

and religious principles of the king of the Revolution—the imputation that to his “hard-heartedness” is to be ascribed “the massacre of Glencoe; an enormity which has left a stain on William’s memory that neither time, nor the services that he was providentially the instrument of rendering to these kingdoms, can ever efface.”*

In narrating the circumstances which retarded the Union of the kingdoms of England and Scotland—a measure of which William observed, “I have done all I can in that affair, but I do not see a temper in either nation that looks like it”—Defoe says, “The affair of Glencoe was another step to national breaches.” To us, looking calmly upon this affair at the interval of a hundred and sixty-six years, it would appear the most extravagant of national delusions to set up this as “a ground of national animosity.” From the beginning to the end it was a Scottish affair. Not an English statesman was concerned in advising the proceeding. The character of the monarch who signed the order, as king of Scotland, is far more truly exemplified in one sentence of the Proclamation of Indemnity, which ought to have been the rule of conduct for those who urged on the massacre—“to interpret this indemnity in the most favourable and ample manner.”

* “Annals of England,” vol. iii. p. 120.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Marlborough dismissed from office.—Parliamentary debates.—Independence of the Judges.—The king leaves for Holland.—Threatened invasion.—Declaration of James.—Battle of La Hogue.—Siege of Namur.—Grandval’s plot to assassinate William.—Battle of Steinkirk.—Parliament.—Crime and public distress.—Commencement of the National Debt.—The Licensing Act expires.—Place Bill.—Bill for Triennial Parliaments.—The King’s Veto.—Murder of Mountfort.—Trial of Lord Mohun.

“THE king was pleased, without assigning any reason, to remove my lord Marlborough from his employments.” Such is the brief notice of an important event by the wife of the great peer. Much fuller is her account of the circumstances which caused a serious disagreement between queen Mary and her sister, the princess Anne. The queen, three weeks after the dismissal of the earl, wrote to her sister that “it is very unfit lady Marlborough should stay with you, since that gives her husband so just a pretence of being where he ought not.” Mary said, I need not repeat the cause he has given the king to do what he has done, nor his unwillingness at all times to come to such extremities, though people do deserve it.” Anne refused to be separated from her beloved Mrs. Freeman; and Mrs. Freeman being commanded to leave the palace, Mrs. Morley left with her. Anne chose her abode at Sion House; and the nation was scandalised at a quarrel between the occupier of the throne and the sister who might one day be called to occupy it. It is easy to imagine that no circumstance in the lives of William and Mary produced more misery than this rupture. The dismissal of Marlborough occurred on the 10th of January, at the very time when, in the view of some candid persons, William was occupied in planning the slaughter of an obscure Highland clan. It was a period to the king of great political anxiety. Lady Marlborough says she could never learn “what cause the king had for his displeasure.” The popular feeling regarded the earl’s dismissal as a just punishment “for his excessive taking of bribes, covetousness, and extortion on all occasions from his inferior officers.”* In another passage, Evelyn attributes Marlborough’s disgrace to his

* Evelyn, “Diary,” January 24.

"having used words against the king" What Marlborough had really done has been revealed in a letter of James. The Lieutenant-General of William, who also held the domestic office of his Gentleman of the Bedchamber, had concerted with the Jacobites to effect the recall of James by the subtlest of plots. He was organising a party to propose and carry in Parliament a motion that all the foreigners in the employ of the Crown, civil or military, should be sent out of the kingdom. The object was to produce a rupture between the king and the parliament. Then, says the letter of James, "my lord Churchill would declare with the army for the parliament; and, the fleet doing the same, they would have recalled me." James adds that some of his own imprudent friends, dreading that the scheme of Churchill had for its ultimate object to make the princess Anne queen, discovered it to Bentinck, and thus "turned aside the blow."*

The Parliament was adjourned on the 20th of February, having met on the 2nd of the previous October. It was a Session of great debate; but more remarkable for the discussion of important measures, than for their final enactment. The rival claims of the Old East India Company and of the New, were the subject of earnest argument, not unmingled with party feelings. But nothing was finally decided; and a bill for the regulation of the India trade was suffered to drop. † A most important measure for regulating trials in cases of high treason was passed by the Commons; but becoming the subject of a great controversy between the two houses, as to the right of peers to be tried by the whole body of the Upper House as well during a recess as during a sitting of Parliament, that valuable bill also fell through. A few years later the jealousy of the Commons was removed. Another measure of great public advantage was defeated by the king's Veto. It was the first time in which William had exercised this power. The Judges had been made independent of the Crown as to their term of office. They were appointed by William and Mary "Quamdiu se bene gesserint:" they could not be arbitrarily removed. But their salaries had not been fixed, as they ought to have been. The Houses passed a Bill for legally establishing this judicial independence; also providing that each judge should be paid a thousand a year. But they charged the salaries upon the hereditary revenues of the

* This letter, in French, is given by Macaulay, who mentions that a translation was published by Macpherson "eighty years ago." "History," vol. iv. p. 166.

† See *ante*, p. 428.

