the Spanish claimants of its territory, was constructed a railway, by which the great highways of North and South America were connected by the wonder-working powers of Science, devoted to the magnificent object of gradually making the human race one great family.

CHAPTER IV.

Question of the Succession to the Crown of Spain.—The Partition Treaties.—Negotiations at Loo.—Correspondence of the king with his ministers.—First Partition Treaty signed.—The new Parliament.—The troops disbanded.—William's mortification.—A rash resolve, and a calmer judgment.—The Dutch guards dismissed.—Penal law against Catholics.—Portland and Albemarle.—Admiral Rooke in the Baltic.—Policy of Louis the Fourteenth.

In 1698, Charles II., the son of Philip IV., had been for thirty-four years king of Spain and the Indies. He had become the head of that corrupt and decaying monarchy when a child of four years of age. His early life had been spent under the tutelage of his mother, and of his illegitimate brother, Don John of Austria. He had one glimpse of happiness in his affection for his young wife, the princess Louisa of Orleans, whom he soon lost. Under his second wife, a princess related to the emperor, he was governed as in his childish days. His body and mind were equally enfeebled. In June, 1698, Stanhope, the English ambassador, wrote from Madrid, "The name the doctors give to the disease of the king is *alfereyn insensata*, which sounds, in English, a stupid epilepsy." Charles had no issue. The question of the succession was very complicated. Louis XIV. had married Charles's eldest sister; but, upon their marriage, the Infanta of Spain, by a solemn contract, had renounced for herself and her successors all claim to the Spanish Crown. The emperor Leopold had married a younger sister, and she had made a similar renunciation. Her daughter had married the Elector of Bavaria, and their son, the electoral prince, was the inheritor of whatever claim his mother might have upon the Spanish Crown; for her renunciation was considered of none effect from not having been confirmed by the Cortes, as the renunciation of the elder sister had been. The Emperor himself was a claimant to the succession in his own person, for he was the grandson of Philip III. of Spain, and first cousin to Charles II. Thus the legitimate heir, the dauphin of France, was barred by that renunciation of his mother which was considered valid. The next in order of inheritance, the electoral prince of Bavaria, had a less doubtful claim, for his mother's renunciation was held invalid. The emperor, who was farthest removed in blood, was not fettered

by any contracts. We can readily understand how, with this complication of interests, the question of the Spanish succession influenced the political combinations of Europe. We can also understand the deep anxiety which William felt, when he saw what an opening would be presented by the death of the king of Spain to the realization of the most ambitious projects of France. This was no chimerical dread, in which William stood apart from the people he governed. His most anxious hours had been given to discussions with Tallard, the French ambassador, of the terms of a treaty which would reconcile these conflicting claims. But in May, 1698, Tallard wrote to Louis that the English nation "consider the partition of the succession of the king of Spain as something in which they must take a part * * * * They conceive that their commerce and its interests are at stake, and that it would be ruined if your Majesty were in possession of the Indies and Cadiz * * * * You may rely upon it that they would resolve on a war, if it were suggested to them that your Majesty desires to render yourself master of the countries which I have just named, and if the king of Spain were to die before a treaty had been made." * Although William readily went into negotiations with France for a Partition Treaty, he had a deep conviction that the question of succession would not be decided by diplomacy. He said to Tallard, "that it was much to be feared that it would be necessary to have recourse to the sword before it could be settled." He desired peace, he added; he was old and worn out; he should be very glad to enjoy repose. But France was alone to be feared, and he could be guided by no other rule than the interests of the kingdoms which he governed.†

The scheme of a partition of the vast dominions of the crown of Spain unquestionably originated with the Court of France. It had been hinted to Heinsius by the French ambassadors, before the beginning of 1698. It was formally proposed to Portland soon after his arrival in Paris, as "a thing of the greatest importance, and which demanded the greatest secresy." The truth of history is not substantially violated by the humourist, who has so capitally described the compact between Lewis Baboon, John Bull, and Nic Frog: "My worthy friends, quoth Louis, henceforth let us live neighbourly. I am as peaceable and quiet as a lamb of my own temper, but it has been my misfortune to live among quarrelsome neighbours. There is but one thing can make us fall out, and that is the inheritance of Lord Strutt's estate. I am content, for peace sake, to waive my right, and submit to any expedient to prevent a

* Grimblot, vol. i. p. 508. † *Ibid.*, p. 365.

