"As soon as the House met again [after the morning adjournment], it was moved, considering there was an intention to take these five members away by force, to avoid all tumult, let them be commanded to absent themselves; upon this the House gave them leave to absent themselves, but entered no order for it. And then the five gentlemen went out of the house.

"A little after, the king came with all his guard, and all his pensioners, and two or three hundred soldiers and gentlemen. The king commanded the soldiers to stay in the hall, and sent us word he was at the door. The Speaker was commanded to sit still, with the mace lying before him; and then the king came to the door, and took the palsgrave in with him, and commanded all that came with him on their lives not to come in. So the doors were kept open, and the earl of Roxburgh stood within the door, leaning upon it. Then the king came upwards towards the chair, with his hat off, and the Speaker stepped out to meet him; then the king stepped up to his place, and stood upon the step, but sat not down in the chair.

"And after he had looked a great while he told us he would not break our privileges, but treason had no privilege; he came for those five gentlemen, for he expected obedience yesterday, and not an answer. Then he called Mr. Pym and Mr. Hollis by name, but no answer was made. Then he asked the Speaker if they were here, or where they were? Upon this the Speaker fell on his knees, and desired his excuse, for he was a servant to the House, and had neither eyes nor tongue to see or say anything but what they commanded him; then the king told him he thought his own eyes were as good as his, and then said his birds had flown, but he did expect the House should send them to him; and if they did not, he would seek them himself, for their treason was foul, and such a one as they would all thank him to discover; then he assured us they should have a fair trial; and so went out, pulling off his hat till he came to the door.

"Upon this the House did instantly resolve to adjourn till tomorrow at one of the clock, and in the interim they might consider what to do."

CHAPTER XXIII.

The king demands the Members at Guildhall.—Manifestations of popular discontent.—The king removes from Whitehall.—The Members brought back in triumph.—The queen leaves England.—Conference at Newmarket.—The king refused entrance to Hull.—Parliamentary Ordinance for the Militia.—The king forms a body guard at York.—Propositions of the Parliament.—View of society immediately before the commencement of the Civil War.—Arming of the People.—The Cavaliers.—Influence and character of the Puritans.—The Clergy.—Shutting up of the Playhouses.—Volunteers of London.—Women petitioning.—London apprentices.—Industry affected by the preparations for civil war.—Disturbances in the country districts.—Maintenance of order generally.—Influence of the Press.—The Poets.—The Journalists.—Superstitions.—The king sets up his Standard at Nottingham.—His gloomy prospects.—Messages between the king and parliament.—Essex marches from London.

When the king left the House of Commons, the members for a few seconds sat in mute astonishment; but the cry of "Privilege, Privilege," then burst forth, and the House instantly adjourned. As the members passed into the lobbies, they found themselves amongst a crowd of their own servants and other spectators, who were repeating the violent expressions which had been used by the king's attendants. The accused members proceeded to the city. The night was one of general alarm. The citizens formed themselves into armed patrols. The cry was that the Cavaliers were coming to fire the city. At Whitehall there was terror and despondency. The queen, who in the morning had seen the king go forth from the palace, promising her that he would return in an hour, master of his kingdom, saw him return under the disgrace of having attempted an unlawful act, and failed in the attempt. In the evening it was known that the six members were in a house in Coleman street. Lord Digby offered, says Clarendon, "with a select company of gentlemen, who would accompany him, whereof sir Thomas Lunsford was one, to seize upon them, and bring them away alive, or leave them dead in the place." The historian, who had just related the scene in the House of Commons, adds, with wonderful *naïveté*, "but the king did not like such enterprises." The Commons assembled on the 5th, and, declaring the king's coming "in a warlike manner" a high breach of privilege, ad-

