

CHAPTER XXV.

Close of the first Session of the English Parliament.—The Irish Parliament.—Second Session of the English Parliament.—The Bill of Rights.—The Princess Anne.—Whig and Tory Factions.—Parliament dissolved.—State of the Army in Ireland.—Abuses in Government Departments.—Opening of the New Parliament.—Corruption.—Jealousy in settling the Revenue.—Act of Recognition.—Act of Grace.—William goes to Ireland.—Landing and March of William.—The Boyne.—William slightly wounded.—Battle of the Boyne.—Flight of James.—His Speech at Dublin.—Naval defeat at Beachy Head.—Energetic Conduct of the Queen.

THE proceedings of the English parliament, from the period when the Commons went up to the king with an address, declaring that they would support him in a war with France, to the adjournment in August, are no doubt interesting when presented with characteristic details, but are scarcely important enough to be related with minuteness in a general history. Less important is it to trace the factious disputes in which so many angry passions and so many petty jealousies were called forth, during the three or four latter months of the Session. It is satisfactory to know that the attainders of William lord Russell, of Algernon Sidney, of Alice Lisle, and of alderman Cornish, were reversed. It is not so satisfactory to trace the revival of past animosities in the discussions upon the sentence of Titus Oates, who brought that sentence before the House of Lords by a writ of error. A majority of Peers affirmed the judgment; but in the Lower House a bill annulling the sentence was brought in. The majority of the Lords looked at the infamous character of Oates. In the Commons the supporters of the bill for annulling the sentence looked to the illegality of the judgment. The difference between the two Houses was compromised. Oates was released from confinement, having received a pardon; and the Commons moved an address to the Crown that he should be allowed a small pension for his support. In the case of Samuel Johnson, the Commons voted that his degradation from ecclesiastical functions was illegal, and the king was asked to bestow some preferment on him. William, more wisely, gave him a thousand pounds and a pension.

During this Session an Act was passed by which any Protes-

tant clergyman of Ireland, who had been forced to leave that kingdom, "for fear of the Irish rebels," should not be deprived of an Irish benefice by accepting ecclesiastical preferment in England.* Before the landing of James at Kinsale many Protestants had fled to England, in the dread of a repetition of the frightful atrocities of 1641. Many of these refugees were aided by a public subscription; and some of the clergy were appointed to lectureships and small livings.† The miseries produced "by fear of the Irish rebels" were small, compared with the tyrannous proceedings of the Parliament which king James opened in Dublin on the 7th of May. Of two hundred and fifty members of the Irish House of Commons, only six were Protestants. James told the Parliament in opening the Session, that he had always been for liberty of conscience, and against invading the property of any man. The next day he issued a Proclamation in which he says that, since his arrival in his kingdom of Ireland, he had made it his chief concern to satisfy his Protestant subjects "that the defence of their religion, privileges, and properties, is equally our care with the recovery of our rights." It has been alleged, as an excuse for James in furnishing a very speedy proof of the futility of such professions, that he could not control the violent spirit of his Parliament. They passed an Act of Toleration on one day; they passed an Act of Confiscation on the next. The one Act consisted of unmeaning professions; the other transferred all the lands held by Protestants under old Acts of Settlement to their ancient proprietors before the rebellion of 1641. Another Act transferred the tithe, for the most part from the Protestant to the Catholic clergy, without compensation. But the iniquity of the Act which deprived the holders of property for nearly forty years, whether acquired by grant, purchase, or mortgage, was small when compared with the Act of attainder by which two thousand six hundred persons were declared traitors and adjudged to suffer the pains of death and forfeiture. "The severity of this Act exceeded even that of the famous proscription at Rome during the last Triumvirate."‡ The Act of Attainder affected the real estates of absentees thus declared to be traitors. Another Act vested in the king all their goods and chattels, debts and arrears of rent. The spirit of the Parliament was universally carried out. The arms of all Protestants were seized, whatever their political opinions. The Protestant clergy, mostly preachers of

* 1 Gul. & Mar. c. 29. † See Journal of the Very Rev. Rowland Davies, 1857.

