

CHAPTER XII.

Impeachment of Dr. Sacheverel.—Proceedings in Westminster Hall.—Articles of the Impeachment.—Passages from the Speeches of the Managers.—Popular Manifestations.—Sentence upon Sacheverel.—Sentence regarded as a triumph of the High Church.—Prosecutions of Rioters for High Treason.—Trials of Rioters.—Progress of Sacheverel.—His character.

THE well-known hypothesis that a deaf man, looking for the first time upon a ball-room, and hearing no note of the music which inspired the quadrille or the waltz, would think the company mad, may be paralleled by him who, reading of some mighty national ferment, and vainly endeavouring to trace the latent causes of senatorial declamation and popular fury, concludes that a general lunacy can only account for the frantic gallopade. Nevertheless, there is always the piper to direct this sort of dance—sometimes to lead it to a tragical end, as the Pied-piper of Hameln piped the town rats into the Weser. Such a piper was Henry Sacheverel, Doctor of Divinity, who, on the 5th of November, 1709, having to preach at St. Paul's before the lord mayor and aldermen of London, laid his magic pipe to his lips, and speedily had half the nation dancing like drunken satyrs to the tune of "The king shall enjoy his own again," and breaking heads and burning conventicles amidst their pious cry of "God save the Church."

The famous impeachment of Doctor Sacheverel, which for a time absorbed all other public questions, may be regarded as an inexplicable demonstration of party madness, or a grand assertion of party principle. Lord Campbell tells us, that the Whigs "probably would have continued undisturbed in their offices till their tenure had been confirmed by the accession of the House of Hanover, had it not been for their most preposterous prosecution of the contemptible sermon preached before the lord mayor of London."* In another place, the Chief Justice delivers his judgment that the Whigs "seem to have been deprived of their understanding, and they were given as a prey into the hands of their enemies."† Against this authority may be cited that of one to whom the historian is bound to listen with profound respect—Edmund

* Life of Somers, "Chancellors," vol. iv. p. 204.

† Life of Cowper. *Ibid.*, p. 317.

Burke. The greatest of philosophical politicians says, "It rarely happens to a party to have the opportunity of a clear, authentic, recorded declaration of their political tenets upon the subject of a great constitutional event like that of the Revolution. The Whigs had that opportunity, or, to speak more properly, they made it. The impeachment of Dr. Sacheverel was undertaken by a Whig ministry and a Whig House of Commons, and carried on before a prevalent and steady majority of Whig peers. It was carried on for the express purpose of stating the true grounds and principles of the Revolution; what the Commons emphatically called their *foundation*. It was carried on for the purpose of condemning the principles on which the Revolution was first opposed, and afterwards calumniated, in order by a juridical sentence of the highest authority to confirm and fix Whig principles, as they had operated both in the resistance to king James, and in the subsequent settlement; and to fix them in the extent and with the limitations with which it was meant they should be understood by posterity."* If this view of the matter be correct, the impeachment of Sacheverel was not the act of a party "deprived of their understanding;" although, looking at it as a mere question of expediency, it might have led to the party being "given as a prey into the hands of their enemies." The temporary removal of a ministry from power is a small question, compared with the question of the principles which were brought into conflict on this occasion. It is the business of the historical inquirer to endeavour to trace what may have a real and abiding interest in this extraordinary proceeding. One great and permanent lesson may be derived from the contemplation of this battle of opinions—a lesson which has been briefly but emphatically proclaimed by him who, "thinking the ecclesiastical history of our country might advantageously be presented to view in verse," has touched on the great controversial points in a truly Christian spirit:—

HIGH and LOW,
Watch-words of Party, on all tongues are rife;
As if a Church, though sprung from Heaven, must owe
To opposites and fierce extremes her life—
Not to the golden mean and quiet flow
Of truths that soften hatred, temper strife." †

About a month after the Session of Parliament had been opened, without any very manifest signs of a party-conflict, Mr. Dolben, the member for Liskeard, son to the late archbishop of York, complained that two sermons preached by Dr. Sacheverel, one at

* "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs."

† Wordsworth, "Ecclesiastical Sketches."