journed for six days, appointing Committees to sit in the city. One Committee occupied Grocers' Hall, another occupied Merchant Taylors' Hall. Charles himself on that morning rode into the city without any guards. He was received by the people generally with cold respect, and by some with cries of "Privilege of Parliament." One man threw into his carriage a paper inscribed "To your tents, O Israel!" The king had written to the lord-mayor to summon a Common Council in Guildhall. He told them that he came amongst them without a guard, to show his affection; "that he had accused certain men of high-treason, against whom he would proceed in a legal way; and therefore he presumed they would not shelter them in the city." Clarendon adds, "he departed without that applause and cheerfulness which he might have expected from the extraordinary grace he vouchsafed to them." The king told one of the sheriffs whom he wished to conciliate, that he would dine with him; and having dined, he returned homewards, hearing the cry of "Privilege of Parliament" repeated, and looking upon faces of gloom and disquiet. It was Twelfth Night. The old Christmas gaiety of Whitehall was interrupted by such occurrences as England had never before seen. But on this Twelfth Night the one play of that Christmas was performed in the Cock-pit. The king and queen were not present; the prince of Wales, then a boy of twelve, was there to laugh at the scenes of "The Scornful Lady," one of the most popular of the dramas of Beaumont and Fletcher. This was the last dramatic performance which Whitehall witnessed during the reign of Charles.* There were four more days of fear and vacillation whilst the king and his family remained in the capital. The Common Council sent a petition to the king, complaining of the attempt to arrest the members. He makes an answer which only increases the discontent. On the 8th he issues a proclamation to arrest lord Kimbolton and the five Commoners. The parliamentary committees in the city meet the proclamation by great preparations to bring them back in triumph to Westminster. The courtiers now became alarmed for the personal safety of the king and queen. On the evening of the 10th Charles left Whitehall for Hampton Court. He never again entered that palace of the English kings, till that fatal morning when he walked across the Park from St. James's, attended by bishop Juxon, and guarded by a regiment of foot.

* The book of the Master of the Revels furnishes this record. See Collier's "Annals of the Stage," vol. ii. p. 102.

At two o'clock of that day se'nnight on which the king had entered the House of Commons, the accused members were brought back to the Parliament-stairs, in a rude triumph which presented a remarkable contrast to the welcome which the city gave its sovereign on the 25th of November. From London bridge to Westminster the Thames was covered with pleasure-barges and wherries filled with citizens. Lighters and long-boats, carrying pieces of ordnance, and dressed up with streamers, surrounded the barges of the Commons. The trained bands marched past Whitehall, bearing on their pikes the Protestation of 1641, and the printed votes of the Commons declaring the king's breach of their privileges, pinned on their breasts. As the crowd passed the palace they exclaimed, "Where are now the king and his cavaliers?" The House of Commons having met, the sheriffs of London were called in, and received the thanks of the Speaker. The masters and officers of ships, who had formed the river-guard, were also thanked. Then came the freeholders of Buckinghamshire, who, to the number of four thousand, had arrived in London to offer their services for the defence of Parliament. They came, each wearing the famous Protestation in his hat.* A deputation from the freeholders went the next day with a petition to the king, in which they prayed that their representative, Mr. Hampden, and the other members who laboured under a "foul accusation," might enjoy the just privileges of parliament. The king replied, "that because of the doubt that hath been raised of the manner, he would waive his former proceedings, and proceed in an unquestionable way." This "unquestionable way" was never tried. Another attempt of the king's rashest partisans was as unpropitious as the breach of privilege. On the day when the Buckinghamshire petition was presented, Lord Digby and colonel Lunsford appeared with a body of men in arms at Kingston. The parliament proclaimed them traitors. Digby fled beyond sea; Lunsford and his cavaliers attended the king to Windsor.

In the councils of Windsor, in which we may now well believe that better advisers were listened to than the vain Digby or the truculent Lunsford, a sensible plan of operations was resolved upon. The king was to refrain from all open contests with the

* Butler calls this document—

> "The prototype of reformation,
> Which all the saints, and some, since martyrs,
> Wore in their hats, like wedding-garters."—*Hudibras*, canto 2.

