CHAPTER V.

A Tory administration.—Death of the duke of Gloucester.—The electress Sophia of Hanover.—Death of the king of Spain.—Will of Charles, which Louis accepts.—The new Parliament.—The king asks assistance for the States.—The Act of Settlement.—Impeachment of Somers and other Whigs.—The Kentish Petition.—The Legion Memorial.—The Great Alliance formed by William.—Death of king James.—Louis declares the son of James king of England.—William opens his last Parliament.—His accident.—His message on the Union.—Death of William the Third.—*Note:* The Act of Settlement.

After the prorogation of Parliament in April, the king, contrary to his usual custom, passed three months in England. He had gone through what he described as "the most dismal Session I ever had;" and he had no resource but to aim at the neutralization of the violence of the Tory party by opening to them most of the chief employments of the State. But it is evident that there was a great unwillingness in the minds of reflecting men to deem such arrangements likely to be permanent. No lawyer of eminence would accept the Great Seal; and after a month's delay it was given to Serjeant Wright, as Lord Keeper. Secretary Vernon wrote to the duke of Shrewsbury, that "when the serjeant took the Seals, he did it with a foresight that he should not hold them long, and therefore intended to move his majesty that his compliance might not turn to his prejudice by any change."* Sunderland was labouring,—whether honestly, or in his old intriguing spirit, it would be difficult to say,—to effect the return of Somers to the high office which he had so ably filled. Montague wrote to Somers that according to the report of Vernon, "lord Sunderland has found out a method, whereby the Seal may again be put in your hands." But he adds, "this seems only like a shift of lord Sunderland to lessen the odium"—that is, the odium excited by the dismissal of Somers.† The violent hatreds of the rival factions rendered it very difficult for the king to conduct the government upon any settled principles. William quaintly observes in one of his letters, "We must always say here, like the newspapers, 'Time will show.'" But these rivalries also made the most able and honest of the king's advisers shrink from the responsibility of office. Shrewsbury, during the next Parliament, when the violence

* Vernon Letters, vol. iii. p. 59.

† Hardwicke State Papers, vol. ii. p. 436.

of party had reached its climax, wrote to Somers, "I wonder that a man can be found in England, who has bread, that will be concerned in public business. Had I a son, I would sooner breed him a cobbler than a courtier, and a hangman than a statesman."*

The summer and autumn of 1700 were productive of events of the greatest importance to the future of England. On the 30th of July, the duke of Gloucester, the only one remaining of the seventeen children of the princess Anne, died at Windsor, after a short illness. He had just entered upon his twelfth year, his birth-day having been celebrated six days previous to his decease. Burnet had been the preceptor of the young prince for two years. The king sent a message to the princess "that he put the whole management of her son's household into her hands, but that he owed the care of his education to himself and his people, and therefore would name the persons for that purpose."† When he named Burnet as preceptor to the prince, he also named Marlborough as his governor. Burnet has recorded the system of education which he pursued. He "read over the Psalms, Proverbs, and Gospels with him," and gave copious explanation; so that he "came to understand things relating to religion beyond imagination." To Divinity the bishop added Geography; forms of government in every country; the interests and trade of each nation; the history of "all the great revolutions that had been in the world;" and the explanation of "the Gothic constitution and the beneficiary and feudal laws." Burnet says the prince "had gone through much weakness, and some years of ill health." This loading of the mind of a weakly boy with so much of that knowledge which belongs to riper years, instead of giving him a more complete possession of the keys of knowledge had probably reference to the fact that "the king ordered five of his chief ministers to come once a quarter and examine the progress he had made." Something more of spontaneous application would perhaps have been a wiser system. Lady Jane Grey enjoyed reading Plato; but we doubt if the poor duke of Gloucester had much enjoyment, or much profit, in puzzling over "the Gothic constitution and the beneficiary and feudal laws." He was to display "his knowledge and the good understanding which appeared in him," at the quarterly examinations. Had he been construing Virgil, and playing in the fields of Eton, instead of hearing his worthy preceptor talk of these abtruse things "near three hours a day," as they moped about on Windsor terrace, that event might not have occurred which made the Jacobites

* Hardwicke State Papers, vol. ii. p. 441.

† Life of Burnet. "Own Time," vol. vi. p. 305.

