

CHAPTER XXVII.

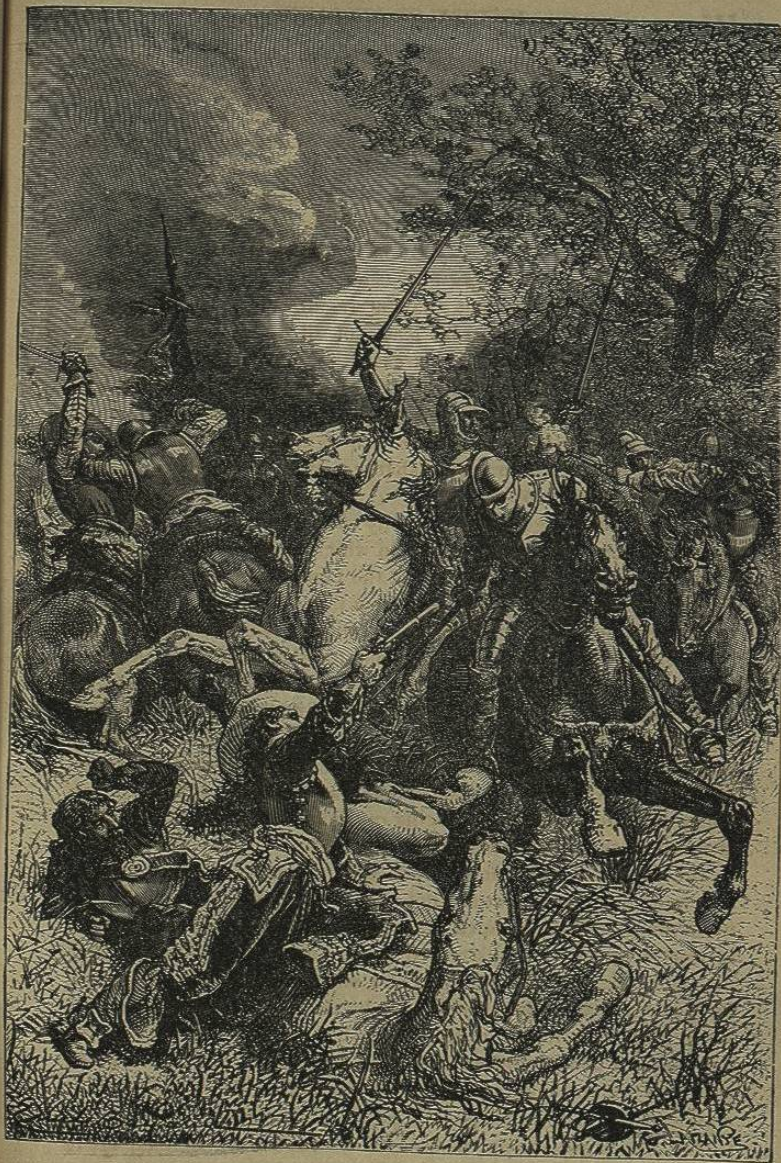
Destruction of the Manor Houses.—Miseries of Sieges.—Montrose defeated at Philiphaugh.—Defeat of Digby.—His Cabinet taken.—The King in Oxford.—Overtures for Pacification.—Termination of the War in the West.—Prince of Wales leaves for Scilly.—The King negotiates with the Scots.—The King's Flight from Oxford.—Adventures of the King on his way to the Scottish Army.—The King with the Army before Newark.—State of Parties.—Negotiations.—The King surrendered to English Commissioners.—Capitulation of Oxford.—End of first Civil War.

