

XLV.

EXECUTION OF MONMOUTH.—MACAULAY.

[Charles the Second was easy, good-natured, and popular in his ways, but he was unprincipled and utterly selfish. His chief aim was to avoid trouble, so that he might pursue his pleasures unmolested. Almost from the outset he played into the hands of the French king, Louis XIV., and enabled that monarch to build up a power which proved dangerous to Europe. As Charles had no legitimate children, his lawful heir was his brother James, who was a Catholic. There were many in England who thought that a Catholic king should not be allowed to rule, and they made a determined effort to have a law enacted excluding James from the succession. But the measure failed, and, on the death of Charles, in 1683, James became king.

He was exceedingly unpopular, and his first acts made him still more so. So strong was the feeling against him that the duke of Monmouth, the eldest of Charles's illegitimate children, and a Protestant, believed that he could be dethroned by force. In 1685 Monmouth invaded the kingdom; but he had mistaken the temper of the English people. They refused to support the claim of a bastard, and the duke was defeated and captured at the battle of Sedgemoor.]

THE king cannot be blamed for determining that Monmouth should suffer death. Every man who heads a rebellion against an established government stakes his life on the event; and rebellion was the smallest part of Monmouth's crime. He had declared against his uncle a war without quarter. In the manifesto put forth at Lyme, James had been held up to execration as an incendiary, as an assassin, who had strangled one innocent man and cut the throat of another, and, lastly, as the poisoner of his own brother. To spare an enemy who had not scrupled to resort to such extremities would have been an act of rare, perhaps of blamable, generosity. But to see him and not to spare him was an outrage on humanity and decency. This outrage the king resolved to commit. The arms of the prisoner were bound behind him with a silken cord; and, thus secured,

he was ushered into the presence of the implacable kinsman whom he had wronged.

Then Monmouth threw himself on the ground, and crawled to the king's feet. He wept. He tried to embrace his uncle's knees with his pinioned arms. He begged for life, only life, life at any price. He owned that he had been guilty of a great crime, but tried to throw the blame on others, particularly on Argyle, who would rather have put his legs into the boots than have saved his own life by such baseness. By the ties of kindred, by the memory of the late king, who had been the best and truest of brothers, the unhappy man adjured James to show some mercy. James gravely replied that this repentance was of the latest; that he was sorry for the misery which the prisoner had brought on himself; but that the case was not one for lenity. A declaration, filled with atrocious calumnies, had been put forth. The regal title had been assumed. For treasons so aggravated there could be no pardon on this side of the grave. The poor, terrified duke vowed that he had never wished to take the crown, but had been led into that fatal error by others. As to the declaration, he had not written it; he had not read it; he had signed it without looking at it; it was all the work of Ferguson, that bloody villain, Ferguson. "Do you expect me to believe," said James, with contempt but too well merited, "that you set your hand to a paper of such moment without knowing what it contained?" One depth of infamy only remained, and even to that the prisoner descended. He was pre-eminently the champion of the Protestant religion. The interest of that religion had been his plea for conspiring against the government of his father, and for bringing on his country the miseries of civil war; yet he was not ashamed to hint that he was inclined to be reconciled to the Church of Rome. The king eagerly offered him spiritual assistance, but said nothing of pardon or respite. "Is there, then, no hope?" asked Monmouth. James turned

away in silence. Then Monmouth strove to rally his courage, rose from his knees, and retired with a firmness which he had not shown since his overthrow.

The hour drew near, all hope was over, and Monmouth had passed from pusillanimous fear to the apathy of despair. His children were brought to his room that he might take leave of them, and were followed by his wife. He spoke to her kindly, but without emotion. Though she was a woman of great strength of mind, and had little cause to love him, her misery was such that none of the by-standers could refrain from weeping. He alone was unmoved.