"grow insolent upon it, and say, now the chief difficulty was removed out of the way of the prince of Wales' succession;" and which, on the other hand, "turned the eyes of all the Protestants in the nation towards the electress of Brunswick." *

William had not left the country more than three weeks when this unforeseen calamity rendered it necessary to take serious thoughts of the English succession. Politicians in England were anxiously discussing this matter. "The House of Hanover is much spoken of. The objection is, 'What! Must we have more foreigners?'" † The electress Sophia of Hanover was the last surviving child of Elizabeth Stuart, the daughter of James I., and of Frederic, the Elector-Palatine, who accepted the crown of Bohemia. Sophia, or Sophie, their twelfth child and fifth daughter, was born in 1630, and thus was in her seventieth year when the question arose as to the Protestant succession of England. In 1658 she married Ernest Augustus, who became duke of Hanover in 1679, and elector in 1692. Her eldest son, George Lewis, became elector of Hanover in 1698, when in his 38th year. The princess Sophia was a lady of unusual talent and knowledge—the friend of many learned men whom she collected around her in her court—but no female pedant, being distinguished as much for her good sense and refined manners as for her various acquirements.‡

The electress had been visited by William in 1699, and now she came to Loo, to return the visit, at the time when the interests of her family were thus affected by the death of the duke of Gloucester. The princess Sophia, with her large experience and keen observation, saw not only the advantages but the difficulties that were opened by this prospect. There is a very curious letter from her, written in French, to George Stepney, who, by the grace of Doctor Johnson, is counted amongst the English poets, and by the friendship of Charles Montague was a busy diplomatist in the German courts. The electress says, that if she were thirty years younger, she has a sufficiently good opinion of her blood and her religion to believe that people might think of her in England. But as there is little likelihood that she should survive two persons, William and Anne, it is to be feared that her sons will be regarded as strangers. She hints that the son of James II., who would be glad to recover what his father had lost, might be made what was desirable—that is, might be led to change his religion. She does not look enthusiastically at the prospect before her own family;

* Life of Burnet. "Our Time," vol. iv. p. 439. † Vernon Letters, vol. iii. p. 129.

‡ See the notice of her character in the admirable volume of "State Papers and Correspondence," edited by John M. Kemble.

for, she wisely says, "It seems to me that in England there are so many factions, that one can be secure in nothing." * The English Jacobites were acting upon the prospect of the succession of the prince of Wales, and sent over a representative to St. Germains to propose that he should be educated in England—we presume after the death of William. Lord Manchester, the English ambassador, wrote to Vernon, "the changing his religion will never be suffered; and they have lately declared that they would rather see him dead." The House of Savoy would probably have had a better chance of succeeding to the English crown, had the duke not deserted the English alliance before the peace of Ryswick. When Victor Amadeus was the friend and ally of William, a negotiation had been entered into with him, to send his son into England, to be educated as a Protestant. This son, Charles Emmanuel, was the grandson of Henrietta Maria, the daughter of Charles I., who married the duke of Orleans. Their daughter, Anne Marie, married the duke of Savoy. The descendant of the daughter of Charles I., had a higher claim by the law of inheritance than the descendant of the sister of that king. There were many other claimants, who were equally disqualified with the House of Savoy, by being Roman Catholics.

More pressing considerations than belonged to the possibly distant event of the Protestant Succession in England now demanded the utmost exercise of William's foresight and perseverance. In October, the king of Spain was considered to be in the most imminent danger. The Treaty of Partition existed between France, England, and Holland; but the Emperor had not yet signed it. He was holding off, expecting to obtain greater advantages than the treaty had given him. William wrote to Heinsius from Loo on the 11th of October, "You may assure the ambassadors of France from me that I shall rigidly observe the treaty, in the expectation that their master shall do the same." In another letter of the 15th, he says, "I find much too great precipitation on the part of France, who wishes to take instant possession of every thing." France had other views than the execution of the treaty in exhibiting this haste to carry out its conditions before the event which the treaty contemplated. The agents of Louis were about the death-bed of Charles of Spain, striving to influence the feeble prince to dispose of the succession by will in favour of the Bourbons. The agents of the emperor were also intriguing for the same object, in favour of the Imperial family. Louis had contrived to persuade the king of Spain that England and Holland

* Hardwicke State Papers, vol. ii. p. 442.

