

chapel at Whitehall, the other chapel was crowded by eager multitudes, to hear bishop Ken describe the calamity of the reformed church of Judah under the Babylonian persecution. As God had delivered Judah upon the repentance of her sins; so should the new Reformed Church be delivered, wherever insulted and persecuted.* The princess Anne, the daughter of James, was amongst the hearers. The contest soon assumed a more formidable shape than in the eloquence of the pulpit or the arguments of the press. The king issued a second Declaration of Indulgence on the 27th of April. It was a repetition of the Declaration of 1687, with an avowal that his resolution was immutable, and that he would employ no servants, civil or military, who refused to concur with him. He would hold a Parliament in the following November; and he exhorted his people to choose representatives who would support him in his resolves. This proceeding was little regarded; for all knew what the king meant, and knew also the pride and obstinacy of his character. But his next step was something more exciting. By an Order in Council of the 4th of May, he commanded the Declaration to be read in all churches and chapels throughout the kingdom, on two successive Sundays, by the ministers of all persuasions. The Gazette of the 7th of May fixed the 20th of that month for the first reading in London and the neighbourhood. In the country, the first reading was to take place on the 3rd of June. There was short time to collect the opinions of ten thousand ministers of the Anglican Church. There were then very imperfect means of communication. The Gazette was wholly under the control of the government. Letters could not be sent through the post-office without the certainty that they would be opened, if suspected, and would be stopped, if their contents were displeasing. Country clergymen would peruse the Order of Council in the Gazette, and some might hear that it was considered by their brethren in London as an insult to their order. But to disobey was to incur the danger of deprivation by the Ecclesiastical Commission. The most eminent of the London clergy came to a resolution not to read the Declaration; and a large majority joined in the same pledge. On the 18th a great meeting of prelates and other divines took place at Lambeth, and a petition to the king was drawn up by the archbishop of Canterbury on behalf of himself, of divers of the suffragan bishops of his province, and of the inferior clergy of their dioceses. They professed their averseness to dis-

* Evelyn, "Diary," April 1.

tribute and publish the king's Declaration for liberty of conscience, not from any want of duty and obedience,—for the loyalty of the Church of England was unquestionable,—“nor yet,” they said, “from any want of tenderness to Dissenters, in relation to whom we are willing to come to such a temper as shall be thought fit, when the matter shall be considered and settled in Parliament and Convocation.” Their averseness especially arose from the consideration that the Declaration was “founded upon such a dispensing power as hath been often declared illegal in Parliament.” It was so declared, they said, in 1662, in 1672, and at the beginning of his majesty's reign; and therefore they could not in prudence, honour, or conscience make themselves parties to the Declaration, as the distribution and solemn publication of it in God's house would amount to. They therefore prayed the king not to insist upon their distributing and reading this Declaration. The archbishop and six suffragan bishops signed this petition. Sancroft was not received at Court; and therefore, without their head, bishops Lloyd, Turner, Lake, Ken, White, and Trelawney, immediately went to the king's palace, and were admitted to the royal closet. The king was unprepared for resistance to his mandate. When he read the petition he broke out into unseemly violence. “This is a standard of rebellion,” he cried. Three bishops passionately disclaimed the imputation. “Did ever a good Churchman question the dispensing power before?” Ken answered, “We honour you, but we fear God.” The final threat of the king that they should disobey him at their peril was met by “God's will be done” from the lips of Ken. The petition of the prelates was circulated through London on that Friday night. It was imputed to them that they were instrumental to this publication; but they denied it. There was but one copy, which the king kept. Burnet and Dalrymple intimate that some one was concerned in the publication, to whom the king had shown the original. A commentator on Burnet, Bevil Higgons, says, “All agreed that it must have been in the press, if not before, by the time it was delivered to the king, which was about five in the afternoon, and it came out that very night at twelve, and was so bawled and roared through the streets by hawkers, that people rose out of their beds to buy it.”* Slow as were the operations of the printing press at that time, there was no necessity that the delivery of the petition, and printing, should have occurred at the same hour of five, if not before, to allow of its

* Note to Burnet, Oxford edit. vol. iii. p. 220.

