

## CHAPTER XI.

Warlike Addresses of Parliament.—Reverses.—Battle of Almanza.—Marlborough's visit to Charles XII. of Sweden.—Indecisive Campaign of 1707.—Siege of Toulon.—Wreck of Sir Cloudesley Shovel.—Naval miscarriages.—Complaints in Parliament.—Discontents in Scotland.—Jacobite Plots.—Attempted invasion.—Dismissal of Harley and St. John from the ministry.—Campaign of 1708.—Ghent surrendered to the French.—Battle of Oudenarde.—Sardinia and Minorca surrendered to the Allies.—Death of the Prince of Denmark.—Surrender of Lille.—Proposals of France for Peace.—Campaign of 1709.—Surrender of Tournay.—Battle of Malplaquet.

THE Parliament which met in December, 1706, is chiefly memorable for its ratification of the Treaty of Union. The ministry was all powerful, chiefly through the splendid successes of Marlborough in the Netherlands, and from the favourable aspects of the war in Spain and Italy. An indirect overture for peace had been made by Louis; but the English Parliament was in no pacific attitude. The queen called for supplies, "sufficient for carrying on the war next year in so effectual a manner, that we may be able to improve everywhere the advantages of this successful campaign." The Lords congratulated her majesty upon "the ever-memorable victory of Ramillies," and expressed what they called "the universal satisfaction of your people," at the public declaration which the queen had made "that no negotiations for peace should be entered into, but in conjunction with all the members of the Grand Alliance." The Commons promised "such speedy and effectual supplies as, by the continuance of God's blessing upon your majesty's arms, may establish the balance of power in Europe, by a safe, honourable, and lasting peace." The supplies were granted with unusual rapidity; and the pension of 75000. per annum to the duke of Marlborough was settled upon his posterity. When the Parliament was prorogued, it was renewed by Proclamation, declaring that the first Parliament of Great Britain should be held on the 23rd of October.

The warlike successes of the Allies during this year were by no means commensurate with the expectations of the government. In Spain there was a fatal reverse. We have already seen how the insurrection of Catalonia and Valencia had utterly failed, through the incompetency of the Austrian prince and his generals. When Peterborough no longer animated their courage by his dar-

ing, and combated their hesitation by his energetic sagacity, the good fortune which gave the Allies Barcelona utterly forsook them. Madrid had been retaken by marshal Berwick, and king Philip was again seated in the Escorial. The so-called king Charles, instead of remaining with the army in Valencia, to lead them against Berwick, returned to Barcelona. In April, lord Galway and the Portuguese general, Das Minas, took the field, with about seventeen thousand men. The French and Spanish army was superior in numbers, especially in cavalry. They met on the plain of Almanza; and there a battle was fought, in which the Allies were utterly routed. Four thousand of the English, Dutch, and Portuguese were slain on that fatal Easter Monday, the 25th of April, and eight thousand were taken prisoners. A letter from Mr. Methuen, the English minister at Lisbon, to the duke of Marlborough, says, "Our infantry is wholly taken or destroyed; but of the horse three thousand five hundred are saved, the greater part of which are Portuguese, who, being on the right, gave way upon the first shock of the enemy, and abandoned the foot."\* The towns of Valencia and Aragon were surrendered to the victor. Peterborough's exploits were nearly fruitless. In Catalonia alone had king Charles any adherents. That province continued the seat of warfare, with English assistance, for three more years; but the spirit which only could secure success was gone. It was no longer an insurrection in favour of the House of Austria against the House of Bourbon; it was a national demonstration for king Philip against a foreign enemy. The terrible defeat of Almanza went to the heart of the humblest in England, if we may judge from Addison's amusing Essay upon omens. The salt is spilt by an unlucky guest, and the lady of the house says to her husband, "My dear, misfortunes never come single. Do not you remember that the pigeon-house fell the very afternoon that our careless wench spilt the salt upon the table?" "Yes, my dear, and the next post brought us an account of the battle of Almanza."†

Marlborough, the diplomatist, was more busy in 1707 than Marlborough, the general. There was a young king of Sweden, with a passionate desire for war and conquest, who would not take the orthodox course of heartily joining the Grand Alliance against France, or of throwing his weight into the scale of France against the Grand Alliance. Charles XII. had plans of his own, which he pur-

\* Dispatches, vol. iii. p. 355.

† Lord Macaulay, in his "Essays," has quoted this passage, to observe that much clearer omens indicated disaster in Spain. We quote it to show the impression which public disasters made upon the popular mind at home.