alone were to blame in the matter of the Partition treaty. The knowledge of this treaty had provoked such wrath at Madrid, that the Spanish ambassador at London published a declaration so insolent that William commanded him to leave,—a measure which was retaliated by the dismissal from Spain of the English and Dutch ambassadors. The revelation of the secret of the treaty was attributed to Louis, as the readiest way to obtain something better than those Italian possessions of Spain which the treaty gave him.* The dying king was tormented, on one side, by the importunities of his queen and her confessor, to favour the emperor; on the other side, the Cardinal Porto-Carrero subdued the mind, always feeble, but now prostrate in superstition, by arts which Rome counts among its most precious accomplishments. The wretched prince was first terrified into the belief that his health was affected by sorcery; and the cardinal then procured a Capuchin monk, "very intelligent and well practised in matters of enchantment and casting out devils," to perform the rite of exorcism. Charles was persuaded that his health would be restored if he descended into the vaults of the Escurial, and looked upon the mouldering remains of his ancestors. The coffins of his mother and of his first wife were opened; and when he saw the face of his loved queen, scarcely yet touched by corruption, he rushed away, exclaiming, "I shall soon be with her in heaven." Enfeebled in body and mind, the poor king still clung to the idea that he ought to preserve the inheritance of Spain to the Austrian family from which he had sprung. The authority of the pope was called in to determine for him what he ought to do. Innocent XII. decided that the whole Spanish monarchy belonged by right of inheritance to the dauphin; but to prevent the union of the crowns of Spain and France, it was desirable to give the succession to the duke of Anjou, the dauphin's second son. Thus fortified, Porto-Carrero, and Harcourt, the French ambassador, worked with unremitting energy. The wretched man grew worse and worse. Ecclesiastics surrounded his bed to urge, under the penalties of divine wrath, obedience to the councils of the Vatican. The famous Testament which plunged Europe into a war of ten years was signed. The king exclaimed, "Now I am as one of the dead." When the last breath had departed, after Charles had lingered four weeks,—the duke of Abrantes came forth from the Council, of which Porto-Carrero had obtained from Charles the nomination as chief,—and announced that Philip, duke of Anjou, was the sole inheritor of the

* "Louis," says John Bull, "revealed our whole secret to the deceased lord Strutt, who, in reward to his treachery, and revenge to Frog and me, settled his whole estate upon the present Philip Baboon."—Arbuthnot.

vast Spanish monarchy. Saint Simon relates an amusing incident which preceded the formal announcement. Blécourt, the ambassador of France, who was probably in the secret of the will, and count d'Harrach, the ambassador of the emperor, who thought that his master would be the fortunate heir, were anxiously waiting in the crowd around the council door. Abrantes came out; looked a moment at Blécourt; then turned his eyes another way, and fixing them on d'Harrach, moved towards him, embraced him, and thus spoke: "Sir, it is with much pleasure,"—bows and reciprocal embraces—"Yes, Sir, it is with extreme joy, that for the rest of my life," more embraces,—"and with the greatest contentment that I part from you, and take my leave of the august House of Austria."

On the 12th of November, the earl of Manchester, the English ambassador to France, wrote home, "I must now acquaint you that there is an end of our Treaty." The king of France had decided to accept the Will. One of his reasons was, that the emperor had not yet acceded to the Treaty. The emperor had in his possession a Will of the king of Spain, made in the previous June, which gave the inheritance to the archduke of Austria. He had to learn that Charles had cancelled that will, when he signed the Testament of the 2nd of October. The exultation of the court of France was scarcely attempted to be concealed. Louis affected to doubt what his decision should be; and he went through the mockery of consulting his council. He then came forth, and addressed the boy-king. "Sir, the king of Spain has named you his successor. The nobles demand, the nation desires you, and I give my consent. You will reign over the greatest monarchy in the world." The Spanish ambassador did homage to Philip V.; and when the youth parted from his affectionate grandfather, the superb monarch exclaimed, "The Pyrenees exist no longer." William knew what the pretended separation of the Crowns of France and Spain really meant. He had arrived in London in November, where he received the news that Louis had broken his engagements. He immediately wrote to Heinsius: "I am perfectly persuaded, that if this Will be executed, England and the Republic are in the utmost danger of being totally lost or ruined."* In a letter, three days later, he says: "My chief anxiety is to prevent the Spanish Netherlands from falling into the hands of France. You will easily conceive how this business goes to my heart." † The most heroic period of the life of William was now to be entered upon—that period in which Burnet says—"there was a black appearance of a

* Hardwicke Papers, vol. ii. p. 393.