Derby and one at St. Paul's, contained dangerous matter. Printed copies having been laid upon the table of the Commons, the House voted that "the two sermons were malicious, scandalous, and seditious libels, highly reflecting on the queen and her government, the late happy Revolution, and the Protestant Succession." The preacher was ordered to attend at the bar the next day; when it was resolved that he should be impeached of high crimes and misdemeanours. The puppets are in action; but who is pulling the strings? It is told of Harley, that he, being one of those who spirited Sacheverel to undertake an enterprise so suited to his vain and turbulent nature, "having an entertainment one day at his house in Herefordshire, there came in after dinner a packet of expresses from London; which having read, he looked with an air of joy upon his friends, and snapping his fingers, cried out in exultation, 'The game is up! get the horses ready immediately.'"^{*} No lover of "woodcraft" in the Shakspearean age, singing "Hunt's up to the day," could show more eagerness for a run than Harley, one of the most famous professors of state-craft. If Swift is to be believed, the impeachment of Sacheverel "arose from a foolish passionate pique of the earl of Godolphin, whom this divine was supposed, in a sermon, to have reflected on, under the name of Volpone, as my lord Somers, a few months after, confessed to me; and at the same time, that he had earnestly, and in vain, endeavoured to dissuade the earl from that attempt. . . . Mr. Harley, who came up to town, during the time of the impeachment, was, by the intervention of Mrs. Masham, privately brought to the queen; and in some meetings easily convinced her majesty of the dispositions of her people, as they appeared in the course of that trial, in favour of the Church, and against the measures of those in her service."† Here, then, we have the two great rivals face to face to fight the battle for office. Neither Godolphin nor Harley cared very much for the great principles that were called forth in the proceedings against Sacheverel. A keen observer of English politics, Baron von Steinghens, Minister at London from the Elector Palatine, thus describes the factions of the latter years of Anne: "Give them whatever name you will, they will at all times be reducible under two principal heads, namely those who are in office, and those who want to be. In short, it may be asserted that office is the source of the animosities of the most envenomed divisions of this nation."‡ Unquestionably there was a higher

^{*} Nichols's "Literary Anecdotes," vol. i. p. 68.

† "Memoirs relating to the change in queen Anne's Ministry."

‡ Kemble, "State Papers," p. 599.

class of politicians at this time than the mere office-seekers. But the title of the reigning sovereign was so peculiar, and the principle of the Succession so open to controversy, that the holders of office, and the strugglers for office, had to deal with party-questions of more than ordinary vitality; and hence "the most envenomed divisions of this nation" were represented in their strongest force by the great men in place and the great men out of place. The controlling power of public opinion over public men was as yet imperfectly formed. The multitude might be stirred to fury by party-leaders; but political knowledge was too little diffused to give the people, properly so called, any effectual influence over those who claimed to be the guardians of the national interests. People and Mob were synonymous terms with the oligarchs of the eighteenth century.

The preliminary debates, meetings of Committees, preparations of Articles of Impeachment, answers of the accused, messages between the two Houses, and other formal proceedings, occupied ten weeks, before the day of trial came. The metropolis and the country were now in a ferment. On the 27th of February, Westminster Hall was filled with as gorgeous an assembly as when Strafford stood at the bar. The Queen was there in a private box. The Peers were seated in the centre of the Hall. The Commons were ranged on one side. A galaxy of ladies filled the other side. The commonalty, described as "the populace," were also accommodated with seats in galleries. The crowd without the doors was unusually large and noisy. The Articles of Impeachment, Doctor Sacheverel's Answer, and the Replication of the House of Commons being then read, Mr. Lechmere opened the charges of the Managers. The Sermon on the 5th of November was next read. It was described by Harley as "a circumgyration of incoherent words without any regular order."^{*} Of real eloquence the pulpit demagogue had no conception. But he had the power of stringing sentences together which appeared to have some logical sequence, but which were meant to stand alone as axioms of a party. The sermon defies analysis. Its separate dogmas were taken as texts by the managers of the impeachment, to refute the principles thus proclaimed as the bases of the Constitution.

The reading of the Doctor's sermon closed the proceedings of the first day. Wearisome must these proceedings have been, especially to "the noble ladies who attended the trial." We are told that these ladies who came "to see or be seen," were troubled by a matter even more serious than their apprehension "that the

^{*} Cunningham, vol. ii. p. 285.

Church of England would be ruined by the punishment which was to be inflicted upon this one priest." They "were very much afraid lest somewhat in their dress or behaviour there should give occasion to the 'Tatler' or 'Observer' to turn them into ridicule in their papers." * The great masters of humour had found a fit vehicle for their good-natured pictures of social follies. Bickerstaff was in his chair, and fashion, usually so bold, was afraid of his laugh. But Steele and Addison wisely kept their charming little paper clear of the prevailing madness of this time; and we have few traces of the great trial in their lucubrations. Defoe says that Sacheverel stopped all lighter matters of social interest:—"The women lay aside their tea and chocolate, leave off visiting after dinner, and, forming themselves into cabals, turn privy-councillors, and settle the affairs of States Nay, the 'Tatler,' the immortal 'Tatler,' the great Bickerstaff himself, was fain to leave off talking to the ladies, during the Doctor's trial, and turn his sagacious pen to the dark subject of death and the next world." † This is exaggeration. Steele did talk to the ladies, and very agreeably, after the 27th of February, "although the attention of the town is drawn aside from reading us writers of news." ‡ He laughs to think "how many cold chickens the fair ones have eaten since this day sevensnight for the good of their country;" for Westminster Hall, while the court adjourned, had become "a dining-room." § Addison did not "turn his sagacious pen" to Homer's description of a future state, till the trial of Sacheverel was over, and his sermon was burnt by the common hangman.