sued with a self-will which had very little respect to the power or influence of any state or confederacy of states. He had defeated the Russians in 1700. He had first conquered, and then deposed king Augustus of Poland, and had set up a man of noble family, Stanislaus, as king; Augustus was also elector of Saxony. Charles led his army into Saxony; held its elector in a sort of honourable captivity; and from his camp at Alt Ranstadt, near Leipsic, demanded the submission of Europe to his decrees. Louis XIV. in the reverses of 1706 turned his views to Charles as an ally; bribed his ministers; even solicited him to become the mediator between the Bourbons and the Allies. The English government had also its alarms; and Marlborough was in communication with general Grumbkow, who had been sent on a mission to Charles by the king of Prussia. The Prussian gave the young Swede a glowing account of Marlborough and his actions, which was duly reported to him whom the general styles "his hero:"—"Among other particulars, he asked me if your highness yourself led the troops to the charge. I replied, that as all the troops were animated with the same ardour for fighting, your highness was not under the necessity of leading the charge; but that you were everywhere and always in the hottest of the action, and gave your orders with that coolness which excites general admiration. I then related to him that you had been thrown from your horse; the death of your aide-de-camp, Brinfield, and many other things. He took such pleasure in this recital, that he made me repeat the same thing twice. I also said that your highness always spoke of his majesty with the highest esteem and admiration, and ardently desired to pay your respects. He observed, 'that is not likely, but I should be delighted to see a general of whom I have heard so much.'"\* The general of whom Charles had heard so much was not slow to gratify him. On the 27th of April Marlborough was at Alt Ranstadt. He writes to Harley that he had that day his audience of the king; delivered the queen's letter; and that his majesty seemed very well inclined to the interest of the Allies. † Lediard, the biographer of Marlborough, who was in the camp at Alt Ranstadt, gives us a more precise view of the courtly management of the duke at this audience. He presented to his Swedish majesty a letter from the queen of Great Britain, and, at delivering it, made him the following compliment in French: 'Sir, I present to your majesty a letter, not from the Chancery; but from the heart of the queen, my mistress, and written with her own hand. Had not her sex prevented it, she would have crossed the sea to see a prince admired by the

\* Coxe, vol. iii. p. 159.

† Dispatches, vol. iii. p. 347.

whole universe. I am, in this particular, more happy than the queen; and I wish I could serve some campaigns under so great a general as your majesty, that I might learn what I yet want to know in the art of war."\* Charles was very gracious in return. He said he would do nothing to prejudice the common cause in general, or the Protestant religion in particular. He cared very little for the common cause. Voltaire has shown what he did really care for. Marlborough, Voltaire says, "fixed his eyes attentively upon the king. When he spoke to him of war in general, he imagined that he saw, in his majesty, a natural aversion towards France, and that he took a secret pleasure in speaking of the conquests of the Allies. He mentioned the Czar to him, and took notice, that his eyes kindled whenever he was named, notwithstanding the moderation of the conference. He, moreover, remarked, that the king had a map of Muscovy lying before him on the table. This was sufficient to determine him in his judgment, that the king of Sweden's real design, and sole ambition, were to dethrone the Czar, as he had already done the king of Poland." Marlborough promised pensions to the Swedish minister, count Piper, and other functionaries, paying one year in advance; and then he returned to the Hague, to go to his accustomed fighting-ground.

Marlborough wrote from Brussels to Harley, in the middle of May, "All our troops are in motion. . . . Since their success in Spain, the enemy talk very big, and pretend to give us battle; for my part, I think nothing could be more for the advantage of the Allies." † But there was no battle in the Netherlands during that campaign. Vendôme commanded the French army, and he was content with defensive operations. The States controlled Marlborough's plans. Thus the two generals were constantly occupied in watching and counteracting each the strategy of the other. But if Marlborough was unable to strike any decisive blow, he had consulted with prince Eugene for the accomplishment of a plan that was calculated to injure France in a vital part. An attempt was to be made, by land and sea, to penetrate into the south-eastern part of Louis's own territory. The land forces, under the duke of Savoy and Prince Eugene, were to invade Provence. An English and Dutch fleet, under sir Cloudesley Shovel, were to co-operate in this bold attempt. In the beginning of July, Victor Amadeus and Eugene crossed the Alps by the pass of the Col di Tende; and on the 11th they made the passage of the Var; dislodged

\* Lediard, "Life of Marlborough," vol. ii. p. 166.

† Dispatches, vol. iii. p. 869.

French from their intrenchments on the right bank of that river; and on the 25th encamped near Toulon. The difficulties of this attempt at invasion are described by a high military authority. The fortifications of Toulon were "respectable;" the neighbouring heights presented many strong positions, difficult to be acquired or to be retained; the force of the Allies was wholly incompetent to invest the place, so that the communication between the garrison and the army of marshal Tessé could not be impeded; the besiegers were wholly dependent upon the fleet for provisions and military stores.\* In less than one month, the object of the expedition was abandoned. To revenge, it is said, the bombardment of Turin, the duke of Savoy resolved to bombard Toulon, in which act of destruction the fleet was the chief agent. The "diversion," as it was called, drew off some of the forces of France from other quarters; but the fires of Toulon blazed for no sufficient object, unless success in war is to be measured by the amount of havoc and misery which man can inflict on man.

All that naval daring could effect in the siege of Toulon was accomplished by the fleet under the command of sir Cloudesley Shovel. This admiral was faithful and incorruptible, at the time when James II. employed every art to seduce the commanders of the English fleets to betray their trusts. "He was not a man to be spoken to," was the tribute of a Jacobite emissary to the character of sir Cloudesley Shovel. Returning home from the siege of Toulon, with fifteen ships of the line, his flag-ship was wrecked on the rocks of Scilly, with two other vessels, on the night of the 22nd of October. The crews of the *Associate*, the *Eagle*, and the *Romney* all perished. The body of the admiral, supposed to be cast ashore by the waves, was found after some days, and was brought to Westminster Abbey for interment with all honour; and in that house of the illustrious dead may be seen his sumptuous monument. But there is a remarkable story connected with his fate, which was published under the authority of the earl of Romney, grandson to sir Cloudesley Shovel. Many years after the wreck, an aged woman confessed to the parish minister, on her death-bed, that, exhausted with fatigue one man who had survived the wreck reached her hut, and that she had murdered him to secure the valuable property on his person. This worst of wreckers then produced a ring taken from the finger of her victim, and it was afterwards identified as one presented to sir Cloudesley Shovel by lord Berkeley. Burnet has described the catastrophe of the wreck: "When sir Cloudesley Shovel was sailing home with the