† *Ibid.*, p. 395.

new and dismal scene;" but the period which called forth the most wonderful display of the energies of the king's character. William's conduct cannot be better described than in the magnificent words of Burke: "In all the tottering imbecility of a new government, and with Parliament totally unmanageble, he persevered. He persevered to expel the fears of his people, by his fortitude; to steady their fickleness, by his constancy; to expand their narrow prudence, by his enlarged wisdom; to sink their factious temper in his public spirit. In spite of his people he resolved to make them great and glorious; to make England, inclined to shrink into her narrow self, the arbitress of Europe, the tutelary angel of the human race. In spite of the ministers, who staggered under the weight that his mind imposed upon theirs, unsupported as they felt themselves by the popular spirit, he infused into them his own soul; he renewed in them their ancient heart, he rallied them in the same cause. It acquired some time to accomplish this work. The people were first gained, and through them their distracted representatives." *

The Parliament which had been prorogued in April was dissolved in December, 1700. The Tory party were now in the ascendant, and they had all the advantages of government influence in the elections. The king, if we may judge from the first aspect of proceedings in the House of Commons, was the person in this kingdom who had the least control upon the temper of the people's representatives. Ralph, the laborious party-historian of these times, relieves his usual dreariness by the following anecdote: "His majesty, in dismissing the Whigs, because they could no longer do his business in Parliament, had done enough to disoblige them, but not enough to gain the Tories; and so met with such treatment from both as once gave him occasion to say, in a pet, to Lord Halifax, 'that all the difference he knew between the two parties was, that the Tories would cut his throat in the morning and the Whigs in the afternoon.' " † The Houses met on the 6th of February. Godolphin was now at the head of the Treasury; Rochester was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Under the ministerial influence Harley was chosen Speaker by the new Parliament, by a majority double that of the Whig nominee. The speech of the king touched upon the two great events of the past year—the death of the duke of Gloucester, and the death of the king of Spain. The loss of the duke of Gloucester "made it absolutely necessary that there should be a further provision for the Succession of the Crown in the Protestant line." The death of the late

* "Letters on a Regicide Peace," Letter I.

† Ralph, vol. ii. p. 90

king of Spain "has made so great an alteration of affairs abroad, that I must desire you very maturely to consider their present state." The House divided upon a motion arising out of the king's speech, carrying this Resolution only by a majority of twenty-one: "That they would stand by and support his majesty and his government, and take such effectual measures as may best conduce to the interest and safety of England, the preservation of the Protestant religion, and the peace of Europe." Burnet says that a design was laid, to open the Session with a vote that the king be requested to own the king of Spain; but the opponents of William's policy thought better of the scheme when a member, Mr. Moncton, who was present at the discussion, said that if the vote were carried, he should expect the next vote would be for owning the pretended prince of Wales.* The king was, however, moving steadily forward to the completion of the great object of his policy. When he received the Address of the Commons in reply to his Speech, he laid before them a Memorial from the Envoy Extraordinary of the States General. It set forth that they had acknowledged the new king of Spain, under the condition that a negotiation should be entered into, in concert with their allies, to secure the peace of Europe. They prayed the king of England to send the necessary instructions to his minister at the Hague to act conjointly with them. But they added that, as French troops were moving towards their frontier, they requested the succour agreed to be provided for their defence, under a treaty made by England with the States in 1677. The Commons asked that the Treaty of 1677 should be laid before them. They then unanimously resolved to request the king to enter into such negotiations with the States General, and with other powers, as might conduce to the mutual safety of these kingdoms and the United Provinces, and promising their support in performance of the Treaty. William was unexpectedly gratified by this decision. "Nothing," he said to the Houses, "can more effectually conduce to our security than the unanimity and vigour you have shown on this occasion." From that hour the king calmly and resolutely looked upon the future. There was a slight change in the temper of the Commons, which he probably could trace to a higher cause than the change which he had made of his ministers. Public opinion was slowly but surely coming into operation. There were few organs of opinion besides party pamphlets; but the people had some knowledge of political events, even from their meagre newspapers.