‡ Harris's "Life of William III." p. 231.

divine right, were insulted and unprotected. The fellows and scholars of the university of Dublin were thrust out of their halls and chambers, and their property seized; the sole condition of their personal liberty being that no three of them should meet together, "on pain of death." This was the ready phrase of terror applicable under all circumstances. The king, with the example before him of iniquities long faded away, issued a coinage of brass money which was to pass as sixpences, shillings, and half-crowns. "Eight half-crowns of this money were not intrinsically worth two-pence."* The tradesmen of Dublin, if they refused the money, were threatened to be hanged by the Provost-Marshal. The government of king James, that was looking forward to the day when England and Scotland should come under the same merciful rule, decreed, by proclamation in the name of the king, that no covetous person should give by exchange of the currency, intolerable rates for gold and silver, to the great disparagement of the brass and copper money, under pain of death.

Such, when king William met his Parliament on the 19th of October, were the manifestations of what might be expected from the blessed rule of king James, should he be restored in England. It is recorded of William that, on the day before, he met the Council, and produced a draft of his speech, written by himself in French, when he thus expressed himself: "I know most of my predecessors were used to commit the drawing of such speeches to their ministers, who generally had their private aims and interests in view; to prevent which, I have thought fit to write it myself in French, because I am not so great a master of the English tongue: therefore, I desire you to look it over, and change what you may find amiss, that it may be translated into English." This was not complimentary to the king's ministers, nor accordant with our modern notions of ministerial responsibility. Yet it was an honest endeavour of William's common sense not to be misunderstood. He said that it was a misfortune that, at the beginning of his reign, he should have to ask such large supplies for carrying on the wars upon which he had entered with their advice. He had not engaged in these out of a vain ambition, but from the necessity of opposing those who had so visibly discovered their designs of destroying the liberties and religion of the nation. He asked that there should be no delay in determining what should be the supply for the charges of the war, because there was to be a

* Harris's "Life of William III." p. 231.

meeting at the Hague, of all the princes and States who were engaged against France, and his own resolutions would be determined by the means at his command. This was honest language; which the Commons seconded by a vote that they would stand by the king in the reduction of Ireland and in a vigorous prosecution of the war with France. Yet there is nothing more painful to one who looks back upon the history of his country with an earnest desire to think the best of her public men, than to trace, amidst the bitter contests of factions, the slight predominance of the patriotic spirit. The second Session of the Convention Parliament is a melancholy exhibition of party intrigues for power, of rivalries that were to be made enduring by mean revenges, of desperate attempts to revive the indiscriminate hatreds of the past in a frequent disregard of the necessities of the present—hateful contests, that made William seriously purpose to throw up the government, and remove himself from a scene where he was unable to make men understand that there was a duty to their country, which ought to outweigh all selfish desires.

The work for which this Session of Parliament is to be chiefly remembered in after time, was the passing of the Bill of Rights. This celebrated measure was the reduction to a Statute of the Declaration of Rights.* Some important provisions were introduced. It was enacted, to prevent the kingdom being governed by a Papist, that the sovereign should in Parliament, and at the Coronation, adopt by repetition and subscription, the declaration against Transubstantiation. It was also enacted that if the sovereign should marry a Papist, the subject should be absolved from allegiance. The dispensing power of the Crown—the cause of so many fierce conflicts—was absolutely taken away.† The Parliament in this Session left few other records of considerate legislation. They went wildly to work with impeachments. They impeached the earl of Peterborough and the earl of Salisbury, for departing from their allegiance, and being reconciled to the Church of Rome. They impeached the earl of Castlemaine, under a charge of trying to reconcile the kingdom to the Church of Rome. They raked up the accusations against those who had been accessory to the convictions of Russell and Sidney, chiefly, in the hope to fasten some charge upon Halifax, who had retired from office. They carried their political hatreds so far back into the region of history, as to accept a statement that "Major-General Ludlow is

* *Ante*, vol. iv. p. 376.

come into England, and is in town; and that his old accomplices do comfort, aid, and abet him;" and thereupon they carried an address that the king would issue a proclamation for apprehending General Ludlow, who stood attainted of high treason for the murder of Charles I. Old Colonel Birch, who asked for evidence of Ludlow being in London, made a sly allusion to the contrast between the present and the past: "I am in a new periwig, and pray let the House look upon me."* The men of the new periwigs seemed anxious that the passions of the old love-locks should never be forgotten. Ludlow returned to his asylum at Vevay; to wonder, perhaps, what sort of Revolution was that of 1688, which had thus repudiated what it owed to the Puritans who had made the Bill of Rights a practicable thing.