It was ten o'clock. The coach of the lieutenant of the Tower was ready. Monmouth requested his spiritual advisers to accompany him to the place of execution, and they consented; but they told him that, in their judgment, he was about to die in a perilous state of mind, and that, if they attended him, it would be their duty to exhort him to the last. As he passed along the ranks of the guards he saluted them with a smile; and he mounted the scaffold with a firm tread. Tower Hill was crowded, up to the chimney-tops, with an innumerable multitude of gazers, who, in awful silence, broken only by sighs and the noise of weeping, listened for the last accents of the darling of the people. "I shall say little," he began. "I come here not to speak, but to die. I die a Protestant of the Church of England." The bishops interrupted him, and told him that, unless he acknowledged resistance to be sinful, he was no member of their Church. He went on to speak of his Henrietta.* She was, he said, a young lady of virtue and honor. He loved her to the last, and he could not die without giving utterance to his feelings.

The bishops again interfered, and begged him not to use such language. Some altercation followed. The divines have been accused of dealing harshly with the dying man.

* Henrietta, Baroness Wentworth, had followed Monmouth to Holland, and had sacrificed her jewels to provide funds for his expedition.

But they appear to have only discharged what, in their view, was a sacred duty. Monmouth knew their principles, and, if he wished to avoid their importunity, should have dispensed with their attendance. Their general arguments against resistance had no effect on him. But when they reminded him of the ruin which he had brought on his brave and loving followers, of the blood which had been shed, of the souls which had been sent unprepared to the great account, he was touched, and said, in a softened voice, "I do own that. I am sorry that it ever happened." They prayed with him long and fervently; and he joined in their petitions till they invoked a blessing on the king. He remained silent. "Sir," said one of the bishops, "do you not pray for the king with us?" Monmouth paused some time, and, after an internal struggle, exclaimed, "Amen." But it was in vain that the prelates implored him to address to the soldiers and to the people a few words on the duty of obedience to the government. "I will make no speeches," he exclaimed. "Only ten words, my lord." He turned away, called his servant, and put into the man's hand a tooth-pick case, the last token of ill-starred love. "Give it," he said, "to that person." He then accosted John Ketch, the executioner, a wretch who had butchered many brave and noble victims, and whose name has, during a century and a half, been vulgarly given to all who have succeeded him in his odious office. "Here," said the duke, "are six guineas for you. Do not hack me as you did my Lord Russell. I have heard that you struck him three or four times. My servant will give you some more gold if you do the work well." He then undressed, felt the edge of the ax, expressed some fear that it was not sharp enough, and laid his head on the block. The divines in the meantime continued to ejaculate with great energy: "God accept your repentance! God accept your imperfect repentance!"

The hangman addressed himself to his office; but he had been disconcerted by what the duke had said. The first

blow inflicted only a slight wound. The duke struggled, rose from the block, and looked reproachfully at the executioner. The head sank down once more. The stroke was repeated again and again; but still the neck was not severed, and the body continued to move. Yells of rage and horror rose from the crowd. Ketch flung down the ax with a curse. "I cannot do it," he said; "my heart fails me." "Take up the ax, man," cried the sheriff. "Fling him over the rails!" roared the mob. At length the ax was taken up. Two more blows extinguished the last remains of life; but a knife was used to separate the head from the shoulders. The crowd was wrought up to such an ecstasy of rage that the executioner was in danger of being torn in pieces, and was conveyed away under a strong guard.

In the mean time many handkerchiefs were dipped in the duke's blood; for, by a large part of the multitude, he was regarded as a martyr who had died for the Protestant religion. The head and body were placed in a coffin covered with black velvet, and were laid* privately under the communion table of St. Peter's Chapel, in the Tower. Within four years the pavement of the chancel was again disturbed, and hard by the remains of Monmouth were laid the remains of Jeffreys. In truth, there is no sadder spot on earth than that little cemetery. Death is there associated, not, as in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's, with genius and virtue, with public veneration and imperishable renown; not, as in our humblest churches and church-yards, with every thing that is most endearing in social and domestic charities; but with whatever is darkest in human nature and in human destiny, with the savage triumph of implacable enemies, with the inconstancy, the ingratitude, the cowardice of friends, with all the miseries of fallen greatness and of blighted fame. Thither have been carried, through successive ages, by the rude hands of jailers, without one mourner following, the bleeding relics of men who had been the captains of armies, the leaders of parties,