lawsuit. I think an equal division will be the fairest way." * John Bull, then represented by "a little long-nosed thin man," thought Louis an honest fellow who would stand by his bargain. It would be scarcely worth while here to pursue the story of treaties that were broken through like cobwebs, if the negotiations only exhibited the folly and danger of that diplomacy which attempts to settle the destinies of peoples by regard alone to the interests of crowns. "It was the fashion to do such things," says the satirist.† The fashion, unhappily, is not quite obsolete. But there was one essential difference between the Partition Treaties which William negotiated with Louis, and later Treaties, in which the word Partition is another term for robbery:—"an equal division" had no reference to the especial advantage of England or the States General, beyond their protection against the first imminent danger of a vast addition to the power of France, or the secondary danger of a similar addition to the power of Austria. William, as king of England and as Stadtholder, negotiated these treaties upon purely defensive principles. "I have had the honour," says Defoe, "to hear his majesty speak of these things at large; and I appeal to all those noble persons now living, who were near the king at that time, who I believe often heard him express himself with great caution as to the giving too much to the empire, as equally dangerous to the public peace with giving it to France." ‡ The Partition Treaties are associated with the subsequent policy of Europe; and they require a little more consideration to understand the objects with which William entered upon them, than is necessary to pronounce that "a more infamous proceeding is not recorded in history." §

As the summer of 1698 was approaching, the king contemplated his usual journey to Holland. Tallard wrote to Louis that this intention gave much uneasiness to the nation. The French ambassador saw clearly the difficulties with which William was surrounded: "The king of England is very far from being master here. . . . So much is certain, that the situation of the king is still very precarious, and that the moment which has given repose to all the world has been but the beginning of troubles to this prince." ‖ William went to the country where he was venerated: "His countenance was expressive of the joy which he felt at going to Holland. He took no pains whatever to conceal it from the

* Arbuthnot, "History of John Bull," part ii., chap. vi. † *Ibid.*
‡ 'Review," quoted in Wilson, vol. iii. p. 230.
§ Alison's "Life of Marlborough," p. 29. ‖ Grimblot, vol. i. p. 466.

English; and, to say the truth, they speak very openly about it."* Tallard was invited to follow the king, and the negotiations were resumed at Loo. On the 24th of August, they were arrived at such maturity, that Portland was authorized by the king to write to Mr. Secretary Vernon, to impart to him the proposed conditions of a treaty: "You may speak to my Lord Chancellor about it, to whom the king himself writes by this post, that he would likewise talk about it with those he thinks he may trust with the secret, which it is of the highest importance to keep with the utmost care." In the letter of the king to Somers he refers to the fact that the Chancellor had been previously apprised by him of the inclination that had been expressed by the court of France "to come to an agreement with us concerning the succession of the king of Spain." Since that time count Tallard had made certain propositions which Portland had communicated to Vernon, for the purpose of Somers deciding to whom else they should be imparted, "to the end," says the king, "that I might know your opinion upon so important an affair, and which requires the greatest security." William then adds, "If it be fit this negotiation should be carried on, there is no time to be lost, and you will send me the full powers, under the great seal, with the names in blank, to treat with count Tallard."† Vernon, the Secretary of State, in reply to Portland, rejoices that there is a prospect of avoiding a war when we are in so ill a condition at present for entering into it again. At this present time, August 20, Orford, one of the ministers, wrote to Shrewsbury: "Here is no news, but that we daily expect to hear the king of Spain is dead. What will become of us then, God knows. I do not see the king has made any provision for such an accident."‡ The king had been labouring for months to make such provision. Somers was in ill health at Tunbridge Wells, when these important despatches arrived from Loo. By his direction their contents were communicated to Shrewsbury, Orford, and Montague. On the 8th of September, Somers wrote to the king an elaborate letter, conveying their joint opinions. They thought that the proposal would be attended with ill consequences, "if the French did not act a sincere part." But they were fully assured that the king "would not act but with the utmost nicety in an affair wherein the glory and safety of Europe were so highly concerned." They thought that there was little hope of preventing France taking possession of Spain, "before any other prince could be able to make a stand," in case nothing was done to provide against the accident of the death of the king of Spain, "which seemed probably to be

* Tallard to Louis. Grimblot, vol. ii. p. 91. † *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 121.
‡ "Shrewsbury Correspondence," p. 552.

