glenorchy. They came; but the treaty went on very slowly. Every head of a tribe asked for a larger share of the English gold than was to be obtained. Breadalbane was suspected of intending to cheat both the clans and the King. The dispute between the rebels and the government was complicated with another dispute still more embarrassing. The Camerons and Macdonalds were really at war, not with William, but with Mac Callum More; and no arrangement to which Mac Callum More was not a party could really produce tranquillity. A grave question therefore arose, whether the money entrusted to Breadalbane should be paid directly to the discontented chiefs, or should be employed to satisfy the claims which Argyle had upon them. The shrewdness of Lochiel and the arrogant pretensions of Glengarry contributed to protract the discussions. But no Celtic potentate was so impracticable as Macdonald of Glencoe, known among the mountains by the hereditary appellation of Mac Ian.

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Mac Ian dwelt in the mouth of a ravine situated not far from the southern shore of Lochleven, an arm of the sea which deeply indents the western coast of Scotland, and separates Argyleshire from Invernesshire. Near his house were two or three small hamlets inhabited by his tribe. The whole population which he governed was not supposed to exceed two hundred souls. In the neighbourhood of the little cluster of villages was some copsewood and some pasture land; but a little further up the

defile no sign of population or of fruitfulness was to be seen. In the Gaelic tongue Glencoe signifies the Glen of Weeping; and in truth that pass is the most dreary and melancholy of all the Scottish passes, the very Valley of the Shadow of Death. Mists and storms brood over it through the greater part of the finest summer; and even on those rare days when the sun is bright, and when there is no cloud in the sky, the impression made by the landscape is sad and awful. The path lies along a stream which issues from the most sullen and gloomy of mountain pools. Huge precipices of naked stone frown on both sides. Even in July the streaks of snow may often be discerned in the rifts near the summits. All down the sides of the crags heaps of ruin mark the headlong paths of the torrents. Mile after mile the traveller looks in vain for the smoke of one hut, for one human form wrapped in plaid, and listens in vain for the bark of a shepherd's dog or the bleat of a lamb. Mile after mile the only sound that indicates life is the faint cry of a bird of prey from some stormbeaten pinnacle of rock. The progress of civilisation, which has turned so many wastes into fields yellow with harvests or gay with apple blossoms, has only made Glencoe more desolate. All the science and industry of a peaceful age can extract nothing valuable from that wilderness; but, in an age of violence and rapine, the wilderness itself was valued on account of the shelter which it afforded to the plunderer and his plunder. Nothing could be more natural than that the clan to which this rugged desert belonged should have been noted

for predatory habits. For, among the Highlanders generally, to rob was thought at least as honourable an employment as to cultivate the soil; and, of all the Highlanders, The Macdonalds of Glencoe had the least productive soil, and the most convenient and secure den of robbers. Successive governments had tried to punish this wild race; but no large force had ever been employed for that purpose; and a small force was easily resisted or eluded by men familiar with every recess and every outlet of the natural fortress in which they had been born and bred. The people of Glencoe would probably have been less troublesome neighbours if they had lived among their own kindred. But they were an outpost of the Clan Donald, separated from every other branch of their own family, and almost surrounded by the domains of the hostile race of Diarmid. [211](#) They were impelled by hereditary enmity, as well as by want, to live at the expense of the tribe of Campbell. Breadalbane's property had suffered greatly from their depredations; and he was not of a temper to forgive such injuries. When, therefore, the Chief of Glencoe made his appearance at the congress in Glenorchy, he was ungraciously received. The Earl, who ordinarily bore himself with the solemn dignity of a Castilian grandee, forgot, in his resentment, his wonted gravity, forgot his public character, forgot the laws of hospitality, and, with angry reproaches and menaces, demanded reparation for the herds which had been driven from his lands by Mac Ian's followers. Mac Ian was seriously apprehensive of some personal outrage, and was glad to get safe back to his own

glen. [212](#) His pride had been wounded; and the promptings of interest concurred with those of pride. As the head of a people who lived by pillage, he had strong reasons for wishing that the country might continue to be in a perturbed state. He had little chance of receiving one guinea of the money which was to be distributed among the malecontents. For his share of that money would scarcely meet Breadalbane's demands for compensation; and there could be little doubt that, whoever might be unpaid, Breadalbane would take care to pay himself. Mac Ian therefore did his best to dissuade his allies from accepting terms from which he could himself expect no benefit; and his influence was not small. His own vassals, indeed, were few in number; but he came of the best blood of the Highlands; he had kept up a close connection with his more powerful kinsmen; nor did they like him the less because he was a robber; for he never robbed them; and that robbery, merely as robbery, was a wicked and disgraceful act, had never entered into the mind of any Celtic chief. Mac Ian was therefore held in high esteem by the confederates. His age was venerable; his aspect was majestic; and he possessed in large measure those intellectual qualities which, in rude societies, give men an ascendancy over their fellows. Breadalbane found himself, at every step of the negotiation, thwarted by the arts of his old enemy, and abhorred the name of Glencoe more and more every day. [213](#)

But the government did not trust solely to Breadalbane's diplomatic skill. The authorities at Edinburgh put forth a

proclamation exhorting the clans to submit to King William and Queen Mary, and offering pardon to every rebel who, on or before the thirty-first of December 1691, should swear to live peaceably under the government of their Majesties. It was announced that those who should hold out after that day would be treated as enemies and traitors. [214](#) Warlike preparations were made, which showed that the threat was meant in earnest. The Highlanders were alarmed, and, though the pecuniary terms had not been satisfactorily settled, thought it prudent to give the pledge which was demanded of them. No chief, indeed, was willing to set the example of submission. Glengarry blustered, and pretended to fortify his house. [215](#) "I will not," said Lochiel, "break the ice. That is a point of honour with me. But my tacksmen and people may use their freedom." [216](#) His tacksmen and people understood him, and repaired by hundreds to the Sheriff to take the oaths. The Macdonalds of Sleat, Clanronald, Keppoch, and even Glengarry, imitated the Camerons; and the chiefs, after trying to outstay each other as long as they durst, imitated their vassals.

