on the constitution without any direct warfare with his parliament and the system of religious persecution, which was most intolerant.

The king was at heart a Catholic; and yet the persecution of the Catholics is one of the most signal events of the times. We can scarcely conceive, in this age, of the spirit of distrust and fear which pervaded the national mind in reference to the Catholics. Every calumny was believed. Every trifling offence was exaggerated, and by nearly all classes in the community, by the Episcopalians, as well as by the Presbyterians and the Independents.

Titus Oates.

The most memorable of all the delusions and slanders of the times was produced by the perjuries of an unprincipled wretch called Titus Oates, who took advantage of the general infatuation to advance his individual interests. Like an artful politician, he had only to appeal to a dominant passion or prejudice, and he was sure of making his fortune. Like a cunning, popular orator, he had only to inflame the passions of the people, and he would pass as a genius and a prophet. Few are so abstractedly and coldly intellectual as not to be mainly governed by their tastes or passions. Even men of strong intellect have frequently strong prejudices, and one has only to make himself master of these, in order to lead those who are infinitely their superiors. There is no proof that all who persecuted the Catholics in Charles's time were either weak or ignorant. But there is evidence of unbounded animosity, a traditional hatred, not much diminished since the Gunpowder Plot of Guy Fawkes. The whole nation was ready to believe any thing against the Catholics, and especially against their church, which was supposed to be persecuting and diabolical in all its principles and in all its practice. In this state of the popular mind, Oates made his hideous revelations.

He was a broken-down clergyman of the Established Church, and had lost caste for disgraceful irregularities. But he professed to hate the Catholics, and such a virtue secured him friends. Among these was the Rev. Dr. Tonge, a man very weak, very credulous, and full of fears respecting the intrigues of the Catholics but honest in his fears. Oates went to this clergyman, and a plan was concerted between them, by which Oates should get a knowledge of the supposed intrigues of the Church of Rome. He professed himself a Catholic, went to the Continent, and entered a

Catholic seminary, but was soon discharged for his scandalous irregularities. But he had been a Catholic long enough for his purposes. He returned to London, and revealed his pretended discoveries, among which he declared that the Jesuits had undertaken to restore the Catholic religion in England by force; that they were resolved to take the king's life, and had actually offered a bribe of fifteen thousand pounds to the queen's physician; that they had planned to burn London, and to set fire to all the shipping in the Thames; that they were plotting to make a general massacre of the Protestants; that a French army was about to invade England; and that all the horrors of St. Bartholomew were to be again acted over! Ridiculous as were these assertions, they were believed, and without a particle of evidence; so great was the national infatuation. The king and the Duke of York both pronounced the whole matter a forgery, and laughed at the credulity of the people, but had not sufficient generosity to prevent the triumph of the libellers. But Oates's testimony was not enough to convict any one, the law requiring two witnesses. But, in such a corrupt age, false witnesses could easily be procured. An infamous wretch, by the name of Bedloe, was bribed, a man who had been imprisoned in Newgate for swindling. Others equally unscrupulous were soon added to the list of informers, and no calumnies, however gross and absurd, prevented the people from believing them.

Oates's Revelations.

It happened that a man, by the name of Coleman, was suspected of intrigues. His papers were searched, and some passages in them, unfortunately, seemed to confirm the statements of Oates. To impartial eyes, these papers simply indicated a desire and a hope that the Catholic religion would be reëstablished, in view of the predilections of Charles and James, and the general posture of affairs, just as some enthusiastic Jesuit missionary in the valley of the Mississippi may be supposed to write to his superior that America is on the eve of conversion to Catholicism.

Coleman.

But the general ferment was still more increased by the disappearance of an eminent justice of the peace, who had taken the depositions of Oates against Coleman. Sir Edmondsbury Godfrey was found dead, and with every mark of violence, in a field near London, and was probably murdered by some fanatical persons in the communion of the Church of Rome. But if so, the murder

was a great blunder. It was worse than a crime. The whole community were mad with rage and fear. The old penal laws were strictly enforced against the Catholics. The jails were filled with victims. London wore the appearance of a besieged city The houses of the Catholics were every where searched, and two thousand of them imprisoned. Posts were planted in the streets, that chains might be thrown across them on the first alarm. The military, the train bands, and the volunteers were called out Forty thousand men were kept under guard during the night. Numerous patrols paraded the streets. The gates of the Palace were closed, and the guards of the city were doubled. Oates was pronounced to be the savior of his country, lodged at Whitehall and pensioned with twelve hundred pounds a year

