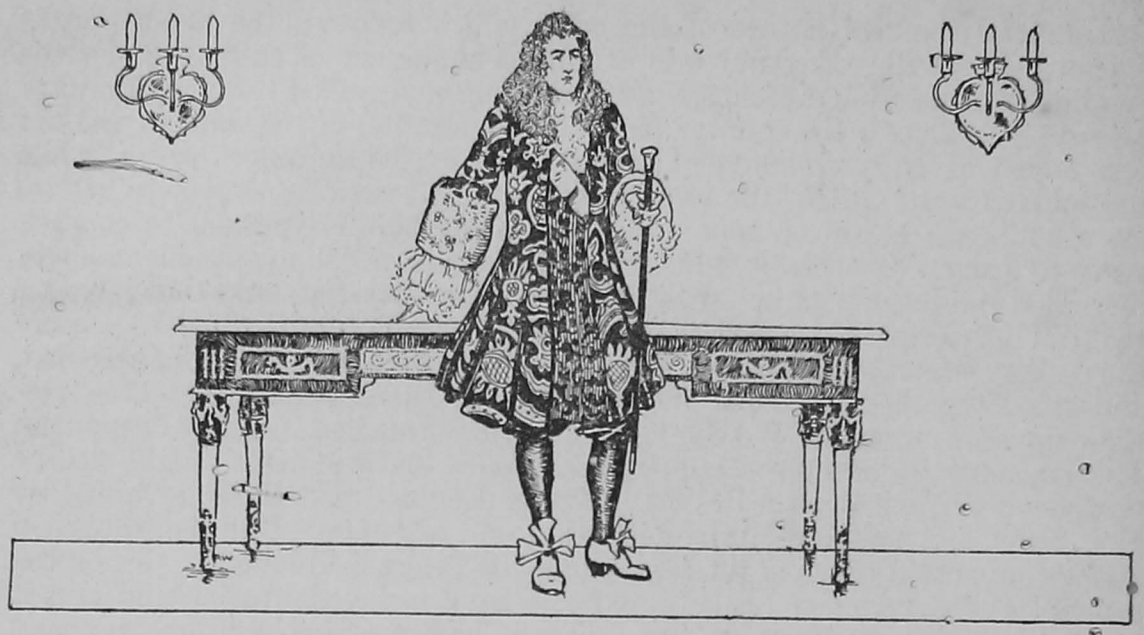

CHAPTER VII

THE RESTORATION OF THE STUARTS

[1660–1668 A.D.]

The history of the Stuart restoration is wearisome, nauseous, and disgraceful. The debauches of Commodus and of Heliogabalus were revived under the disguise of rustling silks and waving plumes. Painted harlots flaunted in the palace and squandered money for lack of which soldiers and sailors starved. By seventeen known mistresses, Charles was reputed to have had thirteen children; several of whom were created earls or dukes, with ample incomes, charged in perpetuity and still paid, where not recently commuted, on a generous scale. Defoe[b] satirises such results of the "lazy, long, lascivious reign." — W. H. S. AUBREY.[c]

MACAULAY'S PICTURE OF THE TIMES AND OF THE NEW KING

THE history of England, during the seventeenth century, is the history of the transformation of a limited monarchy, constituted after the fashion of the middle ages, into a limited monarchy suited to that more advanced state of society in which the public charges can no longer be borne by the estates of the crown, and in which the public defence can no longer be entrusted to a feudal militia.

It has been too much the practice of writers zealous for freedom to represent the restoration as a disastrous event, and to condemn the folly or baseness of that convention which recalled the royal family without exacting new securities against maladministration.[1] Those who hold this language do not

[1 Among those who have censured the lack of a stipulation stands Lingard[d] as cited in the previous chapter, but Hallam[e] says: "It has been a frequent reproach to the conductors of this great revolution, that the king was restored without those terms and limitations which might secure the nation against his abuse of their confidence; it has become almost regular to cast on the convention parliament, and more especially on Monk, the imputation of having

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comprehend the real nature of the crisis which followed the deposition of Richard Cromwell. England was in imminent danger of sinking under the tyranny of a succession of small men raised up and pulled down by military caprice. To deliver the country from the domination of the soldiers was the first object of every enlightened patriot: but it was an object which, while the soldiers were united, the most sanguine could scarcely expect to attain. On a sudden a gleam of hope appeared. General was opposed to general, army to army. On the use which might be made of one auspicious moment depended the future destiny of the nation. Our ancestors used that moment well. They forgot old injuries, waved petty scruples, adjourned to a more convenient season all dispute about the reforms which our institutions needed, and stood together, cavaliers and roundheads, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, in firm union, for the old laws of the land against military despotism. The exact partition of power among king, lords, and commons might well be postponed till it had been decided whether England should be governed by king, lords, and commons, or by cuirassiers and pikemen. Had the statesmen of the convention taken a different course, had they held long debates on the principles of government, had they drawn up a new constitution and sent it to Charles, had conferences been opened, had couriers been passing and repassing during some weeks between Westminster and the Netherlands, with projects and counterprojects, replies by Hyde and rejoinders by Prynne, the coalition on which the public safety depended would have been dissolved: the Presbyterians and royalists would certainly have quarrelled: the military factions might possibly have been reconciled: and the misjudging friends of liberty might long have regretted, under a rule worse than that of the worst Stuart, the golden opportunity which had been suffered to escape.

Abolition of Tenures by Knight Service and Disbanding of the Army

The old civil polity was, therefore, by the general consent of both the great parties, re-established. It was again exactly what it had been when Charles the First, eighteen years before, withdrew from his capital. All those acts of the Long Parliament which had received the royal assent were admitted to be still in full force. One fresh concession, a concession in which the cavaliers were even more deeply interested than the roundheads, was easily obtained from the restored king. The military tenure of land had been originally created as a means of national defence. But in the course of ages whatever was useful in the institution had disappeared; and nothing was left but ceremonies and grievances. A landed proprietor who held an estate under the crown by knight service — and it was thus that most of the soil of England was held — had to pay a large fine on coming to his property. He could not alienate one acre without purchasing a license. When he died, if his domains descended to an infant, the sovereign was guardian, and was not only entitled to great part of the rents during the minority, but could require the ward, under heavy penalties, to marry any person of suitable rank. The chief bait which attracted a needy sycophant to the court was the hope of obtaining as

abandoned public liberty, and brought on, by their inconsiderate loyalty, or self-interested treachery, the misgovernment of the two last Stuarts, and the necessity of their ultimate expulsion. We may remark, in the first place, that the unconditional restoration of Charles the Second is sometimes spoken of in too hyperbolical language, as if he had come in as a sort of conqueror, with the laws and liberties of the people at his discretion. Yet he was restored to nothing but the bounded prerogatives of a king of England; bounded by every ancient and modern statute, including those of the Long Parliament, which had been enacted for the subject's security."]

the reward of servility and flattery, a royal letter to an heiress. These abuses had perished with the monarchy. That they should not revive with it was the wish of every landed gentleman in the kingdom. They were, therefore, solemnly abolished by statute; and no relic of the ancient tenures in chivalry was suffered to remain, except those honorary services which are still, at a coronation, rendered to the person of the sovereign by some lords of manors.

The troops were now to be disbanded. Fifty thousand men, accustomed to the profession of arms, were at once thrown on the world; and experience seemed to warrant the belief that this change would produce much misery and crime, that the discharged veterans would be seen begging in every street, or that they would be driven by hunger to pillage. But no such result followed. In a few months there remained not a trace indicating that the most formidable army in the world had just been absorbed into the mass of the community. The royalists themselves confessed that, in every department of honest industry, the discarded warriors prospered beyond other men, that none was charged with any theft or robbery, that none was heard to ask an alms, and that, if a baker, a mason, or a waggoner attracted notice by his diligence and sobriety, he was in all probability one of Oliver's old soldiers.

The military tyranny passed away; but it left deep and enduring traces in the public mind. The name of a standing army was long held in abhorrence, and it is remarkable that this feeling was even stronger among the cavaliers than among the roundheads. It ought to be considered as a most fortunate circumstance that, when the country was, for the first and last time, ruled by the sword, the sword was in the hands, not of her legitimate princes, but of those rebels who slew the king and demolished the church. Had a prince, with a title as good as that of Charles, commanded an army as good as that of Cromwell, there would have been little hope indeed for the liberties of England. A century after the death of Cromwell, the tories still continued to clamour against every augmentation of the regular soldiery, and to sound the praise of a national militia. So late as the year 1786, a minister who enjoyed no common measure of their confidence found it impossible to overcome their aversion to his scheme of fortifying the coast; nor did they ever look with entire complacency on the standing army, till the French Revolution gave a new direction to their apprehensions.

Disputes between the Roundheads and Cavaliers Renewed

The coalition which had restored the king terminated with the danger from which it had sprung; and two hostile parties again appeared ready for conflict. Both indeed were agreed as to the propriety of inflicting punishment on some unhappy men who were, at that moment, objects of almost universal hatred. Cromwell was no more; and those who had fled before him were forced to content themselves with the miserable satisfaction of digging up, hanging, quartering, and burning the remains of the greatest prince that has ever ruled England. Other objects of vengeance, few indeed, yet too many, were found among the republican chiefs. Soon, however, the conquerors, glutted with the blood of the regicides, turned against each other. The roundheads, while admitting the virtues of the late king, and while condemning the sentence passed upon him by an illegal tribunal, yet maintained that his administration had been, in many things, unconstitutional, and that the houses had taken arms against him from good motives and on strong grounds. "The monarchy, these politicians conceived, had no worse enemy than the flatterer who exalted the prerogative above the law, who condemned

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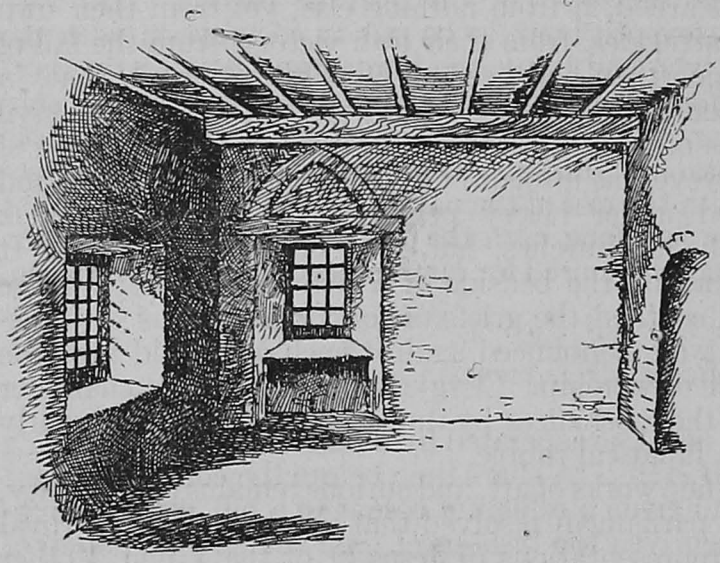
all opposition to regal encroachments, and who reviled, not only Cromwell and Harrison, but Pym and Hampden, as traitors. If the king wished for a quiet and prosperous reign, he must confide in those who, though they had drawn the sword in defence of the invaded privileges of parliament, had yet exposed themselves to the rage of the soldiers in order to save his father, and had taken the chief part in bringing back the royal family.

The feeling of the cavaliers was widely different. During eighteen years they had, through all vicissitudes, been faithful to the crown. Having shared the distress of their prince, were they not to share his triumph? Was no distinction to be made between them and the disloyal subject who had fought against his rightful sovereign, who had adhered to Richard Cromwell, and who had never concurred in the restoration of the Stuarts, till it appeared that nothing else could save the nation from the tyranny of the army? Grant that such a man had, by his recent services, fairly earned his pardon. Yet were his services, rendered at the eleventh hour, to be put in comparison with the toils and sufferings of those who had borne the burden and heat of the day? Above all, was he to be suffered to retain a fortune raised out of the substance of the ruined defenders of the throne? Was it not enough that his head and his patrimonial estate, a hundred times forfeited to justice, were secure, and that he shared, with the rest of the nation, in the blessings of that mild government of which he had long been the foe? Some violent members of the party went further, and clamoured for large categories of proscription.

Religious Dissension

The political feud was, as usual, exasperated by a religious feud. The king found the church in a singular state. A short time before the commencement of the civil war, his father had given a reluctant assent to a bill, strongly supported by Falkland, which deprived the bishops of their seats in the house of lords: but Episcopacy and the liturgy had never been abolished by law. The Long Parliament, however, had passed ordinances which had made a complete revolution in church government and in public worship. The new system was, in principle, scarcely less Erastian than that which it displaced. The houses, guided chiefly by the counsels of the accomplished Selden, had determined to keep the spiritual power strictly subordinate to the temporal power. They had refused to declare that any form of ecclesiastical polity was of divine origin; and they had provided that, from all the church courts, an appeal should lie in the last resort to parliament. With this highly important reservation it had been resolved to set up in England a hierarchy closely resembling that of Scotland. The authority of councils, rising one above another in regular gradation, was substituted for the authority of bishops and archbishops. The liturgy gave place to the Presbyterian directory. But scarcely had the new regulations been framed, when the Independents rose to supreme influence in the state. The Independents had no disposition to enforce the ordinances touching classical, provincial, and national synods. Those ordinances, therefore, were never carried into full execution. The Presbyterian system was fully established nowhere but in Middlesex and Lancashire. In the other fifty counties, almost every parish seems to have been unconnected with the neighbouring parishes. In some districts, indeed, the ministers formed themselves into voluntary associations, for the purpose of mutual help and counsel; but these associations had no coercive power. The patrons of livings, being now checked by neither bishop nor Presbytery,

would have been at liberty to confide the cure of souls to the most scandalous of mankind, but for the arbitrary intervention of Oliver. He established, by his own authority, a board of commissioners, called triers. Most of these persons were Independent divines; but a few Presbyterian ministers and a few laymen had seats. The certificate of the triers stood in the place both of institution and of induction; and without such a certificate no person could hold a benefice. This was undoubtedly one of the most despotic acts ever done by any English ruler. Yet, as it was generally felt that, without some such precaution, the country would be overrun by ignorant and drunken reprobates bearing the name and receiving the pay of ministers, some highly respectable persons, who were not in general friendly to Cromwell, allowed that, on this occasion, he had been a public benefactor. The presentees whom the triers had approved took possession of the rectories, cultivated the glebe lands, collected the tithes, prayed without book or surplice, and administered the eucharist to communicants seated at long tables.



BRICK TOWER

Thus the ecclesiastical polity of the realm was in inextricable confusion. Episcopacy was the form of government prescribed by the old law which was still unrepealed. The form of government prescribed by parliamentary ordinance was Presbyterian. But neither the old law nor the parliamentary ordinance was practically in force. The church actually established may be described as an irregular body made up of a few Presbyteries, and of many Independent congregations, which were all held down and held together by the authority of the government.

Of those who had been active in bringing back the king, many were zealous for synods and for the directory, and many were desirous to terminate by a compromise the religious dissensions which had long agitated England. Between the bigoted followers of Laud and the bigoted followers of Calvin there could be neither peace nor truce: but it did not seem impossible to effect an accommodation between the moderate Episcopalians of the school of Usher and the moderate Presbyterians of the school of Baxter. The moderate Episcopalians would admit that a bishop might lawfully be assisted by a council. The moderate Presbyterians would not deny that each provincial assembly might lawfully have a permanent president, and that this president might lawfully be called a bishop. There might be a revised liturgy which should not exclude extemporaneous prayer, a baptismal service in which the sign of the cross might be used or omitted at discretion, a communion service at which the faithful might sit if their consciences forbade them to kneel.

But to no such plan could the great body of the cavaliers listen with patience. The religious members of that party were conscientiously attached to the whole system of their church. She had been dear to their murdered king. She had consoled them in defeat and penury. Her service, so often whispered

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in an inner chamber during the season of trial, had such a charm for them that they were unwilling to part with a single response. Other royalists, who made little pretence to piety, yet loved the Episcopal church because she was the foe of their foes. They valued a prayer or a ceremony, not on account of the comfort which it conveyed to themselves, but on account of the vexation which it gave to the roundheads, and were so far from being disposed to purchase union by concession that they objected to concession chiefly because it tended to produce union.

Unpopularity of the Puritans

Such feelings, though blamable, were natural and not wholly inexcusable. The Puritans in the day of their power had undoubtedly given cruel provocation. They ought to have learned, if from nothing else, yet from their own discontents, from their own struggles, from their own victory, from the fall of that proud hierarchy by which they had been so heavily oppressed, that, in England, and in the seventeenth century, it was not in the power of the civil magistrate to drill the minds of men into conformity with his own system of theology. They proved, however, as intolerant and as meddling as ever Laud had been. They interdicted under heavy penalties the use of the Book of Common Prayer, not only in churches, but even in private houses. It was a crime in a child to read by the bedside of a sick parent one of those beautiful collects which had soothed the griefs of forty generations of Christians. Severe punishments were denounced against such as should presume to blame the Calvinistic mode of worship. Clergymen of respectable character were not only ejected from their benefices by thousands, but were frequently exposed to the outrages of a fanatical rabble.