circulation at midnight. The printers of that age had learnt to do their work with speed during the Civil War, when the broadside stood in the place of the newspaper, and a ballad was as effective as a leading article. On the Sunday following this memorable Friday, the reading of the Declaration "was almost universally forborne throughout London."* One exception to this disobedience shows the direction of popular opinion. "I was then at Westminster school," says lord Dartmouth, "and heard it read in the Abbey. As soon as bishop Sprat, who was dean, gave order for reading it, there was so great a murmur and noise in the church that nobody could hear him; but before he had finished, there was none left but a few prebends in their stalls, the choristers, and Westminster scholars. The bishop could hardly hold the proclamation in his hands for trembling, and every body looked under a strange consternation."† In only four of the London churches was obedience yielded to the mandate of the king. Over all England, not above two hundred of the Clergy read the Declaration. "One, more pleasantly than gravely, told his people, that, though he was obliged to read it, they were not obliged to hear it; and he stopped till they all went out, and then he read it to the walls."‡

Sir John Resby reports that he was told by lord Huntingdon, one of the Privy-council, "that had the king known how far the thing would have gone, he would never have laid the injunction he did, to have the Declaration read in churches."§ In its blind self-reliance, tyranny rarely sees how far the thing will go. It puts the match to the combustible matter, and is then astonished at the explosion. James had boasted that his past life ought to have convinced his people that he was not a man to recede from any course which he had once taken. In this case he took more than a week to look about him before he proceeded on his perilous way. Some of his more prudent counsellors recommended that he should issue a conciliatory proclamation, stating his deep mortification at the proceedings of the Clergy, but admitting that, as their scruples might have been conscientious, he was unwilling to treat them with the severity due to their disobedience. This advice was rejected. It was determined to prosecute the bishops for a seditious Libel. They were summoned to appear on the 8th of June before the king in council. During this interval, there had been no signs of submission in the metropolis or in the country. The archbishop of

* Evelyn.

† Burnet, *ibid.*

‡ Note to Burnet, vol. iii. p. 218.

§ "Memoirs," p. 346.

Canterbury, and his six suffragans, came into the royal presence at Whitehall on the appointed afternoon. They were asked if they acknowledged the petition to be theirs. They had received sound legal advice, and they refused to Criminate themselves. At length the archbishop said that if the king positively commanded him to answer he would do so, in the confidence that what he said in obedience to that command should not be brought in evidence against him. They were sent out, and upon their return the king gave the positive command. Sancroft and his brethren then acknowledged their hand-writing. They were immediately called upon to enter into recognizances to appear in the Court of King's Bench on a Criminal information for libel. They refused, maintaining that as peers they could not be so called upon. Their firmness irritated and embarrassed the misguided king. He must still proceed on his dangerous course. A warrant was made out for their committal to the Tower. Then was presented a spectacle which struck terror into the soul of the despot. The people of London had, in many a year of trouble, seen the state-barge leave Palace-yard stairs with some unhappy peer proceeding from Westminster Hall to his last prison. Often had they wept, as the axe was borne before some popular favourite. But never had there been such an outburst of feeling as on this evening of the 8th of June. The seven prelates, surrounded by guards, passed through lines of weeping men and women, who prayed aloud for their safety, and knelt to ask their blessing. When they entered their barge, the river was sparkling in the setting sun, as the oars of a thousand wherries dashed up its silver waters. From Whitehall to the Tower, as the twilight stole on, the voices of the people were heard in one solemn cry of "God bless your lordships." There was something in their popular sympathy far more elevating and consoling than the favour of kings which the Church had so laboured to earn. The Church was now in its right attitude—the champion of the national faith and the national freedom. It seemed as if the old contests for minute differences of doctrine and discipline were at an end. To manifest respect towards them would be to secure the resentment of the king; but the feeling towards them received no abatement. Their very guards in the Tower would drink no other health than that of the bishops. Day by day, such numbers of persons flocked to them "for their blessing and to condole their hard usage," as Resby relates, "that great and very extraordinary remarks were made both of persons

and behaviour." The king saw with dismay, that his frown was powerless, even over a nobility that had been too long accustomed to fancy that the royal favour was their breath of life. Most indignant was James when ten non-conformist ministers—leading men amongst those whom he thought would be for ever at enmity with episcopacy,—visited the prelates in the Tower. "He sent for four of them to reprimand them; but their answer was, 'that they could not but adhere to the prisoners, as men constant and firm to the Protestant faith.'"*

