On the 26th of July, all the avenues of the Houses were beset with a violent multitude. They brought a Petition, which was received at the door of the Commons. No answer was returned, and shouts arose of "Let us go in." Members drew their swords, and drove back those who were crowding in the lobby. Some of the rioters climbed up to the windows of the House of Peers, and threw stones into the Chamber. The door of the House of Commons was at last forced open; and a body of men rushed in, calling out "Vote, Vote." They demanded that a resolution of the previous day, carried by the Independents, declaring those traitors who voted for the city "engagement," should be rescinded. The Speaker left the chair, and went into the lobby, after the House had voted as the rioters desired. Ludlow thus records the scene when the Speaker "was forced back into the chair by the violence of the insolent rabble." "It was thought convenient to give way to their rage; and the Speaker demanding what question they desired to be put, they answered, That the king should be desired to come to London forthwith: which question being put, they were asked again what further they would have. They said that he should be invited to come with honour, freedom, and safety: to both which I gave a loud negative, and some of the members as loud an affirmative, rather out of a prudential compliance than any affection to the design on foot." * This was on a Monday. The army lay at Windsor, Maidenhead, Colnbrook, and adjacent places. The Houses adjourned to Friday, the 30th of July. The Speakers of the Lords and Commons have withdrawn, and many members have withdrawn with them. The eleven members whose impeachment the Army had demanded, have now returned. The Presbyterian party appears to be triumphant. New Speakers are elected. The king has had his interview with Ireton and the Council of Officers, and has indiscreetly shown his reliance upon agitations which he is more than suspected of having excited. Suddenly the whole course of the political movement is changed. A train of carriages arrives from London with lord Manchester and Mr. Lenthall, the Speakers; and they are accompanied by fourteen of the Peers, and about one hundred members of the Commons.† Those who remain at Westminster have not been idle. Troops are to be enlisted. The army is commanded not to advance. But

* "Memoirs," vol. i. p. 206.

† These numbers are given by Rushworth and Whitelock. Hollis says eight lords and fifty-eight commoners.

it does advance. On the 3rd of August, Hounslow Heath, then a vast unenclosed space, is appointed for a Rendezvous of this formidable force. It is now something more than a power struggling against a parliamentary majority. The Speaker of the Lords, and the Speaker of the Commons,—the Sergeant-at-Arms with the mace—the most energetic of the Members—the visible authority and the real potency of Parliament are with the Army. "They appeared at the head of them," says Ludlow, "at which the Army expressed great joy, declaring themselves resolved to live and die with them." There is yet a hope that the king will still endeavour to retain the only power that can really help him. It was clear that London will succumb without a blow. Fairfax and his twenty thousand pause for a day or two, communicating with the authorities of the City. With the party at Westminster and their new Speakers, they have no intercourse. The army is quartered about Brentford, Hounslow, Twickenham, and adjacent villages; "without restraining any provisions, which, every day, according to custom, were carried to London; or doing the least action that might disoblige or displease the city: the army being, in truth, under so excellent discipline, that nobody could complain of any damage sustained by them, or any provocation by word or deed." * Berkeley says that Cromwell, Ireton, and the rest of the superior officers of the army, knew that London would certainly be theirs; and "therefore sent an express to Mr. Ashburnham and to me, to express that, since his majesty would not yield to the proposals, yet he should, at least, send a kind letter to the army, before it were commonly known that London would submit." A meeting of the friends and advisers of the king was held at Windsor, and a letter of this nature was prepared. But Charles would not sign the letter till it was too late; and when he reluctantly sent it, "it had lost all its grace and efficacy." The City had yielded. There was no longer a present hope of profiting by dissensions between Parliament and Army. On the 6th of August, Fairfax, surrounded by four of his regiments, and conducting the Members of Parliament who had fled to the Army, proceeded to Westminster. At Hyde Park they were met by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen; at Charing Cross by the Common Council. The Independents, now supreme in parliament, took their seats. The mace was again laid on the table. Two days after, the whole army, horse, foot, and artillery, marched through Westminster and

