

CHAPTER XVI.

Tendencies to Absolutism.—Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.—Meeting of Parliament.—James announces his appointments of Romish Officers.—Address of the Commons.—Dissatisfaction of the Peers.—Parliament prorogued.—Trials for treason.—Repeated prorogations, and final dissolution of the Parliament.—Preponderance of the Jesuit party in the government.—Embassy to Rome.—Dispensing power of the king.—Court of King's Bench affirms the royal power to dispense with the Test Laws.—Roman Catholics appointed to benefices.—The Ecclesiastical Commission.—The bishop of London suspended from spiritual functions.—Monastic bodies settle in London.—Mass at Oxford.—Trial of the Rev. Samuel Johnson.—Massey, a Romanist, Dean of Christchurch.—Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge deprived.—Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, ejected.

WHEN the failure of Monmouth's expedition seemed almost inevitable, Louis the Fourteenth wrote to his ambassador in England, "there is every appearance that he will soon meet with the same fate as the earl of Argyle; and that his attempt will have served to render the king of England much more absolute in his kingdom than any of his predecessors." Louis made this incontrovertible deduction from the whole course of history. Tyranny never learns moderation from the resistance which is made to it. The resistance must be strong enough to crush the tyranny, or the second state of the enslaved people will be far worse than the first. The attempt of Monmouth was premature. The nation had vague fears of the disposition of the government, but those fears were not sufficient to justify insurrection. The system of James was not at that time fully developed. The man who undertook to attack that system in its infant strength had not the confidence of the best part of the nation. Yet his rallying cry of "The Protestant Religion" might have convinced any ruler less blind and obstinate than James, that the principle which was sufficient suddenly to raise the industrious people of the western counties into an army of cloth-workers and miners,—to make the train-bands throw away their uniforms, and to leave it doubtful whether the militia would fight,—would, if provoked beyond a certain point, convert the whole nation into the opponents of the king. Fortunate was it for the future destinies of England that James the Second, who would have been the most dangerous of rulers a century earlier, was the

weakest of despots, in his utter ignorance of the new elements of society which had been called into real vitality during the struggles of his father. He was not wanting in ability and in decision of character; he was capable of serious application to business; he was not utterly prostrated by idleness and luxury as his brother was. But his personal merits were as the fuel to nourish the fire of his intense egoism. Every action of his life had reference to his personality. James, the king, was the one power in the State, that was to counterbalance every other power. If James, the king, could retain an Established Church, to proclaim his divine right to dispense with laws, and to share its honours and riches with the Romanists, till it should be wholly recovered to Rome, it were well. If James, the king, could maintain a large standing army, by the voluntary contributions of the people, it were well. But if Parliament should refuse supplies; if the Church should preach of the supremacy of the law over the will of the sovereign; if the people should murmur under a hated military domination,—then, Parliament should be dismissed; a High Commission should again purge the Church of all disloyalty; the soldiers should familiarise burgess and yeoman with the benefits of free quarters. James was not a man to accomplish such designs. He ran straightforward, snapping as the mad-dog runs and snaps, and of course had the same mad-dog ending, as a public enemy.

The Parliament was to meet on the 9th of November. Its meeting had been preceded by the dismissal of Halifax from his office of President of the Council. The king could not induce the ablest man of his time to fall into his own views as to the removal of the Test Act. The schemes of James were maturing; and he desired to be surrounded by ministers who would have no scruples in seconding them. The removal of the barriers which opposed the admission of Roman Catholics to office; the repeal of the Habeas Corpus Act; and the establishment of a large Standing Army, were the objects to which the king devoted himself without reserve. The Jesuits urged on the king, persuading him that "the present juncture is the most favourable one that can be hoped for," to strengthen his authority. "But the opulent and settled Catholics are alarmed for the future, and apprehend a change which may ruin them." So wrote Barillon, the French ambassador. This juncture was not altogether the most favourable. That persecution of the Protestants in France which was carried into effect by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, took place in October. Under this

