

probably is no higher example of decision of character than the energy of William in the last six months of his life. If we imagine that he had only to lay before "princes and states" his notions of their common danger, and then to secure their cordial co-operation in its resistance, we should take a every imperfect view of the policies of the various European governments. The emperor, no doubt, could be easily induced to take part in a great confederacy to secure for his family their coveted share in the Spanish dominions. But the smaller German states were moved by various conflicting influences—of ambition, of jealousy, of fear. The notion of some was to combine in a neutrality, in which they might gain something and risk little. Several of the German electors had as much dread of Austria as of France, and probably more hatred of the power with which they were more immediately in contact. The northern maritime states, though quarrelling with each other, had no affection for the Dutch, who interfered with their commerce. William, during his sojourn in Holland, concluded Treaties with the States-General, with the king of Sweden, with the king of Denmark, with the emperor. He laid the foundation of future alliances with the king of Portugal, with the king of Prussia, with the duke of Savoy. He had an able assistant in Marlborough, whose treachery he had long ceased to fear, and in whose great ability he had a just confidence. But the experience of William in all the complications of European politics; the confidence which those with whom he had to deal had in his judgment and honesty; and, more than all, his own undoubted reliance upon the conviction of his earliest and of his latest years that the power of France must be limited, if England and Holland were to be secure and free,—these were the means by which that league which history now calls the Grand Alliance was formed. One of the most remarkable features of this Alliance in its earlier stages of the union of England, the States, and the emperor, was its extreme prudence. It made no declaration as to the inheritance of the crown of Spain. It only stipulated that the contracting powers should be united to prevent the union of the crowns of France and Spain; that France should be compelled to evacuate the Netherlands; and that she should not acquire any of the Spanish Colonies in the West Indies. England was not committed by William to a war.

The Treaty of Alliance between England, the States-General, and the emperor, with powers for all kings and states to join the league, was signed at the Hague on the 7th of September. In Italy war had previously begun on the part of the emperor. Prince

Eugene commanded the imperial army, and drove the joint forces of the French king and the duke of Savoy from their position along the Adige. Marshal Villeroy subsequently attacked Prince Eugene, but was repulsed. The warlike events of the year had no decisive results. But one event now took place which involved England in a war against France, upon far more popular grounds than the question of the succession in Spain. On the 16th of September, king James II. expired at St. Germain, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. The biographer of the exiled sovereign describes the visit of the king of France to the death-bed, when Louis, having desired that nobody should withdraw, said, "I am come, Sir, to acquaint you, that whenever it shall please God to call your majesty out of this world, I will take your family under my protection, and will treat your son, the prince of Wales, in the same manner I have treated you, and acknowledge him, as he then will be, king of England."* The biographer describes how the French and English courtiers threw themselves at his Most Christian Majesty's feet, weeping and lauding so generous an action. In the court, says Saint Simon, "nothing was heard but applause and praise." Yet reflection came to some. It was seen, that to recognize the prince of Wales was in direct opposition to the recognition, as king of England, of the prince of Orange at the peace of Ryswick; and thus to wound that prince in the tenderest point, and to invite England and Holland to become allies of the emperor against France. Saint Simon, who takes this common-sense view, holds that the resolve of Louis XIV. was "more worthy of Louis XII., or of Francis I., than of his own wisdom." The recognition of the son of James II. as king of England was no private act of Louis. Lord Manchester, the English ambassador, wrote home: "The prince of Wales was immediately proclaimed king of England, by the title of James III. I do not hear there was any other ceremony, than that, after he had taken the title of king, those of St. Germain kissed his hand, and treated him with 'majesty.'" William desired that his ambassador should immediately quit the French court. It was alleged by France that the bare owning of the prince's title was not a breach of the treaty of Ryswick, as they gave him no assistance to make good his claim. Neither the king of England nor his people were deceived by this sophistry. William saw that the greatest opportunity of his life had now arrived; that the factions which had so long harassed him would shrink away before the might of public opinion; that he could now—when France believed he was broken down, worn out,

* "Life of James II." vol. ii. p. 598.

