The Secret History Of The Court And Reign Of Charles II

By
A Member of His Privy Council

1792
Volume II

The Secret History
Of The
Court And Reign
Of
Charles The Second
By
A Member Of His Privy Council
To Which Are Added
Introductory Sketches
Of The Proceeds Period From The Session Of
James I
With Notes And A Supplement
Continuing The Narrative In They Summary Manner To
The Revolution
By The Editor
Charles McCormick

Luaque ipse miserrimavidi,
Etquorum parsmagna fui

In Two Volumes:
Vol. II
London:
Printed by T. Gillet number 19, Bartholomew Close,
for J. Bew, No. 28 Paternoster Row
1792

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It was the actions of General George Monck which led to the Monarchy being restored: Monck marched into England on 1 January, reaching London by early February

The Secret History
Of The
Court And Reign
Of
CHARLES THE SECOND

Chapter 1
1663
The Kings Plausible Speech At The Opening Of The New Sessions

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HE Parliament assembled together on the day in February, to which they had been prorogued; and the King, in a very insinuating speech, endeavoured to seduce them into an approbation of what he had already done, and of what he further desired to do in favour of the Roman Catholics.

He expressed a full confidence in the wisdom and affection of both houses; and doubted not but when they should have well examined the grounds of his late declaration, they would readily

concur with him therein. It's great object was "to cure the distempers, and compose different minds of the people; – to set bounds to the hopes of some, and to the fears of others."

He said, "that he was, in his nature, and enemy to all severity for religion and conscience however mistaken, when it extended to capital and sanguinary punishments, which, he was told, had been begun in Popish times;" and added, "but when he said this, he hoped he should not need to warn them against inferring thence, that he meant to favour Popery."

He confessed however, "there were many of that profession, who, having served his father and himself very well, might fairly hope for some part of the indulgence, which he would willingly afford to other dissenters; but he was far from intending to grant them the toleration or qualifying them thereby to hold any offices all places in the government: he even with some laws to be made to hinder the growth and progress of their doctrines."

Having thus taken some pains to remove any suspicions that might be entertained of his partiality to papists, his Majesty's next touched upon the very delicate point, to which his speech and his wishes were alike directed; and that was, to engage Parliament to acquiesce in his occasional exercise of the dispensing power.

He said, "he trusted they had all so good an opinion of his zeal for the Protestant religion, as that he needed nor to tell them, that he would not yield to any therein, not to the bishops themselves, nor in his liking the uniformity of it, which was to be kept pure and uncorrupted, free from all other mixtures. Yet," he added, "if the dissenters would demean themselves peaceably and modestly under the government, he could heartily with, he had such a power of indulgence, the use upon occasions, as might not needlessly force them out of the kingdom, or staying here, give them cause to conspire against the peace of it."

The Address of The Commons Against Any Toleration, or Indulgence

Though upon this location his Majesty exerted all his powers of persuasion and flattery, he could not remove the prejudices, or quiet the fears of Parliament. On the contrary, their enmity to the Presbyterian's, and their alarm at the encouragement which the Popish clergy met with at court, where greatly increased even by the most cautious hints of the proposed indulgence.

Besides the King was not supported in this measure by his own ministers. There were but few members of his privy Council at this time, who were friendly to Popery; and the party under their major influence in either house was by no means able to give the law to the others.

The Commons therefore, after some debate, resolved upon presenting an address to the King, in which they renewed assurances of zeal, duty, and affection, and declared that "it was with the utmost unwillingness and reluctantcy of heart they were brought to differ from anything which his Majesty had thought fit to propose."

They admitted, "that the distempers of some men's spirits, and many mutinies and conspiracies, which were carried on during the late intervals of Parliament, might have recently inclined his Majesty to endeavour to give some allay to those ill humours by the hopes of indulgence, if Parliament should consent to it; but that they humbly offered to his great wisdom, that it was in no sort advisable to grant any indulgence to persons, who presumed to dissent from the Act of Uniformity, and the religion established."

As to his Majesty's declaration from Breda, the Commons whereof the opinion, "that he ought not to be pressed with it any farther; for that it was not a promise, but only a gracious declaration of his intentions to do what in him lay, and what Parliament should advise him to do: that no such advice of indulgence was ever given, or thought fit to be offered, nor could

it be otherwise understood, as there were laws of uniformity then in being, which could not be dispensed with by an act of Parliament: and that those, who pretended a right to that supposed promise, have put the right into the hands of their representatives, who had passed, with his Majesty's consent, the act of uniformity."

In the next part of the address, the Commons enlarged on their consequences which they thought would necessarily attend the indulgence proposed. Its effects they said would be, "to establish schism by law; to take away all means of convicting recusants; to discredit the gravity and wisdom of Parliament; to expose his Majesty to the restless importunity of every dissenter; to increase sects and sectaries; to render the transition almost unavoidable from indulgence to a general toleration, and from that to an establishment, which, for ought that could be foreseen, might end in Popery; and, in all probability, to occasion great disturbance, instead of attending to the peace of the kingdom."

After assigning some plausible reasons, why a settled tranquillity and obedience were more likely to be produced by asserting the laws and the religion established, according to the act of uniformity, than by any relaxation of those laws, the Commons concluded with declaring, "that, if any person should presume to disturb the peace of the kingdom, they would, for ever, and all occasions be ready, with the utmost endeavour and assistance, to adhere to, and serve his Majesty according to their bounden duty and allegiance[1]."

The King was very much vexed at so declared an opposition to his wishes: he expected more compliance from the Parliament; and knew not how to account for the little effect produced by his own speech, but by ascribing the address of the Commons to the intrigues of the bishops and the Chancellor, whom he knew to be averse to his exercise of a dispensing power. He did not, indeed, express his displeasure to the Chancellor: he even studiously avoided all conversation on the subject: but those, who knew him well, who clearly perceive his dissatisfaction in his countenance, of which he had not quite so perfect a command as his language[2].

In his jealousy of his ministers endeavours privately to defeat his scheme of indulgence, he was encouraged not only by the Earl of Bristol, and all the Roman catholic junta, but by his fair Idol, Lady Castlemaine, who besides her bearing an implacable enmity to the Chancellor soon declared herself of the Popish persuasion, and became a warm and powerful advocate for its interests. This gave rise to some changes in the Cabinet, and in the management of the Kings affairs in Parliament, of which I shall presently enter into a more particular accounts.

Remonstrations on The Leniency Shown to Papists

But whatever his Majesty had resolved upon with those secret advisers, it was at this time carefully concealed. He took no public notice of the address for almost three weeks; and then in a written message, pretended an unwillingness to reply to the reasons it contained, though, he said, he found he had been misunderstood; but thanked the Commons for that declaration to assist them against any person that should presume to disturb the peace of the kingdom.

As the Commons, in their address, had only given one hint respecting the possible establishment of Popery, they afterwards engaged the Lords to concur with them in a particular remonstrance on that subject alone, in which they represented to his Majesty, "that is lenity towards the papists had drawn into the kingdom a great number of Romish priests and Jesuits: they were therefore humbled suitors to him, to issue out a proclamation to command all Jesuits, and all English, Irish, and Scottish Popish priests, and all such other priests as had taken orders from the See of Rome, or by authority thereof, (except such foreign Jesuits all priests, as, by contract of marriage, were to attend the persons of either the Queens, or, by the law of nations, to attend foreign Embassadors) to depart the kingdom by a certain day, under pain of having the penalties of the law inflicted upon them."

Fallacy of The Same in Compliance With The Wishes of Parliament

There were, indeed, just grounds for this remonstrations. The number of Romish priests increased every day to the most alarming degree; and their party, too much elated by court favour, conducted themselves with such indiscretion and insolence as to fill the people with fears, and the Parliament with jealousy.

The King manifested great uneasiness on this occasion; and, after affecting to consult with the select committee of his privy Council, he sent a message to the Lords on 2 April, to be also imparted to the Commons, in which he said, "that he was not a little troubled, that is leniency and condescension towards many of the Popish persuasion (which were about natural effects of his generosity and good nature, after having lived so many years in the dominions of Roman Catholic Princes; and out of a just memory of what many of them had done and suffered in the service of his father and himself) had been made so ill use of, and so ill deserved, that the resort of Jesuits and priests into the kingdom, had been thereby increased, with which his Majesty was highly offended."

Having thus apologised for his indulgence to papists, and expressed his disapprobation of their abuse of it, he promised to issue out such a proclamation as the Parliament desired, and to take care that it should be more effectual than any of that kind had ever been. His Majesty farther declared to both houses, and to all his loving subjects, "that, as his affection and zeal for the Protestant religion, and the Church of England, had not been concealed, or untaken notice in the world, so he was not, nor ever would be solicitous for settling his own revenue, or providing for the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom, as for the advancement and improvements of the religion established, and for using and applying all proper and effectual remedies to hinder the growth of Popery, both which he in truth looked upon as the best expedients to establish the peace and prosperity of all his kingdoms."

Both houses were highly pleased with the message, as it promised the fullest gratification of their resentment against papists. His Majesty seemed also very ready to comply with their request, by immediately issuing the desired proclamation against Popish priests. But, instead of rendering it, as he said, more effectual than any former one, the end of it was defeated by the artful omission of a single words in the clause recommended by Parliament for accepting such **foreign** Jesuits or priests as attended either of the Queens, or any of the embassadors from Roman Catholic countries.

The word "**foreign**" was left out in the proclamation; and thus every priest might claim the benefit of the exception, under the pretence of belonging to one of the Queens, all to some embassador. The fallacy was obvious, but no remarks were made upon it in either house; for, besides their unwillingness to offend the King by too many representations on the same head, they intended before the end of the session, to frame a bill for enforcing the penal acts with more rigour against nonconformists of every description. From this purpose, however, they were diverted by very great address.

In the meantime the Commons proceeded to take the state of his Majesty's revenue into consideration, and to devise means for making good such deficiencies in it as were complained of. The produce of many of the supplies before voted were said to have fallen short of their expectations; but though this was the case in a few instances, the emptiness of the exchequer was much more owing to the improvident and unthrifty expenditure of the money which had been received.

The settlement of these matters led to enquiries into some other grievances, and occasioned such frequent interruptions of the main business, and so many unpleasant messages to the King about objects of reform,[3] that his Majesty resolved to apply the same spur to their dispatch which he had tried the year before with success.

He sent for them to Whitehall, and after some gentle expostulation on the seeming abatement of their zeal for his service, he stated the urgency of his wants, and the necessity of a present supply for the supply for the support of government, and for the maintenance of public peace. He also reminded them of the season of the year, and the propriety of making a recess at Midsummer; and concluded with assuring them, upon his word, "that they should have great comfort in what they did for him[4]."

The King was not disappointed in his hopes of quickening the liberality of the Commons by this artful mode of expostulation. As soon as they returned to their house, and voted four entire subsidies for the supply of his Majesty's present occasions; and the clergy, who were then assembled in convocation having also testified their affection for his Majesty by a similar grant of four subsidies, it was readily confirmed by Parliament. The Commons also prepared three other acts for rendering the former assignments to the Crown of the duty of excise, and of the revenue arising by hearth money, more productive.

But though, while the impressions of the King’s speech was fresh upon their minds, the vote of subsidies, and other bills to increase his Majesty's revenue, and to strengthen his power, where carried through with the utmost dispatch; yet they soon abated of that that alacrity, and all matters depending proceeded with the usual slowness. This did not arise from any diminution of the zeal in the king's service, but rather from the excessive officiousness of some new members, to whom his Majesty had transferred a great part of his confidence, and who, by their ignorance, for the intrigues, puzzled and impeded, instead of accelerating the progress of public affairs. I have before hinted at the changes made in his Majesty's counsel, and in the management of the house of commons; and shall now explain the causes and effects of such alterations.

Changes in The Cabinet, and in The Management of The House of Commons

In the course of almost 3 years, since this Parliament was first assembled, many members of the house of commons had died; and great pains were taken to have some of the Kings menial servants chosen in their places. Hence it happened that there was a very great number of men in all stations in the court, as well below stairs as above, who were become members of Parliament; and there were very few of them, who did not think themselves qualified to reform whatever was amiss in church or state, and to procure whatsoever supply the King would require. They, who from the lowness of the former rank in his service, never before have presumed to speak to him, now, by the privilege of Parliament, resorted to him every day, and had as much conference with him as they desired.

They even took the liberty to give their opinions and advice on the conduct of his affairs; and represented such and such men, whom they liked, as well affected to his service, and others of much greater merit, but who paid them less respect, as ill affected, and as wanting duty to his Majesty. Availing themselves of the King’s weakness in too easily believing such insinuations, they brought the persons, of whom they had spoken favourably, and whose great recommendation consisted in a professed readiness to do anything his Majesty pleased to prescribe, to receive his thanks, as well as immediate directions from himself how to behave in the house, though many of them were in reality capable of no other instructions than to follow the example of some discreet man in whatsoever he should vote.

Till this time the King had been content to refer the direction of his affairs in Parliament to the Chancellor and those other members of the select committee, of whom I have already made frequent mention. They conferred every day with some members of the greatest talents an interest in the Commons; and settled with them in what manner to proceed in managing the house, and what parts to assign to other men, whom they found willing to concur in what was to be desired; and all this was done without noise, or scandal. But there were two persons now introduced to act upon that stage, who disdained to receive orders, or to have any method prescribed to them;

– who took upon them to judge of other men's defects, and thought their own abilities beyond exception.

The first of those new performers on the political theatre was Sir Harry Bennett, who had resided for some time as his Majesty's agent, or, then envoy at Madrid; and who, since the restoration, had obtained his recall, as hoping by means of the Kings favour and his own dexterity to make a more rapid fortune at home than he could in a foreign country. He always professed great respect for the Chancellor, with whom he was obliged, while abroad, to correspond, and by whom his instructions were regularly drawn, though whatever orders he received, and how positive so ever, he observed so far, and not rather than his own humour disposed him.

Even showing this formal correspondence with the Chancellor, he held a more secret intelligence with Daniel O'Neill of the bedchamber, by whose means he obtained the King’s consent to many particulars which he himself advised, without the privity of the Chancellor, or even of the secretaries of state. He had renewed the treaty with Spain, without there being once consulted; nor did they know anything of his having left Madrid, till they heard that he was in Paris, from whence he arrived in London in a very short time after. He was well received by the King, in whose affections he had a very good place; and shortly after his arrival, his Majesty conferred upon him the only office then vacant, which was that of privy purse; and admitted him into a great familiarity, and to the nightly meeting of favourites at lady Castlemaine's where he filled the principal place to all intents and purposes.

His discourse was always enlivened with ready wit and pleasantry; and he could also throw into it a great deal of that the lascivious reasoning, which was the high treat at those conversations. In politics he flattered the King’s wishes, and paid his court to the lady who have equal address; and, with regard to religion, if he had any, it was supposed to be leaning towards Popery[5].

By the display of these accomplishments he made himself so agreeable, and was thought so useful, that the King desired the Chancellor to use his credit to get Sir Harry elected a member of the House of Commons, which was accordingly done upon the first opportunity.

William Coventry's Parents on The Political Theatre

The other person now brought forward was Mr William Coventry, the youngest son of the late Lord Coventry, who had been many years Lord keeper of the great seal. This gentleman, towards the close of the civil war, had the command of a company of foot, and shortly after travelled into France, where he remained whilst there was any hope of getting another army for the King, or the either of the other crowns would engage in his quarrel. But when all thoughts of that were desperate, he returned to England, and gave up every idea of any further attempts, till the King was proclaimed in London.

He then went over with others to offer his service to his Majesty at the Hague, and had the good fortune to find the Duke of York without a secretary, which, as the duke held the office of high Admiral of England, was not only very honourable, but almost as lucrative as that of Secretary of State.

He was a sullen, ill-natured, proud man, whose ambition had no limits; his parts were very good, if he had not thought them better than any other man's; and he had diligence and industry, which men of good parts are too often without, which made him quickly to have at least credit and power enough with the duke.

He had a seat in the House of Commons from the beginning of the Parliament; he always spoke pertinently, and was well attended to: he was, in like manner, one of those with whom the person is trusted by the King in conducting his affairs in the lower house consulted very frequently. But perceiving that the advice of some few others, who had much longer experience, was more relied

upon than his, he began to think himself not valued enough, and only made use of to promote the designs and contrivances of other men, without being signal in the management, to which he aspired.

This determined to make frequent experiments how far he himself could prevail in the house, by declining the method that was prescribed, and proposing somewhat which was either beside, all contrary to it. Then if it succeeded, as it sometimes did, the rest of the court party not opposing him, from a belief of his having received new directions, he had argument enough to censure the Chancellor for having formed wrong ideas of the temper and affections of the house.

League of Friendship Between Those Two Favourites

When those two persons, Sir Harry Bennet and Mr Coventry, (who had entered into as a great a league of friendship as can subsist between two very proud men) came to sit together in the House of Commons, though the four of them knew no more of the Constitution and the laws of England, than he did of China, nor had in through the care or tenderness for the church or state, but believe France was the best pattern in the world, they thought it would be doing them the greatest wrong, if they were not allowed entirely to govern the house, or if the King took measures of what should be done there from anybody but themselves.

They made friendships with several young members, who spoke confidently, and often seem to have credit in the house. As these were for the most part country gentleman of ordinary condition, and mean fortunes, they were desirous to secure the interest of such a person as Sir Harry Bennet, who was thought to have, and who indeed had considerable influence with his Majesty.

Sir Harry, proud of having gained such an number of adherents, and said he understood the house, and what was to be done there, as well as any man in England. He recommended those men to the King, as persons of sublime parts; spoke in their own hearing of the services they had done, and how much greater they could do; and assured his Majesty, that with such loyal and zealous supporters he might carry what he would in the house of Commons.

The King received and conferred with them graciously, and dismissed them with promises which made them rich already. They had before been entirely governed by Sir Hugh Pollard, under the Chancellor's secret direction; but they thought they had now got a better patron; the new courtier had raised their value, and talked to them of recompenses and rewards in a different dialect from what they had been accustomed to.

Profits of The Post Office and Wine Licences Granted to The Duke of York and His Heirs

The two friends before mentioned agreed so well between themselves, that whether they spoke together, or apart to the King, they always said the same things, gave the same information, and took care that both their masters might have the same opinions and judgements of the affections of the House of Commons, which they said were so great and united, as to be ready to do whatsoever the King, or Duke could require.

They had it in their power to give the latter more especially a strong instance of the seeming truth of their of assertions. About the beginning of the session, some abuses in contracts with relation to the Post Office having been complained of, the Commons requested the King to make no further grants of that kind, till the matter could have been more fully enquired into. But by the contrivance of Coventry and Bennett, the house sometime after unanimously assented to a motion for settling the profits of the Post Office, and the power of granting wine licences, on his Royal Highness the Duke of York, and the heirs male of his body. This was a very acceptable piece of service, as so great in addition to the Dukes establishment[6] enabled him to keep a separate court, without troubling the King for any further assistance.

Introduction of Free New Members That The Select Meetings

Such a proof of the sentiments and liberality of the Commons afforded an excellent subject for Sir Harry and Mr Coventry to enlarge upon. They said, "that former delays in matters which the King had a heart were entirely owing to mismanagement; they knew many worthy and able men, of whose Western the house was so well persuaded, as to agree to whatever they proposed; and yet these men complained that they had no directions given to them, which way they might best serve the King." They farther asserted, "that if those men were properly treated with, it would quickly appear how much they were at his Majesty's disposal; and all things, which now depended long, would be hereafter dispatched in half the time."

The King wondered very much, that any members of the house, who were so well disposed to serve him, should have been so much neglected, and wish Sir Harry and Mr Coventry to speak to the Chancellor on the subject. They are artfully concealed their having the least prejudice against the Chancellor, (though they were not united in anyone thing more than the desire of his ruin) and said they would very willingly repair to him, and be directed by him; but they requested, that is Majesty himself would first speak to him to call those persons, whom they had recommended, to meet together with the rest, whom the Chancellor used to consult.

This the King willingly undertook, and being shortly after waited upon by the Chancellor, his Majesty mentions what had been told him, and named several members of the house of Commons, who, he said, took it ill, that they were not particularly informed of the Kings wishes and which way they might best serve him. He therefore desired that, at the next conference upon Parliamentary business, those gentleman, with Sir Harry Bennett, might have notice to be present.[7] Mr. William Coventry, he and his brother Harry of the bedchamber had been constantly in those councils.

It was not difficult for the Chancellor to perceive the secret design of those measures which had been suggested to the King. He said, "that great and notorious meetings in Parliament had been always odious; and though they might produce success in a few particulars, they ended unluckily; that since his Majesty's return, care had been taken to confine the management of his business in the Commons to a few persons, who had a mutual confidence in each other, and by whose means instructions were communicated, without noise and without notice, to such of the members as were willing to be instruments towards procuring what was desirable, and preventing what might be unpleasant to his Majesty; that the very gentleman, whom his Majesty had named, as always received every necessary advice and information of his pleasure, without being exposed by any numerous meetings to those suspicions and reproaches, which in all parliaments had been looked upon as a disgrace: and lastly, that he could not conceal his own fears, that putting the business into a wider and more open channel, and his Majesty's too publicly speaking with the members, and believing the reports of every man, who was present at the debates, will be attended with some inconveniences not easy to be remedied[7]."

The King did not express any dissatisfaction at this discourse, but seemed to approve it. However he would have Sir Harry Bennett, and two of the other gentleman, Mr Clifford, and Mr Churchill, called to the next meeting; and because they were to be introduced into company they had not used converse with, his Majesty desired that the select party might meet at the Chancellor's, and not at the chief Baron Bridgeman's, all the attorney general's Chambers, the former places of resort; and that the Chancellor should let the rest know the good opinion his Majesty had of those, who are added to the number.

Decline of The Chancellor's Power

By these means, and with these circumstances, this alteration was made in the conduct of the King's service in Parliament, upon which many other alterations followed, though not at once.

It soon appeared, that the introduction of new confidence was not pleasing to those, who thought they had very well discharged their trust.

The old members became more reserved in the delivery of their opinions, and some of them always discontinued their attendance at the meetings. The newcomers, on the other hand, knowing their credit with the King, and presuming on the superiority of their talents, claim rather to dictate than advise; so that by degrees there were less resolutions taken than had been formally, nor was there so chervil a concurrence, or so speedy a dispatch of the of the business depending on the house as before.

The Chancellor felt very sensibly the diminution of his own power; and knew very well to what causes it was owing, though both Sir Harry Bennet and Mr William Coventry carried themselves towards him with great civility and outward respect, while neither of them let slip any opportunity of injuring him in private. Still, however, they acted with great wariness and caution; and even among their parties they spoke of his foibles rather with an air of pleasantry and ridicule, than with any show of enmity or ill nature.

The Earl of Bristol's Rash and Malicious Attempt

Another of the junto, who privately conspired the Chancellor's ruin, was not quite so discreet, or rather so patient to wait for a favourable opportunity of effecting his destruction. This was the Earl of Bristol, who had been crossed in many of his schemes by the Chancellor and who ascribed to every check that was imposed on his own most extravagant pretensions. Though the King had been often very liberal to him, at one time making him a present of £10,000 in money, with which he purchased Wimbleton of the Queen mother, and at another time giving him Ashdown Forest and other lands in Sussex, yet these marks of Royal favour were not sufficient to gratify his pride, or his avarice.

His religion kept him from any post of considerable honour, or emolument; and his family estate had been sold and settled by his own consent upon the marriage of his eldest son twice to great fortunes; so that when he returned from beyond the seas, he had little more to subsist upon than the King's Bounty; and though no man tasted more of it, yet he always thought the Chancellor prevented its being poured out upon him in greater measure.

He was in this nature very covetous, and ready to embrace all ways of getting money; but, with an inconsistency very common to proud men, he was nothing providence in his expenses, when he had any temptation from ambition or vanity. He spent as much in building and gardening at Wimbleton as the land was worth; and to add to his frequent distresses, he had an unconquerable passion for gaming, in which he had no skill, but constantly lost all the money he could ever command.

By such imprudent conduct the Earl found himself in streights, which he could neither endure, nor get out of, and which transported him to such a degree, that he resolved to treat the King in a very different manner from what he had ever yet presumed to do. Upon this determination, he immediately went to the King, and finding only Lord Aubigny in his company, with whom the Earl was upon a footing of greatest intimacy, he stated his wants, and made a request so very unreasonable that it could not be complied with.

He then told his Majesty, "that he knew well the cause of his withdrawing his favour from him: that it proceeded slowly from the Chancellor, who governed him and managed all his affairs, whilst he himself spent this time only in pleasures and debauchery." He went on in the same passionate strain, upbraiding the King with many excesses, to which no man had contributed more than the Earl himself; and uttering many harsh truths, which came with a worse grace from his lips. He concluded, "that if this request was not granted in four and twenty hours,

he would do somewhat that would awaken the King out of his slumber, and make him look better to his own business;" adding many threats against the Chancellor. So violent and daring an attack deprived the King of all presence of mind; and he afterwards reproached himself for not having called his guard, and sent the Earl to the tower[8].

A report was quickly spread through the courts and the town, that the Earl of Bristol would accuse the Chancellor of high treason; and the Earl did not fail to realise his menaces. When the time was past, that he prescribed to the King to give them satisfaction, he came to the House of Lords with a paper in his hand, and told them,

"that he could not but observed, that, after so glorious a return, with which God has blessed the King and the nation, all the world had expected, that the prosperity of the kingdom would have far exceeded the misery and adversity which it had for many years endured; and that the parliament, on their part, had left nothing undone to promote so happy and desirable change; notwithstanding all which it was evident to all men, and lamented those who wished well to his majesty, that his affairs grew everyday worse, and worse, and that the king himself lost much of his honour, and of the affections he had in the hearts of the people: that, for his part, he looked upon it with as much sadness as any man, and made enquiry as well as he could from whence this great misfortune, which everybody was sensible of, could proceed; and that he was satisfied in his own conscience, that it proceeded principally from the power and credit of the chancellor; and therefore he was resolved, for the good of his country, to accuse the lord high chancellor of high treason, which," he added, "he had done in the paper now submitted to their lordships, all written with his own hand, and subscribed with his name.

He then desired that the paper might be read: it contained many articles of supposed treason and other misdemeanours, the chief of which consisted in changing the chancellor with having endeavoured to alienate the affections of his majesty's subjects, by insinuating that the king was a papist; with following dissensions between the king and his brother; with striving to raise his own reputation and popularity on the ruins of the royal charter: and with assuming to himself the government of all public affairs, which he had administered unskillfully, corruptly, and traitorously. Most of the other charges were frivolous, or malicious, and evidently designed to wound the king through the chancellor[9].

As soon as the paper was read,, the chancellor rose, and without any trouble in his countenance, said, "that he had had the honour heretofore to have so much good opinion and friendship of the noble earl, that he durst appeal to his own conscience, that he did not himself believe that one of those articles to be true, but knew to the contrary of most of them." He then spoke at large to the several charges, not only to show the impossibility of their being founded in truth, but that they respected more upon the king's honour than upon his.

The Chancellor concluded with saying, "he was sorry the noble Earl had not been better advised; for he did believe, that, though all that was alleged in the articles should be true, they would not all amount to high treason;" and desired that the judges might be required to deliver their opinion upon that point. To this the house very readily agreed, ordering the judges to consider the articles, and to give their opinion next day. It was also moved by one of the Lords, that a copy of the articles might be sent to the King, as his Majesty was so presumptuously mentioned in them; which was likewise agreed; and the articles were delivered to the Lord Chamberlain to present to the King.

Next morning the Lord Chamberlain informed the house, "that he was commanded by the King, to thank them for the respect they had shown his Majesty, in sending those articles to him; and to let them know, that he looked upon them as a libel upon himself[10], more than the charge upon the Chancellor, who upon his knowledge, was innocent in all the particulars charged upon him."

The judges at the same time declare their unanimous opinion, first, "that an accusation of high treason could not be originally exhibited by one peer against another in the house of Peers; therefore the charge was not regularly and legally brought in; and secondly, that if the matters alleged were true, they did not amount to treason, as was asserted in the charge."

The message from his Majesty, and the declaration of the judges threw the Earl of Bristol into great confusion. He lamented his condition, "that he, for endeavouring to serve his country, from the impulse of his conscience, was discountenanced and threatened with the anger and displeasure of his Prince, whilst his adversary kept his place in the house, and had the judges so much at his devotion, that they would not certify against him."

The Chancellor then moved the house, "that a short day might be given to the Earl to bring in his evidence to prove the several matters of his charge; otherwise that he might have such reparation, as was in the judgements proportionable to the indignity."

The Earl said, "he should not fail to prove all he had alleged and more; but that he could not appoint a time, when he could be ready for a hearing, because many of his most important witnesses were beyond the seas, some at Paris, and others in other places; and that he must examine the Duke of Ormond, who was lieutenant in Ireland, and the Earl of Lauderdale who was then in Scotland, and must desire commissions to that purpose."

But from that day he made no further instance; and understanding that the King had given warrants to a sergeant at arms to apprehend him, he absconded for some time, sending letters and petitions by his wife to the King, who would not receive them. At length his Majesty was prevailed upon by lady Castlemaine and Sir Harry Bennet to see him in Private; but never showed him any public countenance till the Chancellor's misfortune, when the Earl came to the court and to parliament in great triumph, and boasted of enjoying a greater share than before of the Kings familiarity and confidence.

Curious Intrigues to The Effect The Removal of Secretary Nicholas

There was one of the articles in the charge against the Chancellor, which took its rise from the solicitors resignation of secretary Nicholas, and the appointment of Sir Harry Bennett to that high office. As this alteration soon produced a variety of other changes at court, and led the way to the total this dismission of the Chancellor and his party, I shall here relate the circumstances attending it. Sir Harry, though appointed keeper of the privy purse, did not think himself preferred to a station worthy of his merit and great qualifications. The King had made him some flattering promises at Fontarabia, whither he attended the Spanish Minister to meet is Majesty, and to strengthen himself in his good graces.

Since his return to England, he had been uncommonly successful in making a further progress in his Majesty's affections. There was no man for whom the King showed more kindness, or whose company he more delighted in. He had also secured the ladies favour; and his old friend Mr O'Neill was still ready to put his Majesty in mind of all his services; so that the only difficulty was to find a vacancy, that might give opportunity for his advancement.

It was impossible, that Sir Harry could have a better friend near the King’s person than Mr O'Neill, or any man more dextrous in making opportunities, which it could not find. He made no scruple to insinuate to the King, that the abilities of neither of his secretaries were so great, but that he might be better served. He knew very well that is Majesty was not fond of old men; and had not so much esteem of them, as their parts, industry, and integrity deserved; and that he would not have been sorry, if either, or both of them had died.

But it would have been an ungracious thing to dismiss either, merely because they had lived too long. Secretary Nicholas had served the late King in the same function with great fidelity; and

having very much impaired his fortune by his attachment to the Royal cause, he returned from exile with his present Majesty, in the hope of repairing past losses by the just perquisites of his office.

He was indeed, some years above seventy; but being well versed in business, and all the forms of dispatch, he supplied by his industry and expertness the want of youth and of shining talents. The other secretary was Sir William Morris, general Monks kinsman and great confidant, who alone was entrusted with the correspondence between him and the King; and who, having obtained his present place by the general's special recommendation, could not be turned out without the grossest affront to his friend and patron.

The only expedient, therefore, to provide for Sir Harry Bennett was to remove secretary Nicholas by his own consent; and to this the King was the more easily persuaded, because it would give him an opportunity to bring another person into the office of the privy purse, of whom he was lately grown very fond, though when it came into England, he had a greater aversion to him than to any gentleman, who had been abroad with his Majesty.

This was Sir Charles Barkley, then captain of the Duke of York guard, and much in the good graces of his Royal Highness. I have in a former of part taken notice of his enmity to the Chancellor, and of his entire devotion to the Queen mothers intriguing designs.[11]

Whilst this scheme of new promotions was contriving and depending, great care was taken that it might not come to the notice of the Chancellor, lest, if he could not divert the King from desiring it, he might dissuade his old friends secretary Nicholas from harkening to such proposal, or accepting any composition. This, they thought, he would exert all his influence to effect, as well to keep a man in, whom they could entirely manage, as to keep another out, of whom he had reason to be jealous.

O'Neill, who had always the skill to bring that to pass by others, which he could not barefacedly appear in himself, insinuated to Mr Ashburnham, a friend of the secretary, "that the King thought the secretary to old to take so much pains, and often wished that his friends would persuade him to retire, that there might be a younger man in the office, who could attend upon his Majesty at all hours, and in all journeys; but that his Majesty always spoke kindly of him, and as if he resolved to give him an ample recompense." O'Neill added, as a great secret, that the King had an impatient desire to have Sir Harry Bennett secretary of state.

Ashburnham was well versed in the artifices of court too; and thought he might very well perform an office of kindness to his old confidant, and that the same time find a new and more useful friend or himself, by having a hand in procuring a large satisfaction for the old, and likewise facilitating the way for the introduction of a new secretary, who could not forget the obligation.

He told O'Neill, "that all the world knew his long and sincere friendship for secretary Nicholas;" (they had been both servants at the same time to the Duke of Buckingham, when he was killed.) "And that he should be much troubled to see him displaced in his old age with contempt: but, if his Majesty would dismiss him with honour and reward, so as to enable him to for his wife and children, he would not hesitate to persuade him to quit his employment.

O'Neill had all he looked for; and only repeated his injunction of secrecy, "lest," he said, "it might come to the King's ear, that he had communicated this to any man; and he did presume, that before any resolution was taken in it, is Majesty would speak of it to the Chancellor."

Within a day or two the King sent for Ashburnham and told him, "he knew he was a friend to the secretary, who was now grown old and not able to take the pains he had done; that he had served his father and himself very faithfully, and had spent his fortune in his service; that if he were willing to retire, he would give him £10,000, or any other recompense he should choose,"

implying a title of honour; but intimated, though he referred all to its own will, that he wished, and that it would be acceptable, that the office might be vacant, and at his Majesty's disposal.

Ashburnham undertook the employment very cheerfully, and quickly imparted what the King had said, and all that he himself knew before, to the secretary, who was not fond of the court, and thought he had lived long enough there. The secretary also considered, that though the King's message was very gracious, and offered a noble reward, it did withal appear, that his Majesty desired he should be gone, and that having designed a successor, who had already much credit with his Majesty, if he himself should seem sullen, or unwilling, he might in a short time be put out without any consideration, or at most with the promise of one.

Hereupon he wished his friend to assure the King, "that he would very readily do whatsoever his Majesty thought necessary for his service; but he hoped, that after about forty years spent in the service of the Crown, he should not be exposed to disgrace and contempt; that he had a wife and children, who had all suffered with him in exile, till his Majesty's return, and for whom he could not make a competent profession, without his Majesty's bounty; and therefore he hoped, that, before his Majesty required the Signet, he would cause the recompense to be more than what was mentioned, and to be *first paid*[12]."

Note 12 the old secretary you the King to world to trust his promises.

The business could not be put into better hands, for it was managed by Ashburnham with notable skill. As soon as it was known that the secretary would willingly resign, (which was feared) and that only a better recompense was expected, all the party were killing that the King should make the act look as graciously as might be, that they successor might be attended with the less envy; and Ashburnham cultivated their impatience so cunningly, that it cost the King in present money, and land to lease, very little less than 20,000, all which the old secretary received before he resigned his place.

Thus Sir Harry Bennett was, at the King's charge, accommodated even to the satisfaction of his own ambition; and his Majesty was as well pleased both in having procured him the object of his wishes, and being thereby enabled to bring into the other office near his own person Sir Charles Berkley, whom he every day loved with more passion, for what reason no man knew, nor could imagine.

From this time, every close observer could not but discerned, that the Chancellor's influence with the King manifestly declined. Inconvenient grants came every day to the seals, for the benefit of particular persons; and when the Chancellor stated any objections, though his Majesty seemed to hear him as willingly as ever, he had always some reasons for persisting in his first resolution to have the Grants passed. It was also well known, that in the evening conversations at lady Castlemaine's greater liberties were taken than useful in speaking of public affairs, and of the Chancellor's conduct; and what before was mentioned only as a jest, or with an air of pleasantry, became now and object of serious censure.

However, there appeared nothing of disunion as yet in the meetings of the select committee; and the show at least of a sameness of opinion in all matters relating to the King was kept up. In Parliament, as I have already hinted, business went on more tardily; not that the number of persons devoted to the Court was lessened; but upon any debate, they seemed to be guided by different instructions.

Sir Harry Bennett, never spoke, nor ever was he likely to speak in the House of Commons, except in the ear of whosoever sat next to him; and yet that whisper often produced more effects than the eloquent harangues of others. Mutual confidence in the servants of the Crown was really lost, while all processed and equal zeal for his Majesty's interest.

National Discontents

But with whatever care any divisions were avoided in Council and in Parliament, great murmurs and discontents broke out in the country, where the people began to talk with more freedom and less reverence of the court, and of the King himself; and to reproach the Commons for their granting so much money, and increasing taxes and impositions without having done anything for the redress of public grievances.

They scandalous corruption of manners, which, flowing from the court, as from a polluted source, had spread all over the land, afforded the dissenting preachers matter enough for the severest invectives. As they themselves smarted from the lash of persecution, they gratified their Private resentment in ascribing the dissoluteness of the times to the indolence, and irreligion of the established Clergy.

The number of conventicles is increased; and some of the sermons delivered there were little short of libels on the conduct of the legislature. The papists assumed still greater liberties; and bragged as if they had a toleration, and cared not what the magistrates could do. The Parliament had a desire to correct both with the same rigour; but though there would have been a general consent in any severities that could be inflicted on the frequenters of conventicles, but there could not be the like concurrence against the papists; and it was not possible to carry on that one without the other.

The new leaders of the court party therefore, that they might be sure to prevent the latter, interrupted all that was proposed against the former; and chose to have neither, out of fear of both. This increased the disorders in the country, and caused more reflections on the court.

Delusive Promises at The Prorogation

The summer being now very far advanced, and as much money obtained as could then be well drawn from the Commons, the King, in order to prevent those questions respecting the dissenters and the papists from being further agitated, resolved to prorogue the Parliament. He went to the house of Peers on the twenty-seventh of July, and having passed the bills that were ready[13], he sent for the Commons, and thanked them for the present they had made to him of the four subsidies, "which," he told them, "he would not have received from them, if it were not absolutely necessary for their peace and quiet, as well as his, and that it would yet do him very little good, if he did not improve it by good husbandry, and by retrenching those very expenses, which in many respects might be thought necessary enough."

When his Majesty touched upon this subject, he was too apt to forget the weakness of all his past resolutions, and the vanity of his repeated promises of economy and reform. He now again assured them, "that they should see, that he would rather impose upon himself than upon his subjects; and if all men would follow his example in retrenching their expenses, (which possibly they might do with much more convenience than he could retrench his) the Kingdom must in a short time gain what they had given him that day."

His Majesty then took notice of these discontents of the people, and of the license in religion which he knew had been so much complained of. He said, "he was very glad the members were going into their several counties, where their presence would do much good; and he hoped their vigilance and authority would prevent those disturbances, which the restless spirits of ill and unquiet men would be always contriving, and of which he assured the Parliament those men promised themselves some effects that summer, and that there had been more pains and unusual ways taken to kindle the old fatal fears and jealousies, than he thought he should ever have lived to have seen, at least to have seen so countenanced." He further told them, "that he had expected to have had some bills presented to him against the several distempers in religion, against seditious conventicles, and against the growth of popery; but that it might be they had been in

some fear of reconciling those contradictions in religion into some conspiracy against the public peace, to which he himself doubted men of the most contradictory motives in the conscience were inclinable enough." He promised "to lay business to heart, and the mischiefs which might flow from those licenses; and that if he lived to meet his parliament again, as he hoped he should, he would take care to present two bills to them at the end, in the mean time," he said, " he had given it in charge to the judges, in their several circuits, to use their utmost endeavours to prevent and punish the scandalous and seditious meetings of secretaries, and to convict the papists;and he himself would take all pains he could, that neither the one or the other should disturb the peace of the kingdom." After adding many gracious expressions of his esteem and confidence in both houses, he caused them to be prorogued till the sixteenth of March following.

Prevalence of Popish Interest

The King was in truth content enough that the Parliament had not presented to them any such bills as he mentioned, which he well foresaw would not have been agreeable to his wishes; for though he was ready to ascent to the most rigorous acts against all other factions in religion, he did not think the papists had deserved the same severities.

The order given to the judges for convicting them, and his Majesty's promise to prepare against the next meeting two bills to remedy the distempers in religion were entirely owing to the persuasions of the Chancellor; but were soon retracted through the more powerful influence of contrary advise.

He had represented to the King, how much his Majesty's goodness and condescension towards the Catholics were abused by the very imprudent carriage; and that even some of their priests often urged it as an argument to those whom they endeavoured to make proselytes, that the King was of their religion in his heart, and would shortly declare it to all the world.

The best way therefore, the Chancellor said, to silence and contradict such scandals, and to restrain such incidents in future, will be to give the before mentioned order to the judges, and to prepare a bill, which, without exposing the papists to any notable inconveniences in their persons, or their fortunes, if they behave themselves well and warily, might lessen and limit the number of their priests, who upon missions resorted hither as to an infidel nation; and might also remove the inducements which made many week people, even about the court, embrace that religion from false hopes and worldly temptations.

So candid and just a representation had the more weight with the King at the moment, as he well knew the Chancellor was no advocate for the old sanguinary laws against the papists; and as the order to the judges for convicting them would be of no material prejudice to them, without a farther proceeding upon their conviction, which his Majesty could easily restrain.

The Chancellor also pointed out to him, that the unchecked result of the Romish priests and Jesuits was a very great grievance to the Catholics themselves; that by contracting their numbers, and by other regulations in the proposed bill, his Majesty might himself know the names of all the priests remaining in the kingdom, and the several stations where they resided; which, he said must produce such security to those who stayed, and to those with whom they stayed, as would freedom from any apprehension of any penalties imposed by the former laws.

It was in consequence of these remarks, that the King, without imparting his designs to any of his private favourites, commanded the Chancellor to give proper instructions to the judges on the subject; and resolved to have two such bills prepared as he had mentioned to the Parliament. But all this purposes vanished, as soon as they were discovered.

His own discourse about the bill against the Roman Catholics excited an immediate alarm among them and their numerous friends at court. They complained that the King was deceived by the Chancellor. They said, "that the direction given to the judges was the necessary preamble to the highest persecution the law had prepared against them; that, till their conviction, they were in the same predicament with the rest of his Majesty's subjects; but as soon as they were convicted, they would be liable to all the other penalties, which his Majesty was inclined to protect them from."

They also presented to him a short Memorial of the disadvantages which were consequent to a conviction, in which they alleged many particulars, that were not clear in law, at least, had never been practice in the severest times.

Though the King had well weighed all the had done, before he determined upon it with the Chancellor; and though he well knew, after all their insinuations and allegations, that none of those in conveniences could ensue to them, if he restrained any further prosecution, as he always had intended to do; yet they wrought so far upon him, that he was sorry for the order given to the judges, and threw out hints that he cared not how little it was attended to.

Then for the bill you meant to present in the next session, the same persons said, "that all the security and quiet they had enjoyed since his Majesty's happy return, depended wholly upon the general opinion, that he had favour for them, and satisfaction in their duty and obedience as good subjects, and in their readiness to do him any service; (which they would all make good with their lives) but if he should discover any jealousies of their fidelity, and that there was need of new law against them, which his purpose of providing a Bill implied, what mitigations soever his Majesty intended in it, it would not be in his power to restrain the passion of other men: they were sure, all those animosities, which had been hitherto covered and concealed through respect for his Majesty, would upon this occasion break out to their destruction: they hoped therefore that, whatever bitterness the Parliament might express against them, at its next meeting, such unjust prejudices would receive no invitation or encouragement from any jealousy, or displeasure manifested towards them by his Majesty."

These and the like arguments, or rather the influence and credit of those who urge them, made such an impression, that he declined any further thoughts of the bill, nor was there ever any mention of it.

The Roman Catholics grew bolder in all places, and conversant in those rooms of the court, into which the King's chaplains never presume to enter; and, to crowd all their hopes, lady Castlemaine now made public profession of that faith, and indeed sharply against the church's had been bred in.

Dismal Prospect of Public Affairs

During the interval of the Parliament there was no such a vacation from the trouble and anxiety as was expected.

The domestic un-quietness in the court made every day more noise abroad; infinite scandals and calumnies were scattered amongst the people; the increase of taxes, the decay of trade, and the fall of rents throughout the kingdom were loudly complained of; and what, perhaps, provoked the public clamour is still more, the profusion of the court, and of those who depended upon it, was carried to the greatest excesses; and the King himself, after all his admirable speeches, grew less intent upon business, and fonder of his pleasures, to which he prescribed no limits, nor to the expenses which could not but accompany them.

The gloom of despondency hung over every thinking mind; and many sensible men really believed, that God was angry with the nation, and resolved to exercise them in the greater tribulation than they had ever before experienced.

Information of a New Conspiracy

In this state of general discontent, while the court were upon the journey of pressure in the west, inflammations were received of a design called by the republicans and fanatics to seize York and other towns in the north, and to excite a general insurrection.

The practice of contriving or inventing plots for the sole purpose of committing of obnoxious and suspected persons to prison had begun the late troubles; and was too much continued after his Majesty's peaceful restoration.

The accounts, however, which were laid before the council of this fresh conspiracy were so plausible, so circumstantial, and at the same time so alarming, as they stated that all the disbanded

officers and soldiers where to join in it, that orders were originally issued to increase the vigilance of the lord lieutenants and deputy lieutenants of all the Northern counties; and several troops of horse were sent to secure the city of York, and to attend some of the places, where it was said the malcontents had proposed to assemble.

A great many people were taken up; and all the prisons in the north were soon so full, that the King thought it necessary to send down four or five of the judges to York, with a commission of *oyer and terminer* to examine the whole matter there. Several of the prisoners were condemned, 17 or 18 executed, some reprieved, and a great number left to be tried at the next assizes.

Use made of it at The Re-meeting of Parliament

The judges were returned from York a little time before the meeting of Parliament; and the King resolved to avail himself of so good a pretence and of so seasonable an opportunity of soliciting the repeal of the ***Triennial Act,*** to which his father had given an involuntary assent, and which was in truth a very great check on the royal power and prerogative[14].

He knew that the present Parliament would not object to a request which tended to remove all bounds to their own duration: he only wanted a popular pretext for that measure; and he could not with for a better than the late alarm, so universally spread, of a republican insurrection.

When the two houses therefore met, his Majesty, after enlarging on the danger and extent of those rebellious combinations, said, "he could not upon this occasion omit to tell his Parliament, that the desperate conspirators (as appeared by several examinations) had not been all of one mind in the ways of carrying on their wicked designs: some would still insist on the authority of the long parliament, of which they said they had numbers enough willing to meet; others fancied to themselves by some computation of their own, upon a clause in the ***Triennial Bill***, that the present Parliament was at an end some months since; and that for want of new writs, they might assemble themselves to choose representatives, which will be the best expedient to bring themselves together for their other purposes.

For the long parliaments," is Majesty said, "that he and they together could do no more than was already done to fall and compose the minds of men; let them proceed upon their peril, but he thought that there had been nothing to disabuse men in respect of the Triennial Bill; and though there was no colour for the fancy of determination of this parliament, yet he would not deny, that he had always they expected they would, and even wondered that they had not considered the wonderful clauses in that bill, which had passed in a time very uncareful of the dignity of the Crown, or the security of the people[15]."

Having thus prepared the compliance of his hearers by the discovery of his own sentiments, his Majesty desired the speaker and the gentleman of the house of Commons to give that triennial Bill a reading, and then, in God's name, to do what they've thought fit for him, themselves, and the whole kingdom; adding, "that he needed not to tell them, how much he loved parliaments: never King was so much beholding to parliaments as he had been, nor did he think that the Crown could ever be happy without frequent parliaments; that he wished them to assure themselves, that if any should think otherwise, he would never suffer a Parliament to come together by means prescribed by that bill[16]."

After the King had fully explained himself on this point, he renewed his thanks to the Commons for the supply of the four subsidies granted him the last sessions; "yet," he said, "that supply was fallen much short of what he expected, and they intended; it would hardly be believed, yet they knew it to be true, that very many persons who had estates of three or four thousand pounds by the year, did not pay for those four subsidies sixteen pounds; so that whereas the Commons intended and declared, that they should be collected according to former precedents, they did not now arise to the same proportion as in the time of Queen Elizabeth; and yet," he added, "the

Crown wanted more now than it did then, and the subject was at least as well able to give: the truth was, that, by the licence of the late time, and the ill humour of this, too many people, and even of those who made fair professions, believed it to be no sin to defraud the Crown of anything that was due to it: tonnage and poundage had been no sooner given him, than men were devising all the means they could to defraud the customs; nor could the farmers of the revenue be so vigilant for the collection, as others were to evade the duties: they gave him the excise, which all people abroad believed to be the most i***nsensible*** imposition that could be laid upon the people[17]: what conspiracies and combinations were entered into by the Brewers, who, he was sure, did not bear the burden themselves, even to bring that revenue to nothing, they would here in Westminster Hall; they had given him the chimney money, which they had reason to believe will be a growing revenue, for man built at least fast enough; and they would therefore wonder that it was already declined, and that the last half-year brought in less than the former did: he desired therefore that they would review that bill, and since he was sure they would have him received whatsoever they gave, that he might have the collecting and has husbanding of it by his own officers; and then he doubted not but to improve that receipt, and he would be cozened as little as he could."

His Majesty concluded his speech with desiring and conjuring both houses, "to keep a very good correspondence together, that in mind not be in the power of any seditious factious spirits to make them jealous of each other, or either of them jealous of him, till they should see him ***pretend one thing, and do another, which he was sure they had never yet done:*** he assured them, that it should be in nobody's power to make him jealous of them; and so desired them to dispatch what they found necessary, that they might be ready for a session within two months or thereabouts, because the season of the year would invite them all to take the country air."

Repeal of The Triennial Law

The hint of dispatch had a wonderful effect upon both houses, and they proceeded with great alacrity to the work which his Majesty had cut out for them. In little more than 10 days they carried through, and got ready for the Royal assent a Bill for the repeal of the **Triennial Law** of; which was so grateful. to the King, that he went in person to the house to pass it, and to thank them, adding, "that every good Englishman would also thank them for it, as the act had repealed could only have served to discredit parliaments; to make the Crown jealous of parliaments, and parliaments of the Crown; and to persuade neighbour Princes, that England was not governed under a monarch[18]."

Act to Suppress Conventicles

As the Parliament made this entrance, they went on with unabated zeal in completing all other business within two months, in which the King desired they would be ready for a prorogation. They empowered his Majesty, according to his particular desire to collect the tax of the hearth money by officers of his own; and they further gratified him in making a very severe law to prevent and suppress conventicles, without taking any notice of the growth of Popery[19].

But this session, though short, was not entirely devoted to the King alone. The Parliament prepared a very good Bill, and very necessary for a time of such corruption, that had contracted new ways of dishonesty and villainy, which former times had not thought of[20] its object was to prevent a species of treachery practiced by many unworthy and cowardly masters of ships and their crews, who were often contented to be robbed at sea, and to have all their owners goods taken, upon an allowance made to them by the pirate.

This was a breach of trust for which no law had before sufficiently provided. A Bill was therefore drawn up, and readily agreed to by both houses, for the discovery of punishments of all such treacherous and infamous actions, and for the rewards of such honest and stout sealant, should

manfully and courageously defend their owners goods, and therein maintain the honour of the nation.

These bills, and a few others[21] for the remedy of particular grievances, were presented to the King, and confirmed by his assent, on the seventeenth of May, when his Majesty, after thanking the Parliament in the usual manner for their public services, told them, "he did not intend to bring them together again till the month of November, that they might enjoy the summer in the transaction of their private affairs; yet because there might some emergent occasions fall out, that might make it necessary to bring them together sooner, he would prorogued them only to August; and before then they should have seasonable notice by proclamation not to give their attendance, except such occasions should fall out."

Investigation of The Remote Causes of a Rupture With The Dutch

The possible emergency, which the King said might oblige him to convene the Parliament before November, was the great likelihood of a rupture with the Dutch, gainsaying both houses had presented in the course of this session a very menacing address. But in my remarks on their proceedings I deferred taking any notice of their hostile resolutions, that I might bring into one point of view the different causes of this impolitic war, some of which I must trace a little farther back.

Establishment of The Royal African Company

Upon the Kings first arrival in England, he manifested great desire to improve the general traffic of the kingdom, and often conferred with the most active merchants on the subject. He also established a council of trades; but it's only effect was to give to a variety of schemes and adventures, the projectors of which had commonly much more regard to their own interests than to the public good.

Some merchants and seamen made a proposal by Mr William Coventry and a few others to the Duke of York, for the erection of a company, in which state desired his Royal Highness to preside, and to which his Majesty should grant the sole trade of Guinea.

This, they asserted, would in a short time bring great advantage to the nation, and much profit to the adventurers, who where to begin upon a joint stock, to be managed by a committee chosen from among themselves.

Before the troubles, a similar privilege had been granted by the late King to Sir Nicolas Crispe and others named by him, who at their own charge sent ships to the African coast. In order to carry on the trade with greater convenience, Sir Nicolas purchased from the natives a nook of land, that jutted out into the sea, and built thereon warehouses and a fort, under which the ships lay in great safety.

After the breaking out of the civil war, Sir Nicolas betook himself to serve the King; but the trade was continued by others, even with the Nicolas’s consent, or through Cromwell's power, and the fort he had built, called Fort Cormantine, was still in the possession of the English, when his present Majesty returned. The trade thither from England was, indeed, small, in respect the Dutch had fixed a stronger quarter at no great distance from it, and sent much more ships and commodities there, and returned once every year to their own country with much wealth.

But it was said, that it might now be easily extended in spite of those rivals; that it would open a wider market for putting off great quantities of our own manufactures; and afford valuable returns in gold, which that coast produced in good quantity, and in Negro slaves, who were readily souls to any plantation at great prices.

The Duke was much pleased with the details both of the plan, and the prospect of advantage, which was likely to result from it. He quickly procured a charter, with ample privileges to be granted by the King to the company; and even persuaded his Majesty to become himself an adventurer, and what was more, to assist them, for the first establishment of their trade, with the use of some of his own ships.

The duke was the governor of the company, thence called the Royal Company. He had also the power of appointing a deputy; but all the other officers and the committee were chosen by the entire body of adventurers, who were all persons of quality. Everyone of them brought in £500 for the joint stock, with which they set out the first ships; upon the return whereof they received so much encouragement, that they compounded with Sir Nicolas Crispe for his property in the fort and Castle, and processed themselves of another place upon the coast, for the greater convenience and enlargement of their traffic.

They increase the number of their shipping, all which made profitable returns, by putting off their blacks at Barbados and the other plantations, at their own prices, and brought home such store of gold, as administered the first occasion for the coinage of those pieces, which from thence had the denomination of Guineas.

Other Branches of Commerce Neglected

But though the people were at first dazzled with the vast profits which resulted from the establishment of this new company, the general interest of the state, so far from being promoted, was very much injured by it. Other branches of commerce, that might have afforded more lasting and secure advantages, were suffered to languish. Even though trade to the East Indies, which had of late been so badly conducted as to call loudly for the immediate care and interference of government, was disregarded, and the Royal patronage and assistance were wholly confined to the favourite Company. Nor was this the only evil attending it. The nation was thereby plunged into a war, which was chiefly, if not solely owing to the avarice, the rapacity, and intrigues of the African adventurers.

Suggestions of Merchant Told Jealousy and Avarice

From the first entrance into this trade, it was easily discovered that the Dutch had a better footing in Guinea than the English, which the latter were willing to believe the former had no right to; for that they themselves had first settled there, and were therefore entitled to exclude all others, at least by the same law that the Spaniards claimed the sole property of the West Indies, and the Dutch what they, or the Portuguese enjoyed in the East.

But this pretence they quickly found would not establish such a title as would bear a dispute: they having sent a ship or two thither and built a little fort could not be allowed such a possession as would shut out other nations; and the truth was, the Dutch were there some time before us, and the Danes before either; and the Dutch (which was the real grievance) had planted themselves more advantageously, upon the bank of a river, than we had done, and by the erection of more forts were more strongly seated, and drove a much greater trade, which it was not likely they could be persuaded to quit.

This drew the discourse from the point of right to the easiness, by the assistance of two or three of the Kings ships, to take all that the Dutch processed in and about Guinea, there having never been a ship of war seen in those parts, so that the work might be presently done, and such an alliance made with the natives, who did not love the Dutch, as that the English may be unquestionably processed of the whole trade of that country, which will be of in inestimable profit to the kingdom.

Such were the arguments which the members of the committee took much delight to enlarge upon at their meetings, that were held once a week at the duke of York's lodging at Whitehall. They went farther, and endeavoured to show what immense benefits would accrue, from a barefaced war against the Dutch, and how easily they might be conquered, and the trade carried on by the English.

They said, "that Cromwell had always beaten them, and brought them upon their knees, and could have totally subdued them, if he had not thought it more for his interest to have such a second, whereby he might the better support his usurpation: that it was from this motive alone he made peace with them, after they had confessed to all the infamous conditions of totally abandoning the Royal cause, and, as far as in them lay, to the extirpation of all the Royal family, and to of perpetual exclusion of the Prince of Orange: that the only Poplar and glorious thing the usurper had ever done was his having compelled them to pay a great sum of money for the damages which the English had sustained at Amboyna, when all the demands and threats from King James could never procure any satisfaction for that foul action[22].

The Duke of York's Eagerness for a War

These discourses, with some remarks on the tardiness of the Dutch to restore, according to treaty, the island of Poleron, which they had so long since barbarously taken from the English, being often reiterated in season and out of season, made a very deep impression on the Duke, who, besides his having a particular aversion to the Dutch, longed impatiently for any war, in which he knew he could not but have achieved command. This disposition of his was also assiduously cultivated by many persons about the court, who hope thereby to advance their own interest, and to get more power into their own hands.

But there was lately a piece fully concluded with the states general upon the same terms, articles, and conditions, which they had formally yielded to Cromwell, and upon the ratification of which state issued orders for the delivery of the island of Poleron to the English East India Company[23].

They also gave at the same time another proof of the readiness to comply with any reasonable or just requisition on the part of his Majesty. As during the interval between the two treaties, a misunderstanding had taken place between both nations on account of two English ships, which are merchants said had been unjustly attacked and captured by the Dutch in the East Indies, the states, in order to prevent the treaty from been delayed by the investigation of this claim, agreed to deposit fourscore thousand florins for the full indemnification of the sufferers, in case the process already commenced on account of their ships should be decided in their favour.

After doing all this, there could be no colour of Justice to make war upon them. Besides there were then great jealousies from Spain, on account of the marriage with Portugal; nor had France, notwithstanding all her possessions, made any haste to renew the treaty with England.

She had even, contrary to the positive assurance given by Monsieur Bastide in the French King's name, concluded a treaty with the states, without any previous notification of the terms to his Britannic Majesty.

It therefore could not but seem strange, that we should desire to make war upon Holland, the only state, except Portugal, with which we had this yet renewed former treaties of peace, and that so lately, and after such long deliberation.

However, the Duke's heart was set upon it, and he loved to speak of it, and it benefits which would attend it. He had not yet thought proper to propose it in Council; but he mentioned it privately to many of the members, and found most of them to concur with him in the opinion of the advantages which might arise from thence.

He also pressed it very earnestly upon the King, who, he well knew, had no kindness for the Dutch, and he often left his Majesty strongly disposed towards it by an argument, which he found prevailed with many, and which he never failed to enforce in any conversation upon the subject.

He said, "that the differences and jealousies in point of trade, which did every day fall out, and would every day increase between the English and the Dutch, who had in the late distractions gained great advantages, words unavoidably produce a war between them: then the question only was, whether it were not better for us to begin it now, when they did not expect it, and we were better prepared for it than probably we should be then; or to stay two or three years, in which the same jealousy would provoke them to be well provided, when probably we might not be ready:" he added, "that we had the best see officers in the world, many of whom had often beaten the Dutch, and knew how to do it again; a multitude of excellent mariners and common seamen, all of whom, if they found that nothing was to be done at home, would dispersed themselves and merchant voyages to the Indies and the Streights, and probably so many good men would never be found together again."

Its Impolicy and Injustice Demonstrated by the Chancellor

When by these and the like arrangements he thought he had sufficiently secured the King’s concurrence, he proposed the matter to the Chancellor, whom he found to be passionately and obstinately against it, and who thought it his duty to point out to his Highness, and afterwards to the King, the probable consequences of so unjust, so unseasonable, and so ill advised a war.

The Chancellor represented to his Majesty "the state of his own affairs, the great debt, that yet lay upon him, which with peace and good husbandry might be in some time paid; but that a war would involve him in so much greater, then no man could see the end of it: that is Majesty would be able to preserve them self against they factions and distempers in his own kingdom, and probably suppress them, if they were without a foreign enemy; but if they should be engaged in a war abroad, its domestic divisions, especially those in religion, would give him more trouble than he could well struggle withal: that it was an enormous assumption that the Dutch would be better provided for a war two or three years hence, and his Majesty worse; for that it would be his own fault, if within that time, the distempers in his three kingdoms were not composed, which would make him much better for a war, whereas now neither of them could be said to be in peace.

Ireland's being wholly unsettled, Scotland not yet well pleased, and England far from it: that in that time it was very probable the two crowns of France and Spain would be engaged in a war, since it was generally believed, and with great reason, that France only waited for the death of the King of Spain, who was very infirm, and then meant to fall into Flanders, having already provided great magazines of corn and hay upon the borders, which could be for no other end: that whilst his Majesty continued in pace, his friendship will be valuable to all the Princes of Europe, and the two crowns would strive who should gain him; but if he engaged in a war, particularly with Holland, which would interrupt and disturb all the trade of the kingdom whence the greatest part of his revenue arose, all other Princes will look on, and not much esteem any offices he could perform for them."

To those very forceful remarks on the impolicy of the war the Chancellor added the flagrancey of its injustice. He said "that a general outcry will be raised against so precipitate and unprovoked a rupture, after the late ratification of a treaty of peace." But perceiving, that this part of his discourse was not so well relished as the former, he did not enlarge upon it; and contented himself with observing, "that a little time might possibly administer a just occasion of a war, which at present there was not."

The King yielded to the full evidence of these truths; but the Duke was very much displeased, that the Chancellor should positively endeavour to cross him in an unfair, upon which his heart was so much set. The subject however was seemingly dropped, and for some months, there was

no more mention of it in the court, though the person's who first laid the design, still cultivated it secretly, and made little of bringing it at last to pass.

Both Houses Seduced Into a Menacing Address Against The Dutch

During the last short session of Parliament, those Private advisers of a war with Holland did not forget what they had to do.

They knew, indeed that it was not a good season to speak of raising fresh supplies of money, which the King himself had forborne to mention, that the people might see one session at least passed without new impositions; and therefore, that it would be improper to propose a war in direct terms.

However, they made such an approach towards it, as might render a farther advance much more easy. The merchants in the committee of trade, who had all private views of interest in this business, and who were also entirely governed by the dictates of the Duke of York, lamented much the distractions and discouragement's, which, they said, they had long found in their commerce by sea, and with other nations, and which were not removed by the blessed return of the King, all which they imputed to the pride and avarice of the Hollanders.

They asserted, "that those insolent Republicans observed no laws of commerce, nor any conditions, which even they themselves consented to; that by their fraud and practices the English were almost driven out of the East and West Indies, and had their trade in Turkey and Africa much diminished; that, besides many other and sufferable indignities offered by them to his Majesty and to the Crown of England, his subjects had in a few years sustained the damage of seven or eight hundred thousand pounds sterling;" and he they added a particular instance of the loss of two ships before mentioned.

They report of all those pretended grievances was made to Parliament from the committee of trade; and after a very short enquiry into the grounds of such complaints, the Commons resolved, and easily obtained the concurrence of the Lords in the same resolution, "that the wrongs, dishonours, and indignities done to his Majesty by the subjects of the united provinces in India, Africa, and elsewhere, and the damages done by them to the English merchants, are the greatest of obstructions of the trade of England: that the same be speedily presented to his Majesty, and he be moved to take some effectual course for the redress of these injuries, and all others of the like nature, and for the prevention of the like for the future: and that, in prosecution thereof, they would with their lives and fortunes is assist his Majesty against all oppositions whatsoever."

An address, drawn up according to these resolutions, was immediately presented by both houses to the King, who next day sent them a written answer, "that he was pleased with their zeal for the advancement of trades, and are removal of all obstructions which might hinder the same; being convinced that nothing with more contribute to the honour of the nation, and the prosperity of his people: that he would examine the complaints which has been represented by his Parliament, and order his minister in Holland to demand speedy reparation; and, in case of a denial he relied on their promise and declaration to stand by him."

The whole of this scheme for obtaining the address from Parliament was contrived and managed by so William Bennet, Sir Charles Berkely, and Lord Ashley, a man of much greater abilities than either, and of whose recompense for the first exertion of his ingenuity to please the Duke of York I shall presently have occasion to take notice.

As the Chancellor, besides his other arguments to dissuade the King and the duke from any rupture with the Dutch, had said, "that he did not think the Parliament would be forward to encourage the war, and since it was a subject entirely in the King's determination, all the odium of it would inevitably fall upon his Majesty and his ministers;" it was necessary, in order to refute

these assertions, to introduce both houses to manifest such warm resentment of the supposed wrong and indignities suffered from the Dutch, as might seem to force the King to a peremptory demand of reparation. By the temporary success of this artifice, the point was gained, and the Chancellor forced withdraw his offensive and unavailing opposition.

It was easy to foresee that the first step would soon lead to actual hostilities; and the prosecution of the business to that end could not be put into better hands, than those of the person mentioned by the King in his answer, who was his Majesty's resident at the Hague, and who being also a member of the House of Commons, had inflamed them more than the merchants themselves against the Dutch.

This was Sir George Downing, a man of obscure birth, and more obscure education, which he had received in part in new England. He had passed through many offices in Cromwell's army, of chaplain, scout master, and other employments; and at last obtained great credit with the usurper, and under that countenance married a beautiful lady of very noble extraction.

When Cromwell had subdued the Dutch to the temper he wished, and thereupon made peace with them, he chose Downing to reside as his agent in Holland, knowing him to be a man of great pride and insolence, and who would add to any imperious commands of his somewhat of the bitterness of its own spirit.

It soon appeared how well suited he was to the usurper's purposes in this new employment; for he did so fully execute his charge in all things, especially when he might manifest his animosity against the Royal party, that having notice of the King’s being upon a tour of pleasure incognito to Amsterdam and other towns in the same province, he delivered a memorial to the states of Holland, wherein he inclosed the third article of their treaty, by which they were obliged not to suffer any traitor, rebel, or any other person who was declared an enemy to the Commonwealth of England, to reside all stay in their dominions; and told them, that Charles Stewart, and Marquis of Ormond had been lately in Amsterdam, and were still in some places adjacent; and required that they might not be permitted to remain in any part of the dominions of the states.