Parliament; to hold out terms of conciliation, and gradually to retire to the north, whilst his friends were gathering strength. Charles invited the houses, on the 20th of January, to reduce all their complaints to one specific relation. The Peers hailed this as an omen of peace; the Commons would put no faith in the king's desire for conciliation, unless he would transfer the military commands of fortresses and the Militia to those who possessed the confidence of parliament. The king gave a decided refusal to the Commons' "sure ground of safety." The House then directed, by Ordinance, that Goring, the governor of Portsmouth, and Hotham, the governor of Hull, should hold those garrisons "for king and parliament," and surrender to no one but under the authority of the parliament. Day by day was the contest growing to a fatal crisis. The Houses passed a Bill for regulating the Militia early in February. About the same time the Bill was carried "for disabling all persons in Holy Orders to exercise any temporal jurisdiction or authority," the preamble of which runs thus, "Whereas bishops and other persons in Holy Orders ought not to be entangled with secular jurisdiction, the office of the Ministry being of such great importance that it will take up the whole man." * To this Bill, by which the bishops were excluded from the House of Lords, the king at length gave his assent. The Bill for the Militia he rejected. The queen urged her husband to accept the one bill and reject the other. On the 16th of February her majesty, escorted by the king to Dover, took her departure for Holland. She carried with her the crown-jewels; and her real purpose was to raise forces for resisting the demands of the Parliament. There are many letters from the queen to the king, during her absence, which show how she laboured to strengthen the king's infirmity of purpose. They communicated in cipher, and the key to the cipher was always kept in the king's pocket. "Once again I remind you," she writes, "to take care of your pocket, and not let our cipher be stolen." † The breach between the king and the parliament upon the question of the Militia was more and more widened. Commissioners were received again and again, and the matter could not be accommodated; nor would the king, at the earnest entreaty of the Houses, return to London. At last, at a conference at Newmarket, when it was asked by lord Holland and lord Pembroke, whether the Militia might not be granted for a time, Charles replied, "No, by God, not for an hour; you have asked

* 16 Car. I. c. 27.

† Green's "Letters of Henrietta Maria," p. 54.

that of me, in this, which was never asked of a king, and with which I would not trust my wife and my children." This scene, in this locality must have suggested a contrast to the usual meetings of the court at Newmarket, for the race-course there was established by Charles; and few courtiers fell in with the opinion of lord Herbert of Cherbury, who said, "The exercise I do not approve of is running of horses, there being much cheating in that kind." The king, after this stormy conference, went on to York. Royalist forces had been raised in the north by the marquis of Newcastle. The first step towards an actual outbreak of civil war was quickly taken. On the 23rd of April the king suddenly appeared before Hull at the head of a strong body of horse, and demanded admittance into the town. There was a large store of arms and ammunition in the fortress. The mayor was about to open the gates, when sir John Hotham went on to the ramparts, and falling on his knees begged the king to excuse a refusal to the demand, for that he, as governor, had sworn to keep the place at the disposition of the parliament. Charles was compelled to retire, proclaiming Hotham a traitor. He then complained to the parliament, demanding justice against the governor of Hull, according to law. The two Houses voted their approval of Hotham's act. The crisis had arrived. There was nothing more to be done for reconcilement. Thirty-two Peers, and sixty-five members of the Commons, joined the king at York. Those that remained no longer attempted to pass Bills for the royal sanction. They issued Ordinances. On the 5th of May the Parliamentary Ordinance for the Militia was directed to be carried out. The king proclaimed this ordinance to be illegal, and summoned the gentlemen of York to form his body-guard. But even in this county, which was considered the stronghold of the royalists, opinions were divided. The lord Chancellor, Littleton, had sent the great seal to the king, that mystic symbol of legal government. Many gentlemen of the county assembled in the town-hall of York, and were addressed by Charles, who was received with loud acclamations. Commissioners of the parliament, men of local influence, who had been sent to York to observe what passed, were threatened by the king and hooted by the cavaliers. But under this appearance of overwhelming strength, some fifty gentlemen, with sir Thomas Fairfax at their head, refused to join in the formation of a body-guard. A more important demonstration of public feeling occurred in the gathering round the hall of several thousands of the middle class, who demanded admission to the meet-