The thirty-first of December arrived; and still the Macdonalds of Glencoe had not come in. The punctilious pride of Mac Ian was doubtless gratified by the thought that he had continued to defy the government after the boastful Glengarry, the ferocious Keppoch, the magnanimous Lochiel had yielded: but he bought his gratification dear.

At length, on the thirty-first of December, he repaired to Fort

William, accompanied by his principal vassals, and offered to take the oaths. To his dismay he found that there was in the fort no person competent to administer them. Colonel Hill, the Governor, was not a magistrate; nor was there any magistrate nearer than Inverary. Mac Ian, now fully sensible of the folly of which he had been guilty in postponing to the very last moment an act on which his life and his estate depended, set off for Inverary in great distress. He carried with him a letter from Hill to the Sheriff of Argyleshire, Sir Colin Campbell of Ardkinglass, a respectable gentleman, who, in the late reign, had suffered severely for his Whig principles. In this letter the Colonel expressed a goodnatured hope that, even out of season, a lost sheep, and so fine a lost sheep, would be gladly received. Mac Ian made all the haste in his power, and did not stop even at his own house, though it lay nigh to the road. But at that time a journey through Argyleshire in the depth of winter was necessarily slow. The old man's progress up steep mountains and along boggy valleys was obstructed by snow storms; and it was not till the sixth of January that he presented himself before the Sheriff at Inverary. The Sheriff hesitated. His power, he said, was limited by the terms of the proclamation, and he did not see how he could swear a rebel who had not submitted within the prescribed time. Mac Ian begged earnestly and with tears that he might be sworn. His people, he said, would follow his example. If any of them proved refractory, he would himself send the recusant to prison, or ship him off for Islanders. His entreaties

and Hill's letter overcame Sir Colin's scruples. The oath was administered; and a certificate was transmitted to the Council at Edinburgh, setting forth the special circumstances which had induced the Sheriff to do what he knew not to be strictly regular.

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The news that Mac Ian had not submitted within the prescribed time was received with cruel joy by three powerful Scotchmen who were then at the English Court. Breadalbane had gone up to London at Christmas in order to give an account of his stewardship. There he met his kinsman Argyle. Argyle was, in personal qualities, one of the most insignificant of the long line of nobles who have borne that great name. He was the descendant of eminent men, and the parent of eminent men. He was the grandson of one of the ablest of Scottish politicians; the son of one of the bravest and most truehearted of Scottish patriots; the father of one Mac Callum More renowned as a warrior and as an orator, as the model of every courtly grace, and as the judicious patron of arts and letters, and of another Mac Callum More distinguished by talents for business and command, and by skill in the exact sciences. Both of such an ancestry and of such a progeny Argyle was unworthy. He had even been guilty of the crime, common enough among Scottish politicians, but in him singularly disgraceful, of tampering with the agents of James while professing loyalty to William. Still Argyle had the importance inseparable from high rank, vast domains, extensive feudal rights, and almost boundless patriarchal authority. To him,

as to his cousin Breadalbane, the intelligence that the tribe of Glencoe was out of the protection of the law was most gratifying; and the Master of Stair more than sympathized with them both.

The feeling of Argyle and Breadalbane is perfectly intelligible. They were the heads of a great clan; and they had an opportunity of destroying a neighbouring clan with which they were at deadly feud. Breadalbane had received peculiar provocation. His estate had been repeatedly devastated; and he had just been thwarted in a negotiation of high moment. Unhappily there was scarcely any excess of ferocity for which a precedent could not be found in Celtic tradition. Among all warlike barbarians revenge is esteemed the most sacred of duties and the most exquisite of pleasures; and so it had long been esteemed among the Highlanders. The history of the clans abounds with frightful tales, some perhaps fabulous or exaggerated, some certainly true, of vindictive massacres and assassinations. The Macdonalds of Glengarry, for example, having been affronted by the people of Culloden, surrounded Culloden church on a Sunday, shut the doors, and burned the whole congregation alive. While the flames were raging, the hereditary musician of the murderers mocked the shrieks of the perishing crowd with the notes of his bagpipe. [218](#) A band of Macgregors, having cut off the head of an enemy, laid it, the mouth filled with bread and cheese, on his sister's table, and had the satisfaction of seeing her go mad with horror at the sight. They then carried the ghastly trophy in triumph to their chief. The whole clan met under the roof

of an ancient church. Every one in turn laid his hand on the dead man's scalp, and vowed to defend the slayers. [219](#) The inhabitants of Eigg seized some Macleods, bound them hand and foot, and turned them adrift in a boat to be swallowed up by the waves or to perish of hunger. The Macleods retaliated by driving the population of Eigg into a cavern, lighting a fire at the entrance, and suffocating the whole race, men, women and children. [220](#) It is much less strange that the two great Earls of the house of Campbell, animated by the passions of Highland chieftains, should have planned a Highland revenge, than that they should have found an accomplice, and something more than an accomplice, in the Master of Stair.

