

affairs. The king and the prince of Wales openly quarrelled. The rupture was deemed of sufficient importance to warrant the Secretary of State in writing an explanation of the circumstances to the foreign ministers. This official account does not differ in any material point, from the more lively narrative of Horace Walpole: "The princess of Wales had been delivered of a second son. The prince had intended his uncle, the duke of York, bishop of Osnaburg, should with his majesty be godfather. Nothing could equal the indignation of his royal highness when the king named the duke of Newcastle for second sponsor, and would hear no other. The christening took place as usual in the princess's bed-chamber. Lady Suffolk, then in waiting as lady of the bedchamber, and of most accurate memory, painted the scene to me exactly. On one side of the bed stood the godfathers and godmothers; on the other the prince, and the princess's ladies. No sooner had the bishop closed the ceremony, than the prince, crossing the feet of the bed in a rage, stepped up to the duke of Newcastle, and, holding up his hand and fore-finger in a menacing attitude, said, 'You are a rascal, but I shall find you;' meaning, in broken English, 'I shall find a time to be revenged.' 'What was my astonishment,' continued Lady Suffolk, 'when going to the princess's apartment next morning, the yeomen in the guard-chamber pointed their halberds at my breast, and told me I must not pass! I urged that it was my duty to attend the princess. They said, No matter; I must not pass that way.'*" The prince of Wales had been put under arrest in his own apartment, into which lady Suffolk was forbidden to pass; and was finally commanded to leave the palace, which he did with the princess Caroline of Anspach, his sensible wife. Then was exhibited the unbecoming spectacle of the heir-apparent in opposition to the government of his father; of the Court of Leicester-House in rivalry to the Court of St. James. The discarded members of the Whig cabinet could at Leicester-House lament, in common with Tories and Jacobites, over their exclusion from power. Walpole and Shippen could make common cause as assailants of the existing government, however irreconcilable themselves upon the principles upon which the government should be conducted. The king, on the other hand, was surrounded by some indiscreet and unscrupulous adherents. After his majesty's death, queen Caroline found amongst his private papers a proposal from the earl of Berkeley, first lord of the admiralty in 1718,—which proposal was in the hand-writing of Charles Stanhope—to seize the prince of Wales, and carry him off to America. George I.

* "Reminiscences of the Courts of George I. & II."

had too much sense to adopt the kidnapping project; but he formed a crude plan to obtain an Act of Parliament that the prince should be compelled to relinquish his German possessions upon coming to the throne of Great Britain. The friends of a constitutional monarchy were alarmed at these proceedings; and it was fortunate that the power which the great abilities of Walpole eventually secured under George I., enabled him to use, for the purpose of outward reconciliation, the influence which he had obtained over the prince of Wales during his term of opposition politics.

Into fightings arising out of the squabbles of the Empire and of Spain—or rather out of the squabbles of "Kaiser Karl VI. and Elizabeth Farnese, termagant queen of Spain"*—was England precipitated. When the number of troops to be maintained came to be discussed in parliament, "downright Shippen" said, that some expressions of the king's speech "seem rather calculated for the meridian of Germany than of Great Britain." He added, "It is the only infelicity of his majesty's reign that he is unacquainted with our language and constitution; and it is therefore the more incumbent on his British ministers to inform him, that our government does not stand on the same foundation with his German dominions, which, by reason of their situation, and the nature of their constitution, are obliged to keep up armies in time of peace."† For these expressions Mr. Shippen was sent to the Tower, and there remained till the prorogation of parliament in March. There were interesting debates in both Houses on the evident tendency to engage in war indicated by the number of troops to be employed; but the Parliament was prorogued with the royal expression of a hope that such Treaties might be concluded, "as will settle peace and tranquillity amongst our neighbours." The hope was illusive; and indeed was contrary to a message from the Crown, just at the close of the Session, pointing out the necessity of an increase of the navy. No specific object was named; but Walpole observed that the message and the address which was voted, had the air of a declaration of war against Spain. On the 4th June, Admiral Byng sailed for the Mediterranean, having twenty ships of the line under his command; for intelligence had been received that an armament of twenty-nine ships of war, with transports for thirty-five thousand soldiers, had sailed from Barcelona with sealed orders. The English prime minister, lord Stanhope, in the desire to avert war, had proceeded to Madrid; and he was even pre-

* Carlyle—"Friedrich II.," vol. i. p. 499.