Upon this the states sent immediately to the Princess of Orange, who was then at her country house of Hounslerdyke, that if her brother were then with her, or should come to her, he should forthwith depart out of their province. And order to the same purport was also published at the Hague, and sent to Amsterdam and other towns, according to their custom.

With this rude punctuality Downing behaved himself during the life of Cromwell, and while his son retained the usurpation, but when he saw Richard thrown out, and that the struggles and intrigues, which followed, might lead to the King's restoration, he bethought himself how he might have a reserve of his Majesty's favour. The Marquis of Ormond making a journey about the same time incognito to the Hague, upon a marriage of his eldest son with a noble lady whose friends lived there, Downing found an opportunity to have a private conference with him, and made an offer of his services to the King, if his devotion might be concealed, without which, he said it would be useless to his majesty.

For an earnest of his fidelity, he informed the Marquis of some particulars, which were of moment for the king the king to know; and engaged in future to give his majesty notice of anything that it would be necessary or useful to be informed in reference to England or Holland.

The marquis thought it very fit to accept such an instrument, and promised him to acquaint his majesty with his good affection, who, he presumed, would receive it graciously, and give him as much encouragement to continue it, as his majesty’s present condition would permit.

To this the other replied, that he knew the Kings present circumstances too well, to expect any reward from him; but if his Majesty would vouchsafe, when the should be restored, to confirm to him the office he then held of a teller in the exchequer, and continue him in his employment

in Holland, where he presumed he should be able to do is Majesty more service, than a stranger could do, he would think himself abundantly rewarded. Upon the marquises' return, to the King at Brussels, he was authorised to assure Downing of his Majesty's acceptation, and that all that he expected should be made good.

This was the ground and reason that, when the King came to the Hague the year following to embark for England, he received Downing very graciously, and knighted him, and left him there as is resident; which many, who were near the King but knew nothing of what had passed secretly, wondered at as much as strangers, who had observed Downings former behaviour.

The states themselves who would not, at such a time do anything that might offend his Majesty, could not forbear lamenting in private, that is Majesty would depute a person to have his authority, who had never used any other dialect but threats to persuade them of but ever he proposed; and who at several times had disobliged most of their persons by his insolence.

They soon had still more reason to be dissatisfied; for Downing having found out that the King and the Duke were in their hearts no friends to the states, he assumed a still bolder tone, and made them feel the full weight of his increased consequence.

He never made such representations as men in the like ministries used to do, but put the worst comments upon all their actions; and when he afterwards sat as a member in the English House of Commons, returning still in the interval of Parliament to his employment at the Hague, he took all opportunities to inveigh against their usurpations in trade; and pretending to know many of their mysteries of iniquity, he rendered himself very acceptable to the house by laying them open.

Reply of the States to Downing’s Memorial

When the province of expostulation for the injuries said to be sustained from the Dutch was committed to this their mortal enemy he had his wish, and use little modesty in urging it. The state answered, "that most of the particulars of which he complained, were put under oblivion by the last treaty, and that in consideration thereof they had yielded to many points for the benefit of the English[24]; that for the other claim, in respect of the loss of the two ships in the East Indies, that likewise, by the same treaty, was referred to as a process in justice, against which no exception yet could be taken[25]; and lastly that since the conclusion of the treaty, which was not many months before, nothing could even be pretended to have been done on their part, which could give occasion to the smallest misunderstanding."

All this was strictly true, but Downing, according to his usual method insisted upon his own demand[26]; and frequently reproached them with the former submissions to Cromwell, and their present presumption upon the goodness and generosity of the King.

Advantage Taken of Their Unsuspecting Security

It is without question, that the states general guided by the standard of their own wariness and circumspection, did not suspect that the King intended to make war on them. They well knew the straights and necessities in which his of affairs stood both with reference to money, and to the several distempers of the nation in matters of religion, which might probably grow more dangerous, if there were a foreign war: they concluded, therefore that Downing’s importunities and menaces were but the results of his own impetuosity, and that the King would not be so forward to interrupt and in part with his own peace. According to this persuasion they sent out their trading ships as usual, without any of those precautions, which commonly indicate the dread of hostilities. But the Royal African company here acted in a very different manner.

They sent out a stronger fleet of merchant ships than they had ever before done; and for their better encouragement, the King lent them some of his own ships or a convoy[27]. The reason assigned for this was, that the Dutch had made it a common practice, and in the East Indies, but lately also upon the African coast, when they found that in that advantageous trade was carried on in any poll by some other nation, presently to send their ships to live before that port, and to declare war against the Prince to whom the port belonged, which being done, they published a declaration that it should not be lawful for any nation whatsoever to trade to the territories of that Prince, with whom they were then at war. The Royal Company therefore pretended it was necessary to put their fleets in a state to resist such insolence and usurpation.

Not after the departure of this fleet, in order to show that such steps had been taken only for the sake of self defence, and to assert the rights and freedom of our trade, the king ordered the complaint of the above-mentioned practice of the Dutch to be added to the list of other grievances; and required Downing to demand a positive renunciation of all pretence on the part of the Dutch to such an odious usurpation.

To this complaint and demand they deferred making an answer, till their ambassador had presented a memorial to the King on a recent injury, which they complained of in their turn. Captain Holmes, who commanded the ships of war, which the King had lent to the Royal Company for the convoy of their fleet to Guinea, had, in the voyage thither, assaulted and taken the Dutch forts and settlements in the neighbourhood of Cape Verde[28].

Of this invitation their ambassador made a laud complaint; and demanded that the captain might be punished severely, and that the King might, in the meantime, give a present order to him, the ambassador, for the redelivery of those places, which he would transmit to his masters.

They King told the ambassador that the captain, if they had done any such thing, had not the least commission or authority for so doing; that he was now on his way homeward, so that he might be expected speedily, and then he should be sure to undergo such punishment as the nature of his offence required, when the matter should be examining; and they should then receive full reparation[29]

The Treachery Retaliated

The states now began to think seriously of hostile preparation; but as they found they had been used treacherously, they resolved to retaliate by means of some similar artifice. Large fleets were at this time equipping both in Holland and in England for the avowed purpose of contending for superiority on the African coast; but when the English fleets under the command of Prince Rupert was almost ready to sail, the Dutch ambassador presented to the King an humble desire from the states, that Prince Rupert's fleet might stay in harbour, as their’s likewise, that was prepared for Guinea, should, till some means might be found for the accommodation of all differences.

They had to objects in view, first to amuse the English, while they sent secret orders to De Ruyter, then cruising in the Mediterranean, to make all possible haste with his fleet to Guinea, to recover their late losses; and next to gain time, in hopes that their homeward bound fleets of merchant men might return before the commencement of hostilities. They accomplish one of these objects, but in the other they were miserably disappointed.

At the time of De Ruyter's being first sent into the Mediterranean, the purport of his commission was to cruise against the pirates of Algiers and Tunis, who had, in truth preyed very much upon the Dutch, taken many of their ships, and had abundance of their subjects in chains.

When that fleet was ordered out by the Dutch, their ambassador had requested of the King, that is Majesty's fleet under the command of Lawson, which was then in those parts, and for the same

purpose, might upon all occasions joined with De Ruyter, when opportunities should be offered thereby to infest the Turks; to which is Majesty consented.

But the two naval commanders, instead of such an amicable union, sent home different complaints of each other. De Ruyter said, that upon meeting Lawson in in the Mediterranean, he saluted the English admiral, who did not return the compliment, as he ought to have done according to an express stipulation in the treaty of 1662.

Lawson on his part, complained, the sole business of the Dutch admiral appeared to be to ransom the captives with money, not to exact the delivery of them by force, and to make an accommodation for the time to come as well as he could, and that when the English fleet was at any time in pursuit of the Algerians, and expected that the Dutch, by whom they must pass, would have given a little stop to their flight, which they might easily Have done, they rather assisted than obstructed their escape. There was certainly a great deal of truth in those mutual reproaches.

Progress of Reciprocal Provocations and Injuries

Intelligence was soon brought that De Ruyter, having concluded a hasty and dishonourable peace with the pirates, had re-passed the Streights, with an intent, as was naturally conjectured, to sail to Guinea. As it was now too late to oppose him in that quarter, the king thought that he might justly seize upon any ships belonging to the Dutch, to satisfy the damage that he could not but sustain from De Ruyter's un-restituted operations on the coast of Africa.

It being now therefore the season when the Dutch fleets returned with their wines from Bordeaux, Rochelle, and other parts of France, such of them, as were forced by the weather to put into the English harbours, were seized upon; and the Duke of York having put himself on board, with a fleet of about fifty sail, upon the report of the Dutch being come out to defend theirs, took a great many more of their merchantmen, even upon their own coasts, which they chose rather than suffer, than to venture out of their ports to relieve them.

That this proceeding might not appear an open breach of the late treaty, or a violation of the law of nations, the captured ships were not immediately condemned, but were ordered to be kept unladed and unhurt, till advice should be received from Guinea of what De Ruyter had done there.

This, indeed, was merely to keep up appearances, as it was justly presumed that he would retaliate the violence committed by Holmes. He did not disappoint such expectations; for not content with retaking the places seized upon by Holmes, he dispossessed the English of many other forts and settlements of their own, took several of their ships in those parts, and then sailing to America, he exercised all the acts of hostility there which his commission authorised him to do, also made an attempt upon Barbados, without success.

Some time before any intelligence was received of De Ruyter's proceedings, the East India company complained and informed the King, that, when their had demanded the re-delivery of the island of Poleron, according to one of the articles of the late treaty, and had presented to the Dutch governor of that island the order from the states, given by their ambassador in London, the Governor, after making the English officer with his ship and men wait for two or three days, then told him, that upon a better perusal of those orders, he found they were not sufficient, and therefore he could not give up the place, till he should receive fuller instructions.

In consequence of this fraudulent evasion, they said, their officer and ship which had been sent at great charge, was necessitated to return, without any effect than to affront and indignity to his majesty.

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Such was the state and progress of reciprocal provocations and injuries, before either country publicly avowed and proclaimed its horrible designs, according to the forms very properly sanctioned by the law of nations, but too often disregarded even by those that call themselves civilised.

Notes To Chapter 1

1. Had the Commons resisted the Kings attempt to obtain the exercise of a dispensing power, on legal and constitutional grounds, their opposition would have done them honour. But the corrupt members of the pension – Parliament were incapable of anything either great, or good. Even when they acted right, which was very seldom, they did so from the impulse of some despicable passion, never from generous, or patriotic motives. The whole of their address was dedicated by a mean, arbitrary, unjust, and intolerant spirit. Instead of asserting that the King could have no right to suspend the execution of a positive law, they endeavoured by the most wretched sophistry to prove, that he was relieved from the obligation of his promise at Breda, because an act to the contrary had, from its own perfidious artifice, been passed by the Parliament. They even pretended that the dissenters could have no claim to the promised indulgence, as they had committed that and all their other rights to their representatives in Parliament, who passed the act of uniformity. According to this curious mode of reasoning, the authority of a trust justifies the abuse of it, and person elected for the general welfare are not accountable for acting contrary to the interests of their constituents. Such a position is just as absurd, the use the simile of a late writer, as to imagine, "that physicians, chosen to superintend and cure the sick in hospitals, have a right to kill their patients, if they please." The other absurdities of the address are so numerous and so gross is not to a admit of, will require a particular illustration.

2. Southall says it is character of Charles, "that his face was as little a blab as most man's; yet, though it could not be called a prattling face, it would sometimes tell tales to a good observer."

3. In those messages which respected only a very small part of the errors of administration, the Commons made it their humble desire to the King to make no grant nor contract, with relation to the Post Office; not to lay law continue any imposition in Scotland or Ireland on the wollen or other manufacturers of England; to recall this proclamations for bidding the exportation of geldings; two point no merchants consoles, but at that this hour of the merchants, though, unless supported at their expense; to issue out is proclamation for the punctual and effectual execution and observance of the navigation act, without any dispensational connivance whatsoever; to recall such dispensations as had been already granted; and to forbear to pass any further grants upon the commissions issued for the discovery of lands gained from the sea, which commissions had been undulate exercise. What trifling objects of reform compared with a long catalogue of national grievances, which this Parliament of infamous memory not only acquiesced in, but supported!

4. As this speech of affords another very serious curious specimen of those powers of insinuation and address, which Charles so often perverted to the worse of purposes, the reader will not be displeased with our inserting it at full length.

"Mr Speaker, and you gentleman of the House of Commons, I have sent for you this day to communicate with you, as good friends ought to do, when they discover the least jealousy growing, which may lessen their confidence in each other; and you may all remember, that, when there was lately a little jealousy among you upon somewhat I have said or done, I made all the haste I could to give you satisfaction, for which you all returned me your hearty thanks and were, I think, satisfied.

Gentleman, it is in no man's power, no, not in your own part, to make me suspect, or in the least degree imagine it possible, that your affections and kindness are diminished towards me. I know very well, that the people did never, in any age, use that diligence and circumspection in the

election of representatives of tried and known affections to the Crown, of your good principles and unquestionable inclinations to the peace of the church and state. You are the very same men who, at your first coming together, gave such signal testimonies of your affection and friendship to my person; of your zeal for the honour and dignity of the Crown, and liberal support of government; and of your horror and detestation of those men, whose principles, you discerned, did keep them awake, to take all occasions to disturb the peace of the kingdom, and to embroil us in the new civil war, which is much their endeavour now as ever, and, it may be, not enough abhorred by others, whose principles and ends are very different from theirs. You are the same men, who, at your first meeting, by a wonderful harmony and concurrence in whatsoever I could wish, gave me a reputation abroad, and security at home; made our neighbours solicit us for our friendship, and set a just value upon it; and, trust me, such a reputation is such a vast importance is made by evil subjects even despair of bringing the wicked purposes to pass; and it is possible that the same persons can continue the same together, without the same affection to me? I am sure it is impossible; and yet I must tell you, the reputation that I had from your concurrence and tenderness towards me, is not at all improved since the beginning of this session; indeed it is much lessened; and I'm sure I never stood more in need of that reputation than at present, to carry me through the many difficulties, in which the public is at least as much concerned as myself.

You cannot take it amiss (you shall use as much freedom with me) that I tell you, there have not appeared that warmth in you of late, in the consideration of my revenue, as I expected, as well from some of your messages, as my own confidence in your career and kindness. It hath been said to myself, that it is usual for the parliament to give the Crown extraordinary supplies upon emergent occasions, but not to improve the constant revenue of the Crown. I wish, and so do you, that nothing had been done in and by parliaments but what was usual; but if ill parliaments contrive the ruin and disinherison of the Crown, God forbid that good parliaments should repair it, how unusual for ever it is. If you yourselves had not, in an extraordinary manner, improve my revenue, the government could not have been supported; and if it be not improved to the proportion you have designed, the government cannot be supported.

Believe me, gentlemen, the most disaffected subjects in England are not more unwilling to pay any tax or imposition you lay upon them, then I am to receive it. God knows, I do not long more for any blessing in the world, than that I may live to call Parliament, and not ask or receive any money from them. I will do all I can to see that happy day. I know the vast burdens this kingdom hath borne last twenty years and more; that it is exceedingly impoverished; but alas! What good will that which is left do them, if the government cannot be supported.

I must deal plainly with you, and I do not but discharge my conscience in that plainness; if you do not, besides the improving my revenue in the manner I have recommended to you, give me some present supply of money, to enable me to struggle with those difficulties I am pressed with, I shall have a very melancholy summer, and shall much apprehend the public quiet; for you have heard, I presume, of the late design in Ireland, for the surprise of the Castle of Dublin, which was spread all over the kingdom, and many Parliament men engaged in it. There is an absolute necessity, that forthwith send over a sum of money for the payment of the army, and putting the garrisons there in good order; you will not doubt but that those seditious persons had a correspondence with the friends here; and I pray, let us not be too careless of them.

I assure you that I have so great an location for money which my revenue cannot supply me with, that I every day omit the doing somewhat that is very necessary for the public benefit. These sure are just motives to persuade you to give me a supply as ever moved the house of commons; and therefore I conjure you to go carefully about it, and let me not be disappointed in my confidence of your affections; and, I pray, remember the season of the year, and how necessary it is we make our recess at, or about Midsummer.

I do pray heartily that the effect of this day’s conversation may be the renewing of our confidence in each other, and raising our joint reputation, which will be the strongest security, with God's

blessing, the kingdom can have for its peace, plenty, and prosperity; and upon my word, you shall have great comfort in what you do for me."

Nothing can throw a fuller light on the beauties of this speech than a little recollection of the unprecedented extravagance of parliament in the form of grants, and of the immense sums which Charles received from so many other quarters, particularly from his grand paymaster, the King of France. Yet, poor man! He wanted money for no other purpose than to preserve the nation from civil confusion and foreign disgrace!

5. There is no doubt that he was one of the few entrusted with the grand secret of the King being a papist. Besides a great variety of presumptive proofs, we meet with the clearest evidence of it in Carte's ***life of the duke of Ormond,*** where he mentions a difference of opinion between Bennett, and the Earl of Bristol, when they were with the King in Flanders, on the policy of his Majesty's openly declaring himself Roman Catholic, after having embraced that religion. Bennett thought, that such a public avowal of his faith was the only thing that could induce France and Spain to concur with all the powers in restoring him to his throne. But the Earl asserted on the contrary, that so imprudence of declaration would have no other effect than that of ruining the Kings affairs in his own country, while no dependence or stress could be laid on the mighty promises of France and Spain, "who," he said, "would give more to get one frontier garrisons into their hands than to get the catholic religion established, not only in England, but all over Europe." The Earl's arguments prevailed; and Charles continued to wear at least in public, the mask of hypocrisy ever after.

6. The revenue of the Post Office alone afforded at that time a clear income of £21,000 a year.

7**.** By these remarks we may see, that some of the ministers of Charles II were almost as well skilled in the arts of ***decent corruption***, as Walpole himself, or any of his modern imitators.

8. It is very probable that the King had some stronger reasons for not taking this step, than the pretence of his momentary confusion. The Earl was privy to some secrets, the discovery of which, at this juncture, might have taken the hypocritical tyrant from his throne. This made the latter first timid as the former was insolence and audacious.

9. The specific charges exhibited against the Chancellor by the Earl were to this effect;

“That he had endeavoured to alienate the hearts of his Majesty's subjects, by artificially insinuating to his creatures and dependants, that is Majesty was inclined to Popery, and designed to alter the established religion;

He had said to several persons of his Majesty's privy Council, that is Majesty was dangerously corrupted in his religion, and inclined to Popery; and that persons of that religion had such access and such credit with him, that unless there was a careful eye had un to i: the Protestant religion would be overthrown in this Kingdom:

Upon his Majesty's admitting Sir Henry Bennett to be secretary of state, in the place of Sir Edward Nicolas, he said that his Majesty had given £10,000 to remove a zealous Protestant, that he might bring into that place of high trust the concealed papist:

In pursuance of the same traitorous design, several friends and dependents of his had said aloud, that were it not for my Lord Chancellor's standing in the gap, Popery would be introduced into this Kingdom:

That he had persuaded the King, contrary to his reason, to allow his name to be used to the Pope and to several cardinals, in the solicitation of a cardinals For the Lord Aubigny, great protector

to the Queen; in order to effect which, he had employed Mr Richard Bealing, a known papist, and had likewise applied himself to several Popish priests and Jesuits for the same purpose, promoting great favour to the priests here, in case it should be effected:

That he had likewise promised to several papists, he would do his endeavour; and said, he hoped to compass the taking away all penal laws against them; to the end that they might resume and grow vain upon his patronage, and, by their publishing their hopes of a toleration, increase the scandal endeavoured by him to be raised throughout the kingdom:

That being interested with the treaty betwixt his Majesty and the Royal consort, the Queen, he concluded it upon articles scandalous and dangerous to the Protestant religion; moreover he brought the King and queen together, without any settled agreements about the performance of the marriage rites, whereby the Queen refusing to be married by a Protestant priest, in case of her being with child, either the succession should be made uncertain for want of due rites of matrimony, or else his Majesty be exposed to a suspicion of a being married in his own dominions by of Romish priest:

That having endeavoured to alienate the affections of the Kings subjects, upon the score of religion, he made use of all malicious scandals and jealousies to raise to himself a popular applause of being the zealous upholder of the Protestant religion:

That he farther endeavoured to alienate the affections of the Kings subjects, by venting in his own discourses, and in those of his emissary opprobrious scandals against his Majesty's person and course of life, such as were not fit to be mentioned, unless necessity should require it:

That he endeavoured to alienate the action of the Duke of York from his Majesty, by suggesting to him, that his Majesty intended to legitimate the Earl of Monmouth:

That he had persuaded the King, against the advice of the Lord General, to withdraw the English garrison out of Scotland, and demolish all the forts built there at so vast a charge to this Kingdom; and all without expecting the advice of the Parliament of England:

That he endeavoured to alienate his Majesty's affections and esteem for his present parliament, by telling him, that there never was so weak and inconsiderable a house of lords, nor ever so weak and heady a house of Commons; and particularly, that it was better to sell Dunkirk, than to be at the mercy for want of money:

That, contrary to a known law made last sessions, by which money was given and applied for the maintaining of Dunkirk, he advised and effected the sale of the same to the French King's:

That he had, contrary to law, enriched himself and his creatures by the sale of offices:

That he had converted to his own use vast sums of public money raised in Ireland by way of subsidy, Private and public benevolences, and otherwise given and intended to defray the charge of the government in that kingdom:

That having arrogated to itself the supreme direction of all his Majesty's affairs, he had prevailed to have his Majesty's Customs farmed at a lower rate than others offered, and that by persons with some of whom he went a share; and had enriched himself in various other instances to the injury of his Majesty's revenues.

10. Most of the insinuations, as far as they respected the King’s sentiments, were, indeed strictly true; though the Earl of Bristol, by ascribing them to the Chancellor, affected to represent them as treasonable slander.

11. See page 150, Vol, I

12. The old secretary you the King to world to trust his promises.

13. Besides the acts before mentioned, another, which received the Royal assent at this time, deserves notice. It was entitled "***an Act for the encouragement of trade***," though one of its clauses betrayed the grossest ignorance of the principles not only of commerce, but sound policy.

It prohibited the importation of foreign cattle. Such a prohibition, which was particularly levelled at Ireland, not only reduced the inhabitants of that country to the greatest distress, by shutting them out from the only market they had for the chief article of their produce; but was highly injurious to the industry, the agriculture, and the manufactures of England. It caused a greater quantity of land here to be applied to the purpose of pasturage than is consistent with the higher improvements of husbandry in a populous and commercial island; it's gave the English graziers all the advantages of a monopoly against their own countrymen; and as the Irish, who had no wealth but their cattle, were deprived of the means of supplying themselves, as before, with the manufactures of England, this oppressive act, which was carried to a still more pernicious extent by the Parliament in 1666, put a stop to all trade between the two nations.

Mr Carte, in his ***life of the Duke of Ormond,*** takes occasion from this act to observe, "that the English never understood the art of governing their provinces; that they always treated them in such a manner that is either put them under the necessity, or subjected them to the temptation, of casting off their government, whenever an opportunity offered; that it was a series of this impolitic conduct which lost them Normandy, Poictou, Anjou, Guienne, and all the dominions which they formerly had in France: that in the King of France's ***Triférdе Chartres*** there are an infinite number of appeals and memorials for grievances, which the inhabitants of the English provinces suffered from the English government; that, for these reasons, they never appeared in arms to assist the English against the French, according to the obligation of their tenures; and whilst 100,000 vassals, under the like tenures, served in the armies of France, the English were forced to fight their battles themselves: that from an abhorrence to the English government, when Rochelle, Saintes, Anjoulesme, and other towns in those provinces submitted to the King of France, they took particular care to insert in their capitulations, an express article, ***That in no distress of the affairs of France they should ever be delivered back into the hands of the English."***

Had Mr Carte lived in our times, what a melancholy addition he might have made to his catalogue of provinces dismembered from the British Empire by the narrow and illiberal policy of its government! He would also have increased the number of his stinging remarks by asserting, that, even after the loss of America, the concessions in favour of Ireland were not obtained from the generosity, but extorted from the fears of its rulers. These faults, however, are not peculiar to the English government, as Mr Carter insinuates. Most of the European states have not only been guilty of the same absurd oppressions, but still persist in them contrary to the clearest precepts both of history and experience.

14. See the account of this act, with a detection of Mr Humes errors and inconsistencies in his remarks upon it, in the ***Sketches of Constitutional History*** prefixed to the first volume of this work.

15. It is very evident from the whole tenor of Charles's conduct, that he had this little idea of the real dignity of the Crown, as he had regards for the security all rights of the people.

16. What a corrupt set of slaves Charles new he was addressing, or he never would have dared to avow not only his contempt, but is determined violation of the law, which had been formally sanctioned by all branches of the legislature! This was affecting his right to the dispensing power with a vengeance, and in the matter of the utmost constitutional importance. Yet the pension

Parliament tamely acquiesced in this last subversion of the only barrier that was left them against the encroachment of arbitrary power.

17, It was probably,this artful insinuation that suggested to Mr Pitt, if not the hint for exceeding the excise, at least his most specious argument in support of the measure. It would increase the revenue, he said, without making the people feel the weight of any additional burdens. This, however, is mere sophistry. It is not the enormity of the load, but it's vexatious and galling pressure that is complained of. In the last Parliamentary debate on this subject, even the attorney general was forced to acknowledge, "that the excise laws were anomalous to the English constitution." How then can the pretence of rendering any particular branch of the duties more productive be omitted as a good reason for an arbitrary and unconstitutional method of collecting them?

18. An act to prevent the inconveniences happening by the long intermission of parliaments was inconsistent with Charles idea of the monarchy; but what is more remarkable in this transaction between the King and his hirelings, is the paltry artifice made use of by the latter to hide from their constituents so treacherous a surrender of their only remaining security.. They entitled it "an act for the assembling and holding parliaments once in three years at the least, et cetera." As if to use the people with the specious form of their ancient constitution, while they robbed them of their most inestimable privilege the power of dismissing after sufficient trial such representatives as had betrayed their trust.

19. We cannot give a better account of this act for the total suppression of all public worship according to the Presbyterian form, than in the words of the speaker of the House of Commons, upon presenting it with the other bills to the King. "We have," said he, "prepared to Bill against the frequenting of conventicles, the seed-plots and nurseries of seditious opinions under pretence of religious worship. The first offence is made punishable with five pounds, or three months imprisonment, and ten pounds for a peer: the second offence ten pounds, or six months imprisonment, and twenty pounds for a peer: but the third offence, after a trial by jury, and the trial of a peer by his peers, the party convicted shall be transported to some foreign plantation, unless he lays down an hundred pounds:-

Immedicabile vulnus
Ense recidendum ne pars fincera trahatur."

Care also was taken to prevent this act from being evaded by holding religious meetings in private houses; for the penalties were extended to every five persons, over and above those of the same household, who assembled to worship God, after a different mode from that of the established church.

20. The writer has pointed out very clearly in the former part of this chapter, the true cause of such general, and before unheard-of corruption. It flowed from the polluted fountain of the great, and spread its infection through all the lower classes of society. Was it likely that common sailors would hesitate to take a bribe, or to sacrifice honour and honesty to present gain, when the Lords and Commons were not ashamed to set the example?

21. One was for preventing abatement of writs of error on judgement in the Exchequer; another for suppressing the disturbances of semen, and preserving the stores belonging to the navy; a third against deceitful, disorderly, and excessive gaming; and therefore for the continuance of of former act to regulate the press; that is to say, to prohibit and to punish by fines, by imprisonment, by the seizure of property, and by corporal punishments, the publication of any truth, that might be disagreeable to those in power.

22. The war with the Dutch was certainly the most glorious part of Cromwell's administration. Enraged at the favours that the people had shown to the family of the Stewarts, and that there

affording an asylum to English outlaws; piqued also that the Republic of the United provinces should pretend to the dominion of the sea, he resolved at once to inspire respect for his country, and to avenge himself. Of all the maritime wars recorded in history none were more famous for the skill of the commanders, for the bravery of the sailors, and for the number of obstinate and bloody engagements, in which the English at length gained a decisive superiority. But Cromwell having fully gratified his own resentments, checked his country in the career of conquests and of glory. He made peace with the Dutch; and though the terms were very humiliating to them, and very honourable to England, yet they were far from being so advantageous to the latter as might have been expected from such a brilliant success. He did not to exert himself as far as the might in favour of India. He was satisfied with providing for the security of the English trade procuring a disavowal of the massacre at Amboyna, and insisting upon an indemnification for the descendants of the unhappy victims who perished in the dreadful transaction. He also took care, as is above observed, to stipulate for having the island of Poleron restored: but no mention was made in the treaty of the forts taken from the nation by the Dutch in the island of Java, and in several of the the Maluccas, by which that monopolising people had aimed at getting all the spices into their own hands.

23. Before the Dutch restored this island, they rooted up all the trees that furnish the spices; but as the soil still remained and might, with proper culture, prove an obstacle to the monopoly which they meant to establish, they retook it in 1666, and could never after be prevailed upon to give it up.

24. They had, in consequence of that treaty, yielded to a point, highly dishonourable to themselves, and contrary to the laws of all generous nations: that was treacherously given up Corbet, Okey and Berkstead to the vengeance of the English court. See page hundred and 16 of the first volume.

25. Downing, however, soon found an exception, by saying that these states made themselves judges of the process; to which they replied, "that it belonged to the cognizance of the Admiralty of Amsterdam, who only had to right to decide it." He even took another step to prevent any compromise on account of those ships with the sufferers; for when Cary, a man trusted by the claimants with the management of the law for one of the ships in dispute, would have accepted of the thirteen thousand pounds, he was hindered by Downing, who told him that the claim was a matter of state, and not a cause between private persons.

26. In one of count D'Estrade's letters, dated June 5, 1664, he says he had been told by De Wit, "that the difference between England and Holland arose on account of Downing’s interests only, who had brought the pretended rights of the merchants concerned in those two ships, for a trifle: that to this end informed the King of England's counsel, raising imaginary grievances and injuries received at sea by the English, which state never suffered." This was true in part;, but the Dutch statement was not in the secret of the resident’s private instructions: he could not at that time know, that Holland had much more dangerous enemies in the English Council then Downing, notwithstanding all his selfishness, falsehood, impetuosity, and insolence.

27. Historians differ in their account of the number of ships also which this Squadron, sent out under the command of Sir Robert Holmes, consisted; but whether it was 22 of only 14 men of war, it certainly far exceeded the already means of peaceful security, and manifested a hostile design. Holmes conduct soon put the matter beyond doubt.

28. He not only expelled the Dutch from Cape Corfe, to which the English court pretended they had a title; but seized on all their settlements at Cape Verde, and in the island of Goree. Then, after erecting a fort in the mouth of the River Gambia, he proceeded all along the coast of guinea, leaving the Dutch no other possessions there than two faults, Achin and St George de Mina, which he did not attack.

29. in order to keep up the deception a little longer, Holmes, upon his return, was confined to the tower; but being soon after set at liberty, and no steps having been taken to redress the injuries he had done the states, it was very evident that he had not acted from the impulse of wanton insolence, but by the express orders of the duke of York.

The Controversial Sir George Downing, after whom Downing Street is named. This painting now hangs in Number 10 just inside the front door.

Chapter II

New sessions of parliament – Vote of thanks to the city of London – Contrivance to obtain an unprecedented supply – Various embassies foreign courts – Treaty entered into with the Bishop of Munster – Mismanagement of the Navy since the Kings return – All offices and commissions sold to the highest bidder – Stores embezzled with impunity – New modelling of the Navy board – Silly blustering of the court – Unjust rules for the adjudication of prizes – Bad effects of encouraging privateers – Commission to prevent the prize money from being carried to the public account – Nightly meetings at lady Castlemaine's – Extraordinary scheme of toleration defeated – Religion turned into ridicule – First appearance of the plague – War declared against the Dutch – New creations – Duplicity of the French court – Victory at sea – Cause of not pursuing the success – Command of the fleet given to the Earl of Sandwich – The court removed to Salisbury – Faint avowal of the French King's treaty with Holland – De Witts indefatigable exertions – Reception of Mr Coventry in Sweden – Disreputable agreement with Denmark – The Danish Kings shameless perfidity – The Parliament convened at Oxford – Vote of fresh supplies – 5 mile act – Innovations in the Exchequer – Disgrace incurred by the Earl of Sandwich – Menaces and departure of the French ambassadors.

New sessions of Parliament

WHEN there was now no remedy, and the war was actually made, though not declared, there was nothing to be done but to resort to Parliament, which, after having been twice prorogued, met on the twenty-forth November. The King, in his speech to both houses, did not fail to remind them, that he had proceeded thus far, in consequence of their earnest advise and resolution.

He informed them of the preparations he had already made, upon the stock of his own credit: he had, he said, set out a fleet not inferior to any England had ever seen, and which had cost him £800,000; he expressed his confidence in their zeal and affection to vindicate his honour and their country's rights; he took notice of a vile jealousy, which had been scattered abroad by some ill men, that when Parliament should give him a noble and a proportionable supply for the support of the war, he might be induced to make a sudden peace, and to keep the money for his own occasions: so unworthy a jealousy, he was sure, did not deserve an answer: nor would he be thought to have so brutish an inclination as to love war for war's sake; he desired no blessing more than to see a firm peace between all Christian princes and states; but when he was compelled to enter into a war for the protection, honour, and benefit of his subjects, he would not make a peace till he had obtained and secured those ends, for which the wall was entered into.

After these assurances, his Majesty told them he had ordered a written narrative concerning the treaty and manner of proceeding with the Dutch to be laid before both houses, as the Chancellor was prevented by illness from attending in his place to relate those particulars[1].

Vote of Thanks to The City of London

The only immediate proof, which the Parliament gave of their approbation of what had been done, was a vote of thanks to the city of London[2] for having assisted his Majesty with a loan

of one hundred thousand pounds, towards the necessary equipment of the fleet. But after this there seemed to be a great suspension in the matter of supplies.

It was quickly discovered, that there was not the same alacrity in either house towards a war now, as there had been when they presented their address, and that they would have been much better pleased, if any expedient had been found for reconciliation, and if Holmes had been called to a severe account for giving the first offence by his invasion of the Dutch settlements at Cape Verde and on the coast of Guinea.

This was a step, which those of his Majesty's counsel, who were utterly against the war, had pressed with great earnestness, upon Holme's return, and before any more mischief done; but the lenity he met with made many believe, that he had done nothing without warrant or promise of protection.

As to the recent complaint against the Dutch for their breach of the treaty in not restoring the island of Poleron their ambassador disclaimed any invasive intention on the part of the states; and protested, that the none delivery of the place proceeded only for want of an order from the governor of Batavia, which order came the next day after the English ship was departed, but that notice was immediately given to the English factory at Bantam, that the same or, another English ship might be sent to receive the island; to which they ambassador added, "he was confident it was now in the hands of the English."

Though the cause of the delay was justly suspected, it is certain that the Dutch had that this time given up the island, in the hope of thereby preventing a rupture. When they found themselves disappointed, they did not let slip the first opportunity of retaking it.

But whatever room was still left for negotiation too much had been done in the way of violence to expect an honourable peace, without very notable preparations for a war. This required ready money, for though nothing was more positively asserted at first, than that the war would maintain itself, and though orders had been speciously given to preserve the Dutch prizes for that purpose, yet it soon appeared that a great part of their cargoes had been embezzled, or disposed of, even before they were adjudged to be prizes; and there was too much cause to fear, that very little of the rest will be applied to the public service.

The Parliament, therefore, being privately tampered with, now again promised fairly, and entered upon consultation about the supplies. As at no time was to be lost, the King commanded the Chancellor and the treasurer of Batavia, which order came the next day after the English ship was departed; but that notice was immediately given to the English factory at Bantam, that the same or another English ship might be sent to receive the island; to which the ambassador added, "he was confident it was now in the hands of the English." Though the cause of the delay was justly suspected, it is certain that the Dutch had at this time given up the island, in the hope of thereby preventing a rupture. When they found themselves disappointed, they did not let slip the first opportunity of retaking it.

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xxxx
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with whom they had been used to confer, and to whom he had joined the new favourites before mentioned, to adjust together what sum should be asked, and in what manner to propose and conduct it.

Contrivance to Obtain and Unprecedented Supply

The meeting of those persons appointed by the King was held that Worcester house, where the chancellor and the treasurer, both of whom had that first concurred in the same opposition to any immediate quarrel with the Dutch, told the others,

"that there was no more debate now to be, war or no war: it was come upon us; and we were at present only to contrive the best way of carrying it on with success, which could only be done by raising a great sum of money, that the enemy might see, we were prepared to continue, as well as to begin it."

Those, on the contrary, who had manifested the greatest eagerness for the war, Sir Harry Bennett, Mr William Coventry, and their friends, were of the opinion, "that there should not be a great sum demanded at present, but only so much as might carry out the fleet in the spring, and provide for the summer's service; and then, that the war being once thoroughly entered into, another and a better supplies might be got about Michaelmas, when there was reason to hope that some good success would dispose all men to a Frank prosecution of the war."

Such a backwardness, on the expediency of a considerable demand, was least of all expected from those gentleman, who had hitherto inflamed the King with an assurance, that he could not task more money of the Parliament than they would readily give him, if he were engaged in this war, which the whole kingdom so much desired.

It was not less remarkable to see the Chancellor and the treasurer, who had deprecated the rupture before the striking of a blow, now that it had taken place, contending for large supplies to prosecute it with vigour and effect, "that there house of Commons could never be in a better disposition to give than at present: that hereafter they might grow wary and apt to find fault with their conduct, especially when it should be found that the country was not so well pleased with the war, as it was conceived to be; whereas now the war was begun, and the King engaged in it as much as he could be after ten battles, and all upon the desire and promise of Parliament, they could not refuse to give anything proposed within the compass of that reason, which all understanding men might examine and judge of: that it was evident enough that the true ground of all the confidence, which the Dutch had, was from the opinion of the Kings necessities and want of money, and their belief that the Parliament would supply him very sparingly, and not long continue such an expense as a war at sea must require; in which imagination they would be confirmed, if, at the beginning, they saw Parliament give him such a sum of money, as seemed to be implied by what the other gentleman had said."

Having then demonstrated the policy of a scanty supply, the Chancellor and the treasurer declared, "that they thought it absolutely necessary that the King's friends should move for such a sum as might, upon the proper estimate, carry on the war for a full year, that is, a sufficiency for setting out the present fleet, and paying it off upon its return, and for setting out another fleet the next spring: if this were now done," they said, "is Majesty would not be involved in importunate necessities the next winter, but he might calmly and deliberately consider upon such, further supplies, as the experience of what would be then passed should suggest to be necessary; and that this would give his Majesty such a reputation of all his neighbours, and strike such a terror into his enemies, as would probably disposed them to a peace."

They observed, "that the best method to compute what the expense might amount to in the year, would be, by reflecting on the disproportion of the charge we were already engaged in, and what had been estimated four months since, when the wall was designed: that it was well known to

Mr Coventry, who had been always present at those conferences, that it have been said by the most experienced sea officers, and those who had fought in the formal battles against the Dutch, that a fleet of forty or fifty such ships, as the king's were, would be strength sufficient to beat the whole Dutch navy out of the narrow seas; and one very eminent man among them said, he would not desire above fifty ships to fight with all they had, and that he was confident a greater number than fifty could never be brought to fight orderly and usefully; and yet that there were at present no fewer than fourscore good ships preparing for the duke, and the charge in other particulars appeared already to amount to double the sum that was at first computed."

The chancellor and treasurer therefore concluded, "that a less sum than two millions and a half ought not to be proposed, and when once proposed, ought to be insisted on, and pursued without consenting to any diminution; for that nobody could conceive it would do, more than maintain the war one year, which the parliament could not refuse to provide for in the beginning; and there being, in truth, so much of it already expended in the preparations and expedition the duke had made in November, when he went to sea in pursuit of the Dutch merchantmen, and thought it necessary to employ as great a force as possible, in, case their fleets, as was expected, should come out of their harbours for the protection of their trade."

There was nor a man of those, who shrunk from the measure, that did not heartily with that sum or a greater to be proposed and granted; but they all protested, that they could not advise so prodigious a sum should be even named; and, that, as it was not proper for any of his majesty's servants to make such a motion, they did not know any one man, who had the courage to attempt it, or who would be persuaded to it.

The two lords continued very obstinate, that a less sum should not be named for the reasons they had given: they acknowledged that the proposal in the house ought not to be made by any man, who had relation to the court, or was thought to be in any grace there that might influence him; nor yet by any gentleman of a small estate, as it might be said, he was very liberal in grants, towards which he himself was likely to contribute very little.

It was necessary therefore to think of some members, who were looked upon as lovers of their country, and whose great fortunes would put them beyond the suspicion of having any designs at court. Mr. Coventry named five or six persons, of whom he said the house had a very good opinion ; but he feared that none of them could be prevailed with to undertake the business. The two lords engaged to try what might be done next morning, in order, if possible, not to have the motion for supplies deferred any longer than till the following day.

The chancellor and the treasurer chose out of the persons mentioned three Norfolk gentlemen, because they were good friends and grateful to each other; and sent to desire an interview with them.

Here the chancellor repeated the former arguments on the necessity of a liberal vote at the present juncture; and said, that he had therefore desired to confer with them on the best method of obtaining it, as he was well assured both of their good affections to the king, and the great influence their opinion would have upon the house.

They readily promised their concurrence, and their utmost endeavours to compass what the king should desire. To this the chancellor replied, that something more was expected from them; and then mentioning the exact sum of two millions and a half, said, that he hoped they would not only assent to it, but that, when the debate should be entered upon, which was intended to be next day, one of them would propose this sum, and the others second the motion.

They looked at each other for a little time, as if in surprise: at last one confessed, that though the reasons for a liberal supply appeared to him very just, yet he did not expect the demand of so

prodigious a sum, which he believed had never yet been mentioned in parliament to be granted at one time: he would, however, do his best to answer any objections that should be made to it, but desired to be excused as to the first proposing it.

Another was of the same mind; but the third,. Sir Robert Preston, declared very frankly, "that if they believed him fit to do it, he would propose it the next morning, let other men think what they would of him for it. "The two lords gave him their warmest thanks, and said what was necessary to confirm him in his resolution, and the other gentlemen in their promise to second him.

So delicate a point having been thus satisfactorily settled, notice was given to sir Harry Bennet and Mr. Coventry to call for the debate next day, which was entered into with readiness, every man acknowledging the necessity of it, and the obligation they were under to make good their former assurances, but nobody venturing to name the proportion that should be given.

When the house was in a deep silence, expecting that motion, sir Robert Preston, who was no frequent speaker, stood up; and, after mentioning concisely their former vote, the charge of the war, and that the present supply ought to be such as might terrify the enemy, as well as assist the king, he proposed to grant his majesty five and twenty hundred thousand pounds for carrying on the war against the Dutch. The silence of the house was not broken,: they state in amazement, until a gentleman, who was believed to wish well to the king, without taking notice of what had been proposed, stood up and moved, that they might give his majesty a much less proportion.

Then the two others, as had been previously concerted, renewed and supported by their best arguments sir Robert's motion, which seemed to be entertained with the consent of many, and was contradicted by none; so that, after a short pause, no man who had any relation to the court, saying a word, the speaker put it to the question, and the affirmative made a good sound: few gave their negative aloud, and many sat silent.

The vote was presently drawn into an order; and the house resolved the next day to be in a committee, to agree upon the way that should be taken for raising this money, the proportion whereof could no more be brought into debate.

This brave vote put the king in high spirits, and renewed, at least for a time, his esteem for, and confidence in the two lords, through whose advice and management it was obtained. It was above what he had expected, or, indeed, wished to be proposed and those favourites of his, who had been at the first conference, represented the resolution of the chancellor and treasurer as impossible to be compassed, not without insinuating, that it was affected only to indispose the house to the war.

Yet they did not think fit to vary from the sum, till they saw the success of the motion, which the lords were engaged to procure a fit person to make.

When they found the conclusion to be such as could be wished, they fell into the opposite extreme, commending the counsel, and magnifying Sir Robert Preston's merit, for having done his majesty so signal and desirable a service in such a conjuncture.

They invited Sir Robert to court; introduced him to the king, by whom he was very graciously received; amused the poor man with the hope of a baronage; and afterwards endeavoured to make him believe, that if he had not what he desired, he might impute it to the chancellor.

There appeared not more joy in the court at obtaining this vote, than upon the exchange, most of the merchants being, from prejudice, and from the narrow jealousies of trade, unskillfully

inclined to a war with the Dutch, above what their true inter could invite them to, as in a short time afterwards they had cause to confess.

The king sent to the lord mayor to call a common council, where some of his majesty's ministers attended, and prevailed with the city presently to furnish the king with the loan of two hundred thousand pounds, upon the credit of the vote of the house of commons. That money being in a few days paid into the hands of the treasurer of the navy, all preparations were forwarded with wonderful alacrity; and the parliament also made what haste was possible to dispatch the bill, by which the supply they had granted might be collected from the people[3]

Various Ambassadors to Foreign Countries

In the meantime, the king neglected not to apply what endeavours he could to dispose foreign powers as much in his favour as any offers of interest might reasonably invite them to. From France he expected only neutrality, by reason he knew that court had renewed an alliance with the States; but he never suspected it was in such a manner as would hinder the neutrality.

Spain could at this time do little good, or harm; yet nothing necessary was left undone towards a good correspondence with it: Sir Richard Fanshaw was sent to Madrid; but resentment of the assistance given to Portugal, and of the partiality and preference shewn to France in the sale of Dunkirk, prevented his meeting there with any very cordial reception.

Ambassadors were also sent to the northern courts, Mr. Henry Coventry of the bedchamber to Sweden, and sir Gilbert Talbot to Denmark, in hopes to unite them both to the king in this conjunction against the Dutch; or, at least, to engage them to remain good friends to his majesty, and to furnish him with all those naval stores, without which his fleets could not be supported; and, as far as was possible, to restrain the Dutch from the like supplies, by obtaining such large contracts on account of the English, that there would not be enough left for the others. How far the objects of those two embassies were accomplished will be seen in their proper place.

Treaty Entered into with The Bishop of Munster

While the king was thus endeavouring to secure foreign alliances, a voluntary offer of service came from a very unexpected, quarter. A Benedictine monk, who belonged to the English abbey at Lanspring in Westphalia, and who was well known to both the king and chancellor, during their residence at Cologne, called upon the latter with a letter from the bishop of Munster, the purport of which was, that, if the war against Holland was to be resolutely prosecuted by the king of England, he (the bishop) conceived, that the assistance of an ally who could infest the Dutch by land, while his majesty did the same by sea, might not be unacceptable to his majesty; and in that case, upon the answer to this letter, he would send a fit person to make proposals to the king on the subject.

The matter was by the king's desire immediately laid before the select committee of his privy council. They all knew that the bishop was a warlike prince, having had command in armies before he dedicated himself to the church; and that he had a great animosity against the Dutch for having interfered in a dispute between him and his subjects about two years before, and compelled him to accept of such conditions as did not please him; but he was poor, and therefore unable to make any effectual attack upon the United Provinces, without a powerful support. However, every man was of opinion, that the proposal ought to be very kindly received, and the bishop invited to send his agent; and to that purpose the chancellor wrote to him, and the monk was dispatched the next day.

In a much shorter time than could well be expected, the monk returned, accompanied by a Ger-man baron, one of the bishop's subjects, who had a letter of credit to the king, and full

authority to treat and conclude according to his instructions, which he likewise presented to his majesty.

He had also a recommendatory letter to the chancellor from the elector of Mentz, who declared that he believed the bishop would be able to perform whatsoever he should undertake. The baron's instructions were to propose that his majesty would cause one hundred thousand pounds to be immediately paid at Hamburgh, Cologne, or Frankfort, and should promise to pay fifty thousand pounds a month for three months; after which it was hoped the army would provide for its own support.

This being undertaken on his majesty's part, the bishop would be engaged, within one month after-the first bills of exchange for the one hundred thousand pounds should be delivered into the baron's hands, that he would be in the dominions of the States General with an army of sixteen thousand foot, and four thousand horse, with which he was very confident he should in a few days be possessed of Arnhem, and shortly after of Utrecht; and if the king's fleet came before Amsterdam, that army of the bishop should march to what quarter or place his majesty should direct.

After the king had, by particular inquiries of the baron, satisfied himself of the reasonableness of the bishop's hopes respecting the practicability of the proposed attempt, the next thing to be considered was the sum of money demanded, which far exceeded what the king either could, or ought to comply with.

It was not an auxiliary army that was to be raised for the king's service, nor were its conquests to be applied to his benefit; but it was an army raised to revenge the humiliations to which the bishop himself had been subjected, and what he should get must be on his own account, and his majesty's hostility at sea would as much facilitate the bishop's enterprise against the Dutch by land, as the marching of his army might probably disturb and distract their naval preparations.

Yet, it could not be expected, that the bishop could collect such a body of forces without a good supply of money, nor keep them together without pay; and as the advantages, which his majesty was likely to derive from so inviting an offer, extended themselves to a very large prospect, he resolved to undertake any thing to promote it which was in his power to perform. He therefore gave his answer in writing, what sum of money he would cause to be paid at once for the first advance, that the bishop might begin his march, and what he would afterwards cause to be paid by the month.

This being less than the baron's instructions would admit him to accept, he sent an express with the king's answer to the bishop, the violence of whose enmity to the Dutch made him assent to the terms.

The success of this design, though prosecuted for some time with vigour, was defeated by the insidious policy and opposition of France, though the bishop, before the treaty with the king of England was concluded, had received a positive assurance from the French minister, that his Christian majesty would do nothing to his prejudice.

Mismanagement of Navy Since The King’s Return

The state of his majesty's affairs abroad being put into such a train, it may be proper to consider what preparations were made at home towards carrying on this war, for which the parliament had so bountifully provided. It is very certain, that, is ordinary prudence had been exerted in the management and proper application of such liberal supplies, the success would have been answerable; and, at least, any inconvenience from the sudden want of money would have been prevented. But every man, who was either privy himself to the secret guidance of those affairs, or who may be able to procure from others a sincere information of the intrigues by which every

measure was at that time regulated, must confess that the persons, who contrived the war, had the entire conducing of it, and were the sole cause of all the ill effects of it.

They began it from motives of jealousy, avarice, and ambition; and, in carrying it on, they constantly sacrificed the honour and interest of the nation to the same selfish and pernicious passions. This is a truth too fully illustrated in almost every part of the conduct of administration at this melancholy period,

From the hour of the king's return, and of his being possessed of the entire government, the naval affairs were never put into any order. That province being committed to the duke of York as lord high admiral of England, was entirely engrossed by his servants, especially by his secretary Mr. Coventry, who infused into his highness the opinion, that whoever presumed to meddle in anything that related to the navy or admiralty, invaded his jurisdiction, and would lessen him in the eyes of the people; and that as he was superior to all men by being the king's brother, so being high admiral, he was to render an account to none but his majesty: whereas, in truth, there is no officer of the crown more subject to the council-board, than the admiral of England, who is to give an account of all his actions, and of every branch of his office, constantly to the board, and to receive their orders.

But there was no retrieving this authority, not only from the influence Mr. Coventry and others had upon the duke, but from the king's own inclination, who thought that those officers who immediately depended upon himself, and only upon himself, were more at his devotion, than they who were obliged to give an account to any other superior. His majesty had also, from the time of his flirt going to France, been accustomed to no discourse more, than to the under-valuing of the privy council, as is it shadowed the king too much, and usurped too much of his authority, and too often superseded his commands.

In conversations of this kind, the queen his mother had always some fatal instances to give of the authority, which in. particular cases the council had assumed against the late king's judgment; all which, being the subject of every day, made so deep an impression as could never be effaced, and rendered the choice and nomination of privy councillors less regarded, since they were to be no more advised with afterwards than before.

Another argument that used to be as frequently insisted upon by the queen, and with more heat and indignation, was the little respect that by the law or custom of England was paid to the younger sons of the crown ; and though there was no body present at those conversations, who knew any thing of the law or custom in such cases, yet all that the queen said was taken for granted; and not only the duke but the king himself conceived a manifest prejudice to the nation In in that respect: it was easily agreed that the model of France was in those and other cases much preferable; and that model was afterwards observed upon too many occasions.

All Offices and Commissions Sold to The Highest Bidder

This being the state and temper of the royal family, when the king was recalled, the very next morning after the fleet came to Scheveling, the duke went on board, and took possession of it as lord high admiral; and his secretary provided new commissions for all the officers then in command, for which it is probable they paid him very liberally, as with him the custom began of demanding five pounds for every warrant signed by the duke, though the fee to former secretaries had never exceeded twenty shillings.

Mr. Coventry, who was utterly unacquainted with all the rules and customs of the sea, and knew none of the officers, but was much courted by all on account of the place he filled, made choice of captain Penn, whom the king knighted as soon as he came on board, and with whom the secretary made a fast friendship, being guided by him in every thing. Penn had risen from the rank of a common sailor to the highest command under Cromwell, with whom he was in great

favour, till he failed in the enterprise against St. Domingo, when he was admiral at sea; and Venables had the command of the land forces. At their return to England, they were both imprisoned m the Tower, and never after employed by the protector[4]

Upon Cromwell's death, Penn had an appointment again at sea, and was at this time under Montague, when he went to attend the king. By the present change of the government, the places of all the officers belonging to the navy, the dock-yards, and the whole admiralty became void, and were all, except those of the three superior officers of the navy, to be supplied by the duke, that is, by Mr. Coventry, who by the advice of Penn, his only confidant in the brokage, conferred them upon those who would give most money, without the least regard to any other pretensions.

While Coventry pursued this system of the most barefaced venality, he took care to secure a proper number of friends hear the duke's person, and to lessen the odium that he would incur by engrossing to himself the whole of those immense profits, or rather bribes.

As the sums paid for their appointments by many of the principal officers in the dock-yards were considerable, and must attract notice, some being obliged to give eight hundred, and others a thousand pounds for their places, he had the skill to move the duke to bestow the fees arising from one of those lucrative appointments on some person of his household, Sir Charles Berkeley for instance, and the money paid for another place upon another of his servants, and some to be divided between two or three; by which means all the duke's family were laid under obligations, and retained to justify him, and even the duke looked upon it as a generosity in Mr. Coventry to accommodate his fellow servants with what he might have asked, or kept for himself.

But it was the best husbandry he could have used; for by this means all men's mouths were stopt, while the smaller sums for a multitude of offices of all kinds were reserved for himself with less notice, and jealousy, though they amounted to much more than any officer under the king could get by all the perquisites of his place for many years.

Stores Embezzled With Impunity

Among the many irreparable inconveniences and rnischiefs which resulted from this corrupt manner of selling commissions to the highest bidder, and of filling up all the vacant offices in the navy without the smallest consideration of any man's character or merit, one grew quickly visible and notorious in the stealing and embezzling all sorts of things out of the ships, even when they were in actual service: but when they returned from any voyages, it was much worse; for then great quantities of various stores, which ought to have been delivered back into the proper offices appointed to receive them, were embezzled and sold, and very often sold to the king himself for the fitting out of other ships.

When this was discovered, as sometimes happened, and the criminal person apprehended, it was alleged by him, as a defence or excuse, that he had paid so dear for his place, that he could not maintain himself and his family without practising such shifts: yet none of those fellows were ever brought to exemplary justice; and most of them were restored to their employments.

Thus was the public service injured, and the state plundered with impunity, through the corruption of one individual, unhappily placed at the head of so great a department.

New Model of The Navy-Board

The same motives prompted Mr. Coventry to recommend and bring about a change in the lord high admiral's established council, to the detriment of the service, and the increase of the public expense. The three superior officers of the navy were possessed of their places by patents under the great seal of England before the king's return: they were the natural council of the lord high admiral, and used of course to attend him regularly once a week to render an account of all the

state of the office, to give their advice upon any occasion, and to receive his orders. Now because those three depended not on the secretary, he wished, as much as possible, to lessen their consequence.

He had also a particular animosity to one of them, Sir George Carteret, who, besides being treasurer of the navy, was vice-chamberlain of the king's household, and a member of the privy council. Mr. Coventry, therefore, suggested to the duke, that, in regard of the multiplicity of business, much more than in former times, when those officers and that model for the government of the navy had been established, his royal highness would propose to the king to make an addition by commissioners of some other persons always to sit with those three officers with equal authority, and to sign all bills with them.

He farther observed that no new expense need be incurred by such a measure, as the perquisites of the treasurer of the navy were now so greatly increased, that he might very well afford out of his fees a handsome salary for the commissioners.

The duke liked the proposal, and mentioning it to the king at the council-board, where nobody thought fit to make any objections, his majesty gave his consent, and appointed to the proposed office four persons recommended by the duke, namely, the lord Berkley, sir John Lawson, Sir William Penn, and sir George Askew, to whom Mr. Coventry himself was afterwards added, with a pension of five hundred pounds a year to each. But these pensions, which were so inconsiderately granted on the presumption of having them paid out of the treasurer of the navy's fees, became directly an additional charge on the revenue, for it was found that those fees had been secured under the great seat to the treasurer of the navy, and could not be taken from him with decency, or justice.

To shew how little the public service was considered in this business, it will be sufficient to say, that three of the new commissioners were likely to be engaged at sea in case of a war, and therefore incapable of any duty at the navy-board: Mr. Coventry had business enough in his own office, if properly attended to; and the only one who had leisure, that was lord Berkeley, neither understood any thing that related to the employment, nor give himself any trouble about it; but after he had enjoyed the pension about a year, he procured leave to sell the place to Mr. Thomas Hervey for three thousand pounds.

Silly Blustering of The Court

This was the state of the navy before the war with Holland was entered into. Let us next see what alterations took place, or what other preparations were made, and what counsels were most adhered to for the better conduct of this war.

It is certain, that a clear and impartial view and reflection upon what was then said and done, gave discerning men an unhappy presage of what would follow, There was no discourse in the court, after the two millions and a half had been voted, but of giving the law to the whole trade of Christendom, and of making all ships, that should pass by or through the narrow seas, to pay an imposition to the king, like the tolls paid to Denmark by all vessels passing through the Sound into the Baltic.

The king and duke took no trouble to discountenance and suppress this impertinent talk, which was so likely to be reported abroad, and to increase the number of their enemies. But this bad effect was still more promoted by some new regulations.

Unjust Rules for The Adjudication of Prizes

Commissioners were appointed to reside in the principal port-towns for the sale of all prize-goods; and those commissioners were chosen out of such members of the house of commons as had

given proofs of their readiness to oblige the king, or who promised to do so, and to whom liberal salaries were assigned.

There were other commissioners named to decide all appeals from the sentences given by the judge of the admiralty, or his deputies; and these were privy councillors, the earl of Lauderdale, lord Ashley, and secretary Bennet, whom the king could trust to take care of his profit.

But then the rules, which were prescribed to judge by, were such as were neither agreeable to former precedents, nor acknowledged to be just by the practice of any neighbouring nation, and such as would make all ships, which traded for Holland, from what country soever, lawful prize; which, it was foreseen, would bring complaints from all places, as it did as soon as the war began.

One of those rules was, that if above three Dutch mariners were found aboard any ship that was taken, no farther proof should be required for condemning it. Thus Dutchmen, who ran from their own country to avoid fighting, and put themselves on board merchant ships of any other country, made those ships in which they served, lawful prize, by a rule which no other nation knew, nor would submit to.

However, French and Spaniard, Swede and Dane were in this respect treated alike, whilst their ambassadors made loud complaints every day to the king and the council, against such injustice and rapine, without any other remedy than references to the admiralty, and then to the lords commissioners of appeal, which always increased the charge, and sometime the indignity.

Above all the Hanse towns, (which had large exemptions and privileges granted to them by former kings, and confirmed by his present majesty) had the worst luck. Their ships as well as their language were so like the Dutch, as not to be easily distinguished; so that not one of their vessels was met with, from what part of the world soever it came, or whither soever it was bound, but it was seized; and if the evidence, that any of the ships so taken belonged to the Hanse towns, was such that there could be no colour to retain them as prizes, but that they must be released, they always carried with them sad remembrances of the company they had been in.

This spirit of injustice and rapacity was greatly promoted by a resolution taken almost as soon as the war was thought of, **that all possible encourage went should be given to privateers**; that is, to as many as would take commissions from the admiral, to set out vessels of war, as they call them, to take prizes from the enemy.

Now the persons, who solicit such a license, are always a people whom no articles or obligations can restrain from all the villainy they can act; and who never fail to bring great scandal, and, it is to be feared, a great curse upon the justest war. **A sail, a sail** is the word with them: friend, or foe is the same: they seize all they can master, and run with it to any obscure place where they can sell it, and never wait for the ceremony of an adjudication.

But betides the reproach and disgrace brought by this class of men upon the whole government for defect of justice, the prejudice, which resulted thence to the public, and to the carrying on the service, is unspeakable. All seamen ran to them; for though such as belonged to the king's ships were allowed prize-money, over and above their wages, yet there was great difference between the condition of the one and the other.

In the king's fleet they might gain well, but they were sure of blows: nothing could be got there without, fighting: with the privateers there was rarely fighting: they took all who could make little resistance, and fled from all who were too strong for them. The privateers were of course always well manned, when the king's ships were compelled to stay many days for want of men, who were railed by pressing and with great difficulty. But notwithstanding so many obvious injuries and mischiefs occasioned by those privateers, whoever ventured to speak against them, upon any

case whatsoever, was thought to have no regard for the duke's profit, nor any desire to weaken the enemy.

In all former wars at sea, as there was great care taken to appoint commissioners for the sale of prize goods, who understood the value of the commodities, they had to sell, so there was equal strictness used in bringing the receivers to as punctual an account, as any other of the king's receivers are bound to make; and in compelling them to pay all the money they had received into the exchequer, that it might be issued out to the treasurer of the navy, or to other offices for the expense of the war.

One great argument in the first consultations upon this war was, that it would support itself; and that, after one good fleet should be set out to beat the Dutch, (for that was never thought worthy of a doubt) the prizes, which would every day after be taken, would plentifully do all the rest, besides the great sum that the Dutch would give to purchase their peace, and the yearly rent they would give for the liberty of fishing; with all which it was not thought fit to allow them to keep above a certain number of ships of war, limited to so many tons, and to so many guns, with many particulars of that nature, carefully digested by the promoters of the quarrel.

But now, after the noble supply voted by parliament, there was no more danger of want of money; and many discourses there were, that the prize-money might be better disposed of in rebuilding the king's houses, and several other good ides, which would occur.

The king forbore to speak any more of appointing receivers and treasurers for that purpose, when all other officers, who were judged necessary for the service, were already named; and the lord treasurer, who by his office should have the recommendation of such persons to the king, had made out a list of men, who, in his judgment, were worthy of the trust. But private intrigue had settled the matter otherwise.

A commission was made out by his majesty's order, to constitute the lord Ashley treasurer of all the money, that should be raised by the sale of all prizes, which were or should be taken in the present war, with power to appoint all such officers as should be necessary for the service; and that he should account for all monies so received to the king himself and to no other person whatsoever, and pay and issue out all those monies, which he should receive, in such manner as his majesty should appoint by warrant under his sign manual, and by no other warrant; and that he should be free and exempt from accompting to the exchequer.

When this commission was sent to the chancellor to be passed under the great seal, he delayed signing it, till he remonstrated with the king on the dangerous consequences of such an innovation, which; he said, was not only without a precedent, and highly derogatory to the lord treasurer, but must be destructive to his majesty's service, by throwing open a door to fraud and cozenage, without any means of prevention, or remedy.

He also expostulated with the lord Ashley himself on the subject; but to no purpose. The king in a short time sent a positive order to seal the commission, which the chancellor could no longer refuse, though he did it with the more trouble, because he knew that few men could have before entertained a worse opinion of lord Ashley's integrity than the king himself.

But that lord was now got into friendships, which could remove, or reconcile all prejudices: he was fast linked to Sir Harry Bennet and Mr. Coventry, in a league offensive and defensive, the same friends, and the same enemies: he had also gained an entire trust with lady Castlemaine, who very well understood the benefit such an officer would be to her: nor was it difficult to persuade the king (who thought himself more rich in having one thousand pounds in his closet, than fifty thousand pounds in his exchequer) how many conveniences he would find in having so much money at his own immediate disposal, without the formality of privy seals, and other

men's warrants, and the indecency and mischief that, he thought, would attend a formal account of his gifts and expenses, which should be known only to himself.

Nightly Meetings at Lady Castlemaine’s

The chancellor's opposition in this affair served only to inflame lord Ashley with the most implacable animosity towards him, and to give his other enemies an opportunity of lessening him in the king's esteem by putting the worst construction on his motives. The nightly meetings at lady Castlemaine's had of late made him more the subject of discourse; and since the appointment of the new secretary, as I have noticed elsewhere[5], they had taken more liberty than before to talk of what was done in council.

The duke of Buckingham pleased himself and the company by mimicking the looks and actions of all the persons who spoke there; and in this ridiculous exhibition the chancellor was sure to have a full part. In the height of mirth, if the king said he would go such a journey, or do such a trivial thing on the morrow, some of the party would lay a wager, that he would not do it; and when he asked why, it was answered, "that the chancellor would not let him." Then another would protest, "that he thought there was no ground for that imputation; though he could not deny, that it was generally believed abroad, that his majesty was entirely and implicitly governed by the, chancellor."

This was touching his majesty upon the tenderest string; for though his unconquerable indolence and his easiness of belief made him the constant dupe of designing and presumptuous men, yet he was extremely jealous of the supposed independency of his own will, and could not endure the least suspicion of his being governed by the dictates or counsels of another.

When such things were insinuated, he never failed to declare in a great passion, that the chancellor had no more credit with him than any other man; and certainly, his majesty was afterwards more upon his guard against shewing even any outward marks of particular respect for the chancellor's advice.

Extraordinary Scheme of Toleration Defeated

Besides the unwillingness manifested by the chancellor to comply with his majesty's desires upon this late occasion, there was another instance of his opposition, which having defeated a favourite project in parliament, sank very deeply into the king's mind, and almost cancelled the remembrance of an old servant's fidelity and zeal in so many other instances.

In the former session, lord Ashley out of his indifference in matters of religion, and Sir Harry Bennet out of his good will to the Roman Catholics, had drawn in the lord privy seal, whole interest was most in the Presbyterians, to propose to the king a particular scheme of toleration, for which they offered two motives.