The Master of Stair was one of the first men of his time, a jurist, a statesman, a fine scholar, an eloquent orator. His polished manners and lively conversation were the delight of aristocratical societies; and none who met him in such societies would have thought it possible that he could bear the chief part in any atrocious crime. His political principles were lax, yet not more lax than those of most Scotch politicians of that age. Cruelty had never been imputed to him. Those who most disliked him did him the justice to own that, where his schemes of policy were not concerned, he was a very goodnatured man. [221](#) There is not the slightest reason to believe that he gained a single pound Scots by the act which has covered his name with infamy. He had no personal reason to wish the Glencoe men ill. There had been no feud between them and his family. His property lay in

a district where their tartan was never seen. Yet he hated them with a hatred as fierce and implacable as if they had laid waste his fields, burned his mansion, murdered his child in the cradle.

To what cause are we to ascribe so strange an antipathy? This question perplexed the Master's contemporaries; and any answer which may now be offered ought to be offered with diffidence.

222 The most probable conjecture is that he was actuated by an inordinate, an unscrupulous, a remorseless zeal for what seemed to him to be the interest of the state. This explanation may startle those who have not considered how large a proportion of the blackest crimes recorded in history is to be ascribed to ill regulated public spirit. We daily see men do for their party, for their sect, for their country, for their favourite schemes of political and social reform, what they would not do to enrich or to avenge themselves. At a temptation directly addressed to our private cupidity or to our private animosity, whatever virtue we have takes the alarm. But, virtue itself may contribute to the fall of him who imagines that it is in his power, by violating some general rule of morality, to confer an important benefit on a church, on a commonwealth, on mankind. He silences the remonstrances of conscience, and hardens his heart against the most touching spectacles of misery, by repeating to himself that his intentions are pure, that his objects are noble, that he is doing a little evil for the sake of a great good. By degrees he comes altogether to forget the turpitude of the means in the excellence of the end, and at length perpetrates without one

internal twinge acts which would shock a buccaneer. There is no reason to believe that Dominic would, for the best archbishopric in christendom, have incited ferocious marauders to plunder and slaughter a peaceful and industrious population, that Everard Digby would for a dukedom have blown a large assembly of people into the air, or that Robespierre would have murdered for hire one of the thousands whom he murdered from philanthropy.

The Master of Stair seems to have proposed to himself a truly great and good end, the pacification and civilisation of the Highlands. He was, by the acknowledgment of those who most hated him, a man of large views. He justly thought it monstrous that a third part of Scotland should be in a state scarcely less savage than New Guinea, that letters of fire and sword should, through a third part of Scotland, be, century after century, a species of legal process, and that no attempt should be made to apply a radical remedy to such evils. The independence affected by a crowd of petty sovereigns, the contumacious resistance which they were in the habit of offering to the authority of the Crown and of the Court of Session, their wars, their robberies, their fireraisings, their practice of exacting black mail from people more peaceable and more useful than themselves, naturally excited the disgust and indignation of an enlightened and politic gownsman, who was, both by the constitution of his mind and by the habits of his profession, a lover of law and order. His object was no less than a complete dissolution and reconstruction of society in the Highlands, such a

dissolution and reconstruction as, two generations later, followed the battle of Culloden. In his view the clans, as they existed, were the plagues of the kingdom; and of all the clans, the worst was that which inhabited Glencoe. He had, it is said, been particularly struck by a frightful instance of the lawlessness and ferocity of those marauders. One of them, who had been concerned in some act of violence or rapine, had given information against his companions. He had been bound to a tree and murdered. The old chief had given the first stab; and scores of dirks had then been plunged into the wretch's body. 223 By the mountaineers such an act was probably regarded as a legitimate exercise of patriarchal jurisdiction. To the Master of Stair it seemed that people among whom such things were done and were approved ought to be treated like a pack of wolves, snared by any device, and slaughtered without mercy. He was well read in history, and doubtless knew how great rulers had, in his own and other countries, dealt with such banditti. He doubtless knew with what energy and what severity James the Fifth had put down the mosstroopers of the border, how the chief of Henderland had been hung over the gate of the castle in which he had prepared a banquet for the King; how John Armstrong and his thirty-six horsemen, when they came forth to welcome their sovereign, had scarcely been allowed time to say a single prayer before they were all tied up and turned off. Nor probably was the Secretary ignorant of the means by which Sixtus the Fifth had cleared the ecclesiastical state of outlaws. The eulogists of that great

pontiff tell us that there was one formidable gang which could not be dislodged from a stronghold among the Apennines. Beasts of burden were therefore loaded with poisoned food and wine, and sent by a road which ran close to the fastness. The robbers sallied forth, seized the prey, feasted and died; and the pious old Pope exulted greatly when he heard that the corpses of thirty ruffians, who had been the terror of many peaceful villages, had been found lying among the mules and packages. The plans of the Master of Stair were conceived in the spirit of James and of Sixtus; and the rebellion of the mountaineers furnished what seemed to be an excellent opportunity for carrying those plans into effect. Mere rebellion, indeed, he could have easily pardoned. On Jacobites, as Jacobites, he never showed any inclination to bear hard. He hated the Highlanders, not as enemies of this or that dynasty, but as enemies of law, of industry and of trade. In his private correspondence he applied to them the short and terrible form of words in which the implacable Roman pronounced the doom of Carthage. His project was no less than this, that the whole hill country from sea to sea, and the neighbouring islands, should be wasted with fire and sword, that the Camerons, the Macleans, and all the branches of the race of Macdonald, should be rooted out. He therefore looked with no friendly eye on schemes of reconciliation, and, while others were hoping that a little money would set everything right, hinted very intelligibly his opinion that whatever money was to be laid out on the clans would be best laid out in the form of bullets and