\* Sir George Murray, in *Dispatches*, vol. iii. p. 380.

great ships, by an unaccountable carelessness and security, he, and two other capital ships, ran foul upon those rocks beyond the Land's End, known by the name of the Bishop and his Clerks; and they were in a minute broke to pieces; so that not a man of them escaped. It was dark, but there was no wind, otherwise the whole fleet had perished with them: all the rest tacked in time, and so they were saved. Thus one of the greatest seamen of the age was lost, by an error in his own profession and a great misreckoning; for he had lain by all the day before and set sail at night, believing that next morning he would have time enough to guard against running on those rocks; but he was swallowed up within three hours after."\*

There was another disaster at sea, which in the ensuing session of Parliament led, with other accidents, to serious complaints of naval miscarriages. A convoy of five ships of the line were to guard a fleet of merchantmen to Lisbon, chiefly laden with stores and horses for the king of Portugal. Fourteen sail of French ships from Brest and Dunkirk met the English ships off the Lizard; and of this convoy one vessel was blown up and three taken. Most of the merchantmen escaped, and reached their destination. The posture of affairs was not agreeable; and the first Parliament of Great Britain met on the 23rd of October, in no very placable temper. The prince of Denmark was Lord-high Admiral; and against his management, or rather that of his Council, to whom he deferred in all things, were the complaints of Parliament openly or covertly directed. Lord Haversham's denunciations spoke, to some extent, the murmurs of the people: "Your ships have been taken by your enemies, as the Dutch take your herrings, by shoals, upon your own coasts; nay, your royal navy itself has not escaped. And these are frequent misfortunes, and big with innumerable mischiefs. Your merchants are beggared, your commerce is broke, your trade is gone, your people and manufactures ruined. \* \* \* My lords, the face of our affairs is visibly changed in the space of one year's time, and the temper of the nation too." † In all wars, the English have ever been impatient of misfortune, and even of the absence of success. It was time that Marlborough and the Whigs should make some strenuous exertions to recover their popularity. They turned out Harley, and compelled St. John to resign; for these very able but not very scrupulous coadjutors were intriguing against them. Two more years of fierce warfare, in which the national excitement was abundantly kept up;

\* "Own Time," vol. v. p. 324. † "Parliamentary History," vol. vi. col. 599.

and then a season of polemical fury, of court intrigue, an outcry for peace, and a total change of men and measures.

The Union, as might be expected, has not worked very smoothly in Scotland. The general taxation of the two countries being assimilated, there were perpetual differences about the collection of the Excise. The Scots had been accustomed to have their duties farmed, upon a system of composition for the tax payers. When the gauger came with his accurate measurements, and the loose system would no longer prevail, the indignation was very general, though very unreasonable. The Customs were also obnoxious; and a contraband trade was very soon established. The Equivalent money, too, was delayed in its arrival, from the somewhat low state of the English exchequer. When it was paid there were only a hundred thousand pounds sent in specie, and the remainder in bills. Even the specie was not welcomed; for the populace of Edinburgh were incited to stone the carters who conducted the precious deposit to the Castle. The people at first refused to take the bills; but regularity of payment soon removed the difficulty. There had been a year of grumbling on both sides of the Tweed; for the English merchants looked with aversion, upon the system that had been attempted, of sending foreign goods to the Thames as Scottish merchandise. There were seizures of French wine and brandy, which were held to be smuggled from abroad. The interference of the government prevented a collision, by remitting the penalties which the Board of Customs would have exacted. But there was mutual exasperation; and very angry commercial jealousy.

After the discussions in the Scottish Parliament upon the question of Union, a Jacobite agent from France had been busy in stirring up the disaffected to an insurrection. This ambassador from St. Germain's was colonel Hooke; and he came with offers of French assistance, to unite with the Scots to whom the Union was held to be hateful, for the invasion of England. The legitimate king was to lead the conquering forces of his ancient realm; and he should wear the two crowns, as his royal ancestor, the sixth James had worn them. This enthusiastic agent had communications with several peers of well-known Jacobite principles. He was also endeavouring to work among the Cameronians; and he received assurances from our amusing friend, John Ker, of Kersland, that five thousand of these fighting zealots should take the field. This worthy patriot had again seen the duke of Queensberry, and told him that there was a project to bring in the Pretender. "The duke was much surprised when he understood a

French power was to land in Scotland, and desired me to go into their measures in order to discover the plot." Ker had scruples: "I told him I was afraid I had gone through too much dirty work already." The duke went to London. "I retired," he says, "to Kersland, to breathe some honest air in the country." But "the bugbear of Popery" still troubled his head. The agents came from St. Germain's; let him into the whole affair; promised that nothing should be wanting to secure the Protestant religion; settled that five thousand troops should be sent from France; and forthwith, says the candid autobiographer, "I acquainted the duke of Queensberry with what had passed." In this juncture Ker exercised his influence with the Cameronians, not to excite them to insurrection, and then betray them, but in persuading them not to rise. His information, however, from the Jacobite agents was correct, and his warnings to the government were useful. But he received small personal benefit for his "good services;" and he adds, out of the depth of his frank soul, "Truly, I dare say, I was rewarded just as I deserved."\*