The first was the probability of a war with the Dutch, in which case the persecution of people at home on the score of religion would be very inconvenient and might prove mischievous. The other argument was, that the fright men were thrown into by the bill against Conventicles, and the warmth expressed by parliament with reference to the church, had so prepared all sorts of non-conformists, that they would compound for liberty of conscience at any reasonable rates; and that by this means a good yearly revenue might be raised to the king, and a firm concord and tranquility established in the kingdom, if power were granted by the parliament to his majesty to dispense with the penalty of the laws in favour of such persons as he knew to be peaceably affected, and desirous only of liberty to follow the religion most agreeable to their conscience.

The recommenders of this new scheme had prepared a schedule, in which they computed what every Roman catholic would be willing to pay yearly for such a dispensation, and so of every

other sect; which, upon the estimate they made, would indeed have amounted to a very considerable sum.

The exercise of the dispensing power had long been one of the fond objects of the king's wishes. I have before shewn the failure of an attempt which he made to obtain it by the advice of the Roman catholic into at the queen-mother's; but parliament at that time proved refractory[6].

He was now flattered with the hope of their acquiescence: he liked the arguments in favour of this new project very well; and expressed his eagerness to see it thrown into the form of a bill. This was quickly done, and the bill prepared in a very concise manner, without any mention of other advantage to grow from it than the peace and quiet of the kingdom, and an entire reference to the king's own judgment and discretion in dispensing such indulgences.

The whole being fully approved of by his majesty, he resolved to impart it to the chancellor and treasurer, from whom it had been hitherto kept a profound secret. As the chancellor was. then afflicted with the gout, the king commanded the select committee to meet at Worcester-house; and thither likewise went the lord privy-seal, and lord Ashley, who had never before been present at those meetings. The king briefly explained the occasion of the conference, and caused the draught of the bill to be read, which was done, and such reasons given by those who promoted it as they thought fit.

The chancellor and treasurer used many arguments to dissuade the king from prosecuting it, but what the others said prevailed more; and his majesty declared, "that the bill should be presented to the house of peers, as from him, and that he hoped none of his servants, who knew his mind as well as every body there did, would oppose it, but either be absent or silent; to which the chancellor and treasurer answered, "that they could not absent themselves purposely; and they hoped, that if they should be present, his majesty would excuse them for speaking according to their judgment and conscience." The king seemed much dissatisfied; but this refusal was more pleasing to the other lords than their concurrence.

In a few days after the bill was presented in the house of peers by the lord privy-seal, as by the king's direction and approbation, and thereupon had the first reading ; but as soon as the second reading was proposed, the treasurer and many of the bishops spoke against it with some asperity, the chancellor being still confined in his chamber.

However, it was moved, that since it was averred-to be with the king's privity, it would be a thing unheard of to deny it a second reading; but that there might be no danger of its being read in a thin house, it was ordered that it should be read the second time upon a day named, at ten of the clock in the morning, with which all were satisfied.

In the mean time great pains were taken to persuade particular men to approve of it; and some of the bishops were sharply reprehended for opposing the king's prerogative, with some intimation, that if they persisted in that obstinacy, they should repent it.

Insinuations were even thrown out that it had been perused by the chancellor, and that he was not against it, the report of which obliged him to attend in his place on the appointed day; and after the second reading of the bill, he was of course to propose the commitment of it.

Several of the bishops and the lord treasurer continued their former opposition. Many others in like manner spoke fiercely against the bill, as a project to get money at the price of religion. The lord privy-seal, either observing the countenance of the house, or unwilling to venture his reputation in the enterprise; had given over the game the first day, and now remained silent. But lord Ashley adhered firmly to his point; spoke often, and with great sharpness of wit; and had a cadence in his words and pronunciation that drew attention.

Among other remarks, he said, "it was the king's misfortune, that a matter of so great concern to him, and such a prerogative as would perhaps be found inherent in him, without any declaration of parliament, should be supported only by such weak men as himself, who served his majesty at a distance; while the great officers of the crown thought fit to oppose it, which he the more wondered at, because nobody knew better than they the king's unshaken firmness in his religion, that had resisted and vanquished so many great temptations, and that his majesty therefore could not be thought unworthy of a greater trust with reference to it, than he would have by this bill."

This last reflection called up the chancellor, who declared, "that no man should say more, if it at were necessary or pertinent, of the king's constancy in his religion, than he was disposed to do; and that, if the question were, how far his majesty might be trusted in that point, he would make no scruple in averring, that he thought him more worthy to be trusted than any man alive.

But,"he said," the- degree of confidence justly due to the king was not the point of debate in a bill, which confounded all notions of religion, and erected a chaos of policy to undermine both religion and government; so that the question was not, whether the king were worthy of that trust, but whether that trust were worthy of the king." He added, "that it had been no new thing for kings to divest themselves of many particular rights and powers,which they found exposed them to great trouble and vexation; and he thought it a very unreasonable thing to commit a trust to the king, which he could not be supposed to execute himself, and yet must subject him to daily and hourly importunities, the uneasiness of which would be the more sensibly felt by his majesty, to whom, such was the great bounty and generosity of his nature, nothing was so painful as to be obliged to deny."

As the chancellor's arguments seemed to have most weight with the majority of the house, though a great many, besides the catholic lords, would have consented to the bill, it was agreed, that there should be no question put for the commitment, which was the most civil way of rejecting it.

The king was infinitely troubled at the ill success of this bill, which he had been assured would pass, notwithstanding the opposition that was expected. He even expressed in very fretful terms his dissatisfaction at the chancellor's and treasurer's behaviour in particular, after they had been made acquainted with his sentiments on the subject and there were not wanting persons to insinuate, that pride alone had prompted those two lords to shew their power and credit in diverting the house from gratifying the king in a matter which was not of their contrivance.

The chancellor an having, in the vehemence of debate, let fall some unwary expressions,and said in his remarks on the wildness of the bill, "That it was ship-money in religion, that nobody could know the end of it, or where it would rest, and that if it were passed, Dr. Goffe, or any apostate from the church of England might be made a bishop or archbishop here, all oaths, statutes, and subscriptions being dispensed with;" those words were reported by his enemies to the king, with glosses and reflections very much to the chancellor's disadvantage.

Religion Turned into Ridicule

Another mischief resulted also from this unhappy debate, which was the prejudice and dislike his majesty took to the bishops, on account of their objections to the bill. He never after treated any of them with the respect he had done formerly, and often spoke of them too slightly; which easily encouraged others not only to mention their persons very negligently, but their function, and religion itself, as an invention to impose upon the free judgments and understandings of men.

What was preached in the pulpit was commented upon and derided in the chamber; preachers were acted with curious mimicry; and their sermons vilified, as laboured discourses, made only to display their parts, and to gain praise and preferment.

Such were the common subjects of the mirth and wit of the court; and all serious persons who saw, or heard of suck prophaneness, could not help regarding it as an ill presage, that, whilst all warlike preparations were making in abundance suitable to the occasion, there should be so little preparation of spirit for a war against an enemy, who might be without force of our virtues, but assuredly were without any of our vices.

The First Appearance of The Plague

There began now to appear another enemy, much more formidable than the Dutch, and more difficult to be struggled with, which was the plague[7]. It broke out in the winter, and made such an early progress in the spring, that though the weekly bills of mortality did not rise high, and though the contagion seemed confined to obscure alleys, and to the poorer sorts of people, yet old men, who well remembered in what manner the last great plague, about forty years before, first broke out, and the progress it afterwards made, foretold a terrible summer; and many of them removed their families out of the city to country habitations, when their neighbours laughed at their fears, and thought they might have staid without danger. But it soon appeared that they had done wisely.

In March the pestilence spread so much that the parliament was very willing to part, which was likewise the more necessary, as so many of the members of the house os commons were appointed to different employments relating to the war, which required their immediate attendance.

For though the fleet was not yet gone out, yet there were many prizes daily brought in, besides the first seizure of the wine fleet, valued at above an hundred thousand pounds, in all which great loss was sustained through the absence of those who should punish the delinquency and rapine of the officers as well as common men.

As soon therefore as the bill was passed both houses for the good aid they had voted, his majesty gave it his assent, and prorogued the parliament till the September following, declaring that, if it pleased God to extinguish, or allay the fierceness of the plague, he should be glad to meet them then, by which time they should have notice by proclamation, that they might not hazard themselves.

War Declared Against The Dutch

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The parliament being thus prorogued, and war having been formally declared[8], every exertion was used to hasten out the fleet, not only in order to be before the enemy, but because while the ships were in port, it was impossible to keep the sailors from going on shore, by which they might bring the plague on board with them.

Had the plan of equipment, which was at first proposed, been adhered to, the fleet would have been ready to sail long before; but Mr. Coventry, who by his contrivance of commissioners was enabled to direct all the resolutions of the navy-board, seemed solicitous only to enlarge the preparations, and to increase the expense by all the ways possible.

The estimates were always made out in consultation with the sea-captains before named, sir John Lawson, sir George Askew, and fir William Penn, all men of professional experience. Lawson was greatly superior to the rest in skill and judgment: he always spoke clearly, and pertinently, but not pertinaciously enough, when he was contradicted.

Askew was a gentleman, but had kept ill company too long, which had blunted his understanding, if it had ever been sharp: he was of few words, yet spoke to the purpose, and to be easily understood. Penn, though possessed of less abilities than either, had a great mind to appear better

bred, and to speak like a gentleman: he had got many good words, which he used at adventure: he was very formal, and spoke leisurely, but much, and left the matter more intricate and perplexed than he found it.
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He was entirely governed by Mr. Coventry, who constantly attended at these consultations, and who learned enough from Penn to enter himself into the debate, and to cross what was not agreeable to his own fancy. It also belonged to Mr. Coventry's province to reduce into writing whatever was resolved upon in order to be laid before the king; and as his majesty desired, merely for the sake of form, to confer with the lord treasurer upon every new demand for the issuing of money, the duke always brought with him to such conferences the sea-officers, and Mr. Coventry, who spoke much more than any of the rest, and often what the others never thought of, though they dared not contradict him. if sir John Lawson at any time ventured to say, that Mr. Coventry must have misunderstood them, and put that into writing which had not been proposed; the latter insisted upon his own exactness, and would continue disputing it, till the other yielded.

Every conference raised the charge very much; and what they proposed yesterday as enough, was to-day made twice as much; so that there could be no possible computation of the expense. The number of ships in the first estimate was doubled before they were ready to put to sea and the king was very willing, upon the reasons stated to him by the duke, respecting the danger of the plague from a longer continuance in harbour, that they should sail as soon as possible.

New Creations

Before the duke's final departure for the fleet, there were two persons whom he and the king desired to make remarkable by some extraordinary instance of their kindness, sir Charles Berkeley, equally the favourite of both, and sir Harry Bennet, for whom the duke had, indeed, no great regard, but who enjoyed a considerable share of his majesty's affection and confidence.

Sir Charles had been lately created an Irish viscount; but this was not enough, without an English title; and secretary Bennet must also be made a lord. The king had deferred these creations till the parliament should be prorogued, lest the conferring of these titles should raise the appetites of others to make application, from which his majesty had hitherto defended himself by declaring that he would make no more lords.

But the parliament was no sooner prorogued, than he resolved to execute his purpose; and so lord Fitzharding was created earl of Falmouth, before he had one foot of land in the world; and Bennet, who had no more estate than the other, was created lord Arlington, taking his title from a little farm that formerly belonged to his father, at a village called Harlington between London. and Uxbridge.

The king could not avoid conferring at the same time the like honours on two others, Mr. Frechville, a gentleman of Derbyshire, and Mr. Arundel of Trerise in Cornwall, to whom his majesty was bound by many obligations and repeated promises; but he declared at the same time, that no importunity should prevail with him to make any more lords, till the present number, which was become a grievance, should be lessened.

There creations were no sooner over, than the new earl of Falmouth, being a man of fearless courage, and thinking himself obliged not to quit the duke, when exposed to so much danger, set out with his royal highness to join the fleet.

Many other noblemen and persons of quality went as volunteers, and were distributed into the several ships with much countenance by the duke, after taking as many on board his own ship as could be done with convenience. The duke of Buckingham, from the first mention of the war, which he promoted all he could, had declared that he would make one in it; and now desired the command of a ship, though he had never been at sea. On being refused this, he entered as

volunteer on board a flag ship, the captain whereof was in his favour; and then desired that in respect of his quality, and being a privy councillor, he might be present in all councils of war. As none were admitted to these councils but flag-officers, his royal highness

highness positively refused to gratify him in this point also, which the duke of Buckingham thought to be such a personal disobligation as might well excuse him for declining the enterprise. Pretending therefore that he appealed to the king in point of right, he left the fleet, and returned to the shore to complain: and we return back to the view of other. Particulars.

Duplicity of The French Court

During all those hostile preparations the French ambassador Monsieur Cominges remained in England, pretending to be ready to finish the treaty of commerce; but formalized so much upon every article, (though nothing was demanded but what had been granted to Cromwell) that it was concluded he wanted power, though much was imputed to the capriciousness of his own nature.

As soon as the war was evidently determined upon, the. king of France sent two other ambassadors to be joined in commission with the former. The one was the duke of Verneuil, and the other Monsieur Courtine, a master of requests, and much the quicker man of the three, and upon whose parts and address most of the business depended.

At their first audience they said, "that the purport of their embassy was to mediate a peace, of which the United Provinces having professed a very great desire, their master hoped he should find the same good inclinations here; and if he might be informed what would satisfy his Britannic majesty, he did not doubt but that he should persuade the States to submit to it."

With these general declarations, and without delivering any memorial in writing, the ambassadors contented themselves for many months, as if their business was only that the Dutch ambassador, who still continued in London, might know and send word to his masters, that they had begun their mediation.

But in their private discourses they seemed to make some kind of apology for being sent, implying as if the extraordinary importunity of the Dutch had prevailed with the king their master to undertake this mediation, and which he did the rather upon their promise to yield to any thing he should advise; but he was far from defining that his majesty might not receive ample satisfaction in whatsoever he required. They took care at the same time to persuade the Dutch ambassador, as appeared by his letter to the Hague, that they were very intent upon, and had much advanced the treaty[9]

It was in April that the Duke went to sea; and from the day of his departure till the day of battle, letters and orders continually came from him for an addition of more ships, upon intelligence received of the increased strength of the enemy. In these dispatches, Mr. Coventry took care, to add from himself, that whilst the king's brother ventured his own person, nobody, who wished him well, would, for the sake of saving money, hinder any thing from being sent, that his highness thought necessary for his defence.

This caused an immediate compliance with every demand, though procured with the utmost difficulty; as the king's ministers would have been otherwise liable to Mr. Coventry's reproaches of want of ability, or want of affection.

But though he was disappointed in this respect, he found something to exercise his intriguing spirit on board. There was a rivalship between him and the earl of Falmouth, who should have most interest with the duke, who loved the earl best, but thought the other the wiser man. Coventry had procured his great friend Penn to be made captain of the lord high admiral's own ship; and

encouraged him in his haughty rudeness to all the courtiers, and even to the earl himself, who contemned Penn, as a fellow unworthy of the charge and trust reposed in him. These factions; and the unpleasantness of the sea, gave many of the duke's family and of the volunteers a great disrelish for the war, which they had before been so eager to promote.

Victory at Sea

After the fleet had been out for about a month; the Dutch remaining dole in their harbours, the duke returned to our own coast, where he resolved to attend the motions of the enemy[10]. As soon as he received intelligence of their being at sea, he set sail to meet them; and on the first of June the fleets, which were nearly equal[11], came within sight of each other. Some skirmishes took place on the second, but the wind favouring neither party prevented a general engagement. On the third it served both their turns, and brought them as near each other as they could desire to be.

The English were animated by the remembrance of their superiority in former wars; nor did the Dutch seem to advance with less confidence and intrepidity. Opdam, the Dutch commander in chief, was a brave man, but of no experience. He bore down with his squadron upon the duke, with a resolution to board; but before he came near enough, either by some accident in his own ship, or from a grenade or other shot out of the duke's, his gun-room took fire, and in a moment the ship sunk, without a man being saved.

Cortenaer, the vice-admiral, who succeeded him in command, pursued the same resolution, and would have boarded the duke, if Jeremy Smith, a captain of the duke's squadron, had not put himself between, and boarded the vice-admiral, whose ship, being now equally attacked by the duke, was taken, after most of the, men were killed; and the vice-admiral himself was so wounded, that he only lived to be brought on board the duke's ship, and to complain of his not having been properly seconded.

There was, in truth, but little unanimity among the officers of the Dutch fleet: the two surviving vice-admirals Evertzen, and Cornelius Tromp, son of the famous Martin Tromp, besides their being of opposite political factions, now disagreed on the right of succession to the chief command.

They continued the fight, however, though with evident disadvantage, till night; and then hoisting all their sails, fled with the utmost precipitation. The duke, after giving orders to the master of his ship to bear after the enemy as closely as possible, that no, ground might be lost during the night, went to repose himself. The rest of the sleet had no guide but the lanthorn of the admiral, and were not to out sail him of course, and behaved themselves accordingly.

But when the duke arose, and the day appeared, the Dutch were out of view and before he could reach them, they were got into their ports, or under the shelter of their flats, where it was not advisable to pursue them; so that the duke finding his own ship and many others much damaged, thought it necessary to retire to port, in order to refit.

The victory and, triumph of the day were now conspicuous. Eighteen ships of war belonging to the enemy, whereof half were of the best they had, were sunk, burnt, or taken; and but one small ship of the duke's whose fleet was missing. It is true the number of our killed and wounded men was great, and appeared much greater on account of there being many persons of quality among them; whereas in the prodigious slaughter of the enemy, none fell of any particular name, or distinction, except the admiral and vice-admiral.

The_duke lost a great many on board his own ship. The earl of Falmouth, and lord Maskerry, eldest son to the earl of Clancarty, were killed so near his royal highness, that he. was spattered with their blood. There fell likewise in the same ship Mr. Richard Boyle, younger son of the earl

of Burlington, and many other gentlemen volunteers, besides above two hundred men of inferior rank. In prince Rupert's ship, and in that of the earl of Sandwich, there were also many persons of family slain.

The earl of Marlborough, who had the command of one of the best ships, and the earl of Portland, who was a volunteer on board with him, fell side by side. Among many others, who shared the same fate, and whose memories ought to be preserved, one deserves particular notice, as his skill and bravery were equally conspicuous. This was Sir John Lawson. In the middle of the sight, .he received a shot with a musket-ball upon the knee; and finding that he could no longer stand and was in great torment, he sent to the duke to desire that another might be appointed to the command of the ship, which was done presently.

He was sent on shore, and for some days there was hope of his recovery; but his wound shortly gangrened, and he died. He had risen in the service of the parliament, during the troubles, from the rank of a common sailor to the command of their best ships. He had been in all the actions performed by Blake, some of which were very stupendous; and afterwards signalised himself in many other battles fought with the Dutch.

He was commander in chief of the fleet when Richard Cromwell was thrown out; and when the contest grew between the Rump and the army, he brought the whole fleet into the river, and declared for the parliament. Upon the sudden turn of affairs soon after, as he was supposed to be a zealous republican, and therefore not to be trusted, the supreme command was given to colonel Montague, in the rank of admiral; and the post of vice-admiral was still continued to Lawson. Thus his authority was lessened, without removing him, which might have excited a mutiny, he had so great an interest in the seamen.

After the king was proclaimed, he accompanied Montague in the fleet to Scheveling; and being received into favour by his majesty and the duke, he served them with great zeal and fidelity till his death, which was an almost irreparable loss to the service.

The trouble and grief of many families for the loss of such a number of gallant men clouded in some degree the public joy for so signal a victory. But no sorrow was so great, none at least so remarkable as the king's was for the earl of Falmouth. Neither the immense advantages gained, nor the safety of his own brother seemed to make any impression towards mitigating his affliction for the death of this new favourite, in whom few other men had ever observed any virtue, or quality, which they did not with their best friends without.

Those who reflected on the earl's insatiable ambition, on his late rapid progress in the king's esteem, and on the prodigious height of favour to which he might have attained in a little time more, were not at all troubled that he was taken out of the way; and even regarded his death as a great ingredient and considerable part of the victory.

The duke, after he had given directions for the speedy repairing of the fleet, and for the immediate sending out of such ships as could quickly be got ready to ride before the coasts of Holland, made haste to present himself to the king, and to the queen-mother, who had lately resolved to go to France, but had said some days to wait the issue of the naval sight, and to see the duke.

Her pretence for going was the bad state of her health, and her dread of the plague; but upon her departure, which was soon after the duke's arrival, the took so many things with her, that it was generally thought the never meant to come back. Whatever her intentions at that time were, the never did visit England again, though the lived for many years after.

Cause of Not Pursuing The Success

Now the whisper began in the duke's family of the reason why the victory, after so decisive a superiority, had not been pursued with such vigour, as might have given an irrecoverable blow to the enemy.

The matter of the duke's ship pursued his orders very punctually, and kept for some time within a just distance of the main body of the Dutch fleet; but his royal highness was no sooner asleep, than Mr. Brounker of his bedchamber, who with wonderful confusion had sustained the terror of the day, resolved to prevent the like on the day following.

He first went to Sir William Penn, and urging the danger and presumption of again exposing the heir-apparent of the crown, after so providential an escape, advised him to order the matter to slacken the sails, that the Dutch might get what ground they could, to avoid a farther encounter. Penn answered that he durst give no such order order, except he had a mind to be hanged, for the duke had himself given positive charge to the contrary.

Brounker then went to the master, and confidently told him, that it was the duke's pleasure that he should slacken sail, without taking notice of it to any man. The matter, not suspecting that a servant so near his highness's person would dare to bring such an order without due authority, did as he was commanded; by which means the remainder of the Dutch fleet escaped, that probably would otherwise have been all taken, as the contention between Evertzen and Tromp for the chief command had spread more confusion amongst them than even the destructive cannon of their pursuers.

Nobody presumed to tell the duke of this, which made many suspect that it was done with the privity of Mr. Coventry, or that Penn and the master would not have remained fluent, when the duke expressed so much dissatisfaction the next morning. Nor was this matter publicly known for some years after when Brounker's ill course of life made him so odious, that among other censurable actions of his, the giving such an order to the master of the duke's ship was taken notice of in parliament, and was found upon examination to be as is here related.

Hereupon he was expelled the house of commons, whereof he was a member, as an infamous person, though his friend Coventry used many indirect arts to protect him, and afterwards engaged the king to countenance him. The only recommendation he had, to counterbalance a whole life of infamy was his playing very well at chess, which preferred him more than the most virtuous qualities could have done.[12]

With this victory a new expense, besides repairs and additional equipments, appeared, that was not foreseen, or brought into any computation, which was

was a provision for the sick and wounded, and the charge of keeping the Dutch prisoners, who were above two thousand, and increased daily. The duke was very impatient to have the fleet refitted for sea, and seemed intent upon going again to command it. But the queen-mother had prevailed with the king at parting to promise her that the duke should not expose himself any more in that expedition.

This was as yet concealed as well from the duke, as from every body else, his majesty believing that the confidence of his royal highness's going not only encouraged others, and occasioned greater dispatch, but contributed, as it certainly did, to the procuring of money for so many new and unexpected demands. This last object was also strangely facilitated even by public calamity; for the increase of the plague made all people that had money, and could not venture to leave it in their houses, where they durst not stay themselves, put it into the hands of the bankers, who supplied the king upon such assignments as the late act of parliament and other, branches of his majesty's revenue would yet bear. Thus a temporary convenience seemed to flow from a fountain of extreme misery.

If at this time the French ambassadors had pursued their office of mediation, it is very probable that it might have been with success. Besides the great loss, which the Dutch had received in the battle, and in being deprived of so many of their merchant ships, the factions were irreconcilable in the fleet. There were many officers, who had behaved themselves very basely and cowardly in the action, but whom it was dangerous to call to account. Evertzen and Tromp, who were the best seamen, would not submit to be commanded by each other.

The people were ready to rise upon De Witt, whom they unjustly looked upon as the author of the war; and cried aloud for peace. The States themselves were torn by the rage of party; and as all the other provinces blamed that of Holland for involving them in the quarrel, it is likely that they would have forced that state to accept of any reasonable conditions that should be offered. The people of England in general were not pleased with the beginning of the war, nor had even this late victory reconciled them to it.

The court grew also weary of it; and the king would have been willing to receive any good overtures for composing it. But the ambassadors pressed no such matter. On the contrary, they congratulated the victory with the same joy they found in the court, and seemed to think that any misfortune, that could befall the Dutch, would be but a just punishment for their pride and insolence towards all their neighbour princes. The two nations had not yet worried themselves enough, entirely to submit to the arbitration of France, which it resolved they should do.

Command of The Fleet Given to The Earl of Sandwich

In less than a month the fleet was again prepared for sea; and the king going to see it with the duke, informed him of the promise he had made to the queen their mother, and of his intention to give the joint command to prince Rupert and the earl of Sandwich.

The duke complied, though with much seeming reluctance; but by the intrigues of Mr. Coventry, who did not think himself sufficiently esteemed and respected by prince Rupert, the sole command was given to the earl of Sandwich. In a few days after the earl of Sandwich set sail, with directions first to visit the coasts of Holland, and if he found that the Dutch fleet was not ready to come out, that he should go northward to watch their East-India fleet, which had orders to come home that way, in hopes of escaping the vigilance of the English.

The Court Removed to Salisbury

Upon the king and duke's return to town, it being now the beginning of July, the plague increased so fast that there died above two thousand in a week; and it became highly advisable for his majesty to withdraw from the danger. He first moved to Hampton; but as it was soon found that the sickness had spread, to some of the adjacent villages, the king resolved to make choice of Salisbury for his summer residence.

Thither the duke and his family proposed to accompany his majesty; but he was diverted from this purpose by Mr, Coventry,. who thought that his own consequence would be lost in the crowded union of the two courts. He suggested to the duke, that on account of the general discontents, then spread throughout the kingdom, it would be better for the king and his highness to separate, that they might by their presence in different parts restrain the spirit of turbulence and sedition; and, as the king meant to spend the summer in the west, his highness could not make choice of a properer place to reside at than York, in the neighbourhood of which an insurrection was most to be dreaded, and where he could also receive by the way of Hull frequent intelligence from the fleet, which would probably be all the summer on the northern data in expectation of the Dutch East-India ships.

The advice was no sooner given than embraced by the duke and his wife, who were well content to enjoy themselves in their own family, apart from the court, where the prevalence of the ladies,

and the queen's humour thereupon destroyed all peace and rational pleasure. The duke then proposed it to the king, who, upon hearing the reasons assigned by Mr. Coventry, gave his consent; so that on the_ fame day the duke and his family departed for York, and the king with the court set out for Sailisbury.

Faint Avowal of The French King’s Treaty With Holland

A few days after his majesty's arrival there, he was waited upon by the French and the Spanish ambassadors; and the former sail, for the first time, "that their master was so far engaged by treaty with the Dutch, that he must, however unwillingly declare himself on their behalf, if the king would not accept of a just and an honourable peace." His majesty answered, "that is there was any such engagement, he had not been well dealt with; for that the French king had given his word to him, that he would not enter into any treaty with the Dutch, but *pari passu* with his majesty; and when his majesty had been informed that there vas some treaty concluded with them, he was assured from France that it was only a treaty of commerce, in which there was nothing that could be to his majesty's prejudice." He added, " that he had been always ready to embrace peace, which had never yet been offered by the Dutch, nor did he know what conditions they expected."

The ambassadors artfully evaded any further discourse on the treaty, which their master, in direct violation of his word, had concluded with the Dutch; but they threw out hints, as if they were much offended with the insolent behaviour of the Dutch, "who," they said, "were not in reality solicitous for peace, but only desired to engage their master in the war; nor did the ambassadors press the matter any farther while the court remained at Sailisbury.

De Witt’s Indefatigable Exertions

It was afterwards very well known that this faint avowal of the French king's engagement to assist the Dutch was at the pressing importunities of De Witt, who urged the performance of that treaty as the only means to silence the murmurs of the Orange party, and to make the States recover from the consternation and confusion, into which they had been thrown by the late defeat. The pensionary was now in a situation which required the full exertion of all his great talents and industry.

The enemies he had to struggle with at home were much more formidable than those whom he was to provide against abroad. He saw how successfully the opposite faction worked upon the fears of the people; and that most of the provinces were led to regard him as the fomenter of the war.

This prejudice he removed with wonderful address. He assured the States, "that he desired nothing more earnestly than a safe and honourable peace, and that France was very sincere in her endeavours to obtain it; but that the enemy were so insolent upon their late success, that they rejected all overtures, and seemed full of considence that the factions and divisions among the States would hinder them from being able to set out another fleet. That," he said, "ought therefore to be their first care, and is their fleet were ready to sail, he doubted not but a peace would quickly follow; for that France was solemnly engaged, in case the king of England should not consent to what was just and reasonable, to declare war against him, and to assist them with men, money, and all her naval power, which the duke of Beaufort was then preparing with the utmost dispatch."

He observed, however, "that it could not be expected that the king of France would send out his fleets, which were much inferior to the English, except he saw a Dutch fleet at sea ready to join them." He concluded with reminding them of the great value and imminent danger of their East-India ships, which were soon expected home, and "which," he said, "must inevitably fall into the hands of the English, if a proper fleet was not sent out to protect them."

These reasons, of weight in themselves, and enforced by De Witt with great ability, prevailed upon the States to pursue the plan which he recommended.

They sent very strict and severe orders to their several admiralties, for the proceeding against all, without distinction of persons, who had misbehaved themselves in the late battle; and to provide new ships, and every other necessary for the complete equipment of a fleet, by a certain day. This grew the more easy to them, by the return of De Ruyter with his fleet, which brought a present addition of good strength. Besides he was the best sea-officer they had, and having exercised the highest command, no other could refuse to obey him.

That there might be no delay in carrying on these preparations, they made, according to their usual custom upon extraordinary occasions, committees of the States to assist in the different admiralties; and to that purpose De Witt, and such others as he thought fittest at this time to join with him, were appointed.

They went first to the fleet to reform the disorders there: they cashiered many captains and officers: they put one or two to death: they set particular marks of disgrace upon others: and though they did not think it safe or politic to proceed to the utmost rigour against all who deserved it, yet they struck a terror into the factious, and established due subordination throughout the fleet. There soon appeared a general concurrence in promoting the public service, and in repairing the damages sustained by the late disaster.

Reception of Mr. Coventry in Sweden

While the indefatigable De Witt was thus inciting his countrymen to the most vigorous efforts, and employing all the arts of negotiation to keep the French king to his promise of assistance, the English ambassadors sent to the northern courts were not inattentive to the objects of their commission.

Mr. Coventry found a very frank and open reception in Sweden. That court did not dissemble its resentment of former injuries from the Dutch, nor its jealousy of the ambitious designs of France; and was prevented from immediately declaring in favour of England only by two things, first, the dread that Denmark might, by a junction with the Dutch, endeavour to deprive the Swedes of all the conquests confirmed to them by the treaty of Copenhagen; and secondly, a wish to see the bishop of Munster fully engaged, which would give Sweden an opportunity of prosecuting its long cherished design upon Bremen.

The first dispatches that were received from Sir Gilbert Talbot, the ambassador at Copenhagen, were far from affording any prospect of, essential assistance from that quarter. He said, that he had been very politely received, with all imaginable professions of affection for the English, and of destration of the Dutch; but that the king of Denmark was weak, timid, and wavering, and having chosen his own barber, an illiterate man, for his chief minister, had thereby given such offence to all she persons of quality in the kingdom, that they conspired to cross all his purposes, so, that what was concluded one day, was reversed, or not pursued the next. Sir Gilbert was therefore of opinion that little good could be expected from a poor nation, an irresolute king, an ignorant minister, and a factious nobility.

Disreputable Agreement With Denmark

In consequence of these accounts, which were repeated, his majesty was on the point of recalling Sir Gilbert, when he received an express stating, that the Dutch East-India fleet were just arrived in the port of Berghen, there to wait for a convoy from Holland; and that the king of Denmark had agreed to abandon them to the English fleet, on condition of being allowed to have the value of the whole; but that in order to remove any suspicion of treachery, he would protest against the act as a violence which he was incapable of resisting.

Letters to ratify the bargain were immediately sent back to Copenhagen, and instructions forwarded to the earl of Sandwich, who lost no time in sailing towards Berghen, and detaching a squadron of fifteen or sixteen stout ships to make the proposed seizure.

But after two days' delay in waiting for the arrival of the viceroy of Norway with particular instructions, the patience of the English was exhausted, and they resolved to fall upon the Dutch without farther ceremony. In this attempt, however, they were disappointed; for the Dutch having in the interval drawn their ordnance on shore, and the inhabitants having thrown up a breast-work, behind which they were posted, the English were not only exposed to those fires, but to that of the castle; and after having lost a great number of private men, and several officers and volunteers of distinction, were forced to retire and join the rest of the fleet.

Soon after the action the viceroy arrived; and many messages passed and re-passed between him and the admiral. Complaints were made of the precipitancy of the English squadron, and new proposals were offered. The earl of Sandwich did not think sit to run any more hazards: he had reason to doubt the sincerity of the Danes, and having also received intelligence that De Ruyter was out with the fleet, he was unwilling to be found intangled in rocks, and upon a coast, where the seas now towards the beginning of September began to run very high and boisterous.

He therefore resolved to be master of more sea-room, that he might fight the Dutch admiral, if he came; and if he did not, the earl might then meet those East-India ships more securely in their way to Holland, than by making another attempt in the harbour.

The Danish Kings Shameless Perfidity

This whole affair of Berghen was so dark and intricate that it could never be clearly understood. Mr. Clifford, who was present, being afterwards sent to Copenhagen to expostulate with his Danish majesty on the subject, was assured by that king, "that the disappointment was entirely owing to bad weather, which had hindered the positive orders from arriving at the precise time:" he added, "that he was still resolved to detain the Dutch ships there, and only feared the conjunction of Sweden with Holland.

Upon this Mr. Clifford went to Stockholm with the project of suck a treaty to be ratified there as would quiet all the Danish king's seeming apprehensions. But in the mean time this faithless monarch made another bargain, or alliance with the opposite party, in which he stipulated to assist the Dutch with thirty men of war, for which he was to receive a subsidy of fifteen hundred thousand florins, besides the remission of a large debt he owed the States, and the release of the engagements they had upon the Sound.

He then disavowed his having made any offer or promise respecting the Dutch fleet at Berghen; complained that the English admiral had broken the law of nations in violating the peace of his ports, and endeavouring to fire his town, when he was hospitably received and treated there under the protection of his castle; and as if to aggravate his public perfidy by the basest acts of private injustice, issued orders for immediately seizing all English ships in Denmark, or Norway, and the persons of all merchants and others who were subjects of England; and even many of those, merchants, to whom he owed great sums of money, which they had lent him, were imprisoned, and all their effects confiscated.

Such a timid prince, whatever his depravity of sentiment was, would never have proceeded to such daring outrages, if he had not been encouraged and urged on by France, who besides warranting the performance of whatever was promised by the Dutch, and engaging to pay a part of the subsidy[13], undertook also to protect the Dane against the justly dreaded resentment of the English.

The Parliament Convened at Oxford

The king Raid not altogether so long at Salisbury, as he had intended, for besides a little accidental indisposition, which made him dislike the air, some inferior servants and their wives came from London, and brought the plague with them; so that the court removed to Oxford before the end of September.

The great likelihood that it would be dangerous for the parliament to meet at Westminster at the time to which they were prorogued, and the necessity there was that they should meet somewhere to grant another supply, had determined the king before he, left Hampton, to issue a proclamation for requiring the parliament to meet at Oxford on the tenth of October; and proper directions were given to the speaker of the commons and to other members of both houses for the observance of the forms usual on such occasions.

The duke, having been sent for by express, came to Oxford the day after his majesty; and the first object of consultation with respect to public business was what answer should be made to the French ambassadors, who now desired frequent audiences, and positively declared "that their master was engaged by his treaty with the Dutch, that in case they were invaded or assaulted by any prince, he would assist them with men, money, and ships, which he had hitherto deferred, in hopes that his mediation might be accepted."

But though they assumed a more peremptory tone upon these occasions, they left room to suppose that it was rather to keep up appearances with the Dutch, whole ambassador was likewise come to town, rather to treat concerning the prisoners, and to observe what the French ambassadors did, than for the avowed purpose of making any specific proposals towards a peace.

The French even insinuated that the Dutch, since the refitting and enlargement Of their fleet, expressed much confidence in their own superiority, and looked upon the great plague in London, which still raged with unabated fury, carrying off above six thousand every week, as of such insupportable damage to the king, that he would not be able to fit out another fleet the year following; and that when they had been pressed by the French king to make some offers, he could get no other answer from them than that they expected the island of Poleron should be released to them, and that the fort at Cabo Corso in Guinea should be thrown down and slighted, which the ambassadors thought insolent proposals. They only wished therefore that his majesty would consent to some reasonable overture; and engaged that their master would then conduct himself in such a manner as to give no cause to complain of his partiality to the Dutch.

The king, the duke, and those persons whom his majesty used to consult in his most secret affairs, were all willing to believe that France would not take a decisive part against him, nor insist upon his making the first overtures, which his majesty not only regarded as a very humiliating condescension on his part, but an implied acknowledgment of his being the aggressor.

It was therefore resolved, that in reply to the declarations of the French ambassadors, his majesty should complain of their master's proceedings in having entered into any engagement with the Dutch, expressly against his own word; that they had begun the war, and ought to make the first approach towards peace; that the conditions with respect to Cabo Corso, and the island of Poleron, could not even be thought of without giving up the principal objects, for which the war had been undertaken; and that the pride and presumption of the enemy on account of the calamity, with which the nation was at present afflicted deserved no other notice than that his majesty hoped God almighty had not sent that heavy judgment of the plague upon him and his people, on the behalf of the Hollanders, and to expose him to their insolence.

The parliament convened at Oxford in greater numbers than could reasonably have been expected, the sickness still continuing to spread in several parts of the country, which made travelling very dangerous. Upon the tenth of October the king commanded both houses to attend him in Christ

Church Hall, and told them, " that he was confident they did all believe, that if it had not been absolutely necessary to consult with them, he would not have called them together at that time, when the contagion had spread itself over so many parts of the kingdom; and that he thanked them for their compliance so far with his desires.

"He reminded them of his having entered upon the war by their advice and encouragement; which made him more desirous of giving them as frequently as possible information of the effects and conduct of it, that he might have the continuance of their chearful supply for carrying it on. He then mentioned the causes of its having been much more chargeable than was at first imagined. The extraordinary addition made to their fleets by the enemy rendered proportionable preparations on his part unavoidably requisite; and God had hitherto blessed his efforts with success.

Their intrigues also with foreign powers obliged him to encourage princes, whom they had wronged, to recover their own by force; and he particularly instanced the bishop of Munster, whom he had assisted with large sums of ready money, and who, he believed, was at that time in the bowels of their country with a powerful army.

In the prosecution of such measures the former supply, however bountiful, and managed with great husbandry, was already spent; and as no offers towards a peace had yet been made worthy of his acceptance, but, on the contrary the enemy grew insolent from the continuance of the plague, he hoped for such assistance as would enable him to carry on the war, and to defend himself against any new accession of enemies.

The chancellor, at the same time, by the king's command, entered into a more circumstantial narrative of the progress of the war, the victory obtained by the duke, the vast number of prisoners, and of sick and wounded men, a charge that had not been computed, the unreasonable concessions expected by the Dutch, and the menacing inter-position of France.

After thus endeavouring to inflame their zeal for the honour of the king and nation, he next gave an account of many treasonable designs, which, he said, would have been lately carried into execution, had it not been for the vigilance of government, and the general's unwearied industry.

With respect to this latter part of the chancellor's speech, though he was too liable to be imposed upon in such matters, yet it is certain, that at this time there were juster grounds of alarm, and stronger motives for circumspection than at any former period. The emissaries of the Dutch had been very active in fomenting the national discontents, and in urging the republicans and sectaries to an insurrection[14].

Some went abroad, and engaged in their service, and it is likely that others who staid at home, were not better affected to the present government. But the projects of a few desperate individuals were not to be checked, nor the peace and security of the state provided for by increasing the rigours of persecution. This was a fundamental error, which the chancellor did not discover discover till it was too late; and in which, as I have repeatedly observed, his fears and prejudices made him the constant dupe of the duke of York's artful insinuations.

Vote of Fresh Supplies

The king could not expect or wish a fuller concurrence from a parliament than he now found. With very little hesitation they voted the sum of twelve hundred and fifty thousand pounds to be raised by monthly assessments for his majesty's present supply; and upon a hint given them, that a testimony of their gratitude for the victory obtained by the duke of York at the imminent hazard of his life, would please the king very much, they added to their first vote of supply another month's assessment, about fifty thousand pounds, which they desired his majesty to confer as a free-gift upon his royal highness.

Five Mile Act

After this a bill was carried through both houses, though not without some opposition in the lords, for prohibiting all non-conforming preachers, or teachers, under a penalty of forty pounds for each offence, from dwelling or comings unless upon the road, within five miles of any city, town corporate, or borough, or any, place, where they had before officiated[15].

It is remarkable that the chancellor's strongest opponents in the debate on this bill were the earl of Southampton and lord Ashley, the one his sincerest friend, and the other his determined enemy; the one averse to persecution from the strongest motives of conscience as well as policy, and the other very indifferent to all religious considerations, but deeply resenting the rejection of his own scheme to raise money by tolerating papists.

As the courts of law had likewise adjourned the term to Oxford, which brought thither a great concourse of persons from all places, even from London itself, whence the communication of the plague was so much to be dreaded, the parliament confined themselves to the dispatch of necessary business, that they might be dismissed, as soon as possible, to their respective habitations.

But some time had been unavoidably lost upon the bill of supply, not from any reluctance to grant so large a sum, which, as I said before, was voted with the utmost readiness, but from the **insertion of a new clause to alter the mode of issuing money from the exchequer**, which gave rise to much debate, and proved in its consequences so mischievous, that it will not be unfit to set down a particular account of it.

Innovations at The Exchequer

Lord Arlington and fir William Coventry, the latter of whom had been lately knighted, and admitted a member of the privy council and of the select committee, were still unsatisfied with the extraordinary degree of influence and elevation they had attained, unless they could make a total change in the course and method of the king's councils, which was not to be done without the removal of the chancellor and treasurer.

Their malice was most against the chancellor; but they did not as yet think it safe to throw off the disguise of a pretended esteem for him. They began therefore with the treasurer, often insinuating to the king how ill all the business of the exchequer was managed, by reason of the treasurer's continual infirmities, which obliged him to leave the whole to the care of his secretary.

As the king was too easy in making assignments upon his revenue, which the treasurer often found himself obliged to oppose, they said that it was a high arrogance and presumption in any subject to stop the king's signature; and that the want of money, which the treasurer alleged to justify such refusals, proceeded from his own un-skillfulness and inactivity. Lord Ashley had for some time engaged with them in the same intrigue, in the hope of getting the treasurer's place; but when he found that they intended nothing of advantage to him, he ceased to push that matter, though in all other particulars he faded with them.

The two associates, however, soon found another person much more useful to them in promoting their immediate designs against the treasurer. This was Sir George Downing, who having for some years held the office of a teller of the exchequer, and being of a restless brain, learned enough of the nature of the revenue, and of the course of the receipts, to make others, who understood less of it, imagine that he knew the bottom of it, and that the expedients, which should be proposed by him towards a reformation, would be readily adopted.

He was much dissatisfied with the treasurer's giving assignments upon the receipts of the revenue to the bankers, who supplied government with money; by which means, though the

tellers of the exchequer received their just fees, they had not what they would have taken, if the sums so assigned for the repayment of the bankers had passed through their hands.

Motives therefore of immediate interest in his own office, as well as the desire of increasing his consequence with such men as Sir William Coventry and lord Arlington, made him very ready to instruct them in all the pretended miscarriages and oversights of the treasury, and to propose some plausible innovations. "The root of all evil," he said, "**was the unlimited power of the lord treasurer, without whole warrant no money could be issued even at the king's desire,** which seemed a very great incongruity." He added, " that the bankers had secured the treasurer's favour, and thereby engrossed all the money of the state; but that by inserting a clause into the bill of supply, for confining the payments at the exchequer to those persons only, and for those purposes, to which his majesty himself should assign them, all inconveniences would be prevented, the inordinate power of the treasurer diminished, the credit of the exchequer raised, and the king relieved from the humiliating formalities of warrants and privy seals."

Sir William Coventry and lord Arlington were highly delighted with these remarks, so favourable to their wishes, and so likely to be approved by the king. They took Downing to his majesty, and made him enlarge on the many mischiefs that would be remedied, and the vast convenience and advantage that would accrue to his majesty's service by the new method that he had devised.

He even made the king believe, that this project of appropriating all the branches of the revenue to particular purposes, without the treasurer's controul, would quickly raise the reputation of his his majesty's exchequer so high, that all men would deposit their money there, and it would become the best and greatest bank in Europe.

The king was so intoxicated with these notions that no arguments on the other side of the question were even thought of. He never conferred with any body else on the subject; but desired that when the bill for supply should be read a second time and commit Downing should offer his proviso; and because it was foreseen that it might be opposed even by many of the court party, Downing and the other two were authorized privately to assure such persons, that it was offered with the king's approbation.

His majesty resolved also to new model the whole government of his treasury, and not to have a superior officer much longer; but this last intention he communicated to those only who devised the project.

In order to give the intended clause the most plausible, and popular shape, they contrived it so artfully, as if all the money, to be raised by the bill for supply was to be applied to those ends only for which it was granted, and to no other purpose whatsoever, by what authority soever. When this strange proviso was moved for by Downing, upon the second reading of the bill, the solicitor-general and many others were so alarmed at the seeming restriction it imposed even upon the king himself, that they would never have suffered it to be committed, if they had not been assured by Mr. Coventry, that it was brought in by the king's own direction, and for purposes well understood by his majesty.

In the afternoon of the same day the king sent for the solicitor, and forbad him any more to oppose that proviso. He also spoke to some other members of the house upon the subject; and all opposition being now removed, it passed the commons with the correction only of a few absurdities, not foreseen by the framers of it.

Money bills seldom stay long with the lords. The house of commons being the immediate representative of the people, it is presumed, that they best know what the people can bear, or are willing to submit to. Whatever therefore the right or privilege of the lords may be, it would be very ungracious in them to put any stop to the passage of such bills; so that when they are once adjusted by the commons, they pass through the house of peers with the reading twice and formal

commitments, in which any alterations are so rarely made, that the engrossment sent up by the commons is usually the bill itself that is presented to the king for his assent. As soon, therefore, as the bill of supply was sent to the lords, all other acts, which were thought necessary for the present session, having passed both houses while this was preparing, many members of the commons left the town, conceiving that nothing more remained for them to do, and that the king, on passing that act with the others which were ready, would prorogue the parliament out of fear of the sickness.

But the novelty of Downing's clause so surprised the lords, that they thought it worthy of a very serious consideration.

It happened to be in an ill conjuncture, when the terrible cold weather kept the lord treasurer from going out of his chamber for fear of the gout, of which the chancellor had, at the same time, so severe an attack as to be obliged to remain in his bed; and neither of them had received information of this affair. But many of the lords now spoke to them upon the subject; and some went to the king to let him know the prejudice that the new proviso would certainly bring upon him.

Even lord Ashley, who had been privy to the beginning of the scheme, finding himself left out in the most secret part of it, passionately inveighed against it both in public and private, and finding in the fertility of his wit and invention more objections to it than any body else had made, he so alarmed the king with remarks on its destructive consequences, that his majesty consented to have the matter debated in his pretence.

He thereupon ordered a meeting at the chancellor's chamber, where his majesty and his brother were present, as also the chancellor in his bed, the lord treasurer, lords Ashley and Arlington, Sir William Coventry, the attorney and solicitor-general and Sir George Downing, who the king still believed would be able to answer all objections.

The first argument urged against the clause was its novelty, which might lead to unforeseen evils, besides immediately transferring the authority of the treasurer, and of the chancellor of the exchequer to the tellers, who were subordinate officers, and confining the various supplies to such particular purposes, that his majesty would never be master of his own money, nor the ministers of his revenue ever able to make assignments for defraying any casual expenses of what nature soever.

The king had so little reverence for old forms and orders, that the objection of novelty father advanced than obstructed any proposal. He was a great lover of new inventions, and thought them the effects of wit and spirit, and fit to controul the superstitious observance of the dictates of our ancestors. That argument therefore made little impression and as to the want of power in the disposal of his own money, he said, it would be amply recompensed by the establishment of his bank, all discourse against which was supposed to proceed from pure ignorance.

One of the lords having asserted that the imagination of a bank was a mere chimera; **Sir George was let loose to instruct them how easy it was to be established. He talked in an imperious stile of the banks of Amsterdam, Genoa, and Venice;** said they had been settled by the industry of very few persons, when the greatest men thought such attempts impracticable; **and asserted, that his majesty's exchequer would by means of the proposed reform quickly surpass any of those banks in credit, and make England the seat of all the trade in Christendom.**

Then affirming all he said to be demonstration, he wrapped himself according to his custom, in a mist of words, that nobody could see light in, but they, who by often hearing the same chat thought they understood it. He never seemed to consider that the security for the money deposited in any of the banks he mentioned was the republic itself, which must expire before

that security could fail; but that no such confidence could be placed in a king's exchequer, where the sole word of the monarch might cancel every formal provision.

The next objection was against the injustice of the clause, and the ill consequences of that injustice. Money had been borrowed from the bankers upon the credit of this bill, as soon as the first vote had passed in the house of commons for so considerable a supply; and the treasurer had also made assignments upon several branches of the revenue, which had been reserved for the army and the immediate expenses of the king and queen's household, upon presumption that enough would come in from this new act of parliament to replace the sums, which had been thus anticipated,

But by the new proviso especial care was taken, that none of the money to be raised should be applied to the payment of any debt contracted before the royal assent was given to the bill ; so that both the money lent by the bankers upon the promise made to them must be unpaid and unsecured; and the sums also, which had been anticipated upon particular branches of the revenue, and diverted from their original use, not being replaced, would leave the army and household unprovided for.

Besides the bankers had the king's word, and the engagement of the ministers of the revenue, that all new hills of supply should still make good what former securities were not sufficient to do; for by the heavy visitation. of the plague, the assignments, which had been made on the excise and chimney-money, proved very deficient; and in consequence of the decay of trade occasioned by the war and sickness, the assignments on the customs brought in so little money, that the debt to the bankers remained almost as high as it was a yea; before, notwithstanding the liberal grant of the two millions and a half.

When it should be known therefore, that the new supply was exempt from the payment of any of those and the like debts, it would be a great heart-breaking to the bankers, who had not only lent the king all their own property, but the property of many thousands of other men, who would now be deprived of all prospect, or likelihood of being ever repaid.

It was farther urged, that besides the dishonour and injustice of such a breach of faith, nothing could be more evident than that, let the future necessities of the crown be ever so great, there could be no hope of borrowing money, since it would be no longer in the power of the king himself to make any assignment upon new impositions.

The king seemed much troubled at any loss the bankers might sustain; but it was very plain that the contrivers of the project did not care what ruin befell those public creditors, and that his majesty himself was in this instance too regardless of his own credit and character.

Downing broke out into many indecent and bitter invectives against the bankers: he called them cheats, bloodsuckers, extortioners; and asserted that they were the causes of all the king's necessities, and of the want of money throughout the kingdom.

He slighted what was past as sufficiently provided for; and undertook that for the future the king should never more want such dearly purchased assistance; for that this act, he said, would be no sooner past, than money, upon the credit of it, would be poured into the exchequer faster than it could be told. His majesty could not pretend that he was perfectly satisfied with such vague answers to so weighty an objection: he affected to with that the matter had been better consulted, or that some amendments could be made in the bill, without casting out the proviso, the foundation and end of which still pleased him for those reasons, which he would not communicate, and for which, perhaps, more than any other, it ought to have been rejected.

It even appeared that there was no real desire for any material alterations. It was suggested that they might give occasion to more debate; and that, as several of the belt affected members of the

house of commons were gone out of town, when the bill so altered should be sent down thither again, it might be longer detained there than would be convenient for the public, or agreeable to the general impatience for a prorogation.

Upon the whole, his majesty said, that it was better not to run the hazard of delay, but to make such amendments only as would be consented to in both houses as soon as they were read. The bill accordingly met with no farther interruption; and the king having given his assent to it, and to the other acts that had been some days in readiness[16], the parliament was prorogued to April following.

In the course of the debate at the private consultation, the chancellor was prompted by Downing's insolence, and perhaps in some degree by the pain which he then suffered from the gout, to break out into some unusual asperities of language: **he sharply reprehended Downing for his arrogance in undertaking to set such a design on foot, that concerned the whole fabric of the exchequer, in which he filled an inferior place, without first communicating it to his superior officers, and receiving their advice; and told him, " that it was impossible for the king to be well served, whilst fellows of his condition were admitted to speak as much as they had a mind to; and that in the best times such presumption would have been punished with imprisonment by the lords of the council**."

There was no notice taken at the time, nor any reply made to the chancellor's unguarded vehemence. But those who felt that the fling was aimed at them as well as at the teller of the exchequer, found quickly opportunity to incense the king, and to make him believe, that the chancellor's behaviour was a greater affront to his majesty, than to Downing; that a gentleman should undergo such reproach in the king's own presence, for no other reason but having with all humility presented to his majesty an information, which he was led into by the very nature of his office; and having afterwards followed the directions given by the king himself; and that, is this were overlooked, it must terrify all men from giving his majesty any light in his own affairs, so that he would know nothing of his nearest concerns but what his chief ministers should think fit to impart to him.

Feeling themselves upon advantageous ground, they made the most of it; and whatever their wit, sharpened by malice, could suggest, they enforced with warmth, which now appeared the effects of zeal for the king's dignity. All this could not fail of making impression; and though the chancellor, some time after, on the king's expressing a great resentment of his behaviour at the conference, made the best apology he could, yet he had reason to think that the insinuations of his enemies were not wholly forgotten.

The purpose of making the alteration in the government of the treasury was pursued very industriously. The framers of the proviso in the money bill had flattered themselves, that the indignity of the affront thereby put upon the treasurer would have prompted him to give up his staff; and it is probable that he would have done so, if he had not been dissuaded by his friends from gratifying those who withed him out of the way. That plot therefore not succeeding, they persuaded the king to try another expedient; and as they heard that it was the chancellor alone who had prevented the treasurer from resigning, they said, that if his majesty would clearly tell the chancellor how agreeable it would be to him to have the staff given up, there was no doubt but that such an intimation would have the desired effect.

The king pursued their instructions with great delicacy and artifice; but the chancellor pleaded so strongly in favour of his old friend, and engaged the duke of York to become so warm an advocate for his continuance, that the king gave up the point, and the contrivers. of the scheme did not chose to press him any farther at present. They took care, however, to place his majesty's irresoluteness (which they said still enabled the chancellor to impose upon him) in such a point of view, that the king did not think the better of the chancellor or the treasurer, for his receding

at that time from prosecuting what he had so positively resolved to have done; and he promised his favourite advisers to be firmer to his next determination.

Disgrace Incurred By The Earl of Sandwich

Those private intrigues and contentions unhappily prevailed too much in all his majesty's councils, and at a time when the state of public affairs required the utmost unanimity and vigour. The return of the earl of Sandwich from the unsuccessful expedition to Berghen furnished new matter for a different train of cabals.

He had been obliged, for the reasons before explained, to remove out of those northern seas to the coasts of Holland, where there were harbours enough for his whole fleet to ride safe. In the interval receiving intelligence that De Ruyter was passed by for Norway, to convoy home the rich merchant ships, the earl took all the care he could to put himself in the way of their return; but the darkness and length of the nights so favoured them, that they escaped his vigilance, with the loss, however, of a few of their stragglers, and two of their most valuable East-Indiamen, which were surprised and boarded at break of day, when they thought themselves in the middle of their own fleet.

This booty came very opportunely to supply the present necessities of the navy; but it being much less than was expected, the news no sooner arrived at Oxford, but intelligence came with it of many oversights which had been committed, and opportunities lost; otherwise it had been easy to have taken the whole fleet. Sir William Coventry, who had contributed to the preferment of the earl of Sandwich, only that he might cross prince Rupert, received much. intelligence from several officers in the fleet, which he scattered abroad to the earl's prejudice, and was willing that it should be believed, that he had been too wary in avoiding danger.

But these reports, not being countenanced by either the king, or duke, served only to shew the eagerness of the earl's enemies to discredit and injure him; and they could not with for a more favourable opportunity of executing their purpose than his own indiscretion or avarice very soon furnished them with.

It was a constant and a known rule in the admiralty, that when a ship is taken from the enemy, bulk is not to be broken till it be brought into the port, and adjudged lawful prize. It seems. that when the earl's fleet returned to the harbour, the flag-officers applied to him for some reward out of the East-India ships, for the fatigue and danger they had undergone. He wrote a letter to the vice-chamberlain, who was alto treasurer of the navy, to inform the king of their request, which he himself thought very reasonable.

The vice-chamberlain having shewn the letter to the king, returned his majesty's approbation; but before the answer reached the earl, he had executed the design, and distributed as much of the goods to each of the flag officers as were estimated at one thousand pounds, and took to the value of two thousand pounds to himself. This suddenly made such a noise and outcry as if all the ships had been plundered by the seamen; and they again cried out as much that no care was taken of them, but all given to the flag officers.

The general, who had nothing like kindness for the earl of Sandwich, and thought his services very much overrated by the king at the restoration, received notice of this late transaction, before it reached Oxford. Under the shew of great care for every part of the public service, but in truth from private animosity, he sent orders to all the port-towns to seize upon goods, which were brought in shallops from the fleet; and, at the fame time, wrote to Oxford, aggravating all the ill consequences of the earl's proceeding, which, he said, would spoil the sale of what remained of those ships, since the East-India company, who probably would have been the best chapmen, would not now be forward to buy, since so much was already disposed of to other hands, as would spoil the market.

The king was justly displeased with the earl's precipitancy. Why had his majesty's approbation been desired, when the earl resolved to do the thing, before he could receive an answer? The king was now glad, that the earl had not waited for the answer, because he would then have been more excusable. But the duke, who had been constantly kind to the earl, was offended in the highest degree, and thought himself injured and affronted beyond any precedent. His advice, as the superior officer, ought to have been asked; and for the earl to assume the rewarding of officers, by his own authority, was to defraud and rob him of his proper right and jurisdiction.

Sir William Coventry had now full sea room to give vent to all his passions, and to incense the duke, who wanted no farther incitement. Hints were thrown out, that if the earl's conduct proceeded from covetousness, it was not likely that it could be satisfied with so little, and therefore it might be fairly presumed, that, though the officers perhaps received no more than the value of one thousand pounds each, yet the earl himself would not be contented with so little as two thousand but would have taken much more, which ought to be. inquired into with the greatest strictness.

Every thing which had been said before of his having neglected many occasions of advantage over the enemy, and of not pursuing them far enough, were now renewed; and there were great underhand endeavours that the house of commons might be inflamed with this late misdemeanour, and present it to the house of lords, as sit to be examined and brought to judgment before that tribunal.

They, who with all the malice imaginable endeavoured to kindle this fire, persuaded the king and the duke, that by their sole activity and interest it was prevented for that time, because the session was too short, and all necessary evidence could not be soon produced at Oxford; but that as soon as the plague should cease to such a degree in London, that the parliament might assemble there, it would be impossible to restrain the house of commons from pursuing that inquiry.

The earl, who was not without information of the efforts and designs of his enemies at Oxford, repaired thither, as loon as his absence from the fleet could be dispensed with; and gave so clear and full an account of his conduct while at lea, that both the king and duke thought him undeserving of any imputation of negligence or inadvertency; but they expressed at the same time their strong disapprobation of his breaking bulk, and of all the circumstances that attended it. He made an ingenuous acknowledgment of his fault; pressed his hearty sorrow for it; and humbly begged pardon.

As he was permitted to return to the fleet, it is probable that the matter might have been overlooked, if he had not such powerful enemies. Sir William Coventry persuaded the duke and lord Arlington made the king believe, that the house of commons was determined to fall severely upon the earl at the next meeting, which, if he were at that time in the command of the fleet would be a very great dishonour to the king; and that there was no way to preserve him but by dismissing him from that charge, since it would be interpreted as inflicted on him by the king for his crime, and so might stop any farther prosecution for the same offence.

The general also was not remiss in promoting as far as possible by all his interest the earl's disgrace. The warrants he had issued for seizing all goods that were brought from the fleet occasioned a direct struggle for authority between him and the earl, as the latter wanted to have an officer of the customs at Lynn punished for attempting to stop a shallop full of his goods with circumstances of peculiar insult ; while the former justified the officer for obeying and executing his warrant.

In short the combination against the earl was so irresistible, that the king resolved remove him from the command of the fleet; but endeavoured to lessen the uneasiness he might feel on that account by giving him another honourable appointment as his majesty's embassador extraordinary to the court of Spain.

Sir Richard Fanshaw was to be recalled from that court for having signed a treaty which his majesty did not approve of; and as soon as the matter was settled with respect to the earl, the king declared his resolution in council to send him in, quality of embassador extraordinary to Madrid, as well to correct and amend the mistakes and errors in the late treaty, as to mediate a peace between Spain and Portugal, which upon the death of the king of Spain would be in some respects more practicable.

Sir Robert Southwell, one of the clerks os the council, was also sent envoy into Portugal, that the earl might the better know the inclination of that court; and the instructions necessary to both those ends were to be prepared with all possible dispatch. Aster the designation of the earl of Sandwich was published, prince Rupert and the Duke of Albemarle were appointed joint commanders in chief of the fleet for the next expedition.

Menaces and Departure of The French Embassadors

The late damage sustained by the Dutch, particularly in the loss of their two East-India ships, inflamed them exceedingly. De Witt made grievous complaints to France of its breach of faith in so long delaying the assistance stipulated by treaty, and thereby giving the enemy every advantage at the most critical juncture.

He also very artfully suggested, that his own credit with the States depended upon the immediate declaration of France in their favour, without which the Orange faction would soon give the law, and the king of England become in reality master in Holland. De Witt's remonstrances were not without effect. The French embassadors received instructions once more to make a lively instance to his majesty, that he would declare what he meant to insist upon in order to a peace, which if he refused to do, they should take their leaves and return home immediately.

In this audience they spoke with unusual earnestness : they complained of the intolerable injuries done to the subjects of France by the king's ships, and privateers acting under his authority, which, without any distinction, seized upon all that came in their way; and that, when application was made to the admiralty, or to the lords commissioners, the sufferers could procure no justice, and were obliged to such an attendance and expence, that what they sued for did not prove of value to satisfy the charge; and if after a long solicitation, they did at last procure a sentence for the redelivery of what had been taken from them, when they hoped to enjoy the benefit of this just sentence by the execution, they found their goods embezzled in the port, or plundered by the seamen, so that the owner, had rarely a third part of their property restored to them.

By such violence and unjust proceeding, the embassadors said, the French merchants had lost near five hundred thousand pistols, which their matter resented, and looked upon as a great indignity to himself, but which he had hitherto borne, in hope that the grievance would have been removed by putting an end to the war.

They urged urged it as an argument of their master's friendship for the king, that notwithstanding a defensive treaty so long sine entered into with the Dutch, by which he was obliged to assist them when attacked, he had as yet avoided taking an active part in their favour; but that after their defeat in the summer, and another blow lately sustained, it was not possible for him to defer it any longer, they concluded with very earnest persuasions that his majesty would consent to such a peace as should appear reasonable to their master, who could not but be very just to his majesty, and wished it might be considered, how impossible it was for England, besides the dreadful ravages of the plague, to sustain the arms of France in conjunction with those of Holland, and when possibly some other prince might also join them.

The charge of the depredations made upon the French merchants was the only article in this representation, which had the least truth in it; and even in that respect the conduct of the English admitted of some excuse; for at the beginning of the war it was a common practice with the

French to undertake to convey in their own ships into Holland wine and other goods bought and paid for in France by the Dutch; and when that was once discovered, it is no wonder that our seaman should often seize on vessels, which were not liable to the same reproach.

As to the treaty, which the embassadors called .a defensive one, but was in truth offensive also, the French king's perfidy was very manifest, and corresponded exactly with the character given of his nation fourteen hundred years since:–

"Galli sidenti sidem fregerunt"

His secret endeavours to unite Denmark again to the Dutch, and to dissuade the bishop of Munster from prosecuting his enterprise against the States (in both which he at length succeeded) were well known; as also that he had contributed to the composing of the late distractions in Holland, and to the support of the power and credit of De Witt, who was the soul of the war; and that he had sent him one hundred thousand pistoles, which greatly sacilitated the equipment of the last fleet under De Ruyter.

The unusual efforts lately made by the French to establish a foreign trade excited in like manner much jealousy; and besides the indignity of consenting to make those arbitrators, who had already shewn themselves to be parties in the dispute, it was justly to be seared, that where the decision was left to them, they would imitate the infamous Roman precedent of adjudging that to themselves, which was in difference between their neighbours. These confederations determined the king to dismiss the embassadors with just complaints of their master's want of friendship and sincerity.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. Mr Echard thinks the Chancellor's indisposition at this time was rather political than real, on account of his being utterly against the war. But the plausibility of such conjecture will vanish, when we find that the votes of 2,000,000 1/2 for the support of the war was recommended this very session by the Chancellor and treasurer only, and obtained by their uncommon excursions and address. Those two friends had, indeed, at first endeavoured to dissuade the King from so unjust and so impolitic a war; but as soon as it was determined upon, and a blow struck, none of those, who promoted it, contributed so much to the carrying it on, as the former two. This may seem strange, but it is very clearly accounted for in page 72 of the first volume, where the author takes notice of the following remarkable trait in the Chancellor's character. "Such was his sense of official duty, that if any measure was resolved upon in the Cabinet, however contrary to his opinion and advice, he thought himself bound afterwards to support it in Parliament with the utmost strenuousness." This, however, was a very weak excuse for exerting all his influence in the support of measures reprobated by his own judgement, and pregnant with ruin to his country.

2. This vote was communicated to the city by deputation of six Lords and 12 commoners.

3. At the king's desire, the old and popular method of levying the grants of parliament by subsidies was laid aside; and that of assessments, which first took its rife from the exigencies of the civil war, was adopted. During this session also, the clerical body gave up the expensive privilege of taxing themselves, and submitted to the assessments of parliament in common with the laity.

4. Cromwell, notwithstanding the success of his intrigues to obtain the supreme power, was far from possessing any depth, or extent of political knowledge. He was always the dupe of French artifice, and was easily persuaded by the subtle Mazarin to make war upon Spain, soon after his advancement to the protectorship. Towards the close of the year 1654, he sent out a fleet of thirty ships under Penn, with about five thousand soldiers commanded by Venables. Their orders, which were sealed, and to be opened at a certain latitude, contained very circumstantial directions

for the attack of St. Domingo, the capital of the Spanish settlement in Hispaniola. At the approach of the English fleet, the Spaniards abandoned the town; but Venables, instead landing his troops, according to his instructions, within a mile of the place, disembarked them ten leagues more to the westward. This gave the inhabitants time to recover from their first consternation. They returned to the town, and put it in a posture of defence. The English troops, when they approached Domingo, were so fatigued by a long march, and by the excessive heat, besides the want of all necessary refreshments, that they were easily repulsed, and forced with considerable loss to retreat, to their ships. But before their return home, they took the island of Jamaica, which probably softened in some small degree the violence of Cromwell's indignation and resentment.