dying—lead a great people to go with him, heart and hand, in the work of their own national salvation, as he had led his own countrymen in the full vigour of his early manhood. Before the news arrived from St. Germain, he had been in communication with Sunderland on the state of affairs in England. In the remarkable correspondence, carried on in the third person, between the king and this Ulysses of the distracted camps of the two factions, William expresses his doubts of calling a new Parliament; “the Tories giving him great hopes, and making him great promises.” Sunderland replies with a freedom which sounds like the greatest integrity. “It is a melancholy thing, that the king, who has more understanding than anybody who comes near him, is imposed on by mountebanks, or by such as, he himself knows, hate both his person and his government.”* William, on the 10th of October, sent Mr. Galway to Somers, to confer with him confidentially on the state of English politics. Somers drew up a body of arguments to induce the king to call a new Parliament, of which the first argument was, “the present ferment and disposition of the nation;” and he says, with a politician’s confidence in the principle of expediency, “the art of governing in England is watching and using such opportunities.” The king came from Holland on the 4th of November. On the 11th he dissolved the Parliament.

On the 30th of December, the two Houses met, and Harley was chosen Speaker of the Commons, by a majority of fourteen over Littleton, the Whig Speaker of a former Parliament. On the last day of the year 1701, king William delivered his last parliamentary speech,—“the best speech,” says Burnet, “that he or any other prince ever made to his people.” He alluded to the loyal and seasonable Addresses which he had received, in resentment of the late proceedings of the king of France. He described the setting up of the pretended prince of Wales, as king of England, as the highest indignity that could be offered to himself and to the nation. It so nearly concerned every man who had a regard for the Protestant religion, or the present and future quiet and happiness of his country, that he earnestly exhorted them to lay it seriously to heart. He then proceeded to take a general view of the position of England with reference to the Spanish succession:

“By the French king’s placing his grandson on the throne of Spain, he is in a condition to oppress the rest of Europe, unless speedy and effectual measures be taken. Under this pretence, he is become the real master of the whole Spanish monarchy; he has made it to be entirely depending on France, and disposes of it as

* Hardwicke State Papers, vol. ii. p. 447.

of his own dominions, and by that means he has surrounded his neighbours in such a manner, that, though the name of peace may be said to continue, yet they are put to the expense and inconvenience of war. This must affect England in the nearest and most sensible manner, in respect to our trade, which will soon become precarious in all the variable branches of it; in respect to our peace and safety at home, which we cannot hope should long continue; and in respect to that part, which England ought to take in the preservation of the liberty of Europe.” The king then announced that he had concluded several alliances, in order to avert the general calamity with which the rest of Christendom is threatened by the exorbitant power of France. “It is fit I should tell you, the eyes of all Europe are upon this parliament; all matters are at a stand till your resolutions are known; and therefore no time ought to be lost. You have yet an opportunity, by God’s blessing, to secure to you, and your posterity, the quiet enjoyment of your religion and liberties, if you are not wanting to yourselves, but will exert the ancient vigour of the English nation; but I tell you plainly, my opinion is, if you do not lay hold on this occasion, you have no reason to hope for another.” He called upon them to provide a great strength at sea, and a land force that should be proportionate to the forces of the allies. He exhorted them to take care of the public credit, “which cannot be preserved but by keeping sacred that maxim, that they shall never be losers who trust to a parliamentary security.” The king concluded with this bold and stirring exhortation:

“My lords and gentlemen; I hope you are come together determined to avoid all manner of disputes and differences; and resolved to act with a general and hearty concurrence for promoting the common cause, which alone can make this a happy session. I should think it as great a blessing as could befall England, if I could observe you as much inclined to lay aside those unhappy fatal animosities, which divide and weaken you, as I am disposed to make all my subjects safe and easy as to any, even the highest offences, committed against me. Let me conjure you to disappoint the only hope of our enemies by your unanimity. I have shown, and will always show, how desirous I am to be the common father of all my people. Do you, in like manner, lay aside parties and divisions. Let there be no other distinction heard of amongst us for the future but of those who are for the Protestant religion, and the present establishment, and of those who mean a Popish prince, and a French government. I will only add this; if you do in good earnest desire to see England hold the balance of Europe,

and to be indeed at the head of the Protestant interest, it will appear by your right improving the present opportunity."