Churches and sepulchres, fine works of art, and curious remains of antiquity, were brutally defaced. The parliament resolved that all pictures in the royal collection which contained representations of Jesus or of the Virgin Mother should be burned. Sculpture fared as ill as painting. Nymphs and graces, the work of Ionian chisels, were delivered over to Puritan stonemasons to be made decent. Against the lighter vices the ruling faction waged war with a zeal little tempered by humanity or by common sense. Sharp laws were passed against betting. It was enacted that adultery should be punished with death. The illicit intercourse of the sexes, even where neither violence nor seduction was imputed, where no public scandal was given, where no conjugal right was violated, was made a misdemeanour. Public amusements, from the masques which were exhibited at the mansions of the great down to the wrestling matches and grinning matches on village greens, were vigorously attacked. One ordinance directed that all the May-poles in England should forthwith be hewn down. Another proscribed all theatrical diversions. The playhouses were to be dismantled, the spectators fined, the actors whipped at the cart's tail. Rope-dancing, puppet shows, bowls, horse-racing, were regarded with no friendly eye. But bear-baiting, then a favourite diversion of high and low, was the abomination which most strongly stirred the wrath of the austere sectaries. It is to be remarked that their antipathy to this sport had nothing in common with the feeling which has, in our own time, induced the legislature to interfere for the purpose of protecting beasts against the wanton cruelty of men. The Puritan hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators. Indeed, he generally contrived to enjoy the double pleasure of tormenting both spectators and bear.

Perhaps no single circumstance more strongly illustrates the temper of the precisians than their conduct respecting Christmas day. Christmas had been, from time immemorial, the season of joy and domestic affection, the season when families assembled, when children came home from school, when quarrels were made up, when carols were heard in every street, when every house was decorated with evergreens, and every table was loaded with good cheer. At that season all hearts not utterly destitute of kindness were enlarged and softened. At that season the poor were admitted to partake largely of the overflowings of the wealth of the rich, whose bounty was peculiarly acceptable on account of the shortness of the days and of the severity of the weather. At that season the interval between landlord and tenant, master and servant, was less marked than through the rest of the year. Where there is much enjoyment there will be some excess: yet, on the whole, the spirit in which the holiday was kept was not unworthy of a Christian festival. The Long Parliament gave orders, in 1644, that the twenty-fifth of December should be strictly observed as a fast, and that all men should pass it in humbly bemoaning the great national sin which they and their fathers had so often committed on that day by romping under the mistletoe, eating boar's head, and drinking ale flavoured with roasted apples.

No public act of that time seems to have irritated the common people more. On the next anniversary of the festival formidable riots broke out in many place. The constables were resisted, the magistrates insulted, the houses of noted zealots attacked, and the proscribed service of the day openly read in the churches.

Such was the spirit of the extreme Puritans, both Presbyterian and Independent. Oliver, indeed, was little disposed to be either a persecutor or a meddler. But Oliver, the head of a party, and consequently, to a great extent, the slave of a party, could not govern altogether according to his own inclinations. Even under his administration many magistrates, within their own jurisdiction, made themselves as odious as *Sir Hudibras*, interfered with all the pleasures of the neighbourhood, dispersed festive meetings, and put fiddlers in the stocks. Still more formidable was the zeal of the soldiers. In every village where they appeared there was an end of dancing, bell-ringing, and hockey. In London they several times interrupted theatrical performances at which the protector had the judgment and good nature to connive.

With the fear and hatred inspired by such a tyranny contempt was largely mingled. The peculiarities of the Puritan, his look, his dress, his dialect, his strange scruples, had been, ever since the time of Elizabeth, favourite subjects with mockers. But these peculiarities appeared far more grotesque in a faction which ruled a great empire than in obscure and persecuted congregations. The cant which had moved laughter when it was heard on the stage from Tribulation Wholesome, and Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, was still more laughable when it proceeded from the lips of generals and councillors of state.

It is also to be noted that during the civil troubles several sects had sprung into existence, whose eccentricities surpassed anything that had before been seen in England. A mad tailor, named Lodowick Muggleton, wandered from pothouse to pothouse, tippling ale, and denouncing eternal torments against those who refused to believe, on his testimony, that the Supreme Being was only six feet high, and that the sun was just four miles from the earth. George Fox had raised a tempest of derision by proclaiming that it was a violation of Christian sincerity to designate a single person by a plural pronoun, and that it was an idolatrous homage to Janus and Woden to talk about January and Wednesday. His doctrine, a few years later, was embraced by some eminent

men, and rose greatly in the public estimation. But at the time of the Restoration the Quakers were popularly regarded as the most despicable of fanatics. By the Puritans they were treated with severity here, and were persecuted to the death in New England. Nevertheless the public, which seldom makes nice distinctions, often confounded the Puritan with the Quaker. Both were schismatics. Both hated Episcopacy and the liturgy. Both had what seemed extravagant whimsies about dress, diversions, and postures. Widely as the two differed in opinion, they were popularly classed together as canting schismatics; and whatever was ridiculous or odious in either increased the scorn and aversion which the multitude felt for both.

Before the civil wars, even those who most disliked the opinions and manners of the Puritan were forced to admit that his moral conduct was generally, in essentials, blameless; but this praise was now no longer bestowed, and, unfortunately, was no longer deserved. The general fate of sects is to obtain a high reputation for sanctity while they are oppressed, and to lose it as soon as they become powerful: and the reason is obvious. It is seldom that a man enrolls himself in a proscribed body from any but conscientious motives. Such a body, therefore, is composed, with scarcely an exception, of sincere persons. The most rigid discipline that can be enforced within a religious society is a very feeble instrument of purification, when compared with a little sharp persecution from without. We may be certain that very few persons, not seriously impressed by religious convictions, applied for baptism while Diocletian was vexing the church, or joined themselves to Protestant congregations at the risk of being burned by Bonner. But, when a sect becomes powerful, when its favour is the road to riches and dignities, worldy and ambitious men crowd into it, talk its language, conform strictly to its ritual, mimic its peculiarities, and frequently go beyond its honest members in all the outward indications of zeal. No discernment, no watchfulness, on the part of ecclesiastical rulers, can prevent the intrusion of such false brethren. The tares and the wheat must grow together. Soon the world begins to find out that the godly are not better than other men, and argues, with some justice, that, if not better they must be much worse. In no long time all those signs which were formerly regarded as characteristic of a saint are regarded as characteristic of a knave.

Thus it was with the English nonconformists. They had been oppressed; and oppression had kept them a pure body. They then became supreme in the state. No man could hope to rise to eminence and command but by their favour. Their favour was to be gained only by exchanging with them the signs and passwords of spiritual fraternity. One of the first resolutions adopted by Barebone's Parliament, the most intensely Puritanical of all our political assemblies, was that no person should be admitted into the public service till the house should be satisfied of his real godliness. What were then considered as the signs of real godliness, the sad coloured dress, the sour look, the straight hair, the nasal whine, the speech interspersed with quaint texts, the abhorrence of comedies, cards, and hawking, were easily counterfeited by men to whom all religions were the same. The sincere Puritans soon found themselves lost in a multitude, not merely of men of the world, but of the very worst sort of men of the world. For the most notorious libertine who had fought under the royal standard might justly be thought virtuous when compared with some of those who, while they talked about sweet experiences and comfortable scriptures, lived in the constant practice of fraud, rapacity, and secret debauchery. The people, with a rashness which we may justly regret, but at which we cannot wonder, formed their estimate of the whole body from these hypocrites. The theology, the

manners, the dialect of the Puritan were thus associated in the public mind with the darkest and meanest vices. As soon as the Restoration had made it safe to avow enmity to the party which had so long been predominant in the state, a general outcry against Puritanism arose from every corner of the kingdom, and was often swollen by the voices of those very dissemblers whose villany had brought disgrace on the Puritan name.

Thus two great parties, which, after a long contest, had for a moment concurred in restoring monarchy, were, both in politics and in religion, again opposed to each other. The great body of the nation leaned to the royalists. The crimes of Strafford and Laud, the excesses of the Star Chamber and of the High Commission, the great services which the Long Parliament had, during the first year of its existence, rendered to the state, had faded from the minds of men. The execution of Charles the First, the sullen tyranny of the Rump, the violence of the army, were remembered with loathing; and the multitude was inclined to hold all who had withstood the late king responsible for his death and for the subsequent disasters.

The house of commons, having been elected while the Presbyterians were dominant, by no means represented the general sense of the people, and showed a strong disposition to check the intolerant loyalty of the cavaliers. One member, who ventured to declare that all who had drawn the sword against Charles the First were as much traitors as those who cut off his head, was called to order, placed at the bar, and reprimanded by the speaker. The general wish of the house undoubtedly was to settle the ecclesiastical disputes in a manner satisfactory to the moderate Puritans. But to such a settlement both the court and the nation were averse.

Character of Charles II

The restored king was at this time more loved by the people than any of his predecessors had ever been. The calamities of his house, the heroic death of his father, his own long sufferings and romantic adventures, made him an object of tender interest. His return had delivered the country from an intolerable bondage. Recalled by the voice of both the contending factions, he was in a position which enabled him to arbitrate between them; and in some respects he was well qualified for the task. He had received from nature excellent parts and a happy temper. His education had been such as might have been expected to develop his understanding, and to form him to the practise of every public and private virtue. He had passed through all varieties of fortune, and had seen both sides of human nature. He had, while very young, been driven forth from a palace to a life of exile, penury, and danger. He had, at the age when the mind and body are in their highest perfection, and when the first effervescence of boyish passions should have subsided, been recalled from his wanderings to wear a crown. He had been taught by bitter experience how much baseness, perfidy, and ingratitude may lie hid under the obsequious demeanour of courtiers. He had found, on the other hand, in the huts of the poorest, true nobility of soul. When wealth was offered to any who would betray him, when death was denounced against all who would shelter him, cottagers and serving men had kept his secret truly, and had kissed his hand under his mean disguises with as much reverence as if he had been seated on his ancestral throne. From such a school it might have been expected that a young man who wanted neither abilities nor amiable qualities would have come forth a great and good king.

Charles came forth from that school with social habits, with polite and

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engaging manners, and with some talent for lively conversation, addicted beyond measure to sensual indulgence, fond of sauntering and of frivolous amusements, incapable of self-denial and of exertion, without faith in human virtue or in human attachment, without desire of renown, and without sensibility to reproach. According to him, every person was to be bought, but some people haggled more about their price than others; and when this haggling was very obstinate and very skilful it was called by some fine name. The chief trick by which clever men kept up the price of their abilities was called integrity. The chief trick by which handsome women kept up the price of their beauty was called modesty. The love of God, the love of country, the love of family, the love of friends, were phrases of the same sort, delicate and convenient synonyms for the love of self.[1] Thinking thus of mankind, Charles naturally cared very little what they thought of him. Honour and shame were scarcely more to him than light and darkness to the blind. His contempt of flattery has been highly commended, but seems, when viewed in connection with the rest of his character, to deserve no commendation. It is possible to be below flattery as well as above it. One who trusts nobody will not trust sycophants. One who does not value real glory will not value its counterfeit.

It is creditable to Charles's temper that, ill as he thought of his species, he never became a misanthrope. He saw little in men but what was hateful. Yet he did not hate them. Nay, he was so far humane that it was highly disagreeable to him to see their sufferings or to hear their complaints. This however is a sort of humanity which, though amiable and laudable in a private man whose power to help or hurt is bounded by a narrow circle, has in princes often been rather a vice than a virtue. More than one well disposed ruler has given up whole provinces to rapine and oppression, merely from a wish to see none but happy faces round his own board and in his own walks. No man is fit to govern great societies who hesitates about disobliging the few who have access to him for the sake of the many whom he will never see.

The facility of Charles was such as has perhaps never been found in any man of equal sense. He was a slave without being a dupe. Worthless men and women to the very bottom of whose hearts he saw, and whom he knew to be destitute of affection for him and undeserving of his confidence, could easily wheedle out of him titles, places, domains, state secrets and pardons. He bestowed much; yet he neither enjoyed the pleasure nor acquired the fame of beneficence. He never gave spontaneously; but it was painful to him to refuse. The consequence was that his bounty generally went, not to those who deserved it best, nor even to those whom he liked best, but to the most shameless and importunate suitor who could obtain an audience.

Charles, though incapable of love in the highest sense of the word, was the slave of any woman whose person excited his desires, and whose airs and prattle amused his leisure. Indeed a husband would be justly derided who

[1 The following character of this monarch is from a note on Burnet by Speaker Onslow: "Charles had neither conscience, religion, honour, or justice, and he does not seem to have had even the feelings of them. He had no one truly public aim, as such, in the whole course of his reign. All he meant and sought, for which he tumbled and tossed from side to side, from one minister to another, and for which he was continually cheating his people, was to enjoy a lazy, thoughtless ease, in which the constant debauchery of amours, and in the pleasures of wit and laughter, with the most worthless, vicious, abandoned set of men that even that age afforded, and who often made him the subject of their jokes and mirth, sometimes to his face. He was corrupted in France, and had all the pleasantry and vices of his grandfather, Henry the Fourth, but not one of his virtues. Charles made the times here to be profligate; and, instead of ministers spoiling him, he spoiled most of his ministers, and did not love those whom he could not spoil."]

should bear from a wife of exalted rank and spotless virtue half the insolence which the king of England bore from concubines who, while they owed everything to his bounty, caressed his courtiers almost before his face. He patiently endured the termagant passions of Barbara Palmer and the pert vivacity of Eleanor Gwyn. Louis thought that the most useful envoy who could be sent to London, would be a handsome, licentious, and crafty Frenchwoman. Such a woman was Louisa, a lady of the house of Querouaille, whom our rude ancestors called Madam Carwell. She was soon triumphant over all her rivals, was created duchess of Portsmouth, was loaded with wealth, and obtained a dominion which ended only with the life of Charles.

The motives which governed the political conduct of Charles the Second differed widely from those by which his predecessor and his successor were actuated. He was not a man to be imposed upon by the patriarchal theory of government and the doctrine of divine right. He was utterly without ambition. He detested business, and would sooner have abdicated his crown than have undergone the trouble of really directing the administration. Such was his aversion to toil, and such his ignorance of affairs, that the very clerks who attended him when he sate in council could not refrain from sneering at his frivolous remarks, and at his childish impatience. Neither gratitude nor revenge had any share in determining his course; for never was there a mind on which both services and injuries left such faint and transitory impressions.

He wished merely to be a king such as Louis the Fifteenth of France afterwards was; a king who could draw without limit on the treasury for the gratification of his private tastes, who could hire with wealth and honours persons capable of assisting him to kill the time, and who, even when the state was brought by maladministration to the depths of humiliation and to the brink of ruin, could still exclude unwelcome truth from the purlieus of his own seraglio, and refuse to see and hear whatever might disturb his luxurious repose. For these ends, and for these ends alone, he wished to obtain arbitrary power, if it could be obtained without risk or trouble. In the religious disputes which divided his Protestant subjects his conscience was not at all interested. For his opinions oscillated in a state of contented suspense between infidelity and popery. But, though his conscience was neutral in the quarrel between the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians, his taste was by no means so.

His favourite vices were precisely those to which the Puritans were least indulgent. He could not get through one day without the help of diversions which the Puritans regarded as sinful. As a man eminently well bred, and keenly sensible of the ridiculous,[1] he was moved to contemptuous mirth by the Puritan oddities. He had indeed some reason to dislike the rigid sect. He had, at the age when the passions are most impetuous and when levity is most pardonable, spent some months in Scotland, a king in name, but in fact a state prisoner in the hands of austere Presbyterians. Not content with requiring him to conform to their worship and to subscribe their covenant, they had watched all his motions, and lectured him on all his youthful

[1 White says: "The witty epigram of his courtier may be quoted in serious faith as his epitaph:

'Here lies our sovereign lord, the king,
Whose word no man relies on;
Who never said a foolish thing,
And never did a wise one.'"

But it should be added that when Charles heard this epigram, he retorted that the explanation was easy; his discourse was his own, his actions were his ministry's.]

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follies. He had been compelled to give reluctant attendance at endless prayers and sermons, and might think himself fortunate when he was not insolently reminded from the pulpit of his own frailities, of his father's tyranny, and of his mother's idolatry. Indeed he had been so miserable during this part of his life that the defeat which made him again a wanderer might be regarded as a deliverance rather than as a calamity. Under the influence of such feelings as these Charles was desirous to depress the party which had resisted his father.

Characters of the Duke of York, and Earl of Clarendon

The king's brother, James Duke of York, took the same side. Though a libertine, James was diligent, methodical, and fond of authority and business. His understanding was singularly slow and narrow, and his temper obstinate, harsh, and unforgiving. That such a prince should have looked with no good will on the free institutions of England, and on the party which was peculiarly zealous for those institutions, can excite no surprise. As yet the duke professed himself a member of the Anglican church: but he had already shown inclinations which had seriously alarmed good Protestants.