Crown, without the previous consent of the king having been accorded. The king, says Hallam, "gave an unfortunate instance of his very injudicious tenacity of bad prerogatives in refusing his assent." A later historian says that the circumstances under which the king used his veto have never been correctly stated. "William could defend the proprietary rights of the Crown only by putting his negative on the bill. . . . It was not till the provisions of the bill had been forgotten, and till nothing but its title was remembered, that William was accused of having been influenced by a wish to keep the judges in a state of dependence."* This great constitutional principle was determined by the Act of Settlement of 1701 (13 Gul. 3, c. 2), which provides that after the limitation of the Crown under that statute shall take effect, "Judges' Commissions be made Quamdiu se bene gesserint, and their salaries ascertained and established; but upon the Address of both Houses of Parliament it may be lawful to remove them." †

The king set out for Holland on the 5th of March. At the beginning of the Session he had told the Parliament that an Army of sixty-five thousand men would be required, and the Houses voted that number. The distribution of the land force gave about eleven thousand men for England, thirteen thousand for Ireland, two thousand for Scotland, and thirty-eight thousand to serve beyond the sea. The proportion of regular troops for the defence of England was thus comparatively small; but then the militia of the kingdom could be immediately called out, and the regiments of London and Westminster were always in readiness for service. The Navy had been brought into a greater state of efficiency than at any previous period since the Revolution. If loyal songs are to be believed in, the war was popular;

"Our army makes Lewis to tremble and quake
He fearing that Mons we again will retake." ‡

Weavers, shoemakers, butchers, dyers, hatters—the men of Lon-

* Macaulay, "History," vol. iv. p. 183. There is an exception to Lord Macaulay's wonted accuracy in his remarks on this subject. He says, "that great law (the Bill of Rights) had deprived the Crown of the power of arbitrarily removing the judges." The Bill of Rights contains not a word on the subject; neither does the Declaration of Rights.

† Mr. Hallam has pointed out that we owe the independence of the Judges to this statute, and not to George III., as we have long been taught to believe. Blackstone contributed to this popular delusion, by ascribing vast importance to the statute 1 Geo. III., c. 23, which confirmed the commissions of the judges notwithstanding the demise of the Crown—a point before doubtful. The recent editor of Blackstone, Dr. Kerr, has pointed out that "the learned commentator much exaggerates the value" of the statute of George III.

‡ "Songs of the London Apprentices and Trades." Edited by Charles Mackay, p. 122.

don and the men of the West—were all ready to march under “renowned king William,” says the popular doggerel. But something more effective than a broadside ballad was issued to stir up the country to defend its government. It was a Declaration by James himself, which was not suppressed by the queen and her Council, but reprinted, and widely circulated with appropriate comment. There was in this document not a word of regret for the past; not a word that could hold out a prospect of amendment for the future. It breathed vengeance against nobles and prelates who were proscribed by name; it threatened whole classes with punishment as guilty rebels; the judges and juries who had convicted Ashton and Cross, two of the plotting Jacobites; and the “fishermen and all others who offered personal indignities to us at Feversham.” Such was a Declaration issued to prepare the people for receiving their ejected king with contrite tears, when he came back at the head of a French invading army. James had at last induced the king of France to hazard the chance of a landing in England. The minister who had constantly opposed that dangerous project was dead. That minister was Louvois. He had been the chief military administrator of Louis for nearly a quarter of a century, but at last became obnoxious to his master. Louvois, says Burnet, “grew uneasy at the authority Madame de Maintenon took in things which she could not understand; and was in conclusion so unacceptable to the king that once, when he flung his bundle of papers down upon the floor before him, the king lifted up his cane, but the lady held him from doing more.”* Saint Simon tells something like the same story, with the variation of the king catching up the fire-tongs instead of lifting his cane. Louvois died suddenly, not without suspicion of poison. Saint Simon represents Louis as feeling free when he had got rid of his old servant; and then relates that, when an officer came from James at Saint Germain, with a compliment of condolence, Louis, “with an air and a tone more than perfectly easy” (*plus que dégagés*) replied—“give my compliments and thanks to the king and queen of England, and say to them from me, that my affairs and their affairs will go on none the worse for what has happened.” When the great war minister of France was saved by the hand of death from being sent to the Bastille, Louis was free to assist his confident brother at St. Germain with ten thousand French troops, and with the Irish regiments which had entered the service

* “Own Time,” vol. iv. p. 165.

of France. A camp was formed at La Hogue; and James, in the Declaration which we have noticed, announced that the Most Christian King had now “lent us so many troops as may be abundantly sufficient to untie the hands of our subjects, and make it safe for them to return to their duty and repair to our standard.”*

On the 24th of April, James joined his camp in Normandy. He relied upon his French and Irish army, but he relied as much upon the defection of the English fleet. Not only Admiral Russell, but other officers had been tampered with. Russell, however, had been disgusted into something like a sense of honour and duty by the insane declaration issued by James. He sent word to the rebel-threatener that he ought “to grant a general pardon, and that then he would contribute what he could to his restoration, without insisting upon any terms for himself.”† This crafty renegade had still something of the Englishman about him; for whilst he proposed to get out of the way with the fleet he commanded, so as to give the invaders an opportunity of landing, he declared that if he met the French fleet he would fight it, even though the king himself were on board.”

On the 15th of May, the English fleet was at St. Helen’s. It had been joined by the Dutch fleet, the whole force amounting to ninety sail of the line. Russell was in command on board the *Britannia*. A scene took place in that flag-ship which is happily without a subsequent parallel in English history. A despatch had arrived from Nottingham, the Secretary of State, which Russell was commanded to read to the Commanders of the Fleet. In his cabin there were men whose names are inscribed amongst the great naval heroes of our land—sir George Rooke,—sir Cloudesley Shovel. Such true hearts could have little suspected that he who read to them the magnanimous resolve of the queen was most obnoxious to its covert reproach. Nottingham said, in her majesty’s name, that a report was spread abroad that some of the officers of her fleet were not hearty in their service, and that she had ordered many of them to be discharged. She further said that she believed the report was raised by the enemies of the government,—that she retained an entire confidence in their fidelity and zeal for the service of the crown and the defence of the country, and was resolved not to displace any one. Then, with one accord, an address to the queen was signed—Russell probably not signing as being too exalted for suspicion to attach to him. It was an

* “Life of James II,” vol. ii. p. 479.