5. See Page 45.

6. see page 4.

7. Mrs. Macauley makes the following reflection on this dreadful calamity: "Though the presumption of calling the misfortunes, to which all men are liable, the judgments of an offended God, is very uncharitable, irreligious, and unbecoming the philosophic wisdom of an historian, yet it is natural to observe, that as this heavy visitation, which the English severely experienced in the beginning of the late king's reign, and from which they had been almost totally free during the administration of the Long Parliament, so strongly contradicted the assertions of God's peculiar countenance to the present frame of government, and the conduct of public affairs, that it began to make the orthodox to doubt, whether founding titles were the preferable objects of divine favour; and whether piety, justice law, order, and disinterested affection to the commonweal were not at least as acceptable to the purity of the deity, as lewdness oppression, profaneness, and self-idolatry."

8. The declaration was dated the twenty-second of February, but not published till the second of March.

9. France was at this time playing a double game with Holland and England; and under the shew of friendly mediation, only aimed at widening the breach between both, that they might so far exhaust themselves in a war, as to render them incapable of any opposition to the ambitious designs of Lewis. It appears from the count d'Estrade's negotiations, that the French monarch was now preparing for the seizure of Flanders, "that lasting beauty," to use sir William Temple's metaphor, "for which he had an incurable passion; but as she was not kind enough to consent to his desires, he meditated to commit a rape upon her." In this deign he was for force time checked by the fear, as sir William says, "that England and Holland might agree to rescue her, whenever they should hear her cry out for help." It was therefore his immediate interest to see them both considerably weakened, before he declared himself on either side. Even when he pretended to assist the Dutch, he made them subservient to his own purposes: he got ships of war built for him in Holland at a cheap rate: he supplied himself from thence with military stores and ammunition: in a word, he said the foundation of that naval force, with which he hoped soon to give the law to maritime states. Of his treachery to both nations in the course of the war, and his particular baseness to England, towards the close of it, we !hall soon meet with remarkable instances.

10. By this resolution he gave the Holland and Zealand squadrons an opportunity of joining ; and afterwards of intercepting the English Hamburgh fleet.

11. The English fleet consisted of one hundred and fourteen sail, besides fire-ships and ketches ; and the two Dutch squadrons were composed of one hundred and twenty-one sail, but with a smaller number of fire-ships and ketches than the English.

12. According to the above relation of Brounker's behaviour during the first day's fight, and the daring artifice of his directions to the master of the ship at night, the escape of the enemy appears

to be chiefly owing to his cowardice; but this stigma is fixed upon the duke himself in bishop Burnet's account of the same transaction. We shall give it in his own words, that the reader may be enabled to compare both narratives, and then form his opinion of their respective degrees of evidence, or probability. "After the fight," says the bishop, "a council of war was called to concert the method of action, when they should come up with them. In that council, Penn, who commanded under the duke, happened to say, that they must prepare for hotter work in the next engagement: he knew well the courage of the Dutch was never so high as when they were desperate. The earl of Montague, who was then a volunteer, and one of the duke's court, said to me, it was very visible that made an impression: and all the duke's domestics said, he had got honour enough: why should he venture a second time? The duchess had ago given a strict charge to all the duke's servants to do all they could to hinder him to engage too far. When matters were settled, they went to sleep; and the duke ordered a call to be given him when they should get up to the Dutch fleet. It is not known what passed between the duke and Brounker, who was of his bedchamber, and was then in waiting; but he came to Penn, as from the duke, and said, the duke ordered the sail to be slackened. Penn was struck with the order, but did not go to argue the matter with the duke himself, as he ought to have done, but obeyed it. When the duke had slept, he, upon, his waking, went out upon the quarter-deck, and seemed amazed to see the sails slackened, and that thereby all hope of overtaking the Dutch was lost. He questioned Penn upon it. Penn put it upon Brounker, who said nothing. The duke denied he had given any such order; but he neither punished Brounker for Carrying it, nor Penn for obeying it. He indeed put Brounker Out of his service; and it was said, that he durst do no more, because Brounker was so much in the king's favour, and in the mistress's. Penn was more in the duke's favour aster that, than ever before, which he continued to his son after him, though a Quaker; and it was thought, that all that favour was to oblige him to keep the secret. Lord Montague did believe, that the duke was struck, seeing the earl of Falmouth, the king's favourite, and two other persons of quality killed very near him; and that he had no mind to engage again; and that Penn was privately with him. If Brounker was so much in fault as he seemed to be, it was thought the duke, in the passion that this must have raised in him, would have proceeded to greater extremities, and not have acted with so much phlegm."

13. France way to pay three hundred thousand florins annually, while the war lasted.

14. Soon after the commencement of the rupture, the Dutch sent an invitation to general Ludlow to repair to Holland, with the offer of being put at the head of a body of troops, which, with the concurrence of the party in England, might be sufficient to restore the Commonwealth: but this truly great man refused to enter into any treaty of the kind, unless thy Dutch would give satisfaction for the treachery they had been guilty of, in delivering up Okey, Corbet, and Barkstead at the solicitation of the perfidious Downing. The English court, about the same time, suspecting that this general would enter into measures with the Dutch, sent four persons into Switzerland to assassinate him; but the intent was defeated by his withdrawing from Vevey, the usual place of his residence, and keeping himself for some time concealed.

15. After the Act of Uniformity, and the Act against Conventicles, this Five-mile Act, as it was called, seemed to be the last step in the climax of intolerance; for to deprive men of the means of subsistence implies more deliberate cruelty, though it does pretended holy orders, who had not declared their assent and consent to the Book of Common Prayer, according to the **Act of Uniformity**, and did not take and subscribe the oath of non-resistance therein contained; together with all such as should take upon them to preach in any conventicle, or meeting for exercise of religion contrary to law, were not (unless only in passing the road) to come, or be within five miles of any city, town corporate, or borough that sends burgesses to parliament; nor within five miles of any place where they had officiated, or taken upon them to preach; upon the pain of forfeiting forty pounds for such offence: Nor was any person restrained, or who should not take the said oath, and frequent divine service, to teach any school, or take any boarders or tablers that were taught by any other, on pain like-wise of forfeiting forty pounds: And two justices,

upon oath made of any offence against the act, were to commit the offender for six months, without bail or mainprise:" Is it not astonishing that so infamous an act, framed and passed by about one hundred of Charles the second's menial servants, for of such the house of commons at Oxford was almost wholly composed, should be still suffered to disgrace our statute-book! A party of those ignorant and corrupt creatures had even formed the process of imposing upon the whole nation the necessity of perjuring themselves, by making every subject swear, "that it was not lawful, upon any pretence whatsoever, to take arms against the king, or against those that were commissioned by him;" and they were so near carrying this point, that upon the question, the bill they had brought in for the purpose was only rejected by three voices.

16. Besides those above-mentioned, and the continuation of the former a& for restraining the liberty of the press, the parliament had also prepared a bill for attainting such of his majesty's subjects as were engaged in the Dutch service, if they did not appear upon a day prefixed, after notice by the king's proclamation; but even in this they shewed a greater desire to oblige the king, than to promote the public service; for they left entirely to his majesty the nomination of any persons who might be obnoxious to him, and who, indeed, were particularly aimed at in this bill of attainder.

Cornelis de Witt as victor during the 2nd War with the English

Chapter III

Gloomy prospect at the opening of the new year – The defeat of the Bishop of Munster's enterprise – Correspondence and entered into with the Orange faction in Holland – Discovery of the conspiracy against De Witt – Decrease of the plague – Profligacy and extravagance of the court – Lady Castlemaine's influence – The King wholly governed by an unprincipled junto – Separation of the fleet – Desperate conflicts at sea – Another naval engagement – De Ruyter's well conducted retreat – Fatal blow given to the Dutch commerce – The fleets parted by a storm – Fire of London - Transient hope of reform at court – Design to suppress coffee Bourses – State of the public exigencies at the re-meeting of Parliament – Resolutions against the papists – Delay of the bill of supply – Alarm excited at Court by a Bill for the appointment of commissioners of accounts – Dispute occasioned by a clause in the Poll Bill – Duke of Buckingham's cabal – Violent debates on the Bill against the importation of Irish cattle – Curious circumstances of a challenge – Further acts of indecency and outrage – Charitable donation of 30,000 Irish beeves rejected – Lord Mordant's impeachment – The Chancellor renders himself very obnoxious to the Commons – The bill supply passed at length – Impossibility of providing a fleet to face the enemy – Humiliating and dangerous situation of England – Various efforts to bring about a peace – Alternative proposed by France – Ambassadors sent by all parties to Breda – Death of the Lord treasurer – His office put into commission – Dutch fleet enters the Thames – Debates in Council – Peace concluded

Gloomy prospect that the opening of the new year 1616

HE prospect of national affairs, at the commencement of the new year, was very gloomy and as the year advanced, the clouds seemed to grow thicker and heavier. The king of France, whose friendship his majesty had endeavoured to cultivate with the utmost assiduity, published, on the nineteenth of January, a declaration of war against England, and seized upon some English property in his ports with circumstances of unusual injustice.

But neither those acts of ingratitude and baseness nor the great naval preparations he was making, nor the visible assistance of force which he sent to the Dutch, excited so much alarm, or did so much injury, as his secret and invisible intrigues. I have already mentioned their pernicious effects in Denmark. Monsieur Pompon had also been sent to Sweden, with a large sum of money, to retain that country in its dependence on France: the emperor of Germany was diverted by the fame influence from attending to some very inviting offers made him by our court[1]; and to crown the whole of' those pernicious machinations, the bishop of

Munster was forced to relinquish an enterprise, from which immense advantages had been expected.

The Defeat of The Bishop of Munster's Enterprise

It hath been before observed, that when the bishop first thought of making war upon Holland, he acquainted the king of France with his intentions, and received such an answer as made him very confident he should meet with no obstruction from thence.

That confidence was one of the strongest reasons for the king's concluding the treaty, and advancing great sums of money to the bishop upon his promise and engagement, that he would fix himself with his army within the territories of the States General before the end of the winter; and that against the spring, when the king's fleet should be ready for sea, he would at the same time march with twenty thousand foot, and five thousand horse, into the heart of their country, to cause a diversion of the enemy by land, and so promote the king's maritime operations.

But the French ministry, from the first knowledge they had of his purpose, and before their declaration on the behalf of the Dutch, sent secretly to the neighbouring princes not to join the bishop in an undertaking, to which many of them were otherwise very strongly inclined. The elector of Brandenburg, who in expectation of recovering Wesel and other towns then possessed by Holland, had given hopes to the bishop of a powerful assistance, was now persuaded totally to decline any conjunction with him, upon a promise that he should find his own account better from the friendship of France.

The dukes of Lunenburg, in like manner, who had abundant argument of quarrel with Holland, and who had made the bishop believe that they would join him, and had made levies of soldiers for that purpose, were prevailed upon by the same way not only to desist from helping the bishop, but to declare that they would oppose him, and serve the Dutch with all their forces, if he pursued his hostile designs.

An envoy was even sent to the bishop himself, offering the mediation and interposition of France between him and the Dutch; with some menaces in case of his rejecting it; and as the bishop still continued to gather troops, and to give new commissions for enlisting men in different parts of Germany, the princes, who permitted those levies, were told, that if they thus connived at and assisted, instead of preventing the incursion of the bishop of Munster, they would involve the empire in a war.

All this however did not intimidate the bishop: he drew his forces together; and having got permission from the marquis of Castel Rodrigo, then governor of Flanders, to make levies in those provinces, without noise or avowing it, he marched with his army into the dominions of the States. Prince Maurice drew together as many of the Dutch troops as could be spared out of the different garrisons, in order to check the bishop's progress; but finding in some light skirmishes, that the firmness of his men was not to be depended upon, he cautiously avoided a general engagement.

The bishop therefore advanced boldly; took a place or two in the very fight of the enemy; and, having gained an advantageous situation, began to fasten himself in full assurance of increasing his army, in spite of all discouragements, before the spring.

The king of France, perceiving that nothing but superior force could make the bishop desist, demanded of the governor of Flanders a licence for the passage of some troops through such a part of the provinces. The governor dared not deny him, having positive orders from his court to be very careful that no disgust, or pretence for a quarrel should be given to France. Upon this permission the French troops marched into Flanders; and in the first place, they fell upon the levies made for the bishop, whether in their way, or out of their way, killing some, and dispersing

the rest, or taking them prisoners. Then joining the army under Prince Maurice, by the time the bishop had notice of the late disaster, they speedily advanced upon his quarters and beat some of his troops. The poor bishop, finding himself defected by the princes, who with great promises had encouraged his enterprise[2], was obliged to submit; and even heartbroken signed a treaty with the French, who then were careful enough of his honour and interest in the conditions with the Dutch, as of an ally, whole services they might want in another conjuncture,

The news of this treaty, which was signed at Cleves on the eighteenth of April, blasted the king's fondest hopes, and disconcerted all his matures. It was, indeed, the most sensible blow, except the plague, that had been felt from the beginning of the war. Some of his majesty's best advisers, who never liked his excessive desire of securing the friendship of France, availed themselves of this late event, to inflame his resentment against that court, and to urge him to attempt the effecting of a separate peace with Holland, which they had reason to believe would not be found impossible.

It was well known that the States were far from being satisfied with the conduct of the French, who had amused them with the positive promise of immediate assistance at the beginning of the war; and yet, under the pretence of mediating a peace, looked on very unconcernedly, or rather well pleated to see them beaten, and their own people ready to rise against the government. The designs of the French upon Flanders were so easily penetrated as must have given the States another just occasion of jealousy.

That country could not defend itself with its own forces; and it was natural to suppose that the king of France depended upon this war between England and Holland, as what must hinder both these nations from giving it any assistance. Then the Dutch might well judge what their own portion must be, when that screen was removed, which was their best security against so formidable a neighbour. These rational presumptions of the facility of a separate peace were farther confirmed by secret intelligence through a channel lately opened, of which it is necessary to take some farther notice.

Correspondence and Entered into With the Orange Faction in Holland

There was one Buat, a native of France, who by his military services in Holland had so far gained the esteem of the late prince of Orange, as to be appointed captain of his horse-guards. Having married a. Dutch lady of fortune and considerable interest, he was continued, after the prince's death, in the command of the same troop, which was still preserved for a guard to the States.

Notwithstanding the division of parties, and his known attachment to the house of Orange, he was generally beloved as a brave, honest, and sensible man; and though immoderately given to wine, yet that being the disease, or rather the health of the country, it made him not the worse thought of. He was well known to the king, and much esteemed by him; and, after his majesty's return, made a journey into England to congratulate him on his restoration, and to renew those processions of affection and duty, which he had often made to his majesty when abroad.

As soon as the war broke out, Butt was very unreserved in his invectives against the promoters of it; and after the consternation occasioned by the first battle, he cultivated as much as he could the ill humours of all, how mutinous soever, who were most clamorous for peace. But so far from blaming De Witt upon those occasions, he warmly defended the pensionary, whom he believed to have been reluctantly engaged in the war, and who, in frequent conversations with Buat, had declared his readiness to concur in any thing which might lead to an accommodation.

De Witt had his spies every where: he knew well Buat's intimacy with all the Orange faction, and that in every company he vehemently declaimed against the continuance of the war; but that he also did constantly and confidently vindicate the pensionary from many imputations in the presence of those who were least pleased with such language. De Witt therefore looked upon

him as his friend, and one that might by his interest and credit divert some of that popular odium and malice, which are not to be despised in a republic.

He renewed to Buat his former processions of his desire of peace, and among other reasons for it, mentioned his jealousy of the French, who, he said, though they had at last declared in favour of the Dutch, yet did so with a view only of drawing ,England into some conditions, which might facilitate their own enterprise upon Flanders. This, he added, both nations were concerned to prevent by all the ways possible, and none was so likely as a peace, which would immediately make each of them solicitous for their own interest.

But he could not openly declare these sentiments, as that would slacken all the preparations for war, the expediting of which would most advance an honourable treaty. Buat then pointing out his intimacy with several persons of credit in the English court, and with lord Arlington, the secretary, in particular, offered to write in his own name to that lord, barely to testify his good wishes for a peace between the two nations, without making any other mention of De Witt, than that he had reason to believe the grand pensionary (in whose good opinion he had the honour to be known to have some place) would not be unwilling to promote any good overture that should be made. De Witt acquiesced in the proposal, on condition of first seeing all the letters that should be sent, and of having the answers constantly brought to him.

Upon this encouragement Buat began his correspondence with lord Arlington; but what he wrote was with so much wariness, being in fact indicated by the pensionary, that it could draw no other answers from the secretary but in the same stile, with expressions of his majesty's define of peace and esteem of De Witt, and as if he expected some overtures to arise from thence. This intelligence had not been long on foot, before Bust began to suspect De Witt's sincerity, and that he was not so well inclined to peace as he pretended to be.

The pensionary's countenance was not so open as usual he grew less jealous of the French, and less apprehensive of the mutinous spirit of his own countrymen, as he found them more composed, and a greater concurrence in making all things ready for the fleet.

These observations Buat imparted to his bosom friends of the Orange party, with whom he was now ready to concur in fiercer counsels, how to compass a peace in spite of the pensionary, by the majority of votes in the States, and by inflaming the discontents of the people, and raising tumults, for the accidental suppression whereof there were no other forces in view than those horse-guards commanded by Buat himself. He began to concert measures accordingly.

Desirous, however, of still retaining the advantage he had by De Witt's knowledge of his correspondence with England, he shewed him a letter received from lord Arlington, who pressed to be informed of the particulars that would dispose the States to a separate peace, and who had also sent a cipher for the more free and safe communication; which cipher was deposited with all seeming confidence in De Witt's hands. But the pensionary was not so easily imposed upon: he heard that Buat displayed less zeal in his defence than formerly: he grew jealous of him; and therefore dictated such an answer to lord Arlington's last letter as he hoped would put an end to the correspondence.

It required no very great. sagacity in Buat to perceive so manifest a disposition in the pensionary to break off all farther advances towards a treaty. He therefore dispatched a trusty friend, one Silvius, a servant to the late princess royal, and well known to the king, with a full account of the state of the councils at the Hague, and his discovery that De Witt did not desire a peace, nor would consent to it, but upon very unreasonable terms, he then expressed the utmost confidence from his intimacy with many persons of the greatest power, that if his majesty would send to the States General, at their next meeting, a message, the substance of which he offered, blending some overtures for a peace with the interest of the young prince of Orange, it would be supported by so powerful a party, and so few would adhere to De Witt, that a treaty could not be prevented,

even though France should protest against it. He sent likewise at the fame time, and by the same person, another cipher to lord Arlington, with direction that in such letters as were intended for the view of the pensionary the former cipher should be used; and in the other letters, which were to be concealed from him, and which were for the most part to contain intelligence. and advice against him, the latter cipher was to be employed.

In addition to those first assurances, Silvius after his arrival in England, received by every post farther accounts of the progress made by Buat and. his friends, who thought their party so much to increase, that they did not seem to dread an open struggle. As the king had no minister at the Hague to present such a message to the States, the way proposed by Buat was, that he himself should at the proper time deliver it to De Witt, who durst not conceal it; and if he should, there would be web enough found to publish it to his reproach; nor could he take any advantage of Buat for his correspondence with their enemies, because it had been entered into with his approbation.

But for the better security in sending the proposed message, and the better information of all the persons engaged, it was resolved by his majesty, at a meeting of the select committee, that Silvius should return; and, if Buat thought fit to decline the delivery of the king's letter, and no better way could be found for that purpose, that Silvius might present it in the manner his friends there should direct, and avow his having been at London to solicit his own pretences since the death of the princess his mistress, and that he had received the letter from the king's own hand.

This plan, though laid with such presumptions of success, was defeated by a fatal oversight of Buat's in one of his drunken fits.

Discovery of The Conspiracy Against De Witt

After Silvius's departure, letters passed as usual between Buat and lord Arlington for two or three post; and one day Buat, after having made too free with the bottle in the company of his jovial friends, happened to meet De Witt, and being asked, when he had any letter from England, and how affairs went there, he suddenly answered, that he had just received one, which he had not yet deciphered.

He thereupon took a letter out of his pocket, and casting his eyes (which were never good, and now worse by the effect of drinking). upon the superscription, he gave it to the pensionary, and said he would go with him, that they might decipher it together, according to custom.

But he had delivered the wrong letter; and De Witt, perceiving by a single glance that it was not the usual cipher, desired Buat to walk before, and he would presently overtake him, after he had spoken a few words at a house in his way.

The pensionary stopped just to give an order for immediately arresting Buat, and searching his house, to secure his cabinet and all his papers. The other cipher was quickly found, and many letters, which discovered the whole plot. A court of justice was speedily erected; and in three days, according to the expedition used in such cases, Buat loft his head upon a scaffold.

Silvius, who was then upon his journey, hearing that Buat was arrested, did not wait to learn farther particulars, but made his escape back. The reft of the knot, thus broken, dispersed themselves: the burgomaster of Rotterdam, and two or three others of note made all the haste they could into England.

Some thought themselves secure in Antwerp and other parts of Flanders: some were seized upon within the domains of the States, and imprisoned but for want of clear proofs, few of them were put to death. The troop of horse-guards, of which Buat had the command, were reformed. They had before been permitted to wear the livery and to bear the name of the prince of Orange's guard,

though their duty was to attend the States. But their name and uniform were now changed; nor were they permitted to shew the smallest outward reverence for the young prince, whose hopes by this accident were almost extinguished. De Witt stood firmer upon his feet than ever, and directed all preparations for the war without controul.

All present expectations in England vanished, while the pensionary informed France of the dangers to which he had been exposed on account of his attachment to that court, and of the great offers which had been made him, if he would have deserted its interest.

Decrease of The Plague

From this view of our disappointments abroad, it is time to turn our attention to the state of things at home. After Christmas the extreme malignity of the plague began to abate. During the month of February the weather was as it could be wished, deep snow and severe frost, which probably stopped the spreading of the contagion, though it put an end to those that were already infected, the number of the dead being for a week or two very little diminished.

But in March this dreadful calamity gradually disappeared, after having swept away above a hundred thousand persons. For though the bills of mortality did not make the number amount to fourscore thousand, yet those who could compute very well, did not ,think that it would be an extravagant calculation to suppose that almost double that number had been carried off.

The frequent death of the clerks and sextons of parishes hindered the exact account of every week; and what made it still more uncertain was the vast number of persons, who were buried in fields and gardens, whereof no church-warden, or other officers had notice.

Such dreadful ravages necessarily obstructed dispatch in every part of the public service, but were more particularly felt in fitting out the fleet. So many seamen had died of the plague, Stepney and the places adjacent, which were their common habitations, being almost depopulated, that after other difficulties were removed, it seemed almost impossible to procure sailors and mariners enough.

Warrants were issued for pressing watermen, and stripping all merchant ships; which turned not so much to benefit one way, as it did to loss another way. Yet, notwithstanding every effort that could be used, it was near the middle of May, before the fleet was manned and completely equipped for sea.

Profligacy and Extravagance of The Court

When the parliament at Oxford was prorogued, it was to a day in April; but the king had reason to believe that they would not so soon be in good humour enough to give more money, which was the principal end of calling them together. His majesty therefore thought fit to dispense with their attendance at that time, and caused them to be prorogued to the twentieth of September following.

In the mean time the court abounded in all sorts of excesses. There had been some hope during the abode at Oxford that the queen was with child; and whilst that hope lasted, the king seemed to impose some restraint on his inordinate appetites and pleasures. Several persons were then inclined to believe, that if he had a child by his lawful wife, it might have contributed to break off many fatal connections, and to put an end to those extravagant expenses of money and time, which disturbed and corrupted his nature, and which exposed him to the temptations of those, who had all the traps and snares to catch and detain him.

The imagination of -the queen's breeding was one cause of her stay at Oxford, and her slay there was the longer, because the miscarried, when she intended to begin her journey. The doctors

declared, that it was a real miscarriage ripe enough to make a judgment of the sex. Yet some of the women, who had more credit with the king, assured him that it was only a false conception, and that the had not been at all with child; and though his majesty had, upon a former occasion, declared to the queen his mother and others, that upon his own knowledge her majesty had miscarried of a son, yet he suffered himself now to be so far imposed upon by those ladies, that he positively believed that the never had been, and never could be with child.

From that time he took little pleasure in her conversation, and indulged himself without the least restraint in such dissolute company, as drove every thing serious out of his thoughts.

Lady Castlemain’s Influence

Lady Castlemaine, who had never declined in favour, was now greater in power than ever. She was with child again, and well enough contented that his majesty should entertain an amour with another lady, whose friendship she even courted, perhaps out of confidence, that the king would never prevail upon the other lady, who was known to be a person of great modesty and discretion[3]

Her own great object was to secure the king's esteem by suck teeming compliance, and to get a good provision for herself and children. In solicitations of this kind she was never backward: she procured round sums of money out of the privy purse, where she had placed Mr. May, and other assignments in other names, so as to be less taken notice of, though in great proportions. Yet all amounted to little more than to pay her debts, (which the had in a few years contracted to an inconceivable greatness) and to defray her constant expenses, which were almost boundless, in coaches and horses, clothes and jewels, without any thing of generosity, or gratifying any of her family, or so much as satisfying any of her father's creditors, some of whom were very clamorous.

The Wholly Governed by an Unprincipled Janto

Her name was not used in any suits for the grant of lands in this country, because she thought the chancellor and treasurer might oppose such grants, and she did not wish to have any occasion to try the kindness of either of them; and so all the suits she made of that kind were with reference to Ireland, where they had no title to obstruct, nor any natural opportunity of knowing what was granted: in that kingdom, therefore, the procured the settlement of some very valuable estates upon herself and her children.

But all the mischief, however great, was not confined to this shameful waste of the public resources, at a time when the exigencies of the state should have suggested the strictest economy. The most faithful servants of the crown, whose known virtues and propriety of conduct were a reproach to the debauchery and riot of, the court, became the constant butts of ridicule and satire at the nightly meetings.

Lady Castlemaine herself was, indeed, very wary in her attempts to lessen the credit of those ministers whom she hated most; but the was ably served by the duke of Buckingham, and by the lords Ashley and Arlington, who at once gratified her resentment, and promoted their own ambitious designs.

The method they took in order to ruin any person, who was obnoxious to them, was to begin with raising a laugh at his expense by the mimicry, or rather distortion of all his words and gestures. After frequently entertaining the king with these buffooneries, and placing the foibles of whoever they meant to depreciate in a ridiculous light, they knew the transition would be easy from laughter to contempt; and then by continual, though almost imperceptible attacks; they widened the breach in a man's character, which was first effected under the shew of mirth, so as to let in calumny and scandal enough to destroy the belt built reputation.

By such artifice those designing courtiers destroyed the credit of every one, who did not belong to their junto, and obtained a complete ascendancy over the king.

All vacancies were filled up, all honours conferred, and all public measures regulated by their advice. Their requests became orders to his majesty, without his perceiving it; for he could never refuse any favour to those, who knew how to profit by his weakness, and to flatter his predominant passions.

It was, indeed, the great infirmity both of the king and his brother to be too fond of the grossest adulation. They were also much inclined to like men at first fight, and did not love the conversation of persons many years older than themselves, for they thought age not only troublesome, but impertinent through an absurd desire of sending every body away satisfied, they were very unguarded in their promises, though not very scrupulous in the performance of them.

They knew not how to deny, and less to strangers, than to their old arid tried friends; not out of bounty, or generosity, which was a flower that never did grow naturally in the heart of either of the families from which they were descended, that of Stewart, or the other of Bourbon; but from a real incapacity of resisting the subtle approaches of flattery and insinuation.

From these defects, or unhappy constitution of mind, several of the misfortunes, which attended either of them, or those who served them honestly, had their rise and growth, of which there will be frequently occasion to say much more.

Separation of The Fleet

Towards the latter end of May, prince Rupert and the Duke os Albemarle set sail with the fleet, and visited the coast of Holland; but concluding from some intelligence they met with, that the Dutch fleet would not be ready in a month, they returned with some prizes to the Downs. Here it was proposed, that prince Rupert should be detached with part of the fleet to oppose the French admiral, who was reported to be under sail in order to join the Dutch.

An express was sent from the Downs, stating these particulars, and soliciting orders for such an enterprise. Lord Arlington about the same time received accounts from Holland that the Dutch were not yet manned, and that the squadron in particular, which was in the Texel, and was to join De Ruyter in the Weelins, was very unprovided.

He had also positive information from France, that the duke of Beaufort, who commanded the French sleet, had sailed from Brest on such a day; and though the wind had not yet been directly favourable for him, it was concluded that he must be well advanced in his way he had no port to befriend him, till he got round near Calais.

But though lord Arlington seemed to rely much on the accuracy of his intelligence, yet as the other secretary was assured by some of his correspondents in Holland that the Dutch squadrons were completely equipped, and would join in a few days, the council very justly apprehending the accidents that might follow from the division of our fleet, sent two of the members, Sir George Carteret and Sir William Coventry, with orders to represent to both the admirals the contradictory intelligence that was received, and the reflections which naturally occurred thereupon; but with discretionary powers to the Duke of Albemarle to pursue the former purpose, is any later advices which he might have received, or any stronger reasons to the separation of the fleet did not nuke it advisable to relinquish the project.

Sir George and sir William used such expedition, that they returned the next day with an account, that the state of the Dutch fleet was confirmed to be the same as lord Arlington had heard; and that they believed the other information respecting the duke of Beaufort to be very probable;

whereupon it had been concluded with a mutual consent and approbation, that prince Rupert should take twenty of the ships, which he had already chosen, to meet the French, though they were superior in number, while the Duke of Albemarle remained in the Downs with the rest.

It soon appeared which of the secretaries had the better intelligence; for the very next day after the departure of the prince, advice came from the duke of Albemarle that he had unquestionable information that the Dutch were come out of their harbours. Upon this, Sir William Coventry was directed to prepare orders to prince Rupert immediately to return; as there could be no doubt of finding him for some days on the western coast.

Sir William got the orders signed about twelve o'clock at night, and sent them to lord Arlington, whose duty he thought it was to charge a messenger with them; but his lordship was gone to bed, and his servants durst not disquiet him; a tenderness not accustomed to be in the family of a secretary. But whether they did not awake him, as he pretended, or whether being awake he deferred it, the order was not sent away till next day, and never reached prince Rupert till he had tacked about of himself, upon hearing the distant thunder of cannon, which he knew must proceed from an engagement. But the wind, which wafted that sound to his ears, being directly again him, he could make little way that day, or the night following.

Whose fault it was, that those important orders were not sent with, more dispatch, was disputed with some warmth between sir William Coventry and lord Arlington, the former insisting on his having prepared them in due time, and the latter as positively denying that he had the least notice of their contents. But though the negligence was very mischievous in its effect, it was never properly inquired into: the persons, to whom it was owing, were both too great men to be questioned in any judicatory.

Desperate Conflicts at Sea

The duke of Albemarle, after the notice he had received of the motion of the Dutch, weighed anchor about three o'clock in the morning on the first of June; and about four hours after, the scouts came in with notice, that the Dutch fleet was to the leeward. A council was immediately called of the flag officers, who resolved, that it was neither safe, nor honourable to decline the battle; and truly in such consultations, where the duke presided, as he had conceived ever since Cromwell's time a great contempt of the Dutch, whoever proposed any wary advice, was sure to incur his displeasure, and ran great hazard of being reputed a coward.

The resolution of fighting the enemy being taken, they bore up with a full wind; and De Ruyter easily perceiving the inferiority of their numbers[4], made what sail he could to meet them.

It was about two in the afternoon when the engagement began, and the English had got the wind, which was so high that they could not carry out their lower tiers. The admiral, who was amongst the foremost in the attack, was soon so shattered in his rigging and masts, that he was compelled to get off, and anchor, that he might mend what was amiss.

Many of his squadron also had their main-yards shot off, and received such damage in their tackling, (which was the chief aim of the Dutch) that they could hardly govern their ships. By this means the enemy got the wind, and the battle continued with great fierceness till ten at night, when all were willing to have some rest.

The fight was renewed at six o'clock next morning; and the Dutch in the course of the day, being reinforced by the arrival of sixteen new ships, pushed their advantage, while the English sustained the unequal contest for several hours with unparalleled and heroism. The whole fleet seemed animated by the example of their commander, who never appeared to such advantage as upon this perilous occasion, where he displayed the most consummate judgment, and the greatest personal bravery[5]. It was, however, happy for the English that the night again interrupted the

successes of an enemy so superior in strength and numbers, which no efforts of valour were found sufficient counterbalance.

The duke finding by the reports made to him of the state of all parts of the fleet, that many of the ships were so disabled, that there was reason to fear they would hardly hold out to recover the shore, caused all those ships to be put before the wind, and to make all the sail they could, and he himself, with sixteen of the best fighting ships all in a line, closed the rear, to cover their retreat.

A breeze, which sprung up about three in the morning, savoured the admiral's purpose, so that though the enemy used every exertion in the pursuit, they did not come within gunshot till four o'clock the next afternoon. By this time the English descried about twenty sail standing towards them, which they concluded to be prince Rupert's squadron and so being earnest to join, they edged up towards them, but so unfortunately, that some of the flagships ran aground off the Galloper sands, but all got off, except the Royal Prince, which, till the late war, was looked upon as the best ship in the world.

It stuck so fast, that no art or industry could move it; so that the enemy set it on fire, and took the commander, sir George Askew and the whole crew prisoners. After the junction with prince Rupert, our fleet bore to the northward, that they might get clear off the sands; and thereby the enemy got the wind again.

On the fourth day, the battle began again, about eight o'clock in the morning, with extraordinary confidence on both sides. The Dutch still continued to direct a great part of their fire at the rigging, while the English used every endeavour to board the others, as all their own hopes lay in close action.

But the design of the enemy succeeded better, insomuch that one of our vice-admirals, and several of our best ships were so disabled, that they bore off from the battle, in order to mend and repair. The rest fought with unabated fury; nor was it easy to say, to which side the victory seemed most to incline.

A very heavy mist, which came on about six o'clock in the evening, terminated the encounter; and both parties, weary no doubt of suck a dreadful struggle, in which prodigious numbers were killed, and many ships sunk and burnt, separated without looking after each other, and hastened to their respective coasts.

Thus ended that great action, wherein either side pretended to have advantage, and both were in truth considerable sufferers[6].

Most of our ships received such damage in their masts, yards, rigging and hulls, that it was with great difficulty they reached the coast; and went then dispersed into different places, where they might be soonest repaired. As the utmost diligence and expedition were used to prevent the enemy from enjoying any triumph, the damaged ships were refitted, and brought together again to a general rendezvous at the Nore in less than three weeks.

Reinforcements were also sent them every day of such ships as were finished and completely equipped at the several dockyards, and of all that could be spared from every other nation; so that before they were ordered out again in quest of the enemy, the fleet was augmented to above a hundred sail.

Another Naval Engagement

De Ruyter was hovering about in expectation of being joined by the French squadron; and though his number was now somewhat inferior to the English, he seemed to prepare for action with

undaunted firmness. The battle began at ten in the morning, and was continued till two in the afternoon with as much heat and obstinacy as had prevailed in any former encounter. But the squadron commanded by Tromp being either through accident or indiscretion separated from the rest of the Dutch fleet[7] De Ruyter took advantage of the wind, and bore away farther than the English could follow.

Here, however, our fleet took one of their sixty gun ships commanded by vice-admiral Banker, and another ship os seventy guns, both which were burnt, rather than undergo the possible inconvenience of keeping them; and both our commanders took care to bear up as close as possible to the enemy during the night.

De Ruyter's Well Conducted Retreat

The next morning the most spirited efforts were used to close with De Ruyter, but the wind lessening, it could not be effected. He fought well, but till retreating[8], still he got with his division of the fleet into his fastness at the Weelings.

Another division, that was farther off, and likely to have the benefit of the night, tacked about; which our fleet perceiving endeavoured to get between them and the coast; but being suddenly becalmed, they, dropped anchor about midnight, and in the morning, though they made all the way they could with a little wind, the enemy got so close to their own shore, and their ships drawing less water than the English, that there could be no farther pursuit.

The third division also, which had been separated from the rest of the Dutch fleet the day before, recovered the Texel without loss. Many of our captains were blamed for a want of ardour in the chase of this last squadron; but prince Rupert and the duke, though they differed in opinion with respect to the conduct of some of those officers, very wisely laid aside all inquiry into the matter, till they should be at more leisure with less inconvenience to determine it.

Fatal Blow Given to The Dutch Commerce

The enemy being thus scattered, our fleet resolved to ply upon their coast, and to annoy their trade, which they did, and took many prizes both homeward and outward bound of great value. While this interruption was given to the Dutch commerce, another enterprise of still greater importance was undertaken by the advice of one Hemskirk, who had the command of a ship in the service of the States at the beginning of the war, but but having faded with Tromp against Evertzen in the first battle, he would have been hanged, if he had not made his escape.

From that time he had always been on board with prince Rupert; and now persuaded the prince and the duke of Albemarle to send a detachment under his guidance into the road of Ulye, where, as in a place of the utmost security, all ships laden at Amsterdam for the Streights and other parts used to remain for two or three days previous to their departure, while final orders were preparing.

The execution of this design was committed to Sir Robert Holmes, who with a number of small vessels well manned, betides a body of stout foot to land upon occasion, being guided by Hemskirk, entered the road, which was almost land locked, and burnt all the Dutch ships lying there[9], some of which were worth above one hundred thousand pounds each.

Then advancing to the isle of Schelling, he made a descent, and set fire to the town of Brandaris, the flames of which, with those of the ships, appearing at the break of day so near Amsterdam, put the whole city into such consternation, that they thought the day of judgment was at hand. This was not only the greatest loss, but was greater than all the rest put together, which Holland sustained during the war; and as it occasioned great triumph in England, land, so it filled De Witt with the strongest desire and resolution of revenge before any peace should be consented to; which he effected in a great degree the next year.

As there appeared no more likelihood of the Dutch coming out again, the prince and duke returned with the fleet about the middle of August to Southwold Bay, to receive a recruit of men, provisions, and ammunition, having left some ships upon the Dutch coasts to take prizes, and scouts to get intelligence.

On the twenty-ninth a little pink brought notice, that the enemy consisting of about fourscore sail were ready to come out from the Weelings; and the following day advice was received of their being out, and steering to the westward, as if in hope of meeting the French[10].

At seven o'clock next morning our fleet bore to sea, and before noon discovered the Dutch about for leagues to leeward; but they stood away for the coast of Flanders, whilst the English were so entangled upon the Galloper sands, that they could not follow till late in the afternoon, so that it was night before they came near each other; and then several guns were fired to little purpose.

As soon as it was light, they found that the Dutch had got to leeward as far as they could discover near St. John's Bay beyond Calais; but the weather proved so boisterous, and the Dutch kept so close in to the shore, that after some unavailing attempts for two days to bring them to action, our fleet was compelled by the storm to come away to St. Helen's.

In this tempest the French had a very narrow escape. A gentleman of that nation, who had just returned out of England (whither they were suffered to resort with as much liberty as is there was no war, whilst no Englishman could be safe there) hearing upon his arrival at Calais; that the duke of Beaufort was every day expected, dispatched two or three barks after him with information how and where the English lay. One of them happened to find him towards the evening, whereupon he changed his course, and by the darkness of the night got into the road of Dieppe, with the loss only of a seventy gun ship under the command of the vice-admiral, who, knowing nothing of the intelligence, pursued his former direction, and fell into the hands of the English.

The continuance of the storm prevented any farther engagement; but the same winds, and at the same time, did much more mischief at land than at sea.

Fire at London

It was upon the first of September at midnight, or near the morning of Sunday the second of the month, that the memorable and terrible fire of London broke out in a baker's house, at the end of Thames Street next the Tower. As that street contained many timber houses, and was surrounded with several narrow alleys, the whole neighbourhood was in so short a time reduced to ashes, that few persons could save any of their goods, but were as a heap of people almost petrified with sudden consternation.

Buckets were immediately ordered by the city magistrates; but the fire was too ravenous to be extinguished with such quantities of water as could be conveyed by those instruments. It fastened still upon new materials, before it had destroyed the old; and though it raged furiously all that day, no man knowing what remedy to apply, nor the magistrates what orders to give, but all standing amazed as spectators only, yet the progress of the flames was somewhat regular, and the greatest apprehension was for the Tower, and all confederations entered upon for securing that place.

But in the night the wind changed, and carried the danger from thence with such great and irresistible violence, that as it kept the English and Dutch fleets from grappling, when they were so near each other, so it scattered the fire from pursuing the line it was in, and spread it over the city. Those who went late to bed, at a great distance from any place where the fire prevailed, were awakened before morning with their own houses being in a blaze; and whilst endeavour was using to quench that, other houses were said to be burning, which were near no place whence

the fire could. be supposed to have reached them. All this kindled another fire in the breasts of men, almost as dangerous as that within their houses.

Monday morning produced first a jealousy, and then an universal belief and persuasions, that the fire came not by chance. People said, that it was of little consequence where it began; but that its breaking out in several places at so great a distance from each other, made it evident that it was the effect of some horrid conspiracy.

This led to another conclusion, that the incendiaries muff be the Dutch or French, with whom we were then at war; and all of either nation, who could be met with, or strangers of what nation soever, were laid hold of, and after much ill usage thrown into prison.

The same suspicion was loon extended to the papists, who were in the same predicament of guilt and danger; and who quickly found that their only safety consisted in keeping within doors, though same were dragged even thence, and carried to prison.

When this rage spread as far as the fire, and every hour brought reports of some bloody effects of it, the king distributed many of the privy council into several quarters of the city, to prevent by their authority those inhumanities, which he heard were committed.

But neither they nor any body else thought it safe to declare, that they believed the fire came by accident, or that it was not a plot of the Dutch, the French, and the papists to burn the city. This was so generally believed, and in the best company, that whoever said the contrary, was suspected to be one of the conspirators, or at least a favourer of them.

It could not be conceived how a house, that was distant a mile from any part of the fire, could suddenly be in a flame without some particular malice. Instances of this kind were alleged without number; nor did there want the testimony of witnesses, who said they saw the villainy committed, and apprehended men, who, they were ready to swear, threw sire balls into houses, which were presently burning.

Lord Hollis and lord Ashley, who had their quarters assigned about Newgate market, and the streets adjacent, had many brought to them in custody for pretended crimes of this nature; and saw, at a little distance, the people gathered together in great disorder. On going nearer, they perceived a man hauled about and very ill used by the mob, whom they knew to be a servant to the Portuguese ambassador; and who was presently brought to them. A substantial citizen was ready to make oath, that he saw this man put his hand in his pocket, and throw a fire ball into a shop, upon which the house immediately took fire; and that being himself on the other side of the way, he cried out to stop that gentleman, who accordingly was soon seized, and his sword, which he was going to draw, taken away from him, and he not speaking, or understanding English, was used in the manner before described.

His pockets had also been diligently searched, but none of those combustibles were found upon him. Lord Hollis told him what he was accused of, at which he stood in great amazement. His lordship asked him what it was he pulled out of his pocket, and threw into the house answered, that he did not think he had put his hand in his pocket; but he remembered very well, that as he walked in the street, he saw a piece of bread upon the ground, which he took up and laid on a shelf in the next house; which is a custom or superstition so natural to a Portuguese, that if the king of Portugal were walking, and saw a piece of bread on the ground, he would take it up with his own hand, and keep it till he found a sit place to lay it down.

The house being in view, the lords with many of the people walked to it, and found the piece of bread just within the door upon a board, where he said he had laid it. The house on sire was two doors beyond it, but might in a time of such fright and suspicion be easily mistaken for the same

by the person on the other side of the way, who seeing the Portuguese put something down, and perceiving a fire burst out instantly, concluded that he was the incendiary.

Though both the lords were satisfied of the poor man's innocence, they did not set him at liberty, for fear of again exposing him to the fury of the mob; but as if there remained matter enough for farther inquiry, they committed him to the constable to be kept by him in his own house for some hours, when they pretended they would examine him again.

The same conduct was observed with respect to many others, who were apprehended in different parts of the town, upon much weaker grounds of suspicion. None were discharged, especially if they were foreigners or papists, but all sent to prison, where they were in much more security, than if left at full liberty; after they were once known to have been suspected. Most of them understood their commitment to be from that motive, and were glad of it.

The fire and wind continued in the same excess all Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday till the afternoon and flung and scattered burning brands into all quarters, the nights more terrible than the days, and the glare of the conflagration supplying the light of the sun. It is impossible to describe the ravages that were made, or the alarm and distraction of the people.

Nobody knew where to repose for one hour's sleep: no distance was thought secure from the fire, which suddenly started up before it was suspected: all the fields were full of women and children, who had made a shift to bring thither some goods and conveniences to rest upon, as safer than any houses were: they yet felt such intolerable heat and drought as if they had been in the midst of the fire.

The country sent in carts to help those miserable people, who had saved any goods; and by these means and the help of coaches, the neighbouring villages were filled with more people than they could well contain, and more goods than they could find room for, so that the adjoining fields there became likewise as full as those about London and Westminster.

On Wednesday morning, when the king saw, that neither the fire decreased, nor the wind lessened, he even despaired of preserving Whitehall; but having observed, while he rode about with his brother from place to place, that, where there were any vacancies between the houses, by which the progress of the fire was interrupted, it changed its course, and went to the other side, he gave orders for pulling down many houses about Whitehall, and sent some of his most valuable furniture to Hampton Court.

Most persons of quality in the Strand, who had the benefit of the river, got barges and other vessels for the conveyance of their goods to houses some miles out of town; and as the fire was then in Fleet Street, several other families in the Strand, who knew not whither to go, and scarce what they did, fled into the streets, that they might not be within when the fire should fall upon their houses.

But contrary to all expectation, about four or five o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, the wind fell, and the fire decreased, having burnt all on the side of the Thames to the new buildings of the Inner Temple, next to White Friars. It was stopped by that vacancy from proceeding farther in that direction; but laid hold on some old buildings, which joined to Kam Alley, and swept all those into Fleet Street.

The other side being likewise destroyed as far as Fetter Lane, it discontinued there, leaving the other part of Fleet Street to Temple Bar and all the Strand unhurt; and it ceased in all other parts of the town about the same time.

It now required the utmost vigilance to watch the fire that was on the ground, lest it might break out again. This was the better performed, because those, whole houses were yet standing, had

not the courage to sleep, though their terrors and distraction were greatly abated. Some, indeed, were still restless with fears of a different kind.

In their excessive jealousy of the supposed authors of this dreadful calamity, they were so sottish as to believe the most absurd reports, that all the French in town, of whom there was no doubt a very great number, were collected into a body, to prosecute those by the sword, who had escaped the fire.

Wild as such an idea was, the inhabitants of a whole street have been known to run in a great tumult one way, upon the rumour that the French were marching at the other end of it: so terrorised were men with their own apprehensions.

When the night, though far from being a quiet one, had somewhat lessened the consternation, the first care of government was, that the country might speedily supply markets in all places, that those, who had saved themselves from burning, might not be in danger of starving; and there is no doubt, if extraordinary diligence had not been used, many would have perished that way.

The vast destruction of corn and all other sorts of provisions in those parts where the fire had prevailed, not only left the people destitute of every thing that was to be eat or drunk; but the bakers and brewers, who inhabited the other parts that were unhurt, had forsaken their houses, and carried away all that was portable.

Many days part, before enough of them returned, to fall to their occupations. But the supplies from the country poured in very fast; and in four days, scarce a man was to be seen in the fields, which were before covered with those, whole habitations were burnt. All found shelter in the parts which remained of the city, or in the suburbs, and the adjacent villages, every body being ready to give all possible assistance to those who appeared to be undone.

The king was not more troubled at any particular, than at the imagination which possessed the minds of so many, that all this mischief arose from some wicked conspiracy. He appointed the privy council to sit both morning and evening to receive information on that head, and to send for any persons who had been committed to prison upon such evidence as made the greatest noise.

He also sent for the lord chief justice, who was in the country, to come to town, for the better examination of all suggestions and allegations of that kind; there having been a malicious report scattered about the town, that the court and council had so great a prejudice against any testimony of such a plot, that they discountenanced all witnesses who came before them to declare what they knew. This was without any colour of truth; though many who were produced as is their testimony would remove all doubts, made such senseless relations of what they had been told by persons, whom they knew nothing about, nor where to find them, that it was a hard matter to forbear smiling at their evidence.

Some Frenchmen's houses had been searched, in which were found many of those shells for squibs and other fireworks frequently used on rejoicing nights. The men themselves were well known, having followed that trade many years in town; and one of them was constantly employed by the office of ordnance for making grenades.

Yet these men did not escape suspicion, but were seized with many others of their country, and remained in prison till their neighbours solicited for their liberty. What most excites wonder is, that in this general rage of the people, none of the foreigners was murdered outright, though many were sorely beaten and bruised.

There was a very odd accident that confirmed many in what they were before inclined to believe, and startled others who thought the conspiracy impossible. Amongst the Frenchmen, who had

been sent to Newgate, there was one Hubert, a young man of five or six and twenty years of age, the son of a famous watchmaker in the city of Rouen; and this fellow had worked in the same profession with several men in London, and had for many years been looked upon as a lunatic both in Rouen and London.

This man confessed, "that he had set the first house on fire; that he and three more had been hired in Paris a year before to do it; that they came over to England together to put their design in execution at the time of the plague; that, after their arrival in London, he and two of his companions went into Sweden, but returned in the latter end of August; and that the other two having then gone back to France, he resolved to make the attempt himself."

The whole of his confession was so incoherent, that the chief justice, who was not thought to want rigour, did not believe anything he said. He was asked, who it was in Paris that suborned him to this action. He answered "that he did not know, having never seen him before;" and in enlarging on that point he contradicted himself in many particulars. Being asked, what money he had received to perform a service of so much hazard, he replied " one pistol, but was promised five more, when he should have done his work;" with many other such unreasonable things, that every body present thought him out of his senses.

However, they durst not slight the evidence, but put him to a particular, to which he seemed so fully to confirm all that he had before aliened, that they were struck with astonishment, and knew not afterwards what to say, or think.

This last point, upon which Hubert was questioned, and which rendered the whole business singularly strange and unaccountable, was, whether he knew the place, which he had first set on fire he answered, "that he knew it very well, and would shew it to any body."

Upon this the chief justice, and many aldermen who sat with him, sent a guard of substantial citizens with the prisoner, that he might shew them the house; and they first led him to a place at some distance from it, and asked him, if that was it? To which he instantly replied, "no; it was lower, nearer to the Thames."

The house, and all that were near it, were so covered and buried in ruins, that the owners themselves, without some infallible mark, could hardly tell where their respective dwellings had stood. But Hubert led the guard directly to the place ; and described the situation of the house, the shape of the little yard, the fashion of the door and windows, and where he first put the fire; and all this with such exactness, that they who had dwelt long near it, could not have so perfectly accounted for half those particulars:

This silenced. all farther doubts; and though the chief justice told the king, that all his other discourse was so disjointed, that he did not believe any thing he laid, nor was there one man to prosecute or accuse him, yet upon his own. confession, and the relation of all those last particulars, the jury found him guilty; and he was executed accordingly.

It is farther remarkable, that in all his examinations, he neither shewed any sign of sorrow for what he said he had done, nor yet seemed to justify or take delight in it; but being asked, whether he was not sorry for the wickedness, and whether he intended to do so much, he gave no answer at all, and with the same temper died.

The judges, and most persons who. were present at the trial, concluded that he was a poor distracted wretch weary of his life, and chose to part with it this way; for it was very evident that he might have saved it, even though he had been guilty since was only accused upon his own confession. Upon the whole, after the most diligent inquiry by the privy council, and next by a committee appointed by parliament to investigate the matter; no satisfactory proof was ever discovered of any design or combination.

Charges were, indeed, brought against many, but none of them could be substantiated; nor was there any probable evidence (that poor creature Hubert only excepted). of any other cause of that woeful fire than the first accident of its breaking out in a baker's house, where there was so great a stock of faggots, and in the neighbourhood of much combustible matter, such as pitch, rosin, and the like, that led it in an instant from house to house in Thames Street, with the agitation of so terrible a wind to scatter and disperse it.

Let the cause be what it would, the effect was very calamitous. Above two-thirds of that great city, and those the wealthiest parts of it, where the greatest shops and warehouses stood, were reduced to ashes; The Royal Exchange, with all the streets about it, Lombard Street, Cheapside, Paternoster Row, all St. Paul's churchyard, as well as the church itself, and almost all the other churches in the city, Ludgate, the Old Bailey, and the greatest part of Fleet Street, were all burnt, without one house remaining[11].

The estimate of what that devouring fire consumed, over and above the houses, could never be computed in any degree. In the first night it swept away the vast wealth of Thames Street, as from its suddenness, all people being in their beds, when the flames reached their houses, they could save nothing but themselves. The next day, the violence of the wind increased the distraction; and before those who were at a considerable distance, could imagine themselves to be in any danger, or think it necessary to remove their goods, the fire came upon them, and rendered it impossible.

It happened also in a season of the year, when a great number of the substantial citizens and other wealthy men were in the country; whereof many had not left a servant in their houses, thinking themselves upon all ordinary accidents, more secure in the integrity and kindness of their neighbours, than they could be in the fidelity of servants.

Whatever was in such houses was entirely consumed, or lost to the owners. Of this class of absent men the lawyers in particular sustained a considerable loss, which affected others still more than themselves. When the fire reached their places of residence, especially Sergeant's Inn, and the part that was consumed of the Inner Temple, there was scarce a man, to whom chambers appertained, in town; so that whatsoever was there, money, books, and papers, with the evidences of estates deposited in their hands, were all burnt or loft.

The damage sustained by the company of stationers was estimated at no less than two hundred thousand pounds, in which great loss there was one circumstance very lamentable. All those, who dwelt near St. Paul's, carried their goods, books, and the like, as others of greater trades did their commodities, into the large vaults under St. Paul's church, before the sire came thither.

Those vaults, though all the church above ground was afterwards burnt, still stood firm, and preserved all that was within them, till the impatience of those, who had deposited property there, and who had lost their houses and every thing else in the fire, prompted them to open the greatest and most spacious vault.

It was the fourth day, after the fire ceased to flame, though it still burned in the ruins, and cast an intolerable heat. The doors of the vault were no sooner opened than, the air from without fanning though strong heat within, the driest and most combustible matters broke into a flame, which consumed all, of what kind soever, that till then had been unhurt there.

Those, who had committed their goods to some smaller vaults at a distance from the greater, had better fortune; and having learned from the ruin of their friends to have more patience, they waited till the rain fell, and extinguished the fire in all places, and cooled the air: then they securely opened the doors, and got what they had deposited there.

If so vast a damage as two hundred thousand pounds befell that little company of stationers in books, paper, and the like, what shall we conceive the loss to have been in other companies, and in articles of the greatest value?

Blackwell Hall, whither the country clothiers had sent their large annual supplies against Michaelmas, was confirmed with all this valuable property. Then the loss in silk, and those richer manufactures, far exceeded all possible calculation, not to speak of money, plate and jewels, some of which were recovered out of the ruins of those houses, which the owners took care to watch, as containing somewhat worth looking for; and in this deluge there were many ready to fish.

The lord mayor, though a very honest man, was much blamed for want of sagacity, in the last night of the fire, before the wind gave it much advancement. He came, indeed, with great diligence, as soon as he had notice of it, and was present with the firm, yet having never been used to such spectacles, his consternation was equal to that of any body else, nor did he know how to apply his authority to the remedying of the present distress.

When men, less terrified with the object, pressed him very earnestly to give orders for the immediate pulling down of such houses as were nearest to the fire, the doing whereof at that time might have checked its progress, and prevented much of the mischief that followed, he thought it not sate counsel; and made no other answer, than that he durst not do it without the consent of the owner.

His want of skill was the less wondered at, when it was known afterwards, that borne gentlemen of the Inner Temple would not endeavour to preserve the goods, which were in the lodgings of absent persons, nor suffer others to do it, because, they said, it was against the law to break open any man's chamber.

The sudden repair of such widespread ruins was almost as wonderful as the extent and rapidity of the devastation. To say that London rose, like a phoenix, from its ashes, with renovated beauty, would, indeed, fall short of the truth; for all the new streets and public edifices, displayed a beauty and lustre, with which the city had never before been acquainted.

Many improvements were suggested by the calamity itself. In the wide streets and brick buildings it was observed, that though the fire in the height of its rage was not completely repulsed, it made a much slower progress; but in narrow lanes, and where the houses were made, of wood, it spread with irresistible fury.

The streets were therefore widened, and the houses re-erected with brick; by both which alterations the health of the inhabitants, and the security, stability, and elegance of their dwellings were evidently promoted[12].

Transient Hope of Reform of Court

It was hoped that this tremendous and universal calamity, the effects of which covered the whole kingdom, would have made impression, and produced same reform in the licentiousness of the court.

This was the more expected, as during the fire the king had been heard to speak with great piety of the displeasure God was provoked to; and no doubt the deep sense of it raised many good purposes in his royal breast.

But he was narrowly watched that such melancholy might not long possess him, the effects whereof would have been much more grievous to his corrupt favourites than all the ravages of the fire. That loose company often made it a subject of wit and mirth to describe the wildness of

the confusion all people were in; and in such discourse the scripture itself was used with equal liberty, when they could apply it to their profane purposes. Mr. May presumed to assure the king, "that the fire was the greatest blessing that God had ever conferred upon his majesty, his restoration only excepted; for the walls and gates being now burnt down of that rebellious city, which was always an enemy to the crown, his majesty would never suffer them to be built up again, to be a bit in his mouth, and a bridle upon his neck; but would keep all open, that his troops might enter, whenever he thought it necessary for his service, there being no other way to govern that rude multitude but by force!

Whatever had the shew of wit, though very improper in other respects, was never sufficiently discountenanced by the king; and Mr. May's remarks, which excited the laughter of the company at the time, were afterwards repeated elsewhere very much to the king's disservice.

The citizens finding themselves spoken of by the courtiers with so much contempt, took the same liberty in talking of the debauchery and profaneness of the court; and as nothing was done here in private, so it was made more public by pasquinades and libels, which were as bold with reflections of the broadest nature upon the king himself, and upon those in whose company he most delighted, as upon the meanest persons.

All reverence for the king and for government was lost; and there was no man, who had the welfare of his country at heart, that did not lament the fatal consequences which must ultimately attend such scandalous excesses.

Design to Suppress Coffee Houses

The easy and natural method of silencing the railings of the people is to furnish no just occasion for them; and then they must die away of themselves. Other restraints imposed on the liberty of men's tongues betray the weakness, or the wickedness of government, and often serve to kindle the very flame, which they are meant to extinguish.

But maxims of this kind would have conveyed so severe a censure on the manners of the court, that none of the king's sincerest well wishers could venture to urge them with sufficient force of reasoning; for though his majesty himself received such hints without any shew of displeasure, yet he was too easily persuaded by others to regard them as the dictates of ill nature and arrogance.

The plan therefore, which was thought of at this time to check the licence of speech, was to suppress coffee houses, where the boldest scandals were raised, and thence propagated all over the kingdom.

The chancellor was commanded by the king to propose this matter at the council board; which he did with some observations on the mischief that must attend the impunity of such places, where the foulest imputations were laid upon government, without the least fear, as people generally believed that those houses had a charter of privilege for every body there to speak what he liked.

He therefore moved, that the attorney-general might be directed to prepare a proclamation for the suppression of coffee-houses; to which the board seemed inclined to agree, when Mr. Coventry, who had been heard a few days before to inveigh with great fierceness against the permission of so much seditious prattle in those houses, stood up and said, "that coffee was a commodity which yielded the king a good revenue, and therefore it would not be just to receive the duties, and inhibit the sale of it." He added, "that coffee houses had been permitted even in Cromwell's time; and that the king's friends had used more liberty of speech in those places than they durst do in any other."

He, concluded, "that he thought it better to leave such houses as they were, without running the hazard of their being more resorted to than before, notwithstanding his majesty's command to the contrary."

Upon these reasons the king changed his mind, and declined any farther debate, which put the chancellor very much out of countenance, and gave Mr. Coventry great matter of triumph in having by his sole arguments defeated the proposal of so unpopular a measure[13].

State of The Public Exigencies at The Re-Meeting of Parliament

According to the last prorogation, the parliament re-assembled on the twenty-first of September, when the king expressed his joy at meeting so many of them together again, and in that place, which was so likely to be involved in the late dismal ruins. He told them, he was confident, they thanked him for having dispensed with their attendance in April:

He desired to put them to as little trouble as he could, and to as little colt as he could: he wished with all his heart, that he could bear the whole charge of the war himself, and that his subjects should reap the whole benefit of it. His majesty confessed that they had given him large supplies; yet he had been obliged to anticipate his revenue in order to let out the fleet last spring: they would consider what was to be done next; and he would leave it to their wisdom to find out the best expedients for carrying on the war, with as little burden to the people as possible.

He said, "he would add no more than to put. them in mind that their enemies were very insolent; and if they were able to persuade their miserable people, whom they misled, that the contagion had so wasted the nation, and impoverished the king, that he would not be able to set out any sleet; how would they be exalted with this late impoverishment of the city, and contemn all reasonable conditions of peace?" His majesty therefore could not doubt but that his parliament would provide accordingly.

The king had reason to speak of his anticipations, and of his wants, which were at this time very pressing. There had been no sort of good management in any of the former supplies the immense sums arising from the capture of prizes, being diverted into a private channel, were all wasted in thoughtless extravagance, without the smallest benefit to the public service; and in addition to these fatal effects of un-thriftiness and prodigality, the plague and the fire had, as it were, dried up the principal fountains, from which money and credit were accustomed to flow:

The customs and the excise were bankrupt, not affording even enough to pay the interest of the money borrowed upon them; and as to chimney money, the third next considerable branch of the revenue, it must suffer a considerable diminution, till the city could be rebuilt.

This woeful prospect was in view at the meeting of parliament, who came not together with the better countenance, by seeing all hopes abroad with so sad an aspect, and all things at home appear so desperate in many respects.

Yet within a few days after the king had spoken to them, the house of commons being mostly filled with his majesty's servants, and the country gentlemen not being yet come, there was a saint vote procured, that they would give a supply to the king, proportionate to his wants; but without mentioning any sum, or what way it was to be raised.

Revolution Against The Papists

When the number of the members increased, the parliament appeared more chagrined than it had hitherto done; and though they made the same professions of duty and affection to the king as before, they did not conceal the very bad opinion they had of the court, and of the continual rioting there. The truth was, that besides those just grounds of complaints, the court party

themselves were split into factions, and such of them as were jealous of the superior interest and emoluments of the others, secretly inflamed the discontents of the independent members, in hopes thereby of enhancing their own services, or bringing about some revolution more favourable to their private views.

The first business of the commons was to appoint a committee with large powers to send for and examine all persons, who could give any information concerning the causes of the late fire; and to shew their increased jealousy of the papists, they appointed another committee to receive and certify information of the growth of popery, and the insolence of Roman catholic priests and Jesuits.

They also passed some severe resolutions dictated by the same jealousy, in one of which only the lords concurred; and that was to request his majesty to command all priests and Jesuits, except such of them as not being his natural born subjects were engaged to attend the queen consort, or queen mother, to quit the kingdom in thirty days, or to have the laws enforced against them[14]. His majesty issued a proclamation accordingly; but that did not silence other clamours, nor did it induce the commons to use any dispatch in the business of a supply.

When any mention was made of the vote at first obtained, and that it was high time to render it effectual, in order to provide for the equipment of a fleet against the spring; it was answered with passion, "that the king's wants must be made first to appear, before any supply could be discoursed of: that there were already such vast sums of money given to his majesty, that there was none left in the country to carry on trade; and that all the specie having been brought to London, the farmers could not sell their corn, or their cattle, or their wool for half the value, so that they were deprived of the only advantageous means of railing wherewith to pay their taxes."

The opposition upon the subject of a supply was soon carried to a still greater length. The members, who had not sat in the parliament at Oxford, were exceedingly vexed that there had been so much given there, so soon after the two millions and a half had been granted.

They said, "that, if the king wanted again already, he must have been abominably cheated, which was fit to be examined: that the number of the ships, which had been let out by the king in several fleets, since the beginning of this war, was no secret; and that there were men enough well acquainted with the charge of fitting out, manning, and victualling ships, who were convinced, after the fullest estimate of all possible expenses, that, if his majesty had been honestly dealt with, there must still remain a very great proportion of money to carry on the war, without need of imposing more on the people, till they should be better able to bear it: that it was therefore absolutely necessary that all those through whole hands the money had passed, should first give an exalt account of what they had received, and what, or how they had disbursed it; and when that should appear, it would be seasonable to demand an addition of supply, which would be cheerfully granted."

Having Rated those things with unanswerable force, the same persons proposed, that, for the better expedition of such an inquiry, a bill should be forthwith prepared to be passed into an act, for appointing such commissioners as the houses should think fit, to examine all the accounts of those who had received, or issued out any monies for this war; and where any persons were found guilty of a breach of trust, that they should be liable to such punishment as the parliament should think proper.

This proposal found filch a concurrence in the house, that none even of those who were most averse to such an inquiry, ventured to oppose it; and it is also certain, that the overture itself had been secretly contrived and set on by some of the court party, who seemed not to like it, but acquiesced, under a pretence of their thinking it to little purpose to endeavour to divert it; which is an artifice not unusual in courts or parliament. The motion was therefore agreed to, and a committee named to prepare such a bill accordingly.

Alarm Excited At By A Bill For Appointing Commissioners of Accounts

The persons, who were principally aimed at in the proposed inquiry, were sir George Carteret, the treasurer of the navy, who had many enemies, not only from the opinion that his place was too lucrative, but still more from the ill offices Sir William Coventry was always ready to do him; and the lord Ashley, who was treasurer of all the money raised upon prizes, which could not but be very considerable.

The former had already past his account in the exchequer for two years, and was prepared to make up another year's account; but what method commissioners by a& of parliament would put it into, he could neither imagine, nor be well satisfied with. The other, lord Ashley, had yet more reason to be troubled, for he was by his commission exempted from giving any account but to the king himself, which exemption was the only reason that made him solicitous for the office; and he well knew that there were great sums issued, which could not be put into any public account, so that his perplexity was very great in several respects. Both of them, therefore, applied to the king for his protection in this matter.