so very near." They were convinced that the nation was "not at all disposed to the thought of entering into a new war, and that they seemed to be tired out with taxes to a degree beyond what was discerned, till it appeared upon the occasion of the late elections." They had doubts upon some of the points of the proposed treaty; but they could not expect that France would "quit its pretences to so great a succession without considerable advantages." Their last conviction is very characteristic of a humbler policy than William contemplated: "If it could be brought to pass that England might be in some way a gainer by this transaction,—whether it was by the elector of Bavaria (who is gainer by your majesty's interposition in this treaty), coming to an agreement to let us in to some trade to the Spanish plantations, or in any other manner, it would wonderfully endear your majesty to your English subjects." The Lord Chancellor makes not the slightest objection to sending the king a blank commission. "I should be extremely troubled if my absence from London has delayed the despatch of the commission one day." He adds in a postscript: "The commission is wrote by Mr. Secretary; and I have had it sealed in such a manner, that no creature has the least knowledge of the thing, besides the persons named." Before this commission arrived, William had signed the draft of the treaty, with a note at the foot, "in which he declares it to be converted into a treaty, *if the king of Spain should die before the exchange of the ratifications.*" So writes Tallard to Louis on the 9th of September, stating that the treaty itself would not be signed till the 29th of that month, partly because the full powers had not arrived, on account of the absence of the Chancellor from London. Tallard conjectured that the most essential reason for the delay was, that the king "would not have it known by a date, either in England or in the Hague, that a treaty had been signed before they (William's ministers) had been consulted."* Doubtless the king acted unconstitutionally in concluding the terms of a treaty without waiting for the advice of responsible ministers; although it was only a temporary measure. Doubtless, also, the Chancellor acted unconstitutionally in sending a blank commission under the Great Seal, for the appointment of commissioners to conclude a treaty upon the king's sole authority. Lord Campbell states these facts in terms which are scarcely too strong to be employed by a constitutional lawyer of the nineteenth century. But we cannot think that the learned historian of the Chancellors is warranted in saying that "Lord Somers so far acted properly, that he imme-

* Grimblot, vol. ii. p. 149.

diately communicated this letter to four of his colleagues, and they all agreeing with him as to the inexpediency of the treaty, he sent their explicit opinion to the king, with the reasons on which it is founded." We have given an abstract of that "explicit opinion," which is very far from setting forth the "inexpediency of the treaty." When Somers tells the king that the people of England will not sanction a war, and that, knowing this fact, "your majesty will determine what resolutions are proper to be taken," he clearly sanctions a negotiation whose sole purpose was to avert a war. When he tells the king "we are all assured your majesty will reduce the terms as low as can be done, and make them, as far as possible in the present circumstances of things, such as may be some foundation for the future quiet of Christendom," he distinctly sanctions the general expediency of such a treaty. The whole tone of the despatch is to the effect that the king was a better judge of such matters than the advisers of his domestic policy. He had always been his own minister for foreign affairs; and the urgency of the case furnishes in some degree an excuse for his unconstitutional rejection of ministerial responsibility. Lord Campbell, we venture to think, is more rhetorical than just when he asks, "If the government was to be carried on by the sovereign's personal exercise of the prerogative, what had been gained by the Revolution?"* Two years and a half later the constitutional question was more fully raised in the impeachment of Somers. This treaty, known as the First Partition Treaty, was definitely signed at the Hague on the 11th of October by the earl of Portland and sir Joseph Williamson, as the two Commissioners whose names were inserted in the blank space of the commission sent by Somers. Without entering into minute details, it may be sufficient to state that in the Treaty was stipulated that the kingdom of Spain, with the Indies and the Netherlands, should be assigned to the electoral prince of Bavaria; that Naples and Sicily should belong to the dauphin of France; and that the duchy of Milan should be allotted to the archduke Charles, the second son of the emperor. These territorial arrangements were rendered in great part nugatory by an event which occurred only four months after the first Partition Treaty had been signed. The electoral prince of Bavaria, then in his eighth year, died on the 5th of February, 1699. He had been named by the king of Spain as his successor, by a will made in 1698, with a condition that the vast Spanish dominions should not be dissevered. The Partition Treaty had become known. William, upon the death of the young prince, keenly felt the embarrassment of his position. He had been persuaded not to communicate the treaty to Spain or to the emperor. On the 10th of February he wrote to Heinsius, "I cannot comprehend how we shall ever be able to declare our having intended the succession to the monarchy for the elector of Bavaria, and still less to communicate it to the imperial court; so that we are in no small labyrinth, and may it please God to help us out of it." The mode of getting out of the labyrinth was to construct a new labyrinth. The plan of construction was somewhat less complex than the first design. There were now only two claimants to the succession, whose interests had to be accommodated. The Second Partition Treaty, which was concluded in 1700, gave Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands to the archduke Charles. The Bourbons were now to have the Milanese, or an equivalent territory, in addition to the arrangements of the former treaty. When Somers in his letter to the king said that the entertaining the proposal of the first Treaty "seems to be attended with very many ill consequences if the French did not act a sincere part," he gave a warning which William did not then heed, but which was ultimately found to contain something of prophetic wisdom. When Louis, upon the death of the king of Spain, broke through the whole spirit of the two treaties by seizing the Spanish crown for his grandson, William, with an honest candour, wrote to Heinsius, "We must confess we are dupes; but if one's word and faith are not to be kept, it is easy to cheat any man." * But at any rate those who acted for England and Holland are honest dupes. They sought no personal gain; they sought no national acquisition. They endeavoured to prevent by negotiation what it required years of warfare less effectually to prevent—the union of Spain to the crown of France. Upon the authority of a modern French writer, one who ought to aim at historical accuracy has ventured to say, "By secret articles attached to this treaty, the Spanish Colonies beyond seas were to be divided between England and Holland." † Had even the commerce with the Spanish Colonies been secured by the Partition Treaties to England and Holland, the Commons, who in their impeachment of Somers declared that the "Treaties were evidently destructive to the trade of this realm," would have hailed the king and his chancellor as the saviours of the country.