Edict the Protestants had lived undisturbed in the exercise of their religion. The Edict had been originally declared to be a perpetual and irrevocable law. The most peaceful and industrious communities had flourished under this toleration; and now the law was suddenly abrogated at the will of a despotic king, to whom the people were no more than the beasts of the field. Louis had long carried on a petty warfare against the Calvinists—interfering with education, seizing upon property, closing places of worship. But now, the Protestant religion was to be extirpated in France at one blow. The ministers of the reformed faith were suddenly banished or imprisoned; children were taken away from their parents; women were driven into nunneries; dragoons were let loose upon the people, to pillage and to destroy. Burnet has described the horrible scenes of what he terms “one of the most violent persecutions that is to be found in history.” He says, “I went over the greatest part of France while it was in its hottest rage, from Marseilles to Montpellier, and from thence to Lyons, and so to Geneva. I saw and knew so many instances of their injustice and violence, that it exceeded even what could have been well imagined; for all men set their thoughts at work, to invent new methods of cruelty. In all the towns through which I passed, I heard the most dismal accounts of those things possible; but chiefly at Valence, where one Derapine seemed to exceed even the furies of inquisitors. One in the streets could have known the new converts, as they were passing by them, by a cloudy dejection that appeared in their looks and deportment. Such as endeavoured to make their escape, and were seized (for guards and secret agents were spread along the whole roads and frontier of France), were, if men, condemned to the galleys; and, if women, to monasteries. . . . The fury that appeared on this occasion did spread itself with a sort of contagion: for the intendants, and other officers, that had been mild and gentle in the former parts of their life, seemed now to have laid aside the compassion of Christians, the breeding of gentlemen, and the common impressions of humanity. The greatest part of the clergy, the regulars especially, were so transported with the zeal that their king shewed on this occasion, that their sermons were full of the most inflamed eloquence that they could invent, magnifying their king in strains too indecent and blasphemous to be mentioned by me.” The persecuted families carried their industry to other countries. To England they brought their silk trade; and they taught us to make the hats which we had been accustomed to buy from France.

“The tyrant’s revenue,” says Evelyn, “was exceedingly diminished; manufactures ceased.” At the moment at which the Protestant refugees were pouring into England, James was labouring to attain the same power that Louis had so wantonly exercised. There was no concealment about the matter. Evelyn writes, “I was shewed the harangue which the bishop of Valentia, on Rhone, made in the name of the Clergy, celebrating the French king, as if he was a God, for persecuting the poor Protestants; with this expression in it: ‘That as his victory over heresy was greater than all the conquests of Alexander and Cæsar, it was but what was wished in England; and that God seemed to raise the French king to this power and magnanimous action, that he might be in capacity to assist in doing the same here.’”*

The king opened the Parliament with a bold declaration. The rebellion, he said, was suppressed, but the Militia was insufficient for such services. “There is nothing but a good force of well-disciplined troops in constant pay, that can defend us from such as, either at home or abroad, are disposed to disturb us.” He had increased the number of that army. He asked for a supply answerable to the expenses of that force. “Let no man take exception, that there are some officers in the army not qualified, according to the late Tests, for their employments. The gentlemen, I must tell you, are most of them well known to me; and having formerly served with me on several occasions, and always approved the loyalty of their principles by their practice, I think them now fit to be employed under me.” He was afraid, he declared, that some men might be so wicked as to hope and expect that a difference through this might happen between the Parliament and himself; but he did not apprehend that any such misfortune could happen as a division, or even a coldness; nor anything to shake their steadiness and loyalty to him: Up to a certain point the House of Commons would have borne anything. All the Municipal Corporations of England might be destroyed; corrupt juries might be terrified into false verdicts; judicial massacres might be perpetrated without rebuke; an alderman of London, Cornish, might be hanged at this very time upon the revived story of the Rye-House Plot; a poor widow, Elizabeth Gaunt, might be burnt at Tyburn for giving shelter to a rebel who afterwards betrayed her; there was no amount of Civil Despotism which a Parliament would not have sanctioned, and a Church declared righteous.—But to put the

* “Diary,” November 3.

power of the sword into the hands of Popish officers, and to ask the Protestant Commons to pay for this dangerous army, was something more than could be borne. We have happily lived to see these distinctions abolished; but it may be a question if English Protestantism could have ultimately shown its capacity for doing a tardy justice to Roman Catholics, if its most violent prejudices had not been roused at this season, and had not acquired a real strength and dignity by finding that the Cause of religion was also the Cause of liberty. The House of Commons, however the majority was composed of the nominees of the Court, was still penetrated with the old instincts of freedom. It hesitated about voting supplies, before considering the king's address. It beat the Court in a division of 183 against 182. It then, cautiously and timidly, gave the king to understand that he had committed an illegal act in appointing officers without their taking the test; and humbly hoped that "he would be graciously pleased to give such directions that no apprehensions or jealousies may remain in the hearts of his majesty's good and faithful subjects." He frowned upon the Commons. He did not expect such an Address. He had warned them against fears and jealousies. The reputation which God had blessed him with in the world ought to have created a greater confidence in him. The Commons were awe-struck by the threatening brow of this poor inflated creature. A country gentleman, Cook, of Derbyshire, said, he supposed they were all Englishmen, and not to be frightened from their duty by a few high words. The new-born independence of the House was laid low; and Cook was committed to the Tower for daring to say a word of implied reproach. But the spirit of resistance began to spread. The Peers manifested a deeper indignation against the violation of the Test Acts avowed in the royal speech, than the Commons had dared to exhibit. The sarcasm of Halifax was supported by the zeal of Compton, the bishop of London, and by the boldness of lord Mordaunt, afterwards the famous earl of Peterborough. The king was present at a great debate: Jeffreys, the Chancellor, attempted to carry the brutality of the Bench to his new position on the Woolsack. The presence of his master was not sufficient to protect him from the indignation of the proudest nobility of Europe. The government dared not divide upon the motion to take the king's speech into consideration; and the next morning the Parliament was prorogued, without any supplies having been voted.