† *Ibid.*, p. 489.

address, not cold and formal, but full of the devotion of the heart, concluding in these earnest words,—“And that God Almighty may preserve your majesty’s most sacred person, direct your counsels, and prosper your arms by sea and land against your majesty’s enemies, let all the people say Amen, with your majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects.”* There was no time for the enthusiasm of that hour to cool. On the afternoon of that day the French fleet, under Tourville, was seen from the coast of Dorsetshire. On the 17th, the English and Dutch fleets were at sea. Tourville had with him only his own squadron, having sailed from Brest, and in his passage to Cape la Hogue had come within view of Portland. Off La Hogue the French transports were receiving troops. Tourville was to convoy this fleet of the invaders. On the morning of the 19th, the two fleets came in sight of each other. Tourville immediately bore down upon an armament more than double his number. The wind was favourable to him, and only half of the ships of the allies could come into action. The defection upon which he relied was nowhere to be seen. To vindicate their honour, the commanders of the English fleet urged their men with a zeal that made them invincible, and Russell even told the sailors of the ships that he visited, to throw over any commander that played false, himself not excepted. Carter, Rear-Admiral of the Blue—who is said to have disclosed that overtures had been made to him from the Jacobites—broke the French line at the onset, was mortally wounded, and dying exclaimed, “Fight the ship as long as she can swim.” The battle lasted five hours, when the wind changed, and the whole force of the allies was brought together. The victory was complete, the French flying in every direction to their own shores. Tourville’s ship, the *Royal Sun*, the finest vessel of that day, got to Cherbourg, with two other three-deckers. There were no docks at that time to afford security. The great men-of-war were hauled into the shoals, Admiral Delaval attacked them with his fire-ships and his boats’ crews, and the pride of the French navy and the two other vessels were burned to the water’s edge. Tourville, during the chase, had shifted his flag to the *Ambitious*, and with twelve other large ships had got into the bay of La Hogue. Here he lay, under forts and batteries, with the army of James close at hand, and the flags of England and France flying on one of the forts, for James himself was within. On the

* The address is in the London Gazette of the 19th of May, and is quoted in Ralph, vol. ii. p. 352.

23rd of May, Admiral Rooke led a flotilla of two hundred boats and numerous fire-ships into the bay. The huge vessels fired with little effect. There was a cannonade from the batteries and volleys of musketry from the shore; but on came the rowers, with the old battle-shout. The boats’ crews of Tourville fled in confusion. The crews of the French ships abandoning them, the English sailors boarded, and set them on fire. At eight the next morning again came Rooke into the bay with his terrible flotilla. The remaining vessels were in like manner burned, after their guns had been turned against the French batteries. “The defeat,” says the biographer of James, “was too considerable to be redressed, and too afflicting to be looked upon, nor was it even safe to do it long.”* Saint-Simon, mentioning that “the king of England” looked on at this battle from the shore, says, “he was accused of letting some words escape him of partiality in favour of his nation, although none had made good the promises upon which he had counted when he had urged a naval battle.” Tourville, says the same authority, had sent two couriers to Louis to represent the extreme danger of relying upon the assurances of James as to the probable good will of the English commanders, and his confidence in the defection of more than half the fleet during an action. Evelyn writes in his Diary of the 5th of June, “Reports of an invasion were very hot, and alarmed the City, Court, and People.” On the 15th he writes, “After all our apprehensions of being invaded, and doubts of our success by sea, it pleased God to give us a great naval victory, to the utter ruin of the French fleet.” The success was recognised by a temporary act of national gratitude, in a distribution of thirty-seven thousand pounds amongst the sailors, and in the bestowal of gold medals upon the officers. A more permanent demonstration of the feelings called forth by the victory of La Hogue was a declaration by the queen, that the royal palace of Greenwich should become what we now look upon with patriotic pride—the noble asylum for the disabled “mariners of England.”

When the news of La Hogue reached the great supporter of James, the French army was besieging Namur. The army of the allies, under the command of William, was encamped in the neighbourhood. The French general, Luxemburg, with an overwhelming force, prevented any near advance for the relief of the besieged. Louis himself conducted the siege. “The fortified and threatening hill” looks over a “watery glade” of exquisite

* “Life of James II,” vol. ii. p. 496.

beauty; * but in the early summer of 1692 the Sambre had overflowed its banks; and the besiegers had to contend with other difficulties than those created by the science of Cohorn, the engineer of the States-General, who was in the citadel. Vauban, the great engineer of France, was in the lines with Louis. The magnificent monarch so far relaxed the rigour of his wonted etiquette as to permit Vauban to dine with him; at which distinction, says Saint-Simon, Vauban was overwhelmed. It was a time when the presence of the monarch was of some importance. Boileau describes the king, with the basest adulation of a venal muse, as directing the siege:

"C'est Jupiter en personne."