bayonets. To the last moment he continued to flatter himself that the rebels would be obstinate, and would thus furnish him with a plea for accomplishing that great social revolution on which his heart was set. [224](#) The letter is still extant in which he directed the commander of the forces in Scotland how to act if the Jacobite chiefs should not come in before the end of December. There is something strangely terrible in the calmness and conciseness with which the instructions are given. "Your troops will destroy entirely the country of Lochaber, Lochiel's lands, Keppoch's, Glengarry's and Glencoe's. Your power shall be large enough. I hope the soldiers will not trouble the government with prisoners." [225](#)

This despatch had scarcely been sent off when news arrived in London that the rebel chiefs, after holding out long, had at last appeared before the Sheriffs and taken the oaths. Lochiel, the most eminent man among them, had not only declared that he would live and die a true subject to King William, but had announced his intention of visiting England, in the hope of being permitted to kiss His Majesty's hand. In London it was announced exultingly that every clan, without exception, had submitted in time; and the announcement was generally thought most satisfactory. [226](#) But the Master of Stair was bitterly disappointed. The Highlands were then to continue to be what they had been, the shame and curse of Scotland. A golden opportunity of subjecting them to the law had been suffered to escape, and might never return. If only the Macdonalds would

have stood out, nay, if an example could but have been made of the two worst Macdonalds, Keppoch and Glencoe, it would have been something. But it seemed that even Keppoch and Glencoe, marauders who in any well governed country would have been hanged thirty years before, were safe. [227](#) While the Master was brooding over thoughts like these, Argyle brought him some comfort. The report that Mac Ian had taken the oaths within the prescribed time was erroneous. The Secretary was consoled. One clan, then, was at the mercy of the government, and that clan the most lawless of all. One great act of justice, nay of charity, might be performed. One terrible and memorable example might be given. [228](#)

Yet there was a difficulty. Mac Ian had taken the oaths. He had taken them, indeed, too late to be entitled to plead the letter of the royal promise; but the fact that he had taken them was one which evidently ought not to have been concealed from those who were to decide his fate. By a dark intrigue, of which the history is but imperfectly known, but which was, in all probability, directed by the Master of Stair, the evidence of Mac Ian's tardy submission was suppressed. The certificate which the Sheriff of Argyleshire had transmitted to the Council at Edinburgh, was never laid before the board, but was privately submitted to some persons high in office, and particularly to Lord President Stair, the father of the Secretary. These persons pronounced the certificate irregular, and, indeed, absolutely null; and it was cancelled.

Meanwhile the Master of Stair was forming, in concert with Breadalbane and Argyle, a plan for the destruction of the people of Glencoe. It was necessary to take the King's pleasure, not, indeed, as to the details of what was to be done, but as to the question whether Mac Ian and his people should or should not be treated as rebels out of the pale of the ordinary law. The Master of Stair found no difficulty in the royal closet. William had, in all probability, never heard the Glencoe men mentioned except as banditti. He knew that they had not come in by the prescribed day. That they had come in after that day he did not know. If he paid any attention to the matter, he must have thought that so fair an opportunity of putting an end to the devastations and depredations from which a quiet and industrious population had suffered so much ought not to be lost.

An order was laid before him for signature. He signed it, but, if Burnet may be trusted, did not read it. Whoever has seen anything of public business knows that princes and ministers daily sign, and indeed must sign, documents which they have not read; and of all documents a document relating to a small tribe of mountaineers, living in a wilderness not set down in any map, was least likely to interest a Sovereign whose mind was full of schemes on which the fate of Europe might depend. [229](#) But, even on the supposition that he read the order to which he affixed his name, there seems to be no reason for blaming him. That order, directed to the Commander of the Forces in Scotland, runs thus: "As for Mac Ian of Glencoe and that tribe, if they can be

well distinguished from the other Highlanders, it will be proper, for the vindication of public justice, to extirpate that set of thieves." These words naturally bear a sense perfectly innocent, and would, but for the horrible event which followed, have been universally understood in that sense. It is undoubtedly one of the first duties of every government to extirpate gangs of thieves. This does not mean that every thief ought to be treacherously assassinated in his sleep, or even that every thief ought to be publicly executed after a fair trial, but that every gang, as a gang, ought to be completely broken up, and that whatever severity is indispensably necessary for that end ought to be used. If William had read and weighed the words which were submitted to him by his Secretary, he would probably have understood them to mean that Glencoe was to be occupied by troops, that resistance, if resistance were attempted, was to be put down with a strong hand, that severe punishment was to be inflicted on those leading members of the clan who could be proved to have been guilty of great crimes, that some active young freebooters, who were more used to handle the broad sword than the plough, and who did not seem likely to settle down into quiet labourers, were to be sent to the army in the Low Countries, that others were to be transported to the American plantations, and that those Macdonalds who were suffered to remain in their native valley were to be disarmed and required to give hostages for good behaviour. A plan very nearly resembling this had, we know, actually been the subject of much discussion in the political circles of Edinburgh. [230](#) There

can be little doubt that William would have deserved well of his people if he had, in this manner, extirpated not only the tribe of Mac Ian, but every Highland tribe whose calling was to steal cattle and burn houses.