The managers of the impeachment divided themselves into groups, each group to take charge of one of the four articles into which the charge was divided. The first article set forth that Doctor Sacheverel in his sermon maintained, "That the necessary means to bring about the Revolution were unjustifiable; That his late majesty, in his Declaration, disclaimed the least imputation of Resistance; and that to impute resistance to the said Revolution, is to cast black and odious colours upon his late majesty and the said Revolution." ¶ Sacheverel, with a cunning that was evidently prompted by professional statesmen, pretended to vindicate the Revolution—for to hold it altogether odious was to compromise the title under which queen Anne reigned. But, on the other hand, to say it was founded upon Resistance was to shake the doctrine of absolute Non-Resistance, the belief of which he asserted to be the

* Cunningham, vol. ii. p. 290.

† "Review," quoted in Wilson, vol. iii. p. 125.

‡ *Ibid.*, March 6.

§ Tatler, March 4.

¶ "State Trials," vol. xv. col. 38.

pillar upon which the government of England stands. He therefore pretended that when the prince of Orange disclaimed that he came for conquest, he disclaimed the principle of Resistance. "The managers of the impeachment," says Mr. Hallam, "had not only to prove that there was Resistance in the Revolution, which could not, of course, be sincerely disputed, but to assert the lawfulness, in great emergencies, or what is called in politics necessity of taking arms against the law—a delicate matter to treat of at any time, and not least so by ministers of state and law officers of the crown, in the very presence, as they knew, of their sovereign." * They asserted that all the opposition to the measures of king William, and during the reign of the queen, had come "from those who had questioned the lawfulness of the Resistance made use of in the Revolution; that the principle of unlimited Non-Resistance had been revived by the professed and undisguised friends of the Pretender." † The great doctrine of constitutional government is then set forth by the same speaker. "To make out the justice of the Revolution, it may be laid down, that as the law is the only measure of the prince's authority, and the people's subjection, so the law derives its being and efficacy from common consent. And to place it on any other foundation than common consent, is to take away the obligation this notion of common consent puts both prince and people under to observe the laws. And upon this solid and rational foundation, the lawyers in all ages have placed that obligation, as appears by all our law-books. But instead of this, of later times, patriarchal and other fantastical schemes have been framed to rest the authority of the law upon; and so questions of divinity have been blended with questions of law; when it is plain, that religion hath nothing to do to extend the authority of the prince, or the submission of the subject, but only to secure the legal authority of the one, and enforce the due submission of the other, from the consideration of higher rewards and heavier punishments."

The principle of Resistance, as justified by the Revolution, was necessarily held to be an exceptional case to the general doctrine of the subject's obedience. Robert Walpole put this as forcibly as any other of his fellow-managers; and we may quote his argument, especially as it lies in a short compass: "Resistance is nowhere enacted to be legal, but subjected, by all the laws now in being, to the greatest penalties; it is what is not, cannot, nor ought ever to be described or affirmed, in any positive-law, to be excusable: when, and upon what never-to-be-expected occasions,

* "Constitutional History," chap. xvi.

† Sir Joseph Jekyll, "State Trials," vol. xv. col. 96.

it may be exercised, no man can foresee, and ought never to be thought of, but when an utter subversion of the laws of the realm threatens the whole frame of a constitution, and no redress can otherwise be hoped for: it therefore does, and ought for ever to stand, in the eye and letter of the law, as the highest offence. But because any man, or party of men, may not, out of folly or wantonness, commit treason, or make their own discontents, ill principles, or disguised affections to another interest, a pretence to resist the supreme power, will it follow from thence that the utmost necessity ought not to engage a nation in its own defence for the preservation of the whole?"* Walpole then adds, with the sagacity of a practical statesman dealing with an abstract question: "The doctrine of unlimited, unconditional, Passive Obedience, was first invented to support arbitrary and despotic power, and was never promoted or countenanced by any government that had not designs some time or other of making use of it; what then can be the design of preaching this doctrine now, unasked, unsought for, in her majesty's reign, where the law is the only rule and measure of the power of the crown, and of the obedience of the people?"

Major-general Stanhope was even more practical than Walpole, in his application of the question of Sacheverel's impeachment to the High Church doctrines which had so long been the cause of national disgust; and which continued to prevail for half a century, till the common sense of the people had become too strong for their reception: "There is such an affinity, my lords, between this sermon, and the doctrines which are preached and propagated by a certain set of men, that I cannot but observe to your lordships on this occasion, how industrious they have been, ever since the Revolution, to prepare a way for another. They are the pure and undefiled Church of England! The only men of loyal and steady principles! They never took the oaths to the government; never bent their knee to Baal! They have their own archbishops, bishops, and pastors, and constitute the only true and pure Church of England! We are all schismatics, that is, all the rest of England are schismatics, heretics, and rebels! Now, pray, my lords, what are the peculiar and distinguishing characteristics, the favourite and darling tenets of these men? What else but Passive Obedience, Jus Divinum, an hereditary, indefeasible right of succession, which no necessity, no act of parliament, no prescription of time, no natural or legal incapacity, can ever invalidate or set aside? If they are in the right, my lords, what are the consequences? The queen is not queen; your lordships are not a House of Lords, for

* "State Trials," vol. xv. col. 115.

you are not duly summoned by a legal writ; we are no House of Commons, for the same reason; all the taxes which have been raised for this twenty years have been arbitrary and illegal extortions; all the blood of so many brave men, who have died (as they thought) in the service of their country, has been spilt in defence of an usurpation; and they were only so many rebels and traitors."*