THE traces of the Civil War in England are to be found in the existing ruins of several old mansions, besides those of Basing House. Amongst the most interesting and picturesque are the remains of the manor-house of South Winfield. This was one of the estates of the Shrewsbury family; and here Mary, Queen of Scots, resided for some time under the care of the earl, who is associated with her unhappy story. Sir John Gell, who was very active in the parliamentary interest in Derbyshire, here placed a garrison. In 1643 the place was taken by the Royalists. But it was retaken by Sir John Gell; and Colonel Dalby, the governor, was killed in the storming. In 1646 the Parliament ordered the place to be dismantled. Such was the course with regard to other great mansions of historical interest. Of the various conflicts for the possession of detached castles and manor-houses, that of Basing House is amongst the most memorable. The rapine and slaughter there were probably greater than at any other of such strongholds. It was a post of importance, which had held out against the Parliament so long that it was deemed almost impregnable. Its large garrison was amply supplied by the rich surrounding country. The roads between London and the "Western Parts" were entirely commanded by this fortified mansion, and by Donnington Castle, near Newbury. At the siege of Basing House was present Hugh Peters, a chaplain in the parliamentary army, and at that time secretary to Cromwell. After the storm he "took a view of the works, which were many, the circumvallation being above a mile in compass." He then looked about him to see the extent of the victualling department; finding "provisions for some years rather than months; four hundred

quarters of wheat; bacon, divers rooms-full, containing hundreds of fitches; cheese proportionable; with oatmeal, beef, pork; beer, divers cellars full, and that very good." Seventy-four persons, according to Mr. Peters, were slain in the house; amongst whom was one lady "who by her railing provoked our soldiers, then in heat, into a further passion." Amongst the slain was "Robinson the player, who a little before the storm was known to be mocking and scorning the Parliament and our army."* Some of the details of the plunder and destruction, as given by Peters, will furnish an idea of the havoc of this terrible Civil War: "The plunder of the soldiers continued till Tuesday night; one soldier had a hundred and twenty pieces in gold for his share; others plate, others jewels; among the rest, one got three bags of silver, which (he being not able to keep his own counsel) grew to be common pillage amongst the rest, and the fellow had but one half-crown left for himself at last. The soldiers sold the wheat to country-people, which they held up at good rates awhile; but afterwards the market fell, and there were some abatements for haste. After that, they sold the household stuff, whereof there was good store, and the country loaded away many carts; and they continued a great while fetching out all manner of household stuff, till they had fetched out all the stools, chairs, and other lumber, all which they sold to the country-people by piecemeal. In all these great buildings there was not one iron bar left in all the windows (save only what were on fire) before night. And the last work of all was the lead; and by Thursday morning they had hardly left one gutter about the house. And what the soldiers left, the fire took hold on, which made more than ordinary haste, leaving nothing but bare walls and chimneys in less than twenty hours;—being occasioned by the neglect of the enemy in quenching a fire-ball of ours at first. We know not how to give a just account of the number of persons that were within. For we have not quite three hundred prisoners; and, it may be, have found a hundred slain, whose bodies, some being covered with rubbish, came not at once to our view. Only, riding to the house on Tuesday night, we heard divers crying in vaults for quarter; but our men could neither come to them, nor they to us."

* From the construction of a sentence in the report of Peters, it does not seem quite clear that Robinson was slain by Harrison, as Sir Walter Scott assumes in "Woodstock": "There lay dead upon the ground Major Cuffie, a man of great account amongst them, and a notorious Papist, slain by the hands of Major Harrison, that godly and gallant gentleman; and Robinson, the player, who," &c. (See Carlyle, vol. i. p. 194.)

