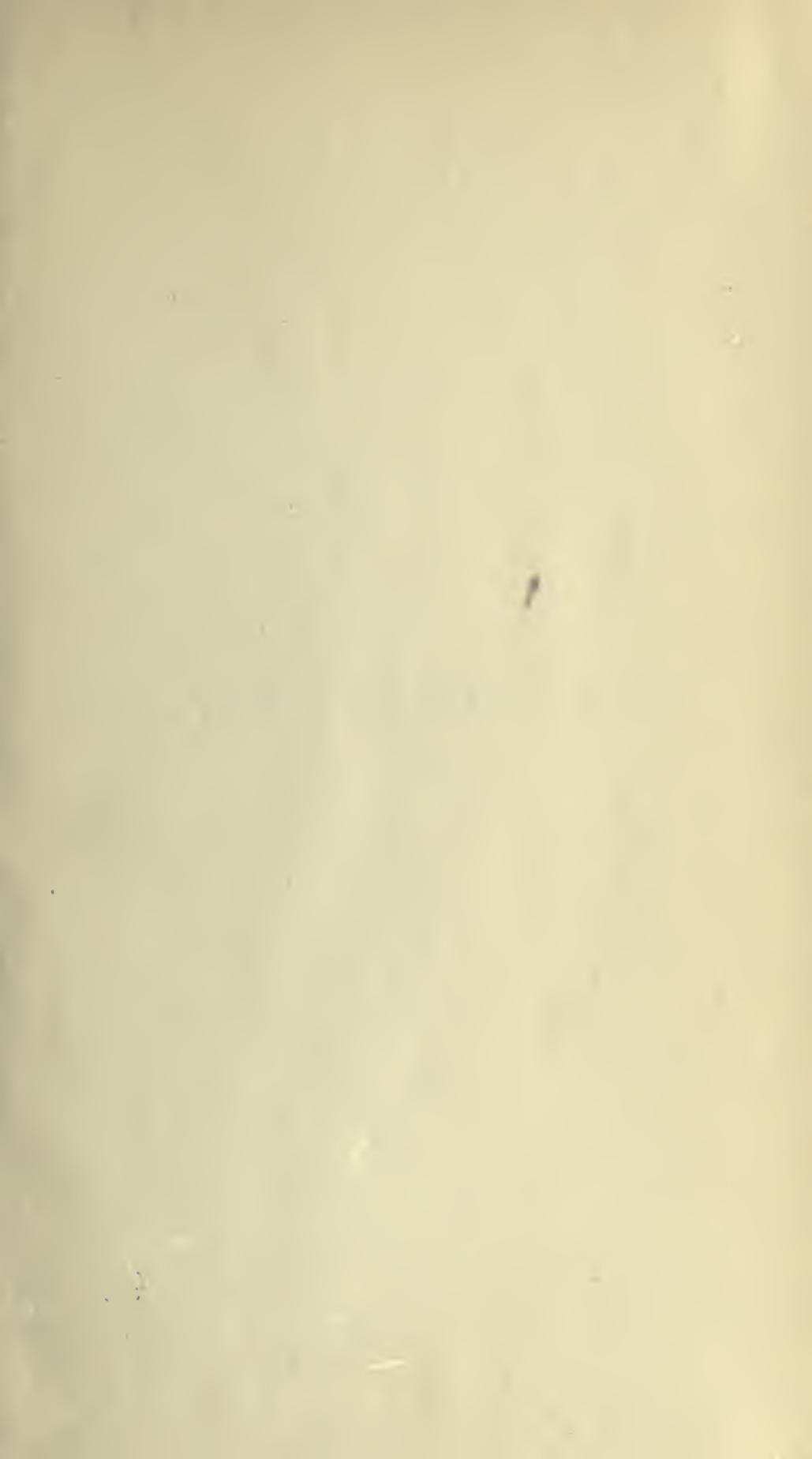


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WILLIAM III.

*(From the engraving of Wissing's portrait in the British Museum.)*

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# THE COURT OF WILLIAM III.

BY

EDWIN AND MARION SHARPE GREW

*WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS*

THE  
COURT OF  
WILLIAM III.

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TO  
THE DUKE OF PORTLAND  
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## PREFACE

“THE COURT of William III.” is in no sense a history of the reign. The King’s important Continental campaigns and the dramatic events in Ireland and Scotland have been scarcely mentioned, because they do not lie within the scope of the book. The writers’ aim has been to give, however inadequately, some idea of the King himself, and of the men and women with whom he came in contact as they appeared to their contemporaries. As far as possible, their part in current events has been told by themselves from their letters and diaries ; with only such narrative matter as was necessary to make their actions intelligible.

The authors wish to take this opportunity of expressing their gratitude to the Duke of Portland for his very great kindness in allowing copies to be made of the letters in the correspondence between William III., Prince of Orange, and William Bentinck, first Earl of Portland, which here appear for the first time in print ;

as well as for the reproduction of the portrait at Welbeck Abbey of William Bentinck. They also wish to thank Mr Richard W. Goulding, Librarian of Welbeck Abbey, for his assistance in the examination of the letters and for permission to make use of his translations. They are furthermore greatly indebted to Mr Goulding for much valuable help, especially in reading the proofs.

*February 18, 1910.*

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THE  
COURT OF  
WILLIAM III

# The Court of William III

## INTRODUCTORY

THE genius of William III. saved England from an enslaving despotism and a degrading religious coercion, but he never earned either her gratitude or her affection. Sickly and taciturn, he lacked the art of popularity, and though his intervention at an acute crisis of England's fortunes conserved the threatened liberties of her people, yet, except for brief flashes of ephemeral popularity, he remained to the last mistrusted and misunderstood. During the reigns of the last two Stuarts, Charles II. had sold England to France, and James II. had betrayed her to Rome. Yet though the people saw their liberties and their religion menaced, they could afford to wait, for James had no son, and must be succeeded on the throne by his daughter the Princess Mary, and her husband the Protestant Prince William of Orange. But on 10th June 1688 an event happened that was destined to change the fate of nations, and to bring about the bloodshed of many gallant gentlemen in a lost and worthless cause, for the

Queen, Mary of Modena, gave birth to a son, James Prince of Wales, afterwards known as the "Old Pretender." "A young Prince born, which will cause disputes," notes the diarist John Evelyn with characteristic brevity; and adds, "about 2 o'clock we heard the Tower Ordnance discharg'd and the bells ringing for the birth of a Prince of Wales. This was very surprising, it having been universally given out that Her Majesty did not look till next month."

A modified form of rejoicing nevertheless took place. The 17th was appointed as a day of thanksgiving in London and its environs, and the Bishop of Rochester drew up a form of prayer to be used in celebrating the birth of the unhappy prince who was to taste the bitterness of lifelong exile, of unsuccessful enterprise, and disappointed hopes. In the country at large the rejoicings were "very cold and forced"; for though bonfires were made here and there, and congratulatory addresses were circulated and subscribed to by those who feared to do otherwise; even before the arrival of the luckless James Francis Edward it was whispered that a trick was designed to be played upon the nation by the court and the Jesuits. For some time it had appeared improbable that the Queen would give her husband an heir to the throne, as none of her children had survived infancy, and for several years past it had seemed as if she herself might not survive the English winters. So much was this apprehended that she probably had the mortification of knowing that among the extreme Papists the name of James Fitz-James was mentioned

as a possible successor to the throne in place of William. Fitz-James was the son of the King and Arabella Churchill, and was greatly beloved by his father, who had created him Duke of Berwick. He was "a soft and harmless young man," says Burnet, and had as yet given no promise of his future military distinction, perhaps because the dislike of the Queen had "kept him from making any great figure."