If the egregious Doctor felt that he was on dangerous ground when he was opposing the principle of the Revolution, he had no hesitation when he had to deal with one of the best consequences of the Revolution, the toleration of Dissenters. The second article of impeachment imputed to Sacheverel that he maintained that the toleration granted by law was unwarrantable, and that he was a false brother, with relation to God, religion, or the Church, who defends toleration or liberty of conscience. This view of Dissent was set forth in a spirit quite worthy of the darkest ages of persecution: "Whoever presumes to innovate, alter, or misrepresent any point in the Articles of the Faith of our Church, ought to be arraigned as a traitor to our State; heterodoxy in the doctrines of the one naturally producing, and almost necessarily inferring, rebellion and high treason on the other; and consequently a crime that concerns the civil magistrate as much, to punish and restrain, as the ecclesiastical." The charitable man denounced Bishop Grindall as "a false son of the Church,"—"a perfidious prelate," who had advised Queen Elizabeth to tolerate the "Genevian discipline," the professors of which she was afterwards obliged utterly to suppress "by wholesome severities." It is unnecessary to follow out the arguments by which the second Article of the impeachment was supported, or to detail the equivocations of those who had the charge of Sacheverel's defence. The tendency of these extreme High Church principles was sufficiently exhibited in the events which followed the third day of the proceedings in Westminster Hall.

"Sacheverel," says Burnet, "was lodged in the Temple, and came every day, with great solemnity, in a coach to the hall. Great crowds ran about his coach, with many shouts, expressing their concern for him in a very rude and tumultuous manner."† On the third day the manifestation of the populace was more remarkable. "Money was thrown among them; and they were animated to such a pitch of fury, that they went to pull down some meeting-houses, which was executed on five of them, as far as burning all the pews in them. This was directed by some of better fashion, who followed the mob in hackney-coaches, and were seen sending

* "State Trials," vol. xv. p. 115.

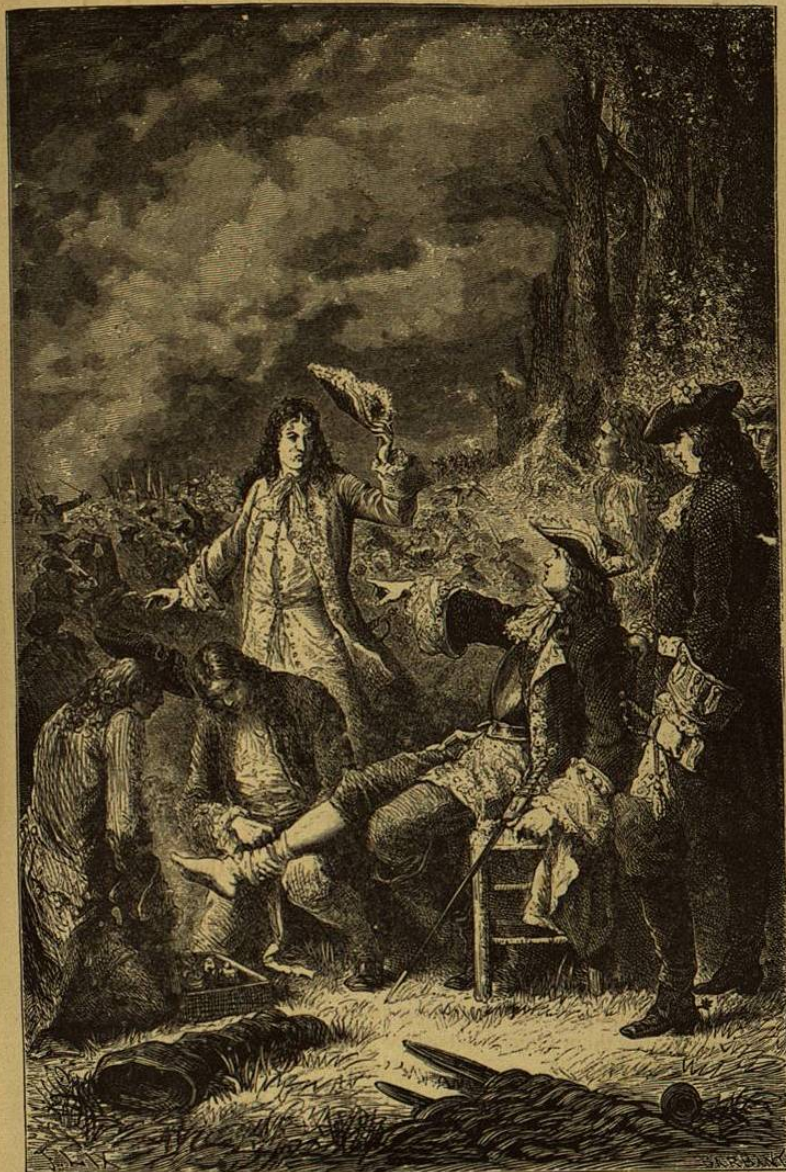
† "Own Time," vol. v. p. 426.

messages to them. The word upon which all shouted was "The Church and Sacheverel." * These outrages were made the subject of several trials for high treason, of which we shall have presently to give some account, especially as the law upon which the rioters were indicted has been very justly called in question. These trials have also a more popular interest, as the evidence furnishes a vivid picture of what one of the witnesses terms a "mobbish night."