the oracles of senates, and the ornaments of courts. Thither was borne, before the window where Jane Grey was praying, the mangled corpse of Guilford Dudley. Edward Seymour, duke of Somerset, and protector of the realm, reposes there by the brother whom he murdered. There has moldered away the headless trunk of John Fisher, bishop of Rochester and cardinal of St. Vitalis, a man worthy to have lived in a better age, and to have died in a better cause. There are laid John Dudley, duke of Northumberland, lord high admiral; and Thomas Cromwell, earl of Essex, lord high treasurer. There, too, is another Essex, on whom nature and fortune had lavished all their bounties in vain, and whom valor, grace, genius, royal favor, popular applause, conducted to an early and ignominious doom. Not far off sleep two chiefs of the great house of Howard—Thomas, fourth duke of Norfolk, and Philip, eleventh earl of Arundel. Here and there, among the thick graves of unquiet and aspiring statesmen, lie more delicate sufferers: Margaret of Salisbury, the last of the proud name of Plantagenet, and those two fair queens who perished by the jealous rage of Henry. Such was the dust with which the dust of Monmouth mingled.

Yet a few months, and the quiet village of Toddington, in Bedfordshire, witnessed a still sadder funeral. Near that village stood an ancient and stately hall, the seat of the Wentworths. The transept of the parish church had long been their burial-place. To that burial-place, in the spring which followed the death of Monmouth, was borne the coffin of the young Baroness Wentworth of Nettlestede. Her family reared a sumptuous mausoleum over her remains; but a less costly memorial of her was long contemplated with far deeper interest. Her name, carved by the hand of him whom she loved too well, was, a few years ago, still discernible on a tree in the adjoining park.

XLVI.

EXIT JAMES THE SECOND.—COOKE.

[James went on from bad to worse, and in the end succeeded in alienating nearly all classes of his subjects. In this state of affairs some of the most prominent party leaders entered into negotiations with William, prince of Orange, and secretly invited him to invade the country. The prince had married James's elder daughter, Mary, and he had, besides, an eventual claim to the crown in his own right, for he was a grandson of Charles the First. He accepted the invitation, and, on his landing, in 1688, James's army melted away, his friends deserted him, and he fled in terror to the Continent. Parliament met, of course without the sanction of the king, declared the throne vacant, and elected William and Mary as joint sovereigns of England.]



JAMES II.

THE desertions which immediately ensued have been recorded as examples of the blackest ingratitude, and, in too many instances, the imputation cannot be denied. Men who had owed their whole advancement to James, now promised fidelity, were trusted, and betrayed him. No consideration can make us regard with pleasure the dissimulation of Ormond or Drumlawrig, or read without strong reprobation the refined treachery of Churchill. It must, however, be remembered that those who are most prominent in the catalogue of traitors could have procured, upon the condition of their conversion, far higher honors under James than any they could hope to receive from the prince of Orange. Whether the crusade which James had commenced against all who continued steadfast to the English Church had absolved him from all ties of gratitude, was a question which the casuistry

of a courtier would probably solve in the affirmative; and since he was persecuted for his religion, he might easily persuade himself that he was justified in joining a prince who treated the report that he had a design upon the crown as a calumny, and stated his object to be, not the dethronement of the monarch, but the protection of the religion and liberty of the subject.

That many of those who now forsook the king had no further intention than the redress of grievances is proved by their after-conduct. Among the present partisans of the prince appear the most illustrious of those names which were afterward reckoned among the party of the Jacobites and in the muster-rolls of the Pretenders. These observations apply only to individuals of the Tory party. The Whigs had no favors to requite; in too many instances they had wrongs to revenge.

Upon the landing of the prince it became immediately evident how impotent the priests behind the throne were to avert the ruin they had called down. Petre* had obtained the disgrace of Sunderland, who, dismissed from all his offices, and, perhaps, trembling for his head, declared to his former dependents that he merely retired because it was, at present, inexpedient to employ Catholics. For a moment Petre and his fellow-laborer, the earl of Melford, held the ascendancy, but James, alarmed by the suddenness and magnitude of his danger, was now really aware of their incapacity, and turned for advice to those of the Protestants who were still with him. These, however, could already read the signs of the times. They had nothing to expect from his success, every thing from his failure. Halifax and Rochester now intrigued, not for the honor of serving, but for the opportunity of betraying him. Halifax was the successful competitor; joined with Nottingham, who had refused to sit at the council-board, and, with Godolphin, who had already changed his

* Petre was James's clerk of the closet.

allegiance, in a commission to treat with the king, he, at his first meeting with the confidential agent of the prince, expressed his determination to use his powers as he might direct. After an interview with the prince he wrote to the king, declaring that he thought there was a design against his person, and Godolphin seconded the intrigue by a letter of advice to withdraw, and within a year his people would invite him back upon their knees.