However that might be, the popular imagination, inflamed by suspicion of every action of the court, was busy with rumours as soon as the news of the expected heir filtered abroad through the London coffee-houses into the country.

In 1687 the Queen, who was generally ailing, had spent some time at Bath, where the King had joined her for a few days, while she was taking the waters. About the same time her mother, the Duchess of Modena, of the House of Este, vulgarly known as "Mother East," made a vow to the Virgin of Loretto, and besought her aid in giving her daughter an heir to the throne. The Queen believed that this prayer had been instantly fulfilled. Such a circumstance naturally aroused suspicions in Protestant minds, and suspicions once aroused seldom fail to find substantiation. The Roman Catholic priests added fuel to the fire by confidently affirming that the child would be a boy. Indeed, the "ingenious Mrs Behn," a novelist of the day, whom a contemporary unkindly describes as "a loose and paltry poetaster," inscribed some verses "To the Royal Boy." A hundred trifles deepened the growing

dissatisfaction. The Queen's toilets were not conducted with the accustomed ceremonial, and none were permitted to be present at them but a few Papists. Her stepdaughter, the Princess Anne, was one of those excluded, and the Countess of Clarendon, formerly a lady of the bedchamber, visiting the Queen unannounced, was hustled out "with some sharpness" by the Countess of Powis, who demanded, "What do you here?" Already coarse libels began to be circulated denouncing the projected imposture. Of this the King and Queen were both aware. But the King omitted, through indolence or indifference, to furnish unquestionable proofs of the genuineness of his expectations of an heir; and the Queen, with more pique than prudence, declared that "since she saw some were suspecting her of so black a contrivance, she scorned to satisfy those who could entertain such thoughts of her."

The Princess Anne wrote to her sister the Princess Mary in 1688 giving her own views as to the projected deception. For the better caution, lest the letter should go astray, she speaks of her father under the pseudonym of Mansel. At this time Anne and Mary were on affectionate terms; it was not till later that Anne's evil genius, the Duchess of Marlborough, worked on her friend's weakness and jealousy to stir up ill feeling between the sisters. Anne begins by complaining that the King, her father, has retracted his permission to her to go to Holland—at Lord Sunderland's suggestion she thinks, and expresses her regret at not seeing her

“dear sister.” She adds:—“Il faut que je vous dise, . . . que la grossesse de la femme de Mansel est un peu suspecte. . . . La certitude où elle est que ce sera un fils, et les principes de cette Religion étant tels que rien ne l’arrête, quelque impie que soit le moyen qu’elle met en usage, pourvu qu’il avance ses intérêts, cela donne quelque lieu de craindre que l’on intente quelque tricherie.”<sup>1</sup>

A later letter is equally explicit. The Queen appeared to shrink from the subject, and avoided being alone with her stepdaughter. Nothing but ocular demonstration, adds Anne, with the coarse frankness of her time, will convince her of the genuineness of the promised heir. Some court gossip follows: Lady Rochester is dead, and Anne fears that Lady Sunderland’s flattering, insinuating manners may now ingratiate her with the Queen. The Queen herself, she says, is so disliked and so proud, that “les dames de qualité” avoid going to court as much as possible.

Besides this disquieting letter Mary received one from her stepmother announcing her expectations of an heir, but in very vague terms (“fort douteuses”), while at the same time James wrote confidently at a time when it was impossible to speak with assurance. Noting these things in her diary, Mary thanks God with

<sup>1</sup> “I must tell you that Mansel’s wife’s expectations of an heir are somewhat suspected. Her certitude that it will be a boy, and the principles of her religion being such that nothing stands in its way, however impious may be the means which it employs—this gives rise to fears that some trick is intended.”—*Lettres et Mémoires de Marie Reine d’Angleterre*, ed. by Comtesse Bentinck.

her characteristic piety that the news does not trouble her, for in her present position she may be better able to serve Him than in a more eminent one.

James had said no word of the impending event to his brother-in-law Clarendon, who notes in his diary for 10th June :—

“ In the morning I was at St James’ Church, where I observed great whispering, but could not learn what the matter was. As I was going home, my page told me the Queen was brought to bed of a son : I sent presently to St James’ (whither the Court removed but the last night), and word was brought me that it was true that her Majesty was delivered about ten this morning. As soon as I had dined, I went to Court, and found the King shaving. I kissed his hand and wished him joy. He said the Queen was so quick in her labour, and he had so much company, that he had not time to dress himself until now. He bid me go and see the Prince. I went into the room which had formerly been the Duchess’s private bedchamber, and there my Lady Powis (who was made governess) showed me the Prince ; he was asleep in his cradle, and was a very fine child to look upon.”

The King, on receiving a message from his wife on the morning of the 10th, brought to St James’s many Peers and Privy Councillors to be present on the occasion of the Prince’s birth, but they were either Roman Catholics, or Protestants who had not the confidence of the nation. The Protestant ladies that belonged to the court were all gone to church before the news was let go abroad, for it happened on Trinity

Sunday, and neither the Dutch Ambassador, nor any member of the Hyde family—natural representatives of the interests of Mary and Anne—had been invited to be present. Sancroft the Archbishop of Canterbury was in the Tower, where he had just been sent for refusing to read the King's illegal Declaration of Indulgence, and, most suspicious circumstance of all, Anne herself was at Bath, where she had been urged to go by her father to take the waters, against the advice of her physician, who had not considered her health to be equal to such a course of treatment, and whence she had not purposed to return till a month later, when everyone expected the Prince's birth to take place. Moreover, a warming-pan had been brought into the Queen's bedroom, "but it was not opened, that it might be seen there was fire and nothing else in it; so here was matter for suspicion with which all people were filled." What was easier, in short, than to introduce a supposititious baby into the Queen's room in a warming-pan and foist him on the nation as the heir to the throne?

In these days gossip could not be flashed all over Europe in the morning papers. Mary had received warning from her sister that a fraud might be practised upon them, but all the rumours and suspicions that were agitating London could not then have reached Holland. It is difficult to realise how remote England was from the Continent in the old days of sailing-ships, when for news from abroad London lay at the mercy of sea and wind. "Time lies heavy on our hands till the

arrival of a fresh mail," says the *Spectator*; one "longs to receive further particulars, to hear what will be the next step, or what will be the consequence of that which has been already taken. A westerly wind keeps the whole town in suspense, and puts a stop to conversation."

But whatever William and Mary's private opinions on the subject, "they received the news of this birth very decently," says Burnet.<sup>1</sup> Letters apprising them of an event so momentously affecting their own future, gave them no grounds for the suspicions that were communicated to them later. There was, besides, no reason why the Princess's stepmother should not have a son; indeed, when later on she gave birth to another child, the question of its parentage was never raised. The Princess therefore ordered that her little stepbrother, the Prince of Wales, should be prayed for in her own chapel, and William sent over his cousin Zulestein to offer congratulations. Meanwhile the Prince learnt from many hands what was being said and thought in London about the trick that had been played by James on his children and country. Zulestein wrote to the Hague that not one person in ten believed the Prince of Wales to be the Queen's child. The evidence appeared convincing, and as William learnt also that his action in ordering the child to be prayed for had been taken ill in England, he gave directions that the prayers should be discontinued. This, however, gave such great offence to the English court that, fearing

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, a historian of his own times.

to precipitate a rupture, while his preparations were yet incomplete, he ordered the Prince of Wales's name to be again mentioned in the prayers. For Zulestein, having ascertained the state of feeling in England, had returned with positive assurances that no more favourable opportunity for William's intervention would ever occur. The Prince now felt secure of the influential invitation that would sanction his taking vigorous measures. The whole country, they told him, was in a state of ferment ; the proceedings against the bishops, the persecution of the clergy, caused all men to fear the impending ruin of the Church and the arbitrary imposition of popery upon the nation, while "the pretended birth," says Burnet, in his forcible style, "made them reckon that popery and slavery would be entailed on the nation." William was urged to strike while the iron was hot, for the heat of passion had welded all men together in a great cause. If this excitement cooled, the favourable moment would go by. He therefore "set himself with great application to prepare for the intended expedition."