† "Parliamentary History," vol. vii. col. 508.

pared to give up Gibraltar, which it appears he thought "of no consequence." Alberoni, amidst pacific professions, had manifested no disposition to abate his pretensions. Whilst Stanhope was talking of peace, the Spanish fleet had sailed into the bay of Solento, and having landed a large force upon Sicilian ground under the marquis di Lede, the troops in a few days had become masters of Palermo. The chief military operation was the siege of Messina. On the 31st of July the citadel was invested. On the 1st of August, sir George Byng's fleet was anchored in the bay of Naples, where he took on board two thousand German troops to reinforce the Piedmontese garrison of Messina. The Spanish fleet would have been in comparative safety if they had remained at anchor in the road of Messina, in line of battle, with the batteries behind them that di Lede had constructed. The admirals chose to put to sea, and Byng hurried after the Spaniards, through the straits of Faro. On the 11th of August the English squadron was carried by a breeze into the heart of the Spanish fleet, off Cape Passero. Six of their men of war had been separated from their main body, and a division, commanded by captain Walton, was despatched by the English admiral to intercept them. The battle, it is held, was commenced by the Spaniards. Byng was superior in force; and the Spanish admirals acted without a settled plan. But they fought bravely, till the main fleet was all taken or destroyed. The report of captain Walton to his admiral, is the very model of a business-like despatch: "Sir, we have taken and destroyed all the Spanish ships which were upon the coast; the number as per margin." The Spanish fleet was thus swept away; but Byng, in a letter to di Lede, affected to consider this catastrophe as not necessarily involving a war between the two nations. Messina fell before the Spanish troops, at the end of September; and Byng again anchored in the Bay of Naples. Alberoni did not quietly endure the pacific mode in which his fleet had been annihilated. He seized all British vessels and goods in Spanish ports.

The war smouldered on during two years; for an object which has been truly said, "could not be excelled in insignificance."* King George, in opening Parliament on the 11th of November, announced that he had concluded terms and conditions of peace and alliance between the greatest princes of Europe, but that Spain, "having rejected all our amicable proposals, it became necessary for our naval forces to check their progress." Walpole headed in the Commons the opposition to an Address of Thanks, contending, that by their giving sanction to the late measures, they "would

* Carlyle.

screen ministers, who, having begun a war against Spain, would now make it the Parliament's war." The motion for an Address of Thanks was carried by a majority of sixty-one.

A domestic measure of real interest to the nation, and honourable to the ministry to have proposed, was carried during this session, with some curtailments of its original design. It was a Bill for the relief of Protestant Dissenters, entitled "a Bill for strengthening the Protestant interest in these kingdoms." Stanhope took a liberal view of the religious differences which had so long agitated the nation, and he desired to repeal, not only the Act against Occasional Conformity, the Schism Act, and the Test Act, but to mitigate the penal laws against Roman Catholics. It was contended, and perhaps prudently, by some of his colleagues, that by aiming at too much nothing would be accomplished. The debates were warm in both Houses; and finally, by a majority of only forty-one, the measure was passed, without the repeal of the Test Act, and without any attempt to put the Roman Catholics upon a juster footing of equality, however limited, with their fellow-subjects.