Then flowed more innocent blood than had been shed for a long period. Catholics who were noble, and Catholics who were obscure, were alike judicially murdered; and the courts of justice, instead of being places of refuge, were disgraced by the foulest abominations. Every day new witnesses were produced of crimes which never happened, and new victims were offered up to appease the wrath of a prejudiced people. Among these victims of popular frenzy was the Earl of Stafford, a venerable and venerated nobleman of sixty-nine years of age, against whom sufficient evidence was not found to convict him; and whose only crime was in being at the head of the Catholic party. Yet he was found guilty by the House of Peers, fifty-five out of eighty-six having voted for his execution. He died on the scaffold, but with the greatest serenity, forgiving his persecutors, and compassionating their delusions. A future generation, during the reign of George IV., however, reversed his attainder, and did justice to his memory, and restored his descendants to their rank and fortune.

If no other illustrious victims suffered, persecution was nevertheless directed into other channels. Parliament passed an act that no person should sit in either House, unless he had previously taken the oath of allegiance and supremacy, and subscribed to the declaration that the worship of the Church of Rome was idolatrous. Catholics were disabled from prosecuting a suit in any court of law, from receiving any legacy, and from acting as executors or administrators of estates. This horrid bill, which outlawed the whole

Catholic population, had repeatedly miscarried, but, under influence of the panic which Oates and his confederates created, was now triumphantly passed. Charles himself gave his royal assent because he was afraid to stem the torrent of popular infatuation. And the English nation permitted one hundred and thirty years to elapse before the civil disabilities of the Catholics were removed and then only by the most strenuous exertions of such a statesman as Sir Robert Peel.

It is some satisfaction to know that justice at last overtook the chief authors of this diabolical infatuation. During the reign of James II., Oates and others were punished as they deserved. Oates's credit gradually passed away. He was fined, imprisoned, and whipped at the pillory until life itself had nearly fled. He died unlamented and detested, leaving behind him, to all posterity an infamous notoriety.

But the sufferings of the Catholics, during this reign, were more than exceeded by the sufferings of Dissenters, who were cruelly persecuted. All the various sects of the Protestants were odious and ridiculous in the eyes of the king. They were regarded as hostile in their sympathies, and treasonable in their designs. They were fined, imprisoned, mutilated, and whipped. An Act of Uniformity was passed, which restored the old penal laws of Elizabeth, and which subjected all to their penalty who did not use the Book of Common Prayer, and adhere strictly to the ritual of the Church of England. The oligarchical power of the bishops was restored, and two thousand ministers were driven from their livings, and compelled to seek a precarious support. Many other acts of flagrant injustice were passed by a subservient parliament, and cruelly carried into execution by unfeeling judges. But the religious persecution of dissenters was not consummated until the reign of James under whose favor or direction the inhuman Jeffreys inflicted the most atrocious crimes which have ever been committed under the sanction of the law. But these will be more appropriately noticed under the reign of James II. Charles was not so cruel in his temper, or bigoted in his sentiments, as his brother James. He was rather a Gallio than a persecutor. He would permit any thing rather than suffer himself to be interrupted in his pleasures. He was governed by his favorites and his women. He had not suffi

cient moral elevation to be earnest in any thing, even to be a bigot in religion. He vacillated between the infidelity of Hobbes and the superstitions of Rome. He lived a scoffer, and died a Catholic. His temper was easy, but so easy as not to prevent the persecution and ruin of his best supporters, when they had become odious to the nation. If he was incapable of enmity, he was also incapable of friendship. If he hated no one with long-continued malignity, it was only because it was too much trouble to hate perseveringly. But he loved with no more constancy than he hated. He had no patriotism, and no appreciation of moral excellence. He would rather see half of the merchants of London ruined, and half of the Dissenters immured in gloomy prisons, than lose two hours of inglorious dalliance with one of his numerous concubines. A more contemptible prince never sat on the English throne, or one whose whole reign was disgraced by a more constant succession of political blunders and social crimes. And yet he never fully lost his popularity, nor was his reign felt to be as burdensome as was that of the protector, Cromwell, thus showing how little the moral excellence of rulers is ordinarily appreciated or valued by a wilful or blinded generation. We love not the rebukers of our sins, or the opposers of our pleasures. We love those who prophesy smooth things, and "cry peace, when there is no peace." Such is man in his weakness and his degeneracy; and only an omnipotent power can change this ordinary temper of the devotees to pleasure and inglorious gains.