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY LIFE OF WILLIAM III

ONE Sunday in the May of 1641, another Mary, the daughter of Charles I., was married at Whitehall with little ceremony to William of Nassau. By a clause in the marriage treaty the little Princess was to remain in England till her twelfth year. Her mother, who disliked the marriage, herself took her to Holland in 1642, where she assumed her position as William's wife with an allowance of £1500 a year pocket-money, and gave audiences, we are told, with a gravity remarkable for her years. Mary's life must have always been a difficult and uncongenial one. She never became one with her husband's people. She remained unpopular among them, and the dislike was so far reciprocated that the Princess would never learn her husband's language.

When Mary became the wife of William of Nassau, Europe was still in the throes of the disastrous Thirty Years' War, in the course of which the revolted Netherlands had fought imperial Spain for religious freedom. In gratitude to their Stadtholder, Frederick Henry, for

his wise administration and military service, the Dutch people had made his office hereditary, with reversion to his son William, then a child of five. William succeeded him in 1647, and after a brief and troubled period of continual dissensions and arbitrary attempts at absolutism died in 1650. A few days after his death Mary gave birth to a son who was to be William III. of England. The sudden death of William II. left the Orange party without a leader. Roughly speaking, the House of Orange represented the imperial interests of the republic, and was supported by the people. The party opposed to them was now headed by John de Witt, who wanted to preserve peace for the development of trade and the internal prosperity of the country, and represented the interests of the burgher oligarchy. The Princess Mary, left a widow at nineteen, offended all those who might have supported and helped her to consolidate her position. She was afflicted with an overweening pride of birth and would not permit anyone of less exalted extraction to eat at her table. Her quarrels with her husband's mother were continuous, and began immediately over the guardianship of the infant Prince. The Princess Dowager, the mother of William II., Princess Amelia of Solms, was a woman of a widely different stamp. To her William III. owed his great qualities. She was diplomatic, affable, and gracious to all. Even so experienced a courtier as Sir William Temple declared her to be "a woman of the most wit and good sense in general that he had known," and in spite of her small

revenues her excellent management enabled her to live "always in as great plenty and more luxuriousness and elegance than is seen in greater courts."

The same writer notes that among "other pieces of greatness she was constantly served all in gold plate, which went so far as to great bottles for water, and a great cistern for bottles, to the key of her closet, and everything of that kind she usually touched; which I mention, because I think 'tis what the greatest Kings of Christendom have not pretended to, nor any I have heard of on this side Persia."

The Princess Dowager and her daughter-in-law had only one point in common, that of quarrelling with their Orange kinsmen. When the Prince was nine years old he was confided, with the consent of the States General, to the governorship of his uncle Frederick of Nassau, a devoted adherent of the House of Orange. On his nephew's birth he had had his entrance gates inscribed with Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, predictions which he applied to the infant Prince. A well-known Calvinist preacher (Dr Cornelius Trigland) was made the director of William's education. He wrote a book for him on the lines of Fénelon's *Télémaque*, called *The Idea or Portrait of a Christian Prince*, and, surviving to see William restored to his hereditary rights, he sent a letter from his death-bed to his former pupil urging him to make a righteous use of his recovered powers.

During William's minority from 1650 to 1672, John de Witt, by virtue of his office as Grand Pensionary,

was practically Prime Minister of Holland. He was called to the direction of affairs at a critical moment. A disastrous naval war between England and Holland left Cromwell in a strong enough position to insist on the insertion of a secret clause in the peace negotiations excluding William Prince of Orange, or any of his race, from the Stadtholdership or Captain Generalship. The secret leaked out through the treachery of a clerk, and raised a storm of indignation among the Orange party. De Witt had carried the "Act of Seclusion," as it was called, by a strategy, because he believed peace to be essential to the interests of Holland. He had, moreover, no reason for protecting the interests of William, whose father had arbitrarily and illegally imprisoned his own father Jacob de Witt in the castle of Loevenstein, a fact of which the old man never failed to remind his son every day till his death. But his sharp practice and betrayal of their young Prince's interests was never forgotten or forgiven by the majority of Dutch people.

William's mother was not at this time in a position to assert her son's rights and thought it expedient to accept de Witt's explanations of his action. The restoration of Charles II. in May 1660, however, changed the face of affairs for his nephew. De Witt's hostility to the House of Stuart underwent an abrupt transformation. Charles was magnificently entertained at the Hague. On visiting the States of Holland, he presented to de Witt a paper, signed with his own hand, commending to him "the Princess, my sister,

and the Prince of Orange, my nephew, two persons who are extremely dear to me." Whereupon the States rescinded the Act of Seclusion, and undertook the education of the young Prince. As a matter of fact, this scheme was not put into execution till several years later, and the Princess Mary, dying shortly afterwards, nominated her brother Charles II. as the guardian of her son, then ten years old, a charge which, fortunately for him, his uncle did not undertake. Meanwhile trade and colonial rivalries precipitated another war with England in which London had the humiliation of hearing Dutch guns, and Admiral de Ruyter burned the shipping in the Thames. At home growing activity on the part of the Orange faction obliged de Witt to take conciliatory measures.

After consulting with the Princess Dowager of Orange, he suggested to the States of Holland that they should undertake William's education as "child of State." A commission was consequently appointed, under the superintendence of de Witt himself, to have the boy properly instructed in the principles of the reformed religion, and in the rights and privileges of the State. William, however, was now sixteen, with strong views of his own. He regarded the States of Holland as usurpers, and declined to take any part in his grandmother's overtures to them. At this time his court was that of an English prince, composed principally of Englishmen, and the wife of his uncle Frederick of Nassau-Zulestein, herself an Englishwoman and the dominant partner in the alliance, had



*Emery Walker.*

"THE CHILD OF STATE."

William III. at the age of seven.

*(From the portrait by Cornelius Jansen van Ceulen the Younger.)*

70 1941  
CALIFORNIA

great influence over her nephew. The Princess Dowager particularly disliked Frederick of Nassau because her husband, the Stadtholder Frederick Henry, had acknowledged him as his natural son.

De Witt's first anxiety was to remove William from this English influence, and he induced the States to appoint a new governor for their ward. William spared no pains to retain his uncle in the office. Seeking out the French ambassador, he implored him with tears to induce the Grand Pensionary "to spare him so great a sorrow," promising to look upon M. de Witt as a father and to conduct himself as a true "child of State," if only his request were granted. He was so ill with grief that he could not leave his room or even his bed. He declared "that it was a mistake to continue to treat him as a child, that he was no longer one, and that he would soon let them know it." He made a last attempt, when the new governor was appointed, begging him to refuse the post, and promising to see to his future welfare and that of his children. When he saw that the change was inevitable, he resigned himself with silence and a simulation of submission. His grandmother alone he never forgave, and ingeniously made things unpleasant for her by asking his new guardians to inquire into his accounts, which were in great confusion, and for which she was responsible. He objected that his land was always being sold under its value, that none of his debts were paid, and that accounts were owing to his tradesmen of years' standing. De Witt did his part

towards the young Prince with the scrupulous fidelity that characterised his actions. He shared his games as well as his studies, and spared no pains to gain the confidence of his wary, self-contained charge.