Had the French expedition made a descent, the government might have been seriously embarrassed, for the queen's troops in Scotland were very few, and there was little preparation for resistance. Previous to the attempt, there had been a serious disorganization in the ministry. Harley was carrying on, through his influence over the queen, schemes for the construction of a party opposed to the powerful ministers, Godolphin and Marlborough with whom he had been serving. A clerk of Harley, named Gregg, was detected in a correspondence with the French secretary-of-state, to whom he had communicated important secrets of office. He was tried, and convicted of treason on his own confession; but he persisted to the end in averring that Harley had no part in his treachery. Various revelations were made of the subtle minister's intrigues at court, and Godolphin and Marlborough insisted on his dismissal. The queen would not consent. The lord-treasurer and the commander-in-chief did not appear at the Cabinet Council, refusing to meet Harley. The queen reluctantly yielded to necessity, and the secretary resigned the seals. St. John and other official persons also resigned. The wretched Gregg was executed. The dismissal of Harley was the prelude to that change in the councils of Anne which divided the nation more completely into Whig and Tory factions, and produced a struggle for political ascendancy as remarkable as any in the history of parties. The Whigs, for a time, were in the ascendant. The resignation of St.

\* "Memoirs," p. 40 to p. 61.

John opened the important office of secretary-at-war to Robert Walpole.

It was not till the beginning of July, 1708, that the war in the Netherlands assumed any decisive character. There was a French army of a hundred thousand men advancing to Brabant, under the command of the duke de Vendôme. The Dutch had conducted themselves with so much harshness in the fortified places which had been surrendered after the battle of Ramilies, that the inhabitants had become thoroughly adverse to the cause of the Allies, and they looked with joy at the advance of the French. Marlborough was inactive through June, waiting for prince Eugene and his army, marching from Vienna. In the meantime the gates of Ghent and Bruges had been opened to the French; and Marlborough wrote to Godolphin, on the 9th of July, "The States have used this country so ill, that I no ways doubt but all the towns in it will play us the same trick as Ghent has done, whenever they have it in their power."\* At the date of this letter Marlborough was marching day and night, to come up with the French who were preparing to invest Oudenarde. Prince Eugene had joined him alone, having hurried on before his troops. They immediately determined to attack Vendôme, and to take a line of march that would interpose between him and the French frontier.

But Marlborough, at this most important juncture, would have been little fitted for conducting a great battle, had he been formed of the same yielding materials as ordinary men. In the letter to Godolphin of the 9th of July, in which he attributes the surrender of Ghent to the harsh conduct of the Dutch to the people of the Spanish Netherlands, he says, "I should answer two of your letters, but the treachery of Ghent, continual marching, and some letters I have received from England, have so vexed me, that I was yesterday in so great a fever, that the doctor would have persuaded me to have gone to Brussels; but I thank God I am now better, and by the next post I hope to answer your letters." This impassive man can feel then. His plans of warfare are disconcerted; he is exhausted by wearisome marches; but, worst of all, he has the agitation of letters "received from England." The future greatness of the ambitious commander, who has more of the dizzy heights of fortune yet to scale, may altogether depend upon those letters. He had written at the end of May to Godolphin, "I am very glad to find by yours of the 11th, that you have hopes that Mrs. Morley, though late, will do what you desire. Nothing else can make us happy in serving her well; for though I should have success, that might give

\* Coxe, vol. iv. p. 133, edit. 1820.

safety abroad, but could not hinder disagreeable things at home."\* Mrs. Morley (the queen), though she had dismissed Harley from her councils, kept up her correspondence with him through her new favourite, Mrs. Masham. Mrs. Freeman (the duchess) had not yielded up her old influence without an attempt to subdue Mrs. Morley entirely to her will, not by blandishments, but by an imperial contempt of her majesty's understanding and conduct. The duchess, when, in the autumn of 1707, she remonstrated against the appointment of two high-churchmen to vacant benefices, employed the following extraordinary language:—"I hope your majesty will not be so much offended with me as you have lately been, if I believe those things for your good that are thought so by those that have served you with so much success—men that have a view of all things and all sorts of people, whereas your majesty has had the misfortune to be misinformed in general things. Even from twelve years old, you have heard in your father's court strange names given to men by flatterers in these former reigns, for no reason in the world but that they would not continue to carry out Popery. That, and many other things too long to repeat in a letter, has given your majesty very wrong notions, and you are like people that never read but one sort of books,—you can't possibly judge unless you heard things stated fairly."† The ascendancy of Mrs. Masham was, under the tuition of Harley, rapidly driving Mrs. Morley to cast off her dear friend Mrs. Freeman, who used such plain speaking. Upon such slight things do the fates of nations depend. Marlborough had a fever fit; but he roused himself, and, three days after, won the great victory of Oudenarde.