ing, and being refused, held a meeting of their own, and protested against the acts of a close assembly. The king called another general meeting upon a neighbouring moor; and thither came forty thousand men, for the purpose of presenting a petition to the king, imploring him to be reconciled to his parliament. Charles read a paper, and was going away, when young Fairfax pressed forward, and on his knee presented the petition of the people. The king indignantly rode off, and after many violent ebullitions of contempt from the cavaliers the meeting dispersed. The councils of the king became irresolute. The decisions of the parliament, freed from the royalist members who had retired to York, became bolder. The leaders prepared for open war with marvellous energy. They proposed terms of accommodation which they must have anticipated would meet with rejection. These propositions went to the extent of stripping the monarch of the greater part of the constitutional powers which, happily, in our times, have been found consistent with the most perfect liberty of the people. They contemplated, more especially, the enforcement of the principle that the appointment of the king's council and the great officers of state should be subject to the approbation of the two Houses. By the gradual establishment of ministerial responsibility, and the harmonious dependence of the executive power upon the legislative, such a result has been attained. It was then sought to be attained by such a direct curtailment of the sovereign authority as would have made the monarch what Charles truly described, "but the picture, but the sign of a king." The courageous and able men who drew up these propositions must have been satisfied that their adoption could have led to no permanent tranquillity; that they were incompatible with the existence of the monarchical principle; and that the executive power, under such arrangements, could have had no real strength to preserve domestic peace or resist foreign aggression. But they dreaded a return to arbitrary power; they suspected, not without cause, the inclinations of the king. They had the great plea of self-preservation for their actions; and they knew that if they fell themselves, public liberty would fall with them. Neither party was in a position to regard their rights and duties with equanimity. The most terrible question that can be put to a nation was now about to be put—to which of two powers, each claiming to be supreme, will you render obedience? On the 9th of July, three days before the Houses came to the decisive vote, that an army shall be raised "for the defence

of the king and parliament" (such, for some time, was the phrase of the Ordinances), one member, sir Benjamin Rudyard, uttered this prophetic warning: "Mr. Speaker, it now behoves us to call up all the wisdom we have about us, for we are at the very brink of combustion and confusion. If blood once begin to touch blood, we shall presently fall into a certain misery, and must attend an uncertain success, God knows when, and God knows what. Every man here is bound in conscience to employ his uttermost endeavours to prevent the effusion of blood. Blood is a crying sin: it pollutes the land. Let us save our liberties and our estates, as we may save our souls too. Now I have clearly delivered mine own conscience, I leave every man freely to his." *

Let us pause at this juncture, at which the public men of England are exhibiting the spirit of party in aspects so unusual and so portentous, and endeavour to catch some faint glimpses of the life of the people immediately before the commencement of the Civil War.

"Before the flame of the war broke out in the top of the chimneys, the smoke ascended in every country." So writes Lucy Hutchinson, a careful and honest observer of what was passing. She saw around her, in many places, "fierce contests and disputes, almost to blood, even at the first." The partisans of the king were carrying out his commissions of array. The partisans of the parliament were insisting upon obedience to the ordinance for the militia. The king proclaimed Essex, the captain-general of the parliament, and his officers, as traitors. The parliament voted the king's commissioners of array to be traitors. Not only were the king and parliament each struggling to obtain possession of the munitions of war by seizing the fortified places, but each barrel of gunpowder was contested for by opposite parties. Mr. Hutchinson, going by chance to Nottingham, at the time when Charles was at York, is told by the mayor's wife that the sheriff has come to take away the ammunition belonging to the trained bands of the country. He goes into the town-hall, and finds lord Newark, the lord-lieutenant, and the sheriff, with two or three captains, seeing the gunpowder weighed. The king, said the lord-lieutenant, desired to borrow it—it should be restored in ten days. Mr. Hutchinson contended that such was the danger of the times that in four days they might be ruined for the want of the powder; there was

* His printed speech bears date July 18. It is in the "Harleian Miscellany," vol v. p. 216.

