of prerogative, and supplied his most urgent necessities by illegal means. People were dragged to the Star Chamber, on all kinds of accusations, that they might be sentenced to pay enormous fines; new privileges and monopolies were invented, and new dignities created. Baronets, who are hereditary knights, were instituted, and baronetcies were sold for one thousand pounds each.

But the monopolies which the king granted, in order to raise money, did not inflame the Commons so much as the projected marriage between the prince of Wales and the infanta of Spain. James flattered himself that this Spanish match, to arrange which he had sent Buckingham to the court of Madrid, would procure the restitution of the Palatinate to the elector, who had been driven from his throne. But the Commons thought differently. They, as well as the people generally, were indignant in view of the inactivity of the government in not sending aid to the distressed Protestants of Germany; and the loss of the Palatinate was regarded as a national calamity. They saw no good which would accrue from an alliance with the enemies and persecutors of these Protestants; but, on the other hand, much evil. As the constitutional guardians, therefore, of the public welfare and liberty, they framed a remonstrance to the king, representing the overgrown power of Austria as dangerous to the liberties of Europe, and entreated his majesty to take up arms against Spain, which was allied with Austria, and by whose wealth Austrian armies were supported.

James was inflamed with indignation at this remonstrance, which militated against all his maxims of government; and he forthwith wrote a letter to the speaker of the House of Commons, commanding him to admonish the members "not to presume to meddle with matters of state which were beyond their capacity, and especially not to touch on his son's marriage." The Commons, not dismayed, and conscious of strength, sent up a new remonstrance in which they affirmed that they *were* entitled to interpose with their counsel in all matters of state, and that entire freedom of speech was their ancient and undoubted right, transmitted from their ancestors. The king, in reply, told the Commons, that "their remonstrance was more like a denunciation of war, than an address of dutiful subjects, and that their pretension to inquire into state

affairs was a plenipotence to which none of their ancestors, even during the weakest reigns, had ever dared to aspire." He further insinuated that their privileges were derived from royal favor. On this, the Commons framed another protest, — that the liberties, franchises, privileges, and jurisdictions of parliament are the ancient and undoubted birthright of Englishmen, and that every member has the right of freedom of speech. This protest they entered upon their journals, upon which James lost all temper, ordered the clerk to bring him the journals, erased the protestation with his own hand, in presence of the judges and the council, and then dissolved the parliament.

Nothing else of note occurred in this reign, except the prosecution of the Spanish match, which was so odious to the nation that Buckingham, to preserve his popularity, broke off the negotiations, and by a system of treachery and duplicity as hateful as were his original efforts to promote the match. War with Spain was the result of the insult offered to the infanta and the court. An alliance was now made with France, and Prince Charles married Henrietta Maria, daughter of Henry IV. The Commons then granted abundant supplies for war, to recover the Palatinate; and liberty of conscience was granted by the monarch, on the demands of Richelieu, to the Catholics — so long and perseveringly oppressed.

Shortly after, (March 27, 1625,) King James died at Theobalds, his favorite palace, from a disease produced by anxiety, gluttony, and sweet wines, after a reign in England of twenty-two years; and his son, Charles I., before the breath was out of his body, was proclaimed king in his stead.

The course pursued by James I. was adopted by his son; and, as their reigns were memorable for the same struggle, we shall consider them together until revolution gave the victory to the advocates of freedom.

Charles I. was twenty-five years of age when he began his reign. In a moral and social point of view he was a more respectable man than his father, but had the same absurd notions of the royal prerogative, the same contempt of the people, the same dislike of constitutional liberty, and the same resolution of maintaining the absolute power of the crown, at any cost. He was

moreover, perplexed by the same embarrassments, was involved in debt, had great necessities, and was dependent on the House of Commons for aid to prosecute his wars and support the dignity of the crown. But he did not consider the changing circumstances and spirit of the age, and the hostile and turbulent nature of his people. He increased, rather than diminished, the odious monopolies which irritated the nation during the reign of his father; he clung to all the old feudal privileges; he retained the detestable and frivolous Buckingham as his chief minister; and, when Buckingham was assassinated, he chose others even more tyrannical and unscrupulous; he insisted on taxing the people without their consent, threw contempt on parliament, and drove the nation to rebellion. In all his political acts he was infatuated, after making every allowance for the imperfections of human nature. A wiser man would have seen the rising storm, and might possibly have averted it. But Charles never dreamed of it, until it burst in all its fury on his devoted head, and consigned him to the martyr's grave. We pity his fate, but lament still more his blindness. And so great was this blindness, that it almost seems as if Providence had marked him out to be a victim on the altar of human progress.