Soon after these arrangements had been made Sir William Temple came to Holland as ambassador for the Triple Alliance.<sup>1</sup> He has left a minute description of the people among whom William's childhood was spent, and of their character and habits, as well as portraits of de Witt and of William himself. Of the former he says:—"For the Pensioner de Witt, his habit grave and plain and popular. His table what only served for his family or a friend: his train (besides commisaries and clerks kept for him in an office adjoining his house at the public charge) was only one man, who performed all the menial offices of his house at home; and upon his visits of ceremony, putting on a plain livery-cloak, attended his coach abroad. For upon other occasions he was seen usually in the streets on foot and alone, like the commonest Burgher in the town. It was a country," concludes the negotiator of the Triple Alliance, "where a man will rather choose to travel than to live, and will find more things to observe than desire, and more persons to esteem than to love."

It is thus that one sees de Witt, trim and formal, walking unattended in the clean bright streets of the city, gravely acknowledging the deferential salutations of passers-by—going home to his plain fare in the

<sup>1</sup> England, Holland, and Sweden against France, formed in 1668.

home whose shining furniture was ever "scour'd and rubbed" under the watchful eye of his wife, Wendela Bicker, whom he tenderly loved, and with whom alone he could relax his watchful, cautious mind from the cares of State. But now, when de Witt's fortunes seemed at their zenith, they were about to sink; "the blind Fury with the abhorred shears" had ordained that he should make way for a greater than himself. William of Orange was emerging from his unhappy childhood. Surrounded ever by hostile influences and watchful enemies, he had grown up silent and self-contained, with a self-control beyond his years, and an impenetrable reserve and cold indifference of manner that was destined to repel and alienate his most eager English partisans.

The time was nearly ripe for William to take upon himself the reins of government. Louis XIV., by heavy bribes, easily persuaded Charles II. to make a secret treaty by which he engaged to make war on his ally, Holland. Early in 1672, England and France declared war on the States. A magnificent French army under some of the finest soldiers of the day advanced from the south. Their advance was made almost without opposition. The States were totally unprepared for war on land, and Holland itself was only saved by the desperate step of cutting the dykes. On the outbreak of war popular feeling overpowered official caution; all de Witt's diplomacy broke down in the face of the people's will. William was named successively Stadtholder, Captain, and Admiral-

General of the Union. The long duel between William and Louis, that was to end only with the death of the former, had begun.

Desperate as was his country's position when he took up the reins of power, William at once repudiated the degrading conditions of peace proposed. "Let us be hacked in pieces rather than accept such conditions," he exclaimed to the States; and to the English ambassador he said proudly that he "could always die in the last ditch." Meanwhile popular indignation had turned against de Witt. His brother was accused of conspiring against William and imprisoned. John de Witt went to visit him, and a hostile mob collecting outside, broke open the prison doors, dragged out the two brothers, and murdered them.

De Witt's murder left an indelible stain on his countrymen, and William has been accused of connivance in this crime because of his neglect to punish the ringleaders; but in extenuation it must be remembered that his position was a very critical and dangerous one at the moment, and that the party which had slain de Witt was ostensibly prompted in its action by affection for the House of Orange. William always spoke of the incident to Bishop Burnet with "the greatest horror possible," but as all his energies and abilities were needed to rally his people against the French foe at their gates, he was forced to concentrate his attention on defeating his enemies rather than on punishing pretended friends.

William's great qualities as a ruler never showed

themselves more brilliantly than in these early years. He succeeded in detaching England from France and making peace in 1674 ; he also formed a coalition against France, including Spain and Austria ; but in 1678 the revival and influence of the anti-Orange party obliged him to conclude the peace of Nimwegen with France against his own wishes. This peace, or armed neutrality, lasted for ten years. The year before William had made a still more important alliance : he had married the clever, popular woman who was to give him a throne and what was, even to his cold, reserved nature, a still dearer gift, the one friendship that never failed him. The marriage had been proposed in 1674, but William then told Lord Ossory, when he broached the subject, that " his fortunes were not in a condition for him to think of a wife." It was not publicly known at the time whether Ossory had official authority for the proposal. At any rate the Duke of York was angry that any mention had been made of the Princess Mary. But some time afterwards William himself introduced the subject to Sir William Temple, who was again at the Hague, and in whom he placed great confidence. Temple had formed the highest opinion of the young Stadtholder. He describes him as " silent and thoughtful ; given to hear and to enquire ; of a sound and steady understanding ; much firmness in what he once resolves or once desires ; great industry and application to his business, little to his pleasures. Piety in the religion of his country, but with charity to others ; temperance unusual to his

youth and to the climate; frugal in the common management of his fortune and yet magnificent upon occasion. Of great spirit and heart, aspiring to the glory of military actions, with strong ambition to grow great, but rather by the service than the servitude of his country. In short, a prince of many virtues without any apparent mixture of vice."

Temple relates how William, when he was about to take the field, called him aside and made an appointment with him in the garden of Honslaerdyck, to ensure privacy. His friends, he said, urged him to think of marrying. "That for his part, he knew it was a thing to be done at one time or another, but that he had hitherto excus'd the thoughts of it otherwise than in general, till the war was ended." He added that "the Deputies of the States began to press him more earnestly every day," but of all the suggestions that had been made to him, he inclined alone to that of an alliance with England. William now went on to broach an interesting and delicate diplomatic question, which he pressed Temple to consider as a friend, or at least an indifferent person, and not as the King's ambassador. He owned that during the recent war English malcontents of considerable position had urged him "to lead the discontents that were raised by the conduct of the Court," and that in the opinion of these persons an English marriage would be in the highest degree undesirable, that it would give an impression he was wholly in sympathy with court policy, and "he would lose by it all the esteem and interest he had there."

Temple strongly reassured him on this point. "It was a great step to be one degree nearer the Crown," he said. But there was a second and more intimate question. What about "the person and dispositions of the young lady? . . . . It would not pass in the world for a prince to seem concerned in these particulars, yet for himself he would tell me without any sort of affectation that he was so, and in such a degree that no circumstances of fortune or interest could engage him without those of the person, especially those of humour and dispositions." William added that "perhaps he might not be very easy for a wife to live with; he was sure he would not to such wives as were generally in the Courts of this age, and if he should meet with one to give him trouble at home, 'twas what he should not be able to bear, who was like to have trouble enough abroad in the course of his life." To this the discreet ambassador made answer that "I had always heard my wife and my sister speak with all the advantage that could be of what they could discern in a Princess so young, and more from what they had been told of the Governess, with whom they had a particular friendship, and who they were sure took all the care that could be in so much of education as fell to her share." On these assurances, William wrote to Charles and the Duke of York soliciting their consent to his marriage with the Princess, and confided his two letters to Lady Temple, who was about to visit England, and who was also charged to "inform herself the most particularly she could of all that concerned the person, humour, and

disposition of the young Princess," in which, says Temple, "he seemed much concerned."