The person on whom devolved at this time the greatest part of the labour of governing was Edward Hyde, chancellor of the realm, who was soon created earl of Clarendon. The respect which we justly feel for Clarendon as a writer must not blind us to the faults which he committed as a statesman. Some of those faults, however, are explained and excused by the unfortunate position in which he stood. He had, during the first year of the Long Parliament, been honourably distinguished among the senators who laboured to redress the grievances of the nation. One of the most odious of those grievances, the council of York, had been removed in consequence chiefly of his exertions. When the great schism took place, when the reforming party and the conservative party first appeared marshalled against each other, he with many wise and good men took the conservative side. He thenceforward followed the fortunes of the court, enjoyed as large a share of the confidence of Charles the First as the reserved nature and tortuous policy of that prince allowed to any minister, and subsequently shared the exile and directed the political conduct of Charles the Second.

At the Restoration Hyde became chief minister. In a few months it was announced that he was closely related by affinity to the royal house. His daughter had become, by a secret marriage, duchess of York. His grandchildren might perhaps wear the crown. He was raised by this illustrious connection over the heads of the old nobility of the land, and was for a time supposed to be all powerful. In some respects he was well fitted for his great place. No man wrote abler state papers. No man spoke with more weight and dignity in council and in parliament. No man was better acquainted with general maxims of statecraft. No man observed the varieties of character with a more discriminating eye. It must be added that he had a strong sense of moral and religious obligations, a sincere reverence for the laws of his country, and a conscientious regard for the honour and interest of the crown. But his temper was sour, arrogant, and impatient of opposition. Above all, he had been long an exile; and this circumstance alone would have completely disqualified him for the supreme direction of affairs.

It is scarcely possible that a politician, who has been compelled by civil troubles to go into banishment, and to pass many of the best years of his life abroad, can be fit, on the day on which he returns to his native land, to be at

the head of the government. Clarendon was no exception to this rule. He had left England with a mind heated by a fierce conflict which had ended in the downfall of his party and of his own fortunes. From 1646 to 1660 he had lived beyond sea, looking on all that passed at home from a great distance, and through a false medium. His notions of public affairs were necessarily derived from the reports of plotters, many of whom were ruined and desperate men. Events naturally seemed to him auspicious, not in proportion as they increased the prosperity and glory of the nation, but in proportion as they tended to hasten the hour of his own return. His wish, a wish which he has not disguised, was that, till his countrymen brought back the old line, they might never enjoy quiet or freedom. At length he returned; and, without having a single week to look about him, to mix with society, to note the changes which fourteen eventful years had produced in the national character and feelings, he was at once set to rule the state.

In such circumstances, a minister of the greatest tact and docility would probably have fallen into serious errors. But tact and docility made no part of the character of Clarendon. To him England was still the England of his youth; and he sternly frowned down every theory and every practice which had sprung up during his own exile. Though he was far from meditating any attack on the ancient and undoubted power of the House of Commons, he saw with extreme uneasiness the growth of that power. The royal prerogative, for which he had long suffered, and by which he had at length been raised to wealth and dignity, was sacred in his eyes. The Roundheads he regarded both with political and with personal aversion. To the Anglican Church he had always been strongly attached, and had repeatedly, where her interests were concerned, separated himself with regret from his dearest friends. His zeal for Episcopacy and for the Book of Common Prayer was now more ardent than ever, and was mingled with a vindictive hatred of the Puritans, which did him little honour either as a statesman or as a Christian.[h]

THE CONVENTION PARLIAMENT (1660 A.D.)

After this review of the situation we may take up in detail the actual procedure.[a] The first care of the king had been to reward those who had been active in his restoration, and to form his council. Monk, as previously described, was created duke of Albemarle, and Montague, earl of Sandwich, and both had the Garter. Annesley was made earl of Anglesea; Denzil Holles, Lord Holles; and Ashley Cooper, Lord Ashley. The earl of Manchester was appointed lord chamberlain, and Lord Say, lord privy seal. Monk's friend Morrice was made one of the secretaries of state. Of the old royalists, Hyde, as we have seen, was made chancellor, Southampton, treasurer, Ormonde, steward of the household; Sir Edward Nicholas continued to be a secretary of state, and Lord Colpepper, master of the rolls.

The present parliament not having been summoned legally, was no more than a convention, and its Acts were therefore not binding. It, however, passed an Act declaring itself to be the parliament, and then proceeded to the consideration of the many weighty matters it had to determine.

The first was to provide a revenue for the crown. As it appeared that a chief cause of the late unhappy troubles had been the inadequacy of the revenue to the exigencies of the government, it was resolved to settle an income of 1,200,000*l.* a year on the king. In return, was required the abolition of tenures in chivalry, with all their incidents, such as wardships, marriages, etc., together with purveyance and pre-emption—all, for centuries, fruitful

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sources of evil, and constant subjects of complaint and remonstrance. This being consented to, the next question was, whence the aforesaid revenue was to arise. A permanent tax on the lands thus relieved was the obvious and equitable course; but he knows little of parliaments, who thinks that this would be assented to by the owners of lands who sat in them, while any mode offered of shifting the burden. Some one mentioned the excise; the idea was at once embraced, and it was carried by a majority of two that a moiety of the excise on beer and other liquors should be settled on the crown; and thus this tax, originally so odious, was made permanent. By this Act (12 Car. II. ch. 24), a most important change was wrought in the constitution, the prerogative losing its most influential branch. We will here add that, at the close of the session, the remaining moiety of the excise was given also to the crown.

An army of fifty thousand men, whose pay required an assessment of £70,000 a month, was alike dangerous to the crown and burdensome to the nation. Symptoms of disaffection had already appeared among the soldiers, and Monk declared that he could no longer answer for the troops. It was therefore resolved to lose no time in disbanding them; money was procured to clear off their arrears, the regiments were reduced one after another, eulogies were lavished on the soldiers, and without mutiny or murmur they merged into the mass of peaceful citizens; and thus disappeared that wonderful army, only to be rivalled perhaps by those of the early days of the Roman republic and those of the first Khalifs, in the union of religion, discipline, and undaunted valour. The king was strongly urged by the duke of York to retain this army, or to raise another; to this course he was himself inclined, but he knew that it was useless to propose it to the parliament. Monk's regiment, named the Coldstream, was however retained, with one or two of horse, and one formed out of the troops at Dunkirk was afterwards added; the whole amounted to about five thousand men, and under the name of guards formed the germ of the present large standing army.

THE BILL OF INDEMNITY; THE REGICIDES

The Bill of Indemnity also occupied the attention of parliament. It had been engaged on this even before the arrival of the king. Monk had recommended the king not to except more than four persons; but the Commons at first (May 16th) excepted seven by name; they afterwards enumerated twenty persons, who, though not regicides, should for their share in the transactions of the last twelve years be affected with penalties short of death; they finally excepted such of the king's judges as had not surrendered themselves on the late proclamation. When the bill came to the Lords (July 11th), where the old royalists prevailed, it was judged to be far too lenient. They voted to except all the king's judges, and also Vane, Lambert, Haslerig, Hacker, and Axtel; they struck out the clause respecting the twenty persons, and then sent the bill back to the Commons. But here there were some feelings of honour and humanity. By the proclamation above-mentioned, the king's judges[1] were required to surrender themselves on pain of being excepted

[1] Five-and-twenty out of the original number had indeed been already removed by death beyond the reach of any earthly tribunal, and nineteen had crossed the sea to escape the fate which awaited them in their native country. Three of these, Whalley, Goff, and Dixwell, secreted themselves in New England, where they passed their lives in the constant fear of being discovered by the officers of government. There is an interesting account of their adventures by Hutchinson, and in the history of these "Most Illustrious and Heroic Defenders of Liberty," published by Ezra Stiles, S.T.D., LL.D., President of the Yale College, Hartford, U. S., 1794. Three others, Corbet, Okey, and Berkstead, were apprehended in Holland, at the

from any pardon or indemnity as to their lives or estates. The obvious construction of this was, that the lives of those who came in would be in no danger, and accordingly nineteen had surrendered. It was contended that these should be set at liberty, and suffered to make their escape if they could.

A compromise at length was effected. Most of the king's judges were excepted, as also were Hacker, Axtel, and Hugh Peters; but the nineteen were not to suffer death without an act of parliament for that purpose. Vane and Lambert were also excepted; but by an address of both houses, the king was requested to spare their lives if they should be attainted. Haslerig, Lord Monson, and five others were to lose liberty and property, and Lenthall, St. John, Hutchinson, and sixteen more, all members of the high courts of justice, were to be ineligible to any office whatever. In this form the Bill of Indemnity received the royal assent.

After sitting about three months, the parliament adjourned, and during the recess the twenty-nine regicides who were in custody were brought to trial before a court of thirty-four commissioners, of whom some were old royalists; others, such as Manchester, Say, Holles, and Annesley, members of the Long Parliament; with these sat Monk, Montague, and Cooper, the associates of Cromwell, whom a feeling of delicacy should, perhaps, have withheld from the tribunal.

Most of the prisoners expressed sorrow for their crime; others said that they had borne the king no malice, that they thought his death an act of national justice, and that they had acted under the supreme authority of the nation. They were all found guilty; those who had surrendered were respited, with one exception, namely, Scroop; his having, after his surrender, expressed his real sentiments on the execution of Charles I, in reply to an insidious question, was the pretext for this breach of faith; ten were executed. These were six of the king's judges, Harrison, Scott, Carew, Jones, Clements, and Scroop; Cook, one of the counsel on the trial; Axtel and Hacker, who had commanded the guards; and Hugh Peters, the fanatic preacher. The place of execution was Charing Cross, where a gallows was erected for the purpose. General Harrison suffered first (Oct. 13). Supported here, as on his trial, by that fervid spirit of enthusiasm so perfectly free from all alloy of worldly motives, he gloried in the act for which he was brought to die as performed in the cause of God and his country, and expressed his confidence in the revival of the good cause in happier times. Carew was the next who suffered (15th); his conduct was similar. Cook and Peters were executed on the same day (16th); the latter alone, according to Burnet,[f] is said, showed want of courage, and was obliged to have recourse to cordials. Scott, Clement, Scroop, and Jones, also suffered on the same day (17th). Hacker and Axtel closed the scene at Tyburn (19th). All died with the constancy of martyrs. It is very remarkable, that not a single man of those who had a share in the death of the late king seems to have voluntarily repented of the deed.

The narratives in the state trials were drawn up by the friends of the sufferers, and are evidently partial. Who can believe that "after Harrison's body was opened, he mounted himself and gave the executioner a box in the ear"? At the same time, it is evident, that they were treated with a degree of cruelty and barbarity, for which the conduct of their party, when in power, offered no precedent.

The lives of the remaining regicides were spared; they spent the rest of

instance of Downing, and given up by the states, as an atonement for their former treatment of the king during his exile. They suffered under the act of attainder, on the 19th of April, 1662. Others sought refuge in Switzerland. — LINGARD.[d]]

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their days in different prisons. The witty and licentious Harry Marten died at the age of seventy-eight, in Chepstow Castle. They surely had no just reason to complain of their fate, if they recollected how many royalists they had, as far as in them lay, subjected to a similar destiny.

REVENGE ON THE CORPSES OF CROMWELL AND BLAKE

Though one must admire the constancy and magnanimity of the sufferers, most of whom were gentlemen by birth and education, the justice of their sentence is not to be denied, even on their own principles; and it was impossible for Charles to suffer such a heinous deed as the solemn execution of his father to go unpunished. But there was another part of the royal vengeance which can be regarded with no other feelings than those of abhorrence and disgust. The bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw, were taken from their tombs in the Abbey, drawn on hurdles to Tyburn on the anniversary of the death of Charles I, hung on the gallows till evening, then taken down, the heads cut off and fixed on Westminster Hall, and the trunks thrown into a pit. The bodies of about twenty persons (those of Blake, and Cromwell's respectable mother included) were afterwards taken out of the Abbey and buried in the adjoining church-yard. Yet Charles showed less enthusiasm for finding his father's body than for avenging the murder for, says Knight,[k] "Charles II caused a search to be made for the vault, when the parliament had voted a large sum for a public interment. The search was fruitless, and the king put the money in his pocket. George IV wished to gratify a reasonable curiosity, and the vault with its coffins was readily found. To our minds there is nothing in the whole course of this evil reign so prophetic of the coming national degradation, as the indignities offered to the remains of the greatest soldier and the greatest sailor that England had produced. Cromwell and Blake by their genius and their patriotism made their country the most honoured and dreaded of the nations. They bequeathed to the heir of the ancient kings, a national dignity which was more solid than the glories of the Edwards and Henries, and as dearly prized by the people as the triumphs of Elizabeth. This miserable heir of the grand English monarchy was utterly destitute of that nationality without which a sovereign is more degraded than the meanest of his subjects. The future pensioner of France was incapable of comprehending what England owed to the man whose corpse he hung up on the gallows at Tyburn."

Another important point for the parliament to decide on was the case of those who had purchased the crown and church lands and the estates of royalists, which had been sold by the public authority in the late times. A bill was introduced for an equitable adjustment, but it met with much opposition; and nothing having been done when the parliament was dissolved, the crown, the church, and the other proprietors entered on the lands in question, and the occupiers, having no legal titles to produce, were obliged to sit down contented with the loss of their purchase-money. But it was only the leading royalists that gained in this way; thousands of gentlemen who had sold their lands to support the royal cause, or to pay the sequestrations imposed on them for their loyalty, and had thus been reduced to poverty, remained without remedy. The sales having been legal, the present possessors were secured by the Bill of Indemnity, against which the disappointed cavaliers now exclaimed, saying it was indeed an act of oblivion and indemnity, but of indemnity for the king's enemies, and of oblivion for his friends. They taxed the king with ingratitude, and they conceived, on account of it, a mortal hatred to Hyde.

Their case was doubtless a severe one, but there was really no preventing it but at the risk of a civil war. It was observed that the most clamorous were those who had suffered least, and the petty services for which many claimed large rewards furnished matter for ridicule.

THE RESTORATION OF EPISCOPACY

The church was a difficult matter to arrange. Most of the livings were in the hands of the Presbyterians, and they had so mainly contributed to the restoration, that it would be both ungrateful and unsafe to attempt to disturb them. On the other hand, both the king and the chancellor were resolved to re-establish Episcopacy. There was also a difficulty about the livings, for such of the clergy as had been ejected for their loyalty, seemed now to have a just claim to recover what they had lost. This, however, was accommodated to a certain extent; but the vision of the jurisdiction of bishops, and the dreaded surplice, ring, and cross, alarmed the Presbyterians. They proposed Bishop Usher's model of Episcopacy, and prayed that the habits and ceremonies might not be imposed, and that the liturgy might be revised. The king issued a declaration, apparently granting all they required; but when an attempt was made to have this converted into a bill, it was frustrated by the efforts of the court party in the commons. It was quite plain from this that the royal declaration was only meant to be illusory.

At length (Dec. 29th) the Convention Parliament was dissolved, for it was urged that it was necessary to have a true parliament, to give the force of law to what it had enacted; and it was also expected that a new parliament would be more purely royalist.

In September of this year the duke of Gloucester died of small-pox, much lamented by the king his brother. Their sister, the princess of Orange, died of the same disorder in the winter. The king's other sister, the princess Henrietta, was married about this time to the duke of Orleans, brother to Louis XIV. Another marriage in the royal family was that of the duke of York to Anne Hyde, daughter of the chancellor, who had been maid of honour to the princess of Orange. She possessed wit and sense, though not beauty. The duke, whose taste on this last point was never very delicate, laid siege to her virtue, which was surrendered on a secret contract of marriage; when the consequences were becoming apparent, James kept his promise, and privately espoused her (Sept. 3rd). He informed the king and chancellor. The former, though annoyed, forgave him; the latter pretended the greatest rage against his daughter, advised the king to send her to the Tower, and that not being done, confined her to a room in his own house. The queen-mother and the princess of Orange were highly indignant; and Charles Berkeley, to recommend himself to favour, swore that Anne had been his mistress, and brought Lord Arran, Jermyn, Talbot, and Killegrew, as witnesses of her wantonness. The duke was shaken; but on the birth of her child, and her solemn assertion at that time, and Berkeley's confession of the falsehood of his story, he resolved to do her justice. He acknowledged her as his duchess, and she bore her new rank, it is said, as if she had been born in it.