It was, doubtless, this letter from Halifax which caused James's suddenly conceived and rapidly executed project of flight. The services of that nobleman in bringing about the revolution were so great, that we could wish to remove from him that stigma of treachery which renders deeds that were the salvation of his country, the dishonor of the man.

The sufferings of James were now, doubtless, great; deserted by all those who had been accustomed to deem themselves honored by his slightest command, a terrified fugitive, stealing under the cover of darkness and disguise from his capital and his kingdom, then a captive in the hands of the rabble of a small fishing-town, cringing, entreating, and imploring his life from these ignoble masters of his fate, while the nobles of his council sought, in affected ignorance of his situation, an excuse for conniving at his destruction; then again, when for a moment installed in his former dignity, and when beginning to remember the language of command, banished at midnight from his palace by the voice of the man he had confided in as his ambassador, reduced to the necessity of borrowing so small a sum as a hundred guineas from a subject; and, lastly, obtaining, by favor of his enemy, an ignominious safety in a second secret flight; these were sufferings which, having none of the dignity that commonly ennobles the reverses of royalty, must have borne with tenfold weight upon the haughty spirit of the last of the Stuart kings. Yet, amid all this misfortune, he must be possessed of a very morbid sensibility who can pity James. When we picture him kneeling and crying before

the hooting rabble, we see, also, Monmouth kneeling at his feet; the rude jests which assailed James from the fishermen of Feversham, were not nearly so savage as the cool denial of mercy with which the duke was dismissed from the presence-chamber to the scaffold. What suffering, which James underwent, can we compare with the horrors which he jested of as Jeffrey's campaign in the West? No one ever thought of pitying the fate which now overtook that instrument of human butchery; why, then, should we waste commiseration upon him who was the real author of all the other's crimes, and who superadded to them the diabolical deeds which he personally perpetrated in the torture-chamber in Scotland?

In the midst of all his distress one act in the dark catalogue of his crimes was brought before him with its full force. Previous to his flight he called together those nobles who were within reach of his summons, to advise with them upon his affairs. The earl of Bedford, whom age and despondency had long secluded from public business, came among the rest. "You, my lord," said James, to this popular nobleman, as he sat at the council-board, "could do much for me in this extremity." The earl replied that he was now old and incapable of exertion; "but," he added, with a sigh, "I once had a son who might have been of infinite service to your majesty at this moment." It is said that James was pale and confounded at the reply. It was the rebuke of a father to the murderer of his son.

Even the treachery of which James was the victim was, in many instances, of a character to excite only disapprobation of the traitors, not commiseration for the betrayed. Their master had rivaled them all in ingratitude. Hyde, earl of Rochester, at one time his chief, at all times his devoted supporter, who had served him faithfully through his difficult and apparently hopeless struggle for the crown, was cast aside like a worn garment, when success had rendered him unnecessary. The eloquence of Halifax, to which he was not less indebted

for his throne, could not protect him from similar treatment; and not the most unconditional compliance, even to the abandonment of his religion, could preserve Sunderland, when he halted for a moment in the course he was given to run.

The king arrived in France on the last day of the year 1688.

XLVII.

KILLIECRANKIE.—SCOTT.

[William came as a mediator between parties, and his influence told beneficially in nearly all directions. The Catholics of Ireland and the Catholic Highlanders of Scotland, however, refused to submit to his authority, and both had to be reduced by force. The Highland clans gathered under Viscount Dundee as leader, and defeated the royal army at Killiecrankie, where Dundee was slain. But if Dundee had lived, the ultimate result would have been practically the same. A Highland army was never so little to be feared as the day after a victory, for the clans were wont to disperse at once to their homes to secure the booty they had won.]