Saint-Simon shows him doing some service in a sensible human fashion, when it rained in torrents, and the trenches were full of mud and water. The soldiers were cursing Saint Médard; for that saint, like his brother of our calendar, was held to be in a rainy humour for forty days if he willed it to rain on his festival day, the 8th of June. Louis, who always travelled with a vast troupe of idle lackeys and fine gentlemen of his household, commanded them to work in carrying corn to the army of Luxemburg. The roads were impassable for waggons, and the household troops and fine gentlemen were commanded to bear sacks of grain to the starving soldiers on the cruppers of their horses. Bitterly they complained; but the king would be obeyed. Without his presence, says Saint-Simon, the siege would never have been successful. The besiegers were in extremity for want of provisions. Unfortunately Cohorn was wounded. The governor of Namur and the garrison lost heart, and the town was first surrendered and afterwards the citadel.

During the siege of Namur the army of William had often a distinct view of the operations of the French army. On the 1st of June the English were encamped at Ville, on the Mehaigne. The low grounds on each side of the river were so flooded by incessant rains, that it was impracticable to cross, so as to attack the enemy on the opposite side. On the 5th the rains had destroyed most of the bridges over the Mehaigne. "I scarce see what we have to do here," writes one in the camp. On the 8th the allied army and the army of Luxemburg were each moving on opposite banks of the river. On the 13th the French army had drawn nearer to Namur, and William continued to follow their movements. † Namur

* See Wordsworth's Sonnet.

† Letters of Vernon to Colt, printed in Tindal's "Continuation of Rapin," vol. iii. p. 206.

surrendered on the 30th. "The king's conduct," says Burnet, "was on this occasion much censured; it was said he ought to have put much to hazard, rather than suffer such a place to have been taken in his sight." Boileau concludes his ode with a taunt, to the enemies of France—"Go to Liège and Brussels, to carry the humble news of Namur taken under your eyes." Louis returned to Paris with his long train of carriages filled with ladies of the court—his poets, his comedians, and the musicians—"according to the old Persian luxury." William remained to watch Luxemburg, and to fight if opportunity offered. In the middle of July the allied camp was at Genappe. Three prisoners had been brought thither from Bois-le-duc, accused of a design to assassinate William. Their movements had been watched for some time. Burnet had made it known that M. Morel, of Berne, who had been incarcerated in the Bastille for seven years on refusing to renounce his Protestantism, and had been released in April, had written to him that he had been out of curiosity to St. Germain's to see king James; and that returning in a public conveyance he met with a man named Grandval, whom he had observed in secret conversation with the exiled king. Grandval was very communicative, and said there was a design in hand that would confound all Europe—the prince of Orange would not live a month. Various other circumstances had led to the arrest of Grandval and two men that he had associated in his enterprise, Dumont, a Walloon, and the Baron de Leefdale, a Dutchman. These two accomplices of Grandval had no desire to carry through the project to which they had agreed. They gave warnings that there was a plot to remove William by assassination. Leefdale came with Grandval from Paris to the Netherlands. Dumont, having previously told something of what he knew to the duke of Zell, at Hanover, set out to meet Grandval. When apprehended, and brought to the camp at Genappe, a court-martial of general officers commenced sitting on the 23rd of July, for the trial of Bartholomew de Linière, Sieur de Grandval. The examination of the prisoner had been taken, and the witnesses were about to be confronted with him, when "greater matters intervening put a stop to the process of Grandval.*

The "greater matters" were the sudden determination of William to attack Luxemburg, and the disastrous issue of the enterprise. The French army was encamped between Enghien and Steinkirk, a few miles to the north-west of Hal. The head-quar-

* Letter of Vernon to Colt.

ters of William's army were at Lambecque. Luxemburg had an agent in the allied camp who gave him information of the movements of the forces opposed to him—a secretary of the elector of Bavaria, named Millevoix. A letter from this man was accidentally picked up, and carried to the elector. His correspondence was discovered; and William, with remarkable presence of mind, took advantage of the discovery, not by hanging the traitor, but by making his treachery serviceable. He dictated a letter of false intelligence to the terrified Millevoix, in which Luxemburg was informed that the English would come the next day towards the French army to forage, and that a portion of the army would be at hand to protect the foragers. At dawn on the morning of the 3rd of August, the whole force of the allies was marching towards Steinkirk. Luxemburg was incredulous of the news which his scouts brought him, for he relied upon the informant in whom he thoroughly trusted. He at last roused himself. The nature of the ground was in his favour. The march had been tedious, for there were defiles to pass, and the country was enclosed. The duke of Würtemberg led the vanguard, and drove the advanced brigade of the French from hedge to hedge. But Luxemburg, with the rapidity of genius, had soon the main body of his army in order of battle. The affair was no longer a surprise. We have before us an unpublished letter written by marshal Conway in 1774, on the occasion of a visit to this battle field: "From Oudenarde and Enghien by Grammont the road lies through a beautiful country. Near the former we took horses to go and see the ground of the famous battle of Steinkirk, where king William took such good measures to surprise marshal Luxemburg; but by the activity and quickness of that able antagonist, failed in his project, and was repulsed after a long and bloody engagement. The ground here remains, by all accounts, just as it was at that time, now eighty-two years ago."* As the ground was, eighty-two years after the battle, we may readily conclude that another term of eighty-two years has made no very material change. Commerce has not here created new towns, though a railway may cut through the hedges, and span the hollow ways, where the allied cavalry could not act, and the vanguard began to engage, while the main body of infantry was at some distance. Count Solmes, who was chief in command of the English, sent his horse to their relief; but, says

* From a MS. volume of Conway's Letters to his brother, the Marquis of Hertford, the property of the author of this history.