THE PARLIAMENT OF 1661 AND THE CORPORATION ACT

The new year (1661) opened with a wild outbreak of the fanatics named fifth-monarchy men, under their leader, Venner, the wine-cooper. One Sunday (Jan. 6th), having heated their enthusiasm by a discourse on the speedy

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coming of Jesus and the reign of the saints, he issued from his conventicle, in Colman street, at the head of sixty well-armed fanatics. They proceeded to St. Paul's, proclaiming King Jesus. They drove off a party of the trained bands that were sent against them, and in the evening they retired to Caen-wood, between Hampstead and Highgate. Here some of them were taken: but on Wednesday morning (9th) they returned into the city, shouting as before, and dispersed some of the troops and of the trained bands. At length, some being killed, and Venner taken, they retired into a house at Cripplegate, which they defended, till a party, headed by one Lambert, a seaman, got in at the roof. Most of them were slain; Venner and the remainder were hanged. The attempt was purely an isolated act, but advantage was taken of it to issue a proclamation for suppressing the conventicles of the Quakers, Anabaptists, and other sectaries; it was also the occasion of the formation of the regiments of guards already noticed.

The king's coronation having been celebrated with great splendour (Apr. 23rd),[1] the new parliament met (May 8th). [It is sometimes called the Cavalier Parliament.] As was to be expected, it was most decidedly royalist, the Presbyterians not having more than sixty seats. Its temper soon appeared, by votes for obliging all the members to receive the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, and for having the Solemn League and Covenant burnt by the common hangman. It was declared that the negative and the command of the army[2] were rights inherent in the crown; and it was made treason to injure the king's person, or to distinguish between his person and his office. It required all the efforts of the king and Clarendon to have the Bill of Indemnity passed without further exceptions. A bill passed the commons for the immediate execution of the remaining regicides; but the lords, more humane or more honourable, rejected it, the king himself expressing his aversion to it. "I am weary of hanging," said he to Clarendon, "except for new offences. Let the bill settle in the houses, that it may not come to me, for you know that I cannot pardon them." The act depriving the bishops of their seats in parliament, which had been so violently extorted from the late king, was repealed, and the prelates were restored to their legislative functions. As a chief weapon in those times had been tumultuary bodies of petitioners, an act was passed that not more than ten persons should present any petition to the king or either house, nor should it be signed by more than twenty, unless with the order of three justices, or the major part of a grand jury.

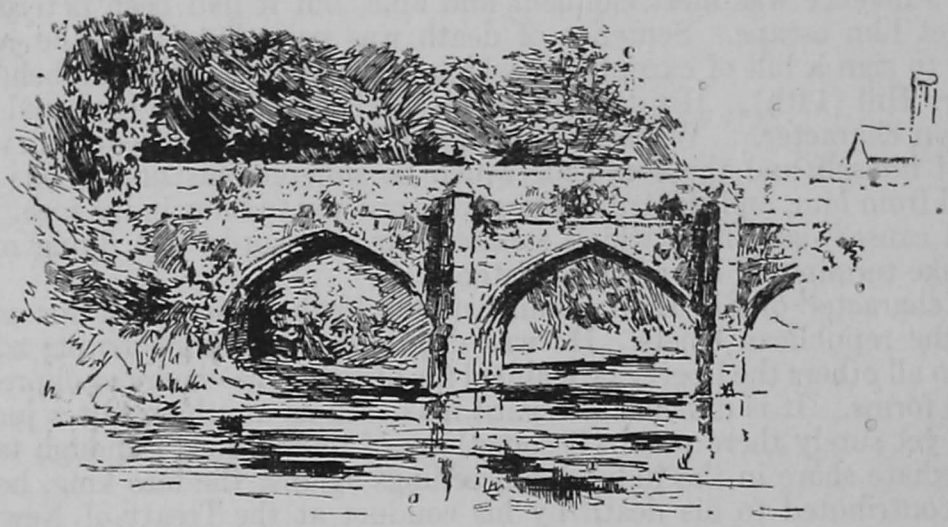
While the parliament was thus replacing the constitution on its ancient basis, a conference (called the Savoy Conference) was going on at the bishop of London's lodgings, at the Savoy Palace, between twelve prelates and nine assistants, and an equal number of Presbyterian divines. The ostensible object was a revision of the Book of Common Prayer. It ended, of course, as all such conferences do. The bishops were predetermined to admit of none but very slight modifications, and to retain all the ceremonies. The Presbyterians, under the circumstances, required by far too much; yet surely the prelates might have conceded something to men at least as pious and as learned as themselves, and but for whom they would be probably still without

[1] Hyde was on this occasion created earl of Clarendon, and Arthur Lord Capel (son of him who had been executed in 1649) earl of Essex.

[2] The act for the command of the militia went rather beyond the constitutional principle of recognising the sole power of the crown to command the forces by land or sea. It declared not only that neither house of parliament could pretend to such power, but could not lawfully levy any war, offensive or defensive, against the king.[k] "These last words," says Hallam,[e] "appeared to go to a dangerous length, and to sanction the suicidal doctrine of absolute non-resistance."]

their sees. If it was puerile on the one side to object so vehemently to the cross, ring, and surplice, it was surely no proof of wisdom on the other to insist on them as if they were of the very essence of religion. So little were the prelates disposed to concession, that even the innovations of Laud were retained, and they remain to this day part of the service of the Church of England.

The strength of the Presbyterian party lay in the corporations, and in these, their strongholds, the church-party proceeded to attack them. By the Corporation Act now passed it was enacted, that any person holding office



BRIDGEWATER MOAT, ELTHAM

in a corporation might be removed, unless he would renounce the Solemn League and Covenant, and declare his belief of the unlawfulness of taking up arms against the king, etc.; and no future officer to be admitted unless he had previously taken the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England.

The revision of the Common Prayer was finally (Nov. 20) committed to the convocation. They made a number of alterations and additions; none, however, favourable to the Presbyterians. The amended book was presented to the king and council, and by them recommended to the house of lords.

THE EXECUTION OF SIR HARRY VANE (1662 A.D.)

Vane and Lambert still lay in prison. As they had had no immediate hand in the death of the late king, the convention had addressed the king in their behalf, and he had assured them that, if attainted, they should not be executed. They were now brought to trial, at the suit of the commons. Lambert, (June 9, 1662), who had never been an enthusiast, or even perhaps a republican, acted with great caution. He excused his opposing Booth and Monk by saying that he knew not that they were acting for the king, and he threw himself on the royal mercy. He was sentenced to die, but he was only confined for life in the isle of Guernsey. He lived there for thirty years, forgotten by the world, occupying his time in the cultivation of flowers and in the practise of the art of painting. It is said that he became a Catholic.

Very different was the conduct of the upright, fervid, enthusiast and

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republican Vane (June 6). Far from suing for mercy, he asserted that "the decision by the sword was given [against the late king] by that God who, being the judge of the whole earth, does right, and cannot do otherwise"; and the parliament then became the government *de facto*, and, consequently, he was entitled to the benefit of the statute 11 Henry VII, for acting in obedience to it. The spirit of the law, if not the letter, was decidedly in his favour, and the judges could only get over the difficulty by the monstrous assertion, that Charles had been king *de facto* from the death of his father, though "kept out of the exercise of his royal authority by rebels and traitors." The prisoner's defence was most eloquent and able, but it had been determined not to let him escape. Sentence of death was passed on him, the judges refusing to sign a bill of exceptions, which he presented. He was beheaded on Tower Hill (14th). His demeanour was such as was to be expected from his known character. When he attempted to address the people in vindication of himself and the cause for which he suffered, his note-books were snatched from him, and the trumpeters were ordered to blow in his face. "It is a bad cause," said he, "which cannot bear the words of a dying man." One stroke terminated his mortal existence.

The character of Sir Henry Vane stands forth pre-eminent for purity among the republican chiefs. He was disinterested and incorrupt; willing to give to all others the liberty he claimed for himself; the enemy of oppression in all its forms. It is difficult to regard his death as anything but a judicial murder, yet surely there was in it something of retribution. Though taking no immediate share in the judicial proceedings against the late king, he had mainly contributed to his death by his conduct at the Treaty of Newport, and his speech in the house on his return. By the manner in which he furnished evidence against Strafford (whose sentence was little, if at all, less iniquitous than his own), he was a main cause of the civil war, and of all the bloodshed and misery which thence ensued. On the same spot on which Strafford fell one-and-twenty years before, Vane now underwent a similar fate. As the series of blood began with the one, it ended with the other. As Charles I forfeited his word and honour in the one case, so Charles II forfeited his in the other.

THE AFFAIRS OF SCOTLAND AND IRELAND

Having thus far carried on the affairs of England, it is now time that we should notice those of Scotland and Ireland [though they are treated at length in the next volume].

As Scotland had not been mentioned in the Declaration from Breda, the cavaliers of that country breathed nothing but blood and forfeitures.

The union which the commonwealth had laboured to effect was no longer thought of. The earl of Middleton was appointed commissioner for holding the parliament, Glencairn chancellor, and Lauderdale secretary. The fortresses built by Cromwell were demolished, and the garrisons disbanded. As the king had been thoroughly disgusted with Presbytery, and he and his chief counsellors regarded it as incompatible with monarchy, the restoration of Episcopacy was resolved on. The utmost efforts having been made to pack a parliament, that assembly, when it met (Jan. 1, 1661), proved to be suited to all the purposes of the court. It was known by the name of "The Drunken Parliament," on account of the continued inebriety of Middleton and his associates. Its first proceeding was to restore the prerogative in its fullest

extent. In one of Middleton's drunken bouts, it was resolved to adopt a measure which Primrose the clerk-register had proposed half in jest, which was, a general act "rescissory," annulling on various pretexts all the parliaments held since the year 1633. This, though vigorously opposed by the old covenanters, was carried by a large majority, and the Presbyterian discipline was left at the mercy of the crown.

Those who hungered after the large possessions of Argyll now hastened to shed his blood. The base treachery of Monk came to the aid of his enemies. He transmitted to the parliament some private letters in which Argyll expressed his attachment to the protector's government: his friends were silenced, and sentence was pronounced (May 25th). Argyll met his fate with piety and fortitude (27th).

The soil being thus watered with the blood of the covenanters Argyll and the clergyman Guthrey, it was resolved to replant Episcopacy. [The inhuman measures adopted in its re-establishment are detailed in the history of Scotland.]

Unhappy Ireland was also to be regulated anew. No blood was here to be shed, and the church, as a matter of course, resumed its former position; but the adjustment of property was a matter of tremendous difficulty. The tide of conquest had swept over the country, effacing all limits and landmarks. The greater part of the lands were now in the possession of the adventurers who had advanced their money on the faith of acts of parliament passed with the assent of the late king, and of the soldiers of Cromwell's army; but there were numerous other claimants, such as the Forty-nine men, or those who had served in the royal army previous to the year 1649, the Protestant loyalists whose estates had been confiscated, the innocent Catholics, those who had served under the king in Flanders, etc.

The king issued a declaration (Nov. 30, 1660) for the settlement of Ireland; but the Irish houses of parliament disagreeing with respect to it, they sent their deputies over to the king, and the Catholics at the same time despatched agents on their part. Charles was, for obvious reasons, disposed to favour these last, but, like true Irishmen, they seemed resolved that it should not be in his power. They justified their rebellion, denied their massacres, and finally the king ordered the doors of the council to be closed against them. The heads of a bill were then prepared and sent over to Dublin in May, 1662, but it was three years before the final settlement was effected. The soldiers and adventurers agreed to give up a third of their lands, to augment what was called "The Fund of Reprisals," or property still remaining at the disposal of the crown, and which had been shamefully diminished by lavish grants to the dukes of York, Ormonde, Albemarle, and others. Out of this the Forty-nine men were paid their arrears, fifty-four Catholics were restored to their houses, and two thousand acres of land; but there remained three thousand who had put in claims of innocence for whom no relief was provided. Previous to the rebellion, it is said the Catholics had possessed two-thirds of the lands of Ireland; there now remained to them not more than one-third. Sir W. Petty[w] says that only a sixth remained to the Catholics.

THE PROFLIGACY OF CHARLES: HIS MARRIAGE (1662 A.D.)

We now return to England, where the marriage of the king engaged the attention of his council. Charles was a notorious profligate with respect to women. While in France he had a son by a Mrs. Barlow or Walters, and imme-

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diately on his coming to England, Barbara Villiers, daughter of Lord Grandison, and wife to a Catholic gentleman named Palmer, a woman of great beauty, but utterly devoid of virtue or principle, having thrown herself in his way, made a conquest of his heart, over which she long retained her empire, though only one sultana out of many. The scandal which the king gave by his amours, caused his ministers to urge him to marry; but he resolved not to espouse a Protestant, and his subjects he thought would object to a Catholic. At the suggestion of the French king, however, the Portuguese ambassador offered him the infanta Catherine, sister to the king of Portugal, with a dower of 500,000*l.*, the settlements of Tangier in Africa, and Bombay in the East Indies, and a free trade to Portugal and her colonies.

The money tempted the king; Clarendon and the other ministers approved of the match, but the Spanish ambassador now laboured to obstruct it. He represented that the infanta was incapable of bearing children; that it might cause a war with Spain, and the loss of the Spanish trade; and he offered, on the part of his master, a large portion with either of the princesses of Parma. Charles sent Lord Bristol secretly to Italy, where he saw the princesses as they were going to church. One glance sufficed; the one was hideously ugly, the other monstrously fat. Meantime Louis sent to urge the Portuguese match, offering Charles money to purchase votes in the parliament, promising to lend him 50,000*l.* whenever he should want it, and to aid him with money in case of a war with Spain. The Spaniard, on the other hand, proposed to the king different Protestant princesses, whom his master would portion equal to daughters of Spain. He also laboured to excite the Protestant feelings of the parliament and city, but to no purpose. The Portuguese match was approved of by the council and both houses, and (June, 1661) the earl of Sandwich was sent out with a fleet to convey the infanta, when ready, to England.

The prospect of her lover's marriage made Mrs. Palmer very uneasy. To reconcile her he made her costly presents, and created her husband earl of Castlemain in Ireland, with remainder to the issue male of his wife, who had just borne to her royal keeper a son at Hampton Court; and finally, lost to all sense of honour and delicacy, Charles pledged himself to make her lady of the bed-chamber to his queen.

On the 20th of May, 1662, the fleet which bore the infanta reached Spithead. Charles, quitting the embraces of the wanton Castlemain, hastened to Portsmouth to receive his bride. They were married privately, according to the rites of the church of Rome, by the Lord Aubigny, the queen's almoner. They then came forth and sat on chairs in the room where the company was assembled, and Sheldon bishop of London pronounced them man and wife. They thence proceeded to Hampton Court, where after some days Charles, taking "The Lady," as Castlemain was called, by the hand, presented her to the queen before the entire court. Catherine had so much command of herself as to give her a gracious reception, but in a few minutes her eyes filled with tears, blood gushed from her nose, and she fell into a fit. Charles now affected the tone of a man of honour; he had been, he said, the cause of Castlemain's disgrace, and he was bound to make her reparation, and he would not submit to the whims of his wife. Clarendon and Ormonde remonstrated, but were harshly reproved, and even required to lend their aid in the royal project; and who will not blush for Clarendon, when he reads that he actually did undertake the odious office? But Catherine would not listen to him. To break her spirit, Charles then sent away her Portuguese attendants, and the presence of Castlemain was continually obtruded on her. The queen long bore up against these studied insults; at length she most imprudently resolved to yield, and

she humbled herself so far as to admit that abandoned adulteress to her familiarity and friendship.

THE SALE OF DUNKIRK TO THE FRENCH (1662 A.D.)

The queen's portion was soon spent, and to raise money for the royal expenses, Clarendon, it is said, proposed the sale of Dunkirk to the French king: Louis was eager to treat. Clarendon demanded twelve millions of livres, he was offered two, and the bargain was finally concluded for five (Sept. 11th). But Charles wanted all the money, and Louis would only pay two millions down, and the remainder in two years. The treaty was nearly broken off, when it was suggested that Louis should give bills for the balance. This was agreed to (Oct. 17th), and a French banker came over and discounted them. The banker was an agent of Louis, who boasts that he made 500,000 livres on the transaction. Dunkirk was certainly of no direct use to England, but the possession of it gratified the national pride, and the people felt mortified at seeing it sold, and the price squandered away on the king's vices and pleasures.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTIONS: THE CONVENTICLE ACT AND REPEAL OF THE TRIENNIAL ACT

But the sale of Dunkirk was a trifle to the cruel Act of Uniformity which now came into operation. It had been urged on by the united bigotry of the clergy, of Clarendon, and of the house of commons; the lords in vain attempted to mitigate its severity; the commons were inexorable. It provided that every minister should, before the feast of St. Bartholomew (Aug. 24th), publicly declare his assent and consent to everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer, or lose his benefice. The appointed day came, and about two thousand ministers, the far greater part of them men of extensive learning, sincere piety, and irreproachable life, laid down their preferments, and rather than do violence to their conscience, faced poverty and persecution. It may be said, that the Episcopal clergy had done as much in the late times, but those were times of civil war, and politics were so interwoven with religion, that it was difficult to separate them, and they had the prospect of ample reward in case of the king's success. But now all was peace; the king had been restored in a great measure through the exertions of these very men; there was no longer a political contest; conscience alone could have actuated them. Henry VIII assigned pensions to the ejected monks and friars; Elizabeth had reserved a fifth of the income of the benefices for those who scrupled to comply with her Act of Uniformity; the Long Parliament had done the same; but now no provision whatever was made, nay, care was taken that those who did not conform should lose the last year's income of their livings, as their tithes would not fall due till Michaelmas.