* Burnet's loose mode of narration would imply that this was mooted in Parliament, which Ralph explicitly denies.

They thought for themselves, and they expressed their thoughts freely amongst themselves. In the heat of the contest between William and the House of Commons about disbanding the army, we are assured that the king "was in truth more really beloved by the body of the people than he thought himself to be, or than his enemies seemed to believe he was." * Swift, who, in 1701, looked upon politics from a higher elevation than the molehill of party, says, that one cause of the popular aversion to some of the proceedings of the Commons was, "a great love and sense of gratitude in the people toward their present king, grounded upon a long opinion of his merit, as well as concessions to all their reasonable desires, so that it is for some time they have begun to say, and to fetch instances, where he has in many things been hardly used." † We shall soon see this temper of the people coming into direct collision with their representatives.

It was on the 3rd of March that the portion of the king's speech which relates to the Protestant Succession was brought forward in the Commons. Burnet says: "The manner in which this motion of Succession was managed did not carry in it great marks of sincerity. It was often put off from one day to another, and it gave place to the most trifling matters." During the whole of March and April the two great parties were engaged in the most furious broils. It was perhaps fortunate that their attention was diverted from high matters that concerned the future, to temporary ebullitions of party rage. The nomination of the princess Sophia and her descendants might otherwise have been resisted by the furious Jacobites; and the clauses of the Act of Settlement which gave guarantees for constitutional freedom, in addition to the Bill of Rights, might have been opposed by the advocates of absolute government. There was comparatively little discussion about these conditions, "for better securing the rights and liberties of the subject." They were proposed by Harley; supported by the Tories; and not resisted by the Whigs,—although the clauses against the sovereign going out of his dominions without the consent of Parliament, and for preventing any foreigner holding office, had the appearance of a personal reflection upon the government of king William. The clause which disqualifies all holders of office, and all receivers of pensions, from sitting in the House of Commons, was repealed early in the reign of Anne. Burnet says, "those who wished well to the Act were glad to have it passed any way, and so would not examine the limitations that

* Onslow's Note on Burnet, vol. iv. p. 392.

† "Contests and Dissentions in Athens and Rome," chap. V.

were in it." He reckoned it "a great point carried that we had now a law on our side for a Protestant Successor; for we plainly saw a great party formed against it, in favour of the pretended prince of Wales." It was indeed a great point gained for the welfare of these realms, that an Act was passed by which the House of Brunswick has possessed the Crown for a century and a half, under whose rule there has been a constant progress towards the solution of the difficult problem of representative government,—the union of the largest amount of individual liberty with the most perfect security for social order.*

Negotiations were proceeding at the Hague between England, Holland, and France, for the removal of French troops from the Spanish Netherlands, and for other objects of prevention against the preponderance of France. Burnet affirms that "the French, seeing these demands run so high, and being resolved to offer no other security for the peace of Europe but the renewing the treaty of Ryswick, set all their engines at work in England to involve us in such contentions at home, as should both disable us from taking any care of foreign affairs, and make the rest of Europe conclude that nothing considerable was to be expected from England." It was scarcely necessary that party rage should be stimulated either by the intrigues or the gold of France. The Tories applied themselves to the task, most unpatriotic at such a moment, of assailing the Partition Treaties with unmeasured invectives, and of pursuing the chiefs of the late Whig ministry with a rancour very little proportioned to any offences which could be alleged against them. The Commons resolved to impeach Portland, Orford, Somers, and Halifax, for their concern in the Treaties by which the king had endeavoured to save Europe from the war which was now impending, and for other alleged offences. It is scarcely necessary, in a narrative which attempts chiefly to regard those historical events which have a permanent interest, to enter into a minute relation of these violent party conflicts. These party dissensions called up a third party, that had hitherto manifested very little participation in the contests of the two great factions. Swift, with the strongest good sense, temperately pointed out to the members of Parliament, during the recess—which he calls "a lucid interval"—the consequence of their bitter animosities: "It would be wise in them, as individual and private mortals, to look back a little upon the storms they have raised, as well as those they have escaped; to reflect that they have been authors of a new and wonderful thing in England, which is, for a House of

* We have printed the Act of Settlement as a Note at the end of this chapter.