a great military critic, "What signified his marching the horse, where the ground was so strait, and the French had such a nation of hedges, and copses, and ditches, and felled trees laid, this way and that, to cover them."* The eloquent Corporal truly describes how five English regiments were cut to pieces; "and so had the English life-guards too, had it not been for some regiments upon the right, who marched up boldly to their relief, and received the enemy's fire in their faces, before any one of their own platoons discharged a musket." These brave fellows were led by Auverquerque. They saved the English life-guards; but they could not save the infantry who had been left without support. Mackay, their brave leader, fell in the desperate conflict. The blame of this great reverse was imputed to count Solmes, who had probably to bear the mistakes of others as well as his own. It is clear that the nature of the ground was not perfectly understood; and that the panic to be produced by a sudden attack was too confidently relied upon. William made every effort to bring up his men to relieve the vanguard; but Luxemburg was now reinforced by Boufflers, who heard the firing, and marched from his neighbouring quarters. The king, it is said, looked upon the slaughter, and exclaimed, "Oh, my poor English, how are they abandoned." On each side there were about seven thousand killed and wounded. The allies marched from the field of battle in good order, to the camp from which they had unfortunately gone forth, as they believed to victory. The nation was dispirited. The army was indignant that Solmes, a foreigner, should have been placed in the command of English troops, and then look on while they were slaughtered. In the House of Commons, three months after, the public voice found an indignant vent. That House now fully exercised the right from which it has never since parted, of seeking occasion freely to comment upon warlike operations—sometimes unjustly, often ignorantly, but never without advantage to the discovery of truth. On the 22nd of November, these words were heard in the House: "None are ignorant of the melancholy story of Steinkirk; every one knows that tragedy. The common soldiers had no opinion of their officers. I move," added sir Peter Colleton, "That none but natives should command Englishmen." Sir Edward Seymour asked, "What number have you fit for General Officers? They are few; and will you think to discharge and send away foreigners till you have generals of your own?" There can be no

* "Tristram Shandy."

doubt that during the long vassalage of the Stuarts to France, England had lost all the qualities of a military nation, except the best quality, the spirit of her people—the blood and bone of those who fought in her ranks. She wanted scientific as well as brave leaders, bred in her own bosom. Seymour truly said, “Men are not born generals.” There were in the House of Commons at that time, as there have been ever since, officers of rank, who came from active service in the field to the senate, and said honestly what they knew. Lord Colchester, who commanded the third troop of horseguards, was one of these. He told his story simply and clearly; and his relation confirms the ordinary historical accounts in all essentials: “I find the business of Steinkirk stick with some gentlemen. The chief occasion of the ill-success there was the wrong information given to the king of the ground we were to pass, which was so full of hedges and woods, that we could not draw up one body to sustain another; horse and foot were mingled. I saw the attack made by Fagel; Dutch, English, and all nations: they beat the French from hedge to hedge, but their very weight of men bore us down. The French came upon us, and Auverquerque came up, and behaved himself as well as any man in the world. He sent us two Danish regiments, and we retreated to the main body, and from thence to the main camp.”* The anger of the House centred upon Solmes. “When this attack was formed,” said colonel Cornwell, “Solmes was there, with ten battalions to sustain them. Solmes said, ‘That to send more was to slaughter more.’” The king withdrew his countenance from the obnoxious general, who had offended by his haughtiness as well as by his conduct in the battle of Steinkirk. He fell in a second unfortunate battle in the coming year.

The Court-Martial on Grandval was re-opened in a week after the battle. Two of the Generals of whom it was originally composed had fallen in the field—Mackay and Lanier. The duty of the court was not very embarrassing; for the prisoner had made a circumstantial confession, “without any constraint or pain, or being in irons.” So says the official relation of the Court-Martial. He declared that the late French minister, Louvois, had in 1691 entered into an agreement with Anthony Dumont, about the murder of king William; that upon the death of Louvois the design dropped, but that Barbesieux, the son of Louvois, who succeeded him as Secretary of State to the French king, revived the project,

* “Parliamentary History,” vol. v. col. 713.

and had several conferences with him, Grandval; that he was engaged in the affair with colonel Parker, in the service of king James; and that with him, Barbesieux, and Dumont, the plan was arranged, which was that he should shoot William, when he exposed himself during the campaign. Leefdale was then brought into the scheme. The most material averment of the prisoner was, that he had seen James at St. Germain, his queen being present, and that James said, “Parker has given me an account of the business; if you and the other officers do me this service, you shall never want.” Grandval was executed in the camp at Hal, according to his sentence. He declared in a letter to a friend that it cost him his life for having obeyed the orders of Barbesieux. The confession of Grandval was printed and circulated in several languages. No answer was made to its circumstantial statements, vouched for by ten distinguished officers of various nations, who composed the Court-Martial.