IN this celebrated defile, called the Pass of Killiecrankie, the road runs for several miles along the banks of a furious river, called the Garry, which rages below, among cataracts and water-falls which the eye can scarcely discern, while a series of precipices and wooded mountains rise on the other hand; the road itself is the only mode of access through the glen, and along the valley which lies at its northern extremity. The path was then much more inaccessible than at the present day, as it ran close to the bed of the river, and was narrower and more rudely formed.

A defile of such difficulty was capable of being defended to the last extremity by a small number against a considerable army; and considering how well adapted his followers were for such mountain warfare, many of the Highland chiefs were of opinion that Dundee ought to content himself with guarding the pass against Mackay's superior army, until a rendez-

vous, which they had appointed, should assemble a stronger force of their countrymen. But Dundee was of a different opinion, and resolved to suffer Mackay to march through the pass without opposition, and then to fight him in the open valley, at the northern extremity. He chose this bold measure, both because it promised a decisive result to the combat which his ardent temper desired; and also because he preferred fighting Mackay before that general was joined by a considerable body of English horse who were expected, and of whom the Highlanders had at that time some dread.

On the 17th of June, 1689, General Mackay, with his troops, entered the pass, which, to their astonishment, they found unoccupied by the enemy. His forces were partly English and Dutch regiments, who, with many of the Lowland Scots themselves, were struck with awe, and even fear, at finding themselves introduced by such a magnificent and, at the same time, formidable avenue, to the presence of their enemies, the inhabitants of these tremendous mountains, into whose recesses they were penetrating. But besides the effect produced on their minds by the magnificence of natural scenery, to which they were wholly unaccustomed, the consideration must have hung heavy on them, that if a general of Dundee's talents suffered them to march unopposed through a pass so difficult, it must be because he was conscious of possessing strength sufficient to attack and destroy them at the farther extremity, when their only retreat would lie through the narrow and perilous path by which they were now advancing.

Midday was passed ere Mackay's men were extricated from the defile, when their general drew them up in one line three deep, without any reserve, along the southern extremity of the narrow valley into which the pass opens. A hill on the north side of the valley, covered with dwarf trees and bushes, formed the position of Dundee's army, which, divided into columns, formed by the different clans, was greatly outflanked by Mackay's troops.

The armies shouted when they came within sight of each other; but the enthusiasm of Mackay's soldiers being damped by the circumstances we have observed, their military shout made but a dull and sullen sound compared to the yell of the Highlanders, which rang far and shrill from all the hills around them. Sir Evan Cameron of Lochiel called on those around him to attend to this circumstance, saying, that in all his battles he observed victory had ever been on the side of those whose shout before joining seemed most sprightly and confident. It was accounted a less favorable augury by some of the old Highlanders that Dundee at this moment, to render his person less distinguishable, put on a sad-colored buff-coat above the scarlet cassock and bright cuirass in which he had hitherto appeared.

It was some time ere Dundee had completed his preparations for the assault which he meditated, and only a few dropping shots were exchanged, while, in order to prevent the risk of being outflanked, he increased the intervals between the columns with which he designed to charge, insomuch that he had scarce men enough left in the center. About an hour before sunset he sent word to Mackay that he was about to attack him, and gave the signal to charge.

The Highlanders stripped themselves to their shirts and doublets, threw away every thing that could impede the fury of their onset, and then put themselves in motion, accompanying with a dreadful yell the discordant sound of their war-pipes. As they advanced, the clansmen fired their pieces, each column thus pouring in a well-aimed though irregular volley, when, throwing down their fusees, without waiting to reload, they drew their swords, and, increasing their pace to the utmost speed, pierced through and broke the thin line which was opposed to them, and profited by their superior activity, and the nature of their weapons, to make a great havoc among the regular troops. When thus mingled with each other, hand to hand, the advantages of superior discipline on the part of the

Lowland soldier were lost—agility and strength were on the side of the mountaineers. Some accounts of the battle give a terrific account of the blows struck by the Highlanders, which cleft heads down to the breast, cut steel head-pieces asunder as night-caps, and slashed through pikes like willows. Two of Mackay's English regiments in the center stood fast, the interval between the attacking columns being so great that none were placed opposite to them. The rest of King William's army were totally routed, and driven headlong into the river.