Petitions claiming the benefit of the Declaration from Breda being presented to the king, he took the occasion of setting forth a declaration, promising to exert his influence with parliament in its next session to have his dispensing power so regulated as to enable him to exercise it with more universal satisfaction. His secret object was to procure toleration for the Catholics; but on this head the commons were lynx-eyed; the Protestantism of the royal brothers was strongly suspected, and the Roman priests, in reliance on the court-favour, gave public offence by appearing in their habits. The com-

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mons therefore (Feb. 1663) rejected the whole scheme of indulgence, and brought in bills to prevent the growth of Catholicism.

Rumours of conspiracies were now spread in order to cast odium on the ejected clergy, and a slight insurrection which did take place this summer in Yorkshire was taken advantage of to pass in the following session (May 16, 1664) the merciless Conventicle Act. By this any person above the age of sixteen, who was present at any religious meeting not held according to the practice of the Church of England, where there were five or more persons beside the household, was to be imprisoned three months for the first offence, six for the second, and be transported seven years for the third, on conviction before a single justice of the peace. This cruel statute speedily filled the prisons, especially with the Quakers. [Transportation meant a practical slavery and heavy toil under the blazing sun of the Barbadoes or some colony of the West Indies.]

The repeal of the Triennial Act of 1641 was effected in this session. The king had the audacity to declare that he would never suffer a parliament to come together by the means prescribed in it; and to please him, a bill was brought in to repeal it, and passed, with a provision, however, that parliaments should not be intermitted for more than three years at the most.

WAR WITH THE DUTCH (1664–1665 A.D.)

Another measure of this session was an address to the king, praying him to seek redress of the injuries inflicted by the Dutch on the English trade, and promising to stand by him with their lives and fortunes. The Dutch were more devoted to commerce than any people in Europe; and as the spirit of trade is jealous and monopolising, they had been guilty of many unjustifiable actions in their foreign settlements, such, for instance, as the massacre of the English at Amboyna in the reign of James I. These however were all past and gone; treaties had been since made with them, in which these deeds had been unnoticed, even so late as the year 1662. Charles himself, though he had a great dislike to the aristocratic or Louvestein party, as it was named, which now ruled in the states, and which had deprived the prince of Orange of the dignity of Stadholder, was little inclined to a war, and Clarendon and Southampton were decidedly adverse to it; but the duke of York, who was lord-admiral, was anxious to distinguish himself at the head of the navy, which his exertions had brought to a state of great perfection; he was also a diligent fosterer of trade, which he justly regarded as a main pillar of the national greatness. He therefore lent his powerful aid to the party desirous of war, and Downing, the resident at the Hague, a man of little principle, spared no labour to widen the breach between the two countries.

The duke of York was at the head of an African company for the purchase of gold-dust and for supplying the West Indies with slaves. The Dutch, who had long traded to Africa, thwarted them as much as possible, and even seized or demolished their factories. The duke had already sent out Sir Robert Holmes, in the name of the company, with some ships of war to the coast of Africa, and Holmes had recovered the castle of Cape Corse and taken that of Cape Verd, and established factories along the coast. The duke had also sent out Sir Richard Nicholas to North America, where the Dutch had settled on the tract of country between New England and Maryland, and named it New Amsterdam. The English claimed this by right of discovery, and the king had made a grant of it to his brother. The Dutch settlers offered

no resistance, and Nicholas named the country New York, and a fort up the river, Albany, from the titles of his patron.

When intelligence came of what Holmes had done, the Dutch ambassador remonstrated in strong terms. But the king denied all concern in the matter, said that Holmes had been sent out by the company on their own authority, and promised to bring him to trial on his return. Holmes accordingly was sent to the Tower; but his explanations were considered satisfactory, and he was soon released. De Witt was resolved to be avenged. A combined Dutch and English fleet, under De Ruyter and Lawson, was now in the Mediterranean acting against the piratic cruisers, and he sent secret orders to the former to proceed to the coast of Africa and retaliate on the English. Lawson, though aware of De Ruyter's object, did not feel himself authorised by his instructions to follow him; but he sent to inform the duke of his suspicions. The Dutch admiral having accomplished his mission on the African coast crossed over to the West Indies, where he captured about twenty sail of merchantmen. The duke meantime had two fleets out in the narrow seas, which seized and detained one hundred and thirty Dutch traders.

The war being now resolved on, the king called on parliament for the requisite supplies (Nov. 25). Their liberality was unprecedented; they voted two millions and a half. In the bill for this purpose, two remarkable deviations from ancient usage were effected; the old method of raising money by subsidies, tenths, and fifteenths, which had been returned to, was abandoned forever, and the mode of assessments introduced in the civil war was adopted in its stead; the clergy, who used to tax themselves in convocation, now consented to be taxed in the same manner as the laity by parliament; and in return they obtained the right of voting at elections. This measure put a total end to the influence and importance of the convocation; it became from that moment a mere shadow. It is remarkable, that this great change in the constitution was the effect of a mere verbal agreement between the chancellor and the primate.

On the 21st of April, 1665, the duke of York put to sea with a gallant fleet of ninety-eight ships of war and four fire ships. This prince had made wonderful improvements in the navy. Instead of committing the command of ships to noblemen of inexperienced valour, he placed them under Lawson and men who had long been familiar with the sea. He continued the practice of dividing the fleet into three squadrons; but he required it to form into line before action, and each captain to keep his place during the engagement; thus substituting the regularity of the land battle for the previous irregular mode of fighting used at sea. The duke himself, with Lawson for his vice-admiral, commanded the red, Prince Rupert the white, the earl of Sandwich the blue squadron.

For more than a month this fleet rode in triumph off the coast of Holland. At length, an easterly wind having blown it to its own coast, the Dutch fleet of one hundred and thirteen ships of war, commanded by Admiral Opdam, came out in seven squadrons. The fleets encountered (June 3) off the coast of Suffolk. The sea was calm, the sky cloudless; for four hours the fight was dubious; the duke displayed the greatest conduct and valour; one shot killed at his side his favourite the earl of Falmouth, the lord Muskerry, and a son of Lord Burlington, and covered him with their blood. At length, observing great confusion on board of Admiral Opdam's ship, he ordered all his guns to be fired into her successively, and she blew up, and Opdam and five hundred men perished in her. Dispirited by the loss of their admiral, the Dutch fled; the English pursued, but during the night, while the duke was taking some

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repose, Mr. Brounker, groom of his bed-chamber, came to the master with pretended orders from the duke to shorten sail, and thus in the morning the Dutch got into the Texel. This was the greatest naval victory gained as yet by the English; the Dutch lost eighteen ships, they had four admirals killed, and seven thousand men slain or taken. The loss of the English was one ship and six hundred men; but among the slain were the admirals Lawson and Sampson, and the earls of Marlborough and Portland.

In other days the tidings of such a victory would have spread joy and festivity through all the streets of London; but now a gloom, not to be dispelled by the triumphs of war, sat brooding over the capital: the plague had visited it in its most appalling form.

During this desolation, the fleet, which was uninfected, kept the sea; and the Dutch Smyrna and East Indian fleets having taken shelter in the port of Bergen, in Norway, Lord Sandwich sailed thither. For a share of the spoil, it is said, the Danish court agreed to connive at the capture of the Dutch vessels. Owing, however, to some mismanagement, when the English ships entered the port and attacked the Dutch, they were fired on by the guns of the fort, and obliged to retire. De Witt now came with a strong fleet to convoy the merchantmen home, but they were dispersed by a storm (Sept. 4th), and Sandwich captured some ships of war and two of the Indiamen. As he plundered these last, and allowed his captains to do the same, he was deprived of his command, and sent as ambassador to Spain, as a cover to his disgrace.

The overthrow of the government in England by means of the discontented Presbyterians and republicans was one part of De Witt's plans, and he entered into correspondence with Ludlow, Sidney, and the other exiles, for this purpose. Lord Saye and some others formed a council at the Hague, and corresponded with their friends in England. An insignificant plot was discovered in London, during the height of the plague; and when the parliament met the following month, at Oxford, to grant supplies, an act was passed for attainting all British subjects who should continue in the service of the states.

The king of France, being bound by a treaty of alliance with the Dutch, was now required by them to share in the war. A French fleet being expected to join that of the Dutch, the English fleet, under the duke of Albemarle and Prince Rupert, put to sea. Rupert went, with twenty ships, in search of the French, who were said to be at Belle Isle; while Albemarle, with fifty-four, proceeded to the gun-fleet. To his surprise, he saw (June 1st, 1666) the Dutch fleet, of eighty sail, under De Ruyter and De Witt, lying off the North Foreland. Unequal as the numbers were, he resolved to fight, and bore down without any order. Most of the ships of the blue squadron, which led the van, were taken or disabled. Night ended the combat. Next morning (2nd) it was renewed. Sixteen fresh ships joined the Dutch, but the English again fought till night. Albemarle then burned a part of his disabled ships, and ordered the others to make for the nearest harbours. In the morning he had only sixteen ships to oppose to the enemy's pursuit. He had lost the *Prince Royal*, the finest ship in the navy, on the Galloper Sand, and the others were likely to share its fate, when Rupert, who had been recalled on the first day of the battle, at length came to his aid. The engagement was renewed the following morning (4th), but the hostile fleets were separated by a fog. Victory was with the Dutch, yet the English lost no honour. "They may be killed," said De Witt, "but they will not be conquered." The obstinacy and temerity of Albemarle were justly censured.

In July the fleets were again at sea; on the 25th an action was fought,

in which the advantage was on the side of the English, who now rode in triumph off the shores of Holland. Holmes, with a squadron of boats and fire-ships (Aug. 8th), entered the channel, where the Baltic traders lay, and burned one hundred and fifty of them, two men of war, and the adjoining town of Brandaris. De Witt, maddened at the sight, swore by almighty God that he would never sheath the sword till he had had revenge. He called on his French ally for prompt aid. Louis, who was exciting the discontented Irish Catholics to insurrection, and who had lately offered Algernon Sidney 20,000*l.* in aid of his project of raising the commonwealth party in England, would rather not put his fleet to hazard. He, however, ordered the duke de Beaufort, who was now at Rochelle, to advance and join De Ruyter. This admiral had already passed the strait of Dover, when Prince Rupert came in view. As De Ruyter himself was unwell and his men were little inclined to fight, he took shelter near Boulogne, and Rupert then sailed to engage Beaufort, who was coming up channel, but a violent wind forced him to take shelter at St. Helen's (Sept. 3), and Beaufort got into Dieppe.

The wind that blew the fleet to St. Helen's was a fatal wind to England. On the night of Sunday the 2nd, the great fire broke out.[l] And now, in Macaulay's words: "The discontent engendered by maladministration was heightened by calamities which the best administration could not have averted. While the ignominious war with Holland was raging, London suffered two great disasters, such as never, in so short a space of time, befel one city. A pestilence, surpassing in horror any that during three centuries had visited the island, swept away, in six months, more than a hundred thousand human beings. And scarcely had the dead cart ceased to go its rounds, when a fire, such as had not been known in Europe since the conflagration of Rome under Nero, laid in ruins the whole city, from the Tower to the Temple, and from the river to the purlieus of Smithfield."[h]

THE PLAGUE (1665 A.D.)

The June of 1665 came in with extraordinary heat. The previous winter and spring had been the driest that ever man knew. The summer was coming with the same cloudless sky. There was no grass in the meadows around London. "Strange comets, which filled the thoughts and writings of astronomers, did in the winter and spring a long time appear." The "great comet," says Burnet,[f] "raised the apprehensions of those who did not enter into just speculations concerning those matters." The boom of guns from the Norfolk coast is heard upon the Thames; and the merchants upon Change are anxiously waiting for letters from the fleet. In the coffee-houses, two subjects of news keep the gossipers in agitation — the Dutch fleet is off our coast, the plague is in the city. The 7th of June, writes Pepys,[m] was "the hottest day that ever I felt in my life. This day, much against my will, I did in Drury Lane see two or three houses marked with a red cross upon the doors, and 'Lord have mercy upon us' writ there; which was a sad sight to me, being the first of the kind that to my remembrance I ever saw."

The red cross upon the doors was too familiar to the elder population of London. In 1636, of twenty-three thousand deaths ten thousand were ascribed to the plague. The terrible visitor came to London, according to the ordinary belief, once in every twenty years, and then swept away a fifth of the inhabitants. From 1636 to 1647 there had been no cessation of the malady, which commonly carried off two or three thousand people annually. But after 1648 there had been no record of deaths from the plague amounting

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to more than twenty, in any one year. In 1664 the bills of mortality only registered six deaths from this cause. The disease seemed almost to belong to another generation than that which had witnessed the triumph and the fall of Puritanism — which had passed from extreme formalism to extreme licentiousness.

How far the drunken revelries of the five years of the restoration might have predisposed the population to receive the disease, is as uncertain as any belief that the sobriety of the preceding time had warded it off. One condition of London was, however, unaltered. It was a city of narrow streets and of bad drainage. The greater number of houses were deficient in many of the accommodations upon which health, in a great degree, depends. The supply of water was far from sufficient for the wants of the poorer population; and with the richer classes the cost of water, supplied either by hand-labour or machinery, prevented its liberal use. The conduits, old or new, could only afford to fill a few water cans daily for household uses. There was much finery in the wealthy citizens' houses, but little cleanliness.

It is to be remarked, however, that the plague of 1665 was as fatal in the less crowded parts of Westminster and its suburbs, as in the City within the walls. Building had been going forward from the time of Elizabeth in St. Giles's-in-the-Fields, and in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields; and we might conclude that the streets would be wider and the houses more commodious in these new parts than in the close thoroughfares, over which the projecting eaves had hung for many a year, shutting out air and light. But in these suburban liberties the plague of 1665 first raged, and then gradually extended eastward. On the 10th of June the disease broke out in the City, in the house of Dr. Burnett, a physician, in Fenchurch street.

Defoe's[n] famous *Journal of the Plague Year* has made this terrible season familiar to most readers. The spirit of accuracy is now more required than when the editor of a popular work informed his readers that Defoe continued in London during the whole time of the plague, and was one of the examiners appointed to shut up infected houses. Defoe, in 1665, was four years old. Yet the imaginary saddler of Whitechapel, who embodies the stories which this wonderful writer had treasured up from his childhood, relates nothing that is not supported by what we call authentic history. The "Citizen who continued all the while in London," as the title of Defoe's journal informs us, and whose dwelling was "without Aldgate, about midway between Aldgate church and Whitechapel bars," relates how, through May and June, the nobility and rich people from the west part of the city filled the broad street of Whitechapel with coaches and waggons and carts, all hurrying away with goods, women, servants, and children; how horsemen, with servants bearing their baggage, followed in this mournful cavalcade, from morning to night; how the lord mayor's doors were crowded with applicants for passes and certificates of health, for without these none would be allowed to enter the towns, or rest in any wayside inn. The citizen of Whitechapel thought "of the misery that was coming upon the city, and the unhappy condition of those who would be left in it." On the 21st of June, Pepys[m] writes, "I find all the town almost going out of town; the coaches and waggons being all full of people going into the country." In the country, the population dreaded to see the Londoners. Baxter[o] remarks, "How fearful people were thirty, or forty, if not an hundred miles from London, of anything that they bought from any mercer's or draper's shop; or of any goods that were brought to them; or of any persons that came to their houses. How they would shut their doors against their friends; and if a man passed over the fields, how one would avoid

another, as we did in the time of wars; and how every man was a terror to another." The Broadstone of East Retford, on which an exchange was made of money for goods, without personal communication, is an illustration of these rural terrors.

A panic very soon took possession of the population of London. They talked of the comet, "of a faint, dull, languid colour, and its motion very heavy, solemn, and slow." They read *Lilly's Almanac*," and *Gadbury's Astrological Predictions* and *Poor Robin's Almanac*, and these books "frightened them terribly." A man walked the streets day and night, at a swift pace, speaking to no one, but uttering only the words "O the great and the dreadful God!" These prognostications and threatenings came before the pestilence had become very serious; and they smote down the hearts of the people, and thus unfitted them for the duty of self-preservation, and the greater duty of affording help to others. Other impostors than the astrologers abounded. The mountebank was in the streets with his "infallible preventive pills," and "the only true plague-water." Pepys records that "my lady Carteret did this day give me a bottle of plague-water home with me." But gradually the astrologers and the quacks were left without customers, for London was almost wholly abandoned to the very poorest. Touchingly does Baxter say, "the calamities and cries of the diseased and impoverished are not to be conceived by those who are absent from them. The richer sort remaining out of the city, the greatest blow fell on the poor."

The court fled on the first appearance of the disease. Some few of the great remained, amongst others the stout old duke of Albemarle, who fearlessly chewed his tobacco at his mansion of the Cockpit. Marriages of the rich still went on.