The king returned to England on the 18th of October. The outward signs of a cordial welcome awaited him. There were illuminations as he passed through London to Kensington. There was a loyal address from the Corporation of London; and the king dined at Guildhall on the Lord Mayor’s day. There was a solemn thanksgiving for his safe return, and for the great victory at sea. But there were many symptoms of political and social distempers, which made sober men uneasy. In September the queen had issued two proclamations—one for the discovery of seditious libellers, the other for the apprehension of highwaymen. The one proclamation was far more effective than the other. The libellers worked their secret presses, and the furious zealots circulated their productions without any material injury to the government. The people grumbled a little more under the pressure of taxation, and under other evils of their daily life, when they read inflammatory pamphlets from Jacobites and Non-jurors; but a return to the times before the Revolution was the farthest from their wishes. There was a good deal of alarm in that autumn of 1692, from the daring crimes that sometimes seem epidemic in a nation. Hence the proclamation against highwaymen. We have mentioned a robbery of the tax-collectors in Hertfordshire.* Similar gangs of banditti robbed mails and stage-coaches even in the day-time. William on his return took strong measures to put down these enormities. Many highwaymen were discovered and execu-

* *Ante*, p. 430.

ted; and a regiment of dragoons was used as a preventive police, and patroled all the great roads leading to the capital. Burglars were almost as bold and as numerous as footpads and highwaymen. We doubt whether there was any especial distress connected with this particular juncture; though it is said that there was a failure of the harvest—that the heavy rains had been fatal to the crops—that no fruit ripened—that the price of the quarter of wheat doubled.* Evelyn indeed writes in his Diary of the 1st of October, “This season was so exceedingly cold, by reason of a long and tempestuous northeast wind, that this usually pleasant month was very uncomfortable. No fruit ripened kindly.” But he says nothing of a bad harvest in England. He says, “France is in the utmost misery and poverty for the want of corn and subsistence.” The harvest of 1692 is represented as plentiful, so that England was exporting corn.† Nevertheless there can be no doubt that amongst a people who had not previously borne such heavy burdens of taxation as four years of war had imposed upon them—and whose industry was not sufficiently developed to enable them to bear their burdens without being weighed down—there must have been much suffering and more discontent.

The king opened the Parliament on the 4th of November. He thanked them for their large supplies; he would be compelled to ask for a further supply to maintain a force by sea and land. He was sensible how heavy this charge was upon his people. It afflicted him to learn that it was not possible to be avoided, without exposing the kingdom to inevitable ruin and destruction. He hoped for their advice and assistance, which had never failed him. The House of Commons set about giving its advice; but it did little more than display a good deal of ill-humour as to the conduct of the war. There were several important matters bearing upon the future condition of the country, arising out of the proceedings of this Session, which we shall briefly notice.

Turning over the Index of the ponderous Statute-book, to look for Acts that have had a permanent influence on the condition of the country, we might perhaps pass over one Act that bears this lengthy title: “An Act for granting to their majesties certain rates and duties of excise upon beer, ale, and other liquors for securing certain recompenses and advantages in the said Act mentioned, to such persons as shall voluntarily advance the sum of ten hundred

* Macauley, vol. iv. p. 204.

† Tindal, vol. iii. p. 217.

thousand pounds towards carrying on the war against France.”* Under this statute commenced the National Debt of England. The million of money which was to supply a portion of the expenses of the war “in a manner that would be least grievous,” as the preamble says, was expected to be voluntarily advanced on the credit of the special provision of the new duties of excise, which were to be set apart as they were paid into the Exchequer. The ten hundred thousand pounds were speedily subscribed; for the industry of the people had created capital which was seeking employment, although they had been far more heavily taxed during four years than at any previous period. Louis, although he was familiar with the system of loans, was somewhat amazed at the comparative ease with which taxes were raised and a million of money borrowed in England upon the credit of the taxes. He is said to have exclaimed, “My little cousin the prince of Orange is fixed in the saddle; no matter; the last louis d’or must carry it.” † This was really a just view of the premises of success, though the great king’s conclusions were fallacious. The people of England were in a far better condition than the people of France, to fight on without expending all to the last louis d’or. The working and accumulating Middle Class was far more powerful in the one nation than in the other. There can be no doubt that the means first created by the Act of 1693 for the investment of superfluous capital, have largely contributed to the progressive development of the national resources. There can be no doubt, on the other hand, that the facilities of borrowing by the creation of Stock, have often led to extravagant expenditure in wars that have averted no real danger nor secured any public advantage.

There can be nothing more true than the assertion of Mr. Ricardo that “there cannot be a greater security for the continuance of peace, than the imposing on ministers the necessity of applying to the people for the taxes to support a war.” He has further observed, speaking the language of common sense which is the language of all true political economy, that “the burdens of a war are undoubtedly great during its continuance, but at its termination they cease altogether. When the pressure of war is felt at once, without mitigation, we shall be less disposed wantonly to engage in an expensive contest, and if engaged in it, we shall be sooner disposed to get out of it, unless it be a contest for some

* 4 Gul. & Mar. c. 3.

† Ralph, vol. ii. p. 398.

great national interest."* Although the statesmen and the people of the reign of William III. felt that the war against the preponderance of France, and the consequent subjection of England, was for a great national interest, they also felt that the burden could not be borne in the existing state of the country without resort to the system of loans. In the case before us they did not contemplate a permanent loan. In the next year, when the Bank of England was established upon the condition of lending a sum of money to the government, of which the principal could not be demanded by the lenders, though the borrowers had the privilege of paying it off, a permanent debt was begun to be contracted. The system of borrowing went on for three years, till at the peace of Ryswick the debt amounted to twenty-one millions and a half. Nevertheless, so strong was the objection to the continuance of that system, that although engaged in a most expensive war for five years after the accession of Anne, the debt was reduced to sixteen millions. In half a century more it had increased to seventy-five millions. It was then the received opinion of financiers that if it ever reached a hundred millions the nation must become bankrupt.