With the reign of Charles commences unquestionably the most exciting period of English history, and a period to which historians have given more attention than to any other great historical era, the French Revolution alone excepted. The attempt to describe the leading events in this exciting age and reign would be, in this connection, absurd; and yet some notice of them cannot be avoided.

For more than ten centuries, great struggles have been going on in society between the dominant orders and sects. The victories gained by the oppressed millions, over their different masters, constitute what is called the Progress of Society. Defenders of the people have occasionally arisen from orders to which they did not belong. When, then, any great order defended the cause of the people against the tyranny and selfishness of another order, then the people have advanced a step in civil and social freedom.

When Feudalism weighed fearfully upon the people, "the clergy sought, on their behalf, a little reason, justice, and humanity, and the poor man had no other asylum than the churches, no other

protectors than the priests; and, as the priests offered food to the moral nature of man, they acquired a great ascendency, and the preponderance passed from the nobles to the clergy." By the aid of the church, royalty also rose above feudalism, and aided the popular cause.

The church, having gained the ascendency, sought then to enslave the kings of the earth. But royalty, borrowing help from humiliated nobles and from the people, became the dominant power in Europe.

In these struggles between nobles and the clergy, and between the clergy and kings, the people had acquired political importance. They had obtained a knowledge of their rights and of their strength; and they were determined to maintain them. They liked not the tyranny of either nobles, priests, or kings; but they bent all their energies to suppress the power of the latter, since the two former had been already humiliated.

The struggle of the people against royalty is preëminently the genius of the English Revolution. It is to be doubted whether any king could have resisted the storm of popular fury which hurled Charles from his throne. But no king could have managed worse than he, no king could be more unfortunately and unpropitiously placed; and his own imprudence and folly hastened the catastrophe.

The House of Commons, which had acquired great strength, spirit, and popularity during the reign of James, fully perceived the difficulties and necessities of Charles, but made no adequate or generous effort to relieve him from them. Some of the more turbulent rejoiced in them. They knew that kings, like other men, were selfish, and that it was not natural for people to part with their privileges and power without a struggle, even though this power was injurious to the interests of society. In the Middle Ages, barons, bishops, and popes had fought desperately in the struggle of classes; and it was only from their necessities that either kings or people had obtained what they demanded. King Charles, no more than Pope Boniface VIII., would surrender, as a boon to man, without compulsion, his supposed omnipotence.

The king ascended his throne burdened by the debts of his father, and by an expensive war, which the Commons incited, but

would not pay for. They granted him, to meet his difficulties and maintain his honor, the paltry sum of one hundred and forty thousand pounds, and the duties of tonnage and poundage, not for life, as was customary, but for a year. Nothing could be more provoking to a young king. Of course, the money was soon spent, and the king wanted more, and had a right to expect more. But, if the Commons granted what the king required, he would be made independent of them, and he would rule tyrannically, as the kings of England did before him. So they resolved not to grant necessary supplies to carry on the government, unless the king would part with the prerogatives of an absolute prince, and those old feudal privileges which were an abomination in the eyes of the people. Charles was not the man to make such a bargain. Few kings, in his age, would have seen its necessity. But necessity there was. Civil war was inevitable, without a compromise, provided both parties were resolved on maintaining their ground. But Charles fancied that the Commons could be browbeaten and intimidated into submission; and, moreover, in case he was brought into collision with his subjects, he fancied that he was stronger than they, and could put down the spirit of resistance. In both of these suppositions he was wrong. The Commons were firm, and were stronger than he was, because they had the sympathy of the people. They believed conscientiously, especially the Puritans, that he was wrong; that God gave him no divine right to enslave them, and that they were entitled, by the eternal principles of justice, and by the spirit of the constitution, to civil and religious liberty, in the highest sense of that term. They believed that their rights were inalienable and absolute; that, among them, they could not be taxed without their own consent; and that their constitutional guardians, the Commons, should be unrestricted in debate. These notions of the people were *ideas*. On ideas all governments rest. No throne could stand a day unless the people felt they owed it their allegiance. When the main support of the throne of Charles was withdrawn, the support of popular ideas and this support given to the House of Commons, at issue with the sovereign, what could he do? What could Louis XVI. do one hundred and fifty years afterwards? What could Louis Philippe do in our times? A king, without the loyalty of the people, is

a phantom, a mockery, and a delusion, unless he have physical force to sustain him; and even then armies will rebel, if they feel they are not bound to obey, and if it is not for their interest to obey.