The extirpation planned by the Master of Stair was of a different kind. His design was to butcher the whole race of thieves, the whole damnable race. Such was the language in which his hatred vented itself. He studied the geography of the wild country which surrounded Glencoe, and made his arrangements with infernal skill. If possible, the blow must be quick, and crushing, and altogether unexpected. But if Mac Ian should apprehend danger and should attempt to take refuge in the territories of his neighbours, he must find every road barred. The pass of Rannoch must be secured. The Laird of Weems, who was powerful in Strath Tay, must be told that, if he harbours the outlaws, he does so at his peril. Breadalbane promised to cut off the retreat of the fugitives on one side, Mac Callum More on another. It was fortunate, the Secretary wrote, that it was winter. This was the time to maul the wretches. The nights were so long, the mountain tops so cold and stormy, that even the hardiest men could not long bear exposure to the open air without a roof or a spark of fire. That the women and the children could find shelter in the desert was quite impossible. While he wrote thus, no thought that he was committing a great wickedness crossed his mind. He was happy in the approbation of his own conscience. Duty, justice, nay charity and mercy, were the names under

which he disguised his cruelty; nor is it by any means improbable that the disguise imposed upon himself. [231](#)

Hill, who commanded the forces assembled at Fort William, was not entrusted with the execution of the design. He seems to have been a humane man; he was much distressed when he learned that the government was determined on severity; and it was probably thought that his heart might fail him in the most critical moment. He was directed to put a strong detachment under the orders of his second in command, Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton. To Hamilton a significant hint was conveyed that he had now an excellent opportunity of establishing his character in the estimation of those who were at the head of affairs. Of the troops entrusted to him a large proportion were Campbells, and belonged to a regiment lately raised by Argyle, and called by Argyle's name, It was probably thought that, on such an occasion, humanity might prove too strong for the mere habit of military obedience, and that little reliance could be placed on hearts which had not been ulcerated by a feud such as had long raged between the people of Mac Ian and the people of Mac Callum More.

Had Hamilton marched openly against the Glencoe men and put them to the edge of the sword, the act would probably not have wanted apologists, and most certainly would not have wanted precedents. But the Master of Stair had strongly recommended a different mode of proceeding. If the least alarm were given, the nest of robbers would be found empty; and to

hunt them down in so wild a region would, even with all the help that Breadalbane and Argyle could give, be a long and difficult business. "Better," he wrote, "not meddle with them than meddle to no purpose. When the thing is resolved, let it be secret and sudden." [232](#) He was obeyed; and it was determined that the Glencoe men should perish, not by military execution, but by the most dastardly and perfidious form of assassination.

On the first of February a hundred and twenty soldiers of Argyle's regiment, commanded by a captain named Campbell and a lieutenant named Lindsay, marched to Glencoe. Captain Campbell was commonly called in Scotland Glenlyon, from the pass in which his property lay. He had every qualification for the service on which he was employed, an unblushing forehead, a smooth lying tongue, and a heart of adamant. He was also one of the few Campbells who were likely to be trusted and welcomed by the Macdonalds; for his niece was married to Alexander, the second son of Mac Ian.

The sight of the red coats approaching caused some anxiety among the population of the valley. John, the eldest son of the Chief, came, accompanied by twenty clansmen, to meet the strangers, and asked what this visit meant. Lieutenant Lindsay answered that the soldiers came as friends, and wanted nothing but quarters. They were kindly received, and were lodged under the thatched roofs of the little community. Glenlyon and several of his men were taken into the house of a tacksman who was named, from the cluster of cabins over which he exercised

authority, Inverriggen. Lindsay was accommodated nearer to the abode of the old chief. Auchinriater, one of the principal men of the clan, who governed the small hamlet of Auchnaion, found room there for a party commanded by a serjeant named Barbour. Provisions were liberally supplied. There was no want of beef, which had probably fattened in distant pastures; nor was any payment demanded; for in hospitality, as in thievery, the Gaelic marauders rivalled the Bedouins. During twelve days the soldiers lived familiarly with the people of the glen. Old Mac Ian, who had before felt many misgivings as to the relation in which he stood to the government, seems to have been pleased with the visit. The officers passed much of their time with him and his family. The long evenings were cheerfully spent by the peat fire with the help of some packs of cards which had found their way to that remote corner of the world, and of some French brandy which was probably part of James's farewell gift to his Highland supporters. Glenlyon appeared to be warmly attached to his niece and her husband Alexander. Every day he came to their house to take his morning draught. Meanwhile he observed with minute attention all the avenues by which, when the signal for the slaughter should be given, the Macdonalds might attempt to escape to the hills; and he reported the result of his observations to Hamilton.

Hamilton fixed five o'clock in the morning of the thirteenth of February for the deed. He hoped that, before that time, he should reach Glencoe with four hundred men, and should have

stopped all the earths in which the old fox and his two cubs,—so Mac Ian and his sons were nicknamed by the murderers,—could take refuge. But, at five precisely, whether Hamilton had arrived or not, Glenlyon was to fall on, and to slay every Macdonald under seventy.