When we look at the one million borrowed on Life annuities in 1693, and the eight hundred and three millions constituting the public debt of the United Kingdom in 1858, we may be amazed at the vast amount of the burthen which has been gradually accumulating, but we also can now distinctly perceive how that burthen has been borne. It has not weighed down the country, because all the material resources of the country have been increasing with it. The increasing wealth—of which this vast debt owing by the nation to the nation is a symbol,—produced by the incessant applications of capital and labour, of science and invention, has increased the ability of the great body of the people to participate in the advantages to be derived from a ready and secure investment of their savings, with the condition that the sum so invested might be easily transferable. To this cause may be attributed the ease with which the government of that day could obtain loans by the creation of Public Funds at a fixed rate of interest, chiefly upon annuities. That facility shows the growing importance of the trading class, who most readily lent their surplus capital. Money, also, was no longer hoarded by those who had no means of employing it commercially; although for a considerable period, there were vast numbers who had not sufficient confidence in the govern-

* "Works of David Ricardo," pp. 539 and 546.

ment to lend. The time was far distant when there would be three hundred thousand persons receiving dividends upon stock, and when one million three hundred and forty thousand persons would also lend their small accumulations through the agency of Savings' Banks. The country was steadily growing more prosperous, as the National Debt went on increasing to six times the amount at the period when inevitable bankruptcy was predicted. It was six hundred millions at the peace of Amiens. The eighteenth century, deficient as it was in many social improvements which we now command, was a period of rapid progress in agriculture and manufactures; and with this progress came a greater command of food and clothing, better dwellings, less frequent and less fatal epidemics for the great bulk of the people. The loan of 1693 has furnished data for a remarkable inquiry into the prolongation of life in the eighteenth century, consequent upon the bettered condition, and therefore improved health, of the population. That loan was a tontine. Every contributor of 100*l.* might name a life, to receive a fixed dividend during the duration of that life. As the annuitants dropped, their shares of the dividends were also to be divided amongst the survivors, till the whole number of annuitants was reduced to seven. In 1790, during the ministry of Mr. Pitt, another tontine was negotiated. The comparative results, as exhibiting the probable duration of life at the two periods, have been worked out by Mr. Finlaison, upon the assumption that the 438 females and 594 males named in 1693, and the 3974 females and 4197 males named in 1790, were the youngest and the healthiest lives that the shareholders could select. Taking the dates at which the annuities of 1693 fell in, and estimating those of 1790 that had fallen or were still remaining in 1851, the calculation showed that in 1790 the expectation of life had increased one fourth.*

In 1692, "An act for continuing certain laws that are expired and near expiring" was passed, in which the Act of Charles II., continued by that of James II., "for preventing abuses in printing seditious, treasonable, and unlicensed books and pamphlets, and for regulating printing and printing-presses," then about to expire, was continued to the 13th of February, 1692, and to the end of the next session of Parliament. If that renewed Act should expire, the Press, exempted from the superintendence of a licenser, would

* We gather these facts from a paper by Dr. Southwood Smith, read at Birmingham in 1857.

to a great extent be freed; its real freedom would depend upon the law of libel, and its honest application. The licenser of the Stuarts, sir Roger Lestrangle, was ejected from his office at the Revolution. "His sting is gone," says John Dunton. That worthy chronicler of publishers and authors sketches the characters of the successors of the Tory licenser, saying, very libellously, "he would wink at unlicensed books if the printer's wife" kept up to the example of too many wives of that age. He describes Mr. Fraser "commonly called Catalogue Fraser, from his skill in books;" Dr. Midgley, "no bigot;" Mr. Heron, with "an air of pleasantness in his countenance;" and "our last licenser, before the Act of Printing expired, Edmund Bohun, Esqre.," "a furious man against dissenters," and "a pretty author himself."* Edmund Bohun brought his own house down over his head. He carried his party feeling into his official occupation; but had very strange notions which his party would not avow. He was bitterly attacked by a writer of very questionable notoriety, Charles Blount; and was more effectually damaged by a scheme of the same person "to ensnare and ruin him."† Blount wrote a pamphlet, which Bohun readily licensed—for it rested the rights of the sovereigns of the Revolution upon a principle which would confer upon them absolute power. On the 22nd of January, complaint was made to the Commons, that a pamphlet, entitled "King William and queen Mary Conquerors, contained matter of dangerous consequence to their majesties, to the liberties of the subject, and to the peace of the kingdom." The House examined the matter; ordered the pamphlet to be burned by the common hangman; and prayed the Crown to remove from his office Mr. Edmund Bohun, the licenser, who had suffered the pamphlet to be printed. With the removal of this licenser the system of licensing came to an end. The Act for regulating Printing expired. The House was in a libel-burning mood, with regard to the same description of offence: "Dr. Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury's book burnt by the hangman, for an expression of the king's title by conquest, on a complaint of Joseph Howe, a member of parliament—little better than a madman."‡ Some were for impeaching the bishop. The Pastoral Letter in which the doctrine was held was written in 1689. There could be no impeachment; for there had been an Act of Grace in 1690. The House of Commons has never failed to rejoice in any exhibi-

* Danton's "Life and Errors," p. 351, edit. 1795.

† Macaulay.

‡ Evelyn. "Diary," Feb. 4.

tion of the power of some member to make a bad joke. At the cry of "Burn it, burn it," the book was sent to the flames at Charing Cross.