This speech, so earnest, so manly, so thoroughly addressed to the great English heart, could be met with no factious strife or sullen coldness. William had the nation at his back. The Commons very speedily voted a supply of six hundred thousand pounds. They resolved that an Address be presented to the king, requesting that it be an article in the several treaties of alliance, "That no peace shall be made with France, until his majesty and the nation have reparation for the great indignity offered by the French king, in owning and declaring the pretended prince of Wales king of England, Scotland, and Ireland." They voted forty thousand men for the land forces, and forty thousand for sea service. The only want of unanimity was in the resistance to a Bill "for abjuring the pretended prince of Wales," but this was finally passed on the 24th of February.

When William went to Holland in the summer of 1701 he appeared in the last stage of bodily feebleness. His spirit had been deeply mortified by the parliamentary conflicts which promised little of future tranquillity. But in the labours of that autumn his health appeared to grow better. It has been admirably said: "Let those who doubt the dominion of the soul over the bodily powers; who deny that a strong mind can sway, and strengthen, and force onward a feeble and suffering frame; let such observe, whether, in the last labours of William to form the Alliance, or in the Alliance itself when formed, they can discover any trace of sickness—one single mark of languor or decline."* The altered spirit of the English Parliament seemed to infuse a new life into the king. He took delight in his additions to Hampton Court. He went there once a week to hunt, although so weak as to be obliged to be lifted on his horse. It was there that, on Saturday the 21st of February, "he fell from his horse that stumbled at a mole-hill." † He fractured his collar-bone; but the injury was not considered serious. He was conveyed to Kensington. On the 23rd he sent a message to the Commons, in which he said that, being confined by an unhappy accident from coming in person, he thus signified what he designed to have spoken from the throne. He referred to the appointment of commissioners in the first year of his reign for treating of a union between England and Scotland. He was convinced that nothing would more contribute to the present and future happiness and security of the two kingdoms than a firm and entire

* Lord Mahon, "War of the Succession in Spain," p. 43.

† Vernon Letters, vol. iii. p. 184.

union between them. "His majesty would esteem it a peculiar felicity if, during his reign, some happy expedient for making both kingdoms one might take place; and is therefore extremely desirous that a treaty for that purpose might be set on foot; and does, in the most earnest manner, recommend this affair to the consideration of the House." It was a solemn appeal, which was made doubly solemn by the event which was impending. On the 3rd of March Vernon wrote that the king "is very near well of his hurt." Three days later he was in extreme danger. Albemarle had been sent to Holland, to arrange for an early campaign. "He came back on the 7th of March, in the morning, with so good an account of everything, that, if matters of that kind could have wrought on the king, it must have revived him: but the coldness with which he received it showed how little hopes were left. Soon after he said '*Je tire vers ma fin*'—I draw towards my end."* He signed a Commission for passing the Bill of Abjuration and the Money Bill. The next day, the 8th of March, he was evidently dying. He received the sacrament. "He was often looking up to heaven in many short ejaculations." He took Portland by the hand, "and carried it to his heart with much tenderness," but his voice was gone. "His reason and all his senses were entire to the last minute. . . . He died with a clear and full presence of mind; and with a wonderful tranquillity." † The enemies of William could not respect this tranquillity, and wanted some better evidence of his piety than the circumstance that "when he was so weak that he could scarce speak, he gave the archbishop of Canterbury his hand, as a sign that he firmly believed the truth of the Christian religion." ‡ The contemporary and the historical revilers of William III. have passed away, as those worshippers of absolute power have passed away who toasted "William's horse;" and drank "a health to the little gentleman dressed in velvet." § He died before any new caprice of fortune,—any fickleness of public opinion,—came to cloud the bright prospect which was opening before him, of the destinies of the country which he had served so well, and which had so ill rewarded him, and of his own land which never failed to recognize his admirable qualities. "The earl of Portland told me," says Burnet, "that when he was once encouraging him, from the good state his affairs were in, both at home and abroad, to take more heart, the king answered him,—that he knew death was that which he had looked at on all occasions without terror; sometimes he would have been glad to have been delivered