The new Parliament—chosen, as Somers said in his letter on

* "Lives of the Chancellors," vol. iv. p. 142.

* Grimblot, vol. ii. p. 477.

† Sir Archibald Alison quotes a passage from Capefigue, "Histoire de Louis XIV.," upon which he relies for this monstrous assertion: "Par des articles joints du traité, les colonies Espagnoles etoient cédées à la Grande Bretagne et à la Holland."—Life of Marlborough, p. 28.

the Partition Treaty, under a state of public opinion which showed "a deadness and want of spirit in the nation universally"—assembled on the 6th of December, 1698. William only arrived in England two days earlier; and before he delivered his speech he wrote to Heinsius, "It is impossible to foresee what will be the upshot of this Session; but notwithstanding the short time I have been here I clearly perceive that my greatest difficulty will be in retaining the troops." Nevertheless he did not shrink from repeating the idea which he had constantly endeavoured to enforce since the peace of Ryswick, that it was dangerous wholly to disarm. In his speech to the House he now said, "I have no doubt that you are met together with hearts fully disposed to do what is necessary for the safety, honour, and happiness of the kingdom; and that is all I have to ask of you." They had to consider what strength ought to be maintained at sea, and what force kept up on land for this year. "The flourishing of trade, the supporting of credit, and the quiet of people's minds at home, will depend upon the opinion they have of their security; and to preserve to England the weight and influence it has at present in the councils and affairs abroad, it will be requisite that Europe should see you are not wanting to yourselves." Edmund Burke, in quoting this last sentence, describes it as proceeding from a ruler "full of the idea of preserving not only a local civil liberty united with order, to our country, but to embody it in the political liberty, the order, and the independence of nations united under a natural head." * The predominant idea of William, in the view of the same philosophical statesman was, at this very time, "to compose, to reconcile, to unite, and to discipline all Europe against the growth of France." † This factious and prejudiced Parliament could not comprehend the high aims of the man who had delivered England from the degradation which has been so truly described by an illustrious Frenchman. "Whilst Charles II. and James II. reigned, England had belonged [*avait appartenu*] to Louis the XIVth." ‡ The Commons met William's exhortations with unusual discourtesy. They voted no address in answer to the speech from the throne; and they passed a resolution that all the land forces of England, in English pay, exceeding seven thousand men, should be forthwith paid and disbanded; that the seven thousand should consist of natural born subjects; and that all the forces exceeding twelve thousand men in Ireland, these also natural born subjects, should be paid and disbanded. This resolution was carried on the 16th of December, on a motion made by Harley, the

* "Letters on a Recigide Peace."
† Guizot, "Civilisation en Europe," Leçon xiii. ‡ *Ibid.*