The bishops remained a week in confinement. On the 15th of June they were brought before the Court of King's Bench. There was the same throng of spectators begging their blessing. They were called upon to plead, after legal objections against their commitment had been over-ruled. Their trial was fixed for the 27th, and they were then enlarged upon their own recognizances. The people fancied they were wholly released, and lighted up bonfires. The excitement went all through the land. The Dutch ambassador expected an insurrection in London. The miners of Cornwall would come to the rescue of their countryman, Trelawney, the bishop of Bristol, as the burden of the old ballad declares:—

"And shall Trelawney die?
There's twenty thousand underground
Will know the reason why."†

The day of trial came. Evelyn says there were "near sixty earls and lords on the bench." Westminster Hall and the whole neighbourhood were thronged with eager crowds. The trial lasted from nine in the morning till six in the evening. Every point was ably contested by the lawyers on each side—for a nation was looking on. No one could distinctly prove that the signatures to the petition were the hand-writing of the accused. The clerk of the Privy Council, Blathwayte, was at last brought forward to swear that he had heard them confess that they had signed it. Then ensued a cross-examination which the counsel for the Crown tried in vain to stop; for it might implicate the king on an implied promise that the confession should not be used against the petitioners. The writing was thus proved. No evidence, however, could be obtained of the publication; till Sunderland came to swear that the bishops had told him of their intention to present a petition to the king. The subject matter of the petition was at

* Reresby, p. 347.

† In the quotation in Lord Macaulay's History, the words run, "thirty thousand Cornish boys." See "Quarterly Review," vol. cii. p. 313.

last argued. It was maintained that the bishops were perfectly right when they held that the dispensing power was illegal. Amongst their counsel there was one, a young man, John Somers, who that day took the high position which he ever after maintained as the great constitutional lawyer and statesman of his time. The Chief-Justice, Wright, summed up that the petition was a libel. Justice Alibone held the same opinion. But the other two judges, Holloway and Powell, differed from them; and Powell affirmed that the dispensing power, as then administered, was an encroachment of the prerogative, and if not repressed, would put the whole legislative authority in the king. The jury were locked up all night. The king's brewer had fought stoutly for his royal customer; but he at last yielded; and at ten o'clock the verdict of "Not Guilty" was delivered. The shouts went from the benches and galleries of the Court to Westminster Hall; from the Hall to the streets and the river; from London to every suburb. They were echoed by the camp at Hounslow, when an express came there to James to tell him of his great failure. He left directly for London. "He was no sooner gone out of the camp than he was followed by an universal shouting, as if it had been a victory obtained."* The king asked the cause of the uproar. He was answered that it was nothing; the soldiers only rejoiced that the bishops were acquitted. "Do you call that nothing?" said the baffled tyrant. He muttered some threat of "so much the worse for them"—for whom the threat was meant was not quite clear. He had one revenge. The two judges, Holloway and Powell, as soon as the term was over, were dismissed from their seats on a bench where independence and honesty were qualities not to be endured. On the night of the 30th of June, London was one blaze of bonfires and illuminations. The effigy of the pope again came forth to be burnt, as in the days of Shaftesbury. Pope-burners and bonfire lighters were indicted at the Middlesex Sessions; "but," says Reresby, who was present as a justice, "the grand jury would find no bill, though they were sent out no less than three times; so generally did the love of the bishops and the Protestant cause prevail." The Declaration of Indulgence, and the Order in Council that the Clergy should publish it, appeared the climax of the king's determination to set his dispensing power above the law. The resistance of the Clergy brought the question to issue between the king and the people. It was shrewdly observed that "a solemn declaration that a king will not govern according to law seems a formal renouncing

* Burret vol. iii. p. 226.

of any right he has by it; and when he has cut the bough he sat upon, he has little reason to be surprised if he falls to the ground." *