Those letters to the ministry at home in which Marlborough relates the results of a battle rarely contain any precise military details. In the instance of his victory at Oudenarde, he sends a note of a few lines to the Secretary of State, referring him to the aide-de-camp he has sent "to give the queen an account of his great success." But five days after this battle of the 11th of July, he writes a letter of very minute information to count Piper, the minister of Charles XII. of Sweden, in which he describes his operations, for the information of that king to whom fighting was the great object of existence. We translate a few passages of this letter, written in French, which may still be read with interest. Having described the occupation of Ghent by the enemy, after they had remained some weeks in their camp of Braine-la-Leude, he says, "their army marched at the same time to make assurance of their new conquest, believing that by that they would become

\* Coxe, vol. iv. p. 108. † Correspondence of Sarah, duchess of Marlborough.

masters of all Flanders. They first desired to besiege Oudenarde, which they had invested on the 9th, and to cover the siege their army marched on the 10th to seize on the camp of Lessines. They were only two leagues from it, when they found that we had anticipated them, by forced marches. Seeing that we had already begun to pass the Dender at Lessines, they recalled their forces from before Oudenarde, to fall back upon Gavre, upon the Escaut [Scheldt] previous to passing that river. This passage they commenced at four o'clock on the morning of the 11th; and the same day we continued our march towards Oudenarde, five leagues distant from our camp.\* It was this march of unexampled rapidity that gave Marlborough his triumph. The French were quite unprepared for the sudden presence of his army, ready to give immediate battle, after a fatiguing march through a close country, with a great river to cross at the end of that march. Saint Simon relates that when it was reported to the French Commander, the duke de Vendôme, that all the army of the Allies was in sight, having crossed the Scheldt, he maintained that it could not be true. An officer arrived to confirm the news; but Vendôme still continued obstinate in his opinion. A third messenger, and then he mounted his horse, saying, "that all this was the work of the devil, and that such diligence was impossible." He soon was relieved of his incredulity. We turn again to Marlborough's own narrative. Bridges had been constructed by an advanced detachment. The main body of the army reached these bridges at noon. "The enemy moved forward and took their ground, which obliged our detachment, about three or four o'clock in the afternoon, to attack their advance; which was executed with success. A brigade, having defeated and killed or taken seven battalions, had thus given time to a part of our army to join them, while the enemy formed in lines. Although many of our troops were not yet come up, between five and six o'clock the battle commenced, principally between the infantry; and it lasted till night, when the enemy retreated towards Ghent in great confusion." In this battle scarcely any use was made of artillery. Marlborough's march had been too rapid to allow him to bring more than a few pieces of cannon into the field; and the French appear to have been equally short of this great arm of war. In a despatch to M. de Thungen, Marlborough says, "if we had had two more hours of day, it is probable that the enemy would have been entirely defeated. We have, however, about seven thousand prisoners, besides more than seven hundred officers, many of distinc-

\* Dispatches, vol. iv. p. 114.

tion, with a great number of colours and standards."\* The great general was very far from considering the battle of Oudenarde a total victory. He wrote, indeed, to Godolphin, "I hope I have given such a blow to their foot, that they will not be able to fight any more this year."† But Marlborough had work still to do before that campaign was finished. On the 26th of July, he wrote to Godolphin, that although the success at Oudenarde had lessened the French army by at least twenty thousand men, he was uneasy. He had difficulty in getting cannon; he was in a country where the people had been commanded to abandon their dwellings, and retire to the strong towns. He had a notion, it is related, of penetrating into France by the northern frontier, having masked Lille. Even prince Eugene, with his fiery courage, regarded the attempt as too dangerous. The siege of Lille was therefore to be undertaken. That siege lasted till the winter. Meanwhile the fortified lines of the French near Ypres were destroyed, and Ghent again fell into the power of the Allies. There were successes of importance in other quarters. The island of Sardinia was taken by the English admiral, sir John Leake; and the same enterprising commander, in conjunction with general Stanhope, who had retrieved the fortunes of the Allies in Catalonia carried Port Mahon by storm; and thus the island of Minorca came into the possession of the English, who retained it for half a century. Other triumphs in the Mediterranean and in South America, again established the naval superiority of England.

At the end of October died the husband of queen Anne, prince George of Denmark. For some time previous to his decease there had been a struggle on the part of some of the great Whig leaders to remove him from his office of Lord High Admiral, for which he was certainly incompetent. His death settled the dispute, and opened the way to the completion of a more decided Whig ministry. Upon the pedestal of a statue of prince George, in a niche at one end of the Town-hall of Windsor, it is recorded, in flattering falsehood, such as many another Latin inscription has recorded of the living and the dead, that he was "a hero in every age to be venerated." The sarcasm of Charles II., that he "had tried him drunk and sober, and could find nothing in him," will probably outlive the incense of sir Christopher Wren, who erected the statue in 1713. The great architect could certainly do no less than make prince George "a hero," when in the inscription under the statue of the queen at the opposite end of the same Hall, the sculptor is told that his art is vain, for if he would exhibit the likeness of

\* Dispatches, vol. iv. p. 111.

† Coxe, vol. iv. p. 154.