The narrative of Defoe, and other relations, have familiarised most of us with the ordinary facts of this terrible calamity. We see the searchers, and nurses, and watchmen, and buryers marching in ominous silence through the empty streets, each bearing the red wand of office. We see them enter a suspected house, and upon coming out marking the door with the fatal red cross, a foot in length. If the sick within can pay, a nurse is left. We see the dead-cart going its rounds in the night, and hear the bell tinkling, and the buryers crying "Bring out your dead." Some of the infected were carried to the established pest houses, where the dead-cart duly received its ghastly load. The saddler of Whitechapel describes what he beheld at "the great pit of the churchyard of our parish at Aldgate:"

"I saw two links come over from the end of the Minories, and heard the bellman, and then appeared a dead-cart, as they called it, coming over the streets, so I could no longer resist my desire of seeing it, and went in. It had in it sixteen or seventeen bodies; some were wrapt up in linen sheets, some in rugs, some little other than naked, or so loose that what covering they had fell from them in the shooting out of the cart, and they fell quite naked amongst the rest; but the matter was not much to them, nor the indecency to any one else, seeing they were all dead, and were to be huddled together into the common grave of mankind, as we may call it, for here is no difference made, but poor and rich went together; there was no other way of burials, neither was it possible there should, for coffins were not to be had for the prodigious numbers that fell in such a calamity as this."

Soon, as Pepys tells us on the 12th of August, "the people die so, that now it seems they are fain to carry the dead to be buried by daylight, the night not sufficing to do it in."

The Reverend Thomas Vincent,[p] one of the non-conforming clergy who remained in the city, has thus described the scenes of August:

"Now people fall as thick as the leaves in autumn when they are shaken by a mighty wind. Now there is a dismal solitude in London streets; every day looks with the face of

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a Sabbath-day, observed with a greater solemnity than it used to be in the city. Now shops are shut in, people rare and very few that walk about, insomuch that the grass begins to spring up in some places, and a deep silence in every place, especially within the walls. No prancing horses, no rattling coaches, no calling in customers nor offering wares, no London cries sounding in the ears. If any voice be heard it is the groans of dying persons breathing forth their last, and the funeral knells of them that are ready to be carried to their graves. Now shutting up of visited houses (there being so many) is at an end, and most of the well are mingled among the sick, which otherwise would have got no help. Now, in some places, where the people did generally stay, not one house in a hundred but what is affected; and in many houses half the family is swept away; in some, from the oldest to the youngest: few escape, but with the death of one or two. Never did so many husbands and wives die together; never did so many parents carry their children with them to the grave, and go together into the same house under earth who had lived together in the same house upon it. Now the nights are too short to bury the dead; the whole day, though at so great a length, is hardly sufficient to light the dead that fall thereon into their graves."

At the beginning of September the empty streets put on another aspect, equally fearful. The bonfire, which was the exhibition of gladness, was now the token of desolation. Every six houses on each side of the way were to be assessed towards the expense of maintaining one great fire in the middle of the street for the purification of the air — fires which were not to be extinguished by night or by day. A heavy rain put out these death-fires, and perhaps did far more good than this expedient.

As winter approached, the disease began rapidly to decrease.[1] Confidence a little revived. A few shops were again opened. The York waggon again ventured to go to London with passengers. At the beginning of 1666 "the town fills again." "Pray God," says Pepys, "continue the plague's decrease; for that keeps the court away from the place of business, and so all goes to rack as to public matters." He rides in Lord Brouncker's coach to Covent Garden: "What staring to see a nobleman's coach come to town. And porters everywhere bow to us: and such begging of beggars." The sordid and self-indulgent now began to come back: "January 22nd. The first meeting of Gresham College since the plague. Dr. Goddard did fill us with talk, in defence of his and his fellow-physicians' going out of town in the plague-time; saying that their particular patients were most gone out of town, and they left at liberty, and a great deal more." This is Pepys' entry of the 4th of February: "Lord's day: and my wife and I the first time together at church since the plague, and now only because of Mr. Mills his coming home to preach his first sermon; expecting a great excuse for his leaving the parish before anybody went, and now staying till all are come home: but he made but a very poor and short excuse, and a bad sermon." Defoe[n] tells, with the strictest accuracy, the mode in which the spiritual condition of the plague-struck city was attended to: "Though it is true that a great many of the clergy did shut up their churches, and fled, as other people did, for the safety of their lives, yet all did not do so; some ventured to officiate, and to keep up the assemblies of the people by constant prayers, and sometimes sermons, or brief exhortations to repentance and reformation, and this as long as they

[1 The decrease was as follows: 6,460, 5,720, 5,068, 1,806, 1,388, 1,787, 1,359, 905, 544. There was not a week in the year in which some cases of plague were not returned. Clarendon[q] with his usual inaccuracy, makes the number of dead, according to the weekly bills, to amount to 160,000, which, he says, ought, in the opinion of well-informed persons, to be doubled. The number of burials, according to the bills, was only 97,306. See the table prefixed to Hodges'[r] *Loimologia*. If we add one-third for omissions, the amount will be about 130,000; but from these must be deducted the deaths from other causes than the plague. In the tables themselves the deaths from the plague in this year are 68,596; in 1666 the are 1,996; in 1667, they fall to thirty-five, to fourteen in 1668, and after that seldom reach to half-a-dozen. In August of the following year it raged with violence in Colchester, Norwich, Winchester, Cambridge, and Salisbury.—LINGARD.[q]]

would hear them. And dissenters did the like also, and even in the very churches where the parish ministers were either dead or fled; nor was there any room for making any difference at such a time as this was.'[b] Baxter[o] also relates that, when "most of the conformable ministers fled, and left their flocks in the time of their extremity," the non-conforming ministers, who, since 1662, had done their work very privately, "resolved to stay with the people; and to go into the forsaken pulpits, though prohibited; and to preach to the poor people before they died; and also to visit the sick, and get what relief they could for the poor, especially those that were shut up." The reward which the non-conforming ministers received for their good work was The Five Mile Act.

The statute which popularly bore this name is entitled "An Act for restraining Non-conformists from inhabiting in Corporations." In consequence of the plague raging in London, the parliament met at Oxford on the 9th of October. Their first act was for a supply of 1,250,000*l*. Their second was what Hallam[e] calls this "new and more inevitable blow aimed at the fallen church of Calvin." All persons in holy orders who had not subscribed the Act of Uniformity were required to take the following oath: "I, A. B., do swear, that it is not lawful, under any pretence whatsoever, to take arms against the king; and that I do abhor the traitorous position of taking arms by his authority against his person, or against those that are commissionated by him, in pursuance of such commissions; and that I will not at any time endeavour any alteration of government either in church or state." In default of taking this oath they were forbidden to dwell, or come, unless upon the road, within five miles of any corporate town, or any other place where they had been ministers, or had preached, under a penalty of forty pounds and six months' imprisonment. They were also declared incapable of teaching in schools, or of receiving boarders. This act had for its object wholly to deprive the conscientious Puritans of any means of subsistence[1] connected with their former vocation of Christian ministers or instructors of youth. Hallam[e] truly says, "The Church of England had doubtless her provocations; but she made the retaliation much more than commensurate to the injury. No severity comparable to this cold-blooded persecution had been inflicted by the late powers, even in the ferment and fury of a civil war." An attempt was made to impose the non-resisting oath upon the whole nation; but it was defeated by a small majority.

The extent of the miseries inflicted by the plague in London was probably diminished by The Settlement Act of 1662. This was entitled An Act for the better relief of the Poor. The preamble of the statute declares the continual increase of the poor, not only within the cities of London and Westminster, but also through the whole kingdom; but there is little reason to doubt that the main object of the bill was to thrust out from the parishes of the metropolis, all chargeable persons occupying tenements under the yearly value of ten pounds. By this act the power of removal was first established — a measure which, however modified, has done as much evil to the labouring population in destroying their habits of self-dependence, as a legal provision for their support, prudently administered, has been a national blessing. The Settlement Act was carried by the metropolitan members, with little resistance from the country members. In 1675, in a debate on a bill for restraint of building near London, one member said that "by the late act the poor are hunted like foxes out of parishes, and whither must they go but where there

[1 Keightley] says it might almost be called a "bill of starvation."]

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are houses?" Another declared that "the act for the settlement of the poor does, indeed, thrust all people out of the country to London." The intent of the framers of the act had probably been defeated by the reprisals of the rural magistrates and overseers. The system of hunting the poor went on amidst the perpetual litigation of nearly two centuries; and it is not yet come to an end.

The plague-year has passed; the "Year of Wonders" is come. Dryden[x] called his *Annus Mirabilis* "an historical poem." In his preface he says, "I have taken upon me to describe the motives, the beginning, progress, and successes, of a most just and necessary war; in it, the care, management, and prudence of our king; the conduct and valour of a royal admiral, and of two incomparable generals; the invincible courage of our captains and seamen; and three glorious victories, the result of all. After this, I have, in the fire, the most deplorable, but withal the greatest, argument that can be imagined: the destruction being so swift, so sudden, so vast and miserable, as nothing can parallel in story." The year 1666 is, indeed, an eventful year; and the relation of its miseries, so closely following upon the calamity of the plague, carries with it the consolation that the spirit of the English people, founded upon their industrious habits and their passion for liberty, has always been able to surmount the greatest political evils, and to acquire, even under the severest dispensations of providence, the courage and perseverance which convert chastisements into blessings.

THE GREAT LONDON FIRE OF 1666

The story of the great fire of London has been related with minuteness by many trustworthy observers. We can place ourselves in the midst of this extraordinary scene, and make ourselves as familiar with its details as if the age of newspapers had arrived, and a host of reporters had been engaged in collecting every striking incident. But it is not in the then published narratives that we find those graphic touches which constitute the chief interest of this event at the present time. Half a century ago the materials for a faithful record of the great fire were to be sought in the report of a committee of the house of commons, in the state trials, and in various tracts issued at the period. There are also several striking passages of Baxter's[o] *Life*, which relate to the fire. But such notices are meagre compared with the personal records in the two remarkable diaries which have been rescued from obscurity during our own day.

We are with Mr. Pepys[m] in his nightgown at three o'clock in the morning of Sunday, the 2nd of September, looking out of his window in Seething Lane, at the east end of the city, and, thinking the fire far enough off, going to sleep again. We accompany him later in the morning to a high place in the Tower, and see the houses near London Bridge on fire. The weather is hot and dry, and a furious east wind is blowing. The active Mr. Pepys takes a boat from the Tower stairs; and slowly sculling up stream, looks upon the burning houses in the streets near the Thames; distracted people getting their goods on board lighters; and the inhabitants of the houses at the water's edge not leaving till the fire actually reached them. He has time to look at the pigeons — of which the Londoners generally were then as fond as the Spitalfields weavers of our time — hovering about the windows and balconies till they burned their wings and fell down.

There is nobody attempting to quench the fire in that high wind. Everything is combustible after the long drought. Human strength seems in vain,

and the people give themselves up to despair. The busy secretary of the navy reaches Whitehall, and tells his story to the king; and he entreats his majesty to order houses to be pulled down, for nothing less would stop the fire. The king desires Pepys to go to the lord mayor, and give him this command. In Cannon street he encounters the lord mayor, who cries, like a fainting woman, "Lord! what can I do? I am spent. People will not obey me." He had been pulling down houses. He did not want any soldiers. He had been up all night, and must go home and refresh himself. There is no service in the churches, for the people are crowding them with their goods. He walks through the streets; and again he takes boat at Paul's wharf. He now meets the king and the duke of York in their barge. They ordered that houses should be pulled down apace; but the fire came on so fast that little could be done. We get glimpses in this confusion of the domestic habits of the citizens. "The river full of lighters and boats taking in goods; and good goods swimming about in the water; and I observed that hardly one lighter or boat in three that had the goods of a house in, but there was a pair of virginals in it." The severer Puritans had not driven out the old English love of music; the citizens' wives and daughters still had the imperfect spinet upon which Elizabeth and her maids of honour played.

That hot September evening is spent by our observer upon the water. Showers of fire-drops are driving in his face. He sees the fiery flakes shooting up from one burning house, and then dropping upon another five or six houses off, and setting that on flame. The roofs were in many streets only thatched: the walls were mostly timber. Warehouses in Thames street were stored with pitch, and tar, and oil, and brandy. The night came on; and then Pepys, from a little alehouse on the Bankside, saw the fire grow, and shoot out between churches and houses, "in a most horrid, malicious, bloody flame, not like the fire flame of an ordinary fire." And then, as it grew darker, he saw the fire up the hill in an arch of above a mile long. Then rose the moon shedding a soft light over the doomed city; and amidst the terrible glare and the gentle radiance the whole world of London was awake, gazing upon the conflagration, or labouring to save something from its fury.

We turn to the diary of Evelyn[8] — a more elegant writer than Pepys, but scarcely so curious an observer of those minute points that give life to a picture. He has seen the fire from the Bankside on Sunday afternoon; and on Monday he returns to see the whole south part of the city burning. It was now taking hold of the great cathedral, which was surrounded by scaffolds for its repair. "The noise and cracking and thunder of the impetuous flames, the shrieking of women and children, the hurry of people, the fall of towers, houses, and churches, was like a hideous storm; and the air all about so hot and inflamed, that at the last one was not able to approach it, so that they were forced to stand still, and let the flames burn on, which they did, for near two miles in length and one in breadth. The clouds, also, of smoke were dismal, and reached, upon computation, near fifty miles in length. Thus I left it this afternoon burning, a resemblance of Sodom, or the last day. The ruins resembled the picture of Troy. London was, but is no more."

On Tuesday, the 4th, Evelyn saw that the fire had reached as far as the Inner Temple. "All Fleet street, the Old Bailey, Ludgate Hill, Warwick lane, Newgate, Paul's chain, Watling street, now flaming, and most of it reduced to ashes; the stones of Paul's flew like grenados, the melting lead running down the streets in a stream, and the very pavements glowing with fiery redness, so as no horse, nor man, was able to tread on them, and the demolition had stopped all the passages, so that no help could be applied; the eastern

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wind still more impetuously driving the flames forward." On that day the houses near the Tower were blown up; and the same judicious plan was pursued in other places. On the 5th the court at Whitehall was in unwonted bustle. The king and his brother had set an excellent example of personal activity; and gentlemen now took charge of particular streets, and directed the means of extinguishing the flames. The people now began to bestir themselves. The civic authorities no longer rejected the advice, which some seamen had given at first, to blow up the houses before the flames reached them, instead of attempting to pull them down. The wind abated. Large gaps were made in the streets. The desolation did not reach beyond the Temple westward, nor beyond Smithfield on the north. On Wednesday, the 5th, the mighty devourer was arrested in his course. Three days and three nights of agony had been passed; but not more than eight lives had been lost. Mr. Pepys at last lies down and sleeps soundly. He has one natural remark: "It is a strange thing to see how long this time did look since Sunday, having been always full of variety of actions, and little sleep, that it looked like a week or more, and I had forgot almost the day of the week."

Whilst indifferent spectators were gazing on the fire from Bankside, and the high grounds on the south of the Thames, the fields on the north were filled with houseless men, women, and children. "I went," says Evelyn,[s] "towards Islington and Highgate, where one might have seen two hundred thousand people, of all ranks and degrees, dispersed and lying along by their heaps of what they could save from the fire, deploring their loss; and, though ready to perish for hunger and destitution, yet not asking one penny for relief." There were liberal contributions from the king, and the nobility, and the clergy. Collections were made and distributed in alms to the most needy. But the real difficulty must have been to ensure a supply of food, when all the usual channels of interchange were choked up. Proclamations were made for the country people to bring in provisions. Facilities were offered to the people to leave the ruins, by a command that they should be received in all cities and towns to pursue their occupations: and that such reception should entail no eventual burthen on parishes. No doubt it was necessary to strive against the selfishness that vast calamities too often produce in the sufferers and the lookers-on. The country people for miles around had gazed upon the flames. There was an immense destruction of books; and their half-burnt leaves were carried by the wind even as far as Windsor. The dense cloud of smoke shut out the bright autumn sun from the harvest-fields, and upon distant roads men travelled in the shade. The extent of the calamity was apparant. Yet it may be doubted if many of the great ones received the visitation in a right spirit. Pepys says, "none of the nobility came out of the country at all, to help the king, or comfort him, or prevent commotions at this fire." Some of the insolent courtiers exulted in the destruction, saying according to Baxter[o]: "Now the rebellious city is ruined, the king is absolute, and was never king indeed till now." One profligate "young commander" of the fleet "made mighty sport of it;" and rejoiced that the corruption of the citizens' wives might be effected at a very reduced cost.

The monument erected in commemoration of the fire has an elaborate Latin inscription, in which it is set forth that the destruction comprised 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. An account, which estimates the houses burnt at twelve thousand, values them at an average rent of 25*l.* a

year, and their value, at twelve years' purchase, at £3,600,000. The public buildings destroyed are valued at £1,800,000: the private goods at the same rate. With other items, the total amount of the loss is estimated at £7,335,000.