Meanwhile Mary's wishes in the matter were not consulted. The birth of a daughter as the eldest child of the Duke of York and Anne Hyde in 1662 caused general disappointment. It "pleased nobody," says Pepys. When the little Princess was two years old, the same writer was much gratified at seeing the Duke playing with her "like an ordinary private Father." And later on he gives a pretty picture of her at six years old, "a little child in hanging sleeves, dancing most finely, so as almost to ravish one; her ears were so good." Princess Mary's early years were spent partly at Twickenham with her grandfather Clarendon, and partly at Richmond, under the care of her governess Lady Frances Villiers, whose daughter Elizabeth, with Anne Trelawney and Sarah Jennings, were her playfellows. Henry Compton, Bishop of London, was entrusted with the care of her religious education as well as that of her sister Anne. He was not eminent either in learning or abilities, but he acquitted himself creditably by his charge, and acquired much influence over both his pupils, especially over the weaker mind of Anne. His father, the second Earl of Northampton, had fought and died for Charles I., so that he was one of the very few churchmen of that age who could lay claim to noble birth; as a young man he had himself been in the Guards. He was succeeded in the office of religious preceptor to Mary by the Archdeacon of Exeter, Lake.

Her gift of graceful dancing was in later years regarded by Mary as a temptation, but at this time she had lessons from a French dancing master, and in 1674 danced before the court in the part of *Calisto*. Dryden wrote an epilogue to be spoken on the occasion which concludes :—

“Two glorious nymphs of your own godlike line  
Whose morning rays like noontide strike and shine,  
Whom you to suppliant monarchs shall dispose,  
To bind your friends and to disarm your foes.”

In those days, however, the serious business of life began early. On 19th October 1677 William followed up his letters by arriving in person, and two days later Mary received from her father the unwelcome news that she was disposed of to a “suppliant monarch.” Whereupon “she wept all that afternoon and the following day.” William was twelve years older than his cousin ; he had neither leisure nor inclination for love-making. His time in England was occupied in persuading Charles II. to promise his support to the coalition against France. The marriage took place on 4th November, in the bride’s bedchamber, at 9 o’clock, with Bishop Compton officiating. “The King, who gave her away, was very pleasant all the while.”

The next day William’s friend Bentinck, who was in attendance on him on this occasion, presented Mary with £40,000 worth of jewels as a wedding present from her husband. The departure of the Prince and Princess of Orange was delayed for some time by contrary winds, and the interval till the beginning of

December, when they sailed, was spent by Mary at St. James's Palace. Here her sister Anne lay ill of the small-pox, but Mary with the indifference to, or carelessness of, risk shown by those of that day towards this horrible scourge, refused to leave the Palace, and here she sought spiritual consolation from Archdeacon Lake. One can well imagine that a beautiful, attractive girl of sixteen, called upon at a few days' notice to exchange the gay court of Charles II. for an unknown country with a husband who was a stranger to her, and who, though he was only twenty-seven, was in manners and habits and experience of life old enough to be her father, needed all the comfort that she could derive, spiritual or otherwise. The years that passed were to bring together the husband and wife in a tender and intimate friendship, but in these early days the strenuous man of affairs had neither sympathy nor understanding to bestow on his girl-wife.

Dr Lake notes in his diary for 16th Nov.: "This day the Court began to whisper the prince's sullenness or clownishness, that he took no notice of his princess at the play or balle, nor came to see her at St. James' the day preceding that designed for their departure."

The graphic pen of Burnet, who was shortly to take up his abode at the Hague, has left us a portrait of the bridegroom: "He had a thin and weak body, was brown-haired, and of a delicate constitution; he had a Roman eagle nose, bright and sparkling eyes, a large front and a countenance composed to gravity and authority; all his senses were critical and exquisite.



DR. GILBERT BURNET, BISHOP OF SALISBURY.

*(From a portrait in the National Portrait Gallery.)*

*Emery Walker.*



He was always asthmatical, and the dregs of the small-pox falling on his lungs, he had a constant deep cough. His behaviour was solemn and serious, seldom cheerful, and but with a few. He spoke little and very shortly, and most commonly with a disgusting dryness, which was his character at all times, except in a day of battle ; for then he was all fire, though without passion : he was then everywhere and looked to everything." It is entirely characteristic of the two men, Burnet and Temple, whose impression of William III. we gave on an earlier page, that the grave diplomatist should have emphasised his great mental and moral qualities, and the impulsive, warm-hearted priest his physical defects ; yet both pictures are equally valuable in showing the man as he was, and just as Temple felt an affinity for the Prince, so Burnet, who saw him much more intimately, seems always to have been vaguely repelled by him. Such a man as William is here described was not calculated to win the affections of a girl of sixteen. He hated talking "and all house games." His relaxation from the business and anxiety of State affairs was hunting ; to this he gave himself up with an absorbing passion. In moments of danger and excitement alone his brilliant eyes lighted up and his habitual reserve thawed to geniality.

But, apart from her husband's naturally difficult temperament, Mary had another reason for unhappiness in her early married life. She had taken with her to Holland a certain Elizabeth Villiers as one of her ladies. She was the daughter of Mary's governess,

Lady Frances Villiers, and granddaughter of the second Earl of Suffolk, Theophilus Howard. Through her father, Sir Edward Villiers, Elizabeth was first cousin to Barbara Villiers, the scandalous Castlemaine of Charles II.'s court. Unlike her notorious cousin, Elizabeth was entirely destitute of physical attractions, and "squinted like a dragon," but she was some years older than Mary and attracted William by her brilliant abilities. Years afterwards Swift wrote of her to Stella, "she is the wisest woman I ever saw." That was in 1712, and ministers of state still consulted her in political crises. William had the grace to be ashamed of his one weakness, but though he was "very cautious and secret" in his conduct of the affair, it was inevitable that Mary should become aware of it, and it was so far matter of public comment that Bishop Ken, while he was chaplain at the Hague, wished to expostulate with William on the subject of his neglect of his wife.<sup>1</sup> But Mary's dignity, sweetness of nature, and forbearance gradually worked their own impression, though there was a cause which produced alienation between them unsuspected by Mary herself, and which was only removed by the intervention of Burnet.

Well meaning, officious, and loquacious, he was not likely to be restrained from motives of delicacy from broaching a subject over which her husband, after nine years of marriage, continued to brood in silence.

<sup>1</sup> Sidney's Diary: "He (Ken) is horribly unsatisfied with the Prince, and thinks he is not kind enough to his wife; he resolved to speak with him, though he kicks him out of doors."

When Mary, as in due course she must, succeeded to the throne of England, William would accompany her only by virtue of his position as her husband, a thought intolerable to his pride and ambition, but far from being suspected by his wife. Burnet, seeking the opportunity of a private conversation with her, and asking what position she intended her husband to occupy when she came to the throne, found her so ignorant of the English Constitution that she did not understand his meaning. Whereupon he explained to her that "a titular kingship was no acceptable thing to a man." He proposed that she should invest her husband with the regal authority of kingship as soon as it came into her hands, as "this would lay the greatest obligation on him possible, and lay the foundation of a perfect union between them which had been of late a little embroiled"; and Mary replied immediately that she "would take no time to consider anything by which she could express her regard and affection for the Prince," and asked Burnet to give her husband an account of their interview and to bring him to her that she might explain her intentions. This she did in Burnet's presence, at the same time conveying to her husband a delicate reproach. "She did not know," she told him, "that the laws of England were so contrary to the laws of God . . . she did not think that the husband was ever to be obedient to the wife; she promised him he should always bear rule; and she asked only that he should obey the command, 'Husbands, love your wives,' as

she should do that, 'Wives, be obedient to your husbands in all things.'"

Burnet was disappointed that William never expressed to him personally any gratitude for his intervention. He learned indirectly that the Prince had said, "He had been nine years married, and had never the confidence to press this matter on the Queen, which I had now brought about easily in a day."