leader of the Tory party. The Whig ministry made a very feeble attempt to resist it; and the king had the bitter mortification of beholding himself humiliated in the eyes of Europe, and of being personally outraged by being deprived of his Dutch guard, and of the faithful Huguenots—both the companions of his toils and dangers during a war of nine years. Truly has it been said, these troops "had claims which a generous and grateful people should not have forgotten: they were many of them the chivalry of Protestantism, the Huguenot gentlemen who had lost all but their swords in a cause which we deemed our own; they were the men who terrified James from Whitehall, and brought about a deliverance which, to speak plainly, we had neither sense nor courage to achieve for ourselves." * The bill for disbanding the troops was carried through with unusual rapidity. Tallard, who had come to England, wrote to Louis, "The House of Commons has acted as in a fury." The agony of mind which the king endured overthrew, for once in that troubled life entirely, his wonderful command of temper, and self-sacrificing discretion. He came to the resolution of abandoning the government of England, and of declaring the same to the Parliament. Somers, in a letter to Shrewsbury, says, "When he first mentioned this to me, I treated the notion as the most extravagant and absurd that ever was entertained, and begged of him to speak of it to nobody, for his own honour. . . . The last time I saw him, he would not suffer me to argue with him, telling me plainly he saw we should never agree, and he was resolved. I told him I hoped he would take the seal from me, before he did it; that I had it from him, when he was king, and desired he would receive it from me whilst he was so." † Somers at first thought the threat of William was "as an appearance only, and to provoke us to exert ourselves." There is ample confirmation that he was thoroughly in earnest, in a passage of a letter to Heinsius: "I am so chagrined at what passes in the Lower House with regard to the troops, that I can scarce turn my thoughts to any other matter. I foresee that I shall be obliged to come to resolutions of extremity, and that I shall see you in Holland sooner than I thought." In the British Museum there is a document of singular interest—a speech written in William's own hand in French, which he intended to deliver to the Parliament.‡ The following is the translation of the plain words of this characteristic address:

"My lords and gentlemen, I came to this kingdom, at the desire

* Hallam. "Constitutional History," chap. xv.
† "Shrewsbury Correspondence," p. 573.
‡ Printed in the Collections of Letters, &c., by Sir H. Ellis.

of this nation, to save it from ruin, and to preserve your religion, your laws, and liberties; and for that end I have been obliged to maintain a long and burdensome war for this kingdom; which, by the grace of God, and the bravery of this nation, is at present ended in a good peace; under which you may live happily and in quiet, provided you will contribute to your own security, in the manner I had recommended to you at the opening of the Session. But seeing, to the contrary, that you have so little regard to my advice, and that you take no manner of care of your own security, and that you expose yourselves to evident ruin, by divesting yourselves of the only means for your defence, it would not be just nor reasonable that I should be witness of your ruin, not being able to do anything of myself to avoid it, it not being in my power to defend and protect you, which was the only view I had in coming into this country. Therefore, I am obliged to recommend to you to choose and name to me such persons as you shall judge most proper, to whom I may leave the administration of the government in my absence; assuring you, that, though I am at present forced to withdraw myself out of the kingdom, I shall always preserve the same inclination to its advantages and prosperity. And when I can judge that my presence will be necessary for your defence, I shall be ready to return, and hazard myself for your security, as I have formerly done; beseeching the good God to bless your deliberations, and to inspire you with all that is necessary for the good and welfare of the kingdom."

The equal mind soon came back to this extraordinary man. In a few weeks Portland told Tallard that the king "preferred calmness and mildness to what appeared best for his own interest." The king of France, who was shrewdly suspected of having stimulated some of this factious fury in the Commons by the old system of bribes, looked upon the fray with very much of the spirit attributed to the great tempter of evil. In the French archives there is a despatch of Louis to Tallard, in which the crafty king, reverting to his practices when England was under the Stuarts, says—"In this conjunction it might be proper to assist him [William] to do without the help of his people; and I would do so with pleasure, if, by such means, it were possible to induce that prince to treat with me for the sum which I should give him for the principality of Orange. . . . He would secure his authority in England, and consequently the happiness and tranquillity of his life, by finding means to do without the assistance of Parliament."*

* Grimblot, vol. ii., p. 242. This extraordinary proposition is struck out of the original; but M. Grimblot prints it, "as faithfully expressing the sentiments of Louis XIV."

There is no evidence that this atrocious temptation was offered to William at the time when he said, "matters in Parliament are taking a turn which drives me mad," nor at any other time. Tallard had a better knowledge of William's character than his presumptuous master possessed. "He is honourable in all he does; his conduct is sincere; he is proud, none can be more so, though with a modest manner." Such were the terms in which the ambassador spoke of William. He would not have dared to insult this proud and honourable man with a proposal to sell himself to France, that he might become a despot in England. The "calmness and mildness" which the king had resolved to pursue were so signally displayed, that his conduct towards the Parliament has been called "the meanest act of his reign," and "below his greatness."* He gave his assent to the Disbanding Bill in these words: "I am come to pass the Bill for disbanding the army as soon as I understood it was ready for me. Though, in our present circumstances, there appears great hazard in breaking such a number of troops; and though I might think myself unkindly used, that those guards who came over with me to your assistance, and have constantly attended me in all the actions wherein I have been engaged, should be removed from me; yet it is my fixed opinion that nothing can be so fatal to us as that any distrust or jealousy should arise between me and my people." Secretary Vernon sent a copy of the Speech to Shrewsbury, and said, "Many people seemed moved with it, and express an inclination to gratify the king in continuing the Dutch guards." On the 18th of March William sent this message to the Commons: "His Majesty is pleased to let the House know that the necessary preparations are made for transporting the guards who came with him into England: and that he intends to send them away immediately, unless, out of consideration to him, the House be disposed to find a way for continuing them longer in his service, which his majesty would take very kindly." The House would not even appoint a Committee to consider the message, but drew up an address which William, in a letter to Heinsius, called "very impertinent." The king was bluntly told "that nothing conduces more to the happiness and welfare of this kingdom than an entire confidence between his majesty and his people, which could no way be so firmly established as by entrusting his sacred person with his own subjects." The king's answer to this address was a model of forbearance: "I came hither to restore the ancient Constitution of this government. I have had all possible regard to it since my coming, and I am resolved through the course of my