Amongst the annoyances to which William and Mary were subjected by party intrigues, there were none, probably, more personally distasteful than the misunderstandings which arose out of the position of the princess Anne. Upon her marriage with prince George of Denmark she had a settlement of £20,000 a year. From the circumstance of Anne being the presumptive heir of the Crown, it was not unnatural that she should desire a larger revenue. From the peculiarities of her character she was necessarily a fit subject for intriguing politicians to work upon. Sarah Churchill, afterwards duchess of Marlborough, had over her the most unbounded influence. The attachment of Mrs. Morley (Anne) to her dear Mrs. Freeman (Sarah)—or rather the dependence of a weak nature upon an imperious one—had an influence of long duration upon the politics of England. The correspondence of the princess and the lady of the bed-chamber, under their fictitious names, would lead to the belief that real friendship was not incompatible with a court atmosphere, if we did not see beneath this seeming affection the schemes of one of the most cunning and domineering of her sex. The Tories, who looked to Anne, in 1689, as one to be propitiated, had been moved to apply to Parliament for a large increase of her income. Sarah tells the story herself: "Her majesty, when some steps were made in Parliament towards settling a revenue on the prince and princess, taking her sister one night to task for it, she asked her, What was the meaning of these proceedings? To which the princess answered, She heard her friends had a mind to make her some settlement. The queen hastily replied, with a very imperious air, 'Pray, what friends have

* "Parliamentary History," vol. v. col. 414.

you but the king and me?" The lady goes on to state how she urged the princess to persist in applying to Parliament instead of depending upon the king; how Shrewsbury (she erroneously calls him "duke") came to her from the king, "who promised to give the princess £50,000 if she would desist from soliciting the settlement by Parliament;" and how she, the dictatress of the princess, insinuated a doubt whether the king would keep his word; upon which the princess herself told Shrewsbury, "that she could not think herself in the wrong to desire a security for what was to support her."* The friends who had a mind to make the princess some settlement went too far. They asked for £70,000 a year, which the House would not grant; and, finally, Anne received the £50,000 which Shrewsbury was authorised to offer.

The politics of the palace were passing annoyances from the troublesome movements of a faction, rather than permanent causes of uneasiness to the king. The Whigs, to whom he in a great degree owed his crown, had manifested a violence towards their political opponents that rendered it impossible that he could wear that crown in tranquillity. They sought to obtain a considerable increase of power, by a bold manœuvre which would materially strengthen them in a new Parliament. Without any attempt to legislate in the spirit of party, a Bill had been read twice for restoring the Corporations which had surrendered their Charters at the mandates of Charles II. and James II. There was a thin attendance in the House, for it was the holiday time of Christmas. But the Whigs by concert mustered in force, and engrafted upon the Bill two clauses disqualifying for municipal office every person who had been instrumental in surrendering the charter of a borough. The term proposed for the duration of this disqualification was seven years. A large proportion of the parliamentary franchise was in the hands of corporations. The clause would have the effect of removing Tory electors, and substituting Whig electors. This attempt at a surprise was finally defeated. The gross injustice of the clauses—their spirit of vindictiveness—produced a disgust in which the king participated as much as any man. Absent members rushed to London from every district—and the clauses were at length rejected. The Tories, now triumphant, tried to carry the Bill of Indemnity for political offences, which had been laid aside in the last Session. So many exceptions to the measure of amnesty were introduced by the opposite faction, that it became a

* "Authentick Memoirs of the Life of the Duchess of Marlborough," p. 89.