After this Burnet had many intimate talks with Mary on religious and political subjects, and she continued to repose great confidence in him. He arrived at the Hague in 1686, and was retained there by William. He was already eminent for his historical writings and had been the friend and intimate of many of the leading men of his day, but his inflexible Whig principles had brought him into so great unpopularity at court, that it was expedient for him to leave the country for a refuge in Holland, where he was protected in spite of the attempts of James to discredit him by warning his nephew that he was a dangerous man whom he ought to avoid.



THE HON. HENRY SIDNEY, AFTERWARDS EARL OF ROMNEY.

*(From an old print.)*



## CHAPTER II

### HENRY SIDNEY—THE SUNDERLANDS—WILLIAM'S ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND

DURING these years William never lost sight of the end he had in view, the formation of a coalition which should include England against France. England was the weight in the scale which would preserve the balance of power in Europe. The English Peace Party was at first too strong for him, but in 1685 two events happened to change the aspect of affairs. Louis XIV. revoked the Edict of Nantes which granted toleration to Protestants ; and James II., who had been received into the Roman Catholic Church, succeeded to the throne of England. French refugees poured into Holland with stories of the persecutions they had undergone at the hands of the French King. This provoked so strong a feeling against France that William was able in 1686 to construct a fresh European coalition, including the States, the Emperor, Spain, and Sweden, to preserve the Treaties of Munster and Nymwegen. While William was engineering coalitions, James II. was engaged in forcing Roman

Catholicism on his distracted people. They turned naturally to the Protestant heir to the throne—William of Orange. As far back as 1677, William had told Temple he was in communication with English malcontents. In the new circumstances which arose their numbers multiplied: and all who were astute enough to foresee events endeavoured to make things safe for themselves at a time when a probable change of rulers should occur. A principal agent of communication between William's court in Holland and the disaffected in England was Henry Sidney. He was the son of Robert Earl of Leicester, brother to Dorothy Sidney Dowager Countess of Sunderland, whom Waller immortalised as "Sacharissa," and uncle to Robert Spencer, the Earl of Sunderland who played so important a part at the courts of both James and William.

Henry Sidney, who was born in 1640, was reputed to be the handsomest man of his time. He had been Groom of the Bedchamber to the Duke of York, but it was rumoured that he was in love with the Duchess and he was dismissed by James. In 1679 he was sent as envoy to the Dutch States, and succeeded in winning high favour with the Prince of Orange, who made him commander of the British forces in the Dutch service, although Charles II. wrote personally requesting that the post might be given to Monck, the Duke of Albemarle. When James succeeded to the throne he had not forgotten that Sidney had supported the Bill in Parliament for excluding him from the throne on account of his religion. Sidney was recalled from Holland. He

returned there later on, and fortunately he kept a diary and preserved much of his correspondence. "He was a man of a sweet and caressing temper," says Burnet, "and had no malice in his heart, but too great a love of pleasure." He adds that "he had some adventures that became very public." In such an age it was very unfashionable not to have "adventures," public or otherwise: but Burnet probably alludes to Mrs Worthley, "a person of an ancient family," who for twenty years had been the mistress of Sidney, and subsequently becoming destitute and distressed, appealed both to James and to Charles to redress her injuries. One of her letters to her former lover contains a threat to appeal to William and Mary in the same way. After a request for money she asks him not to force her "to be the author of any more noises in King William and Mary's Court," for though she is far from desiring "any renewal of his embraces," she is "wholly inclined to Christian amity." Of more importance historically is Sidney's intimacy with another lady, his niece by marriage, Lady Sunderland. Anne Countess of Sunderland was the daughter of the Earl of Bristol and Lady Anne Russell. She was the intimate friend of the diarist John Evelyn. Contemporary gossip credited her with something more than a platonic friendship for Henry Sidney. Both Barrillon and Bonrepaux, Louis XIV.'s envoys in England, alluded, in writing to their master, to the "commerce de galanterie" between Sidney and Lady Sunderland.

The gay Sidney seems at first to have found the Hague rather a poor exchange for London. His friend, Mr H. Thynne, writing to him soon after he had settled there in August 1679, condoles with him on his exile, and suggests that his "power among the ladies" may produce compensation for boredom. "The Hague," he says, "is now a place, I presume, not much more pleasant than London, which is the most solitary that ever I knew, and not to be endured if it had not the advantage of Lady Selwyn's company." His surmise seems to have been correct, for Sidney himself writes to another friend at home, Lawrence Hyde :—

"They tell me that in the winter there will be a great deal of company, but for the present it is something dismal. The Princess's maids (the maids of honour) are a great comfort to me, and on Sunday invited me to dinner."

William frequently entertained and was entertained by Sidney, paying an occasional surprise visit, which was sometimes embarrassing. "On Saturday," Sidney writes to Sunderland, "he [the Prince] did me the honour to come and dine with me, where he had but an indifferent entertainment, as you may imagine, for he let me know of his coming but an hour before ; all yesterday he was a-hunting, and to-day he hath sent me a buck and some gibier, which he intends to eat at my house to-morrow."

When James II. recalled Sidney, William himself wrote to remonstrate :—"I cannot dissemble with your

Majesty that I could have wished your Majesty had thought proper to have left him here, since I can assure you there never was a minister in this country who succeeded better, or did you more faithful service."

This is warm commendation from such a man, but Burnet says that Sidney "had the highest measure of his trust and fancy that any Englishman ever had." Their confidence seems to have been shared by William's friend Bentinck,<sup>1</sup> who corresponded with him in a friendly, intimate strain when he was in England, and who was entrusted by him with different little commissions, such as finding a Dutch gardener for the Countess of Sunderland—to lay out for her one of the formal gardens for which Holland was famous.

He writes :—

"Je crois avoir trouvé un jardinier pour Madame de Sunderlant, mais il me demande beaucoup de gage, pourqu'il faut sortir du pays, ce que ce sorte de gens ont de la peur à faire. Mandez-moi je vous prie quels gages on donne d'ordinairement à un jardinier en Angleterre, et faite moy faire par quelqu'un qui se entende un memoire des fleurs que je pourrois envoyer, qui ne sont pas communes en ce pays la, car d'envoyer les choses qui sont ordinaires, cela ne vaudrait pas la peine."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> William Bentinck, first Earl of Portland.

<sup>2</sup> "I believe I have found a gardener for Madame Sunderland, but he asks high wages, since he must leave his own country, a thing this sort of person is afraid of doing. Tell me, I pray you, what wages one generally gives a gardener in England; and have made for me, by someone who understands such things, a list of flowers that I could send, that are not common in that country, for it is not worth while to send ordinary things."

When, a few years later, affairs in England became critical, Sidney was again at the Hague: though the responsible and dangerous office of go-between which now devolved on him was so far from being congenial to a man of his indolent, pleasure-loving nature, that he travelled for a year in Italy in order to avoid it. Of all his English friends none seemed more likely to be in need of his protection and good offices than the Sunderlands. Robert Spencer, Earl of Sunderland, had inherited the beauty of his mother Dorothy Sidney; and he was a man who added to eminent ability so great a personal fascination, that the charm of his manner overbore the private judgment of the men whom it was his interest to deceive. Macaulay says of him, with that effective use of the triple adjective so characteristic of his style, that he was "cunning, supple, shameless," with "a restless and mischievous temper, a cold heart, and an abject spirit." Sunderland's dexterity in the arts of insinuation is sufficiently proved by his winning the confidence successively of men so different as Charles, James, and William, and in doing so in spite of his proved perfidy.