The third article of impeachment against Sacheverel was, that he had asserted, contrary to a Resolution of Parliament, that the Church was in a condition of great peril and adversity under her majesty's administration. In the fourth article he was charged with keeping up factions, instilling groundless jealousies, and exciting the queen's subjects to arms and violence. It is unnecessary that we should enter upon any details connected with these points. They have ceased to have a permanent interest. Nor is it essential that we should attempt any analysis of the defence of Sacheverel, which was conducted with great ability by sir Simon Harcourt and four other counsel. Burnet has fairly stated their course of argument. "They very truly acknowledged the lawfulness of resistance in extreme cases, and plainly justified the Revolution, and our deliverance by king William. But they said, it was not fit in a sermon to name such an exception; that the duties of morality ought to be delivered in their full extent without supposing an extraordinary case; and therefore Sacheverel had followed precedents, set by our greatest divines, ever since the Reformation, and ever since the Revolution." † In his reply to sir Simon Harcourt, the concessions made by the counsel for Sacheverel were received by sir Joseph Jekyll as the triumph of free principles: "My lords, the concessions are these, that necessity creates an exception to the general rule of submission to the prince: that such exception is understood or implied in the laws that require such submission: and that the case of the Revolution was a case of necessity. These are concessions so ample, and do so fully answer the drift of the Commons in this Article, and are to the utmost extent of their meaning in it, that I cannot forbear congratulating them upon this success of their Impeachment; that in full parliament this erroneous doctrine of Non-Resistance is given up and disclaimed. And may it not, in after ages, be an addition to the glories of this bright reign, that so many of those who are honoured with being in her majesty's service, have been, at your lordship's bar, thus successfully contending for the national rights

* "Own Time," vol. v. p. 430.

† *Ibid.*, p. 427.



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of her people, and proving they are not precarious or remediless."

After very animated debates in the House of Lords, sixty-nine peers voted Dr. Sacheverel Guilty of the high crimes and misdemeanours charged on him by the impeachment of the House of Commons, and fifty-two found him Not Guilty. His sentence was, that he was enjoined not to preach during the term of three years, and that his two sermons should be burnt by the common hangman. On the 21st of March, Godolphin wrote to Marlborough: "Our sentence against Dr. Sacheverel is at last dwindled to a suspending him for three years from preaching, which question we carried but by six; and the second, which was for incapacitating him during that time to take any dignity or preferment in the Church, was lost by one; the numbers were sixty to fifty-nine. So all this bustle and fatigue ends in no more but a suspension of three years from the pulpit, and burning his sermons at the Royal Exchange." Not altogether so, my lord treasurer. The Whigs will be driven from power; the queen will bestow her smiles upon those who would rest her title upon hereditary right; the managers of the impeachment have scorned to adopt the falsehood that the birth of the queen's brother was supposititious, and have therefore cut away the popular argument against his claim to the throne. But they have asserted the principles upon which the Act of Settlement rests. When the sober-thinking people of England shall have read in this the report of trial, circulated amongst them in numbers unparalleled, the manly arguments by which the rights of a nation to civil and religious freedom are upheld, they will turn from the exile of St. Germain's who claims to rule upon the doctrine of Passive Obedience and Non-Resistance, and will think it fortunate that another House, with a parliamentary title, may continue the security which they have enjoyed under the Revolution of 1689. We of the present time, when no one disputes the principles which the managers of the impeachment of Sacheverel upheld, have still to cherish their assertion, and to be grateful to their assertors. These principles have an enduring interest for us, beyond their historical importance. They live and reign in our Constitution. The great orator and temperate reformer, who has lived to see the full value of these principles, thus maintained them when the best victories of the people had been won—many of them by his own exertions. "The National Resistance was not only, in point of historical fact, the cause of the Revolutionary settlement, it was the main foundation of that settlement; the structure of the government was made to rest upon the people's Right of Resist-

ance as upon its corner-stone; and it is of incalculable importance that this never should be lost sight of. But it is of equal importance that we should ever bear in mind how essential to the preservation of the Constitution, thus established and secured, this principle of Resistance is; how necessary both for the governors and the governed it ever must be to regard the recourse to that extremity as always possible—an extremity, no doubt, and to be cautiously embraced as such, but still a remedy within the people's reach; a protection to which they can and will resort as often as their rulers make such a recourse necessary for self-defence.*