Now Charles had neither *loyalty* nor *force* to hold him on his throne. The agitations of an age of unprecedented boldness in speculations destroyed the former; the House of Commons would not grant supplies to secure the latter. And they would not grant supplies, because they loved themselves and the cause of the people better than they loved their king. In short, it was only by his concessions that they would supply his necessities. He would not make the concessions, and the contest soon ended in an appeal to arms.

But Charles was not without friends, and some of his advisers were men of sagacity and talent. It is true they did not fully appreciate the weakness of the king, or the strength of his enemies; but they saw his distress, and tried to remove it. They, very naturally in such an age, recommended violent courses — to grant new monopolies, to extort fines, to exercise all his feudal privileges, to pawn the crown jewels, even, in order to raise money; for money, at all events, he must have. They advised him to arrest turbulent and incendiary members of the Commons, to prorogue and dissolve parliaments, to raise forced loans, to impose new duties, to shut up ports, to levy fresh taxes, and to raise armies friendly to his cause. In short, they recommended unconstitutional measures — measures which both they and the king knew to be unconstitutional, but which they justified on the ground of necessity. And the king, in his perplexity, did what his ministers advised. But every person who was sent to the Tower, every new tax, every sentence of the Star Chamber, every seizure of property, every arbitrary command, every violation of the liberties of the people, raised up new enemies to the king, and inflamed the people with new discontents.

At first the Commons felt that they could obtain what they wanted — a redress of grievances, if the king's favorite adviser and minister were removed. Besides, they all hated Buckingham — peers, commons, and people, — and all sought his downfall. He had no friends among the people, as Essex had in the time of Elizabeth His extravagance, pomp, and insolence disgusted al

orders; and his reign seemed to be an insult to the nation. Even the people regarded him as an upstart, setting himself above the old nobility, and enriching himself by royal domains, worth two hundred eighty-four thousand three hundred and ninety-five pounds. So the Commons violently attacked his administration, and impeached him. But he was shielded by the king, and even appointed to command an expedition to relieve La Rochelle, then besieged by Richelieu. But he was stabbed by a religious fanatic, by the name of Felton, as he was about to embark at Portsmouth. His body was removed to London, and he was buried with great state in Westminster Abbey, much lamented by the king, who lost his early friend, one of the worst ministers, but not the worst man, which that age despised, (1628.)

Meanwhile the indignant Commons persevered with their work. They passed what is called the "Petition of Right,"—a string of resolutions which asserted that no freeman ought to be detained in prison, without being brought to trial, and that no taxes could be lawfully levied, without consent of the Commons—the two great pillars of the English constitution, yet truths involved in political difficulty, especially in cases of rebellion. The personal liberty of the subject is a great point indeed; and the act of *habeas corpus*, passed in later times, is a great step in popular freedom; but, if never to be suspended, no government could guard against conspiracy in revolutionary times.

The Petition of Right, however, obtained the king's assent, though unwillingly, grudgingly, and insincerely given; and the Commons, gratified for once, voted to the king supplies.

But Charles had no notion of keeping his word, and soon resorted to unconstitutional measures, as before. But he felt the need of able counsellors. His "dear Steenie" was dead, and he knew not in whom to repose confidence.

The demon of despotism raised up an agent in the person of Thomas Wentworth, a man of wealth, talents, energy, and indomitable courage; a man who had, in the early part of his career, defended the cause of liberty; who had even suffered imprisonment sooner than contribute to an unlawful loan, and in whom the hopes of the liberal party were placed. But he was bribed. His patriotism was not equal to his ambition. Seduced by a peerage

and by the love of power, he went over to the side of the king and defended his arbitrary rule as zealously as he had before advocated the cause of constitutional liberty. He was created Viscount Wentworth, and afterwards earl of Strafford—the most prominent man of the royalist party, and the greatest traitor to the cause of liberty which England had ever known. His picture, as painted by Vandyke, and hung up in the princely hall of his descendant, Earl Fitzwilliam, is a faithful portrait of what history represents him—a cold, dark, repulsive, unscrupulous tyrant, with an eye capable of reading the secrets of the soul, a brow lowering with care and thought, and a lip compressed with determination, and twisted into contempt of mankind. If Wentworth did not love his countrymen, he loved to rule over them; and he gained his end, and continued the prime minister of absolutism until an insulted nation rose in their might, and placed his head upon the block.