His majesty was not less troubled than either of the treasurers: he knew they had both issued out many sums upon his warrants, which, he would not suffer to be produced. Hereupon he called the select committee of his privy council, and complained of this unusual way of proceeding in the house of commons, which, he said, would terrify all men from serving him in any receipts, as they would no longer know, either what method to pursue for the passing of their accounts, or what punishment they might be liable to incur: he hoped such a bill would never find a consent in the house of commons; or is it did, that the lords would reject it; but declared, that in case it should pass both, and be brought to him, he was resolved never to give it his royal assent[15].

The committee seemed to concur with his majesty, that he ought not to consent to the proposed bill ; however, that the best care should be used to stop it in its progress through the houses, and for that purpose, to prepare the members by giving them notice of his pleasure.

Chancellor’s Fatal Indiscretion

In this conference the chancellor was guilty of the greatest and most fatal indiscretion, though from very disinterested motives. He had nothing to fear from an examination of the public accounts.

On the contrary, it was likely to involve his worst enemies in disgrace. But from a recollection of the steps, by which former parliaments had proceeded to an open rupture with the crown, he was alarmed at the appearance of any new powers assumed by the commons; and dreading the return of the old troubles, he did not sufficiently consider, that extraordinary evils not only admitted of, but required extraordinary remedies, as in the proposed instance was undoubtedly the case.

Through suck an unfortunate mistake, he was prompted to express himself in the committee with unguarded warmth. He owned, "that the king could not be too indulgent in the defence of the privileges of parliament, which he hoped his majesty would never violate; but he desired here to be equally solicitous to prevent the excesses in parliament, and not to suffer them to extend their jurisdiction to cases they had nothing to do with."

He said, "that to restrain them within their proper bounds and limits was as necessary as to preserve them from being invaded: that the bill for a commission of inquiry into the public expenditure was such a new encroachment as had no bottom; and that the fears were yet too fresh and green of those wounds, which had been inflicted upon the kingdom, from such usurpation."He therefore conjured the king not to depart from the resolution he had taken; and promised that if the bill should be brought up to the house of peers, he would not fail in doing

his duty, and speaking freely his opinion against such innovations, how many soever it might offend.

These remarks, which the chancellor made with so little reserve, were soon after communicated to those, who did not fail to turn them to his disadvantage.

Dispute Caused By a Clause in The Poll Bill

In the mean time the utmost efforts were used to prevent any farther notice of the bill in either house. A sufficient majority was secured in the lords for rejecting it; but it was not so easy to persuade the commons to drop it.

Accounts of the money expended in the service of the war were laid before them, but did not prove satisfactory. Various other contrivances were used to divert them from their purpose; and when at length, with unconquerable obstinacy, they added to the Poll-Bill, by which a part of the supplies was to be provided for, a clause authorizing themselves to appoint four commissioners to audit the accounts of all monies received since the beginning of the war, including what arose from prizes, the only expedient for evading it in the most offensive manner was to engage the lords to address his majesty to issue out a commission, appointing twelve commoners and six lords to examine the public accounts.

The commons, however, relented this very warmly: they were not amused with the idea, that twelve of their own body would be of the commission, as they well knew what was to be expected from any persons of the king's appointment: they threatened the chancellor with an impeachment for advising such a measure, and putting the great seal to it and they resolved, that the lords going in petition to the king for a commission for taking the public accounts, whilst there was a bill sent up from their house for taking them another way, was un-parliamentary, and of dangerous consequence and that, according to the right and settled course of parliaments upon bills, neither one bill, nor any part thereof is to be communicated to his majesty by either house, until the whole be agreed unto by both.

But this was not the Only misunderstanding and difference which distracted the proceedings of the two houses during the present session, and proved very injurious to the public service.

Duke of Buckingham’s Cabal

There was a private correspondence by this time begun between some discontented members of the house of peers, with the duke of Buckingham at their head; and some members of the house of commons, who had distinguished themselves by their opposition to the court interest, and among whom Mr. Seymour, Sir Richard Temple, Mr. Ganoway, and Sir Robert Howard took the lead.

The duke was uncommonly assiduous in cultivating the friendship of these bold speakers: he invited them to his table; pretended to have a great esteem of their parts; asked counsel of them; lamented the king's neglecting his business, and committing it to other people, who were not fit for it; and then gave them a lively description of all the licentiousness and debauchery of the court, which he was the better able to do, having been himself a frequent eye and ear-witness of it.

He had lately a violent quarrel with lady Castlemaine, and was so much in the king's displeasure, that he forbore going to the court, and revenged himself upon it by all the merry tales he could tell of what was done there.

It cannot be imagined, considering his loose and dissipated life, what influence he had in both houses, that is, how many in both would follow his advice, and concur in what he proposed. His

quality and condescension, the pleasantness of his humour and conversation, the extravagance and sharpness of his wit unrestrained by any religion or modesty, drew persons of all tempers and talents to like his company. Men of sobriety and virtue were led to believe that his levities would be wrought off by age, and that there would be enough of good left to become a great man, and to make him useful to his country, for which he pretended to have a wonderful affection, protesting that all his quarrel with the court proceeded from their declared malignity against the liberty of the subject, and their desire that the king should govern by the example of France.

He even kept a good correspondence with the principal persons among the dissenters, and professed a desire that liberty of conscience might be granted to all. The king had often heard of his behaviour, and of the freedom he took in speaking of the court, at which though his majesty felt much indignation, yet he never supposed that the duke could long retain either the good opinion of the people, as they must soon discover his want of principle; or the friendship of serious men, whom he could not help abusing and making ridiculous, as soon as he was out of their company; or lastly, an interest in parliament, as he was thought incapable of that close pursuit of any design, which business and political intrigue required.

But the duke had soon an opportunity of shewing the unexpected strength of his faction in both houses.

Violent Debates on Bill Against The Importation of Irish Cattle

The place, which the duke of Ormond held in the king's esteem, had long been an object of jealously to many of the English nobility, but was particularly irritating to the duke of Buckingham, who looked upon the other as his rival, and who was very willing to undertake the prosecution of any complaint against him.

The disjointed state of Ireland, where the duke of Ormond was lord lieutenant, furnished Buckingham with many opportunities of gratifying his personal resentment; but he found in the prejudices of the English house of commons a fuller scope for extending his revenge from the lord lieutenant to the whole country, over which he presided.

There had been for two or three years a murmur, which continually increased with other just causes of complaint, that, in consequence of the great importations of Irish cattle, which were bred there for nothing, and conveyed here for very little, the breeding of cattle in this kingdom was totally given over, whereby the lands would yield no rent proportionally to what they had done, which, it was pretended, was a principal cause of the want of money in the country.

Though it was well known that in many English counties the land was too good to be applied to the purposes of breeding, and that the great traffic of the farmers and graziers in those counties, and the chief means by which they were enabled to pay their rent, consisted in buying lean cattle and making them fat, yet a -chute against the importing of foreign cattle was inferred in the act for the encouragement of trade.

But the enemies of the duke of Ormond and of Ireland, joined with some great monopolizing projectors in this country, endeavoured, during the short session at Oxford, to render the prohibition more pointed against the sister kingdom, by introducing into the lower house a bill against the importing of beef, pork, and bacon from Ireland, with a proviso, according to which no restraint was to be imposed upon bringing either from Scotland. This bill was carried very rapidly through the commons; but upon an intimation given to the lords of its being disagreeable to the king, it was then thrown out, almost without any debate.

The failure of the attempt at Oxford did not discourage the duke of Buckingham's cabal from renewing it now with greater confidence, heat, and obstinacy. The juncture was peculiarly favourable to their wishes. Besides the prevalence of national prejudices and jealousy, and the

increased strength of the faction, there was at this time such an alarm excited by the prodigious fall of rents, that many well meaning members of both houses were too easily imposed upon by a bold assertion, that this grievance arose wholly from suffering the produce of our own land to be undersold at our own markets by Irish importations. The bill was therefore brought forward in the commons, with a new clause extending the prohibition to fish taken by foreigners; and was insisted on as a matter of such importance and immediate necessity, that there could be no debate begun with reference to the giving money to the king, till this bill were first past.

In the mean time, the council of Ireland, who had previous intimation of what was intended here, not only wrote to the king himself, but sent also a long letter to the privy council, in which they gave a strong picture of the distressed and distracted hate of that kingdom.

They said, "that there were more than one hundred thousand persons, who had nothing else to live upon but their droves of cattle, out of which they sent twice a year as many as they could spare into England, and had returns in such goods and merchandize as they wanted, for they received no specie in that traffic: that if this liberty of trade, which they had enjoyed in all ages, should be taken from them, the king's army could not be supported, nor the government maintained, but the kingdom must be unavoidably ruined; and that probably a new rebellion, in so general a discontent as this restraint would administer, might be again entered into."

They concluded their farther representations on this head with desiring, "that a few years longer might at least be allowed to that traffic, to the end that some other husbandry might be introduced into the kingdom, by which the people might live, and which government would endeavour to plant with all possible diligence and encouragement."

The king himself was so much moved with these letters, that he declared he could neither in justice nor in conscience consent to such a bill, which he therefore desired might be put a stop to, so as not to be presented to him, for if it were, he must positively reject it.

The letters did not make the same impression on all the lords of the council: a few were convinced of the injustice and partiality of the bill, and most heartily concurred with the king in opinion; but much the greater number were of different sentiments. Some insisted that in a point so evidently, as they said, for the advantage of England, the inconvenience of Ireland ought not to be put into the scale.

Others, though they did not speak out, thought in truth, that the king was too much inclined to favour the Irish; and in that respect were well content that this bill should be a mortification to them. There were also not a few, who in dark expressions (which grew clearer, when the matter came into the house of lords) insinuated that the estates in Ireland were more valuable than in England; and that some noblemen of that kingdom lived in a higher garb, and made greater expenses than the noblemen in England were able to do, which had not been in former times.

Although his majesty had expressed a very earnest desire that all the interest of the court might be exerted to defeat the bill in the house of commons, yet he was afterwards persuaded by Sir William Coventry to let even his own servants vote as they pleased on that question.

He persuaded the king that the commons had taken the Irish bill so much to heart, that they would never enter upon the debate of money, till that had passed the house and was sent to the lords, who, no doubt, upon the. knowledge of his majesty's mind and resolution would easily throw it out.

He alto pretended, that is his majesty's servants continued obstinate in opposing it below, they would but provoke and anger the house, and render themselves useless to other parts of his majesty's more important business; whereas if they did now gratify the house by concurring with them in this matter, they should make themselves acceptable, have credit enough to divert the

bill for an extraordinary commission to examine the public accounts, and presently dispose every body to enter upon the matter of supply.

These last confederations, urged by a person, in whole knowledge of the temper of the house the king had great confidence, made his Majesty tell such members as came to receive his orders, that they might follow the dictates of their own judgment. Upon this the bill had a considerable majority in the commons[16] and was carried up to the peers by all the members in great triumph, and as in cases they much delight in.

The house of peers was no sooner possessed of the bill, than it was read, and a very keen resolution appeared in many to use the utmost dispatch in passing it, though, besides the exceptions justly entertained against the very principle of the bill, it contained many clauses, which some thought highly derogatory to the king's honour and prerogative.

The duke of Buckingham and lord Ashley were the most violent supporters of it ; and the latter, among other arguments, said, that if this bill did not pass, all the rents in Ireland would rise to a vast proportion, and those in England fall as much, so that in a year or two the duke of Ormond would have a greater revenue than the earl of Northumberland.

It can hardly be imagined what impression this made, as a, thing not to be endured; whereas the duke's hereditary estate in Ireland was four times as large as that of the earl in this country, and the revenue of it, before the troubles, was not inferior to the other. But nothing was more manifest, than that the warmth, with which it was urged by many lords, proceeded from the envy they had of the duke's station in one kingdom, and of his fortune in the other.

The whole debate was very un-parliamentary, and there being, among those who advanced the bill, fewer speakers than there were of those who opposed it, those few took upon them to speak oftener than they ought to do, and reply to every man who declared himself to be of another opinion; and, when they were put in mind of the rule of the house, that no man should speak above once upon the same question, they called presently to have the house resolved into a committee, which any single member may require, and then every man may speak as often as he pleased. Thus the time was wasted in unprofitable debate, without,making the least progress.

There was not less irregularity in the conduct of the commons, who sent frequent massages to press the dispatch of the bill, when they knew well the debates of every day ; and it was often urged as an argument, that the house of commons was the fittest judge of the necessitates and grievances of the people, and that as they had passed the bill, the lords ought to conform to their opinion.

In fine, there grew so great a licence of words in this debate, and so many personal reflections, that every day some quarrels arose to the great scandal of a court that was the supreme judicatory of the kingdom.

Curious Circumstances of a Challenge

The duke of Buckingham, who assumed a liberty of speaking when and what he would, in a dialect unusual and un-grave, his similes and other expressions giving occasion of much mirth and laughter, one day said in the debate, "that whoever was against the bill, had either an Irish interest, or an Irish understanding."Lord Ossory, the duke of Ormond's eldest son, was very much offended at so gross a reflection; but having himself very narrowly escaped the censure of the house lately, for reproaching lord Ashley with having been a counsellor to Cromwell, he would not trust himself with giving a present answer.

An opportunity soon offered of his meeting the duke, when he insisted upon satisfaction; and a well known spot in Chelsea fields was chosen to decide the matter within an hour. But the duke

thought proper to mistake the place, and crossing the water, went to a field over against Chelsea, and staid there, till some gentlemen came to prevent a duel which he never intended to fight.

Finding that lord Ossory was not in custody that night, and being sure that he would soon hear from him again, he took a strange resolution, and next morning as soon as the house sat, lord Osfory being likewise present, related the whole affair, though with great contusion between aggravating the presumption of lord Ossory, and making the offence as heinous as the violating all the privileges of parliament could amount unto, and magnifying his own courage and readiness to fight upon any opportunity, when it was clear enough that he had declined it by a gross shift.

Lord Ossory, greatly troubled that the contest was likely to be only in that place, did not deny the fact; but endeavoured to exculpate himself by asserting that, at the time he called the duke to account, when has grace insisted much on the privilege of parliament, to decline giving him any satisfaction, he had expressly declared to his grace, that he did not question him for any words spoken in that house, but for abusive language used else where, and for affronts which he had at other times chosen to bear, rather than disturb the company.

They were both ordered to withdraw to different rooms near the house; and the duke's partisans, who were very numerous, insisted loudly on the magnitude of the offence, which concerned the honour and safety of the highest tribunal in the kingdom, and the liberty, and security of every one of its members.

They said, and indeed with great truth, "that if any lord by his licentious and offensive language exceeded the modest limits prescribed in debate, the house had the power and the practice to restrain, and reprehend, or imprison the person, according to/the nature of the offence, and that no other remedy and examination could be applied to it by the king himself, but if every private man were allowed to take exception against any words, which the house found no fault with, and to require others to justify with their sword, all that they said in discharge of their conscience, and for the good of their country, there would be ark end to the privilege of parliament."

Then applying these indisputable maxims to the present case, they concluded, "that too great a punishment could not be inflicted upon the notorious and monstrous offence of lord Ossory, which concerned every member of the house as much as it did the duke of Buckingham, who had behaved himself as well as the is custom and iniquity of the age would admit, and had given no offence to the house, but had, on the contrary, always paid it the utmost respect and reverence.

It is not easy to say how far this last conclusion mighty have prevailed, had not some of the lords, who were known not to be the duke's friends, affected to agree to it, and even put on the shew of earnestness that his grace might receive no punishment, "because," they said, "he had committed no fault, for it was very evident he never intended to fight; and had, when no other tergiversation would serve his turn, prudently mistaken the place that was appointed by himself."

This was urged with so much irony, joined to some witty remarks on certain expressions used by the duke himself, that his better friends thought it would be more for his honour to undergo the censure of the house, than the disgrace of such a vindication ; and so both the duke and his challenger were sent to the Tower.

Further Acts of Indecency and Outrage

Those two lords had no sooner undergone the sentence, and were set at liberty, their mutual displeasure being suppressed, or rather silenced by the king's command, than another more untoward outrage happened, that continued the like disturbance.

During the debate on this bill, there was a conference appointed with the house of commons, in which the duke of Buckingham was one of the managers. As they were sitting in the painted

chamber, which is seldom done in good order, it happened that the marquis of Dorchester took his place next to the duke. There had been for some time no good correspondence between them; and one of them now changing his posture for his own case, which made the situation of the other more uneasy, they first began with bustling, and afterwards fell to direct blows, in which the marquis, who was the lower of the two in stature, lost his periwig. .

The misdemeanour, greater than had ever happened in that place, could not be concealed, but was reported to the house, as soon as the conference was ended. Both parties were heard, and both confessed enough to make them undergo the censure of the house.

They were sent to the Tower, from whence, after a few days, they were released together, and such a reconciliation made, as after such encounters is usual, where either party thinks himself before hand with the other; as the marquis had much of the duke's hair in his hands, to make amends for the other's pulling off his periwig.

When things were thus far quieted, the bill was again entered upon, with no less passion, for the stock that had been wasted. Every argument against the principle of the bill, however just and forcible, made but little impression.

It was in vain to say, that it was as partial and unjust to deprive Ireland of its only traffic, on the pretence of its being attended with some imaginary grievance here, as it would be to take away the trade from any one county in England, merely because it might be thought to produce some inconvenience to another. These and many other remarks on the injury so impolitic a bill must be attended with to England itself[17], had no other effect than that of leaving out a very partial proviso in favour of Scotland, to which the house of commons likewise consented, though not without much opposition.

After this almost useless discussion of the principle. of the bill, the debate fell upon some clauses, one of which in particular struck at the king's authority; by making his licence or warrant, to permit at any time the importation of Irish cattle, of no effect, but liable to be controuled by a constable.

This clause was warmly opposed by some of the royal party as not only derogatory to the king's just prerogative, but likely to be attended with very fatal effects, is, in case of a murrain, or any disease amongst our own cattle, the king should not have power to suspend the prohibition, and thereby to provide for the supply of his subjects, and prevent a common dearth.

There was another objection to those restraints on any importation whatever of Irish cattle, as by a former act of parliament Ireland was every year to supply three thousand beeves to be delivered at Chester and another English port for the provision of the king's house.

But it was said in reply, that the end of the bill would be wholly eluded by such exceptions, or by permitting the king to dispense at pleasure with the violation of it; for that his inclinations were well known, and therefore the effect of them, and the importunity of his courtiers must be provided against.

In this discourse an extraordinary liberty of language was used, which reflected so strongly on the king's honour, and indeed upon his whole council and court; that all who possessed any zeal or affection for hit majesty could not avoid relenting it, and insisting that those clauses should be amended in some places, and totally left out in others. These alterations were made in spite of the sturdy efforts of a very powerful opposition; and the bill so amended was returned to the commons.

If the commons expressed great dissatisfaction at the delay of the bill, it may be easily judged how inflamed they were at so many amendments: they rejected them all; and voted, that they

would adhere to their own bill, without departing from a word of it, except with reference to Scotland, from which, as I before remarked, they receded, though not unanimously. Many conferences took place between both houses, in which the commons maintained their adherence with wonderful obstinacy; and the managers for them not only repeated the arguments and expressions which had been used in the house of peers against leaving any power in the king to dispense, but added several observations of their own, reflecting still worse upon his majesty's honour, and yet concluded as if they could say more, if they were provoked; upon which every man might make what glosses he pleased, and the king himself was left to his own imaginations.

Charitable Donation of 30,000 Irish Beeves Rejected

There need be no other instance given of the incredible passion, that was shewn in supporting this bill, than a particular which related to the city of London.

Upon the news of the great fire, and of the devastation it made here, the several provinces of Ireland having digested among themselves a plan of relief for the most distressed sufferers, presented a declaration to the lord lieutenant and council, that they had so tender a sense of that calamity, that is they were able to raised money to administer some affiance to the city, they w would willingly offer it; but that not being in their power, they were desirous of giving at least fine testimony of their good will, and had agreed to send to the lord mayor and city of London, to be disposed of by them to such particular uses as should be thought most convenient, thirty thousand beeves, which should be delivered within such a time, and at such ports as were named, to any such persons as should be appointed to receive them.

The lord lieutenant and council, at their request, sent notice of this offer to the king and likewise to the city of London; upon which, as the bill to prohibit the importation of Irish cattle was then depending in the house of lords, a, petition was presented to them by the lord mayor and aldermen, humbly requesting that a proviso might be inserted, that nothing contained in that bill should hinder the city of London from enjoying the charitable donation of thirty thousand cattle, but be allowed to import the same.

It can hardly be believed with what passion and indignation this petition was received by the house. The promoters of the bill broke out into violent invectives against the city for its presumption, in interposing its own particular interest, to obstruct the public affairs of the kingdom: they made very severe reflections upon the lord lieutenant and council of Ireland for countenancing such an address, and becoming instruments to promote and advance it:

They would not allow it to be an offering of charity, but a cheat and a cozenage, to elude an act of parliament, which could not but he heard of in Ireland, and even presumed to be passed by this time; which if it had been, and such a dispensing power left in the king, as was proposed, it would now, they said, be seen how it would have been applied; for they could not doubt but people enough would have advised the king to gratify the city of London with a licence for importation; and that licence, they were also sure, could not, or would not have been so warily drawn, but that by means of it, instead of thirty thousand, there would be three hundred thousand imported into England:

This, they asserted, was the great charity aimed at; and therefore moved, that the petition and the proviso might be both rejected.

But the other party, who looked upon the offer made by the Irish as a very seasonable intention of charity, prevailed to have the proviso inserted, and transmitted with their approbation to the lower house.

The relief, however, of distressed citizens could not induce the commons to deviate in the smallest degree from their original purpose. The proviso for importing the generous gift of the Irish met with no better fate than any of the other amendments; and though, at a conference between the

two houses, in order to remove the objection that more cattle might be imported under cover of the others, it was proposed that the beeves should be killed in Ireland, and powdered there, and sent over in barrels or calks; yet the commons found cozenage in that also, and were as angry with the cattle when they were dead, as when they were alive; so that no expedient could alter or remove their obstinacy.

In short, nothing was got by the conferences but the discovery of new jealousies of the king and the court, and new intimations of the discontents and murmurs in the country because the bill was so long obstructed.

All this being represented to the king with the most ghastly aspects towards what effects it might produce, his majesty in the end was prevailed upon, notwithstanding very earnest advice to the contrary[18], not only to be willing to give his assent, when it should be offered him, but to solicit particularly many of the lords to depart from their own sense, and conform to what he thought convenient to his service.

This was matter of great triumph to the commons, and to those members of the house of lords, with whom they caballed[19].

Lord Mordaunt's Impeachment

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There were-many other affairs of a more private nature, which at this rime administered farther occasion of faction and dissension in the two houses, and greatly retarded and perplexed all public business.

The commons having preferred articles of impeachment against lord Mordaunt, the constable of Windsor Castle, took offence, that the accused was suffered to remain within the bar of the lords, while the articles of his impeachment were reading; and demanded, that he should be obliged to quit his seat.

The peers, whom his majesty, from particular obligations. to that lord, had previously disposed to favour him as much as possible, rejected the demand of the commons, and even refused to confer with them on the subject, as it was a point of judicature, which the others had no right to-interfere in. This was adding new fuel to the flame, that already burned with too much violence. The displeasure, which arose from the smallest come& vented itself in matters of much greater moment; and produced passions and animosities that were not quickly laid aside, after the affair itself, which had excited them, was composed and ended.

The Chancellor Renders Himself Very Obnoxious to The Commons

In most of the debates on any question of privilege, but especially in the two great struggles upon the Irish bill, and the bill for examining the public accounts, the chancellor had the misfortune to lose much credit in the house of commons.

Whenever he thought they over-stepped the proper limits, he was too apt to speak of them with less reverence than they expected. He often reminded the lords of the mischief which, he said, had their original from the liberties assumed by the house of commons, and the compliance to which the peers bad, descended in the late times, till after multiplied affronts the whole authority was wrested out of their hands, and the door of their house was shut up with a padlock.

Language of this kind, though it flowed from his own conviction, gave as much offence to some of the lords present, as it could do to any of the commons. The truth is, he had seen and suffered so much during the troubles, and his mind was so terribly haunted with the spectre of rebellion, that he took the alarm at the smallest encroachment, and believed that the just prerogatives of

the crown could not be secured, but by carefully watching and restraining all the excesses, which were affected by either house, under the name of privileges.

His enemies were glad td hear him at any time speak against the proceedings of the commons, as they knew it would be warmly relented in that house ; and many of his friends informed him how ill it was taken, and how much every thing he said was aggravated in the. reports made of it; and therefore desired him to use less fervour in these augmentations.

But in things of that kind he was inconsolable; and though he received the strongest intimations, that a storm would be shortly raised to shake him, yet he did not dread it, never suspecting, till it actually burst upon him, that it could proceed from that quarter, whence alone it was capable of doing him injury.

Though the commons knew well that the Irish bill could never have palled the upper house but by the king's powerful interposition, they remained still jealous, or pretended to be so, that he would not give his assent, which till he should do, they would admit no debate.

As soon therefore as it was ready, his majesty went to the house of peers, where having given his assent to that, and to another bill, he commanded the attendance of the commons, and told them, "that he had now paired their bills, and had been in hope to have had other bills ready to have passed too.

He could not," he said, "forget that within few days after their coming together in September, both houses had presented to him their vote and declaration, that they would give him a supply proportional to his occasions; and the confidence of that had made him anticipate all the small part of his revenue which was unanticipated, for the payment of the seamen; and his credit had gone farther than he had reason to think it would;

But it was now at an end." He then observed, "that this was the first day he had heard of a supply, being the eighteenth of January, and what it would amount to God only knew[20]; and what time he had to make such preparations as were necessary, they could well enough judge; and he must tell them, what discourses soever were abroad, he was not in any treaty, but by the grace of God he would not give over himself and them, but would do what was in his power for defence of of both." He added, " that it was high time for them to make good their promise, and it was high time for them to be in the country, as well for the raising of money, as that the lord lieutenants and deputy lieutenants might watch those seditious spirits, which were at work to disturb the public peace: he was therefore resolved to put an end to that session on the next Monday sevennight, before which time he desired that all things might be made ready, which he was to dispatch."

His majesty concluded with' laying " he was not willing to complain that they had dealt unkindly with him in a bill he had then palled, in which they had manifested a greater distrust of him than, he had deserved: he did not pretend to be without infirmities, but he had NEVER BROKEN HIS WORD to them; and, if be did not flatter himself; the nation had never less cause to complain of GRIEVANCES, or the LEAST INJUSTICE, or OPPRESSION, than it had in these seven years, since it had pleased God to restore him to them[21].

The Bill of Supply Passed at Length

This little quickness in the king had the effect which he intended for though some of the refractory party endeavoured to dissuade the commons from proceeding on the supply, till the bill for taking the public accounts, which they had sent up to the lords, should be debated there, and passed, yet the house urged by the shortest of the time allowed them, and desirous of leaving some relish of their former duty and compliance, made such progress in the bill for supply, that it was sent up to the lords, and carried through the necessary stages there against the day prescribed[22].

On the eighth of February the king came to the parliament, and the speaker of the commons presenting to him the bill of supply, he gave his assent to it[23], and thanked them for it, with an assurance, that the money should be laid out for the end it was given; but at the same time expressed his hope, that he should live to have bills of this nature in the old style, with fewer provisos.

He then took notice that the bill of accounts was not offered to him ; but promised to issue out his own commission for that purpose. Though the season was, very far spent, he said, he would make all the preparations he could, but would not reject any good overtures for an honourable peace.

Then exhorting them to use their influence in their respective counties to reconcile the people to necessary burthens, and to remove the false imagining infused into their hearts by the malice of ill men, he prorogued the parliament to the tenth of October.

Impossibility to Provide a Fleet to Face The Enemy

Now the king had much bore to do than he had time or tools to dispatch. After giving orders to the attorney and solicitor-general to prepare a commission for examining the public accounts, in so plausible a manner as might prevent the future clamour of parliament, and yet screen the treasurer of the prize money from any particular inquiry, he began to turn his thoughts to the posture of affairs with respect to the enemy.

The unthrifty expenditure of all the former supplies, the misapplication and waste of the money arising from prizes, the anticipation of every branch of the revenue, **the loss of credit from breach of faith to the bankers**, the arrears due to all the workmen in the dockyards, who were near a mutiny, the insufficiency of the late grant to supply the numberless wants arising from past mismanagement, and the advanced state of the season, all concurred to render it impossible to provide a fleet ready to encounter with the potent enemies in the spring.

A system of defence was therefore to be adopted; and for this purpose it was resolved, first, to erect a fort at Sheerness for the security of the river, and to repair and' strengthen Langhorn point upon the coast of Essex and Suffolk;

Secondly to station a good squadron of light frigates on the coast of Scotland, and another of the same strength off Plymouth, both which should intercept the trade of the Dutch, if they did not protect it with strong convoys, which would break their fleet, and in those cases the frigates might easily retire into port;

Thirdly, to keep also some frigates constantly in the Downs, to chase picaroons from infesting, the coast, and to watch the motions of the enemy;

Fourthly, to put some of the greatest ships at Chatham, Portsmouth, and other places, in readiness against the end of the summer, before which time money might be provided, and the fleets of the enemy being weary and foul after a long cruise, it might be presumed the French would return early into their own forts, which were so far off, and then the frigates from the west and the north might join the great [hips, and either fight the Dutch, if they should chose it, or infest their coast more than they had done this, and take all their homeward bound ships;

Fifthly, to guard against being deprived of the necessary supplies of coal by sending orders to Newcastle immediately to employ all their ships and all they could procure, with two or three vessels given them by his majesty, in conveying as much coals as possible to London and the towns adjacent, before the enemy's fleet could put to sea, and by assigning them convoys too strong for privateers, or small parties of men of war; and lastly to restrain merchant ships from

going to sea, and to advise them to countermand their former orders to all factors and correspondents in foreign parts; till furthest notice.

Humiliating and Dangerous Situation of England

Some of there expedients were very humiliating to a power, whose dominion had long been established at sea; but they were necessary ; and if they been duly carried into execution, they would have prevented the injury and disgrace, which the nation suffered in the ensuing summer.

The king had not himself thought of this defensive plan; but approved it very much, when he heard it discussed; and he liked it the better, because at that time, as he was heartily weary of the war, so he was not without a reasonable hope of peace.

The grounds of this hope, the progress thereupon, the beginning of a treaty, and the conclusion thereof; will be the discourse and relation we shall next enter upon.

Vigorous Efforts to Bring About A Peace

However unfortunate the issue of the negotiation with Denmark proved, through the unsteadiness and perfidy of that court, Mr, Henry Coventry had conducted what had been committed to him with good effect in Sweden. Having disposed that country to enter into a closer union with England, and to send two embassadors here for that purpose, he returned home to give his majesty an account of the progress he had made; and the embassadors arrived soon after, about the time of the great fire.

Their professed purpose was to mediate a peace; but with a secret assurance to the king, that if a treaty should not take effect, the crown of Sweden would firmly unite itself to his majesty's interest, and engage in the war with him.

The embassador from Spain, and the emperor's envoy who was in the same interest, did heartily wish for a peace between England and Holland, with the exclusion of France. But if that could not be, they had much rather the war should continue as is was, that France should be comprehended in the peace; for which they had some reason.

At this time the king of Spain was dead, and as that event was likely to put an end to the quiet of Flanders, they would have been glad to engage England in the defence of those provinces, in which Holland also could not feel itself unconcerned.

Upon' this ground they made some attempts, with the king's knowledge, to bring about a treaty of this kind; but De Witt, who entirely governed the councils of Holland, could not be induced to consent to any overtures, made to separate before, or in the treaty, from France. He even informed that court of whatever was proposed by the Spaniard, or the emperor's envoy, or any other person to that purpose, and swelled his beyond the truth, to heighten and endear his own honour and punctuality.

The same event which made the Spaniard desirous of a separate conjunction with England and Holland, rendered the king of France very willing to put an end to this war, that he might be at full liberty to establish his claims to Flanders, for which he was now making vigorous preparations.

The queen-mother, who, since the beginning of the war, had fixed her residence at Paris, sent over the earl of St. Alban's, under a pretence of looking. after her affairs here, to inform the king of the good temper the French court was in, which was farther confirmed by letters from Monsieur, Rouvigny to the earl during his stay here.

The king had a very great objection to make any use of the earl's agency in this business; but he was contented that the earl should make haste back to Paris, and found the disposition of the French king, whether it would not be possible to persuade him to treat apart, and exclude Holland; or it that was not to be hoped, that at least he might be brought to think it reasonable, that the Dutch restore what they had taken on the coast of Guinea, and likewise pay a good sum towards the charge of the war.

Alternative Proposed by France

A few days after the earl's return to Paris, he sent an express to inform his majesty that, after some conferences with Monsieur Lionne the French minister, he found that the king of France could not quit the Dutch, except they refused to make peace upon just conditions.

The minister had also told him, that the expectation of a sum of money was a thing so unheard of after a war, that the very mention of it would shut the door against any treaty. But he gave two papers to the earl, to he transmitted to his majesty, which, he said, the Dutch would consent to; but if more should be required, the treaty was at an end, before it was begun, and the sword must determine it.

One of the papers contained this alternative, of which his majesty might make his choice, whether all things should continue in the state in which they were at present, either side enjoying what they had got; or that a just computation should be made of the losses on both sides, and they who were found to have received most damage, should be repaired at the charge of the other.

The other paper was, that if his majesty approved of either of these proposals, he should himself make choice of the place where to treat, whither all parties should send their embassadors; but the French king desired, that his majesty would not make choice of any place in the king of Spain's. dominions; and Mr. Van Beuninghen, the Dutch embassador at Paris had named Cologne, Frankfort, or Hamburg.

There appeared little difficulty in the choice of the alternative, for the English had taken much more from the Dutch than they had taken from England. But then the place for the treaty was not so easy to be fixed upon. That such deliberations, however, might not retard the progress of the treaty, which it was so much the king's interest to have in a state of forwardness, if not concluded, before the Dutch should put to sea, and discover his inability to set out a fleet, he sent back the express with his acceptance of the first proposal, to which as soon as the Dutch should give their consent, he would name some equal place for the treaty.

Before the answer could come from Paris, it was resolved in the select committee, on the suggestion of Sir William Coventry, supported by lord Arlington, that the Swedish embassador in Holland should be engaged to present a message from his majesty to the States General, offering to send his embassadors to treat of the peace at the Hague, that it might be concluded with the greater case and dispatch.

The proposers of this measure promised great advantage from it; but besides that it was not very honourable to take a new course, after the answer just sent to France, it was equally vain and impolitic to attempt to fight that court with its own favourite weapons, duplicity and artifice, in the use of which it had always discovered superior expertness.

Nor did the scheme succeed in Holland. De Witt, who was present when the message was delivered, directly saw the drift of it; and could not forbear telling the States, that the design was only to stir up the people against the magistrates, and in fact to make them the judges of the conditions of peace. By this and some other remarks he prevailed upon the States General forthwith to declare in the negative, that the treaty should not be at the Hague; but, at the same time, after naming again Cologne and Frankfort, they added, that if the king desired to do them

the honour to appoint it in any part of their dominions, which they should not presume to propose, they would content that it might be at Breda, or Maestricht, or a place or two more, which they named.

The king of France, who soon got intelligence of this proceeding, took it very ill, that, at a time when he acted with so much candour, and opened the door to a treaty, which the Dutch had peevishly shut against it, the king of England, after having made his choice of the alternative offered, should send these underhand overtures to the Hague.

But the English cabinet had as much reason to complain of France at the same time; for that court, upon receiving his majesty's acceptance of the proposed alternative, pretended that Monsieur Lionne had, through some oversight, omitted inserting in the proposals a clause respecting the island of Poleron, which the Dutch peremptorily insisted upon keeping.

Now this was the most offensive obstacle that could be thrown in the way of the negotiation. Poleron was an interest so valuable, that Cromwell had insisted upon it as a principal article of the peace made with the Dutch, by which he acquired great popularity; and the king, upon his restoration, thought his honour so much concerned in not suffering his subjects to be deprived of that right which Cromwell had vindicated, that he would not consent to a treaty with the Dutch, without the renewal of the same article, the nonperformance of which, on their part, his majesty had declared to be the principal cause of the rupture.

The giving up that point would therefore, in the opinion of the world, draw the whole guilt of the war upon his majesty, or, what would be as bad, the reproach of having purchased a peace upon conditions very dishonourable to himself, and at the charge, and with the estate of his subjects. This was very strongly urged to the king in the select committee, and he was thereby persuaded to send back a dispatch to the earl of St. Alban's, with a very lively resentment of the indignity offered to his majesty, in the French court's receding from what had been proposed by themselves, and in asking what his majesty was resolved never to grant.

Notwithstanding all this, new overtures came from the king of France, who said, that the Dutch had always protested against any treaty, without the release of Poleron, though the mention of it had been unfortunately omitted by his minister; but, if he could not prevail upon his allies to recede from that point, he did not despair of obliging them to give a considerable sum of money in compensation for it.

He therefore urged the appoint, merit of commissioners to open a treaty, which, if once begun, he was sure would not be broken off, before a peace should be concluded. He engaged that the French embassadors, as soon as they met, should propose a cessation from all acts of hostility, to which he had no doubt of an immediate assent.

He added, that the Dutch had already promised that their fleet should remain in their harbours till the middle of May and he engaged on his own part that no hostile act should be done by him from the present time, and that his fleet should nor stir out of port, and that his embassadors should in all things behave themselves as his majesty could wish, that particular only of Poleron excepted, for which they should also endeavour to obtain a compensation.

After the warmth of his majesty's indignation on the subject of that last article was a little abated, he was very willing to hear any thing that might revive the hope of a treaty, being indeed justly armed at the consequences that must attend the continuance of the war in his present condition.

The mention also of a recompense for Poleron gave the hint of an expedient for lessening the odium that might be incurred by giving up that island. The East-India company were sent for, and told, that the king had overtures made him towards a peace, the greater obstruction to which was likely to arise from their interest in the island of Poleron; but that having heard that the Dutch

intended to offer an adequate recompense for it, he gave them this timely notice, that they might chose from among themselves such persons as best understood their affairs, to go over with his embaffadors, and to be consulted when this point should come into debate.

The whole business was now laid before a fun meeting of the privy council, who were all sensible of the necessity of dispatch, from the state of the king's affairs, and therefore readily concurred in whatever might accelerate the opening of the treaty. After a short debate, Breda was thought the least exceptionable place for a congress; and as nothing farther remained to be determined upon, but the appointment of embassadors, the king named for that purpose lord Hollis, who had been lately emmbassador in France, and. Mr. Henry Coventry, who had shewn much ability in the negotiation with Sweden.

Though nobody durst object to the king's choice, yet it gave much secret offence to lord Arlington, who had designed that honour for himself and Sir Thomas Clifford, who was newly made a privy councillor, and comptroller of the household, upon the death of fir Hugh Pollard.

Embassadors Sent by All Parties to Breda

Dispatches were immediately sent to Paris and to the Hague with advice of the king's determination; and the different powers,France, Holland, and Denmark soon appointed their respective deputies[24]. The Swedish embassadors, who were the only mediators, prepared likewise to go to the treaty[25], having agreed with the king, that, if the treaty should not produce a peace, of which no man could be confident, their court would immediately declare in favour of England, both against the Dutch and the French.

This assurance was the more encouraging, as the Swedish army, deemed at that time the best in Europe, was very near the dominions of the States, and therefore capable of acting with immediate effect. In order to confirm Sweden in these sentiments, means were found to supply that crown with a sum of money for the support of its army; and the foundation was laid of another treaty, shortly after known by the name of the Triple Alliance, to the conferences upon which the baron D'Isdla, the emperor's envoy, was also privy.

All things being thus adjusted, and Breda having been agreed to by France, and. Holland, the king on receiving notice that the French embassadors were on their way thither, ordered his own embassadors to depart, with the greater dispatch, as it was now the month of May, when the season for hostile operations being at hand made it necessary to secure that cessation, which the king of France had promised to obtain, as soon as the treaty should be entered upon.

A change, which took place about the same time in a very important department of administration, obliges me to interrupt for a moment my remarks on the farther progress of this treaty.

The Death of The Lord Treasurer

The earl of Southampton, the lord treasurer, for whose removal from office so many intrigues had been entered into, was now ready to expire with the stone. It had kept him in great pain many months, and he had sent to Paris for a surgeon, in order to be cut, but had deferred it too long, the physicians not agreeing on the nature of his complaint; so that at last he grew too weak to undergo that operation. His enemies, who had made the king believe that his majesty's service suffered exceedingly by the delay of his former purpose to dismiss the treasurer, did not think that their triumph would be notorious enough, if their suffered the earl to die in the office.

At the very time, therefore, that he was almost expiring with pain, they urged the king to send for the staff; but the chancellor again prevailed upon him not to do so ungracious an act to one, who had served him and his father so long and so eminently; an act also that was to so little

purpose as the ravishing an office unseasonably, which must in five or fix days fall into his majesty's hands, as it did within less time by the earl's death.

His Office Put Into Commission

Next day the office was put into commission, and consigned to Sir Coventry, Sir Thomas Clifford, Sir Joseph Duncombe, the Duke of Albemarle, and Lord Ashley, the majority of whom was to make a quorum; which was evidently intended to throw the management of the whole business into the hands of the three first, the duke being added to the number only out of compliment, and lord Ashley on account of his place as chancellor of the exchequer:

The king expected that as soon as the embassadors should meet, a cessation of hostilities would be the first thing agreed upon. The French proposed it, according to their master's promise, and in a manner which seemed-to imply their confidence in its being acceded to; nor did the Dutch seem to refuse it, but answered that the adjusting all things in order to a cessation would require as much time as would serve to finish the treaty, considering that all material points were in a manner already settled by the king's having made his choice of the alternative offered him.

This and some other instances of their supercilious behaviour made it manifest that the Dutch, fully sensible of their own superiority, and of the king's unprepared and almost defenceless state, were no farther inclined at that time to a peace, than as they were urged and almost compelled to it by the court of France, which was impatient to have it concluded.

They would not hear any mention of the re-delivery of Poleron, which they said the king of France had promised should not be demanded, and as little about any recompense in money, nor would they fuller the merchant deputies from the English company to go to Amsterdam to confer with the East-India company there on the subject of any composition.

It quickly appeared that they had revenge in their hearts for the last year's affront and damage in the road of Ulye; and that they were resolved to seize the present opportunity of rendering De Witt's menaces effectual; for the pensionary had often said, "that, before any peace, they would leave some such mark of their having been upon the English coast, as the English had left upon that of Holland."

Dutch Fleet Enter The Thames

In the beginning of June, about a fortnight after the conferences were begun[26], De Ruyter sailed with the fleet for the coast of England; and having a fair wind; stood for the river Thames, which put the county of Kent into such an alarm; that all near the sea left their houses and fled into the country.

The earl of Winchelsea, who was lord lieutenant of that county, being at that time embassador at Constantinople, and the deputy lieutenants, from the division and equality of their power, wanting sufficient authority in a moment of such general distraction, the king sent down lieutenant-general Middleton with commission to draw all the trained bands together, and all the forces that could be collected from the neighbouring counties; and in consequence a very large body of horse and foot was soon assembled at Rochester.

It now appeared how little had been done towards executing even the plan of defence, to which all preparations for the present year were, from the most unfortunate mismanagement, necessarily confined.

At Sheerness, where there had been so much talk of erecting a fort for the security of the river, and whither the king himself had gone twice in the winter, there were a company or two of soldiers, but the fortifications were so weak and unfinished, and all other means of resistance so

entirely wanting, that the Dutch fleet no sooner approached it than with their cannon they beat all the works flat, and drove the men from the ground, and then landing some of their own troops in boats, they seemed resolved to fortify and keep it.

This put the country into a flame, and the news of it exceedingly disturbed the king. He was sensible of the consequence of the place, and how easily it might have been secured; and was the more troubled that it had been neglected. The duke of Albemarle was immediately ordered to march to Chatham with a party of the guards, and some regiments of the trained bands, which the city offered with great alacrity:

When the duke reached Chatham, he found Middleton in so good a posture, and so good a body of men, that he had no apprehension of any attempt the Dutch could make at land; and wrote with great confidence on that head to the king, informing his majesty, at the same time, that he had put a chain over the river, which would hinder the Dutch from coming up, adding, that if they should venture to land any where, which he believed they durst not do, he would soon make them repent it.

There was, indeed, no danger of the enemy making any considerable attempt by land[27]: they were too wise to think of it: their bushiness was an element they had more confidence in, and more power upon: they had good intelligence how loosely all things were left in the river; and therefore, as soon as the tide came to help them, they sailed up, not minding the chain, which their ships broke in pieces, and passed without the least pause.

All men were to confounded to see the Dutch sleet advance over the chain, which they unskillfully looked upon as a wall of brass, that they knew not what to do. The duke of Albemarle himself, though of a temper void of fear, was totally at a loss what expedients to adopt, or what orders to give in such an emergency.

There were two or three ships of the royal navy negligently left in the river, which might have been very easily drawn into safety, and could be of no imaginable use in the place, where they were left.

Into one of these the duke put himself, and invited the young gentlemen, who were volunteers to accompany him, which they readily did in great numbers, with only pikes in their hands. But some of his friends whispered to him how unadvised that resolution was, and how desperate without probability of success, the fleet of the enemy approaching as fast as the tide would enable them.

He was thus prevailed with to go on shore, which if he had not done; both he himself and two or three hundred of the nobility and prime gentry of the king would have inevitably perished. All those ships and some merchantmen laden and ready to put to sea, were presently in a flame, the Dutch commander, knowing that he could not carry them them off, having given orders to burn them[28].

The people of Chatham, who may be in same sort looked upon as an army of seamen, and who might and ought to have secured all those ships, which they had time enough to have done, were in a state of the utmost distraction.

The chief officers there employed all the boats and lighter vessels, which should have towed up the ships, to carry away their own goods and household stuff; and gave what they left behind for lost. Such in fact was the general confusion and despair, that if the Dutch had prosecuted their advantage with vigour, they might have burned the entire navy at Chatham, and taken or destroyed all the ships that lay higher up the river, and so have abundantly revenged themselves for what they had suffered in the road of Ulye. But they thought they had done enough, and so made use of the ebb to carry them back again.

Their fleet then failing round the coast continued to spread alarm, and to enjoy the pleasure of their insulting triumph with conscious security[29].

The report of the disaster in the river, and the flame of the ships which were burnt, made it easily believed in London; that all Chatham was reduced to ashes, that the enemy had landed in many places, and that their fleet was already come up as far as Greenwich, with many other extravagancies which naturally arose in timid minds.

Nor was the confusion less in the court itself, where those who had most promoted the rupture at first, and reproached such as were against it with want of public spirit, and who had never spoken of the Dutch but with contempt, as a nation rather worthy to be cudgeled than fought with, were now the most dejected men that can be imagined.

They railed bitterly at the advisers of so ruinous a war; and wished that a peace, as the only hope, were made on any terms. In short, the consternation in both city and court was as great as is the Dutch had not only been masters of the river, but had really landed an army of one hundred thousand men.

Whoever remembers that conjuncture, and was then present in the galleries and private apartments at Whitehall, whither all the world flocked with equal liberty, can easily call to mind many instances of such wild despair, and even ridiculous apprehensions as I am willing to forget, and would not that the least mention of them should remain.

This unreasonable distemper did not pass away, when it was known that the Dutch fleet had left the river, and had withdrawn their men from Sheerness, which was a manifestation very sufficient that they had no design upon land.

There remained a strong persuasion in the minds of many, that they would return again; in which they were confirmed by intelligence that the Dutch were still upon the coasts, and gave the same alarm now to Essex and Suffolk, as they had before done to Kent. It was said, that they meant to attack Harwich, which drew all the trained bands of those counties to the seaside; and the duke of York went thither to conduct them, if there should be occasion.

In this perplexity the king was not at ease, and the less so, because every man took the liberty to speak to him of the discontents and general outcry of the people all over the kingdom, and to give him counsel what was to be done.

Some advised him to call the parliament, which had been prorogued to the twentieth of October, and it was now only the middle of June; but it being a current opinion, that upon a prorogation the parliament cannot be convened before the day, though upon an adjournment it may, they brought Mr. Prynne, the keeper of the records in the Tower, privately to the king, to satisfy him, that upon an extraordinary occasion it might be done; and Prynne's judgment, which his majesty undervalued enough in all other cases, very much confirmed him in what he had a mind to.

He fancied it was the only expedient that would give him case in his present difficulties; though most discerning men thought that suck a conjuncture was so unseasonable for the meeting and deliberations of a parliament, that if they had been sitting, the most wholesome advice would be to separate them, till that occasion should be over, which could be best provided for by a more contracted council.

Among other discontents, which his majesty did not suppose it possible to allay without the aid of parliament, the clamour of the army gave him particular uneasiness.

In the beginning of the summer, when he had resolved to have no fleet at sea, there were many reasons which induced him to increase his forces at land[30]; and that he might do it, without

jealousy of the people, he gave commission to three or four persons of the nobility of great fortunes and good names to raise regiments of foot, and to others for troops of horse, which was done with great expedition, and upon their first musters they all received one month's pay.

Some of those levies were sent to quell an insurrection at Inverness, and others were ordered to different ports upon the coast; but it was in view, that, upon the expiration of that month, there must be new pay provided for those regiments and troops. Then the trained bands, which had been drawn together, had continued for one month, which was as long as the law required; and now expected to receive pay, or to be dismissed.

A mutiny, or some other violence was therefore apprehended, and money seemed to be the only remedy, which the new commissioners of the treasury wanting credit to procure, they were very importunate with the king to issue out his proclamation for the immediate meeting of parliament as the only resource.

30. His principal reason was to guard against the just resentment of his subjects, whose generosity and confidence he had abused, whose blood and treasure he had wasted, and whom he had involved in unprecedented disgrace and calamity.

Debate in Council

After the king had taken this resolution, he desired to make it appear the result of a debate in council, though he knew it was contrary to the sense of many of the members. Having called them together, he opened the business himself: he told them, "that they all saw the straights he was in, the insolence of the enemy, and the general distemper of the nation, which made it manifest that it was necessary for him to have an army ready against whatever might happen: that he had no money, and knew not where to get any, nor could imagine any other way to provide against the mischief which were in view, than by convening the parliament."

He then expressed a wish to know the opinion of his council on this or any other expedient; but declared his own sentiments so fully, that it was plain enough, that he thought that remedy the best that could be applied.

When his majesty had done speaking what he intended, three or four of those who had privately given the advice, and were very desirous that it might be followed, enlarged themselves in the debate, that the soldiers could not be kept together without money, which was only to be obtained from parliament, the assembling of whom, notwithstanding the prorogation, they were confident might be lawfully and regularly done.

In order to prevent opposition, they challenged those, who might be of a contrary opinion, to propose some other way how the king might get money.

It was easy for the chancellor to perceive that this challenge was particularly levelled at him, as he had not been any way reserved in his private discourse, to urge several reasons against the measure. He now said, "he knew well upon what disadvantage he spoke, and how unpopular a thing it was to speak against convening the parliament in those straights, which seemed to be capable of no other remedy.

Yet since he thought neither the remedy proper to the disease, nor that it could be applied in time, he could not concur with those who advised it. "Most men," he observed, " who had any knowledge in the law, did confess, that when the parliament stood prorogued to a certain day, the convening them upon a sooner day was very doubtful; and to him, upon all the disquisitions he could make, it was very clear that it could not be done; and therefore he desired the judges might be consulted on that point before any resolution should be taken[31].

The temper of both houses," he added, "was well known, and that it could not be presumed, that when they should come together, the first debate would be on the manner of their being so brought together, and whether they were in a capacity to act; and he doubted there would be very few, who would be forward to pass an act in a season, when the validity of it might be questioned by those, who had no mind to pay any obedience to it: but if their meeting was designed for no other purpose than to take their advice upon all occurrences, he thought it well worth considering, whether in the present general distemper, such an assembly might not interrupt all other consultations and expedients, and yet propose none, and so increase the confusion."

He concluded, "that, is the urgency of affairs was of such a nature, as to make it absolutely necessary to convene a parliament, and if that which stood prorogued, could not lawfully reassemble till the twentieth of October, as he was confident it could not, there was no question to be made but that the king might, by his proclamation, presently dissolve the prorogued parliament, and issue out writs for the speedy calling of another, against which there could be no exception."

A few of the chancellor's staunchest friends declared themselves of the same opinion, which greatly disappointed the other party, who hoped the chancellor would be left alone in the support of an advice, which they believed nobody else would have the courage to defend.

The advocates for immediately calling together the prorogued parliament declaimed vehemently against the idea of a dissolution. They magnified the affections of both houses; said that the king could never hope to see a parliament better constituted for his service, or so many of the members at his disposal; but that he must expect that the Presbyterians would be chosen in all places, and that those, who were now most eminent for opposing his wishes, would be reelected, while his most zealous friends would be every where thrown out.

The debate on this point was likely to beget some warmth, when the king put an end to it, by declaring his confidence in the present parliament and his resolution not to dissolve it; and by defining the members of the council to confine their discourse to the other point, what he was to do towards the raising of money, or how he should be able to maintain the army, is he deferred calling the parliament till the day to which it stood prorogued.

The old argument, that nothing could be done without the aid of parliament, was now renewed with greater confidence; and the supporters of it demanded, rather in an insulting manner, that those, who were against it, might be obliged to offer their advice, what other course should be taken.

His majesty himself asked the chancellor with some quickness what he proposed, to which he replied, "that if in truth what was so confidently insisted upon by others, was in the nature of it not practicable, or being practised could not produce the effect proposed, it ought to be laid aside, that men might apply their thoughts un-biased to find out some other expedient: that he thought it very clear that the parliament could not be assembled, though the proclamation were issued out that very hour, within less than twenty days;

And that even supposing them willing, and checked by no doubt of their being lawfully qualified to grant a supply of money, all men knew the formality of that transaction would require so much time; that money could not be thereby obtained soon enough either to raise an army, or to maintain that part of it already raised, to prevent the landing of an enemy now upon the coast, and, as some pretended, ready every day to make a descent; and yet the sending out a proclamation for reaffirming the parliament, would inevitably put an end to all other counsels and deliberations: that for his part he believed that the Dutch had satisfied themselves in the affront they had already given, and could not be in any condition to pursue it, without the assistance of the French, of whom there could be now no well-founded apprehension; and that his majesty had reason to believe, that the present treaty would in a short time put an end to all hostilities, though the power

and artifice of De Witt had hitherto prevented a cessation: that, as to the support of the troops now on foot to guard the coasts, since money could not be found for their pay, without which free quarter could not be avoided, the only practicable method of preventing this last evil was to write to the lieutenants and deputy lieutenants of the counties, where the army was obliged to remain, that they would cause provisions of all kinds to be brought into those quarters, that so the soldiers may not be compelled to straggle abroad to provide their own victuals, which would end in the worst kind of free quarter;

And that the like letters might be written to the neighbouring counties, wherein no soldiers were quartered, to raise money by way of contribution, (as in the late civil war) which should be abated out of the next impositions, that so the troops might be enabled to continue in the posts where they were for the defence of the kingdom, in the benefit of which those other counties, though not immediately threatened, had their share, and without which they must themselves be exposed to the disorder of the soldiers, and possibly to the invasion of the enemy."

This advice served only to furnish the chancellor's adversaries with very plausible means of ruining him with both the parliament and the people. The council, though far from being unanimous, acquiesced in the contrary resolution, as being agreeable to the king, and a proclamation was accordingly issued to require both houses to meet on a day appointed in the beginning of, August.

All this time the treaty proceeded at Breda as fast as the imperious humour of the Dutch would suffer it. The French king declared himself much offended with their proceedings at sea; and his embassadors spoke so loud, that the States, having fully gratified their intended revenge, gave instructions to their deputies not to be very peremptory upon small objects; and sent such orders to De Ruyter, that there was no more hostility of any moment: only their fleet remained at sea, that it might appear they were masters of it.

But notwithstanding this shew of condescension on the part of the States, they were determined to insist upon their own terms in the most important articles; and it is probable that the same reason, which moved the French to use all possible diligence to bring the treaty to an end, prevailed with the Dutch to use all the delays they could, that it might be prolonged.

The king of France; whole troops were in readiness to invade Flanders; was impatient to march, and yet desirous of first concluding this treaty, that he might be at liberty to enter into such an alliance with England, as might favour his purposes ; and the Dutch, on the other hand, who had no mind that the expedition should be prosecuted,and as much feared the consequences of such an alliance, secretly wished that the treaty might not be concluded till the winter drew nearer.

While matters seemed to remain in this state of suspense, the king of France put an end to all farther doubts of his intentions, by marching into the heart of Flanders, not without some intimation given by his ambassadors, that if the Dutch did not finish the treaty, he would conclude for what concerned himself.

In truth, he had it in his power to give the law to either party, and to incline the balance to whatever side he pleased. But willing alto to conciliate both as far as possible, he strove to keep up the appearance of a mediator, while he secretly flattered each with assurances of his partial regard.

The suddenness of his march into Flanders spread such an alarm in Holland, that the States quickly removed all obstacles to the conclusion of the treaty, except making any compensation for the island of Poleron, or satisfying the English merchants for the loss of the two ships referred to a court of judicature in the treaty of I 662 ; both which they still pertinaciously refused. As these had been the principal grounds of the war, our ambassadors would not consent without farther knowledge of the king's pleasure ; and so one of them, Mr. Henry Coventry, came to give his majesty an account of all particulars, and to receive his final determination.

Peace Concluded 1667

When it was sound that France would not abandon the interest of the Dutch in those material articles, though her ambassadors had opposed other pretensions of theirs; and had even used menaces in resisting some violent proposals made by the Dane, his majesty sent for the East India company, and mentioned his great unwillingness to do anything to their injury, and his fixed resolution never to release their right without their own consent.

They answered, "that they did not wish their private concerns should interrupt what was so necessary for the kingdom at large; and acknowledged that, if the war continued, they should in many respects sustain a greater loss than could be repaired even by the acquisition of the objects now in dispute: they were therefore willing to sacrifice their claims to the public peace."

This obstacle being thus removed, Mr. Coventry returned to Breda, and in a few days after his arrival there all matters were adjusted, and the treaty was signed on the twenty-first of July[32].

There could be no longer any reason for persisting in the former purpose to urge parliament to a very disputable exercise of their authority. There was now no farther life for an army, and cause enough to disband the forces already raised. As the proclamation had been issued for their meeting in the beginning of August, his majesty went to the house of lords on the day appointed, and sending for the commons to attend him, he told his parliament; "that since the condition of his affairs was not so full of difficulty, as it had been when he sent out his proclamation; and since many were of opinion, that there might doubts arise on the regularity of their meeting, he was content to dismiss them till the twentieth of October."

Upon this both houses separated without any debate.

English merchants were given up, without the smallest satisfaction. The country of Arcadia in North America was also exchanged for some conquests made by France in the West Indies; and as a reward to the king of Denmark for the part he had acted, a debt due from him to the Hamburgh company was cancelled.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Downing proposed to Friquet, the emperor's agent, to negotiate a league between his imperial majesty and the king his master, on the express conditions of never coming to an agreement with the States, till the emperor should obtain full satisfaction for all the injuries and oppressions which they had committed on the neighbouring princes, who were vassals of the empire.

2. The bishop was not properly supported even by England; and on the failure of the promised subsidies four thousand of his men revolted; so that at this time he was literally in a state of universal desertion.

3. It is supposed, that the writer here means Mrs. Stewart, the king's near relation, of whom he was so extravagantly enamoured, that he intended to divorce his queen, in order to marry this new mistress. The Earl of Clarendon, to prevent, this, persuaded the young duke of Richmond to pay honourable addresses to that lady, and to espouse her privately. The king was so enraged at the discovery, that he banished the duke with his new duchess from court, and never forgave the chancellor.

4. The Dutch fleet consisted of seventy-one ships of the line, besides several frigates, fire-ships, and yachts; and the English fleet, in consequence of the detachment under the command of prince Rupert, was reduced to fifty-eight ships of the line, with a few frigates and fire-ships.

5. Though patriotism, dignity of mind, and conscious rectitude are undoubtedly the most invigorating principles of true courage, yet it is very evident from this instance of heroism in so servile, perfidious, and unprincipled a man as Monk, "that an idea of military honour, whether true or false, can exist in an individual, without the association of any other principle of honour; and that a character may be adorned with personal bravery, without the participation of any moral virtue."

6. According to Rapin, the English lost in these four days twenty-three great ships, besides several others of less note, six thousand men, and two thousand six hundred prisoners; and the Dutch lost only six ships, two thousand eight hundred soldiers, and fourscore sailors, besides three vice-admirals, with some other officers. But Echard states the account very differently, asserting that the loss of the Dutch amounted to fifteen ships, and that of the English only to nine. The accuracy of either is now of little consequence; but it may with great truth be asserted, that though the Dutch seemed to keep the possession of the sea, the English lost no glory in retiring to their harbours, after having for four days kept the victory undecided, with so great a disparity of force.

7. The vice-admiral's reparation from the commander in chief is by some ascribed to treachery, as Tromp was of the prince of Orange's faction, and De Ruyter one of the firmest supporters of the republican cause. But it is not likely that so brave a man as Tromp would have been capable of such perfidy from any opposition of political sentiments. Were he even indifferent to successes, which in his opinion might only serve to give liability to De Witt's power, he could not forget the gallant manner in which he himself had been lately rescued by De Ruyter from certain destruction. On the second day of the former engagement Tromp was surrounded by the English, and must have been taken, or sunk, had he not been brought off by De Ruyter's timely and spirited interposition. Would he repay suck signal assistance with the basest ingratitude? Would he, through wilful perverseness, suffer his rival in same to bear away from him the double palm of generosity and glory? The cause of his reparation from De Ruyter is much more probably accounted for by Rapin. He sails, "that while de Ruyter and young Evertzen engaged the red and white squadron, Tromp, after a long dispute, routed the blue squadron, commanded by Sir Jeremy Smith. But, by an unpardonable error, instead of remaining with the fleet, he amused himself with pursuing the flying ships of the enemy." For this error, which was attended with very fatal consequences, he was, upon his return home, dismissed the service.

8. This brave man was so affected with his disappointment, as to exclaim, while retreating before the enemy, "Amongst so many bullets, is there not one to put an end to my miserable life."

9. There were above one hundred merchant ships, and two men of war designed for convoys.

10. Immediately after De Ruyter's defeat; the following letter was written by the French king to his ambassador at the Hague, which, being communicated to the States, mutt have been a strong incitement to their refitting and sending out their fleet again with so much expedition: "As soon as I received the sad news of the disgrace which had befallen the arms of my allies, I resolved to send this express to you for several reasons: the first, that you may declare to the States, that my grief on this disaster is not leas than they feel themselves; but we must, by vigorous resolutions, not only lessen all the prejudices of it, but reduce the English to desire peace in earnest: the second, that you may also assure them, that I will contribute heartily in every thing which depends on me and my forces, to procure this desirable end.

"England is not in a condition, for the small advantages which she has gained in the contest with the United Provinces, to resist the efforts of three such powers as are those of France, Denmark, and the States in junction.

"Is the States have it in their power and their will to put their fleet again to sea, as soon as it is repaired, to act as long as the season shall last, you may, in my name, propose to them the junction of my fleet, and since it cannot sail of arriving in a few days at Rochelle or Belleisle, if it is not

there already, you may now consult with the sieur De Witt, and the other commissioners, of the most proper and safe ways for their junction, and give me an account with all convenient speed, that not a minute of useful time may be lost.

"You shall moreover tell the States, that I this day write to the chevalier De Toulon, whom I have lately sent to Copenhagen, in the same quality of my ambassador as he had in Sweden, to tile his utmost endeavours, and most pressing instances, in my name, with the king of Denmark, to incline him to Come to a resolution to join presently part of his fleet with mine and with that of the said States.

"I would not close this letter without telling you, that you should again recommend from me to the States, to accommodate matters with Sweden, who seeing herself despised, or used hardly, may, in this juncture, take resolutions which may be very prejudicial to us; and we know the Swedes never want pretences to do whatever they think to be for their interest."

11. The ravages of this fire are thus described in one of the inscriptions on the Monument. “It consumed eighty-nine churches, the city gates, Guildhall, many public structures; hospitals, schools, libraries, a vast number of Stately edifices, thirteen thousand two hundred dwelling houses, four hundred streets. Of the six and twenty wards it utterly destroyed fifteen, and left eight others shattered and half burnt. The ruins of the city were four hundred thirty-six acres, from the Tower by the Thames side to the Temple church, and from the north-east gate, along the city wall, to Holborn Bridge."

12. The streets were certainly rendered more open, and the buildings more secure and convenient than before; but the full authority of the legislature ought to have been immediately called in and exerted, to prevent numberless defects and irregularities which arose from the ignorance, the caprice, and the parsimony of individuals. It was owing to this neglect, and to the narrow views of private interest that Sir Christopher Wren's admirable plan was neglected, which; if it had been carried into action, would have rendered London the most commodious, elegant; and magnificent city in the universe.

Dr. Barbon, one of the most considerable re-builders of the city, instituted at this time an office for insuring houses from fire, which afterwards received the sanction of government.

13. Yet we shall find that, in a few years after, this very plan was adopted; and that the most violent attempts were made to carry it into execution.

14. The following are the five resolutions then passed by the commons, to the first of which only, as above observed, they obtained the concurrence of the lords:

"Resolved, I. That in order to the suppressing the insolence of the papists, his majesty be humbly desired forthwith to issue out his royal proclamation for the banishment of all priests and Jesuits out of this kingdom, within thirty days to be therein limited, other than such, not being his natural-born subjects, who are obliged to attend on the queen contort, or the queen mother; and that if any priest or Jesuit shall happen to be taken in England after the said days, that the laws mall be put in due execution against him:

"II. That in the same proclamation proper orders shall be given for putting the laws in execution against popish recusants, and such as are suspected of being so:

“III. That his majesty be humbly moved, that all popish recusants. and such as being suspected so to be shall refute to take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, being tendered to them, may be forthwith so disarmed, as to remove all apprehensions from the people of their possibilities to disturb the public peace of the nation; and that all officers, military and civil, and soldiers, as

than not, within twenty days, take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, may be disbanded and displaced:

"IV. That the commissaries of the musters be commanded and enjoined, upon penalty of losing their places, not to permit any officer or soldier to be mustered in the service and pay of his majesty, till he or they shall have taken the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, and received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the laws and usage of the church of England:

"V. That his majesty be humbly desired to issue out a new commission for tendering and administering the oaths of allegiance and supremacy to the members of both houses."

15. Thus, in order to prevent any discovery of the immense sums, which Charles had squandered away in the most disgraceful extravagance, the plunderers of the nation were to be sheltered by the throne itself from public justice.

16. When the house divided on the question, there were one hundred and sixty-five for the bill, and one hundred and four against it.