* Onslow's Note on Burnet. Oxford edit., vol. iv. p. 391.

reign to preserve it entire in all the parts of it." The House of Commons had the power under the Constitution of determining the amount of the army by limiting the supplies for its maintenance; and the constitutional king accepted its decision. Mr. Hallam judiciously rejects what he calls "the vulgar story which that retailer of all gossip, Dalrymple, calls a well-authenticated tradition, that the king walked furiously round his room exclaiming, 'if I had a son, by God the guards should not leave me.'" His real temper was far more characteristically displayed in a letter to Galway, in which he says, "I am afraid the good God will punish the ingratitude of this nation." A rash man, with a despotic tendency, might have provoked another civil war, by retaining the Dutch guards, and by bringing over other Dutch guards. William was wiser. He said to the Commons in reply to their insulting address, in the hour in which his health and spirit sank under the indignity offered him, "It shall be my study to the utmost of my power to perform the part of a just and a good king; and as I will ever be strictly and nicely careful of observing my promise to my subjects, so I will not doubt of their tender regards to me."

The Commons had carried their jealousy of a standing army, and their hatred of foreigners, to the very verge of political disorganization. The kingdom was left almost entirely without military force. Credit was destroyed by no sum being voted for the discharge of debt; for it was in vain that William had said at the opening of the session, "I think an English Parliament can never make such a mistake as not to hold sacred all parliamentary engagements." The political machine had come to a dead lock. Tallard wrote to Louis, "Till the session of Parliament is closed there is no hope of being able to advance a step in anything that is wanted to be done, of what nature soever." Nevertheless,—setting aside the obvious conclusion that patriotism had a great deal less to do with the temper of the Commons towards the king than the blindness of faction, perfectly reckless in its opposition to his policy of preserving to England its weight and influence in foreign affairs,—there was a deep substratum of English spirit beneath all this violence. Tallard had the sense to perceive how deceived Louis would be if he fancied these dissensions opened to him any prospect of bringing back the nation to its old subjection to his will: "Though the affairs of this country are in this state, I must warn your majesty that if the least circumstance should occur which inspired them with jealousy, and if means should be found to persuade them that they ought to be on their guard, the same spirit of liberty and of fickleness which induces them to do all that I have had the honour to intimate to

your majesty, would determine them to give their last penny for their defence, or to prevent what they should believe to be injurious to them." * Unchanged and unchangeable England!

The Parliament was prorogued on the 4th of May, after having passed a Bill which had a personal bearing on the king's exercise of the prerogative. It was to appoint a Commission to inquire into the extent of Irish forfeitures of estates, "in order to their being applied in ease of the subjects of England." This measure was tacked to a money-bill, so that it could not be discussed in the House of Lords or rejected by the Crown. The king had granted some of these estates to Portland, Albemarle, and other favourites, and a very natural and proper jealousy was excited. In previous Parliaments a measure for the public appropriation of the lands had been successfully resisted. Nine years before this Session, the king had undertaken to make no grants till the principle of the application of forfeitures had been determined. But the interference of Parliament having ceased, the lands were granted to various persons; "it being an undoubted branch of the royal prerogative, that all confiscations accrued to the Crown, and might be granted away at the pleasure of the king." This is the doctrine held by Burnet. In the next Session of Parliament, which commenced on the 16th of November, 1699, the Commissioners of Inquiry presented their report. The grants made by the king, in spite of the exaggerations of the Report, were very enormous. A Bill of Resumption was brought in, by which the whole of the Irish forfeitures were to be applied to the public uses. In a measure which the Lords had rejected eight years before, one-third was to be reserved for the disposal of the king. The present measure was certain to be carried by the Tory majority in the Commons. The Whigs moved an amendment, to resume all grants of lands and revenues of the Crown made since the 6th of February, 1684—the date of the accession of James II. This was a much more sweeping resumption than the opponents of William contemplated. But they had the decency not to resist its adoption. The Commons again tacked the Resumption Bill to a money-bill; and fierce disputes ensued between the two Houses. The king, though bitterly mortified by the measure itself, saw the extreme peril of any conflict upon such a question, and exerted himself to get the Bill passed by the Lords. He gave his assent to it, and immediately prorogued the Parliament. The Commons were preparing a Resolution that an Address should be presented to the king, "that no person, not a native, except the Prince of Denmark, should be admitted to his