Anne, he must carve "a goddess." In the eyes of the duchess of Marlborough, whose ascendancy over the queen was gone, the goddess was now something less than Mrs. Morley; for the spiteful Mrs. Freeman says, "Her love to the prince seemed, in the eyes of the world, to be prodigiously great; and great as was the passion of her grief, her stomach was greater, for that very day he died, she ate three very large and hearty meals." Dire had been the offence which the queen had given to the haughty duchess during this summer and autumn. Harley had been dismissed, but in the small house at Windsor which she had purchased, Anne "staid all the sultry season . . . because from the Park, such persons as Mrs. Masham had a mind to bring to her majesty, could be let in privately by the garden." After the death of the prince, the queen spent many hours every day in the closet where he had been wont to sit. "The true reason of her majesty's having this closet to sit in was, that the back-stairs belonging to it came from Mrs. Masham's lodgings, who, by that means, could secretly bring to her whom she pleased. And that a correspondence was thus carried on with Mr. Harley became every day more and more manifest, by the difficulties and objections which her majesty had learnt to raise against almost everything proposed by her ministers." Such is the testimony, no doubt in great part true, which the duchess of Marlborough has handed down, of the commencement of that system of political intrigue which is so difficult to unravel, for the remainder of this reign. There is only one clue to this labyrinth, which must be steadily kept in view if we would wish to escape from its mazes. Queen Anne was secretly hostile, with all the zeal of which her cold nature was capable, to the settlement of the Crown upon the electress Sophia of Hanover and her descendants. She is believed to have cherished a natural, although dangerous, wish that her brother should be her successor, in spite of solemn Acts of Parliament. Whoever would adroitly foster this humour would have her real favour; and Harley was precisely the man to carry his Jacobitism to the point where it might be safe and profitable. The duplicity of too many of the statesmen of England and Scotland was of the same character; and with those of more ambition than honesty, it was merely a matter of calculation whether the elector of Hanover should come to the throne upon Revolution principles, or the chevalier St. George by divine right; when that queen, who was something like a compromise of the two principles should be no more—an event not generally regarded as very distant.

The temper of the queen, during the summer and autumn of

1708, nearly drove Marlborough to a resolution which certainly must have been the most ungenial to his nature, whether we regard his love of power or his avarice. He resolves, about six weeks after his victory of Oudenarde, to "take the first occasion that can be practicable to retire from business." Yes: his homely phrase is "to retire from business." He writes to the duchess in much the same way as a junior partner in a commercial house would write to his wife, complaining of the obstinacy of the head of the firm: "I can't with patience think of continuing much longer in business, having it not in my power to persuade that to be done which I think is right."\* It was worth while to pause before the dissolution of partnership was announced—for to him, at least, the business was a very profitable one. Exclusive of Blenheim, the duke's fixed yearly income, from offices and emoluments, was very nearly fifty-five thousand pounds; and the income of the duchess, from her offices at court, was nine thousand five hundred pounds. The vast income of the duke principally depended upon the continuance of the war. The income of the duchess depended upon her possession of the favour of the queen.† We shall have to note how, in a very short period, the eminent services of the victor at Blenheim and Ramilies were forgotten, and the people became persuaded,—to use the somewhat prejudiced language of Johnson, in noticing the most successful of the bitter pamphlets of Swift,—"that the war was unnecessarily protracted to fill the pockets of Marlborough; and that it would have been continued without end if he could have continued his annual plunder."‡

The siege of Lille was one of the most sanguinary operations of the war in the Netherlands. It was an enterprise of great difficulty, not only from the extreme strength of the place, which had been fortified with all the skill of Vauban, but from the difficulty of the allied armies in obtaining supplies of provisions and military stores. Prince Eugene directed, and Marlborough covered, the siege. The defence was intrusted to marshal Boufflers. The covering forces of the besiegers had to contend with the constant determination of the French to intercept their supplies. One of the most gallant actions of the campaign was that of general Webb. He was conducting a large convoy from Ostend, with a detachment of six thousand men, when he was attacked at Wynendale, by a French force of more than twenty thousand. For two hours Webb fought with admirable skill and resolution; compelled the

\* Coxe, vol. iv. p. 200.

† The details are given in Lord Stanhope's "History of England from the Peace of Utrecht," vol. i. p. 27.

‡ "Lives of the Poets," Cunningham's edit., vol. iii. p. 170.

French to retreat, with immense loss; and brought his convoy in safety to the camp before Lille. The Speaker of the Commons, in conveying the thanks of the house to the general, said, "We are all sensible how much the reducing the fortress of Lille is owing to your courage and conduct." This must have been painful enough to Marlborough, who, with almost incredible meanness, had attributed Webb's victory to general Cadogan, who had a very small share of the responsibility of the action. Webb left the army in just indignation; published an account of the matter; and received the thanks of the Commons in his place in the House. Lille finally capitulated on the 29th of December. Its loss to France was considered almost irreparable. A real desire for peace was now manifest in the court of Versailles. During the protracted siege of nearly five months, the allies lost at least twelve thousand men. The sufferings of the troops were very great. The veteran Auverquerque closed the last of fifty campaigns in the camp before Lille, worn out by age and sickness. In the besieged citadel, the brave Boufflers and his garrison were, at the last extremity, subsisting upon horse-flesh.