* Burnet.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*

§ The mole that raised the hill over which "Sorrel" stumbled.

out of all his troubles ; but he confessed now he saw another scene, and could wish to live a little longer." The wish was not granted by the Supreme Disposer of the affairs of nations. But the chief object of William's life was in great part accomplished. The union of Europe was consolidated. "Just as the last hand was given to this immense and complicated machine, the master workman died: but the work was formed on true mechanical principles, and it was as truly wrought." It went by the impulse it had received from the first mover. The man was dead: but the grand alliance survived, in which king William lived and reigned."*

* Burke. "Regicide Peace."

NOTE.—AN ACT FOR THE FURTHER LIMITATION OF THE CROWN AND BETTER SECURING THE RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES OF THE SUBJECT.

THE Preamble to this Act recites the tenor of the Statute of the 1st of William and Mary; and sets forth that the late queen and the duke of Gloucester being dead, the king had recommended a further provision for the Succession of the Crown:—

"Therefore for a further provision of the succession of the crown in the Protestant line, we, your majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the lords spiritual and temporal and commons in this present Parliament assembled, do beseech your majesty that it may be enacted and declared, and be it enacted and declared, by the king's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal and commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that the most excellent princess Sophia, electress and duchess dowager of Hanover, daughter of the most excellent princess Elizabeth, late queen of Bohemia, daughter of our late sovereign lord king James the first, of happy memory, be and is hereby declared to be the next in succession in the Protestant line to the imperial crown and dignity of the said realms of England, France, and Ireland, with the dominions and territories therunto belonging, after his majesty and the princess Ann of Denmark, and in default of issue of the said princess Ann and of his majesty respectively; and that from and after the decease of his said majesty, our now sovereign lord, and of her royal highness the princess Ann of Denmark, and for default of issue of the said princess Ann and of his majesty respectively, the crown and royal government of the said kingdoms of England, France, and Ireland, and of the dominions therunto belonging, with the royal state and dignity of the said realms, and all honours, styles, titles, regalities, prerogatives, powers, jurisdictions, and authorities to the same belonging and appertaining, shall be, remain, and continue to the said most excellent princess Sophia, and the heirs of her body, being Protestants. And thereunto the said lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, shall and will, in the name of all the people of this realm, most humbly and faithfully submit themselves, their heirs and posterities, and do faithfully promise, after the deceases of his majesty and her royal highness, and the failure of the heirs of their respective bodies, to stand to, maintain and defend the said princess Sophia, and the heirs of her body, being Protestants, according to the limitation and succession of the crown in this Act specified and contained, to the utmost of their powers, with their lives and estates, against all persons whatsoever that shall attempt anything to the contrary.

"Provided always, and it is hereby enacted, that all and every person and persons who shall or may take or inherit the said crown by virtue of the limitation of this present Act, and is, are, or shall be reconciled to, or shall hold communion with the See or Church of Rome, or shall profess the Popish religion, or shall marry a Papist, shall be subject to such incapacities as in such case or cases are by the said recited Act (1st Gul. and Mar.) provided, enacted, and established. And that every king and queen of this realm who shall come to and succeed in the imperial crown of this kingdom, by virtue of this Act, shall have the coronation oath administered to him, her, or them, at their respective coronations, according to the Act of Parliament made in the first year of the reign of his majesty and the said late queen Mary, entitled 'an Act for establishing the coronation oath,' and shall make, subscribe, and repeat the declaration in the Act first above recited, mentioned, or referred to, in the manner and form thereby prescribed.

"And whereas it is requisite and necessary that some further provision be made for securing our religion, laws, and liberties, from and after the death of his majesty and the princess Ann of Denmark; and in default of issue of the body of the said princess and of his majesty respectively, be it enacted by the king's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same,

"That whosoever shall hereafter come to the possession of this crown shall join in communion with the Church of England as by law established.