The details of horror in sieges of large towns; the misery of blockades; the more sudden distress of assaults and bombardments; are generally passed over slightly in the official narratives of such scenes. But some notion of the sufferings of the people, to whichever party they belonged, may be derived even from such a formal document as an Ordinance of Parliament. Taunton had been besieged three times by the Royalists. It was undergoing the horrors of a siege on the 3rd of July, when Fairfax, after the great victory of Naseby, came to its relief. But, a month before this, the Parliament, having regard to its calamities, had ordered "that a collection be made of all well-affected persons" for the relief of "the poor distressed inhabitants of the town of Taunton," and adjacent places. This Ordinance is written with remarkable unction: "It is notoriously known to all the kingdom, that the said town hath for these two years past, endured all the calamities almost that war (the sharpest of all outward judgments) can bring upon a people. They endured three as sharp and cruel sieges from a bloody enemy as ever any place hath suffered since the wars began; in which their houses were consumed by fire, their persons slain, the famine and the sword contendeth which should prey upon them first; poor mothers looking when the time would come that they should hear the children cry for bread, and there would be none to give them; when they should see them swoon in the top of every street, as Lam. ii. 11. However, God upholds their spirits with unshaken resolution in the midst of fire and blood. But yet, by these calamities and troubles, the estates of those who have escaped the sword are utterly exhausted and consumed, five hundred of their houses burnt down to the ground (being one-half of the town), by which almost one thousand families are turned harbourless and helpless to the mercy of their neighbours, who can only melt upon them, and weep over them, but are not able to relieve them. And therefore, you that have escaped these miseries are earnestly besought to look upon this sad distressed town (sometimes the most eminent of those parts for building and situation, and, which is more, for Piety and true Religion), now by the just displeasure of the Lord against it raked in its own ashes, reduced almost to the extremity of misery and want, for the defence of that Cause which you profess, and take upon you to maintain: listen, and hear it crying to you in the Churches' Lamentations, 'See if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in



BATTLE OF MARSTON MOOR. — Vol. iii. 494.

the day of his fierce anger; and do not stop your ears against their cry for pity from you, lest the Lord deal accordingly with you, and stop his ears against your cry for mercy, when you have most need of it. In such a singular and extraordinary case as this, stir up yourselves to do some extraordinary thing; do not draw out your purses only to your poor distressed brethren, but your very souls too, as the Prophet speaks. This is your duty, and this will be your policy, if you desire to save your persons, houses, and estates from that heavy misery which hath exposed them to your mercy." *

With the exception of a few conflicts for the possession of garrisoned towns and detached manor-houses, the war, during the autumn of 1645, was wholly in the west. The great royalist army was utterly broken and dispersed. After the surrender of Bristol all reasonable hope was gone of once more matching the Cavaliers of Rupert against the Ironsides of Cromwell. But in Scotland there was a royalist leader whose name had become a terror to the Covenanters. Wherever Montrose led his Highlanders he was victorious. As he carried the war into the Lowlands he was joined by many who had formerly dreaded to declare themselves. It was no longer a war of clanship, but a great national contest. On the 15th of August the Covenanted army, commanded by Baillie, was utterly defeated. It was the seventh great victory of Montrose; and it laid Scotland, for a few weeks, at his feet. Edinburgh surrendered to him. In the king's name he summoned a parliament at Glasgow. Before the surrender of Bristol, Charles had conceived the possibility of joining Montrose. The hope returned even after Bristol was lost. He decided to attempt the relief of Chester, then besieged by the Parliament's forces; for at that port only could he receive succours from Ireland. He was at Hereford, anxious and undecided, when, after a week's delay, he marched, with five thousand men, over the Welsh mountains; and on the 24th of September was within view of Chester. Poyntz, the parliamentary commander, was watching the king's movements; and he suddenly came upon the rear-guard of the Royalists, at Rowton Heath. Sir Marmaduke Langdale,—he who had fought at Naseby,—vigorously charged the parliamentary forces; but a detachment of the besieging troops came upon his rear, and decided the day. The king retired again to the mountains. His chance of joining Montrose was gone. But at this juncture, if Charles had

* Husband's "Ordinances in Parliament," 1642 to 1646, p. 651.