measure of proscription. William was worn out by these contests. According to Balcarres, he told the duke of Hamilton, "that he wished he were a thousand miles from England, and that he had never been king of it." * Burnet gives a circumstantial relation of the effect of these manifestations upon a mind so usually calm and imperturbable. "He was once very near a desperate resolution; he thought he could not trust the Tories, and he resolved he would not trust the Whigs; so he fancied the Tories would be true to the queen, and confide in her, though they would not in him. He therefore resolved to go over to Holland, and leave the government in the queen's hands: so he called the marquis of Carmarthen, with the earl of Shrewsbury, and some few more, and told them, he had a convoy ready, and was resolved to leave all in the queen's hands; since he did not see how he could extricate himself out of the difficulties into which the animosities of parties had brought him: they pressed him vehemently to lay aside all such desperate resolutions, and to comply with the present necessity. Much passion appeared among them: the debate was so warm, that many tears were shed: in conclusion, the king resolved to change his first design, into another better resolution, of going over in person, to put an end to the war in Ireland." †. This last resolution came to be known; and it was determined by the Whigs to oppose it, as a step inconsistent with the health and safety of the king. William took a decisive course. He went to Parliament on the 27th of January, determined to prevent any address that should interfere with his purpose. In his speech from the throne he said, "It is a very sensible affliction to me, to see my good people burthened with heavy taxes; but, since the speedy recovery of Ireland is, in my opinion, the only means to ease them and to preserve the peace and honour of the nation, I am resolved to go thither in person, and, with the blessing of God Almighty, endeavour to reduce that kingdom, that it may no longer be a charge to this." The Parliament was then prorogued: and, two days after, dissolved.

"There was fierce and great carousing about being elected in the new Parliament." Thus writes Evelyn on the 16th of February. "There was a great struggle all England over in elections," says Burnet; "but the Corporation Bill did so highly provoke all those whom it was to have disgraced, that the Tories were by far the greater number in the new Parliament." A year had passed

* Ralph, vol. ii. note at p. 186.

† "Own Time," vol. iv. p. 69.

in which the foundations of civil and religious liberty had been widened and strengthened; but the constitutional legislation of the Convention Parliament was not likely to excite much popular enthusiasm. The people were heavily taxed to carry on the war. On the continent no effectual resistance had been offered to the ambition of France; and in Ireland James was dictator, at the head of a large military force. A prince with the highest reputation for courage and sagacity had come to be king over England; and yet her navy had been defeated in an encounter with the French; and the army which had gone to Ireland under Marshal Schomberg had done nothing, and was perishing in its inaction. At the dinner table of the most influential minister, Carmarthen, "a very considerate and sober commander, going for Ireland, related to us the exceeding neglect of the English soldiers, suffering severely for want of clothes and necessaries this winter, exceedingly magnifying their courage and bravery during all their hardships." * Meagre as are the reports of debates in Parliament, we may trace, in 1689, complaints of departmental neglect very similar to those which were so loudly outspoken in 1855. Mr. Waller gave an account at the bar of the House of Commons of the state of the army in Ireland. The baggage-horses were left behind at Chester; for profit was made by putting them to grass. The sickness by which Schomberg's forces were terribly reduced, he imputed to the great defect of clothing; "all that were well clothed were in health." He contrasted the care bestowed upon a Dutch regiment in camp with the neglect of the English: "Their officers looked upon their soldiers as their children, and would see them make their huts, pave them, and lay fresh straw; in the whole Dutch camp scarce two died." Surgeons' medicines were very ill provided: "It was reported they had 1700*l.* worth of medicines, but I know not where they were." In that rainy season "the foreigners were warmer clothed than our own men, in great coats over their close coats; of which the English had none." Lastly, the troops "were not well furnished with shoes: some came late;—they were not consigned to anybody." † The Commons naturally became furious at these recitals of neglect and peculation. Shales, the Commissary of the Stores, was the chief mark for their indignation. "If ever you have the war carried on with honour and success," said Colonel Birch, "you must hang this man." The House wanted to criminate higher men than the Commissary of the Stores,

* Evelyn, "Diary," 5 February 19.