We have now come to the end of the first Act of the Drama of the English Revolution. The king's manifestation of a temper to govern despotically, and of a design to force an obnoxious creed upon the nation, had been gradually becoming more evident. The suppression of Monmouth's rebellion had made him presumptuous. He had a large hereditary revenue, and he had obtained the vote for life of the most important imposts. He had established a powerful Standing Army, and his provident expenditure, amounting almost to parsimony, would enable him to maintain it. The judges were his creatures. The Church might be awed or cajoled into any practical acceptance of its favourite doctrine of non-resistance. From the time of this first dissension with the most obsequious Parliament that had sat since the early years of the Restoration, James manifested the most perfect reliance upon his own self-sufficient power. His nature could brook no opposition. He held to his purpose with a firmness that would have been admirable, if it had been the result of any other principle than that proud stupidity which could see no danger and accept no warning. Having dismissed the Parliament, he had a little more judicial business to accomplish. He pardoned Grey for his part in Monmouth's rebellion, because he could induce him to play the betrayer, having bought his life at a heavy money payment and the heavier price of his forfeited honour. Lord Gerard of Brandon, and John Hampden, were tried for their participation in the Rye-House Plot, upon Grey's confession. Their lives were spared. The earl of Stamford had been indicted upon the same charge; but the prorogation of Parliament prevented his trial before his peers. Lord Delamere was tried before the Court of the High Steward. Jeffreys, who presided, had used every means to obtain a conviction, by the selection of the triers from men opposed in politics to the prisoner, and he conducted himself on the trial with his usual coarse partiality. But Delamere was acquitted. The most courtly began to feel that enough vengeance had been taken for past offences. Lady Rachel Russell expressed the general sentiment when she wrote to her friend, "I do bless God that he has caused some stop to be put to the shedding of blood in this poor land."

England was again to be governed without a Parliament. After the prorogation of the 20th of November, 1685, it was twice prorogued in 1686, and twice in 1687; and it was dissolved by proclamation on the 2nd of July in that year. The course of the government towards arbitrary power is a flood which has no con-

stitutional barrier to prevent it devastating the land. Will the old sea-wall ever be built up again? A strong people is equal even to that work. A less vigorous race would have folded their hands, and have left their fairest possessions to the destroyer.

At the beginning of 1686, king James was steering his state-vessel, with a blind fatality, towards the inevitable Rapids. Prudent friends entreated him, while it was yet possible, to slacken sail; to tack; to veer round, or to seem to veer. Such counsel became offensive to him. His brothers-in-law, Clarendon and Rochester, were looked coldly upon, for they were stedfast in their adherence to their Protestant convictions. Sunderland became the prime adviser of the king, for he had consented to embrace Catholicism. Having impaired his fortune by habitual gambling, he shamelessly received a pension of twenty-five thousand crowns from the king of France to espouse his interests, and prevent the re-assembling of the Parliament. The minister and the king had now a common bond of union, in the purpose of degrading their country abroad and enslaving it at home. The Jesuits, with Father Petre as their great director, were now paramount in the government of England. The moderate Roman Catholics looked with apprehension upon the rashness by which the habitual temper of the nation might easily be lashed into fury. The ostensible ministers of James were divided into two parties. The real power was with the secret cabal of Sunderland and Petre. It was determined to send an ostentatious embassy to the Pope, to replace the modest agency with which the diplomatic business with the Court of Rome had been previously conducted. Lord Castlemaine, the husband of the duchess of Cleveland, one of the late king's mistresses, was appointed to this mission. The pontiff, Innocent XI., was not favourable to the Jesuits, and was opposed to the measures of the French king. Castlemaine was instructed to listen to the counsels of the General of the Jesuits and of the ambassador of France. The Pope sympathised with the feelings of the moderate English Catholics, who were satisfied to be unmolested without hoping to be paramount. The Rector of the Jesuits' College at Rome congratulated Castlemaine that the flourishing Imperial Crown of England was at length added to the Papal Diadem. * The Pope's agent in England, Count d'Adda, had been instructed to solicit the intercession of James "with the French monarch, in favour of the French Protestants." † Although the

* Wellwood, "Memoirs," Appendix xviii.