defeated Poyntz and relieved Chester, this last faint hope would have been destroyed. On the 24th of September, Montrose was himself a fugitive. He had advanced towards the English border, with diminished followers. His Highlanders had dispersed; his Lowland adherents had fallen off. Lesley had moved from England to encounter him. On the 13th of September, at Philiphaugh, on the left bank of the Ettrick, Montrose was surprised by the veteran Covenanter. There was a thick mist. No scout gave notice of Lesley's approach. The camp of Montrose was attacked on each flank. The great leader himself was in the town of Selkirk, on the right bank of the Ettrick. He hastened upon the first alarm to cross the river with his cavalry. But it was impossible to rally the main body of his followers. He retreated to the Highlands. Instead of being the commander of a victorious army, he was now only the leader of a few bands of mountaineers. Lesley re-established the Covenanted power in the Lowlands. His victory was disgraced by a cold-blooded slaughter of prisoners; and by the subsequent execution of many of the royalist leaders. One, who was a true Scotsman in his nationality, but whose genius was too high to make him blindly partial, has thus compared his countrymen with the English during this warfare: "Greatly to the honour of the English nation,—owing, perhaps, to the natural generosity and good-humour of the people, or to the superior influence of civilization,—the civil war in that country, though contested with the utmost fury in the open field, was not marked by any thing approaching to the violent atrocities of the Irish, or the fierce and ruthless devastation exercised by the Scottish combatants. The days of deadly feud had been long past, if the English ever followed that savage custom, and the spirit of malice and hatred which it fostered had no existence in that country. The English parties contended manfully in battle, but, unless in the storming of towns, when all evil passions are afloat, they seem seldom to have been guilty of cruelty or wasteful ravage. They combated like men who have quarrelled on some special point, but, having had no ill-will against each other before, are resolved to fight it out fairly, without bearing malice."*

When Charles reached Denbigh Castle after the defeat near Chester, he rested there three days. After much debate it was decided to go to Newark, which was held by a royalist garrison of about two thousand horse and foot. The excesses of these men,

* Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather."

in a time of so general calamity, had excited the indignation of all the country.* News now came that Montrose had recovered his defeat, and that his army was again victorious. The king again set forward with an ill-conditioned Newark garrison to the aid of Montrose. On the way they learnt the truth of his final ruin. The king returned to Newark, but Digby, with the presumption that marked his character, went on to the north. At Sherborne, in Yorkshire, he was overtaken by the parliamentary troops, and utterly routed. Amongst Digby's baggage his private papers were taken; and these, being published by order of Parliament, "administered afterwards so much occasion of discourse." Thus Clarendon glances at their contents. But the Parliament, when publishing them in the spring of 1646, took care to set forth the policy that was to be collected from this secret correspondence between the queen's favourite, Jermyn, and the king's chief adviser, Digby: "The reader, comparing Cabinet with Cabinet, the king's with the lord Digby's, will easily observe how the unnatural enemies to this their native country (imitating their General, the great enemy to mankind) have gone about seeking how they may devour it, by their restless endeavours to bring in foreign aid from Holland, Courland, Denmark, Portugal, Ireland, France, and from Rome itself, of shipping, arms, ammunition, men, money, horse and foot, and that in no small proportions: 4000 foot and 1000 horse expected from France, 10,000 men from Ireland, and 10,000 more from Lorraine; a strange conjuncture, to concur in the ends pretended! The king and pope to defend the Protestant religion, Denmark and Lorraine to maintain laws and liberties, bloody rebels in Ireland to uphold the privileges of Parliament in England! But blessed be God, who hath discovered the counsels of the enemies, and thereby hath in a great part opened the eyes, and undeceived not only multitudes of their principal adherents at home, but also foreign princes and states abroad, and have withal defeated their forces and expectations both abroad and at home. This is God's work, and it is marvellous in our eyes."†

The stormy meeting between the king and prince Rupert at Newark; the half-mutinous conduct of the royal garrison there,—events minutely related by Clarendon—are indicative of the fallen fortunes of the unhappy king. "He must undergo a new kind of mortification from his friends much sharper than any he had undergone from his enemies." Rupert and his brother Maurice left

* Clarendon, vol. v. p. 289. † Husband, "Ordinances of Parliament," 1646, p. 869.