He was luxurious in his habits and played high and incessantly. "He was a man of great expense, and in order to the supporting of himself, he went into the prevailing counsels at Court." In other words, he loved money, and was indifferent to the purity of its source. He had supported the Exclusion Bill in Charles's reign, and in the violent reaction that took place after its rejection was turned out of office. He



ANNE, COUNTESS OF SUNDERLAND.

*(From an old print.)*

TO THE  
DEPT. OF  
AGRICULTURE

got back the Secretaryship of State through the influence of the Duchess of Portsmouth, with whom "he had the greatest credit," and had so wormed himself back into James's favour that he was allowed to retain office when he came to the throne. He consented to attend the public celebration of Roman Catholic worship in the Palace, and though for a long time he did not venture openly to declare himself of the King's religion, he allowed himself to be regarded as a hopeful proselyte. In consideration of a large stipend from Louis XIV., he consented to dissuade the King from assembling a Parliament which might have interfered with the schemes of France.

Such was the husband of Sidney's friend and correspondent, Lady Sunderland. While he was in Holland she wrote frequently to him, keeping him carefully informed of the progress of events in England. The letters are intimate and unstudied; she is anxious about his health, expresses wishes for his return, begs him to make his home with them, "and in sooth I'd be a very easy landlady." Sometimes she entrusts him with a commission. She wants some "eggs of all sorts done up in bran." "I could raise them if they were put up fresh; they would keep three weeks." Even in her "commerce de galanterie" Lady Sunderland shows herself the good housewife that Evelyn commended. She is confident that Sidney will dutifully attend to all her wishes. "Now I come with another request," she writes; "that you will employ all your skill, and all your most

knowing acquaintances' skill, for one pair of the finest, largest, grey coach-horses, the most dappled, the stateliest persons you can get." £100, she imagines, "will do the business."

In March 1687 Lady Sunderland undertook to write to William herself, probably at her husband's instigation. Her epistolary style is very prolix. Apparently she wants to convey to William that she and her husband were popularly supposed to be adherents of his own. The real gist of her letter lies in the postscript, in which she informs the Prince that some Papists had said of her husband that "my Lord Sunderland did not dance in a net," . . . "there was dispensations in Holland as well as from Rome," and "that they were sure I had correspondence with the Princess of Orange." She ingenuously protests that she "never had the honour to have any commerce with the Princess, except about treacle-water or work or some such slight thing"; as she had assured James II., when he taxed her with it. She naïvely adds, "I have the ill luck to write a very bad hand, which, if your Highness cannot read plain, which few can, I humbly beg you will keep it till Mr Sidney comes, who is used to my hand."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It appears certain that some at least of Lady Sunderland's letters to Sidney were intercepted and read by James, who taxed Sunderland with his wife's political intercourse with Holland. He was reported by Barillon in a letter to his master, Louis XIV., to have excused himself from any complicity in the correspondence, since Sidney's relations ("commerce de galanterie") with his wife precluded the possibility of his putting himself in the power of a man he must hate "qu'il doit hair" (Sidney, I. ix.).

One person was, however, determined that William should be under no illusions as to the character of the Sunderlands, and that was the Princess Anne. She made no secret of her dislike of them. Her uncle Clarendon records a conversation on this subject that he had with her :—"I went to the Princess, my wife having told me she wondered she did not see me. I found her in her bedchamber, only one of her dressers with her. . . . She then spoke with great dissatisfaction of my Lord and Lady Sunderland, especially of my Lady Sunderland. She said she thought her one of the worst women in the world."

Almost at the same time that the Countess of Sunderland was writing to William, Anne wrote to Mary :—

"This letter going by sure hands, I will now venture to write my mind very freely to you. You may remember I have once before ventured to tell you that I thought Lord Sunderland a very ill man . . . . and now, to complete all his virtues, he is working with all his might to bring in Popery. He is perpetually with the priests, and stirs up the King to do things faster than I believe he would by himself. Things are come to that pass now, that if they go on so much longer, I believe, in a little while, no Protestant will be able to live here. . . . This worthy Lord does not go publicly to mass, but hears it privately in a priest's chamber, and never lets anybody be there but a servant of his. His lady too is as extraordinary in her kind, for she is a flattering, dissembling, false woman, but she has so fawning and endearing a way, that she will deceive anyone at first, and it is not possible to find out all her

ways in a little time. She cares not at what rate she lives, but never pays anybody. She will cheat though it be for a little. Then she has had her gallants, though maybe not so many as some ladies here. And with all these good qualities she is a constant churchwoman, so that to outward appearance one would take her for a saint, and to hear her talk, you would take her for a very good Protestant, but she is as much one as the other."

Anne concludes with a warning that Sunderland is about to pick a quarrel with James in order to curry favour with William. In a subsequent letter Anne unbosoms herself further: "She goes to St Martin's morning and afternoon, because there are not enough people to see her at Whitehall Chapel . . . and keeps such a clatter with her devotions that it really turns one's stomach."

William nevertheless seems to have returned a civil answer to Lady Sunderland, for she writes again to thank him, expressing her humble gratitude and zeal in his service, and fears that she has "at present so great a headache that I have writ if possible a stranger hand than ordinary."

Meanwhile in England the persecution of the seven bishops proceeded, and feeling against the court ran so high that even Sunderland advised leniency. He was, however, so far from foreseeing events that, fearing his influence over James was weakening, he was publicly received into the Roman Catholic Church and was greeted on his appearance at the trial of the bishops with cries of "Popish Dog!" On the same day, the

last day of June, the invitation for which William was waiting was at length obtained through the secret negotiation of Edward Russell and of Sidney, in whose writing the letter was drawn up, though it was probably not drafted by him. The signatories, who took the precaution of using a cipher, were Shrewsbury, Devonshire, Danby, Compton Bishop of London, Russell, Lumley, and Sidney. The message was entrusted to Arthur Herbert, disguised as a common seaman. The invitation assured William that nineteen-twentieths of the nation would rally round him if he appeared in England at the head of an army. The army and navy were both disaffected; he was entreated to lose no time.

Meanwhile James was rushing on destruction. He schemed fresh religious persecution, he refused to listen to Louis XIV.'s warnings that the Prince of Orange was preparing for a descent on England, and he rejected, by Sunderland's advice, the offer of a French army. In August Sunderland was sending William assurances of his support, and in September Louis, irritated with James's perverse folly, turned the force of his arms against the Rhine. The Dutch frontier was now safe from attack, at all events temporarily, and the States General consented to the Prince's expedition. By October all his preparations were complete, and he was ready to set sail. James could no longer be deceived. He was thoroughly frightened. Sunderland was hastily dismissed, professing to the last his loyalty to the master he had betrayed. The fleet of William was still delayed by a strong west wind, a "Popish wind" his

anxious English friends called it. James availed himself of this respite to make hasty and ill-considered attempts to reduce the grievances of his people.

On the 19th October a violent storm drove back the ships. It was believed that the best part of the fleet was lost. "Many that have passed for heroes yet showed then the agonies of fear in their looks and whole deportment." The Prince alone "still retained his usual calmness, and the same tranquillity of spirit that I had observed in him in his happiest days," wrote an eye-witness. The ships came through unharmed, and at last the longed-for east wind blew, and on the 1st of November the whole vast armament set sail, filling the straits so that the shores of France and England were at the same time lined with spectators to see it pass, while the Protestant breeze kept the English fleet in the Thames.