17. See the note on this subject at the bottom of page 47; to which it may be added, that though the rent of lands in England seemed to rise in consequence of this bill, the price of provisions and the price of labour rose in a much greater proportion; and the Irish being driven by the most cruel necessity to new resources, set themselves to establish manufactures, and carried their produce to other countries, to the very great injury of English commerce. Thus by an act of absurd oppression, which, took its rise from personal animosities, from prejudice, and ignorance, England was deprived of the blessings of a plentiful market, and Ireland was impelled to cultivate an unnatural and clandestine intercourse with the enemies of her sister kingdom.

18 The chancellor and a few of his party privately advised the king at this time to dissolve the parliament, to which his majesty seemed at first inclined; but was dissuaded from it by Mr. William Coventry, who said, that the present ill temper of the commons would vanish, upon some small condescension; whereas if his majesty should run the risk of a general election, a great many Presbyterians might be returned, and most of his menial servants and their relations, of whom he had above a hundred now in the house at his disposal, would very probably be thrown out.

19. Had the commons defended their civil and religious rights with half the firmness which they manifested in pushing on the Irish bill, what applause would they not have merited! Instead of which, we cannot help feeling the justest indignation, to see a set of corrupt and perfidious slaves, who had sold the liberties, the property, in many instances the lives, and as far as they were able, the consciences of their countrymen, discovering an invincible resonance to the willies of their paymaster and tyrant, in one of the very few purposes in which he seemed to consult the general interest of his subjects.

20. The king means the Poll-bill, which was passed at this time; but of which the author of the ***Secret History*** has taken no farther notice, after his remarks on the manner in which the clause for the appointment of commissioners to examine the public accounts was defeated by the petition of the lords. The obnoxious proviso was afterwards struck out by the commons; but they introduced in its stead a distinct bill nearly to the same purport as the clause, which had been so unconstitutionally defeated. But their new bill was delayed in the upper house till the prorogation of parliament, and so died away without any farther discussion.

21. If this was not self flattery, it was the *ne plus ultra* of mendacious effrontery, as Charles must have been well convinced, that not only his hearers, but the whole nation knew the reverse of every one of his assertions to be a lamentable truth.

22. The supply granted upon this occasion for the service of the year was eighteen hundred thousand pounds, which was to be raised by the Poll-bill, and by the continuance of the former monthly assessments.

23. The royal assent was given at the same time to some other acts, the chief of which related to the re-building of the city of London. One was an act to lay twelve pence upon every chaldron, and twelve pence upon every ton of coals that should be brought into the port of London for ten years, the better to enable the lord mayor and aldermen to recompense those persons, whose grounds should be taken from them, in order to enlarge the streets.

24. The French plenipotentiaries were the count D'Estrades, and monsieur Courtin; those of the States General, messrs. Bevernich, Hubert, and Yonstal; and those of Denmark, messrs. Klingenberg and Canisius.

25. One of them having died during the conferences at Breda, the Swedish embassadors to the States took his place.

26. The English ambassadors did not arrive at Breda till the twentieth of May, and De Ruyter with fifty ships came on the eighth of June to the mouth of the Thames, whence he detached his vice-admiral Van Ghent on the tenth with seventeen of his lightest slips; and some fire ships, which did the damage, and spread the consternation that are now to be described.

27. Doleman, whose name was particularly mentioned with two ethers in the bill for attainting all English subjects who should remain in the Dutch service, was on board this fleet, and to shew his resentment of that act, landed several times with a party of forces, and put the country under contribution.

28. They burnt three barge ships of the line, which had been taken from themselves in the course of the war, and carried away with them the hull of the Royal Charles and a little higher up the river, they also burnt the Royal Oak, the Royal tendon, and the Great James, besides several merchant ships of inconsiderable value, as above intimated.

29. De Ruyter made an attempt to burn the ships in Portsmouth harbour, but failed, probably for want of fire-ships. He than sailed to the westward, and took some ships in Torbay. Thence directing his course eastward, he chased a squadron of nineteen ships, commanded by sir Edward Spragge, who was obliged to retire up the Thames.

30. His principal reason was to guard against the just resentment of his subjects, whose generosity and confidence he had abused, whose blood and treasure he had wasted, and whom he had involved in unprecedented disgrace and calamity.

31. It is curious to see the chancellor so vehement in arguing against the right of convening parliament upon any emergency during a prorogation, in the presence of a king, whose prerogative he himself had fatally contributed to carry to the most unconstitutional extent in matters of much greater importance;—a king, who cared neither for the forms of law, the privileges of parliament, or the rights of the people, when they lay in the way of his arbitrary purposes.

32. By this disgraceful termination of the war Charles was forced to relinquish all the objects, for which he pretended to have undertaken it. In the third and fourth articles of the particular treaty with Holland it was stipulated, that all acquisitions of territory, or any other species of property made by either party, whether during the war, or before, should remain with the present possessors without any compensation, or restitution for the same. Thus the island of Poleron and Downing's claim of eight hundred thousand pounds for pretended injuries to English merchants were given up, without the smallest satisfaction. The country of Arcadia in North America was also exchanged for some conquests made by France in the West Indies; and as a reward to the king of Denmark for the part he had acted, a debt due from him to the Hamburgh company was cancelled.

The Dutch Fleet's on The Thames Raiding Chatham

Chapter IV

Perilous situation of the Chancellor – Message from the King – Sir Orlando Bridgman late Lord keeper – New tempest raised against the disgraced minister – Some victim thought necessary to appease resentment of the nation – Cause of the Duke of Buckingham's personal animosity – The King informs Parliament of the changes in his councils – Address of thanks to the Earl of Clarendon's removal – Cabals entered into for his further prosecution – Heads of the charges brought against him – Vote for his impeachment – Refusal of the Lords to commit him – The Earl's motives for quitting the kingdom – His petition to the house of lords – Vote for its being burnt by the common Hangman – Act passed for the Earl of Clarendon's incapacity and banishment – Seeming change in the system of Court politics – Cause of new overtures to the Dutch – Character and negotiations of Sir William Temple – Extraordinary exertions to reflect late speedy ratification of the triple Alliance – Secret indignation of the French King at this treaty – Reluctant assent of the Spanish Ministry – Peace concluded at Aix-la-Chapelle – Independentcy of Portugal acknowledged – New councils adopted in favour of the non-conformists – Opposition of the Commons – Enquiry into the mismanagement of the late war – Appointment of commissioners of accounts – Impatience of ministry for the money bill – Violent contests between both houses on the point of Judicature.

Perilous Situation of The Chancellor

THE relief from those cares, in which the court favourites were involved by the disastrous incidents of the war, served only to give them more leisure for prosecuting their intrigues and private enmities with greater application:

The chancellor, by having been unfortunately looked upon as the first minister, incurred all the blame and reproach of the people for every fault of administration, and was thus shut out from the best shelter against the storms of a court, the esteem and confidence of his fellow subjects.

His interest in the house of commons began to decline, as soon as the ambitious and the venal found, that, notwithstanding his offensive eminence, all favours flowed through a different channel. He had also given great offence to many of the independent members of the house of commons, by his indiscreet vehemence in the debates, both in council and parliament during the last session. But his late advice to the king to dissolve them, which Sir William Coventry took care to represent with every malicious aggravation, filled many of them with implacable resentment. The chancellor was not uninformed of the combination against him, which every

day gained strength; but he thought himself secure in the king's justice; and though his majesty's kindness was much lessened, he never suspected that he would consent to his ruin. A little more time convinced him of his fatal error.

Message From The King

About the latter end of August, the king sent his brother, the duke of York, to the chancellor, to tell him, that his majesty had received very particular and certain intelligence, that, when the parliament should meet again, they were resolved to impeach the chancellor, who was grown very odious to them, not only for his having opposed them in all those things upon which they had set their hearts, but more especially for his having advised the king to dissolve them; that the steps, which they would infallibly take, in consequence of such a resolution, would be a great dishonour to his majesty, and obstruct all his affairs, nor should he be able longer to protect him, or divert them; that it would be therefore necessary for his service, and likewise for the preservation of the chancellor, that he should deliver up the seal, the manner of doing it being left to his own choice.

The chancellor was thunder struck at this message, which was the more cruel, as being sent him when sinking under the weight of domestic affliction for the late death of his wife. He remonstrated strongly with the duke, and a few days after with the king himself, on the rigour and injustice of this proceeding, which prejudged him by such a signal mark of the king's displeasure, and left him exposed not only to the resentment of the commons, which he was too well shielded by conscious innocence to dread, but to the rage of the people, who had been wrought upon, with great artifice and industry, to believe that he was the author and adviser of every think they did not like.

All this proved ineffectual; for though the duke interested himself in the chancellor's favour, the king remained inflexible, pretending that he himself was at the mercy of parliament, and that he could not oppose them in a matter, upon which they were resolutely bent.

Sir Orlando Bridgman Made Lord Keeper

Nothing was now spoken of at court but the chancellor's expected disgrace. He had declared to the king, that he would by no means suffer it to be believed, that he himself was willing to deliver up the seal; and his majesty seemed to hesitate on the ungraciousness of forcing it from him.

In this suspension, the common subject of debate was not, whether the chancellor was innocent, but whether, when the king had resolved to remove him, and had proceeded so far towards it, he mould retract his purpose, and be governed by his brother, who was known to be very urgent with his majesty in the chancellor's behalf. Mr. Brounker openly declared, that his majesty had resolved upon it above two months before, and that it would not consist with his honour to be hectored out of it by his brother, who was wrought upon by his wife's crying.

Sir William Coventry boasted that he had advised the king to remove the chancellor as a man odious to the parliament, and that his majesty would be ruined, if he did it not. Sir William went farther; and finding that the duke of York was highly offended, that his secretary should presume to shew so much malice towards a person, for whom his highness was much concerned, he resigned the office, by which he had acquiredvast wealth.

Lady Castlemaine, lord Arlington, Mr. May, and the rest of that junto used no reserve in their invectives against the chancellor, and even told the king, that he would be looked upon as a child if he receded from his purpose.

His majesty being thus reconfirmed sent secretary Maurice on the thirtieth of August, with a warrant under the sign manual, to require and receive the great seal, which the chancellor immediately delivered to him, with all expressions of duty to the king.

As soon as the secretary presented it to his majesty in his closet, Mr. May went in, and sell upon his knees, and kissed his majesty's hand, telling him, "that he was now KING, which he had never been before?: The seal was then committed to sir Orlando Bridgman, thereupon made lord keeper.

New Tempest Raised Against The Disgraced Minister

The chancellor believed that the storm was now over, for he had no apprehension of the displeasure of the commons, or of any thing they could say or do against him. He resolved to stay at his house till parliament should meet, that he might not be thought afraid of being called to account, but he did not mean to go thither, which he was informed would be ill taken.

His intention was then to retire into the country, and to live there privately. But these hopes and plans of his were all disconcerted and blasted by a new tempest more violent and terrible than the former.

The persons, who had succeeded so effectually in alienating the king's esteem from the chancellor, at first only advised his removal, as a person odious to the parliament, and whom the commons were resolved to impeach, which, they said, would put his majesty into a streight, either to remove or desert an old servant, which would not be for his honour, or, by protecting him, deprive himself of all those benefits,. which he expected from the parliament; but they asserted, that the dismissing him before the meeting of parliament would not only save the king's honour, by not having it forced upon him, but gratify both houses so much, that they would deny nothing which his majesty should demand of them.

When by these insinuations they had procured his removal, and made themselves more necessary to the king, they prosecuted what they had begun with greater animosity. They told the king, that if the parliament suspected that his majesty still retained any kindness towards the earl of Clarendon, they would not be satisfied with his removal, but apprehend that he would be again received into his majesty's favour; and he would, in the mean time, have so much credit in both houses, especially if he sat in the house of peers, which they undertook to know he meant to do, that he would be able to obstruct whatsoever his majesty desired.

They laid it was therefore necessary, that his majesty should declare his prejudices against the earl so strongly, that nobody should have cause to fear his being ever again received into trust.

By these means the king was incited to express in all companies his great dissatisfaction at the earl's misconduct. He frequently declared, that the earl was so imperious that he would endure no contradiction; that he had a faction in the house of commons who opposed every thing that concerned his majesty's service, if it were not recommended to them by him; and that he had given him very ill advice concerning the parliament, which offended his majesty very much.

All this, being often repeated by the king, was so soon spread abroad, to the great diminution of the unfortunate earl’s credit and interest.

Some Victim thought Necessary to Appease Resentment of The Nation

Besides the gratification of personal malice, and the removal of the only obstacle to the uncontrouled sway of the junto, they, had another end to serve in bringing down upon the earl's head the loudest burst of royal displeasure and resentment.

The people, groaning under the weight of taxes, and filled with just indignation at the disgraceful issue of the war, could be appeased only by some signal sacrifice for all the evils of misgovernment.

The house of commons also had in the last session shewn much ill humour at the wasteful expenditure of the public money, and they were likely to find in the late defenceless condition of the kingdom, after all their supplies, still juster matter of complaint. It was therefore necessary to hold out one conspicuous object to attract all their fury, and thus to divert it from the real delinquents.

Embezzlement, profusion, and neglect of duty were crimes, in which such prodigious numbers were involved, that every man, who dreaded inquiry, was glad to find one victim singled out, and devoted to destruction:

—-Que sibi quisque timebat,
Unius in miseri exitium conversa tulère.

To this combination of the ambitious and the guilty against the earl there was now added another very dangerous enemy, the duke of Buckingham, of whose sudden restoration to the favour of the court it will be proper to give some account.

Cause of The Duke of Buckingham's Personal Animosity

I have before noticed his quarrel with lady Castlemaine, and his endeavours to gain a formidable party in both houses, by which he was enabled to cross every measure which the king had most at heart, and to carry through such bills as were most contradictory to his majesty's wishes. His talents of ridicule in exposing all the vices of the court, which he was so well acquainted with, having long been himself one of the principal actors in every dissolute scene, were exerted in private, in a manner still more provoking than his public opposition.

After the end of the last session, he went into the country; and in several places spoke not only of the court, and government, but of the king's person with greater licence than any body else dared to do; of all which his majesty had intelligence, and was at that time without doubt more offended with the duke than with any man in England, and had really great provocation to jealousy of his fidelity, as well as of his respect and affection.

Lord Arlington, as secretary of state, had received several informations of dangerous words spoken by him against the king; and of his intimacy and correspondence with persons the most suspected for disloyalty.

Some of the proofs appeared so strong against him, that the king, after consulting with the chancellor, sent a sergeant at arms with a warrant under his sign manual to apprehend the duke, and to bring him before one of the secretaries of state, to answer to such crimes as should be objected against him.

The warrant, however, was to little purpose the duke eluded the sergeant's pursuit, and even caused him to meet with a very menacing rebuff for desiring admittance into a house where he knew the duke was.

The king was so much offended at this indignity shewn to a state officer acing by his majesty's express orders, that, after mentioning it at the council board, he publicly declared the duke to be no longer of that number, and caused his name to be struck out of the list of privy-councillors. He also appointed the earl of Rochester to his place in the bed chamber, and revoking his commission of lord lieutenant of the East-riding of Yorkshire, he granted it to the earl of Burlington. His majesty at the same time issued out a proclamation for apprehending the duke,

and inhibiting all persons to entertain, receive, or conceal him; so that it was not possible for the king to give stronger proofs of his resolution to degrade and punish him.

Upon these rigorous steps the duke came from the country to town, where he could be more easily concealed. He sent several times to the chancellor to request an interview, which the latter very properly refused till the duke should surrender himself.

By means of private applications, however, the king's displeasure was softened, and the quarrel was also made up with lady Castlemaine. A great void had been felt at the nightly meetings from the absence of the duke, whose wit was the soul of the conversation.

It was also thought impolitic to carry resentment too far against one who had such an interest in both houses, as enabled him to be highly useful, or the contrary. After the formality therefore of surrendering himself to the lieutenant of the Tower, and undergoing a short examination at the council board, he was set at liberty, and soon after received by the king with extraordinary grace, and restored to all the honours and offices, of which he had been before deprived.

In this reconciliation with the court, care was taken to infuse into the duke not only all the rancour of the party, but the strongest spirit of personal revenge against the chancellor. He was informed and allured, that all the proceedings to his disadvantage were by the advice of the chancellor, who said, that he was to be steward at the duke's trial.

This irritating falsehood arose from the following circumstance. One day whilst that matter was depending, and when some witnesses were to be examined, touching the duke's correspondence with seditious persons, lord Arlington desired that the chancellor might be present, which the king seeming to approve, the chancellor desired to be excused, and among other reasons, said, "that if the testimony of witnesses made good all that was suggested, and the duke should be brought to a trial, the king might probably command him to execute the office of high-steward, as he had lately done in the trial of lord Morley; and in that respect, it would be incongruous for him to be present at the examinations."

It is no wonder, that the report of this, stripped of all the real circumstances, and aggravated by ingenious malice, should have greatly enraged the duke, and prompted him to exert all his powers of intrigue, persuasion, and interest, to procure an impeachment of the Earl of Clarendon.

The King Informs Parliament of The Change in His Councils

The parliament met again upon the tenth of October, when the king, in a short speech told them, "that there had been some former miscarriages, which had occasioned some difference between him and them: but that he had now altered his councils, and made no question but that they should henceforward agree: he was resolved to give them all satisfaction, and did not doubt but that they would supply his necessities, and provide for the payment of his debts."

His majesty threw out an insinuation, that what had been formerly done amiss, had been by the advice of the person, whom he had removed from his councils.

After the king ended, the lord-keeper made first a short apology for the step taken in the summer to convene the parliament when under a prorogation, and then defer its meeting till the time at first appointed. He then informed them of the conclusion of the peace; and took notice of the commission appointed by the king to state the public accounts, which not having answered his majesty's expectations, he left the parliament to follow their own, method, and to examine the accounts as strictly as they pleased.

He added, that his majesty trusted in their affection and endeavours to preserve good understanding between him and his people, and to imprint upon the hearts of his subjects that

known truth, that there is no distinct interest between the king and his people, but the good of one is the good of both.

Address of Thanks on The Earl’s Removal

When the commons returned to their house, a motion was made to send a message of thanks to the king for his gracious expressions, and for the many good things he had done, and particularly for removing the chancellor; but this not being countenanced by the majority of the house, a committee was appointed to prepare a message, in which the dismissing of the chancellor was not to be noticed, as the commons were unacquainted with his majesty's motives for that resolution.

The king declared himself very much offended that the motion had not succeeded, and more that it had been opposed by some of his own servants, and commanded to press and renew it, for that his honour was concerned.

Upon this the vote of thanks in the form at first proposed was again debated, and carried, though not without strong opposition on the part of the earl of Clarendon's still remaining friends.

When the address of thanks was sent up to the lords for their concurrence, they at first refused it, on the pretence of their having thanked his majesty for his speech on the same day, so that it, would be absurd and unprecedented to join in any other address on the same subject. But their reluctance was overcome by the same means before employed with the commons.

The king reproached many of the lords for presuming to oppose what was so absolutely necessary for the service; and sent to the archbishop of Canterbury, desiring him, in his majesty's name, to command all the bench of bishops to concur in it, with menacing intimations is they refused.

The motion for the address being now renewed, it was carried by a great majority; and being presented by both houses, was received very graciously by the king, as a boon he looked for; and in his reply to that part which respected the disgraced chancellor[1], he said, "he would never employ the earl of Clarendon again in any public affairs whatsoever."This answer, through the duke of Buckingham's persuasions, was entered in the journal of the lords, as, a particular record of his majesty's displeasure against the earl.

Cabals Entered Into For Further Prosecution

Several cabals were now entered into for the purpose of impeaching the earl; and after some days spent in close contrivances and combinations; Mr. Seymour, one of the boldest speakers of the duke of Buckingham's party, rose in the house of commons, and made a long and inflammatory speech on the late chancellor's corrupt practices and pernicious counsels, stating a variety of charges; which he said he could prove; and concluding with a motion for immediately sending up to the lords to accuse the earl of Clarendon of high treason, and to require that his person might be secured. Mr. Seymour was seconded by some others, who were equally liberal of their bitter invectives.

In the course of the debate, it was justly argued by the dispassionate part of the house, as well as by the earl's friends, that it would be premature to vote an impeachment upon mere assertions, or without such proofs, as might at least carry with them- a strong presumption of guilt.

Hereupon a committee was appointed to consider of all particulars, which should be presented against him; and to make a report thereof, that the house may then pursue such measures as should appear just and advisable. In a few days the proposed articles of impeachment were thrown into some form, and reported to the house. The heads were;

Heads of The Charges Brought Against Him

That the chancellor had traitorously, about the month of June last, advised the king to dissolve the parliament, and said, "that there could be no farther use of parliaments: that it was a foolish constitution, and not fit to govern by: that it could not be imagined that three or four hundred country gentlemen could be either prudent men or statesmen; and that it would be best for the king to raise a standing army, and to govern by that: "whereupon it being demanded, how that army should be maintained? he answered, "by contribution and free-quarter, as the late king maintained his army in the war:"

That he had, in the hearing of several persons, reported that the king was a papist in his heart, or popishly affected, or had used words to that effect:

That he had advised the king to grant a charter to the Canary company, for which he had received great sums of money:

That he had raised great sums of money by the sale of offices, which ought not to be sold; and granted injunctions to stop proceedings at law, and dissolved them afterwards for money:

That he had introduced an arbitrary government in his majesty's plantations, and had caused such as had complained to his majesty and privy council of it to be long imprisoned for their presumption; and that he had protracted and rejected a proposition, which had been made for the preservation of Nevis and St. Christopher's, and for reducing the French plantations to his majesty's obedience:

That he had caused *Quo Warrantos* to be issued out against most corporations in England, although their charters were newly confirmed by act of parliament, till they paid him good sums of money, and then the *Quo Warrantos* were discharged:

That he had received great sums of money for the settlement of Ireland:

That he had deluded the king, and betrayed the nation in all foreign treaties, and negotiations, especially. concerning the late war:

That he had procured his majesty's customs to be farmed at under rates, knowing them to be so; and caused many pretended debts to be paid by his majesty, to the payment whereof his majesty was not in strictness bound; for all which/he earl had received great sums of money:

That he had received bribes from the company of vintners, that they might continue the prices of the wines, and might be freed from the penalties which they were liable to:

That he had raised in a short time a greater estate than could be lawfully got; and that he had got the grant of several of the crown lands, contrary to his duty:

That he had advised and effected the sale of Dunkirk to the French king, for less money than the ammunition, artillery, and stores were worth:

That he had caused the king's letters under the great seal to one Dr. Crowther to be altered, and the enrolment thereof to be unduly razed:

That he had in an arbitrary way examined and brought into question divers of his majesty's subjects, concerning their lands and properties, and determined thereof at

the council board, and stopped the proceedings at law, and threatened some that pleaded the statute of 17 Car.

That he was a principal author of that fatal counsel of dividing the fleet about June 1666.

The committee reported another article, that he had kept up correspondence with Cromwell and his accomplices, when he was in parts beyond the seas, attending his majesty; and had thereby adhered to the king's enemies.

But there were many members of the house, who knew well enough how that foolish calumny had been examined at Paris, during the king's residence there, when its grossness and absurdity were fully demonstrated. Being sensible, therefore, that the renewal of such a flagrant scandal would weaken their other charges, and tend to the earl's credit, they affected to read it as being included in the Act of Indemnity.

Vote for His Impeachment

Though many of these charges contained the foulest reproaches any minister could be subjected to, yet it did not appear that they afforded sufficient grounds for a charge of high treason.

The earl's enemies, after examining their store, pitched at last upon that article, in which he was charged with deluding and betraying his majesty and the nation in all foreign treaties, and negotiations relating to the late war; but it was said, that those general expressions would not be enough, except it were added, "that being a privy-councillor, he had betrayed the king's secret counsels to the enemy;" which lord Vaughan, son to the earl of Carbery, immediately calling for the paper, inserted in the article with his own hand.

The vote now passed for his impeachment; and Mr. Seymour was sent up to the lords, arid at their bar accused the earl of Clarendon of high-treason, and other crimes and misdemeanours, and desired that he might be sequestered from that house, and his person secured.

Refusal of The Lords to Commit Him

As soon as Mr. Seymour was withdrawn, a violent debate took place on a motion for committing the earl of Clarendon, some urging the propriety of a compliance with the house of commons, and citing some precedents, but very exceptionable ones, as the cases of the earl of Strafford and the like; while others alleged, that it would be of dangerous consequence to every one of the peers, if a commitment was to be ordered upon a general accusation of high treason from the commons, without any particular charge, for that then any peer, whom that house should happen to be offended with, how unjustly soever, might be removed from the body, upon any vague, or fictitious accusation.

The debate continued for several hours, either side adhering obstinately to their opinion. At last, the house adjourned till next day, without putting the question.

This unwillingness of the peers to commit the chancellor gave great offence to the commons, and produced a dispute and several conferences between both houses, in which the majority of the lords still objecting to the earl's commitment, the commons at length resolved, "That the lords not having complied with the desire of the commons, in committing the earl of Clarendon, and sequestering him from parliament, upon the impeachment of that house, was an obstruction of the public justice of the kingdom, and a precedent of evil and dangerous consequence."

At the same time they appointed a committee to draw up a declaration to vindicate their proceedings.

The Earl’s Motives for Quitting The Kingdom

While this contest was carried on with great heat on both sides, and to the total neglect of all public business, the earl's friends in the house of lords finding that many of their party deserted them every day, and joined the faction of the court, were very urgent with the earl to quit the kingdom, as the only means of avoiding that persecution, against which neither his own innocence, nor their efforts could long protect him.

The king himself did not wish that the articles of impeachment should undergo a public discussion, and was therefore content that intimations should be given to the earl of his majesty's desire that he should withdraw himself into any parts beyond the seas, and that if he did so, neither his honour nor fortune should suffer by his absence.

Threats were also held out, sometimes that the people were so incensed at the obstruction of public justice by the lords refusing to commit the earl, that they intended to pull down his house, and the houses of all those who adhered to him; and at other times, that there were secret consultations about sending a guard of soldiers to seize and convey him to the Tower.

The earl in this situation foreseeing the mischief that must arise from the disagreement between the two houses, and uncertain what the malice of his enemies might terminate in, only wanted some evidence of his majesty's commands or wish for his departure, which he received at length in a message from the duke of York, who in this unhappy conjuncture had fallen sick, and was still confined by the small pox.

Upon this the earl resolved to delay no longer, but withdrew in the night of the twenty-ninth of November, leaving the following address to the house of peers, which was delivered to them by the earl of Denbigh, as soon as he got advice of the unfortunate fugitive's arrival at Calais[2]

His Petition to The House of Lords

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To the right honourable the lords spiritual and temporal in parliament assembled.

The humble petition and address of Edward earl of Clarendon.

May it please your lordships,

> I cannot express the insupportable grief and trouble of mind I sustain under the apprehension of being misrepresented to your lordships, and when I hear how much of your lordships' time hath been spent upon my poor concern (though it be of no less than of my life and fortune) and of the differences of opinion, which have already, or may probably arise between your lordships and the honourable house of commons, whereby the great and weighty affairs of the kingdom may be obstructed, in a time of so general a dissatisfaction.
>
> I am very unfortunate to find myself to suffer so much under two very disadvantageous reflections, which are in no degree applicable to me; the first from the greatness of my estate and fortune, collected and made in so few years; which, is it be proportionate to what is reported, may very reasonably cause my integrity to be suspected; the second, that I have been the sole manager and chief minister in all the transactions of state fence the king's return into England to August last, and therefore that all miscarriages and misfortunes ought to be imputed to me and my counsels.
>
> Concerning my estates your lordships will not believe, that after malice and envy hath been so inquisitive, and is so sharp sighted, I will offer anything to your

lordships but what is exactly. True; and I do assure your lordships, in the first place, that, excepting from the king's bounty, I have never received or taken one penny, but what was generally understood to be the just and lawful perquisites of my office, by the constant practice of the best times, which I did in my own judgment conceive to be that of my lord Coventry and my lord Ellesmere; the practice of which I constantly observed, although the office in both their times was lawfully worth double what it was to me, and I believe now is:

That all the courtesies and savours, which I have been able to obtain from the king for other persons in church, or state, or in Westminster Hall, have never been worth to me five pounds; so that your lordships may be confident I am as innocent from corruption as from any disloyal thought; which, after near thirty years service of the crown in some difficulties and distresses, I did never suspect would be objected to me in my age:

That I am at present indebted about three or four and twenty thousand pounds, for which I pay interest, the particulars whereof I shall be ready to offer to your lordships, and for which I have assigned lands and leases to be sold, though at present nobody will buy or sell with me; that I am so far from having money, that from the time the seat was taken from me, I have lived upon the coining some small parcels. of plate, which have sustained me and my family, all my rents being withheld from me:

That my estate, my debts being paid, will not yield me two thousand pounds per annum, for the support of myself, and providing for two young children who have nothing; and that all I have is not worth that the king in his bounty bath bestowed upon me, his majesty having, out of his royal bounty, within few months after his coming into England, at one time bestowed upon me twenty-thousand pounds in money,without the least mention or imagination of mine; and shortly after another sum of money amounting to six thousand pounds, or thereabouts, out of Ireland, and which ought to have amounted to a much greater proportion, and of which I never heard, till notice was given me by the earl of Orrery, that there was such a sum of money for me:

His majesty likewise assigned me, after the first year of his return, an annual supply towards my support, which did but defray my expenses, the certain profits of my office not amounting to above two thousand pounds a year, or thereabouts, and the perquisites not very considerable, or very uncertain; so that the said several sums of money, and some parcels of land his majesty bestowed upon me, are worth more than all I have amounts to, so far am I from advancing my estate by any indirect means; and though the bounty of his majesty bath very far exceeded my merit or expectation, yet some others have been as fortunate at least by the same bounty, who had as small pretences to it, and have no great reason to envy my good fortune.

Concerning the other imputation of the credit and power of being the chief minister, and so causing all to be done that I had a mind to, I have no more to say, than that I had the good fortune to serve a master of a very great judgment and understanding, and to be always joined with persons of great ability and experience, without whole advice and concurrence never any thing hath been done.

Before his majesty's coming into England, he was constantly attended by the then marquis of Ormond, the late lord Colepeper, and Mr. secretary Nicholas, who were equally trusted with myself, and without whose joint advice and concurrence, when they were all present, (as some of them always were) I never gave any counsel. As soon as it pleased God to bring his majesty into England, he established his privy-council, and shortly out of them a number of honourable persons of great

reputation, who for the most part are still alive, as a committee for foreign affairs, and confederation of such things, as in the nature of them required much secrecy;

And with these persons he vouchsafed to join me; and I am confident this committee never transacted anything of moment, his majesty being always present, without presenting the same first to the council board; and I must appeal to them concerning my carriage, and whether we were not all of one mind in all matters of importance. For more than two years I never knew any difference in the councils, or that there were any complaints in the kingdom, which I wholly impute to his majesty's great wisdom, and the entire concurrence of his council, without the vanity of assuming anything to myself; and therefore I shall not be singly charged with any. thing, that hath since fallen out amiss.

But from the time Mr. secretary Nicholas was removed from his place, there were great alterations; and whosoever knows anything of the court or councils, knew well how much my credit since that time hath been diminished, (though his majesty must graciously vouchsafed still to hear my advice in most of his affairs) nor hath there been, from that time to this, above one or two persons, brought into the council, or preferred to any considerable office in the court, who have been of my intimate acquaintance, or suspected to have any kindness for me, and many of them notoriously known to have been very long my enemies, and of different judgment and principles from me both in church and state, and who have taken all opportunities to lessen my credit with the king, and with all other persons, by misrepresenting and misreporting all that I said, or did, and persuading men, that I had done them some prejudice with his majesty, or crossed them in some of their pretences; though his majesty's goodness and justice was such, that it made little impression upon him.

In my humble opinion, the great misfortunes of the kingdom have proceeded from the war, to which it is notoriously known that I was always most averse, and may without vanity say, that I did not only foresee, but did declare the mischief we should run into, by entering into a war, before any alliances made with the neighbouring princes: and that it may not be imputed to his majesty's want of care, or the negligence of his counsellors, that no such alliances were entered into, I muff take the boldness to say, that his majesty left nothing unattempted in order thereunto; and knowing very well, that France resolved to begin a war upon Spain, as soon as his catholic majesty should depart this world, which being much sooner expected by him, they had, two winters before, been at great charge in providing plentiful magazines of provisions upon the frontiers, that they might be ready for the war, his Majesty used all possible means to prepare and dispose the Spaniard to that apprehension, offering his friendship to that degree, as might be for the security and benefit of both crowns.

But Spain, flattering itself with an opinion, that France would not break with them, at least that they would not give them any cause by administering matter of jealousy to them, never made any real approach towards a friendship with his majesty; but both by their ambassadors here, and to his majesty's ambassador at Madrid, always insisted, as preliminaries, upon the giving up of Dunkirk, Tangier, and Jamaica.

Though France had an ambassador here, to whom a project for a treaty was offered, and the lord Hollis, his majesty's ambassador at Paris, used all endeavours to promote and prosecute the said treaty, yet it was quickly discerned that the principal design of France was to draw his majesty into such a _nearer alliance, as might advance their designs, without which they had no mind to enter into the treaty proposed: and this was the mate of affairs, when the war was entered into with the Dutch, from which time neither crown much considered their making an alliance with England.

As I did from my soul abhor the entering into this war, so I never presumed to give any advice, or counsel for the way of managing it, but by opposing many propositions, which seemed to the late lord treasurer and myself to be unreasonable, as the payment of the seamen by tickets, and many other particulars which added to the expense.

My enemies took all occasions to inveigh against me and making friendship with others out of the council, of more licentious principles, and who knew well enough how much I disliked and complained of the liberty they took to themselves of reviling all counsels and counsellors, and turning all things serious and, sacred into ridicule, they took all ways imaginable to render me ungrateful to all sorts of men (whom I shall be compelled to name in my own defence) persuading those who miscarried in any of their designs, that it was the chancellor's doings, whereof I never knew any thing.

However, they could not withdraw the king's favour from me, who was still pleased to use my service with others; nor was there ever any thing done, but upon the joint advice of at least the major part of those, who were consulted with: and as his majesty commanded my service in the late treaties, so I never gave the least advice in private, nor wrote one letter to any person in either of those negotiations, but upon the advice of the council, and after it was read in council, or at least by the king himself, and some others;

And if I prepared any instructions or memorials, it was by, the king's command, and at, the request of the secretaries, who desired my assistance: nor was it any wish of my own, that any ambassador should give me an account of the transactions, but to the secretary, with whom I was always ready to advise; nor am I conscious to myself of having ever given advice that hath proved mischievous, or inconvenient to his majesty; and I have been so far from being the sole manager of affairs, that 1 have not in the whole last year been above twice with his majesty in any room alone, and very seldom in the two or three years preceding; and, since the parliament at Oxford, it hath been very visible, that my credit hath been very little, and that very sew things have been hearkened to, which have been proposed by me, but contradicted, *eo nomine*, because proposed by me.

I most humbly beseech your lordships to re- member the office and trust I had for seven years in which, in discharge of my duty, I was obliged to stop and obstruct many men's pretences, and to refuse to set the seal to many pardons and other grants, which would have been profitable to those who procured them, and many whereof, upon my representation to his majesty, were for ever stopped, which naturally have raised many enemies to me and my frequent concurring with the late lord treasurer (with whom I had the honour to have a long and a fast friendship to his death) in representing several excesses and exorbitance, the yearly issues so far exceeding the revenues, provoked many persons concerned, of great power and credit, to do me all the ill offices they could; and yet I may faithfully say, that I never meddled with au part of the revenue, or the administration of it, but. when I was desired by the late lord treasurer to give him my assistance and advice, (having had the honour formerly to serve the crown as chancellor of the exchequer) which was for the most part in his majesty's presence, in which my opinion always concurred with the major part of the councillors who were present:

All which upon examination, will be made manifest to your lordships, how much soever my integrity is blasted by the malice of those, who, I am confident, do not believe themselves: nor have I in my life, upon all the treaties, or otherwise, received the value of one shilling from all the kings and princes in the world (except the books of the Louvre-print sent me by the chancellor of France, by that king's direction) but

from my own master, to whole entire service, and to the good and welfare of my country, no man's heart was ever more devoted.

This being my present condition, I do most humbly beseech your lordships to entertain a favourable opinion of me, and to believe me to be_ innocent from those soul aspersions, until the contrary shall be proved, which I am lure can never be by any man worthy to be believed: and, since the distemper of the times, and the difference between the two houses in the present debate, with the power and malice of my enemies, who gave out that I should prevail with his majesty to prorogue or dissolve this parliament in displeasure, and threaten to expose me to the rage and fury of people, may make me to be looked upon as the cause, which obstructs the king's service, and the unity and peace of the kingdom;

I most humbly beseech your lordships, that I may not forfeit your lordships' favour and protection, by withdrawing myself from so powerful a persecution, in hopes I may be able, by such withdrawing, hereafter to appear and make my defence, when his majesty's justice, to which I shall always submit, may not be obstructed, or controuled, by the power of those, who have sworn my destruction."

Vote For its Being Burnt by The Common Hangman

This address was no sooner read, than those who had contributed most to the earl's withdrawing himself out of the kingdom, and who were privy to the immediate cause of his having done so, affected to be much troubled, that he had escaped their justice; and moved, that orders might be forthwith sent to stop the ports, that so he might be apprehended; when they well knew that he was landed at Calais.

Others took exceptions at force expressions, which, they said, reflected upon the king's honour and justice; and moved, that the petition might be entered in their journal-book, to the end that they might farther consider of it; which was accordingly ordered.

The lords then desired a conference with the commons, to impart to them the earl of Clarendon's petition, and the account received of his escape, which removed the occasion of their late dispute about committing him.

The duke of Buckingham, who was the bearer of the message to the commons, said, "The lords have commanded me to deliver you this scandalous and seditious paper, sent from the earl of Clarendon: they bid me to present it to you, and desire you in convenient time to send it to them again, for it has a style which they are in love with, and therefore desire to keep it."

The reading of the petition in the house of commons fanned the former flame of their resentment.

After some very bitter invectives against the malignity of the writer, for thus daring, as they alleged; to libel the justice of the nation, they voted, that' the paper contained much untruth, and scandal, and sedition in it, and that it should be publicly burnt by the common hangman; in which vote the lords readily concurred; and the sentence was accordingly executed with the usual formalities by the appointed officer.

Act Passed for The Earl of Clarendon’s Incapacity and Banishment

But the vengeance of the earl's enemies was not yet satisfied. Some of the members of the lower house spoke loudly of bill of attainder against him. As the king did not mean that the persecution should be carried to the last extremity; he prevailed with the duke of Buckingham and the earl of Arlington to content themselves with a bill of incapacity and banishment.

This was soon agreed to by the peers, but, in the commons, met with great opposition. They seemed resolved upon rigorous justice, and voted, "that the king should be prayed to issue out his proclamation for summoning the said earl to appear by a day, and to apprehend him in order to his trial; and that the lords be sent to for their concurrence in this vote."

The lords refuted their concurrence, because the vote was contrary to their bill. Fresh disputes were likely to arise; but the commons; after a little private management, were induced to give way; and retracting their former vote, on the eighteenth of December, they passed the bill sent them by the lords, which received the royal assent by commission next day; and the parliament by the king's desire adjourned to the sixth of February.

Seeming Change in Court Politics

As all the vacancies at court, and in the principal offices of the state had been long filled by the earl of Clarendon's enemies, his removal was only followed by the, before mentioned appointment of sir Orlando Bridgman to the place of lord keeper. But though no real change was made in the directors of the king's counsels, the shew of some alteration of system was to be kept up, for the double purpose of rendering the present ministry popular, and of throwing all the odium of part misgovernment on the disgraced chancellor.

With this view, and by the particular advice of the duke of Buckingham, the king revoked the Canary patent, which had been complained of as an injurious monopoly; issued a proclamation for enforcing the laws against popish recusants; gave orders to the attorney general to proceed by a *Quo Warranto* against the charter of the wood mongers company, for various abuses in the sale of fuel; proposed a reform in the expenses of his household; and in short, seemed intent upon redressing every national grievance[3].

Cause of New Overtures to The Dutch

While the affections and confidence of the people were thus courted at home by specious appearances, an alliance was formed abroad, which was really deserving of the justest praise, and which, if it had been adhered to, would have not only promoted the interests of England, but the peace and security of Europe.

It was a combination to check the progress of the French king, who, in the midst of the treaty at Breda, had entered Flanders with an army of above forty thousand men[4], sad whole conquests were as rapid as his march, the towns in those provinces being too badly fortified, and too weakly garrisoned to impede his career.

Sweden had been long jealous of the designs of the French king, and was therefore ready to enter into any treaty, which might prescribe limits to his ambition. I before observed what advances were made to that end before the close of the war. But Holland was still more immediately interested:

Flanders was the great barrier between them and their justly suspected ally, the suddenness of whole irruption filled the States with the utmost alarm. They complained violently of the king of France's breach of faith, who, after having promised that be would undertake nothing without their participation, scarcely gave them notice of his claims to the Low Countries, when he marched with a formidable army to enforce his unexamined, and very questionable pretensions[5],

Such a temper in the States afforded a very favourable opportunity for the renewal of the overtures indirectly made them by England before the conferences began to Breda. But his majesty at that time was full of resentment at the French king's perfidy; and the warmth of his indignation had line considerably abated. In truth, an attachment to France was somewhat like a disease in his

majesty's constitution, which though it admitted of some temporary palliatives, could never be effectually cured, but left him liable to frequent relapses.

Too many of his council were still more careless of the danger, to which Europe was exposed by the progress of the French arms; and it is likely that England might have continued for some time longer an indifferent spectator of the conquest of. Flanders, if the duke of Buckingham and Sir William Coventry had not persuaded the king, that his spirited interposition at such a moment of universal alarm would wipe off all the disgraces of the late war; would give his majesty fresh consequence in the scale of Europe; would retaliate the intrigues and imperiousness of France; would flatter the pride and prejudices both of his parliament and his people; and would make the one readily grant, and the others as cheerfully pay whatever supplies his majesty should have occasion to demand.

Upon these suggestions, it was resolved in council to make such proposals to the Dutch, as they were not likely to refuse at the present crisis; and the conduct of the treaty was committed to Sir William Temple, of whole character and abilities it is necessary in this place to give some account.

Character and Negotiations of Sir William Temple

This gentleman was the son of Sir John Temple, a master of the rolls in Ireland in the late king's reign he was a member of the Irish convention at the restoration of his present majesty and being reelected to serve in the subsequent parliament, was deputed by them, as one of their commissioners in 1662, to wait upon his majesty, and to represent the great distress and confusion that, country was in for want of some satisfactory settlement.

During his attendance at court, his talents and industry recommended him to the notice of the chancellor, and of the duke of Buckingham; but the latter more particularly cultivated his friendship. He knew the value of such a partisan, and neglected no means of securing his attachment.

When the preliminaries of the bargain with the bishop of Munster, were signed by his agent in London, Mr. Temple, was sent over to have them ratified; and there being some likelihood, that his services abroad might be farther wanted, he was ordered, after the conclusion of the treaty with bishop, to go to Brussels, where a resident's commission, and a patent creating him a baronet were sent him, as marks of his majesty's approbation.

At the termination of the war he received letters of recall; but, a few days after his return, he was appointed his majesty's envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the States General. No man, indeed, could be better qualified for such a commission: he possessed an accurate knowledge of the political views, as, well as of the real interests of the different states of Europe; and united to a great pretence a mind in debate the farther advantage of an animated, insinuating, and persuasive address.

He had alto formed a personal acquaintance with De Witt, in a visit incognito to Holland, while he resided abroad. His integrity was unquestioned; and, indeed, he resembled his patron in nothing, except the supposed looseness of his religious principles.

Sir William, as soon as his orders were dispatched, repaired with the utmost secrecy to the Hague, and lost not a moment to communicate the great object of his embassy, strongly urging the direct necessity of an offensive league between England and Holland, as the only means of forcing back into its proper channel the power of France, which had over flown its banks, and seemed to bear down every thing before it with the impetuosity of a torrent. De Witt was startled at this unexpected overture; and though he knew that such a junction could not fail of producing the intended effect, yet he had great reason to be prejudiced against any offers from a court, of whose enmity to himself, as well as to his country, he had so many recent proofs.

Nor did the pensionary dissemble his sentiments on this head; he told sir William, "that the measure he proposed was too bold, and too precipitate, to be agreed to by the States, who, till matters came to extremities, could never deem it prudent to abandon an old ally, and rely entirely on a treaty with England, which had lately waged so cruel a war against them."

He added, "that ever since the reign of Elizabeth, there had been such a fluctuation in the English councils, that it was not possible, for two years together, to take any sure or certain measures with that kingdom; and though the present ministry, having entered into views which were conformable to national in west, promised a greater firmness and constancy, yet it might still be unsafe, in a business of such an importance, to put an entire confidence in them."

Extraordinary Exertions to Effect The Speedy of The Triple Alliance

Upon this declaration on the part of De Witt, which he rigidly adhered to, while he admitted the necessity of some other expedient, a treaty of defensive alliance was entered upon, and sinned with a degree of dispatch unprecedented in Dutch negotiations.

The pensionary, when he had received the first advice of the king of France's march into Flanders, not only expostulated with D'Estrades upon such a breach of promise to the States, but wrote a very strong remonstrance to the king himself on his un-candid and violent proceedings.

Lewis by this time had made considerable progress; but dreading a combination against him, if he grasped at all the Spanish dominions in the Low Countries, he offered to renounce all farther claims, in right of his queen, on condition of either retaining the conquests he had already made, or of having irrevocably transferred to him the duchy of Luxemburg, or the sovereignty of Franche Comte, with Cambray, Douay, Aire, St. Omer's, and two or three other places.

De Witt thought this proposal preferable to a war; and aster a few conferences with Sir William Temple on the subject, and some extraordinary exertions to obtain not only the consent, but the ratification of the States General, without consulting their constituents, the alliance between England and Holland was concluded in five days after the first overture[6]

This masterpiece of political negotiations was subdivided into three treaties, or rather three distinct agreements united in one treaty by their necessary connection, as dictated by the the same spirit, tending to the same end, and confirmed with the same validity.

The first contained the articles of a defensive alliance between England and the States General, by which either party engaged to assist the other with certain stipulated succours, in case of being attacked by any enemy; and this alliance was to be perpetual.

By the second, it was agreed, that the contracting parties should join their endeavours to dispose the king of France to make peace in the Low Countries upon the conditions offered, and Spain to make choice of one or the other side of the alternative, before the end of May, with full security of having the remainder of the Netherlands guarantied to that crown by the mediating powers; but in case of any difficulty on the part of Spain, they were to induce the king of France not to prosecute his claim by force of arms, but leave it wholly to the allies, to procure the ends proposed in this league.

In the third, they engaged, that in case any difficulties should arise concerning the renunciation, care should be taken so to settle the articles of peace between France and Spain, as to create no prejudice to the rights of either; but if one side only should reject this expedient, then the allies should proceed against the refuser; and if the king of France' should recede from the alternative he himself had proposed, the conditions of which were specified in the second treaty, and should make farther progress in Flanders, then the allies should join with Spain, and make war upon the king of France, till they should compel him to comply with the terms of the Pyrenean treaty.

The allies alto agreed to use their endeavours to establish peace between Spain and Portugal; and though they did not pretend to hinder the king of France from giving any aid to Portugal, they engaged to prevent, as far as lay in their power, his assisting that nation by making war in the Netherlands. All these articles were to be ratified within four weeks[7].

A third power soon entered into all the conditions of this alliance. The Swedish ambassador at the Hague engaged that his master should accede to the treaty, if a place was left for him as a principal; which being done, the king of Sweden's ratification was received in a little time; and the triple knot seemed to be tied with indissoluble firmness.

Secret Indignation of The French King at This Treaty

Both the crowns, whole dissensions had given rise to this alliance, were almost equally dissatisfied with it. The king of France, though the alternative had been first proposed by himself, was greatly mortified to think, that what he wished to appear as a voluntary act, and the effect of his great moderation, should now be prescribed to him as it were by force, and in the form of an imperious mandate.

He could hardly suppress his indignation at seeing such a little state as Holland presumed to be the arbiter of kings. There is no doubt but he would have employed his usual artifice, his promises, and his bribes at the English court to prevent a circumstance so humiliating to his pride, had he timely notice of the negotiation.

But the alliance was concluded almost as soon as he heard that it was begun[8], so that finding his efforts to obstruct it were too late, he concealed his displeasure; and, by his easy compliance with the terms, endeavoured to betray Holland into a state of unsuspecting security.

Reluctant Assent of The Spanish Ministery

The Spanish ministry were much more wee, served in the avowal of their dissatisfaction: they looked upon the claims of the French king as founded in the most flagrant injustice, and deriving their only validity from the sword, They acknowledged themselves under no obligation to the Dutch for an interference, which evidently proceeded from a regard to their own security; nor did they thank the other powers for wishing to satiate the rapacity of France by the sacrifice of so considerable a part of the Spanish provinces.

While they hesitated therefore to accept of the alternative offered them, and seemed rather willing to abandon the whole, than to be unjustly deprived of a part, the king of France invaded Franche Comte, and in about ten or twelve days made himself master of the whole province.

At last when the court of Madrid found that neither England nor the States could be induced to take a decisive part in their favour, while France acceded to the terms, they sent orders to their governor in Flanders to chose the first condition of the alternative, by which France was to retain all the conquests she had made when the alternative was proposed, and which of course did not include Franche Comte.

This unexpected choice, by which Spain gave up so many places almost in the heart of her provinces, was made with a view of engaging both Holland and England in a freer union for the defence of the rest. No farther obstacle remaining to the negotiation of a peace, it was soon concluded by the plenipotentiaries of the different powers, who met at Aix-la-chapelle[9].

France restored Franche Comte, but was confirmed in the possession of its other conquests, after formally renouncing every farther claim. The observance of the articles was guarantied by England, Holland, and Sweden, who were also allowed to solicit the accession of any other princes and states that might be inclined to join them in the fame engagement.

Some time before the Triple Alliance produced the desired effect, with regard to France and Spain, a treaty was concluded between the latter and Portugal, by the mediation, and under the guarantee of England. By this treaty Portugal, after a long struggle to shake off the Spanish yoke, was declared to be free and independent; and the right of succession to that crown was confirmed to the Braganza family[10].

Thus, in the course of a few months, the differences of all the belligerent states were seemingly composed, and the tranquility of Europe provided for by the faith of the most solemn treaties, and the expected vigilance of a. powerful confederacy.

New Counsels Adopted in Favour of The Non-Conformists

In the midst of these very honourable and politic endeavours to promote universal peace, the parliament met, according to their adjournment, on, the tenth of February; and both the king and his ministers had some right to expect the warmest congratulations on the success of the overtures made to the Dutch, and a cheerful grant of supplies to fulfil the conditions of that treaty.

But the friends of the exiled chancellor, and some misguided zealots had not been idle during the recess. They industriously circulated reports, that the earl was removed only to divert public vengeance from its proper objects, the principal directors of the late disgraceful and calamitous war; and to open the way for the reestablishment of Presbyterians on a footing of perfect equality.

This latter assertion was not only the more readily believed, but excited the greater jealousy and alarm, as the ministry had actually taken some steps towards that end, and had even engaged a few of the most, moderate divines of the established church[11] to assist them in preparing such a plan of comprehension. I must, before I proceed any farther, explain the cause of this temporary change in the apparent designs of the court.

In a former part of these remarks[12], it has been observed, that when the duke of Buckingham headed the cabal in opposition to government, he kept up an intimate correspondence with many persons of the greatest weight among the non-conformists, and declared himself a strong friend to their principles, and a warm advocate for liberty of conscience.

These professions were only made with a view of increasing his popularity and his party; for so far from being inclined to favour this or that particular sect through any belief in their tenets, all sense of religion was totally extinguished in his mind by long habits of debauchery and profaneness.

Upon his restoration to royal favour, and his taking the lead in public measures, he did not think it safe to shake off his old friends, not flatly to contradict his former assurances. He therefore resolved to secure the confidence of so large a body of men, whose interest might give additional stability to his power.

He prevailed with the king to adopt his notions for a little time; and had even the address to persuade the friends of the papists, that the proposed lenity to Protestant dissenters would ultimately prove more serviceable to the Roman Catholics, and reconcile the people to greater condescensions in their favour, than the system of intolerance hitherto pursued.

Opposition of The Commons

But though the duke had carried his point in the cabinet, and flattered himself with the hope of gaining the acquiescence of both houses, yet the loud clamours of the church party, and the premature triumph of the dissenters themselves excited in parliament a spirit of the most determined opposition.

On the very morning of their reassembling, and before the king went to the house, the commons gave a sufficient specimen of their intentions by voting, that such of the members, as were of the privy council, should attend his majesty with a request, in the name of the house, "that he would issue out a proclamation, for the putting in present execution the laws in force concerning religion and church government, now established according to the Act of Uniformity." Nor could all the efforts of the court party obtain even the delay of this vote, till the house should be informed of his majesty's sentiments on the subject from his own lips.

After passing this vote, the attendance of the commons was required by the king in the house of peers, where he communicated to his parliament the pleasing news of his having made a defensive league with the States of the United Provinces, and another for an efficacious mediation of peace between France and Spain, into which the king of Sweden had, by his embassador, offered to enter as a principal.

His majesty next availed himself of the present posture of his neighbours, and of the obligations he lay under, in consequence of the new alliance, to urge the necessity of a speedy supply, which might enable him to build some large ships now much wanted in the navy, to fortify the ports, and more immediately to set out a fleet for the purpose of giving weight to the proposed mediation.

Having dwelt sufficiently upon these points, he added, "that for the settling a firm peace, as well at home as abroad, there was one thing more he held himself obliged to recommend to them, which was, that they would seriously think of some course, to beget a better union and composure in the minds of his protestant subjects; in matters of religion, whereby they might be induced not only to submit quietly to the government, but also faithfully give their assistance towards the support of it.

The commons did not disavow the great pleasure they felt at his majesty's gracious communication of the alliances entered into with Holland and Sweden; but as this was connected with, the demand of a supply, they declined taking the king's speech into consideration, and resolved first to examine into all the miscarriages during the late war, for which purpose they appointed a committee of inquiry.

They not only affirmed the vote they had paired in the morning, and caused it to be presented to the king in the afternoon ; but they resolved to go themselves in a body, and to present an address in more' precise and pointed terms, humbly requesting his majesty "to issue out his proclamation for enforcing the laws against conventicles; and that care might be taken for the preservation of the peace against all unlawful assemblies of papists and non-conformists."

As the ill temper of the commons was supposed chiefly to proceed from their jealousies on the force of religion, Buckingham advised the king to shew the utmost readiness in complying with their last request; but, at the same time, to give parliament an indirect hint, that he presumed they had not lost fight of the plan of union, which he had recommended to their care in his speech.

This was done with great artifice and delicacy in the preamble, or opening of the proclamation, where his majesty declared, "that upon information, that divers persons, abusing the clemency used to the dissenters, (even whilst it was under consideration to find out a way for the better union of his protestant subjects) had of late openly held unlawful assemblies and conventicles, he would by no means permit such notorious contempt of himself and his laws to go unpunished."

But the commons were at present very little inclined to admit of any union, except what was prescribed by the act of uniformity: the spirit of patty was inflamed by a blind and implacable zeal; and it was thought impossible to secure the interests and peace of the church but by the means most likely to destroy both, indiscriminate and unrelenting persecution. They voted, therefore, that no man should bring any bill into the house, relating to a comprehension, or

toleration; and the king was soon after obliged to assent to an act for enlarging and enforcing the severities of a former bill for the suppression of conventicles.

Inquiry into The Mismanagement

Various discoveries of misconduct in the late war were every day made and reported to the lower house by the committee, whom they had chosen for that purpose. Brounker was the first person, on whom their vengeance fell for the order he gave to slacken sail on board the duke of York's ship, which prevented the probable destruction of the enemy's fleet, after being so mach shattered in the first day's engagement.

They expelled him the house, of which he was a member, and ordered him to be impeached. They were equally severe in their animadversions on the attempt at Berghen; on the plundering of the two East India ships, while the Dutch fleet passed by; on the want of intelligence, and dividing the fleets in the second year of the war, on not setting out a sufficient fleet the last year, and the separation of those ships that were out, so that they became useless; on the payment of the seamen by tickets; on the want of provision and ammunition in the fleet, and in the forts; and on the last disgraceful loss sustained at Chatham, for which commissioner Pell underwent, like Brounker, the infamy of expulsion.

Appointment of Commissioners of Account

Commissioners of accounts were also appointed this session to examine into the expenditure of all the money voted for the support of the war, they applied themselves with great fidelity to the discharge of that important trust, but had not an opportunity of making their report on the subject till near the end of October in the following year, as the parliament did not meet again till then.

The earnestness of the commons, however, was not abated by that delay; and finding, among other very exceptionable articles, that immense sums had been issued out of the exchequer, by authority of the privy seal, to Sir George Carteret, treasurer of the navy, without specifying the, particular uses to which that money was applied, they began with expelling him the house, and would have then taken other measures against him, had not the king, by a compliance with whose orders Sir George had incurred such severities, immediately prorogued the parliament, and thereby put a sudden stop to all farther proceedings.

Impatience of Ministry for The Money Bill

During the agitation of so many complaints and grievances, the king sent repeated messages to express his impatience at the delay of the money bill, and to remind the commons of the obligation he was under to set out a fleet, in consequence of the late treaty. His own wants were, as usual, very urgent: his ordinary revenues had not yet recovered from the shock given them by the plague, by the dreadful fire, and by the interruption of trade during the war.

He and his ministers were also apprehensive, that if the differences between France and Spain should happen to be settled, before the supplies were voted, the commons would be much more niggardly in their grant, as there would in that case remain no pretence for any naval armament.

Every endeavour was therefore used to press this business upon the attention of the house, and to engage them to prepare for an adjournment against the beginning of May; but a new incident fell out to retard a little the celerity of their progress.

Violent Contest Between Both Houses on a Point of Judicature

One Mr. Skinner, a merchant of London, having grievous matter of complaint against the East India company for seizing a ship and cargo of his, and assaulting his person, did not think proper

to leek redress in the usual manner by commencing a suit in Westminster Hall, but brought the business directly before the house of lords, by way of petition.

They examined his complaint, and awarded him five thousand. pounds damages. Sir Samuel Bernardiston, as governor of the East India company, made an appeal in their behalf to the house of commons, who voted Skinner's complaint and the proceedings of the lords thereon illegal, and ordered Skinner himself to be taken into custody by the sergeant at arms.

The lords filled with resentment, issued a similar order for the commitment of Sir Samuel, and other East India directors, and declared their appeal to the commons to be scandalous. Several conferences took place between both houses, but served only to widen the breach, the lords vindicating their right to such an exercise of judicial authority, and the commons as positively asserting it to be unprecedented, un-constitutional, and illegal.

The commons followed up their former resolution by a second vote, "that whoever should be aiding, or assisting in putting in execution the order or sentence of the house of lords, in the case of Thomas Skinner against the East India company, should be deemed a betrayer of the rights and liberties of the commons of England, and an infringer of the privileges of the house of commons."

In the pauses of this violent quarrel, time was found to carry through the necessary stages, the bill for a supply to his majesty of three hundred and ten thousand pounds, to be raised by an imposition on wines and other liquors. The king going to the house on the fourth of May, gave his assent to this bill, and adjourned the parliament till the eleventh of August; though, as I before intimated, they did not meet again till the latter end of the next year, being adjourned a second time to the first of March, and then prorogued to the nineteenth of October, 1669.

The dispute between the two houses on Skinner's affair was afterwards re-fumed with equal warmth and equal obstinacy on both sides; nor was the question of right or privilege at last decided. The king interfered, and at his insistence, both houses consented to raze the whole proceedings out of their respective journals.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. The address of thanks had reference to four objects; if. to his majesty's having disbanded the forces lately raised. Secondly, to his having dismissed the papists out of his guards, and from other military employments; Thirdly, to his having revoked the Canary patent, and thrown open that trade to all his subjects; and lastly, to his having removed the late lord chancellor from the exercise of public trust and employment in affairs of state.

2. The petition was not presented till the third of December; for though the earl of Clarendon embarked on the twenty-ninth of November in a boat provided for him at Erith by the friendship of Sir John Wolstenholme, yet the wind proved so unfavourable that he was three days and three nights at sea, before he reached Calais, from which place the packet-boat being ready to depart just at the moment of his arrival, soon brought the account of his having landed there.

3. Notice was given in the gazette, that his majesty, for the better regulating of public business, had established a committee for foreign affairs, to which all justices of the peace, and all other his majesty's officers and ministers were to apply; a committee for such matters as concerned the admiralty, navy, and all military affairs; a committee for trade and navigation; and a committee for complaints and grievances, under the express restriction of not meddling with property; and to render this constitution more effectual, it was farther declared in his majesty's, name, that, for the future, nothing was to be resolved in council, till the matter had been first examined by one or other of the committees, to which it respected.

4. He put himself at the head of thirty-five thousand men, commanded by the famous Turenne; besides two other bodies of troops, under the conduit of D'Aumont and Crequi, who with Turenne were looked upon as the greatest generals of the age. The Spaniards, to whom the Low Countries at that time belonged, reposing upon the faith of treaties, had made no preparations of defence; nor were they, indeed, capable of any which could have effectually refilled so powerful an invasion.

5. France and Spain had long been engaged in wars, which kept all Europe in a state of perpetual agitation and disturbance. In order, as was then thought, to reconcile such unhappy differences, a family alliance was proposed and concluded between the two courts. Lewis the XIVth married the Spanish Infanta; and by the treaty of the Pyrenees renounced in the most positive and unequivocal manner all claims of account of his wife to every part of the Spanish dominions. But now, on the death of his father-in-law, the king of Spain, he retracted that renunciation, and pretended that natural rights, depending on blood and succession, could not be annihilated by any extorted deed, or contract.

By the custom of some parts of Brabant, a female of the first marriage, in private succession, is preferred to a male of the second; and as the queen of France stood in this predicament, in regard to seniority of birth, Lewis inferred, that, though the late king of Spain had left an infant son, his queen had a right to this important duchy. The same rule also, by which he had acquitted himself of the restraints laid on him by the act of renunciation, in the case of Brabant, extended to every part of the Spanish dominions; and the only barrier which remained to his claims on that extensive empire was the life of a sickly infant.

6. By the constitution of the Dutch republic, not only all the provinces, but every city in each province must content to the enacting of every law, and the ratification of every treaty. The shortest period of time, therefore, in which this business must be dispatched, was two months, and it was much to be dreaded, that by the influence of French gold the passing the treaty would be obstructed in some of the smaller cities. D'Estradc, the French embassador, treated the league so lightly as to say in contempt, that it would be time enough to speak to it in six weeks. However, De Witt was determined to be beforehand with the embassador, and risked his own safety to preserve the commonwealth: by his authority and example he prevailed with the States General to sign and ratify the league, though it was declared by them all, that if it displeased their constituents, they risked their heads for the irregularity.

7. The Triple Alliance was signed on the twenty-third January, 1667

8. We meet with the following remarkable page in a letter from Monsieur de Lionne to the count D'Estrade, three days before the Triple Alliance was signed:-

> "We agree with you here in the truth of what you write, that there are secret endeavours to engage the States in a league for the defence of the Low Countries; but the king knows, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that whatever the English will say on this occasion, results only from their jealousy and fear, that the States should eater into stricter alliances with his majesty; and perhaps to engage into measures which may entirely disoblige France: and I may add, that is the negotiation of this league should advance at London, in such a manner as to render the king apprehensive of the conclusion of it, he has in readiness some sure method to stop it almost at once, and, at the same time, do the English the greatest pleasure in the world. I cannot explain myself further, but monsieur De Witt has too much penetration not easily to know and judge that what I say is true."

Though the secrecy and extraordinary dispatch, with which the league was concluded, put it out of the king of France's power to employ his sure method of slopping it, he soon found the same

means equally effectual in breaking it. Charles was persuaded, without much difficulty, to untie the triple knot, and undo the only act in all his engagements with foreign powers, which seemed deserving of applause.

9. The conferences at Aix lasted but for a fortnight, and the treaty was acceded to by all parties and signed on the second of May.

10. Portugal was annexed to the crown of Spain, or rather was reduced to a state of the most abject vassalage by Philip II. in 1580. The viceroys under that tyrant and his immediate successors pursued such a system of rapacity and oppression as at length excited a revolt at Lisbon on the first of December, 1640, when the people almost forced John, duke of Braganza, the legitimate heir, to assert his own right, and the independency of his country. Both were confirmed, in the reign of Alphonso his successor, by the above treaty.

11. Among these were Tillotson and Stillingfleet, clergymen highly esteemed for their learning, their talents, and their moderation.

12. See page 263.

East India House - London

SUPPLEMENT
TO
THE SECRET HISTORY

HE author of the Secret History has so clearly laid open to us the ruling passions, and the pernicious designs of Charles and his brother, that, though our curiosity must be greatly disappointed by the discontinuance of his accurate information, yet no additional details could throw any new light on characters, with whom we are already made so well acquainted. The conduct of the king during the remainder of his reign, and the measures pursued by his successor, are but natural and almost necessary consequences of the principles, by which we find they were both governed, from the very moment of the restoration.

Our purpose therefore, in writing a Supplement, is by no means to trace with painful minuteness the farther proceedings of such detestable monsters, but to fix upon those protuberances of their depravity, which seem to swell out from the vicious mass, as if to force themselves upon our notice, and to excite our peculiar abhorrence.

The first of those disgraceful acts is the secret treaty entered into with France towards the close of the year 1669, a treaty unparalleled in the history of nations, by which one tyrant, immersed in sensuality, betrayed; to another, more guided by ambition, the interests of his own kingdom, and the principal security of surrounding states.

This was not effected by the intrigues of France: Charles was too forward a prostitute to wait for the offers of a seducer: he himself made the first advances; and expressed the most teasing impatience till the infamous bargain was concluded. He began by tampering with the French ambassador; but being afraid of communicating his sentiments too, freely, if the French monarch should not Like his proposals, he had recourse to his sister, the duchess of Orleans, whose wit, beauty, and talents for intrigue gave her at that time considerable influence in the court of France[1]

Through her the negotiation was entered upon; and all diffidence being removed, trusty ambassadors were sent to both courts, that the terms might be adjusted with the greater dispatch, and with the profoundest secrecy[2]

Lord Arundel of Wardour, a declared papist, was the person appointed to go to Paris, with full instructions; and none of the ministry or council were admitted into the secret, but Arlington, Clifford, and Sir Richard Bealing, who were. all Roman Catholics.