Charles for ever. He was alone; no one to counsel him. His troops were reduced to a few hundreds. Poyntz and Rossiter, the parliamentary generals, were closing round Newark, which had so long been for him a place of security. To wait there was no longer safe. At eleven o'clock on the night of the 3rd of November, the king, with four or five hundred cavaliers, set out for Oxford. After a wearisome march, with hostile troops all around, they reached the loyal city in safety on the 6th. "So he finished the most tedious and grievous march that ever king was exercised in; having been almost in perpetual motion from the loss of the battle of Naseby to this hour, with such a variety of dismal accidents as must have broken the spirits of any man who had not been truly magnanimous."* There is another magnanimity besides endurance of fatigue and privation without loss of heart—the magnanimity of refusing to employ dishonourable means of averting danger and overcoming difficulty. On the day after his arrival at Oxford, the king wrote to prince Charles, desiring him to leave England; "I have resolved," he says, "to propose a personal treaty to the rebels at London; in order to which a trumpet is by this time there, to demand a pass for my messengers, who are to carry my propositions; which, if admitted, as I believe it will, then my real security will be your being in another country."† Beaten in open warfare, the king now resorted to the more dangerous weapons of craft and intrigue. His ultimate destruction may in a great degree be attributed to the fatal course of endeavouring to win by stratagem what he despaired of attaining by arms—a course which he pursued through so many winding paths after the decisive summer of 1645.

During the long vacation of this year the Commons had resolved to fill up the vacancies in their House, caused by the absence of the royalist members, by issuing out writs for the election of representatives to supply their places. Denzil Hollis complains of the artifices that were employed to procure the return of members favourable to the policy of the Independents; but he adds, "that far the greater part of these new members deceived the expectations of these men."‡ Many persons of eminence came into parliament through this election. The "certain mean sort of people in the House, whom to distinguish from the more honourable gentlemen they called Worst-ed-stocking men,"§ became of less

* Clarendon, vol. v. p. 302.

† *Ibid.*, p. 277.

‡ Memoirs, p. 43.

§ Mrs. Hutchinson's "Memoirs," vol. ii. p. 71.

importance, when Hutchinson, Ireton, Blake, Algernon Sidney, Fleetwood, Ludlow, Fairfax, and others of mark, were returned for counties and boroughs. But such men were not likely to yield the great points of difference for which they had so long fought. The Independents were unquestionably strengthened. They were fast becoming a real power, as much opposed to the narrower views of the Presbyterians, as to the re-establishment of the sovereign without adequate securities. The controversy between the king and the Parliament was becoming more perplexed. The Scottish army in the north was discontented through the want of pay. The Parliament complained that an army which had entered England as allies should ravage the district in which they were quartered. Charles meditated upon these distractions, and sought to take his advantage of them. But his overtures for peace were suspected to be hollow by the men who were now gradually assuming the lead in public affairs. The king on the 5th of December wrote to the Speaker of the House of Lords, offering to send a deputation to Westminster with propositions that should be "the foundation of a happy and well-grounded peace." He received no immediate answer; and he then proposed to proceed to Westminster, to treat in person. Meanwhile a reply had been returned to his first proposal, declining to receive his negotiators. He again wrote on the 29th of December, urging the plan of a personal treaty. This proposition was also rejected. To justify this rejection certain papers that had been found in the carriage of the Catholic archbishop of Tuam, who was killed in a skirmish in October, were laid before Parliament, and then published. They proved that the king had concluded a treaty of alliance with the Irish rebels, in which as the price of their landing in England with ten thousand men, under the earl of Glamorgan, popery was to be re-established in Ireland, and the Protestants brought under subjection. But Charles had gone further than these papers proved. The treaty was concluded with the Irish papists by Glamorgan, under a secret authority from the king himself to make any conditions Glamorgan pleased, which should be righteously observed. The marquis of Ormond, the lord-lieutenant, committed Glamorgan to prison; but he produced two royal commissions as his justification. Charles repudiated his agent in a letter to the Parliament, maintaining that he had given no power to make conditions in the matter of religion or church property, but merely to raise men for his service. The

Parliament disbelieved the king; and documents, then undiscovered, prove that the Parliament was right.*