The lenient sentence upon Sacheverel was received by his passionate adherents as a matter of national rejoicing. When the impeachment of the High Church Doctor was resolved upon by the Commons, they also carried a resolution to address the queen "to bestow some dignity in the Church upon Mr. Benjamin Hoadley, rector of St. Peter's Poor, London, for having often justified the principles upon which her majesty and the nation proceeded in the late happy Revolution." Her majesty never found the opportunity to comply with the desires of her faithful Commons. The reverend author of "The Measure of Obedience to the Civil Magistrate" was the type of Low Church politics; and as the sermons of Sacheverel were burnt by the hangman at the Royal Exchange, the treatises of Hoadley were burnt by the mob at Exeter and Oxford. Bonfires and bell-ringing were universal. In some towns the health of Sacheverel was drunk with bended knees. At Cirencester, an effigy of king William was carried upon a horse; the rider of straw was jerked off the steed's back, and then committed to the flames. Mr. Burgess, the dissenting preacher, was also burnt with great solemnity by enthusiastic churchmen, who imitated, as much as was in their power, the patriots who had gutted his chapel in Lincoln's-Inn-fields. But to the honour of the English rabble, in town or country, they had no taste for bloodshed, and a very national sense of fun. The Cirencester folk, who appear to have been most conspicuous in the demonstrations, had a cock-match, in which one cock was called Sacheverel, and the other Burgess. Unhappily, as is recorded, "the cock-match issued in their confusion; for, after a long and hard battle, Cock Burgess killed Cock Sacheverel." †

On the 18th of April, there stood three men at the bar of the Sessions-house in the Old Bailey.—Daniel Dammaree, a waterman; Francis Willis, a footman; and George Purchase, a sheriff's officer,

* Lord Brougham, "The British Constitution," 1844, p. 103.

† "Compleat History of the Affair of Dr. Sacheverel," 1713.

—against whom a bill of indictment had been found for high treason, in levying open war against her majesty. They were charged that they, with a great multitude of men, armed and arrayed in a warlike manner, with colours flying, swords, clubs, and other weapons, did, on the 1st of March, make war against our lady the queen. The evidence upon the trials of these men shows that they were principals in a riotous destruction, or attempted destruction, of meeting-houses. The Riot Act, by which such offences may be met as felony, without resorting to the law of constructive treason, was not in existence in 1710. It was passed in the first year of George I. Nevertheless, Blackstone holds that an insurrection, with an avowed design to pull down *all* enclosures, *all* brothels, and the like, is a levying of war; "the universality of the design making it a rebellion against the state, a usurpation of the powers of government, and an insolent invasion of the king's authority."* The Attorney-General upon these trials averred that it was a general design to pull down all the meeting-houses. Lord Campbell severely blames these prosecutions for high treason; and very justly says, "no government would now direct such a prosecution to be instituted." In these trials all the judges agreed that the intention of the prisoners to pull down meeting-houses, and their partial destruction of several, was an overt act of levying war. This construction of the law, as we see, is still regarded as authority, and it has been cited in later cases. Lord Campbell, who has the happiness to live in times when law and common sense have more affinity, holds, that in these prosecutions for high treason, "the Whigs showed the infatuation or dementation under which they were labouring." The dementation appears rather to have been in the Whig lawyers than in the Whig statesmen, if we may judge from the marvellous case which they got up, for a jury to try the most solemn issue known to English law. Two of the silly rioters were convicted, and were sentenced to the horrible penalties of high treason. But neither of them was executed; which, says Mr. Hallam, "might probably be owing to an opinion, which every one but a lawyer must have entertained, that their offence did not amount to treason." We are glad thus to premise that Dammaree and Purchase were reprieved, and afterwards pardoned; for, in giving a sketch of these riots as a picture of society presenting some ludicrous aspects, it is well to know that no blood was shed by the fanatic multitude, and that no life was sacrificed to offended justice.

It is Wednesday, the 1st of March, when one captain Edward

* Vol. iv. p. 78. Kerr's edit.

Orrel, who seems to have been gifted with an almost preternatural curiosity to behold all that is going forward, first gazes upon the queen returning through the Park from Westminster Hall, and is then attracted by a man dispersing bills about a prize-fighting. "I thought," says he, "they had been the common papers that are dispersed about such prizes, but I found it was about a prize between Sacheverel and Hoadley."* At Oliver's Coffee-house he hears that the mob are gone from the Temple to Mr. Burgess's meeting near Lincoln's-Inn-fields. "I will go up," cries the captain, "and see what is doing." There he saw pews pulled down, and a little man in the pulpit very busy in its destruction. In and out Orrel runs to watch how the work goes on; and the destructives take him, very naturally, for a spy. He flits about between Holborn and Lincoln's-Inn-fields; for in both places fires are lighted, and pews and pulpits are burning. In Lincoln's-Inn-fields, the fun is fast and furious. Dammaree is there—the waterman, "in the queen's livery, and with his badge." The soldier immortalised by Goldsmith, who exclaims with a fervour of blasphemy, that our religion would be utterly undone if the French should come over, is but a feeble copy of the queen's pious waterman. The mob are in council. The cheers of Dammaree are heard above every other voice. "I'll lead you on, boys; huzza! High Church and Sacheverel! G—damn them all; we will have them all down." He pulls off his wig, and shouts, and superintends the burning of a bedstead, and is "mightily rejoiced." It would have been more than cruel to have hanged Dammaree; for he had capital witnesses in his defence, especially two young ladies, who had been at the fire in Lincoln's-Inn-fields. The fire was burnt to a coal when they were going home, and meeting with Dammaree, one of them exclaimed, "Lord bless me! here is one of the queen's watermen." "What have you to say to the queen's waterman?" quoth he. "Nothing, but God bless the queen, and her waterman too." "You are a jolly girl, and I will kiss you," cries honest Dammaree. Queen Anne must certainly have read this evidence, when she very quickly promoted her orthodox servant to be the master of her own barge, after he had escaped the peril of the hurdle to Tyburn.