The draught of the proposed treaty is said to be Bealing's composition, and was delivered by him to Colbert, the French ambassador, on the eighteenth of December 1669. The preamble, besides the usual cant of perpetual friendship and union, contains two very curious assertions, viz. that it should be beyond the power of anything in the world to disturb this peace, and that the articles

it contained implied such a degree of mutual confidence, and were of such advantage to the contracting parties, that it would be hardly possible to find an instance of a more important treaty, agreed upon and ratified in any age. But men void of honour and honesty are incapable of any lasting friendship: as their union is cemented only by the interest of the moment, it carries in itself the principles of its own dissolution. As to the extraordinary importance, for rather the unparalleled infamy of the bargain, the reader will judge of it after the perusal of the articles:-

ART. I. The king of Great Britain being convinced of the truth of the catholic religion, and resolved to declare himself a catholic, and to reconcile himself to the church of Rome, thinks the assistance of his most Christian majesty may be necessary to facilitate the execution of his design: it is therefore agreed and concluded upon, that his most Christian majesty shall supply the king of England, before the said declaration, with the sum of two hundred thousand pounds sterling, one half to be paid in three months after the ratification of the present treaty, and the other half in three months more: and farther that his most Christian majesty shall assist the king of England with troops and money, as there may be occasion, in case the said king's subjects should not acquiesce in the said declaration, and rebel against his said Britannic majesty (which is not thought likely:) and to the end that the said declaration may have the wished for success, and be executed with the greater safety, it is also agreed, that the day for executing this design shall be entirely at the option of the king of England."

{When Lewis read this first article, both he and his ministers were probably ashamed of the gross indelicacy in the terms of the bargain, as if the money was a bribe for Charles's declaring himself a papist. The language was therefore softened in the following manner; and the sum of two millions of livres was inferred, instead of two hundred thousand pounds:}

"The king of Great Britain, being convinced of the truth of the catholic religion, is resolved to reconcile himself to the church of Rome, as soon as the good posture of affairs in his kingdom will permit him; and though he has every reason to hope, and to promise himself, that even those, upon whom God may not yet have poured down his grace in such abundance as to dispose shew after so august an example, to become converts, will not fail in the inviolable obedience, which all people, though of a different religion, owe to their sovereigns; nevertheless, as there are often found in large states restless and turbulent spirits, who strive to disturb the public peace, particularly when they have so plausible a pretext as that of religion, his Britannic majesty, who has nothing more at heart, after having given peace to his own conscience, than to confirm that which the mildness of his government has procured to his subjects, believes that the best means to prevent its being altered, would be the certainty, in case of any disturbance, of the assistance of his most Christian majesty, who, desirous of giving the king of Great Britain, upon this occasion, effectual proofs of his friendship, and of his wish to contribute to the success of a design so advantageous to his Britannic majesty, and even to the whole catholic religion, hath promised, and doth hereby promise to supply the said king of Great Britain with the sum of two millions of livres, one half to be paid, &c.

ART 2. It hath been likewise agreed between the most Christian king and his Britannic majesty, that the said most Christian king shall not break, not ever infringe the peace, which he hath made with Spain, nor violate in any particular his promises in the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle; and consequently, that the king of Great Britain shall be permitted to maintain the said treaty, conformably to the conditions of the Triple Alliance, and the engagements which depend thereon."

[The absurdity of this article, which is destroyed by the one immediately following it, serves only to expose Charles's weak attempt to conceal some part of his own baseness in this contract.]

" If any new rights or claims on the Spanish monarchy should hereafter fall to the most Christian king, it has been agreed between the king of Great Britain and the most Christian king, that the said king of Great Britain shall assist the said most Christian king with all his forces, as well by sea as land, to facilitate the acquisition of the said rights; the whole at the expense of his most

Christian majesty; and in order to obviate all disputes that may arise in adjusting the accounts of the said troops, it is settled and agreed upon between the said sovereign lords, that the levying and transporting of all the land forces, which the most Christian king shall want, or may require, shall be at the expense of the said most Christian king; and this present treaty being concluded, particular articles shall be entered into, as well concerning the pay and subsistence of the said land forces, as to regulate tie manner and conditions upon which they are to serve: but as a calculation cannot be so well made of the expenses of a naval armament, subject to so many accidents, and composed of so many parts, and it being at the same time necessary to reduce the whole to one head, it is agreed, that the naval forces which shall be employed, as above mentioned, in the service of his most Christian majesty, shall be paid by the said most Christian king, at the rate of three pounds, sixteen shillings a man per month, including the pay of all officers and sailors, provision, ammunition, rigging, refitting, and loss of ships during the war, and this from the time that the said troops shall be railed till they are discharged, reckoning twenty-eight days to a month; and, upon these conditions, such a number of ships of such force as his most Christian majesty shall judge necessary for his service shall be furnished within the time appointed for that purpose: and as it may happen that this assistance shall be required to bring under obedience to his most Christian majesty some distant provinces and places bordering on the Mediterranean, which are at present under subjection to the Spaniards, and that it may be inconvenient, or even impossible for his Britannic majesty's fleets to keep the sea, without some ports and harbours of their own, where they may put in from time to time to careen, to get provisions and ammunition, and to have storehouses, as well as proper places to refit, it has been agreed between the said sovereign lords, that the king of Great Britain shall for ever have for himself, his heirs, and successors, the island of Minorca; as also for the better accommodation of his land and sea forces, shall have for himself, his heirs, and successors, the port and town of Ostend in the Low Countries, with such an extent of territory round, as shall be deemed capable of paying contributions enough for the maintenance of a proper garrison there; and in order to take the said places; and put them into the hands of his Britannic majesty, the most Christian king shall use the same efforts, and employ as many troops as to acquire places, the possession of which is to be vested in himself: moreover, his most Christian majesty promises and engages, as well in his own name as that of the most Christian queen, his heirs, successors, and assigns (the aforesaid claims on the Spanish monarchy having devolved to him) to assist the king of Great Britain to make himself master of the countries and places in America, which are at present subject to Spain, and to do every thing in his power to oblige the inhabitants of those countries and places in America to submit to the government of the said king of England; and the said people having submitted, or being reduced to submission, shall always be accounted subjects of the said king of Great Britain, and of his heirs and successors: it is also agreed and concluded, that neither of the said sovereigns shall make peace, without the content and approbation of the other, with any prince or state whatever, who shall oppose the rights or just titles, that may devolve to the said most Christian king, as is before mentioned."

"**IV.** It is likewise agreed between the laid sovereigns, that they shall make war with all their forces both by sea and land upon the States General of the United Provinces; and that the said sovereigns shall declare all part treaties with the said States null, except that already mentioned of the Triple Alliance made in consequences of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle; and neither of the said kings shall make peace With them, without the knowledge and consent of the other: all commerce between the subjects of the said kings and of the said States shall be prohibited; and if the subjects of either of the said kings trade with the subjects of the said States, the ships and goods of such subject so trading (hall be liable to be seized by the subjects of the other king, and (hall be deemed lawful prize; and is, after the declaration of war, the subjects of either of the said kings than enlist in the serviced of the States, and be made prisoners, they shall be put to death by the king, whose subject shall have taken them: (And forasmuch as the senate and republic of Hamburgh are bound by the ties of interest to the States General and experience having shewn that the said republic always assists the sled States underhand, it is agreed end concluded, that war should be also declared at the same time by the said kings upon the said senate and republic:) and as the preparations by sea, in order to bring the war to a happy issue will be unavoidably

excessive, and as that burthen, muck more heavy than a land army, will principally, fall upon his Britannic majesty, the most Christian king engages to pay, every year while war lasts, to the said king of Great Britain, the sum of eight hundred thousand pounds sterling, by way of subsidy, to defray a part of the very great expense, which the king of Great Britain must necessarily incur in equipping all his naval force, as he intends, and obliges himself to do every year during the course of the war: half the said sum of eight hundred thousand pounds shall be paid in advance to the said king of Great Britain three months before the declaration of the said war, and the other half six months after the said declaration; and thus annually, as long as this war shall continue, one half in the beginning of each year, and the other half six months after: besides the said fleet, his Britannic majestic will always keep on foot a body, of fix thousand infantry, which he is to transport at his own expense; and of all the conquests which shall be made upon the States General, the king of Great Britain will be satisfied with the following places, namely, the island of Walkeron, l'Ecluse, and the island of Cassette: the manner of attack, and of continuing the war shall be settled by a regulation hereafter to be concerted: and as the dissolution of the government of the States General, which is the principal end proposed in this war, will necessarily be of great prejudice to the prince of Orange, the king of England's nephew; and as even some places, towns, and governments belonging to him will be found in the intended partition of the country, it is agreed and concluded, that the said kings will do every thing in their power to make the said prince find his advantage in the continuation and end of this war, as shall be hereafter stipulated in separate articles, since it is to be presumed that the credit, which will be thereby given to the prince and his adherents, will contribute much to the success of this war, at least will sow such seeds of jealousy and division among the Dutch, that the conquest of the country will thereby become much more easy.

[France refused to declare war against Hamburgh; and instead of eight hundred thousand pounds, only engaged to pay Charles a subsidy of three millions of livres annually during the war.]

"V. It is also agreed, that before the declaration of this war, the said sovereigns shall use their utmost efforts, jointly, or separately, as occasion may require, to persuade the kings of Sweden and Denmark, or one of them, to. enter into. this war against the States General, at least to oblige them to remain neuter: and they will endeavour in the same manner to draw into these measures the electors of Cologne and Brandenburg, the house of Brunswick, the duke of Newburg, and the bishop of Munster: the said kings will also do their utmost to persuade even the emperor and the crown of of Spain not to oppose the conquest of the said country."

[In the execution of this last article, the endeavours of the royal conspirators proved, indeed, but too successful. The elector of Cologne and the bishop of Munster were immediately engaged to take an active part against the Dutch. Many other of the German princes were seduced, or intimidated into neutrality. The emperor himself was dissuaded from declaring in favour of the Dutch, till they were on the very brink of ruin. A subsidiary treaty of four hundred thousand crowns a year was entered into with the king of Sweden, who, on this consideration,was to hold a body of troops in readiness, either against the emperor, or the empire, if either should attempt to oppose the arms of Lewis. In short Spain was the only power, whom neither bribes nor menaces could work upon to betray the interests, and the liberties of Europe, at this alarming crisis[3].

The queen regent and her ministers, to their immortal honour, instead of seeking a temporary safety by a mean and ruinous connivance at the designs of France, and England, formed a defensive league with the States General, and proclaimed to the world their spirited purpose to refill the progress of perfidy, injustice and ambition. The court of Vienna was afterwards tempted to follow, though late, so glorious an example.]

"VI. These fundamentals being settled, and the king of Great Britain, after having declared himself a catholic, being in peace at home, he leaves to the most Christian king the liberty of naming the time, when they shall make war with their united forces against the States General: it has been therefore agreed, and concluded, that the most Christian king shall name the time,

which shall appear to him moil proper for the declaration pf the said war, the king of Great Britain being assured, that his most Christian majesty in naming the said time, will have regard to the interests of the two crowns, which after the conclusion of this treaty will be common and inseparable."

[Though this article was not altered before the signing of the treaty, Lewis soon after found means to make Charles defer the intended avowal of his being a papist, and to begin first with the plunder of the Dutch.]

VII. If, upon account of this treaty, either of the said kings should hereafter find himself engaged in foreign or domestic wars, the one, who is not attacked, shall assist the other with all his forces, till the foreign war, or the rebellion shall be quelled.

VIII. If in any preceding treaty made by either of the said kings with any prince or state whatever, there should be found any clauses contrary to those, which are specified in this league, the said, clauses shall be null, and those which are contained in the present treaty shall remain in force and vigour."

While the negotiation for this treaty was carrying on, Colbert, the French ambassador, took a great deal of pains to divert the king from his purpose of making the declaration of his religion precede a war with the Dutch. The following extract from a letter to his minister, giving an account of the conversation he had with Charles on this subject, will place the expectations of both parties in the clearest point of view;

"He told me," says Colbert, "he believed, that I must have thought, after reading his proposals, that he and all those, to whom he had entrusted the conduct of this affair, were made to pretend to re-establish the catholic religion in England, and that indeed every person, who was acquainted with the affairs of his kingdom, and the temper of his people, must think so: yet he hoped, that, with your majesty's support, this great undertaking would have a happy issue: that the Presbyterians and all the other sects had a greater aversion to the church of England than to the Catholics: that all the sectaries breathed no other wish than for liberty of conscience; and that provided they could obtain it, as it was his design they should, they would not oppose his religion: that, betides, he has good troops well affected to him and that, if the late king his father had had so many, he would have stifled in their birth the troubles that caused his ruin: that he would still augment as much as possible his regiments and companies, under the most specious pretences he could devise: that all the magazines of arms are at his disposal, and all well filled: that he was assured of the Principal places in England and Scotland: that the governor of Hull was a catholic; that those of Portsmouth, Plymouth, and several other places which he named to me, among the rest Windsor, would never swerve from their obedience to him: that, as to the troops in Ireland, he hoped the duke of Ormond, who had great credit there, would be always faithful to him; and that though the duke, not approving this change of religion, should fail in his duty, lord Orrery, who was a catholic in his heart, and who had much more influence in that army, would lead it wherever his majesty should command him: that your majesty's friendship, of which he had the most obliging proofs in the answers given to his proposals, and with which he declared himself perfectly satisfied, would be also of great service to him.

In short, he told me, that he was pressed both by his conscience, and the confusion which he saw increasing from day to day in his kingdom, to the diminution of his authority, to declare himself a catholic; and that, besides the spiritual advantage which he should derive from it, he also believed it to be the only means of reestablishing the monarchy.

"I replied, continues Colbert, "that it was a great and generous design, and that I hoped by timing it well, it would succeed; that as your majesty trusted entirely to his discretion for the choice of the time, I had nothing to say to it; unless he wished to hear the reasons which was suggested by my zeal alone for his service, and by the knowledge I had acquired during my residence at his

court; and as he had told me, that he should be glad to take my advice in the whole course of this business, I said, that I did not doubt but if the late king, his father, as he justly observed, had had as many troops as himself, he would have easily quashed the rebellion in its birth,because it began only in little disturbances, excited by court intrigues, in which the people had hardly any concern, and which gained strength and vigour only from the impunity they enjoyed through the weakness of the royal authority, unsupported by troops; but that the troubles, which it was to be feared his declaration would cause, would be of quite another nature; that perhaps nine parts out of ten throughout his kingdom would feel themselves interested; that, if the Presbyterians and sectarics hated at present the English church more than the catholic, it was because the latter was now in the lowest hate of depression, and more an object of pity than envy; but when they should fee it listed up by the king's declaration, and come to reflect on the discredit into which their feet might fall in the course of time, they would probably unite with the protestants to oppose such a change:

That experience had too fully shewn, that religious motives are a fire of sulphur and saltpetre, the whole mass of which kindles in an instant, and is never more furious, nor more violent than at the beginning: that seditions must be expected in every part of the kingdom, and that in London a leader is never wanting to head rebellions of that kind: that I had even heard there were more than twenty thousand men in London and its environs, who had borne arms during Cromwell's usurpation, and who were rendered desperate by want of employment; that there was reason to believe, they would all be ready, at such an opportunity as this, to take up arms in support of the rebellion:

That though none of the troops he kept in pay, or of the faithful subjects he relied upon, should fail him in time of need, they might perhaps be overpowered by the multitude of the rebels, even before the troops your majesty had agreed to furnish could arrive: that the Tower of London, which is his principal magazine of arms, was of no security, and would not perhaps hold out a single day, if attacked: that it was not to be expected, that the Dutch, who must justly fear the consequence of suck a declaration, would remain entirely quiet, and take no share in what was going forward ; but would, on the contrary, employ their treasures and their credit, to form obstacles to the execution of a project so fatal to their mate:

That, in fine, according to my opinion, his crown, and all his trusty servants would be very much endangered by a Premature declaration; whereas, in your majesty's Proposal to begin with a declaration of war against Holland, I law such perfect security, that one might answer for the success: for; in the first place, I did not doubt but upon informing his parliament, that his strongest desire was to render the navigation and trade of England more flourishing than ever, and that, as the greatest obstacles thereto were the Dutch, who, having engrossed in a tyrannical manner the commerce of the whole world, (so that sixteen thousand ships are hardly sufficient for their traffic) refused giving any satisfaction to his just demands, as well on account of the freedom of trade in the East-Indies, as upon other points which respect the advantage of his subjects, he had resolved to make war upon them, in order to bring them to reason;

And that to this end he had taken such prudent measures with your majesty, that he could insure the success, provided his parliament would grant him only two-thirds or half the assistance they before gave him on the like occasion; I was, I said, persuaded, that he would obtain such a supply, as being joined to his ordinary revenues, and to the assistance in men and money ready to be given by your majesty, would put an end to the war in a single campaign, and gain him all the-glory, and all the advantages he could wish; there being moreover great likelihood, that the major part of the German princes, who are either your majesty's friends, or his, would join against the Dutch, or at least remain neuter, which could not be expected from the protestant kings and princes, if this war was preceded by his declaring himself a catholic, as it would give the Dutch room to make those princes believe that religion was the sole ground of the quarrel: that the States, being attacked on the side of the bishopric of Munster, and in other parts also by your majesty's troops and his, would not be able to fit out a considerable fleet, nor to make any long

resistance; and that should your majesty and he think Proper for your common benefit to continue this war, he might, at the end of the campaign, leave, in the places that fell to his share, such troops only as he could not depend upon, after declaring himself a catholic, and recall such as were most devoted to his service, who, being joined to all the recruits and new levies raised in the course of the campaign, under pretence of continuing the war, might enable him to maintain his change of religion: that then, there would be no reason to apprehend that his subjects, seeing that he was well armed both by sea and land, and that he had your majesty's forces at his disposal, against all his enemies, foreign or domestic, and being also put in good humour by the successful beginning of the war, and by the liberty of conscience which he was to grant them, either would, or indeed durst make the least resistance to his will:

That, on the contrary, by assembling his parliament at this conjuncture, he would probably obtain such supplies for the continuation of the war, and such acts in favour of his religion as he could with: that the Dutch being declared enemies to the States, and consequently all those, who should keep up any correspondence with them, without his permission, being liable to be punished as traitors to their king and country, they would not find it near so easy to form, abet, and maintain a rebellion, as when, under the appearance of friendship, they and their emissaries would have full liberty to intrigue and undertake everything.

In fine, Sire, after having made the best use I could of all the other reasons contained in your majesty's memorial, this prince made answer, that he was not yet quite determined upon the time of making his declaration: that perhaps it would be better for your majesty to begin a war upon Holland, in order to furnish him with a pretence to arm, and that immediately after he might without risk declare both his religion and war against the Dutch; and the first succeeding, as it probably would, he might in a month or two join his forces to those of your majesty against the common enemy."

Here we see that the chief point, upon which the two courts differed, was whether Charles's declaration of his being a papist should precede or follow the invasion of Holland. Charles and his brother were very earnest for the former: they dreaded the resistance that was likely to be made to their favourite project, and therefore wished to secure the utmost exertions of the French monarch to support them in the attempt.

They had also some very reasonable suspicions, that, is they began with the reduction of the United Provinces, Lewis, as soon as his turn was served, would give himself very little trouble about settling matters in England. The king of France, on the other hand, though he held out to the royal brothers the bait of arbitrary power, and his great zeal for the catholic religion, in order to engage them to co-operate with him in his ambitious designs, yet was far from intending to put the issue of his enterprize against the Dutch upon so uncertain an event as the establishment of popery and despotism in England.

But finding that all the arguments urged by his embassador did not produce the desired effect, he employed a much more persuasive advocate, and sent over the duchess of Orleans, on the pretence of a friendly visit, to prevail upon her brother to change his purpose, and to begin with the attack on the Hollanders.

Dover was the place appointed for an interview between Charles and his sitter, as her husband's jealousy would not permit her to come to London. The king of France, on the pretence of a visit to his frontiers, and particularly to view the great works, which he had undertaken at Dunkirk, carried the queen and the whole court with him; and whilst he remained on the opposite shore, the duchess of Orleans crossed over the water to Dover, where she was met by Charles and his whole court.

She so far accomplished the purpose of her embassy as to engage her brother to consent to the before mentioned alterations in the first draught of the treaty, representing the money he was to

receive, and the leaving out Hamburgh in the plan of intended hostilities. She also shook her brother's resolution about first declaring himself a papist, and, as Colbert says, " left him almost disposed to enter upon the war with the Dutch, before every other thing." The treaty, however, was concluded without any express engagement of this kind on Charles's part; and in a few days after the duchess went back to France, leaving Charles, and his whole train of courtiers in a seeming melancholy for her departure[4].

As soon as this treaty was concluded, with the privity alone of the four popish members of the council, it became necessary to contrive some plan for engaging the rest of the ministry to concur in the measures that were to be pursued, without admitting them into the grand secret. Charles, therefore, pretended to Buckingham, Ashley, and Lauderdale, that he wished to enter into an alliance with France, for mutual support, and to be revenged of the Dutch; and when various feigned obstacles and difficulties were surmounted, a sham treaty was concluded with their consent and approbation, containing every article of the former treaty, except what related to the change of religion.

The idea of establishing popery in England was thought to be so repugnant to the judgment of every sensible protestant, that those three ministers, though men of the most depraved minds, and the most daring ambition, could not be trusted with such a design; but they were involved in all the rest of the guilt and danger by their concurrence in schemes for the avowed purpose of destroying the independence of all Europe. Charles even suffered them to receive bribes from France for their agency in this business; and as if his confidence increased with their corruption, all other persons were excluded from the cabinet council, and the most important. concerns of the state were committed to the sole directions of **Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Ashley, and Lauderdale, who at this time were called by way of peculiar distinction, or reproach, the CABAL from the initial letters of their names.**

Though Charles did not seem convinced by the French ambassador's political arguments on the danger of prematurely declaring himself a papists, yet he could not resist some pecuniary reasons, which were afterwards urged with much greater effect. In the second treaty, it was agreed, that the two millions of livres, which in the former secret bargain he was to receive for his conversion, should be thrown into the first year's subsidy for the Dutch war, and that he should get a million of livres in hand.

As soon as Charles received the money, he manifest no farther impatience about the avowal of his religion. It is not that he was totally indifferent on this head; but he justly dreaded the resistance of his subjects. He was a coward of the first class, and that weakness often supplied in him the place of policy, or virtue[5].

It saved his country from a civil war during his reign, and probably faxed him from the fate, which his unfortunate father, with much less vice, but greater obstinacy, incurred.

When measures were fully concerted for the, commencement of the Dutch war, and the king had obtained two or three millions more from the pension parliament, on the pretence of exerting himself in support of the Triple Alliance, for the common good of Christendom[6], Sir William Temple, not being a proper tool for dishonourable purposes, was recalled from his embassy at the Hague, and Downing, the old bully, sent out, in hopes by his insolence to provoke the States to afford some shadow of a pretence for quarrelling with them.

But this design being defeated by their cautious conduct, and by their punctual compliance with all the conditions of the peace at Breda, the CABAL had recourse to the mean invention of ordering the captain of a yacht, which was sent to bring over lady Temple, to sail upon his return through the Dutch fleet, then lying on their own coast, and to make them strike their topsails, or to fire on them, and to persevere until they should return his fire. The Dutch admiral, astonished at such a bravado, went on board the yacht, and expressed his willingness to pay all due respect

to the British flag, according to former practice; but that a fleet of their own coasts should strike to a single vessel, and that not a ship of war, was, he said, such an innovation, that he durst not, without express orders, agree to it. The admiral, after this apology, paid the compliment of saluting the yacht with his guns, without lowering his sails: and the captain, thinking it equally absurd and inhuman to sacrifice the lives of his crew, and the life of a lady whose safety he had in charge, yielded to the unequal contest, and continued his course to England; for which neglect of orders he was committed to the Tower.

Though the prudent and humane behaviour of this officer, by not persisting to force the Dutch to fire at his little vessel, had deprived the king of the only plausible ground of complaint; yet Downing, in a very imperious manner, demanded satisfaction for the affront, which, he said, had been put on the British flag; and though the French had kept the English four years out of St. Christopher's, and had done great damage to the island, before they gave it up, without exciting any remonstrance from our court, yet in Downing's memorial to the States, it was represented as a matter of unpardonable offence, that the Dutch had not forced away against their will, some English families which remained at Surinam. He had orders also not to accept of any satisfaction after a certain number of days, in which it was impossible by the shortness of the time allowed, according to the established forms of the republic, to transact any national business. But Downing, though:

"A dog in forehead, was in heart a deer:"

—he was afraid to expose himself to the fury of the populace: he withdrew, without waiting for letters of recall, or taking leave and as, in the preservation of his person, he had deprived the court of another pretence to begin the war, he met with the fame treatment, on his return to London, as the captain of the yacht, and was committed to the Tower.

The answer, which Downing had refused to receive, was sent over to London by an embassador extraordinary, who had orders to use every expedient which might give satisfaction to the court of England; but this court had not demanded satisfaction with any intention to receive it, and replied to the pressing instances of the embassador, that the answer of the States appeared fair, yet it was ambiguous and obscure.

On the English ministry being asked to specify the articles, or expressions, which were liable to that objection, they refused to do it; and when the Dutch embassador desired them to draw the answer in what terms they pleased, and he engaged to sign it, they replied, "that it was not their business to draw papers for the Dutch."

On this the embassador brought them the draught of an article, and asked them, "whether it was satisfactory?" He was told, that when he had signed it, and delivered it, he should know the mind of the ministry concerning it. The embassador, in obedience to the peremptory orders he had received from the States, to prevent a war, if possible, resolved to sign the article. and on his demanding a new audience, an hour was appointed for the purpose; but when he attended, the ministry told him, "that the season for negotiating was now part."

It has been before observed, that the king had lately obtained between two and three millions from parliament, a great part of which was to be applied to the fitting out an additional force at sea, to enable his majesty to conform to the obligations of those alliances, which he had entered into for the defence of the liberties of Europe.

He had also received a very considerable sum from the king of France, to put him in a condition of breaking those very alliances, and commencing a war against the Dutch. Yet so astonishing was his prodigality, that little remained for his present purposes, so that it was found necessary to usher in the violation of foreign treaties with the violation of domestic faith, and the forfeiture of public credit with the pillage of the subject.

It had been usual for the bankers to advance money to the king, on the security of some funds; by which they were reimbursed when the money was levied on the public. By such loans they got eight and sometimes ten per cent. for money which they had borrowed at six. In the present exigency of his finances, the king declared that the staff of treasurer was ready for any one, who should find out an expedient to raise a sum adequate to the necessity. Clifford proposed shutting up the exchequer, and keeping all the money which had been paid into it.

He obtained the promised reward, together with a peerage; and though the king had, by his proclamations, given his faith, that he would make good all his assignments till his debts should be paid, the proposal was carried into such sudden execution, that none but the CABAL had time to recall their cash into their hands. A general astonishment and confusion seized the public; the credit and commerce of the whole kingdom were affected: the bankers stopped payment as well as the exchequer; and the merchants were not able to accept or pay any bills of exchange, to carry on their trade abroad, or to clear their ships at the custom house.

In order to quiet the minds of the public, a declaration was set forth, in which the decay of the navy, and the immediate necessity of large equipments to put England upon a footing with its formidable neighbours were urged as an excuse for such a flagrant breach of faith; and a promise was made to the bankers, that interest, at the rate of six per cent. should be paid them during the detainment of their money. But this not being sufficient to satisfy the bankers, or to restore the necessary circulation of cash the king convened his creditors before him at the treasury, where he gave them positive assurances, that he would punctually discharge his debts, either out of the next parliamentary grants, or his own revenue; and where he required them to make their payments to the merchants, and to the other creditors, as before.

Having amused them with these promises, he kept the exchequer shut, on the same plea of necessity almost a year and a half; nor did he during that period convene the parliament, out of whose next grants the public creditors were led to hope for satisfaction[7]. When some of those, who had deposited their money with the bankers, tired by long delay, commenced actions for the recovery of their property, injunctions were issued out of chancery, by order of Government, to stop such proceedings.

Thus the king's breach of faith was followed and supported by the farther infraction of such laws, as are of the first importance in every commercial country. As the high church party were always courted at the expense of the dissenters, when the king found it necessary to obtain money from the parliament; so in their turn the non-conformists were cajoled by indulgences, when

his majesty had entered into -schemes either to emancipate himself from the necessity of parliaments, or to awe those assemblies into a perfect submission to his pleasure. In conformity to-this policy, the king now resolved to make use of his supreme power in ecclesiastical matters; a power, which, he said, was not only inherent in him, but which had been recognized by several ads of parliament; and by virtue of this authority he issued a proclamation, suspending the penal laws enacted against all non-conformists, or recusants whatsoever, and granting to the protestant dissenters the public exercise of their religion, to the Catholics the exercise of it in private houses[8].

Just before the last sessions of parliament, the king had caused all the ads against the non-conformists to be enforced with the greatest rigour. They were not only exposed to the law, but to the sword. The train-bands were let loose upon them; many were some were killed, and others prosecuted with so little regard even for the common forms of justice, that juries, after being kept for three days without meat or drink, were then fined and imprisoned, for not being willing to perjure themselves, by giving a verdict contrary to evidence against their innocent fellow citizens. It was upon one of these occasions, that the recorder of London declared in open

court, that it would never be well in England, till something like the Spanish inquisition was established.

Charles had various reasons for encouraging such severities at that time, and for now adopting a contrary system of lenity. He hoped to render parliament, which was then going to meet, more liberal in their supplies, and more propitious to his designs, by a pretended zeal for the established church. He alto thought it probable, that the non-conformists might be driven to such acts of disobedience as would give him easier means of increasing the force of his troops, and coming speedily to the point he proposed. But, above all, he flattered himself, that the violence of such a temporary persecution would .increase the enmity of all the protestant dissenters to the established clergy, would lessen their prejudices against the papists, would induce them to accept of indulgence on any terms, and of course make them willing that the Roman Catholics should participate of, the intended toleration.

But the dissenters had been too often perfidiously treated by Charles, to become the dupes of such (hallow fallacy : they wished for liberty of conscience, but in a parliamentary way, not at the price of all the laws, or on terms of comprehension with papists. They joined, therefore, all their interest to that even of their persecution, to oblige the king to recall his declaration, which, under the shew of indulgence to every sect, was designed to prepare the way for the establishment of popery.

As no war had been yet declared against the Dutch, that nation thought themselves secured by the treaty which still subsisted between them and England, and by that common law of nations, which governs the conduct of all civilized Kato. On this security, a large sleet of merchantmen valued at a million and a half, was trusted to the (mall convoy of five men of war. The hopes of seizing this rich prey, which was considered as a resource for supporting military enterprises, and setting the king entirely independent of parliamentary supplies, had prevented the court from making any open, or usual declaration of their intended hostilities.

Sir Robert Holmes, a man well qualified for any piratical attempt, who in 1661 had in time of peace seized upon Cape Verde, and form other Dutch settlements on the coast of Guinea, was dispatched with nine frigates and three yachts:on this expedition. In passing the channel, he met with admiral Spragge, returning with a squadron from a cruise in the Mediterranean, who informed him of the near approach of the Hollanders. Holmes, from the desire of engrossing the honour and the profit of the enterprise, kept the secret of his orders; and by avoiding this conjunction, which would have proved invincible, saved the Dutch fleet.

When he first approached the Hollanders, he put on an amicable appearance, and invited the admiral, who commanded the convoy, to come on board of him. One of his captains gave a like insidious invitation to the rear admiral. But these officers, who had received an intimation of the hostile intentions of the English, had already put all the ships of war and merchantmen in a posture of defence. They were attacked by Holmes with all that impetuous courage which signalised his military conduct; and, during the (pace of two whole days, they defended themselves with a valour, that shewed them worthy of the important charge committed to their care.

At length, by the favour of a mist, the fleet got safe into the Dutch harbours, with the loss only of one man of war, and three or four of the most inconsiderable merchantmen.

When the want of success attends any dishonourable action, it increases the size of its infamy in the opinion of the vulgar. Even the CABAL were dimmed of the fruitless attempt, and endeavoured to represent it in the Gazette as a mere re-encounter, occasioned solely by the ill manners of the Dutch, in refusing to strike and lower their top-sails. However, there was no one so credulous as to believe, that the Dutch would, at the risk of a valuable fleet, make choice of so very dangerous a moment, to contend a point, which they had already given up.

Holmes himself, though pressed to it, had not the impudence to affirm any suck thing. The same Gazette also contradicted itself, by acknowledging that the top-sails were lowered.

The declaration of war, which had been kept back, only till the rich prize of the Smyrna fleet could be secured, was immediately issued after the event of that business[9]. In its preamble the world was desired to believe, than nothing but inevitable necessity had driven his majesty into the war. The reasons for this incredulity were, the complaints of injuries done to the East-India company; the detention of English families in Surinam; the refusal of the Dutch fleet to strike to the English yacht; and force irritating pictures, medals, and pillars. This singular cause of going to war was thus stated:

It is no wonder that they (the Dutch) venture at these outrages upon our subjects in remote parts, when they dare be so bold with our royal person, and the honour of this nation, so near us as in their own country, there being scarce a town within their territories, that is not filled with abusive pictures, and false historical medals and pillars, some of which have been exposed to the public view by command of the States themselves, and in the very time when we were joined with them in united counsels, for the support of the Triple Alliance, and the peace of Christendom."

There was so little ground for this ridiculous complaint, that when the first intimation of it was given to the States in Downing's memorial, they did not know for a' long time what to make of suck a strange article, till it was at last discovered, that there was a portrait of Cornelius De Witt, the pensionary's brother, painted by the order of the magistrates of Dort, and hung up in a chamber of the town-house. In the back-ground of this picture, some ships were represented on fire in a harbour, as a trifling memorial of De Witt's maritime exploits.

The offensive medal was struck after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle ; and on one side represented Holland resting herself on a trophy, and on the other side an inscription to this effect: "That she had secured the laws; reformed religion; assisted, defended, and reconciled kings; restored freedom to the ocean; procured by force of arms a glorious peace; and established the tranquility of all Europe."

After the statement of this unpardonable insult, and some other assertions, equally false, or equally frivolous, the declaration concluded in the following extraordinary manner:-

> "And whereas we are engaged by a treaty to support the peace made at **Aix-la-Chapelle**, we do finally declare, that notwithstanding the prosecution of this war, we will maintain the true intent and scope of the said treaty; and that in all alliances which we have or shall make in the progress of this war, we have and will take care to preserve the ends thereof inviolable, unless provoked to the contrary."

It is evident from this alone, if we had not an abundance of other proofs, that Charles could publish to the world, as well as utter to his parliament, the grossest falsehoods, and the most palpable inconsistencies, without a blush.

The king of France, who had only waited for Charles to begin, soon published his own declaration of war against the States, in the haughty stile of an ordinance by the king, in which he said, "the dissatisfaction he had in the carriage of the States General towards him, for some years past, having risen to such a height, that he could no longer, without a diminution of his glory, dissemble the indignation railed in him by a treatment so unsuitable to the great obligations, which he and his predecessors had liberally heaped upon them: he was therefore determined to make war against them, both by sea and land[10]."

After the States General had used in vain every endeavour to divert the impending storm, they were now obliged to face it with the most desperate resolution. De Ruyter once more appeared at sea, the dauntless champion of the Dutch republic; nor could the combined thunders of his

powerful enemies blast the laurels that still flourished round his brow. Notwithstanding the great superiority of their force and numbers, he left them no room to triumph in their success.

Both parties retired from the battle of Solebay with equal loss; but though such a contest was undoubtedly honourable to that brave commander, yet a complete victory could have hardly saved his country, at that time, from the destruction, which on every other side threatened to overwhelm her. The land forces of the United Provinces, which did not exceed twelve thousand men, with a few auxiliaries received from Flanders, were very incompetent to the defence of an extensive frontier against an army of one hundred and eighteen thousand foot, and twenty, fix thousand horse, with the king of France at their head, assisted by such generals as Conde and Turenne.

The elector of Cologne and the bishop of Munster had also taken the field, and soon made themselves mailers of Overyssel. Guelderland and Utrecht sell into the hands of the French; and Holland itself was driven to the last resource of opening the sluices, and laying the country under water, to stop the progress of the invaders[11].

It was no longer in De Witt's power to be of any service to a people, whose intestine divisions were still more fatal to them than the arms of the enemy. When that virtuous and enlightened politician first rose to guide the councils of the state, he found it necessary to form a connection with France, in order to balance the intrigues of the Orange faction with the English court.

But as soon as he perceived the designs of Lewis, he disclaimed the false friendship of such an ally, and exerted his great talents in railing a barrier against that monarch's ambition. With this view he entered into a defensive league with England; and though he always very justly suspected the firmness and integrity of Charles, yet the immediate danger, to which his country was exposed from the irruption of the French army into Flanders, did not admit of any choice of expedients. It was very plain, from his first declaration to sir William Temple[12], that even at the time of negotiating the treaty, he feared he was only grasping at a rotten bulrush to save the drowning republic. The event fully confirmed the justness of his apprehensions.

We are told, that this true patriot, on receiving a letter of the extent of the conspiracy, which was formed against his unhappy country, fell into a swoon in the Stadthouse; but recovering from the shock, he assumed his usual intrepidity and vigilance in preparing for the unequal contest.

It was by his animating endeavours that the Dutch fleet was put in a condition to cope, for some time at least, with the combined armies of France and England. He also directed his thoughts to the best means of internal defence; but as the want of forces made it impossible to repel the torrent of assailants, he was blamed for all the perils and distresses of the state. The people, naturally fickle, and impatient in adversity, were inflamed against their once admired leader by every art which party malice could invent; and though his incorruptible integrity had been as manifest as his wisdom, yet his enemies were not ashamed to spread abroad the diabolical calumny, that he had been bribed to fell his country to the ambition of the French monarch.

The Prince of Orange was announced by his faction as the only saviour in the present time of imminent danger; and on his being appointed to the high office of admiral and captain general, all the efforts of De Witt and of the remaining friends of freedom could prevail only to have an oath administered to the prince, that he should never accept, even if required, the dignity of Stadtholder.

But the diminution of his authority was not the only effect of the ingratitude and fury of a misguided populace, which De Witt was destined to experience. As the situations of affairs became every day more hopeless, the rage of the mob rose higher. The exacting of the before mentioned oath from the prince of Orange was not only looked upon as a crime, but as a proof of De Witt's treachery to the state. Four russians assaulted him in the street, and after giving him

many wounds, left him for dead. His brother Cornelius, who had gone on board the fleet with De Ruyter, and had behaved with great prudence and courage, was obliged by sickness to come on shore; and whilst confined to his house at Dort, some assassins broke in upon him, and it was with the utmost difficulty that his family and servants could repel their violence.

This was but the prelude to the melancholy tragedy which followed. One Tichelear, a barber, a man noted for infamy, accused Cornelius De Witt of endeavouring by bribes to engage him in the design of poisoning the prince of Orange; and the accusation, though attended with the most improbable and absurd circumstances, was greedily received by the multitude.

Cornelius was cited before a court of judicature, and through the pusillanimity, or prejudices of the judge, was condemned to be put to the rack. Amidst excruciating agonies, he continued to make protestations of his innocence, and frequently repeated that justly admired ode of Horace, *"Justum et tenacem propofiti virum etc*.," containing those heroic sentiments which had directed the conduct of his life, and now sustained him under a trial too severe for the common feelings of humanity. But though his innocence was thus supported by the firmness of his temper, and consequently he was acquitted by law and reason, yet he was condemned to lose his offices, and to be banished the commonwealth.

John de Witt, who had now given up his office of pensionary, was incapable of being terrified by the rage of the populace, from acting the part of an affectionate brother, and a faithful friend. He supported and countenanced Cornelius through the whole proceeding; and when the sentence was palled upon him, he resolved to accompany him, and to carry him in his coach to the place of his exile.

No sooner did De Witt appear in his coach, a part of parade and indulgence to which he did not usually accustom himself, than the signal was given to the populace to finish the last scene of tragedy, and sully to execute the purpose of the party. The mob, with some of the burgher companies, or train-bands of the Hague, gathered about him in a tumultuous manner, and followed him to the prison with much opprobrious language.

De Witt was sensible of the danger which awaited him, but proceeded in the noble resolution he had taken; and on the appearance of the two brothers, arm in arm, they were both knocked down and massacred. The indignities exercised on their dead bodies are too shocking to be related. With them expired Dutch liberty.

After contemplating this horrid scene, it is impossible to feel any pity for the calamities, which so ungrateful and brutal a people then suffered, or for the abject and degraded situation to which they have been since reduced. In the excels of their despair, they made an effort to soothe their enemies by submission; but the terms insisted on by the allied kings were so humiliating and oppressive; that they resolved to hold out to the last extremity, and rather than submit to the French yoke,-to transport themselves and their families to the East-Indies.

Having opened their sluices, as before observed, they sought a dearly purchased security on the land side behind their inundations. At sea they were in more imminent danger. The combined fleets, having repaired the damage sustained in the first battle, before De Ruyter was again in a condition to oppose them, were preparing to make a descent upon the coast of Zealand; but the enterprise was defeated by an extraordinary ebb of the tide, which continued for twelve hours instead of six, and was followed by such a storm as obliged the invaders to quit the coast and provide for their own safety.

This gave the Dutch a little breathing time; and towards the close of the first campaign, the emperor of Germany and the elector of Brandenburg, having at length taken the alarm, entered into an alliance offensive and defensive with the States, and made the necessary dispositions for assisting them with vigour and effect.

Charles, who had made his account to find in the spoils of the United Provinces wealth enough for the supply of all his wants and wishes, began now to perceive the vanity of such expectations. Sluices, tides, winds, and several other untoward and unforeseen accidents had baffled a combination of forces, which he thought would have proved irresistible.

Instead of enriching, he had impoverished himself, and had not only spent the supplies of the nation, and the bribes of France, but the money also which he still withheld from the public creditors by the most scandalous and illegal methods. He was therefore at length obliged to permit the meeting of parliament, after having delayed it for almost two years, in hopes of becoming independent of their assistance.

During so long a cessation of the national councils, grievances had been accumulating very fast. Charles, as if he was already in the undisputed possession of that arbitrary power, which was to be the result of his union with the court of France, dispensed with the laws at pleasure, as in his declaration of indulgence, and in the injunctions against all proceedings for the recovery of money lent to the bankers: he suspended the navigation act: he issued various proclamations in the most despotic stile, and one in particular against those who presumed to speak undutifully of his majesty's measures, and against all who heard such discourses, unless they gave information in due time of the offenders: having levied an army to fulfil his engagements in the secret treaty with France, and to intimidate his own subjects, he caused the discipline of martial law to be established by an order of his council, in direct contradiction to the petition of right.

Betides six thousand men that he had sent under the duke of Monmouth to join the French army. there were between five and six thousand more raised, and encamped at Black Heath, and the command of them was given to a foreigner, count Schomberg. It was this circumstance which probably encouraged Shaftesbury, the new chancellor, to add to the former alarming stretches of power the issuing out of writs to supply the vacancies which death and promotion had made in the parliament, without waiting for the meeting of this assembly, or the authority of the speaker's warrant.

These and many other flagrant violations of the people's rights did not hinder Charles from addressing parliament with the fullest confidence. He would have called them together sooner, he said, but that he was willing to ease them and the country, till there was an absolute necessity. He then informed them, that since their last meeting, he had been forced into a war, not only just, but necessary for the honour and interest of the nation; and he made no doubt but they would give him suitable and effectual assistance to go through with it.

In order to have peace at home, while there was war abroad, he had issued his indulgence to, dissenters, and had found many good affects to result from that measure, He had heard of some exceptions, which had been taken; but he would tell them plainly, he was resolved to stick to his declaration, and he should be much offended at any contradiction.

A rumour, he said, had been spread, as if the new levied troops had been intended to controul law and liberty; but he regarded that jealousy as so frivolous, that he was determined to augment his forces next spring; and he did not doubt but the commons would consider the charge of them in the supplies. He concluded with his usual strain of assurances, that he would preserve the protestant religion as by law established, and that no man's property or liberty should ever be invaded; and then said, he left the rest to the chancellor.

To do the chancellor justice, he did not fall short of his master either in falsehood, or in impudence. He enlarged on all the hints dropped by the king, particularly on the provocations to the war. He said, "that the Hollanders were the common enemies of all monarchies, especially that of England, their only competitor for commerce and naval power, and the sole obstacle to their views of attaining an universal empire as extensive as that of ancient Rome: that the king, in entering on this war, did no more than prosecute the maxims, which had engaged the

parliament to advise and approve of the last war; they had judged aright, that, at any rate, *Delenda Est Carthago*, that government was to be brought down: the king might, therefore, well say to them, it was **THEIR**. war." After having by this curious piece of logic endeavoured to prove that a war, which Charles had engaged in, with the wicked design of plundering the Dutch, and of thereby enabling himself to subvert the constitution of England, was the war of parliament, though, by means of unusual prorogations, they had been prevented from approving or condemning it, he urged them to a hearty conjunction against those eternal enemies of their country; and told them, that unless their supplies were frank, speedy, and liberal, they could never answer the important occasion.

As the commons, upon their meeting, had complained loudly of the steps taken by the chancellor to fill up all the vacancies in parliament with his own creatures, and by his own authority, the king, immediately after the two speeches, declared, "that he had given order to the lord chancellor to send out writs, for the better supply of their house, having seen precedents for it; but if any scruple or question did arise about it, he left it to the house to debate as loon as they could." The following day, they voted the writs and returns irregular, and expelled all the members thus elected.

Their next vote, which, indeed, excited some surprise, was a supply of upwards of twelve hundred thousand pounds; but as they did not express the least approbation, or take any notice of the war, it was undoubtedly done to obtain a redress of their grievances, without coming to a violent breach with the king.

The declaration of indulgence had given, the most offence. Besides the danger of submitting to an arbitrary suspension of penal laws, some events had happened during the long recess, which rendered the views of the court more evident and more alarming. In the year 1671 the duchess of York died, and in her last sickness had made open profession of the Romish religion. Such an extraordinary circumstance as this would have fixed some suspicions on the duke of York, had he even continued his former hypocrisy. But encouraged by the conclusion of the treaty with France, he openly declared his conversion to the church of Rome; and shewed his desire to have a second wise of the same persuasion, by his soliciting, though unsuccessfully, a marriage with the arch-duchess of Innsbruck.

One of the most determined purposes of the commons was therefore to oppose the progress of popery. Three days after the vote of, supply, the declaration of indulgence was ordered to be read; and after a long and solemn debate, in which arbitrary power was openly defended by some of the courtiers, the house resolved, that penal statutes, in matters ecclesiastical, could not be suspended but by act of parliament.

An address, on this resolution, was sent up to the throne, in the name of the lower house, the concurrence of the lords not having been asked, as they were likely to op-pose the measure. The address contained the words of the, vote of thanks for the king's gracious assurances on the subject of religion, liberty, and property; and concluded with an humble request, that the laws might have their free course, should be otherwise provided for by act of parliament.

The king, agreeable to what he had declared in his speech, stood stiffly on this point of prerogative. The commons persevered in their denial of the right, and moreover brought in a qualifying bill, which made it essential that all persons bearing any office, or place of trust or profit, should take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, receive the sacrament in public church, and abjure all belies in the doctrine of transubstantiation.

This was called the TEST ACT, and was calculated to throw all papists out of office. During the debates, to which it gave rise, the court party, by the instructions of lord Clifford, moved, that some favour might be shewn to protestant dissenters, and that their meetings might be allowed. But the drift of this manoeuvre, by which the courtiers hoped to separate the religious factions

in the house, and to divert the blow from the papists by raising a new flame against the non-conformists, was easily seen through. The whole dissenting party immediately declared, that all their friends were at present willing to lie under the severity of the laws, rather than clog a more necessary work with their concerns;. and only desired that an effectual security might be found out against popery[13].

When every artifice had been tried in vain to divert the commons from their purpose, the king sent a complaint of their conduct to the house of peers, whole honour and privileges, he laid, were equally attacked with his own prerogative. There is no regular account of the debate on this message; but, according to Burnet, lord Clifford began it, by calling the vote, which the commons had passed on the declaration of indulgence, *monstrum horendum, ingens*; and declaimed against it with great heat, and many indecent expressions.

To the amazement and confusion of the king and duke, who were auditors of this important debate, Shaftesbury was the first man who stood up to oppose what had fallen from lord Clifford. "Whilst those matters," he said, "were debated out of doors, he, might have thought with others, that the supremacy, asserted as it was by law, did warrant the declaration; but now that such a house of commons, so loyal and affectionate to the king, were of another mind, he submitted his reason to them: they were the king's great council; they must both advise and support him; they had done it, and would do it still, if their laws and religion were secure to them."

By this bold and unexpected stroke of policy, Shaftesbury threw off the odium he had incurred from his intrigues with the court, and secured his personal safety by a timely opposition to those measures which be had approved in the cabinet.

The lords, after thanking the king for the trust and confidence he had reposed in them, recommended the adjusting of the matter in dispute, in a parliamentary way, by bill; and afterwards joined with the commons in an address on the increase of popish mutants, and the great and dangerous encouragement given to papists, by admitting them into places of great trust, and especially into military commands; and they humbly desired that a proclamation might be issued, commanding all priests and Jesuits to depart the kingdom; and that all officers, who refused the oaths of allegiance and supremacy might be disbanded.

Lord Shaftesbury's defection, and the union between the two houses, occasioned a division in the opinions of the ministry, who had never been united in that firm concord which mutual Confidence crews, or in that unshaken resolution which honest counsels inspire. The duke of Buckingham and his creature, lord Berkley, offered, with the assistance of the army, to take out of both houses the members which formed the opposition. Clifford assured the king that the people now saw through all his designs, and he must resolve to make himself master at once, or be for ever subject to their jealousy and contempt.

The duke of Lauderdale pressed with much vehemence the sending for the army out of Scotland, and the seizing on Newcastle, But lord Arlington and the earl of Shaftefbury (who had excused his conduct in the debate, on the necessity he saw of saying something to allay the heat, which lord Clifford's speech would have occasioned, to the infallible obstruction of the supplies) pressed the king to give the parliament full content, on which they undertook to procure him money for carrying on the war, and were he successful in that, he might easily recover what in this extremity he must part with.

On the next day several members of the house of commons backed what Shaftesbury had aliened, and assured the king, that, on lord Clifford's speech, the house was in such a fury, that probably they would have gone to high votes and impeachments, but for lord Shaftesbury's haranguing on the other side, who, they believed, spoke his majesty's sense, as the other side had spoken that of the duke. Those representations from many of the members, who were secretly directed

by lord Arlington, had little effect on either the king or the duke: they regarded themselves as betrayed by the treachery or timidity of Shastesbury and Arlington.

The violent counsels of Buckingham, Lauderdale, and Clifford were more agreeable; and the dissolution of parliament was in agitation when the French king, who feared that the quarrel between Charles and his people would bring on the necessity of concluding a peace with Holland, insisted strongly, by the mouth of his embassador, on the propriety and policy of satisfying for the present the jealousy of parliament; and accompanied those arguments with a promise, that the succours stipulated on the part of France, should be extended, after the expiration of the treaty.

Charles immediately gave way, and assured the embassador, that his master's sentiments had more power with him than all the reasoning of his most faithful ministers; and that he was so sensibly touched with the marks of sincere friendship his most Christian majesty had shewn him, that, to testify fully his acknowledgements, he would grant, without any farther deliberation, what his subjects so pressingly asked of him.

According to what had been determined between the king and the embassador, his majesty next day sent for the declaration, and with his own hands broke the seal; and repairing to the house of lords, he, signified his agreement to the address which had been offered to him on the subject of popish recusants; promised the two houses, that what had been done concerning the suspension of the penal laws, should never, for the future, be drawn into example and consequence; and assured the commons that he would willingly pass any law offered him, which might tend to give them satisfaction in all their just grievances.

Thus did this arrant dissembler endeavour to give the most popular appearance to concessions, which were entirely owing to the pressing instances of the king of France, and to the hope of obtaining at some future day, by that king's assistance, ample revenge for these temporary abatements of royal prerogative.

In return for the king's condescension, the two bodes waited on his majesty in a body, and gave him their, humble thanks and acknowledgments. An act of general pardon and indemnity was paired, which screened the ministers from all farther inquiry.

The resolution for a supply was carried into a law before any farther redress of grievances, except passing the Test; and though a petition was presented praying relief in other matters, the king, having got his own business settled, gave the commons an evasive answer, and adjourned the parliament for about six months.

Though the Test was followed by a few changes of persons in some of the public departments, it produced no alteration of system in the king's conduct, or councils. Most of the Roman catholic officers resigned their commissions, but were secretly flattered with the hope of being reinstated in their ports at a more favourable period. Lord Clifford was deprived of his white staff, which was given to sir Thomas Osborn, a man equally corrupt and equally intriguing.

The duke of York himself was obliged to give up his high appointment of lord high admiral, and the command of the fleet was given to prince Rupert. The duke is said to have shed tears upon the occasion; but they were not tears of repentance, nor did he endeavour to regain the affections of a people, whose confidence he had justly forfeited. He now threw himself entirely on the support of France; kept up a dose correspondence with that court; and regardless of the sentiments or remonstrances of parliament, chose for his second wife a Roman catholic princess, the daughter of the duke of Modena.

The campaign of 1673 afforded much fewer gratifications to the avarice, or ambition of the royal conspirators than that of the preceding year. De Ruyter, though with a fleet greatly inferior, had

the glory, in three different engagements, of resisting with effect the combined squadrons of England and France, and completely defeating their resumed project of a descent in Zealand.

The affairs of the United Provinces took a still more favourable turn by land. The prince of Orange having effected a junction with the imperial army under the command of Montecuculi, they soon obliged Lewis to abandon his conquests, with a rapidity equal to his former success. The taking of Maestricht, which he owed in a great measure to the vigour and conduct of the English troops, was the only advantage he gained to compensate so many mortification.

A congress, which had been opened in the mean time at Cologne, under the mediation of Sweden, broke up, without having produced any other effect than that of increasing the animosities it was designed to appease.

At the re-meeting of parliament the king made an attempt to obtain another supply, in which he was seconded by Shaftesbury, who was still continued in office for that very purpose; but the dread of popery and arbitrary power counteracted all farther imposition.

The first step of the commons was an order for the solemn observance of the fifth of November: they sent up repeated addresses to the throne on the subject of the duke's marriage: they proceeded to vote that a bill should be prepared for a general test, between Protestants and papists, by which those who refused to take it were rendered incapable of bearing any office, military or civil, or to sit in parliament, or to come within five miles of the court: they ordered an address for a general fast: they voted the standing army a grievance; and declared that they would grant no more supplies, unless it appeared that the Dutch were so obstinate as to refuse all reasonable conditions of peace.

In order to slop these proceedings the king prorogued the parliament for two months; and in the mean time endeavoured to (often the resentment of the public by putting the laws in force against papists. But the nation was no longer to be cajoled by such flimsy artifice.

The earl of Shaftesbury, having been deprived of the seals immediately after the late dismission of parliament, was now become one of the leaders of the opposition, and took care to give his party proper ideas of the arbitrary designs of the court. The States General had made frequent proposals of a separate peace with England, some of which had even been printed and circulated through the kingdom.

Spain alto, with whom the English carried on a very lucrative trade, had declared that the could no longer remain neuter, if hostilities were continued against the Dutch. Even the king of France, though so deeply interested in keeping Charles firm to his secret engagements, had refuted the supply of an additional million of livres for the support of the war. In this situation of affairs, Charles having again tried the liberality of the commons in vain, found that he could no longer oppose the wishes of his people, and concluded a treaty with the Dutch[14].

But as this did not prevent the commons from proceeding to the examination of other grievances, nor from preparing some bills of the most offensive nature to a tyrant[15], he had recourse to his usual expedient, a prorogation.

Lewis soon repented his having refused to add. another million to the private subsidy, as it was evidently the want of money, which had forced his ally to conclude a separate peace. He took care, however, to prevent Charles from being driven, either by the violence of parliament, or the emptiness of the exchequer, into any, other measures, which might thwart his ambitious designs.

A bribe of five hundred thousand crowns had the desired effect. The parliament was farther prorogued; and the king of France was not only left at liberty to carry on the war without any interruption from England, but was allowed to retain the six thousand English auxiliaries in his

service; and had his army frequently recruited by the mot illegal means out of Scotland[16]. All remonstrances upon this head from the commons, when they were at length permitted to meet, proved ineffectual[17]

Charles made a new bargain with the French' monarch; and in the beginning of the year 1676, when, by joining the States and their allies, he might have regained the confidence of his people and the respect of all Europe, he obliged himself, in confederation of a yearly pension from Lewis, to prorogue, or dissolve the parliament, if it should endeavour to force any treaties upon him, contrary to that king's interest.

This second infamous compact was known only to the duke of York, the duke of Lauderdale, and the treasurer, who had been created earl of Danby, and who now shared with Lauderdale all the trust and favour, which, for a short time, had been divided among the CABAL.

Notwithstanding the profound secrecy of all those transactions, the nation took the alarm at the king's indifference to the danger which threatened Europe[18] and became very clamorous, at the opening of the year 1674, for a meeting of their representatives, for a war with France, and an alliance with Holland.

It being thought necessary at this time to assemble the parliament, an additional sum of money was remitted from France, to enable the English minister to gain a majority; and so great was the reliance on the success of such forcible arguments, that, on the fifteenth of February, the very day the session was to be opened, the French. king appointed his march for Flanders, as if, says Andrew Marvel, his motions were in just cadence, and that, as in a grand ballet, he kept time with those, who were tuned here to his measures.

The king addressed both houses with his usual plausibility, soliciting money for the repairing of the navy, with a reasonable supply for himself, and the continuation of the additional excise, which was to expire at Midsummer. As the lord treasurer had employed the French king's means of persuasion with great skill, the commons voted five hundred and eighty-four thousand pounds, on the apparent necessity of augmenting the navy; and continued the additional excise for three years.

Nor did they trouble the king with any importunate addressees about foreign affairs, till intelligence was received from abroad, that Valenciennes had fallen into the hands of the French. Upon this, they represented to his majesty the danger, to which the kingdom was exposed from the greatness of France; and they entreated him to secure, by such alliances as he should think fit, his own dominions and the Spanish Netherlands, and thereby to quiet the fears of his people.

As the king gave an evasive answer to this first representation, they followed it with another, urging their former request in terms more explicit, and promising such supplies, as might enable his majesty to prosecute the object of their desires with success. Charles took almost a fortnight to confider, how to elude so pointed an application.

In the mean time fresh advices brought the terrifying news, that Cambray and St. Omer had undergone the same fate as Valenciennes: that the prince of Orange, who had hastily assembled an army, and marched to the relief of the last town, had been defeated and obliged to retreat to Ypres; and that the French troops in Germany had broke into the provinces on the other side of the Rhine, and laid waste all before them.

These accumulated disasters, which exposed the Dutch, as well as the Spanish provinces to imminent danger, and consequently rendered the progress of the French arms very formidable to the safety of England, routed every body's apprehensions but the king's, who coldly replied to the last address of the commons, that, upon some alterations abroad, he thought fit to put them in mind, "that the only way to prevent the dangers which might arise in these kingdoms, would

be to put him timely in a condition to make suck, fitting preparations, as might enable him to do what should be most for their security." This gave rise to a debate, the result of which was the proposal of an addition of two hundred thou-fend pounds to the sum already voted; and a promise to reimburse whatsoever his majesty should expend in extraordinary preparations. The king said, he could take no steps, without the additional sum of six hundred thousand pounds; and as the commons excused themselves from complying with this peremptory demand, on the pretence that many of their members, in expectation of the usual recess at Easter, were gone into the country, and that they did not think it parliamentary to grant so much money in a thin house, he adjourned the parliament for about five weeks.

At the opening of the late session an affair happened, which greatly diminished the strength of the opposition, by intimidating some, who might have resisted the lord treasurer's bribes. An unlucky question was started in each house, but debated only by the peers. Whether the parliament had any right to enter upon business? It had been enacted by a law of Edward III. that parliaments should be held at least once every year; and as the last prorogation had been longer than a year, the duke of Buckingham asserted, that the parliament was illegal, and its future acts consequently invalid, founding his opinion on the before mentioned law, and some other ancient statutes, "which," he said, "were not, like women, the worse for being old."

He was strenuously supported by the earls of Shaftesbury, Salisbury, and Warren; but all four were sent to the Tower, there to remain during the pleasure of his majesty and the house, for having advanced such dangerous positions, as they were termed. Buckingham, Salisbury, and Wharton made submissions, and were soon released[19].

Shaftesbury sought the remedy of law, but his plea being rejected by the judges, he was at length, after a year's imprisonment, obliged to make the same submissions before he could obtain his freedom[20].

When the parliament re-assembled, the business agitated at the last meeting was opened by a verbal message from the king, with an intimation that the commons had no time to lose, as his majesty intended that there should be a recess very quickly; but the house Bill keeping firm to their resolution of parting with no money till the necessary alliances were formed, and having ordered a committee to prepare a bill for. recalling the English and Scotch out of the French service, they were sent for, to attend at Whitehall, where the king told them, that, on his royal word, they should not repent any trust, which they should repose in him for the safety of his kingdom; that he would not, for any confide-ration, break credit with them, or employ their money to other purposes than those for which they intended it; but that he would not hazard either his own safety, or theirs, till he was in a better condition to defend his subjects, and offend his enemies."

Vague promises and the desire of money beforehand could not allay just suspicions. The commons, therefore, resolved to present an address to the king, in which they declared it contrary to established usage to grant supplies for the maintenance of wars and alliances, before they were signified in parliament: they also humbly besought his majesty to enter into a league offensive and defensive with the States General, against the growth and power of the French king, and for the preservation of the Spanish Netherlands; and to make such other alliances with such other of the confederates as his majesty should think fit and useful to that end: they stated several reasons to convince him of the absolute necessity of a war with France at the present crisis; and renewed all their former promises of such speedy supplies as might fully answer the occasion.

The terms of this address were as moderate and respectful as if his majesty had always pursued the wisest measures: there were no allusions to any former misconduct in the administration: the prayer, which it contained, was authorized by a variety of precedents, in which the representatives of the people advised such wars and alliances as were thought necessary for the safety and welfare of the kingdom: it required to other reply than a candid avowal of the king's sentiments.

Yet his majesty affected to represent it as a dangerous encroachment on his prerogative. He made a severe speech on the subject to the commons at Whitehall; and ordered them to be immediately adjourned[21] The Gazette of the next day contained his reproving speech, being the first which had ever appeared in that paper. Thus, says Marvel, were the commons well rewarded for their itch of perpetual sitting and of acting, the parliament being grown to that height of contempt as to be gazetted among run-away servants, lap-dogs, strayed horses, and highway robbers.

The additional sum of money sent from Lewis to Charles in the beginning of the year 1677, to enable the latter to soften the opposition to his measures by the influence of bribery, sufficiently accounts for the conduct of the parliament, before the alarms from abroad had given the popular party too great an authority with the house, and too great a credit with the nation to be resisted.

In consequence of the late contest with the commons, the French embassador had orders to rise in his offers to keep Charles firm; and a third bargain was struck, in which it was stipulated, on the one side, that by the exertion of the power of adjourning, proroguing, and dissolving, the parliament should be no interruption to the progress the French arms, and that Charles should positively declare to his allies, that no consideration whatsoever should be capable of engaging him in the war; on the other, that Lewis should gratify the king with a yearly pension of two millions of livres.

Montague, the English ambassador at Paris, having at the same time made a better bargain, by obtaining two hundred thousand pounds sterling, as the annual price of his master's prostitution, Charles was not ashamed to retract the agreement made with his own immediate consent, on the pretence of his great wants, and of his not rightly comprehending the difference between French and English money.

The king of England's meanness in this respect was not the only part of his conduct, which the French court had loon reason to be dissatisfied with. The prince of Orange, who had been much disappointed by the untoward events of the war, began to turn his thoughts towards a marriage with the duke of York's eldest daughter, the princess Mary. The first intimation of his intended visit to England was discouraged by the king, who civilly expressed his wishes to Mr. Bentinck, the prince's agent, that his highness would first think of making peace, and defer his journey till it was concluded.

But it was fortunate fox the prince, upon this occasion, that he had a powerful advocate at court in the earl of Danby, who cultivated his friendship and patronage with the most sedulous attention, in the double view of gaining the prince's party in England, and of forming a balance to the French interest in the cabinet council; which was continually pushing him on the necessity of losing his place, or risking his head, By the; importunate solicitations of this minister, the point was at length carried: the prince arrived the ninth of October; and by his own consummate and the joint exertions of the earl of Danby and Sir William Temple, the king was brought to agree to the match, and to propose it in such a manner to the duke that he could not easily refute.

A few days before the marriage was celebrated, Charles took some pains to convince the French ambassador, that this match would dissipate the suspicions of his subjects, and enable him to preserve, with less disturbance, his alliance with France, adding, that all his difficulties had arisen from the duke's premature declaration of his religion. After the wedding, letters of ceremony were dispatched to the French court from the duke and the prince of Orange, and one from the king, in which he assured Lewis, that he had made the match in order to engage the prince to be more tractable in the treaty, which was now negotiating at Nimeguen.

The promise was also renewed of not recalling the troops; and to qualify, as much as possible, the taking such an important step without the express leave of his most Christian majesty, a proclamation was inserted in the Gazette for adjourning the parliament to April, 1678; as the king had engaged to do in his late bargain with France.

After the matrimonial alliance with the prince of Orange, Charles's councils were for some time in a state of almost continual fluctuation, as they were successively influenced by duplicity, intrigue, avarice, and resentment. At first he seemed ready for a war with France, in order to obtain large supplies from parliament, and flattered the States with the hope of effectual assistance, while he was secretly bargaining for the sale or sacrifice of their interests to Lewis.

Then irritated by the precariousness or refusal of his pecuniary demands from his grand pay-master, he made in the short fits of fretfulness and disappointment some preparations for actual hostilities. But all this wavering and disgraceful conduct ended in giving the artful French monarch an opportunity of almost prescribing his terms to the allied powers, and in rendering the king of England as contemptible in the eyes of all Europe, as he was in the opinion of the most discerning of his own subjects.

One of the French king's principal motives for receiving some of Charles's proposals with coolness, and for not being so forward to feed his avarice, arose from the extraordinary circumstance of his having gained so considerable a party in the English parliament as almost enabled him to set the king at defiance. The misguided and more than suspicious conduct of Charles had raised such incurable jealousies in the minds of those who even loved monarchy, yet abhorred an absolute government, that a kind of mutual interest, arising from similar views, subsisted at this time between the patriots and the court of France.

The former dreaded the strength and the popularity, which a strict union with the prince of Orange would give the king; and that the army, which his majesty might obtain, on the pretence of a popular war, would be employed for the ruin of their liberties: they also hoped, that a parliament less trained in the corruptions of the court might be more fairly trusted; and regarding the earl of Danby as a very dangerous minister, they aimed at displacing him from an office, in which it is always in the power of a daring and dishonest man to be mischievous.