The overtures for pacification, so earnestly repeated by Charles, were probably held by the sagacious and incredulous men with whom he had to treat, as containing in themselves evidence of the want of that straightforwardness which could alone be successful. In the remarkable collection of letters brought to light in 1855,† we have one to the queen, dated Oxford, January 18th, 1646, in which Charles says, "Though I have stretched my wits to persuade them to accept of my personal treaty, yet examine my words well, and thou wilt find that I have not engaged myself in anything against my grounds. For, first, I am sure that there can be no scruple as concerning the Church. Then, for Ireland and the militia, it is true that it may be I give them leave to hope for more than I intended, but my words are only, to endeavour to give them satisfaction in either." It has been remarked by Mr. Hallam that, "Charles had unhappily long been in the habit of perverting his natural acuteness to the mean subterfuges of equivocal language." There was this folly about his cunning that he fancied others would not examine his words well. In proposing to treat at Westminster he was clearly without any real expectation of there effecting a "happy and well-grounded peace." He was gratifying himself with the belief that he was able to triumph through the dangerous principle of "divide and govern." He writes to the queen: "Now, as to points which I expected by my treaty at London. Knowing assuredly the great animosity which is betwixt the Independents and Presbyterians, I had great reason to hope that one of the factions would so address themselves to me, that I might without great difficulty obtain my so just ends, and questionless it would have given me the fittest opportunity. For, considering the Scots treaty that would be besides, I might have found means to have put distractions amongst them though I had found none."‡ In following out the remainder of this unhappy king's story for two years, we shall always trace this ruling principle of his actions; at every turn of his affairs having the same confident belief that the day would come when the monarchy "would spring up again as fair as ever." The root was left, he said; there were only "lop-

* See *ante*, p. 491.

† "Charles I. in 1646. Letters of King Charles I. to Queen Henrietta Maria, edited by John Bruce, Esq." Camden Society, 1856.

‡ "Charles I. in 1646," p. 11.

pings." In seven years the very loppings "being to return as entirely to the crown as if I had entered London at a breach."*

The military events of the spring of 1646 brought the contest in the west to a termination. The remnant of the royalist army was completely demoralised. It was, says Clarendon, "terrible in plunder and resolute in running away." Lord Hopton very reluctantly accepted the command of this western army, at the express desire of the prince of Wales. A braver man could not have been chosen; a more high-minded friend of the royal cause; a leader who carried on war in the spirit most opposed to the rapacity of those he was expected to change from brigands into soldiers. As might have been foreseen, this honourable man utterly failed, when he brought these bands face to face with the orderly troops of Fairfax. Hopton had possession of Torrington, and his main body was placed on a common at its east end. When Fairfax forced the barricade, horse and foot took to flight, leaving their general and a few of his friends to shift for themselves. Shortly after, Hopton collected some of his runaways; and, with accessions of strength as he went on, marched to Truro, with Fairfax closely following. Hopton would have fought another battle; but his officers of horse declared that their men would never be brought to fight; and proposed to capitulate. Fairfax offered conditions that involved no dishonour; but the general would not yield; and at last a treaty was concluded without him, and the western army was dissolved. On the 22nd of March, lord Astley, marching from Worcester to join the king at Oxford, was defeated at Stow-in-the-Wold, and his three thousand cavaliers were killed, captured, or dispersed. The brave old general was himself taken prisoner. The soldiers brought him a drum to sit down upon. The Parliamentary captains respectfully surrounded the veteran: "Gentlemen," he says, "you have done your work, and may now go to play,—unless you will fall out among yourselves." These disasters at length determined the prince of Wales and his council to obey the king's injunctions to leave the country. The prince's governorship in the west was no longer a protection to his person. He first sailed to Scilly. Two days after his landing he sent lord Colepepper to France to acquaint the queen "with the wants and incommunities of the place," and to desire "a supply of men and moneys." Lady Fanshawe, whose husband acted as secretary to the Council, landed in miserable plight, having been pillaged by the seamen with whom they sailed

* "Charles I. in 1646," p. 21.