"That in case the crown and imperial dignity of this realm shall hereafter come to any person, not being a native of this kingdom of England, this nation be not obliged to engage in any war for the defence of any dominions or territories which do not belong to the crown of England, without the consent of Parliament.

"That no person, who shall hereafter come to the possession of this crown shall go out of the dominions of England, Scotland, or Ireland, without consent of Parliament.

"That from and after the time that the further limitation by this Act shall take effect, all matters and things relating to the well-governing of this kingdom, which are properly cognizable in the privy council by the laws and customs of this realm shall be transacted there, and all resolutions taken thereupon shall be signed by such of the privy council as shall advise and consent to the same.

"That after the said limitation shall take effect as aforesaid, no person born out of the kingdoms of England, Scotland, or Ireland, or the dominions thereunto belonging, (although he be naturalised or made a denizen, except such as are born of English parents), shall be capable to be of the privy council, or a member of either house of Parliament, or to enjoy any office or place of trust, either civil or military, or to have any grant of lands, tenements, or hereditaments from the crown to himself, or to any other or others in trust for him.

"That no person who has an office or place of profit under the king, or receives a pension from the crown, shall be capable of serving as a member of the House of Commons.

"That after the said limitation shall take effect as aforesaid, judges' commissions be made quam diu 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.

"That no pardon under the great seal of England be pleadable to an impeachment by the commons in Parliament.

"And whereas the laws of England are the birthright of the people thereof, and all the kings and queens who shall ascend the throne of this realm ought to administer the government of the same according to the said laws, and all their officers and ministers ought to serve them respectively according to the same, the said lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, do therefore humbly pray, that all the laws and statutes of this realm for securing the established religion, and the rights and liberties of the people thereof, and all other laws and statutes of the same now in force, may be ratified and confirmed. And the same are, by his majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the said lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, and by authority of the same, ratified and confirmed accordingly."

CHAPTER VI.

Accession of queen Anne.—Her declaration to the Privy Council.—Parliament continues sitting.—Preponderance of Tories.—Marlborough sent as envoy to the States-General.—War declared.—Marlborough's first Campaign.—Expedition to Cadiz.—Vigo.—New Parliament.—Tory majority.—Bill against Occasional Conformity.—Defoe's Shortest Way with the Dissenters.—Marlborough created a Duke.—Revolt in the Cévennes.—Marlborough's second Campaign.—The Methuen Treaty with Portugal.—Occasional Conformity Bill again rejected by the Lords.—Aylesbury Election Case.—The Great Storm.—Oaths of Witnesses.—Queen Anne's Bounty.—Touching for the Evil.—May-Poles.

"WHEN the king came to die," says the duchess of Marlborough, "I felt nothing of that satisfaction which I once thought I should have had upon this occasion; and my lord and lady Jersey's writing and sending perpetually to give an account as his breath grew shorter and shorter, filled me with horror." It is the common story of royal death-beds. "As soon as the breath was out of king William," as lord Dartmouth affirms, "by which all expectations from him were at an end, the bishop of Salisbury drove hard to bring the first tidings to St. James's; where he prostrated himself at the new queen's feet, full of joy and duty."* From Edward III. to William III.,—from William III. to George IV.,—it was ever the same:

"Gone to salute the rising morn."

That Anne should have dropped a tear for her brother-in-law was scarcely to be expected. Friends they had never been. Since the death of Mary they had avoided all unseemly differences. Anne, subjected to the will of a domineering favourite, who hated William upon the well-known principle that we hate those whom we have injured, could form no independent opinion of his merits as a king. She regarded him as a disagreeable man, generally sullen, and rarely civil. His appointment of Marlborough in the summer of 1700 to an employment of high trust, had probably disposed the new queen to make no hesitation in accepting the great principles of foreign policy which William had rendered triumphant by his unshrinking constancy. It has been attributed to the foresight of the "master workman" in the Grand Alliance, that he appointed Marlborough to the command of the troops sent to the assistance

* Note on Burnet, vol. v. p. 1.