The night was rough. Hamilton and his troops made slow progress, and were long after their time. While they were contending with the wind and snow, Glenlyon was supping and playing at cards with those whom he meant to butcher before daybreak. He and Lieutenant Lindsay had engaged themselves to dine with the old Chief on the morrow.

Late in the evening a vague suspicion that some evil was intended crossed the mind of the Chief's eldest son. The soldiers were evidently in a restless state; and some of them uttered strange cries. Two men, it is said, were overheard whispering. "I do not like this job;" one of them muttered, "I should be glad to fight the Macdonalds. But to kill men in their beds—" "We must do as we are bid," answered another voice. "If there is any thing wrong, our officers must answer for it." John Macdonald was so uneasy that, soon after midnight, he went to Glenlyon's quarters. Glenlyon and his men were all up, and seemed to be getting their arms ready for action. John, much alarmed, asked what these preparations meant. Glenlyon was profuse of friendly assurances. "Some of Glengarry's people have been harrying the country. We are getting ready to march against them. You are quite safe. Do you think that, if you were in any danger, I should

not have given a hint to your brother Sandy and his wife?" John's suspicions were quieted. He returned to his house, and lay down to rest.

It was five in the morning. Hamilton and his men were still some miles off; and the avenues which they were to have secured were open. But the orders which Glenlyon had received were precise; and he began to execute them at the little village where he was himself quartered. His host Inverriggen and nine other Macdonalds were dragged out of their beds, bound hand and foot, and murdered. A boy twelve years old clung round the Captain's legs, and begged hard for life. He would do any thing; he would go any where; he would follow Glenlyon round the world. Even Glenlyon, it is said, showed signs of relenting; but a ruffian named Drummond shot the child dead.

At Auchnaion the tacksman Auchinriater was up early that morning, and was sitting with eight of his family round the fire, when a volley of musketry laid him and seven of his companions dead or dying on the floor. His brother, who alone had escaped unhurt, called to Serjeant Barbour, who commanded the slayers, and asked as a favour to be allowed to die in the open air. "Well," said the Serjeant, "I will do you that favour for the sake of your meat which I have eaten." The mountaineer, bold, athletic, and favoured by the darkness, came forth, rushed on the soldiers who were about to level their pieces at him, flung his plaid over their faces, and was gone in a moment.

Meanwhile Lindsay had knocked at the door of the old Chief

and had asked for admission in friendly language. The door was opened. Mac Ian, while putting on his clothes and calling to his servants to bring some refreshment for his visitors, was shot through the head. Two of his attendants were slain with him. His wife was already up and dressed in such finery as the princesses of the rude Highland glens were accustomed to wear. The assassins pulled off her clothes and trinkets. The rings were not easily taken from her fingers but a soldier tore them away with his teeth. She died on the following day.

The statesman, to whom chiefly this great crime is to be ascribed, had planned it with consummate ability: but the execution was complete in nothing but in guilt and infamy. A succession of blunders saved three fourths of the Glencoe men from the fate of their chief. All the moral qualities which fit men to bear a part in a massacre Hamilton and Glenlyon possessed in perfection. But neither seems to have had much professional skill; Hamilton had arranged his plan without making allowance for bad weather, and this in a country and at a season when the weather was very likely to be bad. The consequence was that the fox earths, as he called them, were not stopped in time. Glenlyon and his men committed the error of despatching their hosts with firearms instead of using the cold steel. The peal and flash of gun after gun gave notice, from three different parts of the valley at once; that murder was doing. From fifty cottages the half naked peasantry fled under cover of the night to the recesses of their pathless glen. Even the sons of Mac Ian, who had

been especially marked out for destruction, contrived to escape. They were roused from sleep by faithful servants. John, who, by the death of his father, had become the patriarch of the tribe, quitted his dwelling just as twenty soldiers with fixed bayonets marched up to it. It was broad day long before Hamilton arrived. He found the work not even half performed. About thirty corpses lay wallowing in blood on the dunghills before the doors. One or two women were seen among the number, and, a yet more fearful and piteous sight, a little hand, which had been lopped in the tumult of the butchery from some infant. One aged Macdonald was found alive. He was probably too infirm to fly, and, as he was above seventy, was not included in the orders under which Glenlyon had acted. Hamilton murdered the old man in cold blood. The deserted hamlets were then set on fire; and the troops departed, driving away with them many sheep and goats, nine hundred kine, and two hundred of the small shaggy ponies of the Highlands.

It is said, and may but too easily be believed, that the sufferings of the fugitives were terrible. How many old men, how many women with babes in their arms, sank down and slept their last sleep in the snow; how many, having crawled, spent with toil and hunger, into nooks among the precipices, died in those dark holes, and were picked to the bone by the mountain ravens, can never be known. But it is probable that those who perished by cold, weariness and want were not less numerous than those who were slain by the assassins. When the troops had

retired, the Macdonalds crept out of the caverns of Glencoe, ventured back to the spot where the huts had formerly stood, collected the scorched corpses from among the smoking ruins, and performed some rude rites of sepulture. The tradition runs that the hereditary bard of the tribe took his seat on a rock which overhung the place of slaughter, and poured forth a long lament over his murdered brethren, and his desolate home. Eighty years later that sad dirge was still repeated by the population of the valley. [233](#)