The hostility of Alberoni towards the government which had proved the most formidable enemy to his designs for the extension of the power of the Spanish monarchy, now assumed the somewhat dangerous form of an alliance with the Pretender, and a direct assistance to him in another attempt at the invasion of Great Britain. There was no longer to be hope for the House of Stuart in the rash designs of Charles of Sweden. He had fallen by a stray bullet—probably by the hand of an assassin—in the trenches of Frederickshall. He no more will terrify the world with his volcanic outbreaks. Alberoni was to accomplish, by weaving his web of intrigue around the persevering adherents of James, what his brother intriguer Gortz had failed to accomplish. Upon the sister of Charles XII. succeeding to the crown of Sweden, there had been a political revolution, and the restless minister of the late king had perished on a scaffold. Alberoni had failed in the issue of a conspiracy which he had stirred up against the regent Orleans. It was effectually crushed; and, whatever were the private views of the Regent, his lenity in this affair was a proof that he possessed one of the best attributes of power, "the quality of mercy." The plot of the duke and duchess of Maine being clearly traced to the schemes of the Spanish minister, war was declared by France against Spain. There was one great card more to play. The Pretender was invited to Madrid. He safely reached that capital from Italy, and was received with signal honours. The duke of Ormond,

and the earl Marischal and his brother, had also passed from France into Spain. An expedition had been prepared by Alberoni, which it was originally intended that James should lead. But it was at length arranged that Ormond should land in England; that lord Marischal should sail with some forces to Scotland; and that Keith, his brother, should go through France to gather together the Jacobites who had taken refuge there. The armament which sailed from Cadiz, consisting of five men-of-war, with twenty transports, carrying five thousand men, was scattered by a great storm in the Bay of Biscay. The crews threw overboard the stands of arms, the munitions of war, and the horses, to lighten their vessels; and the greater part of the armada returned to Spanish ports, in a dismantled condition. The earl Marischal, with two frigates, carrying about three hundred troops, proceeded to Scotland; and his brother, with Tullibardine, Seaforth, and a few other noble refugees, joined him in a small vessel. The whole proceeding was known to the British government, through information furnished by the Regent of France. The adventurers, with the Spanish soldiers, landed on the banks of Loch Alsh, in the month of May, 1719. The vessels returned to Spain; and the Scottish leaders were left to face their desperate enterprise. They established themselves in an old castle in the inner reach of the Loch; but their attempts to fortify it afforded them no safety. Three English vessels of war entered these solitary waters, and battered the rude tower to the ground. Scattered parties of Highlanders joined the Spaniards; and the whole body, about fifteen hundred—some accounts say two thousand—encamped at Glenshiel. In this valley, surrounded by mountains, whose pathways were known only to the natives, they remained inactive, expecting to be joined by large bodies of insurgents. No general rising took place in the Highlands. No great chiefs again ventured to appear in arms against a strong government. In June, general Wightman, with sixteen hundred troops, marched from Inverness. He hesitated to attack desperate men in their formidable pass; but a sharp struggle took place with detached bodies on the mountain sides, which lasted three hours. The next day the Spaniards surrendered as prisoners of war; but the Highlanders had disappeared. Wightman had twenty-one men killed, and a hundred and twenty-one wounded. He brought into Edinburgh two hundred and seventy-four Spanish prisoners. The Scottish leaders took shelter in the Western Isles; and finally escaped to Spain.

Whatever opposition might be raised to the origin and objects of the war in which England was engaged against France, no one

could complain that the naval power of the country was inefficiently employed. No British admiral could have manifested more energy and promptitude than admiral Byng displayed, in exploits that required the utmost courage and decision of character. He rendered the most efficient aid to the forces of the emperor in the contest with the Spaniards for the possession of Sicily. By his sagacious counsels he gave a successful direction to the languid efforts of the imperial commanders, who were jealous of each other, and divided in their plans. Their troops were destitute of provisions, and he supplied them by sea with stores, to prevent them starving in the interior of the island. They were insufficiently supplied with ammunition, and he furnished them with the means of attack and defence. With such aid the Austrians, after a serious defeat at Franca Villa, in June, 1719, were enabled to besiege the Spaniards in Messina, of whose citadel they obtained possession in October. There were military operations of less importance before the Spaniards finally evacuated Sicily and Sardinia. Meanwhile, the French had sent an army against Spain, under the command of the duke of Berwick, the natural son of James II.—the general who had won the victory of Almanza for the Bourbon king of Spain. Berwick was now to lead an army against the same king; and he was to be assisted by English sailors belonging to the government of the sovereign who was regarded as an usurper by the head of his own family. The French made themselves masters of Fuenterrabia and St. Sebastian; and lord Cobham, with an English squadron, captured Vigo. These disasters might have convinced Alberoni that the conflict with these great powers, in which Spain had engaged, was an undertaking in which his own abilities could not supply the want of material resources. But he probably was not prepared to be deserted by the court which he had so ably served in the endeavour to increase its power and importance. Before the reverses in Sicily, Alberoni had made overtures for peace. Stanhope proposed to Dubois, to demand from king Philip the dismissal of his minister. His ambition, said Stanhope, had been the sole cause of the war; and "it is not to be imagined that he will ever lose sight of his vast designs, or lay aside the intention of again bringing them forward, whenever the recovery of his strength, and the remissness of the allied powers, may flatter him with the hopes of better success." King Philip submitted to this dictation. In December, 1719, Alberoni, by a royal decree, was dismissed from all his employments, and was commanded to leave the Spanish territory within twenty-one days. Incapable grandees rejoiced that the son of an Italian gardener no