Commons to lose the universal favour of the numbers they represent." * The Commons having decided upon impeachment, asked the king to condemn the four peers without trial, by removing them from his councils and presence for ever. The Lords begged his majesty to pass no sentence of discredit upon his late servants, till their alleged high crimes and misdemeanours should be inquired into. The king gave a very general answer to the Commons that he should employ none but those he thought deserving of trust. To the Lords he said nothing. He evidently had made up his mind to let the factions fight out their battle without his intervention. Conferences were held between the two Houses, which became unseemly squabbles. The days were fixed for the trials of Somers and Orford. The Commons said they should not have justice, and refused to attend. The impeachments fell to the ground.

That "new and wonderful thing" of 1701—a House of Commons displeasing to the people—a popular party speaking by other voices than that of its legally-constituted organs—became too familiar to the nation, in times much nearer to our own than the opening of the eighteenth century.† In 1701 the popular feeling began to take the form which has subsequently shaken many a faction, and disturbed many a scheme of blind and selfish policy. On the 15th of May secretary Vernon wrote to the duke of Shrewsbury, "There grows a great ferment out of the House, which begins to make our topping men uneasy. They are endeavouring to suppress petitions; and perhaps the means they may use for it may blow them up higher."‡ At the quarter sessions for the county of Kent, held at Maidstone on the 29th of April, the grand jury drew up a petition to the House of Commons, which was unanimously signed by them, and also by the chairman of the sessions, and twenty-one of the justices. It was also signed by a large body of freeholders. Mr. Colepeper, the chairman, with four other gentlemen, proceeded to London with the petition, which was at last presented to the House by Mr. Meredith, one of the members for Kent, on the 8th of May. It is a plain spoken document, but one which we should now call temperate and respectful: "We, the gentlemen, justices of the peace, grand jury, and other freeholders, at the general quarter sessions at Maidstone in Kent, deeply concerned at the dangerous estate of this kingdom, and of all Europe; and considering that the fate of us and our prosperity

* "Contests and Dissentions," &c.
† See Dr. Arnold's "Lectures on Modern History," lecture vii.
‡ Vernon Letters, vol. iii. p. 145.

depends upon the wisdom of our representatives in Parliament, think ourselves bound in duty, humbly to lay before this honourable House the consequence, in this conjuncture, of your speedy resolution, and most sincere endeavour, to answer the great trust reposed in you by your country. And in regard, that from the experience of all ages it is manifest, no nation can be great or happy without union, we hope, that no pretence whatever shall be able to create a misunderstanding among ourselves, or the least distrust of his most sacred majesty; whose great actions for this nation are writ in the hearts of his subjects, and can never, without the blackest ingratitude, be forgot. We most humbly implore this honourable House to have regard to the voice of the people, that our religion and safety may be effectually provided for, that your Loyal Addresses may be turned into Bills of Supply, and that his most sacred majesty (whose propitious and unblemished reign over us we pray God long to continue) may be enabled powerfully to assist his allies before it is too late." Upon hearing this read, the House resolved, "That the said petition was scandalous, insolent, and seditious, tending to destroy the constitution of parliaments, and to subvert the established government of these realms." They then ordered that those gentlemen who had brought the petition should be taken into custody, as guilty of promoting it. They were committed to the Gate-house. The "great ferment out of the House," which Vernon describes, then ran through the country. "This disposition to blame the slowness in which the House of Commons proceeded, with relation to foreign affairs, and the heat with which private quarrels were pursued, began to spread itself through the whole nation." * The imprisonment of the Kentish men led to many discussions of the right of the Commons to imprison any persons but their own members, or such as had violated the privileges of the House.† On the 14th of May, the day after Mr. Colepeper and his friends were committed, a paper, signed "Legion," was conveyed to Harley, the Speaker;—some accounts say, was presented to him as he entered the House. It purported to be a Memorial, in which the grievances of the nation were set forth, and the rights of the people asserted, in the boldest terms. The concluding paragraph may be taken as a sample of its general spirit: "Thus, Gentlemen, you have your duty laid before you, which 'tis hoped you will think of: but, if you continue to neglect it, you may expect to be treated according to the resentment of an injured nation; for Englishmen are no more to be slaves to parliaments than to kings." In that "History of Eng-