Dundee himself, contrary to the advice of the Highland chiefs, was in front of the battle, and fatally conspicuous. By a desperate attack, he possessed himself of Mackay's artillery, and then led his handful of cavalry, about fifty men, against two troops of horse, which fled without fighting. Observing the stand made by the two English regiments already mentioned, he galloped toward the clan of MacDonald, and was in the act of bringing them to the charge, with his right arm elevated as if pointing the way to victory, when he was struck by a bullet beneath the arm-pit, where he was unprotected by his cuirass. He tried to ride on, but being unable to keep the saddle, fell mortally wounded, and died in the course of the night.

It was impossible for a victory to be more complete than that gained by the Highlanders at Killiecrankie. The cannon, baggage, and stores of Mackay's army fell into their hands. The two regiments which kept their ground suffered so much in their attempt to retreat through the pass, now occupied by the Athole-men, in their rear, that they might be considered as destroyed. Two thousand of Mackay's army were killed or taken, and the general himself escaped with difficulty to Stirling, at the head of a few horse. The Highlanders, whose dense columns, as they came down to the attack, underwent three successive volleys from Mackay's line, had eight hundred men slain.

But all other losses were unimportant compared to that of
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Dundee, with whom were forfeited all the fruits of that bloody victory. Mackay, when he found himself free from pursuit, declared his conviction that his opponent had fallen in the battle. And such was the opinion of Dundee's talents and courage, and the general sense of the peculiar crisis at which his death took place, that the common people of the low country cannot, even now, be persuaded that he died an ordinary death. They say that a servant of his own, shocked at the severities which, if triumphant, his master was likely to accomplish against the Presbyterians, and giving way to the popular prejudice about his having a charm against the effect of lead balls, shot him, in the tumult of the battle, with a silver button taken from his livery coat. The Jacobites and the Episcopal party, on the other hand, lamented the deceased victor, as the last of the Scots, the last of the Grahams, and the last of all that was great in his native country.

 XLVIII.

DOWNFALL OF MARLBOROUGH.—LECKY.

[While William, by his wise statesmanship, conferred great benefits upon England, he rendered still greater service to the Continental states in checkmating the ambition of Louis XIV. Death came to him, however, before the struggle with Louis was over, and the work which he had begun was committed to other hands. John Churchill, earl of Marlborough, was appointed by William's successor, Queen Anne, commander-in-chief of the army. By a series of remarkably brilliant campaigns which proved him to be the greatest general of his age, he forced the French king to sue for peace. But, as the proffered terms were rejected through Marlborough's influence, it was thought that he was prolonging the war for his own advantage. Therefore, the Tories, who strongly opposed the war, and who hated Marlborough because of his great successes, determined to accomplish his ruin.]

MEANWHILE the government at home had been pressing on the peace by measures of almost unparalleled violence.

Supported by a large majority in the House of Commons, it resolved to silence or crush all opposition. The first and most conspicuous victim was Marlborough. It was alleged, and alleged with truth, that, while commanding in the Netherlands, he had during several years received an annual pension of about £6,000 from the contractor who supplied his army with bread, and also that he had appropriated two and a half per cent. of the money which had been voted by Parliament for paying the subsidized troops, and on these grounds he was accused of peculation. The answer, however, in ordinary times would have been accepted as conclusive. It was shown that the former sum was a perquisite always granted to the commander in the Netherlands, and employed by him for obtaining that secret intelligence which is absolutely essential to a general, and which was never more complete than under Marlborough, and that the deduction from the subsidies was expressly authorized by the foreign powers who were subsidized, and by a royal warrant which granted it to the commander-in-chief "for extraordinary contingent expenses." Whatever irregularity there might be in providing by these means a supply of secret-service money, it was of old standing; there was no reason whatever to believe that the fund was misappropriated, though from its very nature it could not be accounted for in detail, and it was proved that the expenditure of secret-service money in the campaigns of Marlborough was considerably smaller than it had been in the incomparably less successful campaigns of William. Prince Eugene afterward very candidly declared that he had himself given for intelligence three times as much as Marlborough was charged with on that head.

The object of the dominant party, however, was, at all costs, to discredit Marlborough. He was dismissed from all his employments, pronounced guilty by a party vote of the House of Commons, and exposed to a storm of mendacious obloquy. When Eugene came over to England in order to use his