a troop of horse in the town, committing great outrages and insolencies, and calling divers honest men puritans and rogues. The contest went on; but lord Newark, admitting that the powder belonging to "the country," would have it for the king. When the countrymen outside the hall knew what had taken place, they desired Mr. Hutchinson to stand by them, and they would part with every drop of blood in their bodies before the lord-lieutenant should have the powder. Lord Newark angrily gave up his demand, when he saw the multitude gathered around the hall. But still the power of the magistrate was respected, and it was agreed that the mayor and the sheriff should have the powder in their joint custody. Such contests between those of opposite opinions were going on throughout England. Few of the members of parliament remained in London. The zealous men of influence in their several counties were in their own districts, raising volunteers, gathering subscriptions, drilling recruits, collecting arms. Each is subscribing largely "for defence of the kingdom." Fire-arms are scarce; and the old weapons of the long-bow and cross-bow are again put in use. Old armour, long since "hung by the wall," is brought down and furbished. The rustic, changed into a pikeman, puts on the iron skull-cap and greaves; and the young farmer becomes a dragoon, with his carbine and pistols. In the parliamentary army there is every variety of clothing. In some companies raised by gentlemen amongst their tenants, the old liveries of each family give the prevailing colour. Hampden's men are in green; Lord Brook's in purple; others are in blue; others in red. The officers all wear an orange scarf, being the colour of their general. The buff doublet, "though not sword yet cudgel proof," is a substitute for armour. Haslerig's Lobsters, and Cromwell's Ironsides—each so called from their rough mail—are not formed as yet. Recruits are taken, at first, without much reference to their opinions. Cromwell, with his super-eminent sagacity, saw the danger of this course. In a later period of his life, when he had attained supreme power, he thus described his position at the commencement of the war:—"I was a person who, from my first employment, was suddenly preferred and lifted up from the lesser trust to greater; from my first being a captain of a troop of horse." He then relates that he "had a very worthy friend, a very noble person, Mr. John Hampden, and he thus spake to him:—'Your troops are most of them old decayed serving-men, and tapsters, and such kind of fellows; and their troops are gentlemen's sons, younger sons, and persons of quality; do you think that the spirits of such mean and base fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen that have honour, and courage, and resolution in them.'" What Cromwell did to meet the ardour of the Cavalier with a zeal equally enthusiastic, he goes on to tell: "I raised such men as had the fear of God before them, as made some conscience of what they did." * Cromwell did justice to the principle upon which the honour and courage of the Cavaliers was founded. He saw, beneath their essenced love-locks and gilded doublets, clear heads and bold hearts. The gay was not necessarily debauched; the health-drinkers were not necessarily drunkards. There were other men in the royalist ranks than—

"The bravoes of Alsatia, the pages of Whitehall."

There were great spirits in both armies ready to measure their swords for "The King," or for "The Cause."

We can scarcely assume that the bulk of the population, or even the greater number of the richer and more educated classes, at once took their sides in this great argument. We know they did not. Many of the best gentlemen of England withdrew from the quarrel which promised to be fatal either to order or to liberty. John Evelyn, whose inclinations were royalist, was one. "The Covenant being passed," he obtained a licence, signed by the king, to travel. He found it "impossible to evade the doing very unhandsome things." † Sir Roger Twysden, one who had refused ship-money, dreaded on the one hand to take part with the parliament, for he "saw, if this war continued, it would prove the ruin of the Protestant religion and the laws of the land;" but, on the other hand, he "did not love to have a king armed with book-law against me for my life and estate." Mr. Kemble, the editor of Twysden's "Government of England," from which we quote, says "Sir Roger Twysden was not the only gentleman who, being unable to join either party, desired to leave England for a time." This learned student of our history adds, by way of accounting for the flight to other lands of some of the country gentlemen, that "they felt it was impossible to serve a king who never spoke a word of truth in his life; and yet could not arm against him, or remain neutral between the two parties." ‡ With every respect for conscientious halting between two opinions, we must nevertheless feel that it is nobler to be a little wrong in the adoption of one party or

* Carlyle's "Cromwell," vol. iii. p. 250. This remarkable speech is also in Guizot's "Cromwell," vol. ii. p. 316.

† Diary.