The first Session of the second Parliament of Great Britain was opened by Commission on the 16th of November. The Whig interest preponderated; and Sir Richard Onslow was chosen Speaker. The Session was continued till the 24th of April, 1709. In the proceedings of this Session there was one public Act passed, which is still of effect. The ambassador of the czar of Russia having been arrested for a debt to a London tradesman, the czar resented the offence against the privileges of the representatives of sovereignty; and the Statute was passed by which all process against an ambassador, or any of his domestic servants, is declared null and void.\* Another Statute presents a curious illustration of the habits of the people. The "Act to prevent the laying of Wagers relating to the Public," declares that "all wagers to be laid upon any contingency relating to the present war, and all policies of assurance, &c., payable upon any such contingency, shall be utterly void;" and that all persons making such wagers, &c., or their notaries or agents, shall forfeit double the sum for which the wager is laid.† Whether for the issue of a battle or a horse-race, we have been ever a betting people, since we passed out of barbarism into the civilization of which gambling is a feature.

The practice of laying wagers about matters of war and government, according to the preamble of the Act, "hath been found in-

\* Anne, c. 12.

† *Ibid.*, c. 16.

convenient to the public." This allegation is not very precise. When the frequenters of Will's Coffee-house, or White's Chocolate-house, were staking their guineas or their crowns upon the doubtful fortunes of Godolphin or Harley, of the elector of Hanover or the king over the water, their brawlings might have disturbed the wits and courtiers, but they could very slightly affect the general convenience of the public. Nevertheless, the betting was a form in which the opinions of Englishmen displayed themselves; and the odds given might indicate sentiments not very agreeable to the official mind. The war was beginning to be unpopular; the French were making advances for peace. A treaty, or another campaign, was a question of chance rather than of calculation at the beginning of 1709; for if France was suffering and exhausted, Marlborough was flourishing. Let us turn from the betting politicians of London, to the suffering population of Paris. Let us, while we behold at home public credit so high, that the Bank of England obtained subscriptions in four hours of more than two millions for the purpose of doubling their stock and of circulating two millions and a half of exchequer-bills for the aid of the government—let us look upon a picture of misery in France, and learn the price which a people has to pay for the mistaken ambition of its rulers; and for that absolute authority upon which some Englishmen looked with envy and admiration.

The winter of 1709 was unusually severe in France. There was an intense frost of long duration; then a sudden thaw; and then again a frost. By this second frost the grain in the earth, the vines and olive trees, were destroyed. The price of bread rose enormously. But the natural price of corn was further raised by the interference of the government. Royal commissioners bought up the corn, and the official monopolists sold it at a great advance. The sums which this scheme produced, says Saint Simon, "were innumerable, and innumerable were the people who died literally of hunger." The depopulation of Paris in this terrible year offers sufficient evidence of the condition of the kingdom. The average annual number of deaths in the capital was sixteen thousand; in 1709 they were above twenty-nine thousand. The number of marriages decreased one fourth.\* Dividends upon public loans were unpaid; taxes were exacted with extreme rigour; the coin was depreciated; everything rose in price. "The king," says Saint Simon, "had no resources, except in terror, and in his unlimited power, which, boundless as it was, failed also for want of having something to take and to exercise itself upon." In this

\* Buffon. Quoted in Somerville's "History of the Reign of Anne," p. 339.



state, when the realm was nearly exhausted, envoys were sent into Holland to negotiate for peace.

If the rulers of nations were ordinarily moved with pity for suffering humanity, the ministers of the Allied powers might have held out the hand of friendship to France, without any compromise of their just pretensions. If Marlborough had taken a generous and lofty view of public affairs, instead of urging upon Godolphin the necessity for another campaign, a far better peace might have been accomplished than their political enemies at last effected. "Marlborough," says his biographer, "was apprehensive that the king of France was not yet sufficiently humbled to agree to the terms which the Allies were entitled to demand; and consequently represented the expediency of obtaining such an augmentation of force as might enable him to dictate the conditions of peace."\* The advice of Marlborough resulted in the most sanguinary and most useless of his battles; with the conditions of peace less under his dictation than before he had lost eighteen thousand killed and wounded in the slaughter of Malplaquet. And yet so complicated were the interests of the States General, of the Emperor, of the duke of Savoy, of Great Britain,—in some cases those interests were so conflicting,—that it would be unjust to represent Marlborough as the adviser of the harsh and humiliating terms which the Allies thought it politic to demand from France. It is difficult, however, to believe that if he had counselled the ministry at home to treat with Louis in a magnanimous spirit, they would have stood out against the advice of their own negotiator. Marlborough had the grace to refuse enormous bribes from France; but he had also the want of decency to sanction the demand, that if Louis gave up Spain and the Indies to the House of Austria, which he stipulated to do, he should join the Allies in dethroning his own grandson, if Philip should be obstinate in holding a throne in the possession of which he was supported by the Spanish people. The pride of the magnificent despot was roused by this demand. He condescended to recollect that he had subjects, who were interested in the national honour. He appealed to their patriotism, in a circular letter addressed to all local authorities. It was no longer a war for courtly interests. The country was threatened with dismemberment; and the king and the people roused their drooping courage, even in the midst of their domestic miseries, and a harder campaign had to be fought, with loftier resolution on the side of France, than had ever been called forth by the proud delusions of the world-grasping Bourbon. Voluntary con-

\* Coxe, vol. iv. p. 370.

tributions for the support of the war had been freely bestowed upon the court. Louis sent his silver plate to the mint to be coined. The rich, whether nobles or traders, followed his example. There was specie to pay the forces; and recruits flocked to the army, glad to obtain that subsistence which the visitation of Providence had denied to their peaceful labours.