† Lingard.

king of England had at first exhibited some pity for the persecuted families who had sought shelter in his dominions, his real temper and views were now unmistakeably displayed. On the 5th of May, by the especial direction of the king in Council, and not without remonstrance from some of his counsellors, there was burnt at the Royal Exchange, by the common hangman, the translation of a small volume recently published on the continent. Evelyn describes this volume as "a translation of a book written by the famous Monsieur Claude, relating only matters of fact concerning the horrid massacres and barbarous proceedings of the French king against his Protestant subjects." The book was burned "without any refutation of any facts therein." Evelyn adds, "So mighty a power and ascendant here had the French ambassador, who was doubtless in great indignation at the pious and truly generous charity of all the nation, for the relief of those miserable sufferers who came over for shelter." The disposition of "the nation" never presented the slightest obstacle to the egoism of the Stuarts; and they always had abettors, in such antiquated idolaters of royalty as sir John Bramston, who, now in his seventy-fifth year, being told that Claude's book had in it "expressions scandalous to his majesty the king of France," says, "if so, it was fitly burned, for all kings ought to be careful of the honour and dignity of kings and princes." * *has livis et catholis*

The time was close at hand when the old cry of the Cavalier, "Church and King!" would be uttered "with bated breath." The king and the church were not unlikely to dissolve that partnership which Strafford and Laud attempted to perpetuate; and for the maintenance of which the first Charles struggled at the risk of his crown and his life. The bishops, who had never ceased to preach the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, and some of whom had been suspected of inclinations towards Popery, were now alarmed at the tendencies of the king. A brief had been ordered in Council for collecting contributions for the French refugees. The collection was put off, under various pretexts. Previous to the publication of the brief, Ken, bishop of Bath and Wells, exerted his eloquence in expressing "detestation of the cruelties of the French, and exhorting to constancy in the Protestant religion. This sermon was the more acceptable, as it was unexpected from a bishop who had undergone the censure of being inclined to Popery." † Other bishops manifested the same

* "Autobiography," p. 228. † Evelyn, "Diary," March 14.

spirit; which example was followed by many of the Anglican clergy. The king and his advisers would not be warned; but intimated to the archbishop of Canterbury that he must warn his clergy not to preach on the miseries which the bigotry of Louis had inflicted on his unhappy Protestant subjects. Such warning was a significant fact. The clergy were not propitiated by the intolerant resolution of the king that, in the distribution of alms to the refugees, the commissioners appointed to that duty should only relieve those who would conform to the Church of England, by receiving the sacrament according to its ritual. James was now resolved to bring to issue the question of the king's dispensing power—that is, of the right of the sovereign to abrogate express laws by the exercise of his prerogative. This prerogative had been exercised in the earliest times of the Constitution; but had gradually become more and more limited, as the legislative power had become more defined. It still continued to be exercised in matters of trifling import, and especially with regard to laws which had fallen into disuse. To admit this dispensing power as a general principle, applicable to all Statutes affecting the well-being of the community, would be to render the monarchy of England absolute. The Test Act had been passed, in direct opposition to the desire of Charles the Second, to prevent the admission of Roman Catholics to civil and military offices. James the Second openly proclaimed his design to render the Test Act nugatory by his dispensing power of admitting to all offices, secular or ecclesiastical. He had appointed sir Edward Hales, a Papist, to be governor of Dover Castle, and colonel of a regiment. He resolved to make an effort to have his dispensing power sanctioned by the Courts of Law. Four of the judges, although not opposed to the politics of the Court, remonstrated with the king on the illegality of his proposed measure; and they were dismissed from their offices. His Solicitor-General, Finch, held the same conviction; and he was also dismissed. Four subservient judges, and a crawling Solicitor, were appointed in their places. A collusive action was brought in the Court of King's Bench for the penalty incurred by sir Edward Hales, for not taking the Sacrament according to the Test Act. The information was laid by his own servant. The object of the action was to obtain an authoritative decision as to the legality of the plea of the defendant, that he was enabled to hold his commission by letters patent authorising him to do so notwithstanding the Test Act. The king's dispen-