from the Land's-end. The poor lady, sick, and far advanced in pregnancy, was set on shore almost dead; and from her narrative we may obtain some notion of "the incommodities of the place." She says, When we had got to our quarters near the castle, where the prince lay, I went immediately to bed, which was so vile, that my footman ever lay in a better, and we had but three in the whole house, which consisted of four rooms, or rather partitions, two low rooms and two little lofts, with a ladder to go up: in one of these they kept dried fish, which was his trade, and in this my husband's two clerks lay, one there was for my sister, and one for myself, and one amongst the rest of the servants. But, when I waked in the morning, I was so cold I knew not what to do, but the daylight discovered that my bed was near swimming with the sea, which the owner told us afterwards it never did so but at spring tide. With this, we were destitute of clothes; and meat and fuel, for half the Court to serve them a month, was not to be had in the whole island; and truly we begged our daily bread of God, for we thought every meal our last. The Council sent for provisions to France, which served us, but they were bad, and a little of them.* From Scilly, after three weeks of privation, the prince sailed for Jersey; and in the summer proceeded to France, and afterwards to Holland.

Three months had elapsed since the proposals of the king had been rejected by the Parliament. They were three months of repeated disaster. The royalist cause had never fallen so low. Charles endeavoured to carry out his hope of dividing his enemies by propitiating the Independents through their leading statesman, the younger Vane. Asburnham, in the king's name, wrote to Vane to propose that the Independents and the Royalists should unite to put down "the tyrannical domination" of the Presbyterians. It is not known whether Vane returned an answer. The king then addressed a message to Parliament, offering to come to Whitehall, and proposing much the same terms as had been rejected by him during the treaty at Uxbridge. His great object was to produce such an effect by his presence in London as would cause a popular re-action in his favour. Three days after he had sent this message to the Parliament, he wrote to Digby, "I am endeavouring to get to London, so that the conditions may be such as a gentleman may own, and that the rebels may acknowledge me king; being not without hope that I shall be able so to draw either the Presbyterians or Independents to side with me for extermina-

* "Memoirs," p. 74.

ting the one or the other, that I shall be really king again."* The leaders of both parties agreed to prevent this by a very strong ordinance, which gave the Committee of the Militia power to raise forces to prevent tumult in case of the king's coming; to apprehend any who should come with him or resort to him; and which commanded all who had ever borne arms for the king immediately to depart from London, upon the penalty of being proceeded against as spies. Meanwhile the army of Fairfax was advancing towards Oxford. Montreuil, a special ambassador from France, had been negotiating with the Scottish commissioners in London to induce the Scots to take up the cause of the king. His offers were received with civility, but with no distinct promises. He then proceeded to Edinburgh, and afterwards to the Scottish army. As might be expected, the question of establishing the Church in England according to the Scottish model was the great apparent difficulty. The real danger, which was perhaps most borne in mind, was the certainty of being involved in a serious quarrel with the English Parliament by a separate treaty. There were already sufficient causes of disunion; the principal being the sufferings of the people of the north, from the long presence of the Scottish troops amongst them. Hollis, who extenuates the conduct of these troops, says: "I must be very ignorant of the carriage of an unpaid army, if I did not believe that many disorders were committed; many a poor countryman exceedingly oppressed and abused by the unruly soldiers; and more by half taken and spoiled by them than would have sufficed for their pay and entertainment, if it had been orderly raised and provided by the authority and care of the state, which was to pay them."† The State did not pay them promptly, and the soldiers took their maintenance into their own hands. After two months of tedious negotiation, Montreuil at last saw that the first advice which he had given to the king to go to the Scottish army was not borne out by any definite promises, and he then dissuaded him from the attempt. On the 22nd of April Charles wrote to the queen from Oxford, complaining that his condition was much worse than ever "by the relapsed perfidiousness of the Scots." He so little suspected it from the previous advices from Montreuil, that, he says, "I did not care what hazard I undertook for the putting myself into their army. . . . And that no time might be lost, I wrote a letter to Montrose to make him march up and join with

* Carte's "Ormond," quoted in Brodie and Hallam.

† "Memoirs," p. 49.