† "Parliamentary History," vol. v. col. 453.

whose experience in what was useful as well as what was dishonest had been acquired in the army of James. The Commons resolved upon an indecent address to the king, to ask him to inform them who had recommended Shales. William consulted his higher sense of honour by refusing to be an informer. A wiser course was adopted than hanging Shales. A Commission was sent to Ireland, to remedy these abuses. The state of the navy was not more satisfactory than that of the army. The indefatigable Secretary of the navy, Pepys, though now out of office, had his keen eye upon the abuses of that department of which he had the most intimate knowledge of any man. At a dinner at which Evelyn was present, Pepys "deplored the sad condition of our navy, as governed by inexperienced men since the Revolution." He was for building frigates. He desired "they would leave off building such high decks, which were for nothing but to gratify gentlemen-commanders, who must have all their effeminate accommodations, and for pomp. It would be the ruin of our fleets, if such persons were continued in command, they neither having experience, nor being capable of learning, because they would not submit to the fatigue and inconvenience which those who were bred seamen would undergo."* The Victualling of the Fleet was as notoriously infamous as the Commissariat of the Army. The Victuallers were ordered by the House into custody; but the affair seems to have evaporated in talk. "I believe the fleet is as ill victualled as if our enemies had done it," was the sense of the House, thus expressed by Mr. Hampden. "You may talk of raising money, but not of raising seamen," said another member. The seamen would not serve to be starved and poisoned. With a Council in which there was far more hatred than concord; with a Parliament in which the evils of Party greatly outweighed its advantages; with a Church equally divided in opinion—"of whom the moderate and sober part were for a speedy reformation of divers things, which it was thought might be made in our Liturgy, for the inviting Dissenters, others more stiff and rigid, for no condescension at all;" † with the dry rot of corruption in all the administrative departments of government, we can scarcely be surprised that William panted for another field of action, in which his own energies could be fairly put forth. "The going to a campaign," he said, "was naturally no unpleasant thing to him; he was sure he understood that better than how to govern England." ‡ And so the sickly man advised with

* "Diary," March 7.

† *Ibid.*, February 16.

‡ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 82.

sir Christopher Wren about building for him a house of wood, that should be carried with the army like a showman's booth; and though his constant cough had driven him from Whitehall to Kensington for purer air, he resolved to take no heed of those who manifested a real or pretended concern for his health. He would see with his own eyes if affairs in Ireland were irretrievable. Upon the king himself almost wholly devolved the duty of making a fit preparation for his campaign, by searching into the abuses of the military departments, and of remedying evils of such disastrous magnitude. He wrote to his friend Portland, after the prorogation of Parliament, "All will depend upon success in Ireland. I must apply myself entirely to regulate everything in the best way I can. There is no small work on my my hands, being so badly assisted as I am."*

At the opening of Parliament on the 20th of March, 1690, some changes had been made in the ministry, and in the lesser offices, "so that," says Burnet, "Whig and Tory were now pretty equally mixed; and both studied to court the king by making advances upon the money-bills." † The king had a tolerably equal contempt for both factions; and his sense of the baseness of some public men is recorded by the historian of his own time. Sir John Trevor, who had been Master of the Rolls under James, "being a Tory in principle, undertook to manage that party, provided he was furnished with such sums of money as might purchase some votes; and by him began the practice of buying off men, in which hitherto the king had kept to stricter rules. I took the liberty once to complain to the king of this method. He said he hated it as much as any man could do; but he saw it was not possible, considering the corruption of the age, to avoid it, unless he would endanger the whole." ‡ The corruption of the age lasted through three generations. It had "lighter wings to fly" when paper-credit came. It grew more rampant under the second George than under the first. It flourished through half the reign of the third George. It would have lasted to our time if the people had not become fully acquainted with the proceedings of their representatives. It could not live in the light of public opinion, shed upon the nation by the free publication of the debates. We can scarcely blame king William for using the ready means of self-defence, whilst his enemies freely employed the subtlest arts for his overthrow. It was difficult for him to trust any one. His favourite minister was the Whig

* Note in Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 537.