* Clarendon, vol. v. p. 466.

the City, and over London Bridge to their various quarters in Surrey. They marched, says Clarendon, "without the least dis. order, or doing the least damage to any person, or giving any disrespective word to any man." Denzil Hollis, one of the eleven members whose little hour of supremacy had so quickly passed, describes with more than his usual bitterness, this march of the Ironsides: "Sir Thomas Fairfax and the whole Army marched in triumph, with laurel in their hats as conquerors, through the subdued city of London, to show it was at his mercy; which was an airy vanity, I confess above my understanding, and might have raised a spirit of indignation, not so easily to have been laid. But a higher insolency of an Army composed of so mean people, and a more patient humble submission and bearing of a great and populous city, but a little before so full of honour and greatness, was, I think, never heard of." The king was lodged at Hampton Court. The head-quarters of the Army were at Putney.

The king remained at Hampton Court for three months. The spacious quadrangles of the old palace of Wolsey were well adapted for comfort. He had dwelt there with his young queen in the first year of their marriage; and ten years had scarcely passed since he was surrounded by his brilliant court at the Revels in the Great Hall, and had listened in freedom and security to the dramas of Shakspere and Fletcher, of Davenant and Cartwright. Some of the old familiar faces came about him in this autumn of 1647. His children were frequently with him. "Persons of all conditions repaired to his majesty of all who had served him; with whom he conferred without reservation; and the citizens flocked thither, as they had used to do at the end of a progress."* Evelyn has this entry in his Diary of October: "On the 10th to Hampton Court, where I had the honour to kiss his majesty's hand, and give him an account of several things I had in charge, he being now in the power of those execrable villains who not long after murdered him." They were very frequently with his majesty, "those execrable villains." They were really intent upon doing him as much service as lay in their power, if he could have trusted them, and they could have trusted him. Cromwell and Ireton endeavoured to serve the king, even with great danger to themselves. Charles was constantly sending messages to them at Putney by Ashburnham, as Berkeley states; Cromwell had many conferences with the king, according to Clarendon. "They had enough to do," says

* Clarendon.

Berkeley, "both in Parliament and Council of the Army, the one abounding with Presbyterians, the other with Levellers, and both really jealous [suspicious] that Cromwell and Ireton had made a private bargain with the king."* Lilburne, now in violent opposition to his old friends, was printing the most bitter denunciations against these betrayers of the people. The Presbyterians gave out that Berkeley had told lady Carlisle that Cromwell was to be earl of Essex, which statement Berkeley explicitly denied. Silly royalists about the king tried to persuade him that it would be for his interest "to divide Cromwell and the Army." These wheels within wheels required some chief motive power which Charles was incapable of furnishing. His natural want of decision of character was rendered more prominent by these complications. He had to deal with men who were the very opposite to himself in that simplicity of purpose which we recognise as the foundation of decision of character. Cromwell and Ireton had strong convictions of the value of democratic government; but they knew how infinite were the risques of democracy becoming universal licence, if the liberties of the people were attempted to be raised upon any other than the ancient foundations. They would therefore endeavour to save the king, if they could do so with security to the popular rights. None but the most prejudiced judges can trace in their actions, at this crisis, the slightest manifestation of a desire to betray the king. They were "faithful to their trust, and to the people's interest;" but they believed "that the king might have been managed to comply with the public good of his people after he could no longer uphold his own violent will." Mrs. Hutchinson, who expresses this confidence in Cromwell and Ireton, shows how the king destroyed these expectations. "Upon some discourses with him, the king uttering these words to him, 'I shall play my game as well as I can;' Ireton replied, 'If your majesty have a *game* to play, you must also give us the liberty to play ours.'" The foremost men of the Independent party still endeavoured to second the reasonable wishes of the king. The Presbyterians had again pressed upon him the terms of the treaty at Newcastle, slightly modified. Charles desired a personal treaty with the Parliament, and thought the proposals which had come from the Army appeared a better ground of settlement. Cromwell, Vane, Ireton, and their friends strenuously supported his desire for a personal treaty. "The suspicions were so strong in the House," says

* "Memoirs."