* Grimblot, vol. ii. p. 292.

councils in England or Ireland." The prorogation prevented this last personal affront. Somers, the only one of the Whig ministers that William had retained, now quitted office. The triumphant Tories succeeded in effecting his removal, although they could not succeed in blackening his character by a vote of the House of Commons.

This House, so furious in its hostility to the Crown, passed the most disgraceful law of this reign. The tolerant disposition of William had in England made the old penal laws against papists in many respects a dead letter. Tallard wrote to his court in 1698 that the Catholic religion "is here tolerated more openly than it was even in the time of king Charles II.; and it seems evident that the king of England has determined to leave it in peace, in order to secure his own." The "Act for the further preventing the growth of Popery" recites, that there has been a greater resort into this kingdom than formerly, of Popish bishops, priests, and Jesuits. Any person apprehending and prosecuting to conviction any such bishop, priest, or Jesuit, for saying mass, or exercising any priestly function, is to receive a reward of a hundred pounds. The punishment for such convicted persons, or for a papist keeping a school, is to be perpetual imprisonment. Every person educated in the Popish religion, upon attaining the age of eighteen, to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and subscribe the declaration against transubstantiation and the worship of saints, and in default of such oath and subscription is declared incapable of purchasing lands, or of inheriting lands under any devise or limitation, the next of kin, being a Protestant, to enjoy such devised lands during life.* Many old and wealthy Catholic land-owners would necessarily come under the penalties of this atrocious law. But it is satisfactory to know that the chief object of the statute, which was to drive out these proprietors, was defeated, in most cases, by the more liberal spirit of the time. "The judges," says Mr. Hallam, "put such constructions upon the clause of forfeiture as eluded its efficacy; and, I believe, there were scarce any instances of a loss of property under this law."

To be governed by favourites is the most dangerous position in which a sovereign can be placed. To lavish gifts upon favourites is almost as dangerous even to a sovereign like William, who was not very likely to be governed by any man. The resumption of the Irish grants was a severe lesson to the king. It was very quickly followed by such a manifestation of the jealousy of Portland towards Albemarle, as must have taught William that it is

* 2 Gul. III. c. 4.

scarcely safe for the very highest in station to have any absorbing friendships, such as private men may indulge in. Burnet says that Portland observed the favour of the king for Albemarle with great uneasiness. "He could not bear the visible superiority in favour that the other was grown up to; so he took occasion, from a small preference that was given him, in prejudice of his own post, as groom of the stole; and upon it withdrew from court, and laid down all his employments." The letters of William to Portland, written about the time of the termination of the stormy Session of 1699, exhibit a warmth of feeling very different from the supposed coldness of his nature: "Not to enter into a long dispute with you, on the subject of your retirement, I will say nothing to you about it, but I cannot help expressing my extreme grief at it, which is greater than you can imagine; and I am convinced if you felt half as much, you would soon change your resolution. . . . I conjure you to come and see me as often as you can, which will be a great consolation to me, in the affliction which you cause me, not being able to help loving you most tenderly as before." William succeeded, after much importunity, in obtaining the consent of Portland to continue the negotiations for the Second Partition Treaty: "I cannot help telling you that the welfare and the repose of all Europe may depend upon the negotiation which you have in hand with count Tallard."