† Burnet, vol. iv. p. 71.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

Shrewsbury. Read his correspondence, and he appears the fairest of advisers. He writes to the king, "I wish you could have established your party upon the moderate and honest principled men of both factions; but as there be a necessity of declaring, I shall make no difficulty to own my sense, that your majesty and the government are much more safe depending upon the Whigs, whose designs, if any against, are improbable and remoter than with the Tories, who, many of them, questionless, would bring in king James; and the best of them, I doubt, have a regency still in their heads; for though I agree them to be the properest instruments to carry the prerogative high, yet I fear they have so unreasonable a veneration for monarchy, as not altogether to approve the foundation yours is built upon."* William manifested some favour to the Tories, and Shrewsbury resigned the seals as Secretary of State. Burnet says, "he saw the Whigs, by using the king ill, were driving him into the Tories; and he thought these would serve the king with more zeal if he left his post." William, continues Burnet, "loved the earl of Shrewsbury." The man represented as so sullen and so cold, pressed his favourite Secretary, again and again, to hold the seals. Shrewsbury steadily refused; and his "agitation of mind threw him into a fever that nearly cost him his life." It has been proved, beyond doubt, that this friend of William resigned the seals by the command of king James, to whom he had tendered his services. James, in a paper submitted to the French government in 1692, said, "There is the earl of Shrewsbury, who, being Secretary of State to the prince of Orange, surrendered his charge by my order." † Shrewsbury, from weakness of character, was faithless to the master whom he admired; and his alienation was very temporary. Others were treacherous through the baseness of their natures; and, in betraying the prince whom they had contributed to raise, did not hesitate to betray their country.

Whatever may have been the amount of individual baseness, and of party violence, amongst the legislators of this period—however unpleasant their jealousy of arbitrary power might have been to a king who truly desired to rule over a free people—the spirit of the Long Parliament had not departed from the second Parliament of the Revolution. However desirous Whig or Tory might be to gain favour with the sovereign, they agreed in refusing to grant the duties of Customs to the crown for life, as they had been granted to William's two predecessors. "Why should they entertain a

* Coxe, "Shrewsbury Correspondence," p. 15. † Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 596, note.

jealousy of me," the king said to Burnet, "who came to save their religion and liberties, when they trusted king James so much, who intended to destroy them?" Wisely and boldly did the bishop answer him: "King James would never have run into those counsels that ruined him, if he had obtained the revenue only for a short term."* On a previous occasion, when this question of the settlement of the revenue was raised, William said to Burnet, "he understood the good of a commonwealth as well as of a kingly government; and it was not easy to determine which was best; but he was sure the worst of all governments was that of a king without treasure and without power." † We may well believe that William had no desire to use treasure or power for despotical purposes; and yet we may rejoice that the Commons of England stoutly resolved to prevent the possibility of the Crown becoming dangerous by being too independent. For out of the practical working of the Constitution, through many a struggle, it has come to be understood that the sovereign can have no interest separate from the public advantage; and that the representatives of the people would grossly err in any attempt to lower the personal dignity of the sovereign. The real relations of the executive and the legislative power have practically changed, without any change in the constitutional theory of their rights. Under the well understood principle that the advisers of the Crown cannot exist with a minority in the House of Commons, the dignity of the Crown is in no degree lessened by any opposition which may enforce a change of the servants of the Crown. It was otherwise when the sovereign was in a considerable degree his own minister; and when his servants did not act under a joint responsibility. William drew a distinction between the good of a commonwealth and the good of a kingly government. Practically, the distinction has almost ceased to exist in our times. But we venture to think that our constitutional historian scarcely makes allowance for the remaining influence of the traditions of the monarchy when he says of William, "he could expect to reign on no other terms than as the chief of a commonwealth." ‡

The Statute-book contains an Act of a dozen lines, which passed with little effectual opposition, although well calculated to produce a trial of strength between the two great parties. It is the Act whereby the Lords and Commons recognise and acknowledge that

* "Own Time," vol. iv. p. 75.

† *Ibid.*, p. 60.

‡ Hallam, "Constitutional History," chap. xv.