‡ Introduction, p. lxx.

the other, than to stand aside in philosophical or interested indifference to either party. No cause can be wholly good or wholly bad. Whilst Englishmen were girding up their loins for battle in 1642, they presented a grander aspect than if the Roundheads had suffered Charles to come back in triumph to London, to be the absolute king which he claimed to be; or if the Cavaliers had suffered the Roundheads to trample the Monarchy and the Church in the dust, even in an honest desire to correct their abuses.

The state of opinion in the country generally is thus represented by Mrs. Hutchinson:—"Some counties were in the beginning so wholly for the parliament, that the king's interest appeared not in them; some so wholly for the king, that the godly, for those generally were the parliament's friends, were found to forsake their habitations, and seek other shelters." But in London, after the attempt of the king to violate the sanctuary of the House of Commons, and his removal from the seat of government, the majority of the people became devoted to the parliament. That the influence of those distinguished as "the godly," was more effectual in the capital than in the country, would be manifest if there were no other evidence than the bitterness with which the Puritans, and especially their preachers, are spoken of by the Royalist writers. The "Gospel Trumpeter, surrounded with long-ear'd rout,"—the "errant saints,"—the "gifted brethren, preaching by a carnal hour-glass," were the objects of Butler's ridicule. Cleaveland's coarser wit attacks the "new teacher of the town,"—"his shopboard breeding,"—his "cozening cough and hollow cheek,"—his "hands to thump, no knees to bow." The puritan clergy were more hated than the "preaching cobblers, pulpit praters," whom some defended "in a merry way," saying that, when such men first began to "take up that duty which the prelates and great doctors had let fall," they each had invaded the other's calling,"—"that chandlers, cutlers, weavers, and the like, preached, while the archbishop himself, instead of preaching, was busied in projects about leather, salt, soap, and such commodities as belonged to those tradesmen."* In London, the influence of the popular preachers, who filled the churches and conventicles, was irresistible. Few of the clergy were bold enough to support episcopacy; and those who proclaimed high-church opinions had very incredulous auditors. This temper began in the hatred of popery, which the people saw lurking behind the most harmless ceremonials. The cause of the parliament became the cause of the more earnest religionists; whilst the party of the king, though supported by many of sincere piety, was also the rallying point of the indifferent, the pleasure-loving, and the licentious. In the king's court, during its season of prosperity, the splendours of the church were more regarded than the ministration of the working clergy. We have mentioned the performance of "The Scornful Lady" on the night of the eventful 5th of January. It is perhaps significant of the real want of respect for the ministerial office, in a court which was ready to risk a civil war in the cause of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, that at this time of alarm a play was acted, of which "the trivial, senseless, and unnatural representation of the chaplain," was, seventy years afterwards, denounced as an offence against good morals; with the just observation that "it is so mean a thing to gratify a loose age with a scandalous representation of what is reputable among men, not to say what is sacred, that no beauty, no excellence in an author, ought to atone it." The "Spectator," in the reign of Anne, held that the character of the chaplain in "The Scornful Lady," "has done more towards the disparagement of holy orders, and consequently of virtue itself, than all the wit of that author, or any other, could make up for in the conduct of the longest life after it." The chaplain of "The Scornful Lady" is not represented as a Puritan. We see only, to use the words of the essayist, "a wretch without any notion of the dignity of his function."* This was the play selected by the master of the revels with an utter unconsciousness of its impropriety. How should he have been conscious that it was inconsistent with the boasted decorum of the court of Charles to ridicule the degraded condition of the clergy, when the curates who did the work were so scandalously paid, that in London they were to be found dining at "the threepenny ordinary," and in the country were glad to obtain from the churchwarden "a barley bag-pudding for the Sunday's dinner." The country curate is described as being "under a great prebend, and a double-beneficed rich man," with a salary inferior to his cook or his coachman. The London curates are represented as living "upon citizens' trenchers; and were it not that they were pitiful and charitable to them, there was no possibility of subsistence." † The Committee of the Commons in 1641 received many bitter complaints from parishes that their rectors and vicars would not preach themselves nor allow others to preach; and they appointed

* May.

* Spectator, No. 270,—1712.