Among the saddest events during the reign of Charles, were the executions of Lord Russell and Algernon Sydney. They were concerned, with a few other great men, in a conspiracy, which had for its object the restoration of greater liberty. They contemplated an insurrection, known by the name of the *Rye House Plot;* but it was discovered, and Russell and Sydney became martyrs. The former was the son of the Earl of Bedford, and the latter was the brother of the Earl of Leicester. Russell was a devoted Churchman, of pure morals, and greatly beloved by the people. Sydney was a strenuous republican, and was opposed to any particular form of church government. He thought that religion should be like a divine philosophy in the mind, and had great veneration for the doctrines of Plato. Nothing could save

Execution of Russell & Sydney. Character of Charles II.

these illustrious men. The Duke of York and Jeffreys declared that, if they were not executed, there would be no safety for themselves. They both suffered with great intrepidity, and the friends of liberty have ever since cherished their memory with peculiar fondness.

Mr. Macaulay, in his recent History, has presented the manners and customs of England during the disgraceful reign of Charles II. It is impossible, in this brief survey, to allude to all those customs; but we direct particularly the attention of readers to them, as described in his third chapter, from which it would appear, that a most manifest and most glorious progress has been made since that period in all the arts of civilization, both useful and ornamental. In those times, travelling was difficult and slow, from the badness of the roads and the imperfections of the carriages. Highwaymen were secreted along the thoroughfares, and, in mounted troops, defied the law, and distressed the whole travelling community. The transmission of letters by post was tardy and unfrequent, and the scandal of coffee-houses supplied the greatest want and the greatest luxury of modern times, the newspaper. There was great scarcity of books in the country places, and the only press in England north of the Trent seems to have been at York. Literature was but feebly cultivated by country squires or country parsons, and female education was disgracefully neglected. Few rich men had libraries as large or valuable as are now common to shopkeepers and mechanics; while the literary stores of a lady of the manor were confined chiefly to the prayer-book and the receipt-book. And those works which were produced or read were disgraced by licentious ribaldry, which had succeeded religious austerity. The drama was the only department of literature which compensated authors, and this was scandalous in the extreme. We cannot turn over the pages of one of the popular dramatists of the age without being shocked by the most culpable indecency. Even Dryden was no exception to the rule; and his poetry, some of which is the most beautiful in the language, can hardly be put into the hands of the young without danger of corrupting them. Poets and all literary men lived by the bounty of the rich and great, and prospered only as they pandered to depraved passions. Many, of great intellectual excellence, died from want and mortifi

Manners & Customs of England.

cation; so that the poverty and distress of literary men became proverbial, and all worldly-wise people shunned contact with them as expensive and degrading. They were hunted from cocklofts to cellars by the minions of the law, and the foulest jails were often their only resting-place. The restoration of Charles proved unfortunate to one great and immortal genius, whom no temptations could assail, and no rewards could bribe. He "possessed his soul in patience," and "soared above the Aonian mount," amid general levity and profligacy. Had he written for a pure, classic, and learned age, he could not have written with greater moral beauty. But he lived when no moral excellence was appreciated, and his claims on the gratitude of the world are beyond all estimation, when we remember that he wrote with the full consciousness, like the great Bacon, that his works would only be valued or read by future generations. Milton was, indeed, unmolested; but he was sadly neglected in his blindness and in his greatness. But, like all the great teachers of the world, he was sustained by something higher than earthly applause, and labored, like an immortal artist, from the love which his labor excited, — labored to realize the work of art which his imagination had conceived, as well as to propagate ideas and sentiments which should tend to elevate mankind. Dryden was his contemporary, but obtained a greater homage, not because he was more worthy, but because he adapted his genius to the taste of a frivolous and corrupt people. He afterwards wrote more unexceptionably, composed lyrics instead of farces, and satires instead of plays. In his latter days, he could afford to write in a purer style; and, as he became independent, he reared the superstructure of his glorious fame. But Dryden spent the best parts of his life as a panderer to the vices of the town, and was an idol chiefly, in Wills's Coffee House, of lampooners, and idlers, and scandal-mongers. Nor were there many people, in the church or in the state, sufficiently influential and noble to stem the torrent. The city clergy were the most respectable, and the pulpits of London were occupied with twelve men who afterwards became bishops, and who are among the great ornaments of the sacred literature of their country. Sherlock, Tillotson, Wake, Collier, Burnet, Stillingfleet, Patrick, Fowler, Sharp, Tennison, and Beveridge made the Established Church

Milton & Dryden.

respected in the town; but the country clergy, as a whole, were ignorant and depressed. Not one living in fifty enabled the incumbent to bring up a family comfortably or respectably. The clergyman was disdained even by the county attorney, was hardly tolerated at the table of his patron, and could scarcely marry beyond the rank of a cook or housekeeper. And his poverty and bondage continued so long that, in the times of Swift, the parson was a byword and a jest among the various servants in the households of the great. Still there were eminent clergymen amid the general depression of their order, both in and out of the Established Church. Besides the London preachers were many connected with the Universities and Cathedrals; and there were some distinguished Dissenters, among whom Baxter, Howe, and Alleine if there were no others, would alone have made the name of Puritan respectable.