But the interruption to industry must have involved even a more serious loss of the national capital. We have stated, on the authority of Clarendon, how the plague had rendered it difficult to collect the revenue. He says of the necessities of the crown in 1666, "Now this deluge by fire had dissipated the persons, and destroyed the houses, which were liable to the re-imbursement of all arrears; and the very stocks were consumed which should carry on and revive the trade."

The monument, which was erected on the spot where the fire first broke out, recorded that the burning of this Protestant city was begun and carried on by the treachery and malice of a popish faction. [In Pope's phrase, the monument, "Like a tall bully, lifts its head and lies." This was true for a century and three quarters until December 6, 1830.] Then the corporation of London wisely obliterated the offensive record. In the examinations before the committee of the house of commons, there was nothing beyond the most vague babble of the frightened and credulous, except the self-accusation of one Hubert, a French working-silversmith, who maintained that he was the incendiary. He was hanged, much to the disgrace of the administration of justice. "Neither the judges," says Clarendon, "nor any present at the trial did believe him guilty; but that he was a poor distracted wretch, weary of his life, and chose to part with it this way."

A medal was struck in commemoration of the plague and fire. The eye of God is in the centre; one comet is showering down pestilence and another flame. The east wind is driving on the flames. Death in the foreground is encountering an armed horseman. The legend is "*Sic punit*" — So he punishes.

WREN'S PLAN FOR REBUILDING THE CITY

The noble cathedral of St. Paul's, and many churches which exhibit the genius of Sir Christopher Wren in many graceful original forms of towers and spires, grew out of the great fire. But the occasion was lost for a nobler city to arise, of wide streets, and handsome quays. The old wooden fabrics were replaced by those of brick; but the same narrow thoroughfares were preserved as of old. The owners of property could not be brought to unite in any common plan; and each built his house up again, upon his own spot of ground. The constant labour of succeeding times, has been to clear away, at enormous cost, what the fire had cleared away in three days and nights. This want of co-operative action was not the result of any ignorance of what required to be done. Wren's labours and wishes are thus recorded: "In order to a proper reformation, Wren, pursuant to the royal command, immediately after the fire, took an exact survey of the whole area and confines of the burning, having traced over with great trouble and hazard the great plain of ashes and ruins; and designed a plan or model of a new city, in which the deformity and inconveniences of the old town were remedied, by the enlarging the streets and lanes, and carrying them as near parallel to one another as might be; avoiding, if compatible with greater conveniences, all acute angles; by seating all the parochial churches conspicuous and insular; by forming the most public places into large piazzas, the centre of six or eight ways; by uniting the halls of the twelve chief companies into one regular square annexed to Guildhall;

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by making a quay on the whole bank of the river, from Blackfriars to the Tower. . . . . The streets to be of three magnitudes; the three principal leading straight through the city, and one or two cross streets, to be at least ninety feet wide; others sixty feet; and lanes about thirty feet, excluding all narrow dark alleys without thoroughfares, and courts. . . . . The practicability of this scheme, without loss to any man or infringement of any property, was at that time demonstrated, and all material objections fully weighed and answered. The only, and as it happened insurmountable, difficulty remaining, was the obstinate averseness of great part of the citizens to alter their old properties, and to recede from building their houses again on the old ground and foundations; as also the distrust in many and unwillingness to give up their properties, though for a time only, into the hands of public trustees, or commissioners, till they might be dispensed to them again, with more advantage to themselves than otherwise was possible to be effected. . . . The opportunity in a great degree was lost of making the new city the most magnificent, as well as commodious for health and trade, of any upon earth."

Sir Christopher Wren
(1632–1723)

The flames of London were still smouldering when the parliament met at Westminster on the 21st of September. The king said, "Little time hath passed, since we were almost in despair of having this place left us to meet in; you see the dismal ruins the fire hath made." There had been a prorogation for ten months. But money was wanting. "I desire," said Charles, "to put you to as little trouble as I can; and I can tell you truly, I desire to put you to as little cost as is possible. I wish with all my heart that I could have the whole charge of this war myself, and that my subjects should reap the benefit of it to themselves." No doubt it was very disagreeable that the king's subjects, being called upon to pay largely, should by any possibility take the liberty of asking what they were to pay for. Clarendon[t] tells us of the somewhat dangerous temper which was spreading after the experience of six years and a half of the happy restoration. "Though they made the same professions of affection and duty to the king they had ever done, they did not conceal the very ill opinion they had of the court and the continual riotings there." They were tending to the accomplishment of Harrington's prophecy as quoted by Aubrey:[u] "Well! The king will come in. Let him come in, and call a parliament of the greatest cavaliers in England, so they be men of estates, and let them sit but for seven years, and they will all turn commonwealth's men."

A bill was brought in for the appointment of commissioners "to examine all accounts of those who had received or issued out any moneys for this war;

and where they found any persons faulty, and who had broken their trust, they should be liable to such punishment as the parliament should think fit." To such a bill the king was resolved never to give the royal assent. This is Clarendon's relation of the matter; and yet he is not ashamed to say that he urged the king "to prevent the excesses in parliament; and not to suffer them to extend their jurisdiction to cases they have nothing to do with." Hallam says, "Such a slave was Clarendon to his narrow prepossessions, that he would rather see the dissolute excesses which he abhorred suck nourishment from that revenue which had been allotted to maintain the national honour and interests, and which, by its deficiencies thus aggravated, had caused even in this very year the navy to be laid up, and the coasts to be left defenceless, than suffer them to be restrained by the only power to which thoughtless luxury would submit." Every effort was made to oppose the bill; and the parliament was prorogued in 1667 without its being passed. Next year, 1668, the parliament carried its salutary measure of control. A supply of £1,800,000 was granted; and at the prorogation the king said, "I assure you the money shall be laid out for the ends it is given."

The calamities which London had endured of pestilence and conflagration were not wholly unacceptable to the corrupt court. Clarendon informs us that there were those about the king, who assured him that the fire "was the greatest blessing that God had ever conferred on him, his restoration only excepted; for the walls and gates being now burned and thrown down of that rebellious city, which was always an enemy to the crown, his majesty would never suffer them to repair and build them 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 upon them whenever he thought it necessary for his service, there being no other way to govern that rude multitude but by force." Charles was not pleased with these suggestions, adds Clarendon. Desirable as it might be to have the Londoners under his feet at this time of their desolation, there was still the old spirit abroad in England. The indiscretion of the king, to apply the least offensive term to his conduct, was sufficient to alienate the affection which had been so lavishly bestowed upon him, even if the people, with their bitter experience, stopped short of rebellion. There were large numbers of the humbler retainers of the royal household who, when Lady Castlemain ordered of her tradesmen every jewel and service of plate that she fancied, and told her servant to send a note of their cost to the privy purse, were themselves absolutely starving.

It sounds very like exaggeration when we read that one of the king's musicians, "Evans, the famous man upon the harp, having not his equal in the world, did the other day die for mere want, and was fain to be buried by the alms of the parish." But this is not idle gossip of Pepys. There is an account in existence of "The state of the Treasurer of the Chamber, his office, at Midsummer, 1665," which shows the yearly payments due to officers of the king's household, and of the sums "behind unpaid." There were forty-two musicians, to whom their salaries had been due for three years and one quarter. High and low, the Bishop Almoner and the rat-killer, the Justice in Oyer beyond Trent and the bird-keeper, footmen, falconers, huntsmen, bear-warders, wardrobe officers, watermen, messengers, yeomen of the guard, and many others, useful or useless, had been "behind unpaid," some for five years, some for four years, some for three or two years, very few only for one year. To three apothecaries, more than 5,000*l.* was due. That these persons, frequenting the coffee-houses or ale-houses of London, did not spread abroad their griefs, cannot reasonably be imagined.

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A sullen discontent, a silent indignation, settled deep into the hearts of the whole community. If a sword had been drawn against the English people, there would have been another civil war, with one certain result. Men were satisfied for twenty years longer to endure and murmur. "It is strange how everybody do now-a-days reflect upon Oliver, and commend him, what brave things he did, and made all the neighbour princes fear him; while here a prince, come in with all the love and prayers and good-liking of his people, who have given greater signs of loyalty and willingness to serve him with their estates than ever was done by any people, hath lost all so soon, that it is a miracle what way a man could devise to lose so much in so little time." Not at all strange, Mr. Pepys, that the people looked back upon Oliver, and what brave things he did. But the vicissitudes of nearly twenty years — the dread of property becoming insecure — the religious divisions — the respect for the monarchical principle, however degraded in the immediate wearer of the crown — the love for the ancient church, amidst all its pride and intolerance — these considerations kept the Englishmen quiet.

On the 31st of December, 1666, Pepys, the official person who had the most intimate knowledge of the affairs of the navy thus writes in his diary: "Thus ends this year of public wonder and mischief to this nation. Public matters in a most sad condition; seamen discouraged for want of pay, and are become not to be governed: nor, as matters are now, can any fleet go out next year. A sad, vicious, negligent court, and all sober men there fearful of the ruin of the whole kingdom this next year; from which, good God deliver us." Such ships as were in commission were commanded by haughty young nobles, wholly ignorant of naval affairs. One of these fair-weather captains, a son of Lord Bristol, was heard to say that he hoped not to see "a tarpawlin" in command of a ship for a twelvemonth. The honest tarpawlins confessed that "the true English valour we talk of is almost spent and worn out."

Direful calamities had not broken the national spirit; but the infamous corruption of the higher classes was eating into the foundation of England's greatness. Her people were losing that masculine simplicity, that healthy devotion to public and private duties, that religious earnestness — intolerant, no doubt, but rarely simulated by the followers of Calvin or the followers of Arminius in the greatest heat of their conflicts — the English were losing that nationality, whose excess may be ludicrous, but whose utter want is despicable. Their high intellect was being emasculated by a corrupt literature. Science was groping in the dark under the auspices of the Royal Society; and divinity was holding forth from orthodox pulpits on the excesses of the early reformers, and the duty of non-resistance to kings deriving their power direct from heaven. These follies probably did little harm; and men gradually shook off their delusions, and went forward to seek for experimental science that had useful ends, and for practical theology that would make them wiser and happier.

But the corruptions of the court soon worked upon the principles of the people, through a debasing popular literature. The drama had come back after an exile of twenty years. When the drama was banished, tragedy was still a queen wearing her purple and her pall; and the "wood-notes wild" of comedy were as fresh and joyous as those of the lark in spring. The drama came back in the shameless garb, and with the brazen look, and the drunken voice, of the lowest strumpet. The people were to be taught that Shakespeare was a barbarian, and not to be tolerated in his own simplicity. He was, if heard at all, to furnish the *libretto* of an opera, to be got up with dresses and decorations by Sir William D'Avenant. "I saw," says Evelyn[s] in 1662,

"*Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, played; but now the old plays began to disgust this refined age, since his majesty being so long abroad." This refined age when it brought women to personate female characters, heard from the lips of Nell Gwyn and Mary Davis, the foulest verses, which they were selected to speak to furnish additional relish to the licentiousness of the poet.

The theatre was at the very height of fashion when it was most shameless. The actresses were removed from "The King's House," to become the mistresses of the king, by their gradual promotion from being the mistresses of the king's servants. Nell threw up her parts, and would act no more when Lord Buckhurst gave her a hundred a year, in 1667. In 1671, when Mr. Evelyn walked with the king through St. James's Park, Mrs. Nell looked out of her garden on a terrace at the top of the wall, and there was "familiar discourse" between his majesty and the "impudent comedian," at which scene Mr. Evelyn was "heartily sorry." It was well for England that her salt had not wholly lost its savour; that the middle class of London, though they rushed to the savage bull-baitings of the bear-garden, which had been shut up during the time of the Long Parliament, were too indignant at the costliness of the court to be enamoured of its gilded profligacy. It was better still for England that some little of the old Puritan spirit was left amongst the humblest classes — that the Bible was read by the poor, and Rochester and Shadwell were to them unknown.

Amidst the abandonment of the court to its pleasures — the rapacity of the royal favourites, who received gratuities and pensions not to be counted by hundreds but by thousands of pounds — the jealousy of the parliament in granting money which they knew would be wasted — the spring of 1667 arrived, without any preparations for carrying on the naval war. When the king's treasurer had got some of the money which the house of commons tardily voted, there were more pressing necessities to be supplied than the pay of sailors, or the fitting out of ships.

On the 23rd of January, the sailors were in mutiny at Wapping, and the Horse Guards were going to quell them. They were in insurrection for the want of pay. When the money was obtained from parliament they still mutinied, for they were still unpaid. On the 5th of June the Portuguese ambassador had gone on board *The Happy Return*, in the Hope, ordered to sail for Holland; but the crew refused to go until they were paid. Other ships were in mutiny the same day. On the 8th of June the Dutch fleet of eighty sail was off Harwich. It was time to stir. The king sent Lord Oxford to raise the militia of the eastern counties; and "my Lord Barkeley is going down to Harwich also to look after the militia there; and there is also the duke of Monmouth, and with him a great many young Hectors, the Lord Chesterfield, my Lord Mandeville, and others"; but, adds Pepys,[m] "to little purpose, I fear, but to debauch the country women thereabouts."

On the 10th of June the Dutch were at the Nore. Then, indeed, the matter was past the skill of the "young Hectors." The enemy had advanced almost as high as the Hope. Monk has rushed down to Gravesend — "in his shirt," writes Andrew Marvell.[v] Money is now forthcoming to pay the revolted seamen; but, sighs Pepys, "people that have been used to be deceived by us as to money won't believe us; and we know not, though we have it, how almost to promise it." The Dutch fleet has dropped down to Sheerness. "The alarm was so great," writes Evelyn,[s] "that it put both country and city into fear — a panic and consternation, such as I hope I shall never see more; everybody was flying, none knew why or whither." Monk was at Gravesend, "with a great many idle lords and gentlemen." Opposite them was Tilbury.

Did any of these "idle lords and gentlemen, with their pistols and fooleries," think of the time when the great queen stood like a rock upon that shore; and her people gathered round her with invincible confidence; and the greatest armament that ever threatened England was scattered by her true gentlemen — the Raleighs and Carews, who loved their country with a filial love, and hurled foul scorn at the invader? Charles, if not belied by the Dutch, was deliberating in council on the propriety of a flight to Windsor, by way of example to his terrified people.

On the 11th, news came to London that Sheerness was taken. The drums were beating all night for the trained-bands to be in arms in the morning, with bullets and powder, and a fortnight's victuals. The Londoners were momentarily relieved of their panic; for the Dutch fleet had sailed up the Medway. Chatham was safe, the courtiers said. Monk had stopped the river with chains and booms; and Upnor Castle was fortified. Chains and booms, and Upnor Castle, availed not long against the resolution of Ruyter and De Witt, who were about to exact the penalty for the wanton desolation of the coasts of the Texel. They went about their work in a manly way — not burning Gravesend, which was really defenceless, but breaking through the defences of the Medway, behind which our ships lay unrigged. They were quickly set on fire. In Upnor Castle and the forts at Chatham, there was little ammunition; and the Dutch "made no more of Upnor Castle's shooting, than of a fly."

The proud ship which bore the king to England, *The Royal Charles*, was secured by the invaders as a trophy; and when they had made their strength sufficiently manifest to the panic-stricken sycophants of the depraved court, they quietly sailed back to the Thames, and enforced a real blockade of London for many weeks.

The spirit of patriotism was trodden out of the sailors by neglect and oppression. There were many of them on board the Dutch ships, who called out to their countrymen on the river, "We did heretofore fight for tickets; now we fight for dollars." The sailors' wives went up and down the streets of Wapping, crying "This comes of your not paying our husbands." Mobs assembled at Westminster, shouting for "a parliament, a parliament." They broke the Lord Chancellor's windows, and set up a gibbet before his gate. Had the Dutch gone up the Thames beyond Deptford, it is not impossible that the iniquities of the Stuarts might have more quickly come to an end. Such a consummation was not to be desired. The English people had to endure two more decades of misrule, that they might gather strength to fit themselves for constitutional government. Besides the disgrace and humiliation, England suffered little from the Dutch in the Thames and the Medway. The Londoners were cut off from their supply of sea-borne coal — no irremediable evil in summer, but one that probably hastened a peace. On the 28th the Dutch fleet was lying triumphantly at the Nore — "a dreadful spectacle," says Evelyn,[8] "as every Englishman saw, and a dishonour never to be wiped off." It was a spectacle of dishonour which has never been seen since, and will never be seen again, unless there should again be such a combination of anti-national elements as in the days of Charles the Second — a profligate and corrupt court, avaricious and selfish ministers, a bribed parliament, an intolerant church, a slavish bench of justice. The disgrace of 1667 will not have been in vain, if it teach the great lesson that the corruption of the high is the corruption of the national honour at its fountain head. On the 29th of July a treaty of peace between England, Holland, and France, was concluded at Breda.

THE FALL OF CLARENDON (1667 A.D.)