* Burnet, vol. iv. p. 497. † *Ibid.*

land from the Revolution," which still holds its place in companionship with that of Hume, it is written, "The Commons were equally provoked and intimidated by this libel, which was the production of one Daniel Defoe, a scurrilous party-writer, in very little estimation." * The author of "Humphrey Clinker" might have been expected to speak somewhat more respectfully of the author of "Robinson Crusoe." There is little doubt that Defoe did write the Legion Memorial. When the Kentish gentlemen were released at the end of the Session of Parliament, a public dinner was given to them at Mercers' Hall by the chief citizens of London; where, says a Tory writer, "Nothing was wanting to show their respect to them, and the cause of sedition they had been carrying on,—no, not so much as some of the nobility themselves, to give a stamp of authority to what had been done, contrary to all law, good manners, or prudence." † Another Tory pamphleteer says, speaking of this dinner, "Next the Worthies [the Kentish men] was placed their Secretary of State, the author of the Legion letter, and one might have read the downfall of Parliaments in his very countenance." ‡ The bitterness of Defoe was no doubt excited by his devotion to the king. William probably found in this most sturdy and sagacious representative of the great middle class, an enlarged patriotism, and a sympathy with his own high views, which he had almost ceased to look for amongst those who were "swaddled, and rocked, and dandled" into statesmen. William respected the man who had the courage to attack that vulgar prejudice which, regarding every foreigner as an enemy to England, compelled him to dismiss the Dutch guards and the French refugees, who had served him so long and so faithfully. "The True Born Englishman" of Defoe, made this prejudice contemptible. The Kentish Petition, and the Legion Memorial, struck at the power which had set the representatives of the people above public opinion,—the power of commanding a majority of the House of Commons by frothy declamation and passionate invective. The Tories possessed the superiority in this power, and they abused it, in this season of real national peril, to an extent which has sometimes been equalled by both of the great parties in Parliament, but never excelled. The impeachment of William's Whig ministers had "dragged its slow length along," for weeks, amidst conflicts between Lords and Commons. The terms of the Partition Treaties were again and again debated, the Commons thus subjecting themselves to the just reproof of "Legion,"—"Voting the Treaty of Partition fatal to Europe, because it gave so much of the Spanish dominions to the French, and not concerning yourselves to prevent their taking possession of it all." The States-General had made the most urgent appeal for the assistance of England. They were preparing for the same sort of resistance to France which had signalised them under the guidance of the young prince of Orange. The heart of the prematurely-aged king of England must have leaped in his bosom, when his countrymen sent to him to say, "We have been obliged to put ourselves in a state of defence, more than if we were actually attacked, by overflowing our country, and even cutting our dykes, to secure our frontiers." Though the Commons had passed two formal votes of support to the king in carrying out the old treaty with the Republic, they were too much occupied with their party-quarrels to look steadily at the great question upon which William had asked their advice and assistance. They were told by Legion "that they were deserting the Dutch when the French are at their doors, till it be almost too late to help them." Gradually the House of Commons came more clearly to understand the public feeling. The people wanted more deeds and less talk. They turned "from petty tyrants to the throne." The House of Lords had a quicker comprehension of the national temper than the Commons had. They addressed the king in terms which encouraged him in the work to which the remainder of his life was devoted: "We humbly desire your majesty will be pleased, not only to make good all the articles of any former treaties to the States-General, but that you will enter into a strict league, offensive and defensive, with them, for their common preservation; and that you will invite unto it all princes and states who are concerned in the present visible danger, arising from the union of France and Spain." The Commons stopped short of directly sanctioning the extensive alliance which William desired, and which the Lords contemplated—an alliance which could have no other end than war. But they voted sufficient supplies to enable the king to send assistance to the States—telling him, however, "they are more than ever were given in a time of peace." On the 24th of June the Parliament was prorogued. On the 1st of July the king embarked for Holland.

* Smollett, chap. vi. § 54. † Quoted in Wilson's Defoe, vol. i. p. 405. ‡ *Ibid.*

Burke has vividly described the great crisis of the summer of 1701. The House of Commons had been more reserved than the Lords. "But now they were fairly embarked, they were obliged to go with the course of the vessel; and the whole nation, split before into an hundred adverse factions, with a king at its head evidently declining to his tomb, the whole nation, Lords, Commons, and People, proceeded as one body informed by one soul." There