If drunken Dammaree were not the exact type of a leader who "falsely, unlawfully, devilishly, and traitorously, did compass, imagine, and intend open war, insurrection and rebellion," what shall we say to Francis Willis, the doughty footman, levying war?

* We pick out this narrative wholly from the evidence upon the trials of Dammaree, Willis, and Purchase. "State Trials," vol. xv. col. 550 to col. 702.

He lives with a lady in Greville-street, who has a laudable curiosity to know how the bonfires are going on in Holborne and Hatton-garden; and she sends her man Frank to learn all about it. Frank stays out till midnight; and, if the witnesses are to be believed, makes good use of his time. He is the only traitor against whom the terms of the indictment apply, that the rebels were "armed and arrayed in a warlike manner, that is to say, with colours flying." Willis is the one standard-bearer. The Attorney-General asks a witness whether any colours were carried before the assembly of five or six hundred people? "Yes, there was a curtain, and he that carried it cried, High Church standard! He stopped many coaches, and got money from them, and made them cry, High Church. He brought the curtain from Mr. Bradbury's meeting, in Fetter-lane." The transformation of this rag of Dissent into the banner of Orthodoxy was a feat of military genius that can scarcely be equalled. It was intuitive in simple Frank, who told his mistress, in excuse for his staying out so long, that "he never saw a mob in London before." The bold footman escaped, for the witnesses were puzzled between one captain of the bonfire-makers in green livery and red buttons, and another captain in blue livery and black buttons.

George Purchase had been a soldier, and had seen service abroad, in the third troop of guards. He is now a sheriff's officer, and he begins his professional day on the first of march, by taking a man at nine o'clock in the morning. But Dr. Sacheverel stops all regular occupation; and so, when the bailiff has dined with a follower in Chancery-lane, they say, "Here is a sad noise and rout; no business is to be done; let us sit and smoke a pipe." After two hours of repose, Purchase adjourns to a brandy-shop in Long Acre; the drawer of which place of resort accounts for the deeds of the ex-guardsman, up to a late hour of the night: "My master gave him a business to dun a gentleman; and then they went to the Horse-shoe tavern, and staid there till eight; then he came back again, and drank with us, and was very drunk." He is sent for, late as the hour is, to assist a brother-officer to execute a writ; but he is too fuddled to "go about business." The mob is up in Drury-lane, and the two friends go forth. The discreet brother-bailiff gets into a chair to go home; for, as he tells the court, "I am not a man that engage myself in mobs, for those of my employment generally suffer in mobs." Purchase has no fear of anything. He has lived with those who "swore terribly in Flanders." The guards have arrived about half-past eleven, at the arch in Lincoln's-Inn-fields. The mob are pulling down a meet

ing-house in Drury-lane, and the captain of the guards gives orders to his men to disperse them. The bold bailiff is, "with his sword drawn, hallooing and flourishing his sword in the middle of the street, just by the kennel in Drury-lane, and fronting the guards." Captain Orrel is the ubiquitous witness: "Says I to him, do you know what you do in opposing the guards? You oppose the queen's person. Says he, G— damn you, are you against Sacheverel? I am for High Church. I will be for High Church and Sacheverel. I will lose my life in the cause." Drunken Purchase then strikes at an officer with his sword, but his sword is beaten down, and he hides behind a bulk. That forbearance which has on most occasions of riot marked the behaviour of the British soldier to his fellow-citizens, was conspicuous on this occasion. The officer that was struck at merely said, "You are mad—you are distracted; go home to your lodgings." The jury found a special verdict that George Purchase, at the bonfire made by the mob in Drury-lane, of the seats and pulpit of the meeting-house, "came there, and with his sword drawn did then defend the said people, and did greatly encourage them to burn the materials of the said house." They also find him guilty as to his assault upon the captain of the guards. But they return no general verdict of guilty of high treason, leaving that to the determination of the Judges. They add "that the general cry of the people aforesaid, whilst they rifled the meeting-houses and burnt the materials of the same, was, universally, High Church and Sacheverel."