On the 21st of June, a hundred thousand men, under the command of Marlborough and Eugene, were encamped in the plain before Lille. Marshal Villars had thrown up intrenchments between Douay and the Lys, which probably interrupted a design of penetrating into France. The Allies then commenced the siege of Tournay. The city surrendered in three weeks. The citadel held out during July and August. During this siege, four thousand of the Allies were killed and wounded. Immense slaughter was occasioned by the system of mining and countermining,—a mode of warfare which was then rarely practised to the same extent as in this siege. Service in the trenches was always faced by the English soldier with alacrity; but to burrow like a mole, whilst the sound of the enemy's pickaxe was close to his ear—to believe he was treading upon firm earth, and then in a moment to be blown into the air—these were strange dangers which required an unaccustomed exercise of courage and fortitude.

The Allied army, after the fall of Tournay, was proceeding to the siege of Mons, when Marshal Villars followed them, and took up a strong position at Malplaquet. His wings were protected by two thick woods. His centre was placed on rising ground between the woods, with intrenchments thrown up in front of the camp. The Allies had about eighty thousand men; the French ten thousand less. Marlborough was encamped in the plain, fronting the opening between the woods. His determination to attack the enemy in so commanding a position has been considered rash; but he had only the alternative of a battle or the abandonment of the siege of Mons. At eight o'clock on the morning of the 11th of September that attack was made. The right of the French was covered by a morass; but this obstacle was rapidly overcome by Marlborough's left wing; and that portion of the enemy was driven back. Villars was himself commanding the left wing of the French, and was to a great extent successful, when he was wounded; and according to the French accounts, that accident was the main cause of the retreat from their position. The French were dislodged from their wooded height after a most sanguinary struggle of four hours, when the conflict was renewed in the plain. At three o'clock they retreated; and the Allies encamped on the field

of battle, amidst thirty thousand of their fellow-men dead or wounded. When the British Parliament met two months afterwards, the queen was congratulated "upon the continued successes of the last campaign, particularly the victory obtained near Mons."

In the year 1709, no great comet burns

"In th' arctic sky, and from his horrid hair  
Shakes pestilence and war ;"

but never was war amongst civilized nations more general or more destructive. There is desperate fighting in the Netherlands; a smouldering flame of battle in Spain and Portugal; and a Northern war as terrible and more decisive than the war of the Succession. It is the year of the fatal death-struggle of Pultowa, when the old dominion of Sweden in the North was struck down by one great blow, and the czar, whose rule over hordes of half savage tribes was little heeded in the struggle for the Balance of power, first planted his foot upon the Baltic, and bequeathed to the world a new Balance to settle from generation to generation. In April, 1707, Marlborough was propitiating the victorious Charles the Twelfth with the most transparent flattery; but the wily negotiator of the Allies has seen the map of Muscovy on the young Swede's table, and he guesses to what point his ambition is directed. In 1698 Peter of Muscovy was learning the trade of a ship-builder in England. He had gone home to build ships; to discipline barbarians into soldiers; to pant for an outlet from his shut-up wastes into the great highways of the world; and so he went to war with the king of Sweden, a lad of eighteen, from whom he and other northern powers hoped to win possessions which had been wrested from them by the Sweden of Gustavus and Christina. The czar was left to fight single-handed for the provinces which had been lost. In 1700 he was signally defeated by Charles at the battle of Narva; but in 1702 he had won territory in Livonia, and in 1703 had founded St. Petersburg on the banks of the Neva. There were five or six years of very doubtful warfare, during which time Peter was forming armies and teaching them how to fight. Charles would no longer endure this teasing and obstinate rival. He had dethroned Augustus of Poland; he would march to Moscow, and treat with the czar in his capital. Five months after Marlborough's visit to the camp at Alt Ranstadt, Charles set out with his army for the invasion of Russia. He traversed Poland, and he wintered at Grodno. In June he defeated the Russians upon the Beresina; and in September, he was again victorious at Smolensko. Peter was alarmed, and made proposals of peace. The

Swede rejected them; and marched into the Ukraine, to effect a junction with the Cossack chief, Mazeppa. In the Ukraine the Swedish army sustained the severest privations. But the resolution of Charles was unshaken:

"He comes, nor want nor cold his course delay ;—  
Hide blushing glory, hide Pultowa's day." \*

In the spring the Swedish army invested the strong town of Pultowa, on the Vorskla. The fortifications protected the military stores of Peter. The place commanded the passes to Moscow. In June the czar advanced to the relief of Pultowa, with an army of about sixty thousand men. Charles had only twenty-four thousand, not half of whom were Swedes. He despised the security of his entrenched lines, and on the 8th of July he marched out to attack the Russian redoubts. He thought that nothing had changed since he had won the battle of Narva with a similar disparity of numbers. The two kings were in the battle; and the troops on both sides fought with desperation. In two hours ten thousand Swedes lay dead or wounded in the field; hundreds perished in the Vorskla and Borysthenes; the Swedish army was annihilated; and Charles having swum over the Borysthenes with a few hundred followers, at length reached the Turkish frontier, and for five years was a troublesome fugitive in the dominions of the sultan.

\* Johnson, "Vanity of Human Wishes."