Berkeley, "that they lost almost all their friends there; and the Army that lay then about Putney, were no less ill-satisfied."

In the course of the autumn an incident occurred, which has so much of romance in it that historians have been somewhat doubtful of repeating a story so admirably calculated for stage effect. The scene is the Blue Boar inn in Holborn. There it still stands in the parish of St. Andrew, pretty much the same as it stood in the beginning of the seventeenth century—a well-preserved specimen of an ancient hostelry. The yard is dedicated to all the purposes of traffic. The buildings of the quadrangle form stables or common tap-rooms on the ground level. On the upper floors are the sitting-rooms and dormitories, with galleries carried all round, forming a corridor to the first floor. To this quaint old place come two men in trooper's clothes on an October evening. They enter by the wicket in the inn gate, leaving an attendant in the street. These jolly troopers go into a "drinking-stall:" and calling for the drawer, "sit drinking cans of beer till ten of the clock." They expect an arrival. Their watcher at the gate gives them notice that "the man with the saddle" is come. Their eyes are upon him from their drinking-stall. He goes into a stable; saddles his horse; and as he leads the steed forth, the troopers draw their swords, and tell him their duty is to search all those who go in or out. They say, however, that he looks like an honest fellow, and therefore they would only search his saddle. Into their drinking-stall they return; cut open "the skirts of the saddle;" take out a letter which they suspected to be therein concealed; and send the horseman on his way. The two troopers are Cromwell and Ireton. Cromwell told the story himself to lord Broghill, afterwards earl of Orrery, when they were serving together in Ireland. The two, with Ireton, were riding out of Youghal, when they fell into discourse about the king's death. Cromwell said that they had once "a mind to have closed with him;" but something happened, and they "fell off from that design." Broghill was curious to know the reason of this change. Cromwell told him that, finding the Scots and Presbyterians were growing more powerful, and were likely to agree with the king "and leave them in the lurch," they thought it best to offer first to come in upon reasonable conditions. "But," continued Cromwell, "whilst our thoughts were taken up with this subject, there came a letter to us from one of our spies, who was of the king's bedchamber, acquainting us that our final doom was decreed that very day; that he could not possibly learn what it was, but we might discover it if we could but intercept a letter sent from the king to the queen, wherein he informed her of his resolution: that this letter was sown up in the skirt of a saddle, and the bearer of it would come with the saddle upon his head about ten of the clock that night to the Blue Boar in Holborn, where he was to take horse for Dover. The messenger knew nothing of the letter in the saddle, though some in Dover did. We were at Windsor when we received this letter, and immediately upon the receipt of it, Ireton and I resolved to take one trusty fellow with us, and to go in troopers' habits to that inn. We did so." Cromwell then related the adventure; and further told what the discovery was that changed their purpose of closing with the king: "We found in the letter, that his majesty acquainted the queen that he was courted by both factions, the Scotch Presbyterians and the army; and that those which bade the fairest for him should have him: but yet he thought he should close with the Scots sooner than with the other. Upon this we returned to Windsor; and finding we were not like to have good terms from the king, we from that time vowed his destruction." This well-known story is told by the reverend Thomas Morrice, as related to him by the earl of Orrery, to whom he was chaplain. The contents of the letter thus described do not appear to us sufficiently important to have caused the resolution of Cromwell and Ireton for the king's destruction. They already knew that he was courted by both factions. They knew that "those who bade the fairest for him would have him." Orrery became a cabinet-counsellor of Charles II., and might have prudently generalised the contents of the letter which is said to have caused the final separation of Cromwell from the interests of Charles I. There is another story of a letter, which Hume thinks contradictory to the character of the king, and therefore rejects it as "totally unworthy of credit." It is thus related by Richardson, the painter: "Lord Bolingbroke told us, June 12, 1742, (Mr. Pope, lord Marchmont, and myself), that the second earl of Oxford had often told him that he had seen and had in his hands, an original letter that Charles I. wrote to his queen, in answer to one of hers that had been intercepted, and then forwarded to him; wherein she had reproached him for having made those villains too great concession, viz. that Cromwell should be lord-lieutenant of Ireland for life without account; that that kingdom should be in the hands of the party, with an army there kept which should know no head but the lieutenant; that Cromwell