The passing of the Act for disbanding the army, and the reduction of the navy by a Vote of the Commons, left England in a very weakened condition for internal defence, or for preserving to England its weight and influence in affairs abroad. Yet the king did not abate one jot of his resolution to maintain the attitude before Europe that belonged to the states which he governed. England and Holland were under treaties of alliance with Sweden, and were bound to render her assistance should she be attacked. The king, Charles the Twelfth, was only in his eighteenth year, and it seemed a favourable opportunity for the king of Denmark, the elector of Saxony and king of Poland, and the czar of Russia, to form a league against him for the dismemberment of Sweden. The young hero threw himself into the affray with that characteristic energy which afterwards astonished the world; and he called upon England and Holland to assist him. The king of Denmark had insolently declared that now the king of England was unsupported by his Parliament; he would be able to do little in Europe. "I will teach the king of Denmark," said William, "that I can yet do something." He would ask for no vote from Parliament; he "apprehended," says Burnet, "that some of them might endeavour to

put an affront upon him, and oppose the sending a fleet into the Sound." He did do something. He sent an armament of English and Dutch ships into the Baltic, under the command of sir George Rooke, when his remonstrances to Denmark and the other powers were unheeded. Rooke formed a junction with the Swedish fleet, and they drove the Danish navy into Copenhagen. Charles exerted himself with wonderful spirit, and prepared with his allies for a siege of the Danish capital. Frederick IV. of Denmark now professed his willingness to accept the mediation of England and Holland; and a treaty of peace was signed under their guarantee. "The king's conduct on this whole matter was highly applauded. He effectually protected the Swedes, and yet obliged them to accept of reasonable terms of peace." * The king of England, with his eight thousand soldiers and his seven thousand sailors, had manifested a spirit which was probably as impressive upon the minds of European statesmen as the ostentatious array of sixty thousand troops in the camp of Compiègne by the king of France. St. Simon has described this wonderful pageant as he alone could describe the prodigal ostentation of the court of Louis. He resolved to show all Europe, which believed that his resources were exhausted by a long war, that in the midst of profound peace he was as fully prepared as ever for arms. "He wanted to convince the world," says the compiler of the "Life of James II.," that he had concluded the peace "more out of a Christian motive than the want of money." To present a superb spectacle to Madame de Maintenon he announced that he counted upon seeing the troops look their best. The officers vied with each other in the finery of their dresses, and the magnificence of their banquets. The temporary houses were furnished with all the splendour of the Parisian saloons. Marshal Boufflers kept open table at all hours. Every luxury which the epicures of France could desire was brought to the camp by unnumbered express carriages. The king showered gratuities of hundreds and thousands of francs upon the officers, according to their several degrees. These gifts were a very small compensation for the extravagant expenditure which the king had stimulated. "There was not a single regiment, officers and men, that was not ruined for several years." Twenty years afterwards, says St. Simon, some of the regiments were still in difficulties from this cause. "Truly did the king astonish Europe. But at what a cost!" When sovereigns, as well as private men, rush into prodigal expenditure to convince the world that they have no "want of money," the real want is pretty sure to overtake

* Burnet.

them. Louis had to endure this bitter experience in his subsequent humiliation. His suffering people had to endure such poverty and privations as never can be the lot of an active and industrious nation, but through misgovernment and false ambition.

There can be little doubt that at this time, when Louis was carrying on the solemn farce of negotiating a second Treaty with William for securing the peace of Europe, he was organizing that system of intrigue in Spain which had for its object to make himself the virtual head of two great monarchies, and as such the powerful enemy of that Protestantism which it had been the chief object of his recent years to subject to the most atrocious persecution in his own realms. He had passed from a life of profligacy to a life of the most ostentatious piety. When, as Saint Simon records, the officers of Compiègne looked on with wonder as he walked with the most profound reverence at the side of the sedan-chair of Madame de Maintenon, he was testifying his homage to the devout widow of Scarron, who had become the keeper of his conscience. He had no qualms when he committed the atrocity of the revocation of the edict of Nantes; for his ambition was to destroy Heresy, and compel all his subjects to return to the bosom of the Church. The massacres, the imprisonments, the banishments, that attended this frightful persecution, touched not his heart, for he was manifesting his devotion to the great cause of Catholicism. He contemplated with no nice sense of honour the probable issue of intrigues which would lead him to break his faith to England and Holland; for were they not Protestant countries, and was not the head of them a heretic, who kept out the rightful Catholic king. It was the great monarch who set the fashion in all things,—in religion as in dress. He fancied that it was for him to make the court and the nation devout; and the mask was put on for a time by the court and nation. Addison writes to Halifax from Paris, in October, 1699, "As for the present state of learning, there is nothing published here which has not in it an air of devotion. Dacier has been forced to prove his Plato a very good Christian before he ventures to translate him, and has so far complied with the taste of the age that his whole book is overrun with texts of Scripture, and the notion of pre-existence supposed to be stolen from two verses out of the Prophets. Nay, the humour is grown so universal, that 'tis got among the poets, who are every day publishing legends and lives of saints in rhyme." * After this sacred literature came Voltaire; after this courtly holiness came the Regency.

* Kemble's "State Papers and Letters," p. 237.