sing power was now solemnly confirmed. "The new, very young, Lord-Chief Justice Herbert, declared on the bench, that the government of England was entirely in the King; that the Crown was absolute; that penal laws were powers lodged in the Crown to enable the King to force the execution of the law, but were not bars to bind the king's power; that he could pardon all offences against the law, and forgive the penalties; and why could he not dispense with them? By which [judgment] the Test Act was abolished. Every one was astonished."* The Attorney-General, Sawyer, had refused to draw warrants, which the king required him to draw, by which members of the Church of Rome were authorised to hold benefices of the Church of England. The Solicitor-General was more obsequious. The warrants were issued. Under one, Edward Sclater, described by Evelyn as "an apostate curate of Putney," was enabled to hold two livings; and under another, Obadiah Walker, Master of University College, Oxford, who, from the accession of James, had been a declared Roman Catholic, and had been busily engaged in the work of conversion, was enabled to hold his office and his benefices. The king's design to sap the foundations, if not to destroy the whole edifice, of the Anglican Church, was now sufficiently manifest. One step remained to be taken. The powers of Ecclesiastical Supremacy which had been assumed at the Reformation for resisting the authority of Rome, were now to be adopted with renewed vigour for re-establishing that authority. James determined to create a Court of Ecclesiastical Commission—a Court modelled upon the Court of High Commission, which had been solemnly abolished at the Restoration.

The king, as the Head of the Church, had issued directions to the Clergy not to introduce into their pulpits any discussion upon doctrinal points which were matter of controversy. The whole question of the differences between the Anglican and the Roman Churches were to be excluded from the consideration of their congregations. A royal licence was granted to an apostate Protestant of the name of Hall, to be the King's Printer, for printing missals, lives of saints, and Roman Catholic tracts, whose publication was prohibited by various Acts of Parliament. The Protestant pulpit was to be silenced; the Papist pulpit was to be free. The Protestant press was to work under terror of venal judges and terrified juries; the Papist press was to be sanctioned by royal

* Evelyn, "Diary," June 27.

licence. A divine of high reputation, Sharp, Rector of St. Giles¹ in-the-Fields and Dean of Norwich, refused to submit to the decree that the clergy were not to preach upon controversial topics. One of his parishioners earnestly begged to be informed of the reasons upon which the Church of England rested its claims to be a true national Church, in opposition to the universal pretensions of the see of Rome. He expounded, as he was requested to do, the essential differences of doctrine and practice between the two Churches. Compton, the bishop of London, was required to suspend Dr. Sharp. He declined to do so; but he requested the offending Dean to suspend his preaching for a season. The Ecclesiastical Commission was now in force. Jeffreys, the Chancellor, to whom all religious and moral principle was a matter of indifference, was its president. Sancroft, the archbishop, would not act. The bishops of Durham and Rochester were more compliant. Sunderland, the new convert to Rome, and Herbert, the advocate of the dispensing power, were two other commissioners. The Protestant convictions of Rochester, another of the commissioners, were not strong enough to lead him to risk his loss of place. Compton was called before this partial and illegal tribunal. Jeffreys bullied him; but the bishop was firm. The one question was, why he had disobeyed the king? Conscience, duty, were of no avail in this Court. He was suspended from his spiritual functions. The Crown did not dare to seize his revenues; for the Courts of Law must have restored them.

The king has himself recorded some of the manifestations of his open encouragement of Roman Catholicism, which gave deep offence. His kingdom, he says, "grumbled at his taking the chapel of St. James into his own hands, which then lay useless; though to avoid all reasonable cause of complaint he took care to leave the chapel of Whitehall to the Protestants, and build one there from the ground for his own use. He settled fourteen Benedictine monks in that of St. James, and gave leave to the Jesuits to build one in the Savoy, and settled a College there for the education of children, in which they had so good success that in a little time there was at least two hundred Catholic scholars, and about as many Protestants, who were no ways constrained in their religion, or required to assist at mass or any of their public devotions."* The chapel of Whitehall was opened with all the pageantry of the Romish ceremonial, at Christmas, 1686. A bishop was

* "Life," vol. ii. p. 79. "His Own Papers."