The survivors might well apprehend that they had escaped the shot and the sword only to perish by famine. The whole domain was a waste. Houses, barns, furniture, implements of husbandry, herds, flocks, horses, were gone. Many months must elapse before the clan would be able to raise on its own ground the means of supporting even the most miserable existence. [234](#)

It may be thought strange that these events should not have been instantly followed by a burst of execration from every part of the civilised world. The fact, however, is that years elapsed before the public indignation was thoroughly awakened, and that months elapsed before the blackest part of the story found credit even among the enemies of the government. That the massacre should not have been mentioned in the London Gazettes, in the Monthly Mercuries which were scarcely less courtly than the Gazettes, or in pamphlets licensed by official censors, is perfectly intelligible. But that no allusion to it should be found in private journals and letters, written by persons

free from all restraint, may seem extraordinary. There is not a word on the subject in Evelyn's Diary. In Narcissus Luttrell's Diary is a remarkable entry made five weeks after the butchery. The letters from Scotland, he says, described that kingdom as perfectly tranquil, except that there was still some grumbling about ecclesiastical questions. The Dutch ministers regularly reported all the Scotch news to their government. They thought it worth while, about this time, to mention that a collier had been taken by a privateer near Berwick, that the Edinburgh mail had been robbed, that a whale, with a tongue seventeen feet long and seven feet broad, had been stranded near Aberdeen. But it is not hinted in any of their despatches that there was any rumour of any extraordinary occurrence in the Highlands. Reports that some of the Macdonalds had been slain did indeed, in about three weeks, travel through Edinburgh up to London. But these reports were vague and contradictory; and the very worst of them was far from coming up to the horrible truth. The Whig version of the story was that the old robber Mac Ian had laid an ambuscade for the soldiers, that he had been caught in his own snare, and that he and some of his clan had fallen sword in hand. The Jacobite version, written at Edinburgh on the twenty-third of March, appeared in the Paris Gazette of the seventh of April. Glenlyon, it was said, had been sent with a detachment from Argyle's regiment, under cover of darkness, to surprise the inhabitants of Glencoe, and had killed thirty-six men and boys and four women. [235](#) In this there was nothing very strange or shocking. A night attack on a

gang of freebooters occupying a strong natural fortress may be a perfectly legitimate military operation; and, in the obscurity and confusion of such an attack, the most humane man may be so unfortunate as to shoot a woman or a child. The circumstances which give a peculiar character to the slaughter of Glencoe, the breach of faith, the breach of hospitality, the twelve days of feigned friendship and conviviality, of morning calls, of social meals, of healthdrinking, of cardplaying, were not mentioned by the Edinburgh correspondent of the Paris Gazette; and we may therefore confidently infer that those circumstances were as yet unknown even to inquisitive and busy malecontents residing in the Scottish capital within a hundred miles of the spot where the deed had been done. In the south of the island the matter produced, as far as can now be judged, scarcely any sensation. To the Londoner of those days Appin was what Caffraria or Borneo is to us. He was not more moved by hearing that some Highland thieves had been surprised and killed than we are by hearing that a band of Amakosah cattle stealers has been cut off, or that a bark full of Malay pirates has been sunk. He took it for granted that nothing had been done in Glencoe beyond what was doing in many other glens. There had been a night brawl, one of a hundred night brawls, between the Macdonalds and the Campbells; and the Campbells had knocked the Macdonalds on the head.

By slow degrees the whole truth came out. From a letter written at Edinburgh about two months after the crime had been committed, it appears that the horrible story was already

current among the Jacobites of that city. In the summer Argyle's regiment was quartered in the south of England, and some of the men made strange confessions, over their ale, about what they had been forced to do in the preceding winter. The nonjurors soon got hold of the clue, and followed it resolutely; their secret presses went to work; and at length, near a year after the crime had been committed, it was published to the world. [236](#) But the world was long incredulous. The habitual mendacity of the Jacobite libellers had brought on them an appropriate punishment. Now, when, for the first time, they told the truth, they were supposed to be romancing. They complained bitterly that the story, though perfectly authentic, was regarded by the public as a factious lie. [237](#) So late as the year 1695, Hickee, in a tract in which he endeavoured to defend his darling tale of the Theban legion against the unanswerable argument drawn from the silence of historians, remarked that it might well be doubted whether any historian would make mention of the massacre of Glencoe. There were in England, he said, many thousands of well educated men who had never heard of that massacre, or who regarded it as a mere fable. [238](#)

Nevertheless the punishment of some of the guilty began very early. Hill, who indeed can hardly be called guilty, was much disturbed. Breadalbane, hardened as he was, felt the stings of conscience or the dread of retribution. A few days after the Macdonalds had returned to their old dwellingplace, his steward visited the ruins of the house of Glencoe, and endeavoured to

persuade the sons of the murdered chief to sign a paper declaring that they held the Earl guiltless of the blood which had been shed. They were assured that, if they would do this, all His Lordship's great influence should be employed to obtain for them from the Crown a free pardon and a remission of all forfeitures.