Lewis, on his part, was not less interested in promoting every one of the same objects. He had the strongest reasons for wishing to prevent a strict union between the court of England, and the prince of Orange; to have a parliament dissolved, which had repeatedly addressed the king for a war with France; and to overturn a minister whose influence had produced the prince of Orange's match, and who, on the principles of self-preservation, must be continually urging the king to break off all his French connections.

In consequence of some advances made to the French embassador, by the patriotic party, he wrote to his master that he thought it advisable to enter into measures with them, as their political views so exactly coincided with those of his most Christian majesty. On this hint, Rouvigny. the son of the former embassador, and who was a near relation to lord Russel, one of the leaders of the opposition, was sent over with a very large sum of money, to be given as douceurs to those, whose conduct was not solely directed by conscience, or principle.

Can any thing give us a stronger idea of the apprehensions entertained of Charles's designs against the civil and religious rights of his people, than to see the greatest and best men forced to employ even his own instruments of corruption to defeat his wicked purposes? The constitution must have been undoubtedly in the most imminent danger, when such exalted patriots as Sidney, Rusiel, Hollis, and Hampden could solicit the support of the venal and unprincipled, and even form a connection with the French court, in order to divert those supplies, which had, in some measure, rendered the king independent of his parliament, and to prevent the united force of the two kings from subverting the religion and liberties of England.

After the peace, the troops which had been sent abroad, were brought back to England; and were kept up under the pretence that there was not money to pay them off; though considerable sums had keen granted for that purpose. It was believed that lord Danby, who, even at the time of the most violent and successful opposition, had often brought his party very near a majority, would

order matters in such a manner as should insure the king's business in the next felons of parliament. The country party gave up all for lost; and many of them were determined to forbear their attendance, rather than by a fruitless conduct to expose themselves to the fury of government; when a very unexpected accident changed the face of affairs, and united the whole protestant interest against the designs of the court.

In the course of the Secret History we have often seen how informers were encouraged, and the alarm of conspiracies kept up, in order to secure from parliament a readier acquiescence in various schemes of persecution and tyranny. The same wicked arts were at length turned against the original inventors; and the fabrication of a plot, in which all the papists were laid to be engaged for the overthrow of the established religion and government, threw the whole nation into a ferment, and rendered the popular party for some time irresistible.

During this agitation of men's minds, the grossest impostures, and the most absurd fictions were admitted as facts; and many persons suffered upon evidence alike questionable for the infamy of the witnesses, and the contradictions in their testimony. But this delusion of the times, though fatal to a few perhaps innocent individuals, was undoubtedly serviceable to the nation at large, as it checked the progress of those measures, in which the king and his brother were so deeply engaged and for which their blood alone, and that of their criminal agents ought to have been shed by the sword of public justice.

When the tide ran so strongly against the papist, the popular party sound no great difficulty in getting a bill passed for disabling all persons of that persuasion from fitting in either house. This bill contained a test to be taken by every member, in which transubstantiation was renounced, and image worship was declared to be idolatrous. The only exception admitted into the bill was in favour of the duke of York, who, on its being debated in the house of lords, told them with tears in his eyes, that he was now to cast himself on their kindness, in the greatest concern which he could have in the world; and protested, that whatever his religion might be, it should only be a private matter between God and his own soul, and never should appear in his public conduct. This condescension had its effect; and the duke carried his point by three voices.

The patriots were not so successful in an attempt they made to recover a privilege, which the intoxication of royalty, joined to the influence of corruption and intrigue, had prompted them inconsiderably to surrender, loon after the king's recall from exile. They now passed a bill, by which it was enacted, that a regular militia should be kept in arms during six weeks of the year, and a third part of them to do duty every fortnight of that time.

But Charles peremptorily refuted his assent, and told the parliament, that he would not, were it for half an hour; part so far with the power of the sword; but he offered to pass any other bill for ordering the militia, provided it was left in his option to assemble, or dismiss them, as he thought proper. The commons were enraged at the king's suspicions; and in order to shew that no danger to the liberties of the constitution could be equal to the power of the sword in the hands of the crown, declined accepting a militia-act on the king's plan; and, notwithstanding one of the witnesses in the popish plot had sworn to intended invasions from abroad, the house voted, that all the new raised levies should be disbanded; and because the money granted in the last year for disbanding the army was employed for keeping it up, in their present bill of supply for the same purpose, they not only appropriated the money by the strictest clauses, but ordered it to be paid into the chamber of London.

The lords were startled at a clause, which threw so severe a reflection on the king and his ministers; and, in behalf of the crown, ventured to interfere in what the commons had so often claimed as their undisputed privilege, the granting of money in their own way: they raised doubts, and proposed amendments, which were all rejected and thus the important business of disbanding the army hung in suspense.

Another difference at this time took place between both houses, on a subject, which led to the prorogation, and soon after to the dissolution of a parliament that began, too late, to repair the fatal effects of its part folly and baseness. Montague; the negotiator of some of the secret treaties with France, was lately returned from Paris, though in opposition to the king's commands; and having secured a seat in parliament, he lost no time in exhibiting charges of high treason against the earl of Danby, founded chiefly on the instructions sent by that minister to Montague, respecting those criminal bargains[22].

One of the dispatches, which was produced, being signed by Charles himself afforded equal evidence of the king's guilt, and very much inflamed the indignation of the commons. They immediately voted an impeachment of the minister; but when the articles were carried up to the bar of the lords, a positive refusal was given to the request for his being ordered to withdraw, and for his being committed.

This obstruction of public justice was defended on the pretence that his charge was not within the statute of the twenty-fifth of Edward III. The earl made a speech, in which he endeavoured to refute force of the less important articles; but with respect to the weighty charges of his having betrayed the interests of the nation, he urged the unconstitutional plea of obedience to the king's commands. His majesty, who was present on this occasion, and who knew that any farther prosecution of this, but finesse would unmask his own infamy to the world, availed himself of the dispute between both houses on the point of privilege, and in a few days prorogued them with a speech that gave sufficient warning of their political death, which was announced about three weeks after by proclamation.

The manner in which this parliament assisted the king; the pretences they gave him to break the solemn promises he had made at Breda, in the persecution of the non-conformists; and their long continued compliance with the crown, to the weakening, if not the total subversion of the free principles of the constitution, have rendered them peculiarly odious to the friends of civil and religious liberty; and as bribery began with them, and was then reduced to a system, it has justly secured to them the opprobrious name of the **PENSION PARLIAMENT**.

As the whole nation was too much inflamed with resentment at the conduct of the court, to afford any prospect of the return of members less favourable to the cause of liberty than those which composed the last parliament, it was, in all probability, intended, on the dissolution of that assembly, either to govern without parliaments, or to awe these subordinate estates into a perfect submission to the king's measures, through the terror of a military force. The duke of York proposed to Barillon that the army should be kept on foot, notwithstanding the resolutions of parliament to dissolve it; and that to facilitate this end, the union between Lewis and his brother should be renewed.

Charles also made overtures to the same purport in terms very mean and submissive. He allured the ambassador, that it would give him the highest pleasure to owe his safety and preservation entirely to the king of France; and that he would not refuse any conditions, which his most Christian majesty should impose. The caution of Lewis was again propitious to the liberties of England. Barillon insisted on the disbanding of the army as a, necessary preliminary to the obtaining any supplies, from France; and Charles, who could neither support, nor disband his troops, without the assistance. of France, or of his people, was reduced to the necessity of summoning a new parliament.

It was at this period that the court first interested itself in a very open, a very dangerous, and a very unconstitutional degree, in the choice of the national representatives. But all its efforts were fruitless. The members returned were chiefly of the country interest; and it was sound necessary to make some condescension towards gratifying and appeasing the people, before the meeting of this formidable assembly. Two express motions had been made in the list parliament by lord Russel, against the duke of York: the one was for an address to his jelly, that his royal highness

might be removed from his pretence and councils; and the other, that the opinion the papists have of the duke's being for them, and of their religion, was the cause of the plot.

The duke, sensible of his own unpopularity, and apprehensive of the consequences, had taken occasion to declare in the house of lords, that since he had found some particular persons were offended at his appearing in the committee of foreign affairs, and at his meeting among the lords of the admiralty, he would, for their satisfaction, hereafter forbear.

The duke's speech was accompanied with a declaration from the king, circulated by the earl of Danby, That his majesty was willing that something should be enacted to lessen the power of a popish successor; but that he would never suffer his brother to be taken away from him, or the right line of succession to be interrupted. This offer, which did not come up to the expectations of the house, was rejected ; and the king was persuaded by the earl of Danby to oblige his brother to give way to the storm, and to quit the kingdom.

The duke of York complied, though with the greater reluctance as he left behind him a dreaded competitor for the crown in the duke of Monmouth, the king's son by Lucy Walters. The peculiar marks of fondness, with which this son was distinguished, even when a child, have been mentioned in the **SECRET HISTORY**[23]; nor did his majesty's affection for him lessen as he grew up.

He was raised to the highest military honours the state; and being possessed of all those specious qualifications and external endowments, which captivate the multitude, he soon became a very great favourite with the people. The most plausible reports of his mother's having been married to the king were spread abroad, and were greedily received by a great part of the nation. The earl of Shaftesbury and several members of both houses countenanced his pretensions; and the king himself, from motives of policy, that he might have an opportunity to lift the designs of party, to distract their councils, and multiply the objects of their attention, sometimes appeared to flatter him in those ambitious views, which in the end proved fatal to his life.

But at the time of the duke of York's being obliged to withdraw, Charles, in order to quiet his brother's fears and jealousies, and to destroy the hopes formed by some of Monmouth's partisans of encouragement from the king, made a declaration in full council of Monmouth's illegitimacy, and denied all promise of marriage with his mother.

On the opening of the new parliament, Charles took care to inform them of his having commanded the absence of his brother; a step, he said, he had taken to discern whether the protestant religion and the peace of the kingdom were as truly intended by others as they were aimed at by himself; for if they were, the parliament would employ their time upon the great concerns of the nation, and not be drawn to promote private animosities under public pretences.

He boasted also of the zeal he had shewn in discovering and punishing all persons concerned in the popish plot, and of his readiness to join in making such farther laws as might be necessary to secure the kingdom against popery. He then desired their assistance in the necessary supplies, to disband the army, to pay off the fleet, to make up the deficiencies in the poll bill, and to discharge the anticipations on the revenue.

His majesty's rhetoric had no longer any persuasive power. The new parliament seemed determined to take up the principal matters which were left depending by their predecessors; and, on the business of supplies, they only prepared a bill for an aid sufficient to enable the king to disband the army, and were careful to appropriate their grant to that purpose by the strictest clauses.

Even whilst this matter was before the house, the commons passed a vote, that all the forces then on foot were kept up contrary to law; and when it was objected that the king's guards, and the

garrisons of Portsmouth and other places would be included, it was answered, "that kings governing according to law had no need of *custodia corporis*; and that it was better to have no garrisons at all, than such as were commanded by Legg, Holmes, and their peers."

Sir William Temple, who, on the unavoidable removal of the earl of Danby, had been complimented with the shew of royal favour, proposed the plan of some changes in administration, as necessary to regain the confidence of parliament. In compliance with this advice, the king admitted the leaders of opposition into his council, but took care, at the same time, that they were so equally balanced by persons devoted to the prerogative, that his own weight on either side should turn the scale as he pleased.

Such a shallow deception was not likely to remove the jealousies, or to dispel the gloomy apprehensions entertained of a popish successor. The commons soon distinguished themselves by a bill for the exclusion of the duke of York from inheriting the crown; by an address against the duke of Lauderdale, whole government of Scotland was marked with all the horrors of oppression and blood; by insisting on the illegality and nullity of the king's pardon, granted to shield the earl of Danby from impeachment; by resuming and perfecting the Habeas Corpus Bill; by laying the axe to the root of bribery and corruption in their own members; and by several other public spirited measures, in some of which they were defeated by the opposition of the lords, and in others by the king's proroguing them, so that the Habeas Corpus Act, and the commitment of Danby were the chief points which they were able to accomplish.

At this time Charles, rendered almost desperate by the inflexible firmness of the commons, and by the poverty of the exchequer, renewed his advances to Lewis, and even went so far as to offer to put England for ever under the dependence of France. Barillon, the French ambassador, who had as great a suspicion of Charles's integrity as any of his subjects, and who, as before hinted, was engaged in intrigues with the popular party, always advised his mailer not to trust to the king's promises or advance any sum of money till the army was disbanded.

At length, however, the court of France began to fear, that from the obstinacy of the parliament, and the indigence of the king, the duke of York would be excluded from the succession, and the crown devolve either to the prince of Orange, who was a professed enemy to France, or to the duke of Monmouth, who would be led by his popular engagements to act in opposition to its interests. A new bargain was therefore let on foot to the following purport; that the duke of York was to be recalled; that the king was not to assemble a parliament for the space of three years; that neither party should enter into treaties prejudicial to each other; that Lewis should not attack Flanders; and that Charles should have a pension.

While attempts were making to adjust the terms of this compact, the king was taken ill, upon which the duke of York was sent for with great secrecy and dispatch. Finding upon his arrival the king recovered, he did not make any long stay at Windsor, and in about three weeks returned to Brussels, as if to continue there. But the prospect of a treaty with France had prompted the king to adopt new counsels more favourable to the duke's wishes.

He flirt gratified him by sending away his favourite son in disgrace to the continent; and he soon yielded to his persuasions in other matters of Bill greater importance. Charles had some time before dissolved the parliament, who had given him so much offence in their first and only sessions. He had also called another; but as, from the nature of the returns, he did not think it of a very ductile complexion, two days before its meeting, he declared in council his resolution to prorogue it for a twelvemonth, and would not hear any advice to the contrary.

It soon appeared what were the king's motives for disgusting his new parliament by so long a prorogation, before the temper of this assembly could be positively known. The public were informed by the Gazette, that the duke of York had asked leave to reside in his majesty's dominions, rather than in those of any other prince: and his royal highness, attended by his family,

loon after made his second appearance at Whitehall; in his way to Edinburgh. All the popular members of the council resigned. A few others, who had shewn themselves very willing tools, finding that they were only the dupes of more trusted confidants, thought proper to retire; and the chief management of public affairs remained in the hands of the earl of Sunderland, an ambitious and, intriguing man; Mr. Lawrence Hyde, the younger son of the late earl of Clarendon[24], who far from relenting the king's ungrateful treatment of his father, had risen into favour by the most assiduous servility; and Mr. Sidney Godolphin, who was bred a page of honour, and who, according to lord chief justice North, had abilities so well suited to flourish in a court-soil, that his preferment was in a manner certain, from the moment he got within its circle.

The conclusion of the French treaty, on which the king depended for supplies, after having in some measure discarded the assistance, as well as the advice of his parliament, had been some time suspended by an uncertainty of the French king's councils; and the bargain was at length broken off; on the farther encroachments of this monarch, who treating the king of England as a vassal, rather than an equal, would have tied him up from making any alliances prejudicial to the interests of France, at the same time that he refuted to be bound by similar obligations.

Charles would probably have submitted to the terms prescribed, had not Sunderland, who began to entertain terrible apprehensions on the consequences which he might incur from being made a party in the treaty, and Hyde, to whom the secret was also communicated, strongly represented the dangers, which a minister must run, who submitted to suck an inequality, and, by refusing their concurrence, put a period to the negotiation.

It is asserted by some writers, that the popular party had got intelligence of the treaty on foot between both courts ; and that the duke of Buckingham had the merit of disappointing the king of any supplies from France, by repairing to Paris, and representing to the French ministers, that they would throw their money away in giving it to Charles, who was not in a situation to do them good or harm. However this may be, the interruption of the bargain produced a temporary change in the king's ever fluctuating measures.

The meeting of a parliament was now become necessary; and Charles and his ministers, in order to acquire some degree of popularity, formed an alliance with Spain; offered a renewal of the alliances with. Holland; and obliged the duke of York, who had been recalled from Scotland, to return thither again.

When a prince has repeatedly and grossly abused the confidence of a generous people, it is almost beyond the power of any dissimulation, or artifice to regain it. Charles had ample reason to be convinced of this truth in the defeat of all his efforts to cajole the new parliament. In vain did he endeavour to give a popular turn to the long discontinuance of the national councils, by saying that he lad made a good use of the time in taking measures with Spain and Portugal for mutual succour and defence: in vain did he urge the prosecution of the popish plot, and soon after acquiesce in the addition of lord Stafford to many former victims, as if with a view of surfeiting the appetite of the popular party by frequent executions: in vain did he renew the assurances of his zeal for the protestant religion, and of his readiness to concur in whatever might tend to give it security: in vain did he accompany the demand of supplies with a declaration, that he valued a perfect union at home beyond all the treasure in the world: the commons were not to be amused by any professions, nor satisfied with any sacrifice short of the duke of York's exclusion from all right to the crown.

The opposition they met with on this point from the king and the lords increased their fears and prejudices. They came to some very violent resolutions[25], which made the king immediately prorogue, and in eight days after dissolve them[26] and as, before this last step was taken, the lord mayor, and common council of London had presented an humble address, that his majesty would be graciously pleased to suffer his parliament to sit at the time to which it was prorogued, he not only told them, "that the sitting of parliaments was none of their business," but farther to

express his resentment against the city, he ordered, in his writs, the next parliament to meet at Oxford.

Sixteen peers, with the duke of Monmouth at their head, petitioned the king against an innovation calculated to increase the terrors of the public, and to inflame the passions of the people. They intimated that the friends of religion and liberty were not safe to assemble in a place so remote from the great seat of the protestant interest, and where they might be massacred even by the popish soldiers in the king's guards.

Charles's designs were too deeply laid to pay any regard to the petition and advice of those peers; and the real or the pretended apprehensions of the popular leaders became so prevalent, that they attended the king's summons at Oxford, accompanied by their servants in arms, and numerous bands of their partisans. The four city members in particular were followed by great multitudes wearing ribbons, in which were displayed the words, "No popery, no slavery." The king had the hirelings of the court and his own guards regularly mustered; and thus the assembly at Oxford carried the appearance of a tumultuous Polish diet, rather than of a regular meeting of the English legislature.

Instead of those gracious expressions which had formerly wheedled the commons out of large sums of money, and what was still worse, out of their own power and importance, the king, assuming an authoritative air, told the parliament on their meeting at Oxford[29], that the unwarrantable proceedings of the last house of commons was the reason of his parting with them; for that he, who would never use arbitrary power himself, would never suffer it in others.

This was intended as a menace of what the present house might expect, if they persitted in their opposition to the court. He then made a merit of his having called another parliament so soon, to let them see, as he pretended, that no past irregularities should make him out of love with them, and to give one evidence more that he had not neglected his part, but had given them another opportunity of providing for the public security. He omitted, he said, to press them on the farther prosecution of the popish plot, as being obvious to confederation, and necessary for the public safety; but as to what he had often declared on preserving the right of succession inviolate, he should not depart from it: yet in order to remove all reasonable fears of what might arise from a popish successor, if means could be found that in such a case the administration should remain in protestant hands; he declared he should be ready to hearken to any such expedient, by which religion might be secured, and monarchy not destroyed.

This last proposal was founded in a deep and subtle plan of the most wicked policy: it was designed to put a false gloss on the king's measures; to throw all the odium of public discord on the teeming unreasonableness of the commons; to destroy that combination of interests between the members of the established church and the dissenters, which the terrors of popery had at first occasioned; and to mislead and corrupt the judgments of the people at large on the conduit of their representatives.

William Williams, the speaker of the last house of commons, and the only one in Charles's reign, who maintained the authority of the house with zeal and vigour, was again chosen into that high office; and to shew that his masters were rather roused than awed by the lofty tone of his majesty's speech, he declared before the throne, that-the commons had elected him to be their speaker to manifest to their sovereign and the world, that they were not inclinable to changes.

The first steps taken by the commons were to appoint a committee to inspect the former proceedings relative to the impeachment of the earl of Danby; to demand a conference with the lords or the manner, in which the bill for repealing the sanguinary statute of the thirty-fifth of Elizabeth had been lost the last parliament; and to examine the evidence of one Fitzharris, who having been detected in an attempt to fix a libel on the popular party, turned short upon the court, and made several discoveries of its secret machinations. But these were only preludes to a debate

on the important question, which had so long occupied the attention of contending parties. After the necessity of excluding the duke of York had been strongly enforced by some of the ablest speakers, one of the king's ministers proposed, that he should be banished during life five hundred miles from England; and that on the king's demise the next heir should be constituted regent, with regal power. This expedient, which left the duke the title of king, whilst it seemed to deprive him of all advantages annexed to that character, was regarded as a Jesuitical snare, and accordingly treated with contempt. It was said, that if one army should be necessary to maintain the exclusion, four would be as necessary to maintain this expedient; and those who proposed it, would have the same power to let the duke in, as to keep him out.

The debate ended like all the preceding ones on this subject, and it was declared, that no method but the bill of exclusion could be properly adopted by the house, because no other method could give any satisfaction, or security to the people whom they represented.

As the king, to cut off all correspondence between Fitzharris and the popular party, had removed him to the Tower, the commons, in the way of a counter-stratagem to take the prisoner out of the hands of the crown, voted an impeachment against him; but this was rejected by the lords, who resolved, that the said Fitzharris should be proceeded against in the ordinary courts of justice.

A violent quarrel now broke out between the two houses, which, furnished the king with a pretence. for dissolving them, His intention was kept so profound a secret, in order to prevent the justly dreaded reproaches of any parting votes, that none of the popular members had the least hint of it, till they saw the black rod appear with a message preparatory to their dissolution. The party, who by a variety of means had been flattered into an assurance that the king was not so averse to the bill of exclusion as he pretended, and that his necessities would reduce him to a compliance with their own terms, were deprived of all spirit by this unexpected measure.

They were convinced that the king had by some secret bargain opened new resources in France, to supply his wants independent of parliament; and they foresaw very clearly, that, during the discontinuance of their assemblies, the authority of the crown, assisted by the efforts of a fierce and unrelenting faction, would have every advantage over a body dispersed and disunited. Full of these dark prospects, and unprovided with any plan or system of conduct to put into immediate execution, on such an exigency of affairs, they hurried out of Oxford in a manner which fully shewed their apprehensions of the violence of the king's councils to be equal to what they represented in their several votes and addresses.

The king, on his part, was not less fearful that resentment and despair might prompt some of the most daring of the exclusionists to have recourse to force. After having, therefore with a blast of his breath, to use the language of the royalist Writers, reduced the representatives of the commons of England to a state of insignificance, and scattered his foes like the leaves of autumn, he took coach, and drove to Windsor, from which place he issued out a royal declaration, to blacken the conduct of the two last parliaments, and to insinuate himself into the esteem and affections of a deluded people.

But the baseness of his calumnies and the fallacy of his professions were exposed with the utmost spirit and judgment in a pamphlet entitled, "***A modest vindication of the two last Parliaments***," which is said to have been written by the illustrious pens of Sidney, Somers, and Jones.

The conjecture of the popular party, that Charles mutt have opened new resources to make himself independent of parliamentary aids, was well founded. The treaty with France, which had been broken off by the timidity of Sunderland and Hyde, was afterwards revived by the king himself, who chose to submit to every condition which Lewis should impose, rather than give up to the national representatives any point that might lead to the limitation of his power.

The duke of York, who, upon his forced return to Scotland, had been frantic enough to court the king of France's assistance to involve the three kingdoms in a civil war[30] was now overjoyed to find the secret negotiation again opened, and did not fail to urge both his brother and the French ambassador by the most pressing importunities to bring it to a conclusion. This long depending bargain was finally settled on the twenty-fourth of March, 1681, just after Charles had felt the pulse of the commons at Oxford, and three or four days before he dissolved the parliament, with a resolution never to call another.

The stipulations of the treaty were, that Charles should receive a pension of two millions of livres for one year, and five hundred thousand crowns for two others, in consideration of his disengaging himself by degrees from the Spanish alliance, and of his taking measures to prevent parliaments from counteracting his promised services to France. In the course of a few months, he eluded the agreement entered into with Spain; and, for a bribe of another million of livres, abandoned to Lewis the duchy of Luxemburg, so important on account of its being the key to Germany, and one of the chief barriers of the Low Countries.

He also suffered the French monarch the year after to seize the principality of Orange on the most frivolous claim, though the prince had been flattered with the hope of effectual interposition on the part of England in defence of his right; but his faithless uncle very readily sacrificed all foreign interests to Lewis's ambition, in return for the assistance received from the latter to support his domestic tyranny.

Everything seemed now to promise Charles the full enjoyment of that despotic authority, which he had been so long endeavouring to establish. The Tory party, grown more rancorous by the mutual provocations which accompany a long struggle for power, and elevated with the general opinion that his majesty would never summon another parliament, exceeded all the bounds of decency and common sense, in their triumph over the Whigs.

Principles of the most slavish nature were every where enforced from the pulpit, and adopted in numerous addresses, which flattered the king in his present measures, and congratulated him on his escape from parliaments. Every day, from the middle of May to the January following, produced an accession of these disgraceful offerings; and though a few members of the community, particularly the citizens of London, and the freeholders of Middlesex, were bold enough to contradict and disclaim such surrenders of the rights of Englishmen, yet their efforts were insufficient to stem the tide of barbarous servility, which threatened the destruction of every thing valuable in the constitution, or rational in the opinion and manners of the people.

Soon after the dissolution of the Oxford parliament, and the conclusion of the French treaty, the duke of York was recalled[31] and a regular plan was concerted between the two brothers for obtaining the fullest revenge on all their past opponents, and for levelling to the ground the few bulwarks of freedom which popular infatuation had not yet destroyed. The dissenters, who were peculiarly obnoxious for having aided and abetted the schemes of the exclusionists, were the first who experienced the power and resentment of the court.

The act of the thirty-fifth of Elizabeth, the repeal of which Charles had eluded by so scandalous a trick, was now enforced with the utmost rigour, and every other effort was used by the subornation of witnesses, and the profligate corruptions of the bench, to fix charges of treason on those, who, by their spirited conduct had made themselves most offensive.

But though some victims bled, and though the blind zeal of the established clergy and of the Tory faction assisted the career of tyranny and intolerance, yet it was found that the complete suppression of the opposite party, and a total command of the life as well as of the civil and religious liberty of the subject could not be acquired, while the city of London and other corporations retained the right of chusing their own magistrates. The invasion of their charters

was therefore resolved upon, as the only step which was still requisite for the final establishment of despotism,

Before the particular mode of effecting this last purpose could be settled by the crown lawyers, a lord-mayor and sheriffs were forced upon the city, and the return of such juries was secured, as were not likely to interrupt or delay the work of persecution. These men, picked for the base purposes of cruelty, and void of every sentiment of humanity and common honesty, shewed themselves worthy of such a choice by the unparalleled rigour of their verdicts. They regarded Magna Charta and the laws of the land as little as they did their own oaths; and pursued no other line of duty than a criminal compliance with the dictates and wishes of their superiors.

But a partial violation of the rights of the citizens in the choice of their civil officers did not fill up the measure of the slavery to which they were doomed: it only served as the means of temporary oppression, while a formidable attack on all their privileges was preparing. It was now pretended, that the city of London might legally be deprived of its franchises, on account of two offences, which the court of aldermen and common-council had committed, first in the words of one of their former petitions to the king for the sitting of parliament, in which the prorogation was represented as an interruption of the public justice of the kingdom; and secondly in imposing a toll on goods brought to market, which was done in order to defray the expense of rebuilding the markets after the great fire.

The solemn mockery of a trial was added to this flagrant injustice; and on such frivolous charges the court of king's bench gave sentence against the city. Its charter became forfeited; and though the independence of its government and the free election of its magistrates were thus destroyed, the courtiers had the insolence to boast of the king's clemency in not letting up an exchequer for its revenue, or granting a commission as upon an escheat to the crown.

The success of this attack on the charter of the metropolis encouraged the court to proceed in a similar manner against every other city and borough in England. *Quo Warrantos*, or writs were issued out to oblige them to shew by what title they enjoyed their respective franchises. The pretensions of some were said to be illegal and defective: others had infringed the conditions of the original grant: and a great number were tempted to surrender their charters at the king's discretion, rather than risk the consequences of so iniquitous a scrutiny.

Considerable sums were exacted for a pretended renewal of former immunities; but all offices of power and profit were kept at the disposal of the crown; a precedent which left no national privilege in security; and as it enabled the king to pack juries, and even to model parliaments at pleasure, it effected at one blow the ruin of all constitutional freedom.

While the court party were employing with fatal success all those wicked arts in England to rivet the chains of the people, and to convert the very forms of their ancient government into engines of irresistible oppression, tyranny threw off the mask in Scotland: it Balked abroad with undisguised horror; and its traces were every where marked with blood. Ireland had long been in a state of absolute vassalage, and was much more likely to promote than oppose the diffusion of slavery through the whole extent of the British empire.

At this gloomy period, a band of chosen patriots, who had opposed the conduct of administration in a legal way, as long as there remained any authority in the laws, and energy in the constitution, now prepared to seek relief by that solemn appeal to the sword, which is the duty of every citizen when the voice of freedom is silenced by the power of oppression.

Cowardice is very ingenious in giving the shew of moderation and wisdom to counsels dictated by the dread of personal danger. Though the alarming progress of arbitrary power was evident to every man who was not blinded by prejudice, bigotry, or corruption, yet the timid and cautious argued, that while so large a faction adhered to the crown, resistance, however justifiable, was

not expedient; and that an unsuccessful rebellion would precipitate the nation into all those evils, which it was intended to redress. Such reasoning had very little weight with the only illustrious whom England could then boat of, Lord Russel, more dignified by the rectitude of his morals, and the amiableness of his manners, than by the nobility of his birth; lord Essex, whom power could not corrupt, and who resigned the highest posts its the state, when he found they were to be held only by baseness; Hamden, who glowed with that generous flame of liberty, by which his grandfather had acquired immortal honour; and Algernon Sidney, whole elevated sentiments, conduct, and literary talents have added lustre to a long train of nobles and heroes, from whom he derived his descent, were of opinion, that the duty, which they owed their country. Called upon them to make use of the present opportunity to destroy a tyranny, which was now only beginning to collect strength but which time and a regular, military force would confirm beyond the possibility of being opposed with success.

There were several others united in the same counsels, but to whom we cannot ascribe the same pure and disinterested motives; the duke of Monmouth, the earl of Shaftesbury, lord Grey, and lord Howard. The city of London, with the gentry and nobility in several Counties of England, were solicited to rise in arms; and the citizens, inflamed by Shaftesbury and his agents, seemed full of ardour and impatience to begin.

But the duke of Monmouth, who knew well the inferiority even of a multitude of raw men to a small number a disciplined troops, said, that, to insure success, the insurrection should he begun in the country, which, by drawing the attention of the king's forces, would afford an advantageous opportunity for rising in the city. Shaftesbury, on the contrary, exclaimed loudly against delay; and represented to his confederates, that having gone so far, and trusted the sercet to so many hands, there was no safety for them but in a bold prosecution of their purpose.

The earl finding his arguments ineffectual lost all patience; endeavoured to blast the character of the patriots with the party in the city; threatened to put himself at the head of the insurgents; and at last, in a fit of despair, fled to Holland, where the violent agitation of his unruly passions, which had already disordered his mind, occasioned his death about six weeks after.

The retreat of Shaftesbury, as it broke off all intercourse with the citizens, put a stop for force time to the proceedings of the confederated patriots. But their project soon assumed a more regular form, and a plan of operations was now concerted with greater unanimity and coolness. But though they agreed in the means of opposing the present system of tyranny, they differed very widely in regard to the use they should make of their success.

Sidney and Howard were ardent for a commonwealth; Essex, from a deference to the judgment of Sidney, embraced the same opinion; Monmouth had entertained hopes of acquiring the crown, with certain limitations, to himself; but Russel and Hamden were much attached to the ancient constitution, and intended only the exclusion of the duke and the redress of grievances. It was quickly perceived by the two latter, that the deigns of the rest of their associates were not the same as their own.

An explanation was accordingly demanded, in regard to the principle of the declaration, which was to be published, on their taking up arms ; and in order to satisfy the scruples of Russel and Hamden, it was agreed to declare, that the arms of the confederates were only defensive, and not to be used against their sovereign, but to be kept in their hands until a free parliament should be called, which, in a constitutional way, and according to ancient precedent, might completely redress the national grievances, and settle the succession.

During the dangerous delays, which the adjusting of these matters necessarily occasioned, an inferior order of conspirators, who had been engaged in all Shaftesbury's projects, held frequent meetings, where they indulged their spleen in all those loose and desperate discourses, which are natural to men, whose passions are highly heated at atrocious acts of wickedness and

corruption. Though many things were said on the practicability of taking off the royal brothers, no design of that kind was laid, or resolved on; and the whole of this black and hellish conspiracy, as it was termed by the court and its creatures, consisted in nothing more than the unguarded sallies of honest indignation. But one Keyling, who was often present at those meetings, fancying that he should find it more for his interest to be an informer than a patriot, gave in an account of an assassination plot to one of the secretaries of state; and the hope of reward, or the dread of danger prompted some others to join in the like testimony.

Besides the warrants issued to seize numberless conspirators of an inferior rank, orders were also given for arresting Monmouth, Grey, and Howard. Monmouth eluded the vigilance of his pursuers: Russel who was unacquainted with the cabals which had been held in the city, did not take any measures to effect an escape: he and Grey were arrested and sent to the Tower; and Howard; who had given strong symptoms of perturbation, and who had been advised by Hamden to get out of the way, if he was either conscious that any facts could be proved against him, or that he had not sufficient fortitude to bear the worth consequences, was taken in his own house concealed in a chimney.

When he found himself in the hands of the messenger, he began to cry and sob, and on the very first examination told, as he himself said, all that he knew, though, in order to earn his pardon, he afterwards made many very material additions. Essex, from a delicacy of sentiment, which must exalt his character in the minds of all those who are capable of an equal degree of generosity, refuted to abscond, lest the circumstance of his flight should affect the safety of Russel; and was apprehended, as were also Sidney and Hamden, on Howard's evidence. Every day some of the other class of conspirators were detected in their places of concealment, and thrown into prison.

The discovery of these matters, and the commitments which followed, had no sooner taken air than every corner of the kingdom rang with the abusive exclamations of the Tories. Faction, bigotry, and a spirit of scurrility seem, at this time, to have extinguished every spark of generosity as well as justice, in the nation. The misfortunes of the earl of Essex, even under the popular government of Elizabeth, were viewed with regret by his contemporaries; but the public could now behold, not only without pity, but with almost incredible exultation, the most virtuous and exalted characters in the kingdom entrapped in the toils of power, for one supposed generous intention to recover all that used to be dear to Englishmen.

A new round of addresses was immediately set on foot; and the city of London, which was now in the hands of the crown, led the way; and other corporation took their turn, in regular order, to manifest the excess of their depravity, by in unreserved tender of fortunes life, and liberty, and by loading the Whigs with all the reproaches which the most envenomed imagination could suggest.

It would be foreign to the purpose of this summary to enter into the shocking detail of all the barbarous executions that soon followed. Almost every page of the history of this cruel and infamous reign is blotted with blood. But it is impossible to pass over the fate of two of the illustrious sufferers without particular notice, and without tears.

"Bring every sweetest flow'r, and let me strew
The grave where RUSSEL lies, whose temper'd blood
With calmest cheerfulness for thee[32] resigned,
Stain'd the sad annals of a giddy reign,
Aiming at lawless power; tho' meanly sunk
In loose inglorious luxury—With him
His friend, the British Cassius[33], fearless bled,
Of high determin'd spirit, roughly brave,
by ancient learning to the enlighten'd love
Of ancient freedom warm'd."—Thompson

After the condemnation of three of those, who were accused of a conspiracy against the king's life, and who were tried first, in order to inflame the minds of the public, and to confound the charge of an insurrection with that of the assassination plot, lord Russel, eminent above all the nobility for the simplicity of his manners, and the purity of his life, was pitched on to be the next sacrifice.

When the prisoner came into court, he desired a delay of his trial till the next day, because some of his witnesses could not arrive in town before the evening. This reasonable request Pemberton, the lord chief justice, seemed inclined to comply with, but was prevented by the attorney-general who with malignant falsehood observed, that the prisoner did not intend to have granted the king the delay of one hour to save his life.

The next important question related to the jury, who were all of them so notoriously devoted to the wicked purposes of the court, that no candour, humanity, or justice was to be expected from them. But as such an objection would have had no other effect than that of provoking them to personal revenge, they were challenged by the prisoner, on the ground of their not being freeholders; and though the law was express on his side, yet the objection was overruled by the unanimous voice of the bench.

The witnesses against him were two of the city conspirators and lord Howard, men whose lives were yet at the mercy of the crown: but though their evidence was incongruous, illegal, and insufficient, yet its defects were amply supplied by the declamations of the crown lawyers, and the accommodating consciences of the jury, who brought in the prisoner Lord Russel, knowing how obnoxious he was to the court from the part he had acted on the bill of exclusion, had given up all thoughts of preserving his life from the first moment of his imprisonment.

However, he so far conformed to the earnest solicitations of his friends, as to send a petition to the king, in which he offered to live beyond sea in any place his majesty should name, and never to meddle any more in English affairs; but Charles was inexorable to all entreaty. He not only rejected the petition of the condemned lord, and another from his father, the earl of Bedford; but beheld without sympathy or remorse lady Russel, the daughter of his faithful servant, the late earl of Southampton, motionless at his feet.

He even signed the death warrant with an insult; and on being told, that Monsieur Rouvigny, who was a relation to the Bedford family, was coming over with intercessions from the court of France in favour of his kinsman, he replied, "I shall be glad to see the embassador, but lord Russel's head will be off before he arrives."

A notion had prevailed among his lordship's friends, that a pardon might be procured, provided he would acknowledge the doctrine of non-resistance in its fullest extent; and Dr. Tillotson and Dr. Burnet endeavoured, though in vain, to reason the prisoner into such a confession[34]. "I can have no conception," said he, "of a limited monarchy, which has not a right to defend its own limitations; and my conscience will not permit me to say otherwise to the king."

Lord Cavendish had lived in the closest intimacy with Russel, and did not desert his friend in the present calamity: he offered to manage his escape by changing clothes with him; but the prisoner refused to save his own life by an expedient, which might expose his friend to many hardships; and when the duke of Monmouth sent a message, that he would chearfully surrender himself, if Russel thought that this measure would any wise contribute to his safety, " It will be no advantage to me" he said, "to have my friends die with me."

The conduct of lord Russel during his trial, his confinement, at his death, and, in a more severe test of fortitude, the parting with his wife and children, was perfectly conformable to that dignified simplicity, purity, and devotion, which had distinguished the whole tenure of his life. With a deep silence, with a long and fixed look, in which respect and affection, unmingled with

passion,were expressed, lord and lady Russel parted for ever: his eyes followed her's, while she quitted the room, and when he lost sight of her, he said to Dr. Burnet, who attended him in the character of a friend and clergyman, "The bitterness of death is now passed."

With a view of indulging the insolence of party, and of mortifying the exclusionists with the fight of their beloved leader concluded to execution through the principal streets of London, the scaffold was erected in Lincoln's-Inn Fields; a circumstance which, however it might shock the feelings of his friends, had no effect on the prisoner, who whilst he seemed touched with the tenderness of those among the spectators who could not refrain from tears, expressed no indignation at others who had the barbarity to insult him in his passage.

On looking towards Southampton house, the tear started in his eye, but he instantly wiped it away. He was attended by Dr. Tillotson and Dr. Burnet, the one to assist him in his devotion, and the other to do justice to his memory; and when he arrived at the scaffold, addressing himself to one of the sheriffs, he said, he did not love much speaking, nor expected now to be well heard; he had therefore set down in a paper, which he then delivered[35], what he had thought proper to leave behind him; and added, "God knows how far I always was from any designs against the king's person, or of altering the government; and I still pray for the preservation of both, and the protestant religion.

In the words of a dying man I profess I know of no plot either against the king's life, or the government; but I have now done with this world, and am going to a better: I forgive all my enemies: I thank God, I die in charity with all men; and I wish all sincere Protestants may love one another, and not make way for popery by their animosities.

After some time spent in devotion, the prisoner embraced his two friends, and with a a chearful and serene countenance, laid his head on the block, which was severed from the body by two strokes of the axe; and, to the mortification of the court, the spirit of party was so far subdued by sympathy, that on the exposure of the bleeding head, with the usual proclamation, the scaffold resounded with the universal groans and lamentations of the spectators.

On the day that lord Russel was brought to his trial, the king and the duke of York, from a curiosity unworthy of their rank, or the characters of gentlemen, went to the Tower, in order to see him pass. As they were going back to their barge, the cry followed, that lord Essex had cut his own throat; and this intelligence was quickly conveyed to the Old Bailey, where the king's counsel made a very unwarrantable use of it to confirm the plot, and to render lord Russel more apparently guilty: a circumstance that gave the stronger credit to another report which immediately prevailed, that the earl. had had not been his own murderer, but that he had been very opportunely disposed of by the hands of others.

The other illustrious sufferer, whole blood was spilt to satisfy the coward rage of the royal butchers, was Algernon Sidney, whose virtues and talents may be fairly put in competition with those of the most exalted character that any age or country could boast of. He had entered deeply into the war against the late king; and, on account of the well known firmness of his attachment to the republican cause, was nominated one of the judges in the high court, by whom Charles was condemned; but from a delicacy of sentiment, similar to that of Sir Henry Vane upon the same occasion, he did not take his seat at the trial.

He continued the zealous supporter of the government, while it preserved the form and spirit of a republic; and on the same motives, which influenced his conduct during the civil war, he was one of the fiercest opponents to the usurpation of the Cromwells. When the independent parliament was restored, on the resignation of Richard, Mr. Sidney was appointed one of the council of state, and was soon after sent to the sound with other commissioners to mediate a peace between Denmark and Sweden. The restoration of monarchy took place before his return; and when every man, according to his hopes or fears, was suing either for favour or pardon,

Sidney chose to remain in banishment, rather than submit to a government., which owed its establishment to the blackest species of treachery, and which, from its first outset, threatened the destruction of religion, morals, and civil liberty:

Sidney continued abroad till the year 1671; when, from the impulse of filial piety, he returned to England, to visit his dying father, the earl of Leicester; and was afterwards detained by a vexatious lawsuit with his elder brother, who refused to pay what was left him in his father's will. The hope of becoming instrumental to the salvation of his unhappy country engaged him in those heroic designs which had so fatal an issue.

When, on the accusation of being concerned in the plot against the government and the king's person, he was seized and brought before the council, he told them; "that he would make the best defence he could; but he would not fortify their evidence by any thing he should say." This propriety of conduct, in which simplicity and dignity were admirably united, as it confirmed the court in the opinion that was entertained of the prisoner's character, confirmed them also in the resolution of depriving him of an existence, which; whilst adorned with such exalted and formidable virtues, at once created terror, and, when judged by the rule of comparison, reflected disgrace.

As lord Howard was the only witness against Sidney, other steps were taken to secure his death by the most abominable contrivances. Pemberton, who had betrayed some symptoms of moderation, or of shame at lord Russel’s trial, was removed; and Jefferies, whose well known profligacy might be depended on, and who had out ranted all his brethren in outrageous abuse against the conspirators, was appointed lord chief justice. With him were joined three other judges, whole corruption and servility perfectly qualified them for sitting on the same bench.

A jury was returned, consisting of persons of low and mean condition, and who had been severally examined on the pliability of their consciences. One Parry, who had been guilty of several murders, was pardoned, and received a commission to act as justice of peace, that he might be enabled to help forward this important business; but as discretion made no part of his virtues, he boasted to one of the duke of York's servants, whom he supposed a friend to the injuries intended against Sidney, 64 that he had sent in a great many names of jurors who were sure men.

The trial was conducted with such a disregard both of decency and justice, as carried upon the very face of it an avowal of the pre-determined resolution of the court to deprive the prisoner of life. His tender of a special plea, his demand of a copy of his indictment, his exceptions to several of the jury for not being freeholders were all rejected.

In order to supply the place of a second witness, as the law required two, and no other plausible perjurer could be found to concur with Howard, some discourses on government, which had been found in ransacking the prisoner's closet, were produced and admitted by the bench as sufficient to complete the necessary evidence. But besides that a similitude of handwriting was not such a proof of his being the author, as could justify a verdict for taking away his life, the discourses themselves, though favourable to liberty, maintained such principles only, as the best and the wisest men under all governments have been known to embrace. Sidney defended himself with a sagacity and precision, which would have done honour to the ablest lawyer that ever sat on the bench, or pleaded at the bar.

But the issue of this mock trial was pre-determined; and the jury having withdrawn merely for shew, returned in about half an hour, and brought in the prisoner guilty.

That elevation of sentiment, that dignity of soul which appears in every part of Sidney's conduct, and which age and infirmity had in no degree abated, shone forth with a singular lustre on the fatal day which put a period to his glorious life. He walked to the place of execution: he asked no friend to attend him: he ascended the scaffold with the air of one who came to harangue, or

to command, not to suffer: he told the sheriffs who had returned a packed jury against him, that it was for their sakes only that he reminded them, that his blood lay on their heads; and when he was asked if he had any thing to say to the people, he answered; "I have made my peace with God, and I have nothing to say to man: I am ready to die; and will give you no farther trouble."

Thus saying, he hastened to the block; and his head was severed from the body with one stroke of the axe, A vindication of himself, which he left behind him, is written with a spirit in all respects equal to what might have been expected from the illustrious author of the ***Discourses on Governmen***t: he confuted the testimonies on which he had been condemned, and asserted that, to reach him, the bench had been filled with men who were the blemishes of the bar; and he regretted death chiefly because it had been inflicted by mean hands.

In his own injuries, he lamented those which his country had sustained; and he laid down with admirable clearness the great and generous principles of policy, which can alone give any permanent happiness to civil society[36].

Other executions followed those of Russel and Sidney; and where no pretence could be found for a charge of treason, royal vengeance was gratified by indictments for misdemeanours and libels; and such heavy fines were imposed as amounted to perpetual imprisonment. The clergy also, not to fall short of the lawyers in testimonies of their zeal, made the churches ring with the doctrines of non-resistance; and left the united influence of the surplice and the gown might not be able to extinguish every spark of public spirit, a standing army, under the name of guards, was increased and kept up to complete the terror and despair of all well wishers to liberty.

This triumph over oppressed patriotism was, however, but of short continuance. Charles did not enjoy those spectacles of cruelty and blood above a year longer. An apoplexy, or as some believed, poison put an end to his wicked and infamous existence on the sixth of February, 1685. A Scotch priest attended him in his last moments, to soothe the horrors of his guilty conscience, and to prepare him for eternity by the hurried efforts of the most abject superstition.

It is said, that a little before Charles's death, he began to repent of his arbitrary proceedings; and resolved to make a change in his system of administration. We will not dispute the possibility of his having formed such a design; but the most candid survey of his character and conduct must prevent our ascribing it to any laudable motive. Indolence and cowardice, not political virtue, often made him stop upon the brink of ruin; but his principles were not the lets vicious and tyrannical, though he sometimes shrunk from contests, which were likely to interrupt his pleasures, or to endanger his person and government.

Notes to Chapter The Supplement

1. In his correspondence with his sister at this time, Charles compliments her highly on her discretion and zeal to unite both crowns: he assures her, it would be the king of France's assault, if the treaty was not concluded; and expresses his hatred and contempt of the Dutch in the most indelicate terms. "You know," he says in one of his letters, "the old saying in England, the more a t—d is stirred, the more it stinks, and I do not care a t—d for any thing a Dutchman says of me; and so I think you have enough upon this dirty subject, which nothing but a stinking Dutchman could have been the cause of." This is not the only specimen still upon record to convince us, that Charles's language to his familiar friends was always as filthy as his sentiments were debased, and his conduct infamous.

2. It was Charles's intention to have entrusted the whole management of the business to his sister, without the intervention of embassadors; but her pregnancy prevented her coming to England for that purpose. "I must confess," he tells her in another of his letters, "I was not very glad to hear you were with child, because I had a thought by your making a journey hither, all things might have been adjusted without any suspicion."

3. As soon as the agreement was settled between Charles and Lewis, and all the preparatory steps were taken for the commencement of hostilities, the earl of Sunderland was dispatched to the court of Spain, to endeavour, in concert with an embassador from the French king, to persuade the Spanish ministry, that they had nothing more to fear on the side of France. The earl was also to recommend very strongly, in his master's name, a strict union between the courts of Spain and France; and if, on giving a hint of the design against the Dutch, which it was said, was only to humble, not to subdue them, the coast of Spain should shew any inclination to enter into a defensive league with that distressed state, then the earl was to join threats with persuasion, and endeavour to intimidate the Spanish ministry with an intimation, that it would produce a war with England. The French minister demanded, on the part of his master, a free passage through the Spanish territories, and to be furnished with forage upon paying for it, with an offer, on the one hand, by way of consideration, to put all the late conquest in Flanders, in the queen of Spain's hands, till the king her son came of age; and, on the other, a menace that his majesty was able to force his way, having sixty thousand men ready. in Flanders, and twenty thousand to make a diversion in Catalonia, Such were the cajoleries and threats at that time ineffectually employed against the found and generous policy of the Spanish cabinet.

4. She did not depart, however, without leaving behind her some fatal marks of her visit. "One of the preliminaries of her treaty," says lord Halifax, "though a trivial thing in itself, yet made us throw off their fashion, and put on veils, that we might look more like a distinct people, and not be under the servility of imitation, which ever pays a greater deference to the original, than is consistent with the equality all independent nations should pretend to. France did not like this small beginning of ill humours, at least of emulation; and wisely considering, that it is a natural introduction, first to make the world their apes, that they may be afterwards their slaves; it was thought that one of the instructions Madame brought along with her, was to laugh us out of these vests; which she performed so effectually, that in a moment, like so many footmen who had quitted their masters livery, we all took it again, and returned to our old service."

But the duchess took a still more effectual step to attach the English court to the interests, as well as to the fashions of France. She brought over with her a beautiful French woman, Louise de Keroualle, who soon became, as was intended, the king's favourite mistress, and retained her influence over him till his death. She amassed a great deal of money, and was honoured with two titles by the two kings to whose pleasures or interests she was subservient. Charles created her duchess of Portsmouth; and Lewis erected the town of Aubigny into a duchy and peerdom of France, and assigned it to her, with remainder to such of her male issue by the king of England, as he should name. Charles Lenox, the first of her sons, was created duke of Richmond, and afterwards succeeded her in the duchy of Aubigny also; and from this very pure, and unpolluted source, one of the proudest families now in the kingdom derives its origin, and its transmissive honours.

The duchess of Orleans, the first mover of those intrigues, did not live long to enjoy the congratulations of the French court on her success. Soon after her return to Paris, she was poisoned in a glass of succory water; and died in excruciating agonies. Though it was notorious that she fell a victim to her husband's jealousy, yet Charles, on receiving the news, only shed a few tears, and gave Monsieur a hard name; but desired the messenger not to divulge the secret, before a formal account was sent from France of the subject. The English ministers were directed to notify to foreign courts, that Madame did not die a violent death; and the marshal De Bellefond, who was sent over to remove the king's suspicions, was received with singular marks of civility: It is not perhaps the least odious feature in Charles's portrait, that neither the dullest proofs of his sister's untimely end, nor the expressions of tenderness, uttered with her dying breath, in which she declared that her only regret in leaving the world was because she left him, had the smallest effect on his callous feelings, to rouse him to a returning sense of national interest, family honour, or brotherly affection.

5. We meet with a singular instance of this tyrant's cowardice in pardoning Blood, after his attempts to assassinate the duke of Ormond, and to carry off the crown out of the Tower. Charles had a strange curiosity to fee him; and Blood, who was a very artful, as well as a daring villain, improved the opportunity. He confessed to the king, that he had been engaged with others in a design to kill him at Battersea, where his majesty often went to bathe; but that when he had taken his hand among the reeds, he found his heart checked with the awe of royalty, and he not only relented himself, but diverted his associates from their purpose. Blood added, that he had long ago brought himself to an entire indifference about life, which he now gave up for lost; yet he could not forbear warning the king of the danger which might attend his execution: that his associates had bound themselves by the strictest oaths, to revenge the death of any of the confederacy; and that no precaution or power could secure any one from the effects of their desperate resolutions. This threat, which would have excited very different emotions from those of mercy in any man of common courage, determined the royal poltroon to spare the delinquent. After obtaining the consent of the duke of Ormond, who granted it in a very gallant manner, the king gave Blood his pardon, with a pension of five hundred a year upon the Irish establishment, and even admitted him into all the privacy and intimacy of the court: whilst poor Edwards, the keeper of the crown and regalia in the Tower, who, in his opposition to Blood's felonious purpose, had received many wounds, and was now in the eightieth year of his age, reaped no reward for his valour and fidelity, but the promise of two hundred pounds, which he did not live to enjoy.

6. The lord keeper in his speech to both houses on the necessity of large supplies to enable the king to make suitable preparations, said, "that France and the States General were powerfully arming by sea and land, were building new ships, and filling their magazines with all sorts of warlike provisions: that the naval strength of the former was thrice as much as at the beginning of the last Dutch war; and that the latter had also been very diligent in augmenting their fleets: and that it would be therefore very unwise in England, while the clouds were gathering so thick all round, to omit, in hopes that the, wind would disperse them, to provide against the storm." He enlarged, at the same time, so much on the alliances entered into by his majesty for the good of his kingdom, and to maintain which a considerable sleet and army were now so necessary, that the CABAL, who knew that all those alliances were just going to be trampled under foot, were ashamed of this speech, and contrary to custom, did not suffer it to be printed.

7. The exchequer was shut on the sixth of January, 1652; and in December following, the king published a proclamation, in which he said, "that notwithstanding he had not been wanting on his part to comply with all honourable ways and means, that might effect a peace, yet the continuance of those inevitable necessities, which first obliged him to shut up the exchequer; compelled him to continue to stop the pay of monies till the first of May next; doubting not but that his loving subjects would have such trust and confidence in his justice, that it would take away all apprehensions of their being in the least defrauded of their just dues." The parliament had been also prorogued from the twenty-second of April 1671 till the sixteenth of April 1672; and was then farther adjourned to the fourth of February following ; that the king might prosecute all his designs, without disagreeable interruptions from any domestic contest.

8. Burnet tells us, that Sir Orlando Bridgman, the lord keeper, refused to put the great seal to this declaration for indulgence, as judging it contrary to law. He was therefore dismissed; and Ashley, lately created earl of Shaftesbury, was made lord high chancellor.

9. It was published on the seventeenth of March, 1672.

10. The only instances of disrespect to this imperious monarch, which his ministry could allege, were the pretended insolence of the Dutch gazette, and a medal struck by Van Beuninghen, one of the negotiators of the peace at Aix-la-Chapelle, in which he compared himself to Joshua stopping the course of the fun. As Lewis had taken the fun for his device, the meaning of the

medal could not be mistaken; but the States caused it to be suppressed. What a just cause for attempting two years after to exterminate the whole nation!

11. The damage which the country sustained, by this step taken for its preservation, was estimated at eighteen millions of guilders.

12. See page 362.

13. This generous sacrifice of their own concerns to the general security of the Protestant religion had such an effect on the house, that a bill was brought in and readily assented to, for abrogating all the rigorous laws made against than in this reign; hut it was stopped in the upper house by the influence of the crown.

14. In order to keep up the shew of having obtained the points, which had been alleged by Charles as pretences for the war, the honour of the flag, which, in the treaty of Breda had been agreed to only in general terms, was now insisted upon in a particular manner, the distinction between a fleet and a single ship, or even a yacht, being expressly disallowed. The English planters at Surinam were permitted to remove at pleasure; but this, in fact, had been before the case, as those planters remained there from their own choice. A seeming regulation of the East India trade was also inserted, but without any peculiar advantages to England. Even the article, by which the States engaged to pay the king eight hundred thousand patacoons (between two and three hundred thousand pounds) was little more than a pretended acknowledgment, as if the peace was to be purchased; for according to Dr. Burnet, lord Arlington had privately agreed that this money should be made over to the prince of Orange, for the payment of a debt which Charles owed him,

15. One of these was the Samous Habeas Corpus bill, which is acknowledged to be the greatest, if not the only support of personal freedom in this kingdom; and was calculated to set bounds to the arbitrary proceedings of ministers, and to preserve those, who sell under their displeasure, from being banned or imprisoned, without cause or relies. But though this bill was now hindered from being passed into a law; it was afterwards taken up, and carried through by the new parliament in 1679.

16. It appeared from unquestionable evidence, laid before the house of commons, that several hundreds of Scotchmen had been forced from their families, bound together, and, like galley slaves, secured in the public goals, and from thence put on ship, board, and transported into the service of France, contrary to the addresses of parliament, his majesty's promises and sham proclamations, and the rights of nature.

17. The naval successes of the French in 1676 were, indeed, very alarming. Their fleet under the duke De Vivonne, which was sent to relieve Messina, was attacked by the joint squadrons of Spain and the United Provinces. Though the French were worsted in the first engagement, yet the gallant De Ruyter, whose Courage, skill, and fidelity had so highly contributed to the preservation of his country, was killed. This alone was more than equivalent to a victory, and soon led to a total defeat of the Dutch and Spanish fleets at Palermo, where they lost twelve capital ships, besides several other vessels, seven hundred cannon, and five thousand men; by which the French, to the terror of Europe, became mailers of the Mediterranean, reduced several places of importance, and endangered the revolt of all Naples and Sicily.

18. The king was equally deaf to the murmurs of the people at large; but though he would not listen to their complaints, he endeavoured in the most arbitrary manner to suppress them. The licences of all the coffee-houses, where people spoke with most freedom of the national grievances, were recalled, and the granting of any new ones prohibited by a proclamation ordered in council on the twenty-ninth of December, 1675. In about a week after, another proclamation was published for discovering and punning the authors of any libels on government, or on its

ministers. The suppression of the coffee-houses was every where exclaimed against as illegal; nor could the sophistry of corrupt judges on this point baffle common sense, They alleged, that no persons could retail liquors without a licence; and that the sessions could refuse a licence to whom they pleased. But the words of the law, which settled the excise, only objected to those who could not find security for the payment of the duties; and betides, coffee was not a liquor subjected to the excise. Charles sound it the wisest counsel to yield to a petition of the coffee-men, who promised to refrain seditious discourse, and to prevent the reading of libels in their houses.

19. The earl of Shaftesbury had, upon some former occasion, reflected on the duke of Buckingham, as a man inconstant and giddy in his conduct. As the duke was taking coach, on his discharge out of the Tower, the earl looking out of his window, cried, "What, my lord, are you going to leave us?"—" Ay, my lord," replied the duke, "such giddy-headed fellows as I can never stay long in a place."

20. There was another instance of rigorous severity in the conduct of the lords at the same time, and on the same account. One Dr. Cary was questioned at the bar of their house, concerning a manuscript treatise on the illegality of the prorogation, which he had carried to the press; and because, agreeable to the authority of the laws, which require no man to accuse himself, he declined answering certain questions which were put to him, he was fined a thousand pounds, and kept close prisoner in the Tower, till it was paid.

21. It had always been the custom of parliament to adjourn themselves, unless the adjournments had been made under the special commission of the great teal; and this privilege was now granted to the lords. But some members of the lower house, on their return from Whitehall, rising up, possibly to express a sense of the rough treatment they had met with, Mr. Edward Seymour, who officiated as speaker for Sir Job Charlton then indisposed, took upon himself the business of dictator, by insisting vehemently, that, after the king had required the house to adjourn, there was no more liberty of speech. This was contested, and those who stood up demanded still to be heard, when the speaker had the confidence, without putting the question, to pronounce the house adjourned; and therewithal stepped down in the middle of the floor, leaving the members astonished at lb flagrant a violation of their inherent privileges.

22. This extraordinary conduct was owing to the following circumstances. Montague, had expected to obtain the office of secretary of state, as a reward for his services at the court of France; but having reason to suppose that his disappointment arose from the lord treasurer's jealousy of him, he meditated the fall of that minister. His first attempt was to bribe an astrologer, in whose predictions Charles had great faith, to foretell the king's ruin, is he continued the treasurer in his office. But he did not keep his own secret. Lady Castlemaine, who, upon Charles's preferring the French sultana to the first place in his feraglio, had retired with the title of duchess of Cleveland, took up her residence in France. There Montague formed a very intimate connection with her; and in an unguarded moment disclosed to her his scheme to bring about Danby's disgrace, and took great freedoms with the character of the king and his brother. Finding afterwards, that he was betrayed by the duchess and that he could expel no more favours from the court, be resolved to impeach the minister; and knowing how agreeable his downfall would be to the court of France, he had the address to bargain with the French ambassador for a gratuity of one hundred thousand crowns, or a pension of fifty thousand livres a year, during his life, provided the ruin of the treasurer, by a parliamentary prosecution, should take place at the end of three months.

23. See page 451

24. The earl died at Rouen, on the ninth of December, 1674, after an exile of little more than severs years.

25. They declared it to be the opinion of the house, that there could be no security or safety for the protestant religion, the king's life, or the government of the nation, without passing bill for disinheriting the duke of York; and that all persons who had advised his majesty against the bill were enemies to the king and kingdom. They peremptorily refused to grant any supply till such a bill should be passed; and in order to prevent the large anticipations which had been often made on the revenue, and to shut out, if potable, all expedients tending to render the king independent of parliament, they resolved, that whoever should hereafter lend, or cause to be lent, by way of advance, any money upon any branches of the revenue, should be adjudged a hinderer of the sitting of parliaments, and be responsible for the same in parliament. Upon hearing that the king was privately gone to the house of lords to prorogue them, they voted that the adviser of such a measure was a betrayer of the king, of the protestant religion, and of the kingdom of England, a promoter of the French interest, and a pensioner to France. They employed the few remaining moments of their authority in passing some other resolutions with more heat than discretion, or effect.

28. Charles, fearing the indignation of the commons, sneaked with the utmost secrecy to the house of lords, on the tenth of January 1681, and prorogued them in the midst of their resolutions. He alto eluded at the same time an act for the relief of protestant dissenters, by a juggle highly worthy of so cowardly, but shameless a tyrant. Not daring openly to reject it, he privately ordered the clerk of the crown to withdraw it, so that, after having passed both houses, it was not presented for the royal assent.

29. This last parliament in Charles's reign- met on the z zit of March 1681, and was dissolved in a week after.

30. It appears from the French embassador's letters to Lewis XIV. that the duke of York, before his return to Scotland, strove to persuade his brother, that a civil war was the only means of establishing the royal authority in England. But as Charles was very averse to so dangerous an experiment, the duke, before his departure for the north, expressed to Barillion his hopes of being able to excite troubles in Scotland and Ireland, and asserted that he had a much more considerable party in England than was thought of. He therefore earnestly solicited the French king's help, and was promised it; but it is probable, that the cautions temper of colonel Churchill, the duke's principal confidant, checked there intemperate fallacies. The subtle, but detestable policy, with which Lewis at this time endeavoured to profit by the divisions in England, is really astonishing. By the versatility, or rather the perfidy of his intrigues he kept up an interest in every party, and almost in the same breath gave directions for encouraging the duke of York in his mad designs; for tempting the king, by assurances of support, to maintain a firm and bold conduct to his subjects; and for amusing the republican party with promises, that he would protect the privileges of the nation.

31. The duke did not at this time continue long in England; but having settled with the king the plan of future operations, he again returned, at his own request, to Scotland, in quality of commissioner, to give the last finishing to that system of undisguised tyranny, which Lauderdale had for so many years pursued with the most sanguinary violence.

32. His country.

33. Algernon Sidney

34. Tillotfon, though he wrote a letter on the subject of passive obedience to the prisoner the very day before his execution, yet afterwards confessed, even in the presence of the king and duke of York, "that he was now of lord Russel's opinion, and that circumstances might happen in which it would be lawful to resist.".

35. It contained a modest defence of his sentiments and conduct, and a warning to all denominations of protestants against those fatal animosities, which exposed them to the common enemy.

36. Lord Russel suffered on the twenty-first of July 1683, and Algernon Sidney on the feventh of December following. The narrow limits of a summary will admit only of a few of the most striking points in the trial, execution, and characters of those revered martyrs to the cause of liberty. But ample justice is done to their memories in the seventh volume of Mrs. Macauley's History, from which, as being beyond all comparison the best that has yet appeared in the English language, the above supplement is principally taken.

Charles II was the last sovereign to make the traditional procession from the Tower of London to Westminster Abbey the day before the coronation in 1661

SUPPLEMENT TO THE SECRET HISTORY

JAMES II

AS all offices had been filled, and all measures concerted, towards the close of the preceding reign, with the full concurrence and advice of the duke of York, no change either in the ministry, or in the late system took place upon his accession to the throne. With manners less conciliating than those of the deceased tyrant, he aimed at the same exercise of uncontrouled authority; and super-added to the inheritance of his brother's worst vices a greater bigotry of principle, a greater vehemence of temper, and a greater obstinacy of will, qualities which happily proved more fatal to himself than to his country.

Though James was no sooner proclaimed than he ordered the customs, and the greater part of the excise, which had been voted to the late king for his life only, to be levied as usual, yet he strove to soften the illegal harshness of this proceeding by calling a parliament. His views are fully explained in a conversation he had upon the subject with the French ambassador, as stated in one of Monsieur, Barillon's dispatches. "I have resolved," said he, "to call a parliament immediately—I shall at the same time publish a declaration for maintaining myself in the enjoyment of all my brother's revenues.

Without this proclamation for a parliament, I should run too great a risk in seizing directly what was established in the deceased king's life-time. It is a decisive stroke for me to enter into possession and enjoyment: hereafter it will be much easier either to put off the meeting of parliament, or to support myself by other means which may appear more convenient." He did not, indeed, long continue even to affect popularity.

As soon as the duke of Monmouth's rebellion afforded him a pretence for keeping a formidable army on foot, he threw off the mask, and blindly gave way to the furious dictates of his arbitrary spirit. Tyranny is never more violent than when impelled by religious zeal to break through all the restraints of policy and caution. James's total disregard of both accelerated the **REVOLUTION,** to which we are indebted for what still remains of our civil and religious liberty.

It is very evident from the steps which James took at that time, that he expected very little opposition from the clergy of the established church, whole sermons had been so long filled with the doctrines of PASSIVE OBEDIENCE and NON-RESISTANCE. He had no doubt but that the practice of those strenuous advocates for royal prerogative would correspond with the lessons which they inculcated.

To his great disappointment, a few of the bishops made a noble stand in the cause of religion; but had not the dissenters forgot all private enmities at the moment of danger and alarm:—had they not formed a generous coalition with the very men by whom they had been illiberally persecuted, popery and despotism would then have established themselves on the ruins of the British constitution.

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King James II

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