Under the rule of this minister, whom every one feared, the Puritans every where fled, preferring the deserts of America, with freedom, to the fair lands of England, with liberty trodden under foot. The reigns of both James and Charles are memorable for the resistance and despair of this intrepid and religious sect, in which were enrolled some of the finest minds and most intelligent patriots of the country. Pym, Cromwell, Hazelrig, and even Hampden, are said to have actually embarked; but Providence detained them in England, they having a mission of blood to perform there. In another chapter, the Puritans, their struggles, and principles, will be more fully presented; and we therefore, in this connection, abstain from further notice. It may, however, be remarked, that they were the most inflexible enemies of the king, and were determined to give him and his minister no rest until all their ends were gained. They hated Archbishop Laud even more intensely than they hated Wentworth; and Laud, if possible, was a greater foe to religious and civil liberty. Strafford and Laud are generally coupled together in the description of the abuses of arbitrary power. The churchman, however, was honest and sincere, only his views were narrow and his temper irritable. His vices were those of the bigot—such as disgraced St. Dominic or Torquemada, but faults which he deemed excellencies

He was an enthusiast in high churchism and toryism; and his zeal in defence of royal prerogative and the divine rights of bishops has won for him the panegyrics of his friends, as well as the curses of his enemies. For Strafford, too, there is admiration, but only for his talents, his courage, his strength — the qualities which one might see in Milton's Satan, or in Carlyle's picture gallery of heroes.

While the king and his minister were raising forced loans and contributions, sending members of the House of Commons to the Tower, fining, imprisoning, and mutilating the Puritans, a new imposition called out the energies of a great patriot and a great man, John Hampden — a fit antagonist of the haughty Wentworth. This new exaction was a tax called *ship money*.

It was devised by Chief Justice Finch and Attorney-General Noy, two subordinate, but unscrupulous tools of despotism, and designed to extort money from the inland counties, as well as from the cities, for furnishing ships — a demand that Elizabeth did not make, in all her power, even when threatened by the Spanish Armada. Clarendon even admits that this tax was not for the support of the navy, "but for a spring and magazine which should have no bottom, and for an everlasting supply on all occasions." And this the nation completely understood, and resolved desperately to resist.

Hampden, though a wealthy man, refused to pay the share assessed on him, which was only twenty shillings, deeming it an illegal tax. He was proceeded against by the crown lawyers. Hampden appealed to a decision of the judges in regard to the legality of the tax, and the king permitted the question to be settled by the laws. The trial lasted thirteen days, but ended in the condemnation of Hampden, who had shown great moderation as well as courage, and had won the favor of the people. It was shortly after this that Hampden, as some historians assert, resolved to leave England with his cousin Oliver Cromwell. But the king prevented the ships, in which they and other emigrants had embarked, from sailing. Hampden was reserved for new trials and new labors.

About a month after Hampden's condemnation, an insurrection broke out in Scotland, which hastened the crisis of revolution.

was produced by the attempt of Archbishop Laud to impose the English liturgy on the Scottish nation, and supplant Presbyterianism by Episcopacy. The revolutions in Scotland, from the time of Knox, had been popular; not produced by great men, but by the diffusion of great ideas. The people believed in the spiritual independence of their church, and not in the supremacy of a king. The instant, therefore, that the Episcopal worship was introduced by authority, in the cathedral of Edinburgh, there was an insurrection, which rapidly spread through all parts of the country. An immense multitude came to Edinburgh to protest against the innovation, and crowded all the houses, streets, and halls of the city. The king ordered the petitioners home, without answering their complaints. They obeyed the injunction, but soon returned in greater numbers. An organization of resistance was made, and a provisional government appointed. All classes joined the insurgents, who, menaced, but united, at last bound themselves, by a solemn league and covenant, not to separate until their rights and liberties were secured. A vast majority of all the population of Scotland — gentlemen, clergy, citizens, and laborers, men, women, and children — assembled in the church, and swore fealty to the covenant. Force, of course, was necessary to reduce the rebels, and civil war commenced in Scotland. But war increased the necessities of the king, and he was compelled to make peace with the insurgent army.