There were two attempts made in this Session to produce what may be called a Reform in Parliament. The Commons passed a Bill excluding all placemen from sitting in the House who should be elected after February, 1693. Men holding office of every kind, civil and military, were in Parliament. It was unwisely proposed to exclude all persons who should in future hold office under the Crown. It was prudently determined by the sitting members not to exclude themselves. They passed no "Self-denying Ordinance." The Lords rejected this measure by a very small majority. A Bill providing that the existing Parliament should end on the first of January, 1694, and that no Parliament should in future sit more than three years, was introduced to the House of Lords, by Shrewsbury, who represented the Whigs. It passed both Houses. On the last day of the Session, the king rejected the measure, in the words of Norman French which would now be the most fatal words ever spoken by a sovereign. The Constitution has worked itself clear of such contending powers. The use of the Veto was not then thought "an exercise of prerogative which no ordinary circumstances can reconcile either with prudence or a constitutional administration of government."* The Bill for triennial parliaments was passed in the next year, without opposition from the Crown. The most memorable circumstance connected with the Bill which William rejected was, that having asked the advice of sir William Temple, that advice, to pass the Bill, was communicated to the king by the humble friend of the retired statesman, his secretary, Jonathan Swift.

Slightly connected with the political transactions of the beginning of 1693 was a tragical event that occasioned great public scandal. "After five days' trial and extraordinary contest, the lord Mohun was acquitted by the lords of the murder of Mountfort, the player, notwithstanding the judges, from the pregnant witnesses of the fact, had declared him guilty. But whether in consideration of his youth, being not eighteen years old, though exceeding dissolute, or upon whatever other reason,—the king himself present some part, and satisfied, as they report, that he was culpable—sixty-nine acquitted him, only fourteen condemned him."† The people cried out that when blood was shed by the

* Hallam. "Constitutional History," chap. xv. † Evelyn. "Diary," Feb. 4.

great there was no justice for the poor. Members of the House of Commons rejoiced that, in the last Session, they had so strenuously opposed an extension of the privileges of the peers, who thus sheltered one of their own guilty members. William Mountfort, the player, according to Colley Cibber, was in tragedy the most affecting lover—in comedy, he gave the truest life to the fine gentleman. In 1694 he was in his thirty-third year—"tall, well-made, fair, and of an agreeable aspect." Nine years before, he was patronised by Jeffries, when at the height of his power; and at a lord mayor's feast the jovial chancellor made Mountfort "plead before him in a feigned cause, in which he aped all the great lawyers of the age in their tone of voice, and in their action and gesture of body"—very much to the scandal of sir John Reresby, who records the fact. This accomplished actor was the favourite of the town. But Mrs. Anne Bracegirdle was "the darling of the theatre." She was "the universal passion," but she admitted no favourite. Amongst the rakes and fops who frequented the one theatre that now enjoyed the monopoly of the drama, it was a fashion "to have a taste of *tendre* for Mrs. Bracegirdle."* Amongst those who toasted this lively brunette over their bumpers of claret, were a captain Hill, and his friend and admirer, the debauched young peer. The captain had addressed the actress in terms which she rejected with contempt. He became jealous, and his jealousy fixed upon Mountfort; for Hill had writhed at seeing the handsome actor in love scenes, when the lady smiled upon her admirer with all the semblance of real passion. Hill, with the assistance of his noble friend, determined to carry off Mrs. Bracegirdle. They also determined to have no more trouble with the presumptuous player. They forced the actress into a coach as she was coming out of a house with her mother; but she was rescued, and the courtly pair departed, vowing vengeance on Mountfort. They loitered about the player's house till midnight. As he approached his home lord Mohun met him in Norfolk-street, entering into friendly conversation. Hill came behind, struck Mountfort on the head, and then ran him through the body. The Grand Jury found a true bill against Mohun and Hill for the murder. Hill escaped. The judges, at the request of Carmarthen, who presided at the trial, had given the opinion upon the case to which Evelyn alludes.

* Cibber's "Apology."

CHAPTER XXIX.

Ministerial Changes.—Preparations for the Campaign.—Louis and William with their Armies.—Louis returns to Versailles.—Battle of Landen.—Naval Miscarriages.—A Ministry formed.—Government by Party.—Preponderance of the Whigs.—Financial difficulties.—Establishment of the Bank of England.—Expedition against Brest.—Illness of the Queen.—Her Death.

KING WILLIAM had closed the Session of the English Parliament on the 14th of March. He had made some important changes in official appointments. Sir John Somers had been promoted to the dignity of Keeper, the great seal having been so long in commission, that "all people were now grown weary" of the dilatory and expensive proceedings in Chancery.* Russell was removed from the command of the fleet; for, in consequence of fierce differences between him and Nottingham, the Secretary of State, they could not have held office together. At this juncture Burnet notices the formation of a party "that studied to cross and defeat every thing." One of the principal leaders of this party was sir Christopher Musgrave, who "upon many critical occasions gave up some important points, for which the king found it necessary to pay him very liberally." † The memory of this senator has been preserved from the utter oblivion to which such patriotism is best consigned, by four lines of the great satirist of the next reign.—

"Once, we confess, beneath the patriot's cloak,
From the crack'd bag the dropping guinea spoke,
And jingling down the back-stairs told the crew
Old Cato is as great a rogue as you." ‡

The amount of business done in this way was very considerable. The bribe at Kensington was too often found necessary to neutralise the bribe from Versailles. William grew more and more cynical and sullen under these degrading affairs of state-craft, and gladly rushed away to hunt in Holland or to fight in Belgium.

His Most Christian Majesty—"Jupiter en personne"—is again

* Burnet, vol. iv. p. 187.

† *Ibid.*, p. 190.

‡ Pope, "Epistle on the Use of Riches."