longer ruffled their solemn pride; some loftier spirits testified their respect to fallen greatness. The cardinal went back to Italy, a poor man. After vain attempts to resist or evade the demands of the Allies that Spain should accede to the Quadruple Alliance, that accession was proclaimed in January, 1720; Philip declaring that he gave peace to Europe at the sacrifice of his rights. He renewed his renunciation of the French crown. Europe was again at peace. Even the Czar of Muscovy had been warned by the presence of an English fleet in the Baltic, that he would not be permitted utterly to destroy Sweden. By England's protection of the female successor of Charles XII., the elector of Hanover secured Bremen and Verden. The policy of foreign affairs did not exclusively contemplate the safety of king George's island subjects, but there was no advocacy of merely German policy of which the nation had a right to complain. The reputation of Great Britain was not damaged by the mode in which the war had been carried on. Her naval strength had been successfully exerted. A peace of twelve years, with a very trivial interruption, was the result of the Quadruple Alliance.

The two parliamentary Sessions of 1719 were remarkable for ministerial attempts to carry a measure which would have produced a vital change in the composition of the House of Lords. It was proposed to limit the royal power of creating peers; and the king was persuaded to send a message to the Lords, that his majesty has so much at heart the settling the Peerage of the whole kingdom upon such a foundation as may secure the freedom and constitution of Parliament in all future ages, that he is willing his prerogative stand not in the way of so great and necessary a work. In February, Resolutions were proposed in the Upper House that the English peers should not be increased beyond six of their present number; with the exception of princes of the blood; and that instead of there being sixteen elective peers for Scotland, the king should name twenty-five as hereditary peers. In the House of Lords, the Resolutions were carried by a large majority. The proposition produced an excessive ferment. The Whig members and the Whig writers took different sides. Addison supported the Bill; Steele opposed it. The measure was abandoned on account of the strong feeling which it produced on its first introduction; but it was again brought forward in the Session which commenced on the 23rd of November. It passed the Lords, with very slight opposition. In the Commons the Bill was rejected by a very large majority, 269 to 167. On this occasion Walpole, generally the plainest and most business-like of speakers, opposed the Bill with

a rhetorical force which, according to the testimony of Speaker Onslow, "bore down every thing before him." The exordium of his speech is remarkable: "Among the Romans, the wisest people upon earth, the Temple of Fame was placed behind the Temple of Virtue, to denote that there was no coming to the Temple of Fame, but through that of Virtue. But if this Bill is passed into a law, one of the most powerful incentives to virtue would be taken away, since there would be no arriving at honour but through the winding-sheet of an old decrepit lord, or the grave of an extinct noble family; a policy very different from that glorious and enlightened nation, who made it their pride to hold out to the world illustrious examples of merited elevation:

"Patere honoris scirent ut cuncti viam."

The opponents of the Peerage Bill did not fail to use the obvious argument, that although the prerogative of the Crown might be abused by the creation of Peers, as in the late reign, to secure a majority for the Court; there was a greater danger in so limiting the peerage as to make the existing body what Walpole called "a compact impenetrable phalanx."