consecrated on the 29th of December.* He sat in his rich copes and wearing his mitre; Jesuits and priests stood around, "censing and adoring him;" the silver crozier was put in his hand, "with a world of mysterious ceremony." The worthy courtier, Evelyn, was astonished: "I could not have believed I should ever have seen such things in the king of England's palace." The Benedictine monks at St. James, the Jesuits' College in the Savoy, were only parts of a general system. The Franciscans had their chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields; the Carmelites settled in the city. The street presented the wondrous spectacles to English eyes of cowed and girdled friars mixing with the crowd; and exultingly telling the wonderers that "they hoped in a little time to walk in procession through Cheapside."† Such things could not be, without exciting the violent dislike of a populace that regarded Popery with the traditional hatred of a hundred and fifty years. Riots took place in London. The priests were insulted in their worship in new chapels in the country. The school of the Jesuits in the Savoy, and the schools which they had set up in various towns, obtained little favour from their being opened to children of Protestant as well as of Catholic parents. The dread of proselytism assumed a practical shape, in the rapid establishment of those Charity-schools throughout the land, to which popular education was almost wholly confined during the eighteenth century. The Jesuits' school in the Savoy gave the first impulse to private endowments of those metropolitan schools for the poor, whose children of both sexes now annually gather beneath the dome of St. Paul's, to unite their five thousand voices in the simple hymns of a devotion well adapted to the national character. The side-aisles of the great Protestant cathedral were appendages which James compelled Wren to introduce into his plan, in the hope that they might resound with the chants of Palestrina as the host was borne along amongst kneeling worshippers. Fortunate for our country that our forefathers preferred to join in Luther's Hymn! The opposition of the Protestant mind of the latter years of the seventeenth century to the secular teaching of the Jesuits was natural and inevitable. No consideration of their ability as teachers could disarm the suspicion that they sought to make converts, under the guise of affording instruction adapted to all churches and sects. The same doubts of all religionists who profess to be merely secular teachers still linger amongst us under other forms; and they will

* Evelyn. "Diary."

† Welwood. "Memoirs," p. 173.

continue to prevail between Protestant and Catholic, Churchman and Dissenter, until Christian worship rests upon a broader foundation of Christian love.

The measures of the king became day by day more clearly directed to the gradual advancement, and ultimate supremacy, of his own creed. The popular discontent was growing serious. When the first Roman Catholic chapel was opened in the city, the train-bands hesitated to disperse the mob that insulted the priests. When Mass was first celebrated at University College, Oxford, in a chapel opened by Obadiah Walker, the dangers of the Church were proclaimed from pulpits in which it had been recently proclaimed that there was no danger and no sin to be compared to that of resistance to the divine authority of kings. The formation of a great camp on Hounslow Heath was naturally considered to be for the purpose of coercing a sinful generation, that obstinately refused to accept the gracious invitation to come back to the creed of Gardiner and Bonner. The ponderous folio of "Acts and Monuments" was again brought out, and mothers gathered their children around their knees to hear the sad stories of Rowland Taylor and Anne Askew. The camp at Hounslow was supposed to be the evidence that another time of fiery trial was at hand. "There were many jealousies and discourses of what was the meaning of this encampment," writes Evelyn. The Reverend Samuel Johnson chose to interpret its meaning, in his own incautious fashion. He had been in prison since his conviction in 1683 for writing "Julian the Apostate."* A restless and dangerous man, Hugh Speke, was his fellow-prisoner; and in the spirit of mischief he excited Johnson to write an address to the troops encamped at Hounslow, which Speke undertook to get circulated. It was entitled "An humble and hearty address to all the Protestants in king James' army;" and, says the biographer of Mr. Johnson, "he exhorted the Protestant officers and soldiers not to serve as instruments to enslave their country, and to ruin the religion they professed."† Johnson was discovered as the author. He had the generosity not to implicate Speke, and he alone suffered. He was convicted, on the 16th of November, of a libellous publication, and was sentenced to stand three times in the pillory, and to be publicly whipped. According to one account, when sentence was pronounced he said, "You whip, upon my back, Acts of Parlia-

* *Ante*, p. 290.

† "Memorials," p. xi.

ment and the Church of England."* According to another account, when told by the judge to be grateful to the Attorney-General that he was not tried for high treason, he exclaimed, "Am I, when my only crime is that I have defended the Church and the laws, to be grateful for being scourged like a dog, while Popish scribblers are suffered daily to insult the Church, and violate the laws with impunity?" He was scourged like a dog; but previous to his punishment, he was stripped of his gown, by the bishops of Durham, Rochester, and Peterborough, Commissioners appointed for the diocese of London, during the suspension of Compton, the bishop. Johnson's cruel sentence was inflicted on the 1st of December, though strenuous endeavours were made to obtain a remission of the whipping. "The king was deaf to all entreaties: the answer was, that since Mr. Johnson had the spirit of martyrdom, 'tis fit he should suffer."† His biographer says of the courageous endurance of the suffering, "He observed afterwards to one of his most intimate friends, that this text of Scripture, which came suddenly into his mind, 'He endured the cross, and despised the shame,' so much animated and supported him in his bitter journey, that had he not thought it would have looked like vain-glory, he could have sung a psalm while the executioner was doing his office, with as much composure and cheerfulness as ever he had done in the church; though at the same time he had a quick sense of every stripe which was given him, with a whip of nine cords knotted, to the number of three hundred and seventeen."