Two days after the seven bishops were sent to the Tower, the Council announced to the lords-lieutenant of counties that it had "pleased Almighty God, about ten o'clock of this morning, to bless his majesty and his royal consort the queen with the birth of a hopeful son, and his majesty's kingdoms and dominions with a prince." † In the language of the Council it was "so inestimable a blessing," that all the people would be called upon to unite in thanksgiving. Another language was held even by the staunch friends of the monarchy. Evelyn enters in his Diary of June 10th, "A young prince born, which will cause disputes." The legitimacy of this young prince was long disputed. This birth was as little a blessing to the house of Stuart as it promised to be to the weary subjects of that house. A large majority of the nation was convinced that this heir of the crown was supposititious. It was almost universally believed that imposture had been practised. The princess Anne did not give credit to the queen's alleged pregnancy. It was wholly disbelieved at the court of the prince of Orange. The birth arrived a month before it was said to be expected. The most ordinary precautions were not taken to put the fact beyond a doubt; for none but those in whom the people had little confidence were in attendance on the occasion. That there was no imposture is now matter of historical belief; but so convinced were many political partisans that there was no real son of James II., that, seventy years afterwards, Johnson drew the character of a violent Whig, who "has known those who saw the bed into which the Pretender was conveyed in a warming-pan." ‡ Burnet devotes five or six pages of his folio volume to the various accounts of this pretended birth—stories which Swift properly ridicules. The belief in this story is the only blot in the subsequent Declaration of William of Orange to the English people; and James took the manly, though necessarily somewhat indelicate step, of instituting an inquiry and publishing all the evidence to refute the calumny. The most important influence of this birth upon the fortunes of England was, that the prospect of an heir to the Crown, born of a Catholic mother, and to be brought up in the bigoted school of a father who had cast aside Protestantism to be governed by Jesuits and apostates, precipitated the Revolution.

* Lord Dartmouth's Note in Burnet, vol. iii. p. 228

† Letter to the Earl of Rochester. Ellis. Series I. vol. iii. p. 339.

‡ "Idler," No. 10.

CHAPTER XVIII.

William, Prince of Orange.—His character and position with regard to English affairs.—The Princess Mary, and the Succession.—Invitation to the Prince of Orange.—Preparations of William.—His Declaration.—Hopes of the English people.—Alarm of the king.—William sails from Helvoetsluys.—The voyage.—Landing at Torbay.—Public entry at Exeter.—The king goes to the army at Salisbury.—Desertions of his officers.—The Prince of Denmark and the Princess Anne.—James calls a Meeting of Peers.—Commissioners to negotiate with the Prince of Orange.—The queen and child sent to France.—The king flies.—Provisional Government.—Riots.—The Irish night.—James brought back to London.—The Dutch guards at Whitehall.—The king again leaves London.—The Prince of Orange enters.—The Interregnum.—The Convention.—William and Mary King and Queen.—The revolution the commencement of a new era in English history.

At the village of Hurley, on the Berkshire side of the Thames between Henley and Maidenhead, stood, in 1836, an Elizabethan mansion called Lady Place, built on the site of a Benedictine monastery by sir Richard Lovelace, who was created a peer by Charles I. This building was the seat of lord Lovelace in the reigns of Charles II. and James II.,—a nobleman whose lavish hospitality and expensive tastes were rapidly wasting "the king of Spain's cloth of silver" * which his ancestor, one of Drake's privateering followers had won. The spacious hall opening to the Thames, the stately gallery whose panels were covered with Italian landscapes, the terraced gardens—were ruined and neglected when we there meditated, some thirty years ago, upon the lessons of "Mutability." All the remains of past grandeur are now swept away. But beneath the Tudor building were the burial vaults of the house of "Our Lady," which seemed built for all time, and which, we believe, are still undisturbed. In these vaults was a modern inscription which recorded that the Monastery of Lady Place was founded at the time of the great Norman Revolution and that "in this place, six hundred years afterwards, the Revolution of 1688 was begun." King William III., the tablet also recorded, visited this vault, and looked upon the "Recess," in which "several consultations for calling in the prince of Orange were held." During the four years in which James had been on the throne, the question

* "Worthies."