† See a curious tract, "The Curates' Conference," in "Harleian Miscellany," vol. i. 8vo.

"The Committee of Preaching Ministers," whose business was to remedy these neglects. We can easily understand how, out of this laxity in regard to the real interests of religion, whilst some ministers were disputing whether "the Lord's table" should stand in the body of the church or at the east end, railed or without rails, covered or uncovered; those who denounced a liturgy, or resisted all ecclesiastical government, grew stronger and stronger, and principally increased in London and other great towns. From this period we cannot understand the causes and the events of the Civil War, without steadily keeping in mind that the zeal of the Puritans, in whatever sectarian differences it exhibited itself, was as much the sustaining principle of the great conflict, as the passionate desire for civil liberty. These two great elements of resistance to the Crown produced impressions upon the national character,—for the most part salutary impressions,—which two centuries have not obliterated.

The strength of the puritanical element in the parliament of 1642 led to bold interferences with popular habits. The parliamentary leaders knew that they would have the support of the most powerful of the community of London, and of many other great towns, if not of the majority of the nation, when they discouraged the ordinary amusements of the people,—the bear-baitings, the cock-fights, the horse-races, the May-poles; appointed a fast on Christmas-day; and shut up the theatres. Bitter must have been the heart-burnings amongst the actors when their vocation came to an end in London, in 1642. The five regular companies were dispersed. Their members became "vagabonds," under the old Statutes, hanging about the camps of the Cavaliers, or secretly performing in inns and private houses. Old John Lowin, who was a fellow-actor with Shakspere, went to keep "The Three Pigeons" at Brentford; and in that ancient hostelry, a few years ago, some scenes were discovered painted on a wall. The parliament would not have ventured upon depriving the people of their most cherished amusement, throwing so many persons into destitution, had not the suppression of plays been held by them as a matter of religious obligation. There is a solemnity in the words of "An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons concerning Stage Plays," dated September 2. 1642, which has no sound of hypocritical pretence:—"Whereas the distressed estate of Ireland, steeped in her own blood, and the distracted estate of England, threatened with a cloud of blood by a civil war, call for all possible means to appease and avert the wrath of God appearing in these judgments: amongst which fasting and prayer having been often tried to be very effectual, have been lately and are still enjoined; and whereas public sports do not well agree with public calamities, nor public stage-plays with the seasons of humiliation, this being an exercise of sad and pious solemnity, and the other being spectacles of pleasure, too commonly expressing lascivious mirth and levity: it is therefore thought fit and ordained by the Lords and Commons in this Parliament assembled, that while these sad causes and set times of humiliation do continue, public stage-plays shall cease and be forborne."

Milton has described two of the chief aspects of the London of this period in very eloquent words: "Behold now this vast city; a city of refuge, the mansion-house of liberty encompassed and surrounded with His protection. The shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers working, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice in defence of beleaguered truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas." * London is the shop of war; it is the home of thought. Let us look at the vast city under the first of these aspects. It has always had its Trained-bands. It has now its Volunteers of every rank. Ludlow thus relates his first introduction to "the shop of war," when he thought it his duty, as a young man, to take part in the cause of parliament: "Soon after my engagement in this cause, I met with Mr. Richard Fynes, son to the lord Say, and Mr. Charles Fleetwood, son to sir Miles Fleetwood, then a member of the House of Commons; with whom consulting, it was resolved by us to assemble as many young gentlemen of the Inns of Court, of which we then were, and others, as should be found disposed to this service, in order to be instructed together in the use of arms." † They frequently met at the Artillery Ground, to receive this instruction from "a person experienced in military affairs." Many who had been in the Protestant armies of the continent, some who had fought under Gustavus Adolphus, were competent to become such instructors. Such a man was Skippon, who had been appointed major-general of the London Militia. Clarendon does justice to his character: "The man had served very long in Holland; and from a common soldier had raised himself to the degree of a captain, and to the reputation of a good officer: he was a man of order and sobriety, and untainted with

* "Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing." † "Memoirs," p. 43.