239 Glenlyon did his best to assume an air of unconcern. He made his appearance in the most fashionable coffeehouse at Edinburgh, and talked loudly and self-complacently about the important service in which he had been engaged among the mountains. Some of his soldiers, however, who observed him closely, whispered that all this bravery was put on. He was not the man that he had been before that night. The form of his countenance was changed. In all places, at all hours, whether he waked or slept, Glencoe was for ever before him. 240

But, whatever apprehensions might disturb Breadalbane, whatever spectres might haunt Glenlyon, the Master of Stair had neither fear nor remorse. He was indeed mortified; but he was mortified only by the blunders of Hamilton and by the escape of so many of the damnable breed. "Do right, and fear nobody;" such is the language of his letters. "Can there be a more sacred duty than to rid the country of thieving? The only thing that I regret is that any got away." 241

On the sixth of March, William, entirely ignorant, in all probability, of the details of the crime which has cast a dark shade over his glory, had set out for the Continent, leaving the Queen his viceregent in England. 242

He would perhaps have postponed his departure if he had been aware that the French Government had, during some time, been making great preparations for a descent on our island. [243](#) An event had taken place which had changed the policy of the Court of Versailles. Louvois was no more. He had been at the head of the military administration of his country during a quarter of a century; he had borne a chief part in the direction of two wars which had enlarged the French territory, and had filled the world with the renown of the French arms; and he had lived to see the beginning of a third war which tasked his great powers to the utmost. Between him and the celebrated captains who carried his plans into execution there was little harmony. His imperious temper and his confidence in himself impelled him to interfere too much with the conduct of troops in the field, even when those troops were commanded by Conde, by Turenne or by Luxemburg. But he was the greatest Adjutant General, the greatest Quartermaster General, the greatest Commissary General, that Europe had seen. He may indeed be said to have made a revolution in the art of disciplining, distributing, equipping and provisioning armies. In spite, however, of his abilities and of his services, he had become odious to Lewis and to her who governed Lewis. On the last occasion on which the King and the minister transacted business together, the ill humour on both sides broke violently forth. The servant, in his vexation, dashed his portfolio on the ground. The master, forgetting, what he seldom forgot, that a King should be a

gentleman, lifted his cane. Fortunately his wife was present. She, with her usual prudence, caught his arm. She then got Louvois out of the room, and exhorted him to come back the next day as if nothing had happened. The next day he came; but with death in his face. The King, though full of resentment, was touched with pity, and advised Louvois to go home and take care of himself. That evening the great minister died. [244](#)

Louvois had constantly opposed all plans for the invasion of England. His death was therefore regarded at Saint Germain as a fortunate event. [245](#) It was however necessary to look sad, and to send a gentleman to Versailles with some words of condolence. The messenger found the gorgeous circle of courtiers assembled round their master on the terrace above the orangery. "Sir," said Lewis, in a tone so easy and cheerful that it filled all the bystanders with amazement, "present my compliments and thanks to the King and Queen of England, and tell them that neither my affairs nor theirs will go on the worse by what has happened." These words were doubtless meant to intimate that the influence of Louvois had not been exerted in favour of the House of Stuart. [246](#) One compliment, however, a compliment which cost France dear, Lewis thought it right to pay to the memory of his ablest servant. The Marquess of Barbesieux, son of Louvois, was placed, in his twenty-fifth year, at the head of the war department. The young man was by no means deficient in abilities, and had been, during some years, employed in business of grave importance. But his passions were strong; his judgment

was not ripe; and his sudden elevation turned his head. His manners gave general disgust. Old officers complained that he kept them long in his antechamber while he was amusing himself with his spaniels and his flatterers. Those who were admitted to his presence went away disgusted by his rudeness and arrogance. As was natural at his age, he valued power chiefly as the means of procuring pleasure. Millions of crowns were expended on the luxurious villa where he loved to forget the cares of office in gay conversation, delicate cookery and foaming champagne. He often pleaded an attack of fever as an excuse for not making his appearance at the proper hour in the royal closet, when in truth he had been playing truant among his boon companions and mistresses. "The French King," said William, "has an odd taste. He chooses an old woman for his mistress, and a young man for his minister." [247](#)

There can be little doubt that Louvois, by pursuing that course which had made him odious to the inmates of Saint Germain's, had deserved well of his country. He was not maddened by Jacobite enthusiasm. He well knew that exiles are the worst of all advisers. He had excellent information; he had excellent judgment; he calculated the chances; and he saw that a descent was likely to fail, and to fail disastrously and disgracefully. James might well be impatient to try the experiment, though the odds should be ten to one against him. He might gain; and he could not lose. His folly and obstinacy had left him nothing to risk. His food, his drink, his lodging, his clothes, he owed to charity.

Nothing could be more natural than that, for the very smallest chance of recovering the three kingdoms which he had thrown away, he should be willing to stake what was not his own, the honour of the French arms, the grandeur and the safety of the French monarchy. To a French statesman such a wager might well appear in a different light. But Louvois was gone. His master yielded to the importunity of James, and determined to send an expedition against England. [248](#)

The scheme was, in some respects, well concerted. It was resolved that a camp should be formed on the coast of Normandy, and that in this camp all the Irish regiments which were in the French service should be assembled under their countryman Sarsfield. With them were to be joined about ten thousand French troops. The whole army was to be commanded by Marshal Bellefonds.

A noble fleet of about eighty ships of the line was to convoy this force to the shores of England. In the dockyards both of Brittany and of Provence immense preparations were made. Four and forty men of war, some of which were among the finest that had ever been built, were assembled in the harbour of Brest under Tourville. The Count of Estrees, with thirty-five more, was to sail from Toulon. Ushant was fixed for the place of rendezvous. The very day was named. In order that there might be no want either of seamen or of vessels for the intended expedition, all maritime trade, all privateering was, for a time, interdicted by a royal mandate. [249](#)

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