should have a garter, &c. That in this letter of the king's it was said that she should leave him to manage, who was better informed of all circumstances than she could be; but she might be entirely easy as to whatever concessions he should make them; for that he should know in due time how to deal with the rogues, who, instead of a silken garter, should be fitted with a hempen cord. So the letter ended; which answer as they waited for so they intercepted accordingly, and it determined his fate. This letter lord Oxford said he had offered 500*l.* for." *

Those who carefully examine the intricate and discordant narratives of this exact period will probably come to the conclusion, that there were more imperative motives for Cromwell breaking off his intercourse with the king than his own personal mortification at being promised a hempen cord instead of a silken garter. He was fast losing his influence over the Army. The conqueror at Naseby was now held to be the traitor at Hampton Court. The Agitators had become unmanageable. They issued pamphlets, setting forth the most extreme principles. They became violent against monarchy in general, and especially furious against those who appeared to favour the cause of Charles in any degree. Cromwell has ceased his visits at Hampton Court. He is alarmed for the king's safety; or, as some hold, he pretends to be alarmed. His cousin, colonel Whalley, commands the guard about the king. Cromwell writes to him in November, " There are rumours abroad of some intended attempt on his majesty's person. Therefore, I pray, have a care of your guards. If any such thing should be done, it would be accounted a most horrid act." Charles yields to the fears natural enough in his helpless condition. He has unhappy dreams. His night-lamp going out is a presage of evil. About the 3rd of November Berkeley and Ashburnham, who had been removed from about the king's person, meet at Ditton at the desire of major Legg, who waited in the king's bed-chamber. They tell Berkeley " that his majesty was really afraid of his life by the tumultuous part of the army, and was resolved to make his escape." Berkeley afterwards saw the king, and was asked to assist in the project. Where to go was yet a question. It was no especial weakness in Charles, but a credulity belonging to the age, that William Lilly, the astrologer, was consulted by a female agent of the king, wno paid a heavy sum to the "Sidrophel," who was ready to prophesy for all

* " I have been informed that a memorandum nearly conformable to Richardson's anecdote is extant, in the handwriting of Lord Oxford."—HALLAM.

parties. Some plan was at last determined upon. On the evening of the 11th of November, the commissioners and Colonel Whalley, missing the king at supper, went into his chamber and found him gone. A newspaper of the time, " the Moderate Intelligencer," has a far more interesting notice of the event (as was the way of newspapers even then) than the official entries of Lords' Journals, and Commons' Journals: " November 11—This day will be famous in after times because towards the end of it his majesty escaped a kind of restraint under which he was at Hampton Court: and according to the best relation, thus:—He, as was usual, went to be private a little before evening prayer; staying somewhat longer than usual, it was taken notice of; yet at first without suspicion; but he not coming forth suddenly, there were fears, which increased by the crying of a greyhound again and again within; and upon search it was found the king was gone; and by the way of Paradise, a place so called in the garden; in probability suddenly after his going in, and about twilight. He left a paper to the Parliament, another to the commissioners, and a third to colonel Whalley." The faithful greyhound of Charles I. whining for the absence of his master, is a pretty contrast to Froissart's story of the unfaithful greyhound of Richard II.; " who always waited upon the king, and would know no man else: " but who, in the hour of his adversity, " left the king and came to the earl of Derby, duke of Lancaster, and made to him the same friendly countenance and cheer as he was wont to do to the king."