William and Mary "were, are, and of right ought to be, by the laws of this realm, our sovereign liege lord and lady, king and queen."* This Act also declares that all the Acts made in the Parliament assembled on the 13th of February, 1688 [1689], are laws and statutes of this kingdom. Upon this point the Lords debated long and warmly. In the Commons, the question was settled in two days; for Somers put the House in a dilemma. This parliament, he said, depends entirely on the foundation of the last. "If that were not a legal parliament, they who were then met, and had taken the oaths enacted by that Parliament, were guilty of high treason: the laws repealed by it were still in force, so they must presently return to king James." † The Whigs had their triumph in so easily carrying this Bill. It was a triumph of common sense. They were justly defeated upon an attempt to impose a new test upon the people. A Bill was introduced in the House of Commons, requiring every person holding office to abjure king James. To make the proposed measure still more odious, any justice of the peace was empowered to tender the oath of abjuration at his pleasure, and to commit to prison whoever refused to take it. The Bill was rejected by a small majority. The measure, with some modifications, was then tried anew in the House of Peers. "I have taken so many oaths in my time," said lord Wharton, who looked back to the days of the Long Parliament, "that I hope God will forgive me if I have not kept them all. I should be very unwilling to charge myself with more at the end of my days." The old Puritan interpreted the real feelings of every honest man about the multiplication of political oaths. It was well known that William had no desire for such a measure as this oath; and thus, after many angry words and insinuations, the abjuration of king James was abandoned. King William strengthened his throne far more effectually than by a test arbitrarily administered, by authorising Carmarthen to present to the Peers an Act of Grace for political offences. Bitter memories of the past had prevented the passing of Indemnity Bills. William resolved that the cause of the Revolution should not be disgraced with forfeitures and bloodshed, as was that of the Restoration. The exceptions to the Act of Grace were the surviving regicides—who had been excepted under the Act of Charles II. These were far out of the reach of such a visitation for the crime of forty years standing. Thirty of the evil instruments of James were excepted by name; and, last of all, "George, lord Jeffreys,

* 2 Gul. & Mar. c. 1.

† Burnet, vol. iv. p. 73.

deceased." This "Act for the King and Queen's most gracious general and free pardon," was passed by both Houses without debate. It was one of the most effectual means to prevent a recurrence of "the long and great troubles and discords that have been within this kingdom." Yet the clemency of William was sneered at by those who received its benefits, and condemned by those who were baulked of their revenges. The king closed the Session on the 20th of May; and an Act having been passed to give the queen power to administer the government in his absence, he prepared to take the conduct of the war in Ireland.

William left London on the 4th of June. He had selected nine privy-councillors to advise the queen in the conduct of affairs. It was difficult wholly to rely upon the honesty of this Council, in which there was a mixture of the leading men of the opposite factions. It was a time of great anxiety. Plots were in course of detection; invasion might be expected. The king determined to go where the necessity was most pressing. "He seemed to have a great weight upon his spirits, from the state of his affairs, which was then very cloudy. He said, for his own part, he trusted in God, and would either go through with his business, or perish in it. He only pitied the poor queen, repeating that twice with great tenderness; and wished that those who loved him would wait much on her, and assist her."* William had done everything in his power to ensure success in his great enterprise. Schomberg had been largely reinforced. His army had grievously suffered from sickness and neglect. The pestilence which had thinned its ranks was deemed by the court of king James, "a visible mark of God's judgment upon that wicked and rebellious generation." † William, "a fatalist in religion" according to Smollett, had a rational confidence that God might manifest His judgments through the industry and zeal of His creatures; and he had set about to repair all that had been amiss in the previous organisation of the Irish army. He had now in Ireland thirty-six thousand troops, well fed, properly clothed, not wanting in the munitions of war, prepared by his own vigilant superintendence to take the field with those advantages without which the skill of a general, and the bravery of his men, may be thrown away. The English knew how carefully it had been endeavoured to repair the evils of the last autumn and winter. Still the people were anxious and doubtful. There is a curious instance of the uncertainty attached by public

* Burnet, vol. iv. p. 82.

† "Life of James II." vol. ii. p. 385.