This, then, was the expression of that public opinion, which Swift says convinced her majesty of the dispositions of her people in favour of the Church, and against the measures of those in her service. Vast exertions were made throughout the country to get up Addresses to the queen, "in which the absolute power of our princes was asserted, and all resistance was condemned, under the designation of anti-monarchical and republican principles."* De-foe, in his "Review," asks a question, somewhat difficult of answer: "Would any man that had seen the temper of this people, in the time of the late king James, believe it possible, without a judicial infatuation, that the same people should re-assume their blindness, and rise up again for bondage?" The Parliament was prorogued on the 5th of April, with the expression of this sentiment by the queen: "I could heartily wish that men would study to be quiet, and do their own business, rather than busy themselves in reviving questions and disputes of a very high nature, and which must be with an ill-intention, since they can only tend to foment, but

* Burnet, vol. v. p. 436.

not to heal, our divisions and animosities." The symptoms of a great change were manifest, whatever was the official tone of the royal speech. Dr. Sacheverel, early in the summer, went upon what is called his progress. This puppet of faction had been rewarded by a presentation of a living in Wales, and his progress was ostensibly to take possession of his benefice. According to one set of authorities, "nobility, gentry, clergy, and people vied in their demonstrations of joy and exultation; cavalcades escorted him from town to town, and from village to village; the roads were lined, the hedges covered, with spectators; steeples were illuminated, and sumptuous feasts prepared in every quarter for the triumphant guest."* There is another mode of viewing the same circumstances: "Wherever he went, his emissaries were sent before with his pictures: pompous entertainments were made for him, and a mixed multitude of country singers, fiddlers, priests and sextons, and a mob of all conditions, male and female, crowded together to meet and congratulate him; among whom, drunkenness, darkness, and a furious zeal for religion, extinguished all regard to modesty."† So, even in the medals issued in commemoration of the great trial, there were two sets of opinion to be propitiated. The medal for the Tories had the head of the Doctor, with the inscription "H. Sach., D.D.," with the Reverse a Mitre, and the legend "Is firm to thee." The medal for the Whigs had the same head of Sacheverel, with the same legend on the Reverse, accompanying the head of the Pope.

The duchess of Marlborough has left a characteristic description of Sacheverel, with which we may dismiss the man to the oblivion, as far as his own merits are concerned, which sooner or later, is the fate of every charlatan: "He had a haughty insolent air, which his friends found occasion often to complain of; but it made his presence more graceful in public. His person was framed well for the purpose, and he dressed well. A good assurance, clean gloves, a white handkerchief well-managed, with other suitable accomplishments, moved the hearts of many at his appearance; and the solemnity of a trial added much to a pity and concern, which had nothing in reason or justice to support them. The weaker part of the ladies were more like mad or bewitched than like persons in their senses. . . . Everybody knows that he was afterwards sent about several counties; where, with his usual grace, he received, as his due, the homage and adoration of multitudes; never thinking that respect enough was paid to his great merit, using some of his friends insolently, and raising mobs

* Coxe, vol. v. p. 345.

† Cunningham, "History," vol. ii. p. 306.

against his enemies, and giving ample proof of how great meanness the bulk of mankind is capable, putting on the air of a saint upon a lewd, drunken, pampered man; dispersing his blessings to all his worshippers and his kisses to some; taking their good money as fast as it could be brought in; drinking their best wines, eating of their best provisions without reserve, and without temperance. And, what completed the farce, complaining in the midst of this scene of luxury and triumph, as the old fat monk did over a hot venison pasty, in his barbarous Latin, 'Heu, quanta patimus pro ecclesiâ!' Oh what dreadful things do we undergo for the sake of the church!"

CHAPTER XIII.

Conferences at Gertruydenberg.—Negotiations for peace broken off.—Despotism and Limited Monarchy.—The Whigs dismissed from office.—New Parliament.—Duchess of Marlborough dismissed from her offices.—Disasters in Spain.—Surrender of General Stanhope.—Hostility to Marlborough.—Party use of the Press.—Swift, the great party writer.—Property qualification for members of Parliament.—Harley stabbed by Guiscard.—Marlborough's last campaign.—Parliament.—Prospect of Peace.—The ministry defeated in the House of Lords.—Marlborough dismissed from all his offices.—New peers created.—Negotiations at Utrecht.—Note to Chapter XIII.—Table of Treaties.

The negotiations for peace which were broken off in 1709 were renewed in 1710. Conferences were opened at Gertruydenberg. Each of the Allied powers was endeavouring to gain some peculiar advantage; but all eventually concurred in pressing upon Louis the one humiliating condition which he had rejected in the previous year—namely, that he should assist in dethroning his grandson. Lord Chancellor Cowper seems to have stood alone amongst the British ministry in having no confidence of a peace, and to have offended his colleagues in doubting whether "France was reduced so low as to accept such conditions."* Marlborough was the representative of England at these conferences; and he took the course which the selfish man ordinarily thinks the safest and most profitable. He was "white paper," he said, upon which the cabinet might write their instructions, but he would have the responsibility of giving advice. The negotiations were broken off; and the great general has the invariable resource of another season of battles and sieges: "I hope God will be pleased to bless this campaign," he writes to the duchess, "for I see nothing else that can give us peace, either at home or abroad."† He believed that another Oudenarde or another Malplaquet would have quieted the popular ferment about Sacheverel, and have disposed the queen to have confidence in her Whig advisers. "Yet," he says, "I have never, during this war, gone into the war with so heavy a heart as I do at this time. . . . The present humours in England give me a good deal of trouble." Louis le Grand was also troubled at this precise juncture; but his trouble had no relation to the bellows of the hydra-headed monster. Saint Simon tells us that the ex-

* Diary, in Hardwicke Papers.

† Coxe, vol. v. p. 179