any of those vices which the officers of that army are exercised in." The parliament considered this city force as a great arm of strength: "Ordered, that the House shall meet to-morrow at eight, and adjourn at ten, to the end that such as please may see the Militia of the city of London exercised." * Eight thousand men were mustered on this occasion. Tents were erected for the members of parliament, and there was a city feast, without which the review would have been maimed of its fair proportions. There were healths, mingled with prayers and thanksgivings, on that and other grand occasions. Skippon and his strict brethren were obliged to compromise with some of the profane customs which they held in abomination. When the parliamentary Ordinance for an army went forth, the zeal of the people was called out in a more remarkable manner than by the sights of Finsbury fields. There was a work to be done which would require heavy payments. Four thousand men had enlisted in one day, and they must have wages. The tables of Guildhall were instantly heaped up with money and plate. The wealthy brought their bags of silver and their parcel-gilt goblets; the poorer, their smallest article of value—"a thimble, bodkin, and a spoon." May says, "it was a common jeer of men disaffected to the cause to call it 'the thimble and bodkin army.'"

> "Women, that left no stone unturn'd
> In which the cause might be concern'd,
> Brought in their children's spoons and whistles,
> To purchase swords, carbines, and pistols." †

Women took part in this great question of the time with an ardour in which there is nothing really ridiculous. The cavaliers laughed at "the zealous sisterhood;" but, in a juster point of view, there is something as heroic as the royalist countess of Derby's defence of Latham House, in the demeanour of the puritan Ann Stagg, a brewer's wife, when she went to the door of the House of Commons, at the head of a great number of women of the middle class, and presented a petition, which said,—"It may be thought strange and unbecoming our sex to show ourselves here, bearing a petition to this honourable assembly; but Christ purchased us at as dear a rate as he did men, and therefore requireth the same obedience, for the same mercy, as of men: we are sharers in the public calamities." Pym delivered a gracious message to Ann Stagg and her companions; "Repair," he said, "to your houses, we entreat, and

* "Journals," May 9, 1642. † "Hudibras," part ii. canto 2.

turn your petitions into prayers at home for us." Milton, commending the courtesy of the parliament to such petitions, says, "The meanest artisans and labourers, at other times also women, and often the younger sort of servants, attending with their complaints, and that sometimes in a less humble guise than for petitioners, have gone with confidence that neither their meanness would be rejected, nor their simplicity contemned." *

The London apprentices, so prominent in these unhappy times, and so really formidable in their organisation, require a brief notice. They were not a low bred or illiterate class. The greater number were the sons of substantial citizens or yeomen; and even the esquire did not disdain that his boy should serve in the shop of the London trader. Stow says, "Because the apprentices of London were often children of gentlemen and persons of good quality, they did affect to go in costly apparel, and wear weapons, and frequent schools of dancing, fencing, and music." Their principle of confederation gave them their political strength. A writer of this period says, "There is a kind of supernatural sympathy, a general union, which knits their hearts in a bond of fraternal affection, under the common notion of a London 'prentice."† The dress of the apprentice in the reign of Charles I. was, "the flat round cap, hair close cut, narrow falling band, close side-coat, close hose, cloth stockings,"—an antique habit which may still be seen in the streets of London, as worn by the youths of that noble school, Christ's Hospital. The violence of the apprentices against episcopacy, and their general adherence to the cause of the Parliament, were probably influenced by the opinions of their puritan masters. But amongst this body there were some differences of opinion. At the beginning of 1643, there was a petition for peace, presented by "divers" London apprentices, which was not very favourably received; and in their published vindication they say, "Though we for several considerations were not, or not suffered to be, of that number who have exposed their persons to the fury of war, yet, as they bleed outwardly, we bleed within for the distempers of this Church and State." They probably belonged to the households of the minority of citizens, or were sons of royalist families. Their assertion that when they went to present their petition, they desired "all the subscribers to meet at the Piazzas in Covent Garden, in complete civil habits, without swords or staves," seems to point to a contrast with the usual truculent demeanour of their fraternity;

* "Apology for Smectymnus." † "Honour of London Apprentices," 1647.