Eleven years had now elapsed since the dissolution of the last parliament, during which the king had attempted to rule without one, and had resorted to all the expedients that the ingenuity of the crown lawyers could suggest, in order to extort money. Imposts fallen into desuetude, monopolies abandoned by Elizabeth, royal forests extended beyond the limits they had in feudal times, fines past all endurance, confiscations without end, imprisonments, tortures, and executions, — all marked these eleven years. The sum for fines alone, in this period, amounted to more than two hundred thousand pounds. The forest of Rockingham was enlarged from six to sixty miles in circuit, and the earl of Salisbury was fined twenty thousand pounds for encroaching upon it. Individuals and companies had monopolies of salt, soap, coals, iron wine, leather starch, feathers, tobacco, beer, distilled liquors

herrings, butter, potash, linen cloth, rags, hops, gunpowder, and divers other articles, which, of course, deranged the whole trade of the country. Prynne was fined ten thousand pounds, and had his ears cut off, and his nose slit, for writing an offensive book; and his sufferings were not greater than what divers others experienced for vindicating the cause of truth and liberty.

At last, the king's necessities compelled him to summon another parliament. He had exhausted every expedient to raise money. His army clamored for pay; and he was overburdened with debts.

On the 13th of April, 1640, the new parliament met. It knew its strength, and was determined now, more than ever, to exercise it. It immediately took the power into its own hands, and from remonstrances and petitions it proceeded to actual hostilities; from the denunciation of injustice and illegality, it proceeded to trample on the constitution itself. It is true that the members were irritated and threatened, and some of their number had been seized and imprisoned. It is true that the king continued his courses, and was resolved on enforcing his measures by violence. The struggle became one of desperation on both sides — a struggle for ascendency — and not for rights.

One of the first acts of the House of Commons was the impeachment of Strafford. He had been just summoned from Ireland, where, as lord lieutenant, he had exercised almost regal power and regal audacity; he had been summoned by his perplexed and desponding master to assist him by his counsels. Reluctantly he obeyed, foreseeing the storm. He had scarcely arrived in London when the intrepid Pym accused him of high treason. The Lords accepted the accusation, and the imperious minister was committed to the Tower.

The impeachment of Laud soon followed; but he was too sincere in his tyranny to understand why he should be committed. Nor was he feared, as Strafford was, against whom the vengeance of the parliament was especially directed. A secret committee, invested with immense powers, was commissioned to scrutinize his whole life, and his destruction was resolved upon. On the 22d of March his trial began, and lasted seventeen days, during which time, unaided, he defended himself against thirteen accusers, with

consummate ability. Indeed, he had studied his charges and despised his adversaries. Under ordinary circumstances, he would have been acquitted, for there was not sufficient evidence to convict him of high treason; but an unscrupulous and infuriated body of men were thirsting for his blood, and it was proposed to convict him by bill of attainder; that is, by act of parliament, on its own paramount authority, with or without the law. The bill passed, in spite of justice, in spite of the eloquence of the attainted earl. He was condemned, and remanded to the Tower.

Had the king been strong he would have saved his minister; had he been magnanimous, he would have stood by him to the last. But he had neither the power to save him, nor the will to make adequate sacrifices. He feebly interposed, but finally yielded, and gave his consent to the execution of the main agent of all his aggressions on the constitution he had sworn to maintain. Strafford deserved his fate, although the manner of his execution was not according to law.

A few months after the execution of Strafford, an event occurred which proved exceedingly unfortunate to the royal cause; and this was the rebellion of Ireland, and the massacre of the Protestant population, caused, primarily, by the oppressive government of England, and the harsh and severe measures of the late lord lieutenant. In the course of a few weeks, the English and Scottish colonies seemed almost uprooted; one of the most frightful butcheries was committed that ever occurred. The Protestants exaggerated their loss; but it is probable that at least fifty thousand were massacred. The local government of Dublin was paralyzed. The English nation was filled with deadly and implacable hostility, not against the Irish merely, but against the Catholics every where. It was supposed that there was a general conspiracy among the Catholics to destroy the whole nation; and it was whispered that the queen herself had aided the revolted Irish. The most vigorous measures were adopted to raise money and troops for Ireland. The Commons took occasion of the general spirit of discontent and insurrection to prepare a grand remonstrance on the evils of the kingdom, which were traced to a "coalition of Papists, Arminian bishops and clergymen, and