In addressing the army of king James in a style which was an incentive to mutiny, Johnson went out of his province as a clergyman; and thus brought himself under the cognizance of a law which could scarcely be considered as arbitrary. The censorship of the press had been revived; and this Address to the Soldiers was one of the many publications that evaded all attempts at repression. One class of publications, however, the licensing system could not restrain—works of theological controversy. There were divines then in England who were fully equal to the task of defending their Church against the advocates of Rome, whose pamphlets, encouraged by the Court, and issued by its printer, were boldly denounced by Johnson upon his trial. In this controversy writers whose names live in honoured remembrance, ardently engaged—Sherlock and Tillotson, Stillingfleet and Prideaux. Such who filled the pulpits of London—others who were the ornaments

* Bramston's "Autobiography," p. 249.

† "Memorials," p. xii.

of the Universities—had feeble opponents in the priests who addressed the learned in bad English, and sought to convert the multitude by legends of miracles, over which the shrewd artisan had his heartless laugh. The government could not touch the controversial pamphlets, of which the Archbishop of Canterbury was the Licenser. Disputants without a professional privilege could be either punished or frightened away. At Amsterdam, the amusing John Dunton tells us, he had the good fortune to meet with Doctor Partridge, “whose Almanacks had been so sharp upon Popery that England was too hot to hold him.”* But the contest soon grew beyond the skirmishes of a paper-war. Before the close of the year 1686, the king’s determination to thrust Roman Catholics into the higher offices of the Church and the Universities, was manifested by the appointment of John Massey to the deanery of Christchurch, Oxford. This Romanist convert was installed without opposition, on the 29th of December. The success of this illegal act was encouraging. The fellowships of Oxford and Cambridge were as freeholders, held by Protestant tenure. No one could be admitted to a degree without taking those oaths which had been provided by Acts of Parliament to exclude Catholics from academical honours and offices. These Statutes king James resolved to violate. On the 7th of February a royal letter was sent to the authorities of the University of Cambridge, commanding that Alban Francis, a Benedictine monk, should be admitted to the degree of Master of Arts. The authorities required the Benedictine to take the oaths. He declined, and left Cambridge, hinting at the consequences of a refusal to submit to the sovereign will. There was an awkward precedent for granting degrees to foreigners. The Secretary to the Ambassador of Morocco, a Mahometan, had received the Master of Arts’ degree. Burnet points out that a proper distinction was made between strangers, whose degree was merely honorary, and those who would have a vote in convocation, as the king’s priests would have, if admitted upon the royal mandate. The University was twitted with the obvious remark that a Papist was treated worse than a Mahometan. John Pechell, the Vice-Chancellor, had to endure an agonising conflict between obedience to the Statutes and obedience to the king. Learned dignitaries had been preaching and writing in support of the king’s absolute power, and they were now to have a practical lesson of the real meaning of their doctrine. The terrified Vice-

* Dunton’s “Life and Errors,” p. 210, 1705.

Chancellor writes to our old friend Samuel Pepys, to relate his misery under his dread sovereign’s frown: “Worthy sir, ’tis extraordinary distress and affliction to me, after so much endeavour and affection to his royal person, crown, and succession, I should at last, by the providence of God, in this my station, be exposed to his displeasure.”* The “princely clemency” upon which the Vice-Chancellor desired to cast himself, was sought in vain. The Vice-Chancellor and the Senate were summoned before the Ecclesiastical Commission. Their judges were papists, or of papistical tendencies. Jeffreys, the Chancellor, to whom all principles were indifferent as long as he had the power to enforce arbitrary decrees by his own insolent demeanour, was the mouth-piece of this body. Pechell was frightened. The other delegates of the Senate in vain pleaded that they had acted in obedience to the laws. The Vice-Chancellor was deprived of his office, and suspended from the enjoyment of his revenue as Master of Magdalene College. The property-rights of the college, which were as sacred from any such interferences as the estate which Jeffreys had bought out of the price of his swindling pardons during his Bloody Campaign, were thus as openly violated as the Statutes of the realm.