The fall of Lord Clarendon from power, in 1667, is one of those events whose causes can only be adequately developed, if they can ever be fully and satisfactorily set forth, through an intimate acquaintance with the public documents and private memorials of the period. A faint outline of these combinations, in connection with an estimate of the character of the fallen man, is all that we can pretend to offer.

Sir Edward Hyde, of all the companions of the adversity of Charles, was by far the fittest minister to guide him through the extreme difficulties of his altered position. He was hated by the queen-mother. His habits of thought and action were diametrically opposed to the levities and vices of the king and the younger courtiers. He had many early associations with the struggle for civil rights, which made him a stumbling-block in the way of any broad attempts to emulate the despotisms of other European monarchies. He was by principle and education devotedly attached to the Protestantism of the Church of England. He was thus no object of affection amongst many whose poverty he had shared, but from whose habits he was altogether alien. But his great abilities were indispensable to Charles; and thus Sir Edward Hyde became the earl of Clarendon, lord chancellor, and the real minister of England, all other administrative functionaries being subordinate to him. It was necessary to govern through parliaments; and Clarendon, by his experience, his dignified carriage, his rhetorical and literary powers, was eminently fitted for the duties of a parliamentary minister.

He was for a while all-successful. The rooted dislike of the queen-mother was neutralised, even to the point of her graciously receiving the plebeian duchess of York. The king and his associates were compelled to manifest respect to the decorous chancellor, and to compensate their submission to his wisdom by their ridicule of his manners. He was hated by the king and the favourites because he had not, when the parliament was lavish and the nation mad, extracted from the temper of the hour a far greater fixed revenue, such as would have made parliaments less necessary for the king. But when parliament had the presumption to ask for an account of the disposal of the sums that had been voted, then Clarendon's opposition to any interference with the old power of the crown made his conscientious scruples about the limits of prerogative less obnoxious. The principles of the man were not fitted for the retrogressive objects of the crown, or the progressive movement of the nation. The triumphs of statesmanship are not to be accomplished like the victory of the deliverers of Gideon, whilst the sun remains in the same place of the heavens.

As early as 1663, the earl of Bristol, a Catholic peer, in his seat in parliament, attributing to the lord chancellor all the evils under which the country laboured, impeached him of high-treason. The opinion of the judges was required; and they answered, that by the laws of the realm no articles of high-treason could be originally exhibited in the house of peers, by any one peer against another; and that the matters alleged in the charge against the lord chancellor did not amount to treason. Personal hostility appears to have provoked this ill-judged attack. Four years afterwards it was pretty well known that the king was alienated from his grave adviser. Clarendon had made enemies all around him by his faults as well as by his virtues. He was haughty and passionate. He was grasping and ostentatious. He had returned from exile in the deepest poverty. In seven years he had acquired a sufficient fortune to build a mansion superior to ducal palaces, and to fur-

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nish it with the most costly objects of taste and luxury. He was envied by the nobility. He was hated by the people; for in the grandeur of what they called "Dunkirk House" they saw what they believed to be the evidence of foreign bribery

The duke of Buckingham had been banished from court through a quarrel with Lady Castlemain; and revenge threw him into the ranks of those to whom the government was obnoxious. He became the advocate of the sectaries; he became the avowed and especial enemy of the chancellor. For a short time he was sent to the Tower, upon the supposed discovery of some treasonable intrigues; but he soon regained his liberty, and his royal master was propitiated when the duke had made his peace with "the lady." She interceded for Buckingham; but at first was unsuccessful. The court tattle said that the king had called Castlemain a jade that meddled with things she had nothing to do with; and that Castlemain called the king a fool, who suffered his businesses to be carried on by those who did not understand them. But very soon "the lady" carried her point; Buckingham was restored to favour; Clarendon was sacrificed.

Charges of the most serious nature were got up against him. The imputation of having sold Dunkirk for his private advantage was confidently maintained. Charles, through the duke of York, asked Clarendon to resign. He indignantly refused, saying, that his resignation would amount to a confession of guilt. After a conference of two hours the great minister saw that his disgrace was resolved upon — disgrace which "had been certainly designed in my lady Castlemain's chamber." On the 15th of October, the two houses voted an address of thanks to the throne for the removal of the chancellor, and the king in his reply pledged himself never to employ Lord Clarendon again in any capacity. This was not enough. Seventeen charges were prepared against him by a committee of the commons; and on the 12th of November the house impeached him of high-treason at the bar of the peers. There were animated debates in that house, in which Clarendon had many supporters. The two houses got angry. The court became alarmed. Clarendon was advised to leave the kingdom clandestinely, but he refused. Then the king sent him an express command to retire to the Continent. He obeyed; addressing a letter, vindicating himself, to the house of peers. An act was passed on the 29th of December, banishing him for life, unless he should return by the following 1st of February.

The close of the political career of Clarendon, under circumstances of punishment and disgrace so disproportioned to his public or private demerits, has left no stain upon his memory. Whatever were his faults as a statesman, he stands upon a far higher elevation than the men who accomplished his ruin. As to the king, his parasites and his mistresses, who were in raptures to be freed from his observation and censure, their dislike was Clarendon's high praise. In the encouragement which Charles indirectly gave to attacks upon the minister who had saved him from many of the worst consequences of the rashness of the royalists, and had laboured in the service of his father and himself for twenty-seven years, either in war, or in exile, or in triumph, with a zeal and ability which no other possessed, we see only the heartless ingratitude of the king, and his utterly selfish notions of the duties of a sovereign. Clarendon had become disagreeable to him through the very qualities which made the government endurable to high-minded and sober men. Clarendon went into exile. It was some time before he was permitted to find a resting place; but he found it at last at Montpelier. He was probably never sincerely reconciled to the loss of power and grandeur; but he

believed that he was reconciled; and in dedicating himself to a renewal of that literary employment which has given him the best title to the respectful remembrance of mankind, he found that consolation which industry never failed to bestow upon a robust understanding, that was also open to religious impressions.

BUCKINGHAM AND THE CABAL MINISTRY

When the seals were taken away from Clarendon they were given to Sir Orlando Bridgman. The conduct of affairs fell into new hands. Southampton, the most respectable of Charles' first advisers was dead. Monk was worn out. Buckingham first came into power with Arlington as secretary of state, and Sir William Coventry. But soon the ministry comprised the five persons known as "The Cabal" — a name which signified what we now call the cabinet; but which name was supposed incorrectly to have been formed out of the initial letters of the names of the members — Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Ashley, Lauderdale. The word cabal had been used long before, to indicate a secret council.

Of the new advisers of Charles, Buckingham was the most influential at court, and he made great efforts to be at the same time the most popular. When Buckingham was taken to the Tower, Clarendon was depressed by the acclamations of the people, who shouted round the prisoner. As Clarendon had supported the church, Buckingham was the champion of the sectaries. Baxter says, "As the chancellor had made himself the head of the prelatical party, who were all for setting up themselves by force, and suffering none that were against them, so Buckingham would now be the head of all those parties that were for liberty of conscience." The candid non-conformist adds, "For the man was of no religion, but notoriously and professedly lustful"; but he qualifies his censure with this somewhat high praise — "and yet of greater wit and parts, and sounder principles as to the interests of humanity and the common good, than most lords in the court." The duke lived in York House, the temporary palace which his father had built, of which nothing now remains but the Water Gate. Here he dwelt during the four or five years of the Cabal administration, affording, as he always continued to afford, abundant materials for the immortal character of Zimri in Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel":

> "A man so various, that he seem'd to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
> Stiff in opinion, always in the wrong,
> Was every thing by starts and nothing long;
> But, in the course of one revolving moon,
> Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon:
> Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
> Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking."

Ashley, afterwards earl of Shaftesbury — the Antony Ashley Cooper of the protectorate, who clung to the Rump Parliament till he saw that Monk had sealed its fate, and then made his peace with Charles with surprising readiness — the ablest, and in some respects the most incomprehensible of the statesmen of his time — has had the double immortality of the satire of Butler as well as of Dryden. In Thanet House, in Aldersgate street, Ashley was at hand to influence the politics of the city. When the mob were roasting rumps in the streets, and were about to handle him roughly as he passed in his carriage, he turned their anger into mirth by his jokes. When the king

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frowned upon him he went straight from office to opposition, and made the court disfavour as serviceable to his ambition as the court's honours and rewards.

The history of the Cabal ministry, which extends over a period of six years, is not the history of a cabinet united by a common principle of agreement upon great questions of domestic and foreign policy. Nor is it the history of a sovereign asserting his own opinions, and watching over the administration of affairs, under the advice of a council, and through the agency of the great officers of state. Charles I, whether aiming to be despotic, or struggling for his crown and his life, was zealous, active, and self-confident. Charles II was absolutely indifferent to any higher objects than personal gratification; and to this circumstance we must refer some of the extraordinary anomalies of the government after the fall of Clarendon. He was neither honest nor able, with reference to any aptitude for the condition of life to which he was called. He did not desire, he said, to sit like a Turkish sultan, and sentence men to the bowstring; but he could not endure that a set of fellows should inquire into his conduct. Always professing his love of parliaments, he was always impatient of their interference. With such a sovereign, as utterly indifferent to the proprieties of his public station as to the decencies of his private life, we can scarcely expect that there should have been any consistent principle of administration. The terrible experience of thirty years imposed upon Charles some caution in the manifestation of his secret desire to be as absolute as his brother Louis of France. The great Bourbon was encumbered with no parliament; he had not to humble himself to beg for supplies of insolent commons; he was not troubled with any set of fellows to inquire into his conduct, and ask for accounts of expenditure; he had the gabelle and other imposts which fell upon the prostrate poor, without exciting the animosity of the dangerous rich; he was indeed a king, whose shoe-latchet nobles were proud to unloose, and whose transcendent genius and virtue prelates rejoiced to compare with the divine attributes. Such a blissful destiny as that of the Bourbon could not befall the Stuart by ordinary means. Charles would become as great as Louis, as far as his notion of greatness went, by becoming the tributary of Louis. He would sell his country's honour — he would renounce the religion he had sworn to uphold — for an adequate price. But this bargain should be a secret one. It should be secret even from a majority of his own ministers. Upon this point hinges the disgraceful history of the Cabal.

The story of the next twenty years, which brings us to the great era of our modern history, would be incomprehensible, if we did not constantly bear in mind, that public opinion had become a real element in national progress. The crown was constantly dreaming of the revival of despotism, to be accomplished by force and by corruption. Yet the crown, almost without a struggle, was bereft of the power of imprisoning without trial, by the passing of the Habeas Corpus Act; and it lost its control over the freedom of the press by the expiration of the licensing system. The church thought it possible to destroy non-conformity by fines and fetters. In its earlier liturgy it prayed to be delivered from "false doctrine, heresy, and schism." Yet when it had ejected the Puritans from the churches, and had shut up the conventicles, it laid the foundation of schisms which, in a few years, made dissent a principle which churchmen could not hope to crush and statesmen could not dare to despise. How can we account for the striking anomaly, that with a profligate court, a corrupt administration, a venal house of commons, a tyrannous church, the nation during the reign of Charles II was manifestly

progressing in the essentials of freedom, unless we keep in view that from the beginning of the century there had been an incessant struggle of the national mind against every form of despotic power? The desire for liberty, civil and spiritual, had become almost an instinct. The great leaders in this battle had passed away. The men who by fits aspired to be tribunes of the people were treacherous or inconstant. But the spirit of the nation was not dead. It made itself heard in parliament, with a voice that grew louder and louder, till the torrent was once again dammed up. A few more years of tyranny without disguise — and then the end.

The first movements of the Cabal ministry were towards a high and liberal policy — toleration for non-conformists, and an alliance with free Protestant states. A greater liberty to dissenters from the church followed the fall of Clarendon. We see transient and accidental motives for this passing toleration, rather than the assertion of a fixed principle. But when the parliament met, the active prelates and prelatists prevailed to prevent any bill of comprehension or indulgence to be brought in.

THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE (1668 A.D.)

At the opening of the session of parliament in 1668, the king announced that he had made a league defensive with the states-general of the United Provinces, to which Sweden had become a party. This was the Triple Alliance. The nation saw with reasonable apprehension the development of the vast schemes of ambition of Louis XIV. He was at war with Spain; but the great empire upon which the sun never set was fast falling to pieces — not perishing like a grand old house, overthrown by a hurricane's fury, but mouldering away with the dry-rot in every timber. France, on the contrary, was rising into the position of the greatest power in Europe. Her able but vainglorious king already looked upon the Spanish Netherlands as his certain prey. The United Provinces were hateful to him as the seat of religious and civil liberty.

The crisis was come when England, by a return to the policy of Cromwell, might have taken her place again at the head of the free Protestant states of Europe. When Charles announced to parliament this league with the United Provinces and Sweden, it was thought to be, says Pepys, "the only good public thing that hath been done since the king came into England." It was a marvel of diplomacy. De Witt and Sir William Temple met at the Hague as two honest men, without any finesse; and they quickly concluded a treaty which they believed to be for the honour and safety of both their countries. This treaty, says Burnet,[j] "was certainly the masterpiece of King Charles' life; and if he had stuck to it, it would have been both the strength and glory of his reign. This disposed the people to forgive all that was past, and to renew their confidence in him, which was shaken by the whole conduct of the Dutch war."

At the very time when the ambassador of England was negotiating the treaty which promised to be "the strength and glory of his reign," the king was making proposals to Louis for a clandestine treaty, by which England was to be "leased out" to France, "Like a tenement or pelting farm."[k]

MACAULAY'S CONTRAST OF ENGLAND AND FRANCE AT THAT PERIOD

We have now reached a point at which the history of the great English Revolution begins to be complicated with the history of foreign politics. The

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power of Spain had, during many years, been declining. She still, it is true, held in Europe the Milanese and the two Sicilies, Belgium, and Franche Comté. In America her dominions still spread, on both sides of the equator, far beyond the limits of the torrid zone. But this great body had been smitten with palsy, and was not only incapable of giving molestation to other states, but could not, without assistance, repel aggression.

France was now, beyond all doubt, the greatest power in Europe. Her resources have, since those days, absolutely increased, but have not increased so fast as the resources of England. It must also be remembered that, a hundred and eighty years ago, the empire of Russia, now a monarchy of the first class, was as entirely out of the system of European politics as Abyssinia or Siam, that the house of Brandenburg was then hardly more powerful than the house of Saxony, and that the republic of the United States had not then begun to exist. The weight of France, therefore, though still very considerable, has relatively diminished. Her territory was not in the days of Louis the Fourteenth quite so extensive as at present: but it was large, compact, fertile, well placed both for attack and for defence, situated in a happy climate, and inhabited by a grave, active, and ingenious people. The state implicitly obeyed the direction of a single mind. The great fiefs which, three hundred years before, had been, in all but name, independent principalities, had been annexed to the crown. Only a few old men could remember the last meeting of the states-general. The resistance which the Huguenots, the nobles, and the parliaments had offered to the kingly power, had been put down by the two great cardinals who had ruled the nation during forty years. The government was now a despotism, but, at least in its dealings with the upper classes, a mild and generous despotism, tempered by courteous manners and chivalrous sentiments. The means at the disposal of the sovereign were, for that age, truly formidable. His revenue, raised, it is true, by a severe and unequal taxation which pressed heavily on the cultivators of the soil, far exceeded that of any other potentate. His army, excellently disciplined, and commanded by the greatest generals then living, already consisted of more than a hundred and twenty thousand men. Such an array of regular troops had not been seen in Europe since the downfall of the Roman Empire. Of maritime powers France was not the first. But, though she had rivals on the sea, she had not yet a superior. Such was her strength during the last forty years of the seventeenth century, that no enemy could singly withstand her, and that two great coalitions, in which half Christendom was united against her, failed of success.

In England, however, the whole stock of popularity, great as it was, with which the king had commenced his administration, had long been expended. To loyal enthusiasm had succeeded profound disaffection. The public mind had now measured back again the space over which it had passed between 1640 and 1660, and was once more in the state in which it had been when the Long Parliament met.

The prevailing discontent was compounded of many feelings. One of these was wounded national pride. That generation had seen England, during a few years, allied on equal terms with France, victorious over Holland and Spain, the mistress of the sea, the terror of Rome, the head of the Protestant interest. Her resources had not diminished; and it might have been expected that she would have been at least as highly considered in Europe under a legitimate king, strong in the affection and willing obedience of his subjects, as she had been under an usurper whose utmost vigilance and energy were required to keep down a mutinous people. Yet she had, in

consequence of the imbecility and meanness of her rulers, sunk so low that any German or Italian principality which brought five thousand men into the field was a more important member of the commonwealth of nations.

With the sense of national humiliation was mingled anxiety for civil liberty. Rumours, indistinct indeed, but perhaps the more alarming by reason of their indistinctness, imputed to the court a deliberate design against all the constitutional rights of Englishmen. It had even been whispered that this design was to be carried into effect by the intervention of foreign arms. The thought of such intervention made the blood, even of the cavaliers, boil in their veins. *h*