The saddest fact, in connection with the internal history of England, at this time, was the condition of the people. They had small wages, and many privations. They had no social rank, and were disgraced by many vices. They were ignorant and brutal. The wages of laborers only averaged four shillings a week, while those of mechanics were not equal to what some ordinarily earn, in this country and in these times, in a single day. Both peasants and artisans were not only ill paid, but ill used, and they died, miserably and prematurely, from famine and disease. Nor did sympathy exist for the misfortunes of the poor. There were no institutions of public philanthropy. Jails were unvisited by the ministers of mercy, and the abodes of poverty were left by a careless generation to be dens of infamy and crime. Such was England two hundred years ago; and there is no delusion more unwarranted by sober facts than that which supposes that those former times were better than our own, in any thing which abridges the labors or alleviates the miseries of mankind. "It is now the fashion to place the golden age of England in times when noblemen were destitute of comforts the want of which would be intolerable to a modern footman; when farmers and shopkeepers breakfasted on loaves the very sight of which would raise a riot in a modern workhouse, when men died faster in the purest country air than they now die in the most pestilential lanes of our towns; and when men died

Condition of the People.

faster in the lanes of our towns than they now die on the coast of Guinea. But we too shall, in our turn, be outstripped, and, in our turn, envied. There is constant improvement, as there also is constant discontent; and future generations may talk of the reign of Queen Victoria as a time when England was truly merry England, when all classes were bound together by brotherly sympathy, when the rich did not grind the faces of the poor, and when the poor did not envy the splendor of the rich."

REFERENCES. — Of all the works which have yet appeared, respecting this interesting epoch, the new History of Macaulay is the most brilliant and instructive. Indeed, the student scarcely needs any other history, in spite of Macaulay's Whig doctrines. He may sacrifice something to effect; and he may give us pictures, instead of philosophy; but, nevertheless, his book has transcendent merit, and will be read, by all classes, so long as English history is prized. Mackintosh's fragment, on the same period, is more philosophical, and possesses very great merits. Lingard's History is very valuable on this reign, and should be consulted. Hume, also, will never cease to please. Burnet is a prejudiced historian, but his work is an authority. The lives of Milton, Dryden, and Clarendon should also be read in this connection. Hallam has but treated the constitutional history of these times. See also Temple's Works; the Life of William Lord Russell; Rapin's History. Pepys, Dalrymple, Rymeri Fœdera, the Commons' Journal, and the Howell State Trials are not easily accessible, and not necessary, except to the historian.

CHAPTER XV.

REIGN OF JAMES II.

Accession of James II.

CHARLES II. died on the 6th of February, 1685, and his brother, the Duke of York, ascended his throne, without opposition, under the title of *James II.* As is usual with princes, on their accession, he made many promises of ruling by the laws, and of defending the liberties of the nation. And he commenced his administration under good auspices. The country was at peace, he was not unpopular, and all classes and parties readily acquiesced in his government.

He retained all the great officers who had served under his brother that he could trust; and Rochester became prime minister, Sunderland kept possession of the Seals, and Godolphin was made lord chamberlain. He did not dismiss Halifax, Ormond, or Guildford, although he disliked and distrusted them, but abridged their powers, and mortified them by neglect.

Alliance with Louis XIV.

The Commons voted him one million two hundred thousand pounds, and the Scottish parliament added twenty-five thousand pounds more, and the Customs for life. But this sum he did not deem sufficient for his wants, and therefore, like his brother, applied for aid to Louis XIV., and consented to become his pensioner and vassal, and for the paltry sum of two hundred thousand pounds. James received the money with tears of gratitude, hoping by this infamous pension to rule the nation without a parliament. It was not, of course, known to the nation, or even to his ministers, generally.

He was scarcely crowned before England was invaded by the Duke of Monmouth, natural son of Charles II., and Scotland by the Duke of Argyle, with a view of ejecting James from the throne.

Both these noblemen were exiles in Holland, and both were justly obnoxious to the government for their treasonable intentions and acts. Argyle was loath to engage in an enterprise so desperate as the conquest of England; but he was an enthusiast, was at the