Cambridge was subject to no further molestation. At Oxford it was concluded that the spirit of resistance might be easily kept down. Oxford had accepted a papist Dean of Christchurch. Oxford had suffered mass to be performed in two of its colleges. The noble institutions of Oxford might gradually be made as available for the advancement of Catholicism as the College of Douay, or the Jesuits’ School in the Savoy. Had not Oxford, to use the words of Burnet, “asserted the king’s prerogative in the highest strains of the most abject flattery possible, both in their addresses, and in a wild decree they had made but three years before this, in which they had laid together a set of such high-flown maxims as must establish an uncontrollable tyranny?”† Surely resistance would not come from Oxford, whatever might happen. There were premonitory symptoms that the spirit of English gentlemen would at length be roused out of the sleep of slavery. Obadiah Walker was insulted and ridiculed in his popish seminary. The undergraduates had long believed, as Colley Cibber represented his own school-boy belief in 1684: “It was then a sort of school doctrine to regard our monarch as a deity; as in the former reign it was to in-

* Letter of February 23,—in the Pepys’ Correspondence.

† “Own Times,” Oxford edit. vol. iii. p. 146.

sist he was accountable to this world, as well as to that above him."* The undergraduates of 1686 were a little veering round to this obsolete notion; and in spite of the Oxford deification of James II. it was necessary to quarter a troop of dragoons in that loyal city, to allow "Ave Maria" to be sung in more than one chapel without interruption from the scurrilous songs of the street. The crisis was at hand. The presidency of Magdalen College was vacant. It was rumoured that Anthony Farmer was to be recommended by a royal letter. This man was not qualified by the Statutes of the College, the presidency being limited to fellows of Magdalen or of New College; he was of notoriously immoral life; he had become a pervert to Rome. The fellows of Magdalen remonstrated in vain against the probability of this indecent choice. The royal letter came. In the hope of some compromise the election was postponed till it could be postponed no longer. John Hough, a man worthy of the office, was elected. The fellows were cited before the Ecclesiastical Commission. They produced such proofs of Farmer's unfitness, that no attempt was made to enforce his election; but that of Hough was declared void. In August a royal recommendation of Parker, bishop of Oxford, arrived. The fellows justly held that the right of election was in themselves; that Hough was duly elected; that the presidency was not vacant. The king had set out on a progress. On the 3rd of September he reached Oxford. He lodged at the deanery of Christchurch, and heard Mass in a chapel fitted up by the dean. The fellows of Magdalen College were sent for. William Blathwayte, the Clerk of the Council, writes to Mr. Pepys an account of what took place at this audience: "His Majesty being informed that the fellows of Magdalen College had refused to admit the bishop of Oxford to be their president in the stead of Mr. Farmer, sent for them yesterday, after dinner, to his anti-chamber in Christ-Church College, where his majesty chid them very much for their disobedience, and with much a greater appearance of anger than ever I perceived in his majesty; who bade them go away immediately and choose the bishop of Oxford before this morning, or else they should certainly feel the weight of their sovereign's displeasure. The terms were to this effect; and yet I hear this morning they have not obeyed his majesty's commands, the consequences of which I cannot yet learn."† The consequences were more full of peril to the threat-

* "Apology for the life of Colley Cibber,"—edit. 1756, p. 23.

† Pepys' "Correspondence," September 5th, 1687.

ening tyrant, than to the fellows of Magdalen College. Resolute against the king's heaviest displeasure—unseduced by the arts of a man whose political faults all would willingly forget, but whose partial aberration from the path of duty can scarcely be disproved—the fellows of Magdalen College persisted in their right of election. Their legal president was ejected by a special commission, whose decrees were enforced by troops of cavalry. Hough refused to give up the keys of the college, and the doors were broken open. The bishop of Oxford was installed by proxy, only two fellows of the college giving their attendance. The other fellows at length consented to a modified submission to the authority which had been forced upon them. The king required a public acknowledgment that they had acted undutifully; and that the appointment of the bishop of Oxford was legal: they must sue for pardon. They one and all refused to submit to this humiliation. They were one and all ejected from their college, and declared incapable of holding any ecclesiastical appointment. The Ecclesiastical Commission, by which this edict was issued, forgot that a power might be raised again, as it had once been raised, before which High Commissioners might be swept away, and even the throne might totter to its base. The immediate object of the king was accomplished. Magdalen College soon became a college of Papists, with a Roman Catholic bishop at its head; for Parker, the bishop of Oxford, had enjoyed his dignity only during a few months, in which his authority was so openly resisted that he died, as men believed, of anxiety and mortification. A subscription was raised for the ejected fellows. All but the most bigoted saw that the ties which bound the Church to the Throne were so loosened, that upon one more violent strain the union might be utterly broken.