The 4th November was William's birthday and wedding day, and he was inclined to land, but was dissuaded by those who thought that the next day, the anniversary of Gunpowder Treason, would be more auspicious for the arrival of the defender of the Protestant religion. An accident nearly led to a serious miscarriage of William's plans. The morning of the fifth broke mistily. The pilot of William's ship, the *Brill*, which led the way, carried the fleet past Torbay. It could not turn in the face of the strong easterly gale, it must run on to Plymouth, where the Prince's reception was more than doubtful, and where a landing would necessitate a much longer march through a much worse country. "All is lost, Doctor, you may go to prayer,"

exclaimed Russell to Burnet, when the wind suddenly turned to the south and "a soft and happy gale of wind carried the whole fleet in four hours' time into Torbay." The disembarkation there took place rapidly and successfully. The Prince and Marshal Schomberg were immediately furnished with horses from the nearest village, and rode out to inspect the surrounding country. Burnet, with his usual tactlessness, bustled up to the Prince to offer his congratulations, and was better received than he might have expected at such a distracting moment. "As soon as I was landed, I made what haste I could to the place where the Prince was, who took me heartily by the hand, and asked me if I would not now believe in Predestination. He was more cheerful than ordinary, yet he returned soon to his usual gravity." Burnet hastened to improve the occasion as befitted his cloth. "I told him I would never forget that providence of God which had appeared so signally on this occasion."

Meanwhile popular excitement was producing a crop of anti-Papal and Williamite ballads.

"A strong fleet and army t' invade us are bent,  
 We know not the cause, though there is something in't,  
 But we doubt not e'er long we shall see it in print :  
 Sing hey, brave Popery, ho, brave Popery.

Ah! England that never couldst value thy peace,  
 Had matters been now as in El'sabeth's days,  
 The Dutch had ne'er ventured to fish in our seas :  
 Then curse o' Popery, pox o' Popery,  
 Plague on senseless Popery, oh."

The following is more strongly anti-Jacobite :—

“ Good people, come buy  
 The fruit that I cry,  
 That now is in season, tho’ winter is nigh ;  
 ’Twill do you all good and sweeten your blood,  
 I’m sure it will please you when once understood :  
 ’Tis an Orange.

We are certainly told  
 That by Adam of old  
 Himself and his bearns for an apple was sold ;  
 And who knows his son,  
 By serpents undone,  
 And his juggling Eve may chance lose her own  
 For an Orange.”

The news of the Prince’s landing did not reach London till 16th November. Directly James heard of it he ordered his army, under the commander-in-chief, Lord Churchill, to concentrate at Salisbury. But within a few days came the news of the defection of one and another of the men on whom he chiefly relied, including Churchill himself. On the night of the 24th Prince George of Denmark, Anne’s husband, supped with the King, and appeared bewildered at the turn affairs were taking. “ Est-il-possible ! ” he exclaimed on hearing that one after another of the King’s servants had joined the Prince of Orange. The same evening, as soon as the King had retired, Prince George followed the example of the majority. “ Is Est-il-possible gone too ? ” was James’s only comment. In his memoirs he remarks that a good trooper would have been of more consequence. When the news of her husband’s defection

reached London, Princess Anne declared she could not face her father. With the connivance of Lady Churchill, she fled secretly, by a back staircase, to the Bishop of London, who took them to the Earl of Dorset's. Here Lady Dorset provided them with necessaries and they travelled to Northampton, where the Earl furnished Anne with a body of horse of which the Bishop assumed the command.

Meanwhile James, seeing that all was lost, secretly despatched his wife and child to France, and was following them, disguised as a servant, when some fishermen complicated matters by capturing and bringing him back. He was permitted to return to Rochester. Thence he again escaped and fled to Louis XIV., who received him with magnificent chivalry, and with whom he remained an honoured guest till the end of his life.

On 18th December, the same day that James left London, William arrived there. He had been preceded by his Dutch Guards. London was in considerable disorder. The rabble were burning and destroying the houses and chapels of Papists.

The manner of his arrival at St James's was prophetic of his unfortunate knack of offending popular sentiment. "It happened to be a very rainy day, and yet great numbers came to see him. But after they had stood long in the wet, he disappointed them ; for he who neither loved shows nor shoutings went through the Park, and even this trifle helped to set people's spirits on the fret."

Nevertheless, the spirits of loyal Protestants rose :—

“How now the Prince is come to town  
The nation’s dread and hope,  
Who will support the Church and town  
Against the Turk and Pope.  
The folks are fled that were the head,  
The prop of Popery,  
If all be true, as it is said,  
Then hey, boys, up go we !”

William had no sooner arrived at St James’s than dissensions among his supporters began to break out. His advent rapidly restored order, and a Convention was summoned to establish a constitutional settlement, in which long and heated debates raged among the various parties. The extreme Tories, who believed in the Divine Right of a hereditary monarchy, wished to restore James with a regency ; another section of the Tories, headed by Danby and Compton, declared that the throne being now vacant, Mary was the next heir. The Whigs, on the other hand, held that monarchical government was a contract between the King and his people ; that James had broken that contract, that the throne was therefore vacant and they were free to elect a successor. William stood entirely aloof from these factions, and the debates were at last ended by the intervention of Bishop Burnet, who made known the intentions of the Princess with regard to the relative position of herself and her husband. Mary herself was explicit. Writing to Danby, she assured him that the cruellest injury that could be done to her was to set

her up as the competitor of her husband, and no person who took such a course could be regarded as her true friend. At the same time Danby learnt from the Prince that he would not accept a regency. The Convention finally resolved that the crown should be offered to Mary and William. Mary, who had been detained by a west wind, came over, and at a great meeting in the banqueting hall of Whitehall, in the presence of the assembled Lords and Commons, the crown was offered to William and Mary by Halifax and accepted. They were proclaimed amid general plaudits.

The Revolution was now accomplished. By it the theory of the Divine Right of kings was superseded by the Whig theory, that the King reigns by the will of his people. As the logical conclusion of this theory, Parliament, the representative of the people, becomes the supreme power in the State, and the King's ministers become an executive committee of the majority in Parliament, and are responsible to them. This change was not yet fully realised by the men who effected the Revolution, and there was at first no question of William's governing by one party.

He was now apparently at the zenith of his success, but his clear-sighted intelligence already foresaw the inevitable reaction. "Here," he said to Dykvelt, who came to congratulate him, "the cry is all Hosannah to-day, and to-morrow will perhaps be Crucify."

The Revolution was, in fact, already unpopular. The army was ashamed of the ignominious part it had played in recent events; the clergy were in the difficult posi-

tion of having to relinquish their favourite theory of non-resistance and passive obedience. A contemporary, writing of the sermons of the time, says that "It is hard to say whether Jesus Christ or King Charles the Martyr were oftener mentioned and magnified." Moreover, William was showing toleration to Roman Catholics and protecting them from persecution. Burnet had received special instructions to prevent their being injured. Worse than this, William regarded Presbyterians favourably, and Mary was known to have attended a Nonconformist place of worship at the Hague.

The clergy and the army generally stood aloof from the public rejoicings on William and Mary's accession. The Tories, now that James was a fugitive, underwent a reaction in his favour, and the Whigs expected William to be a party leader and the head of their own faction ; whereas, having been invited over by both parties, he had no choice but to select his ministers from both Whigs and Tories.

In his own opinion no man had a stronger claim on William's gratitude than the Tory Earl of Danby. He had signed the letter of invitation to him, and had raised the North in his favour. He expected that the post of High Treasurer, previously in his possession, would be restored to him. He was, however, made President of the Council, to his own mortification, but to the extreme annoyance of the Whigs, who thought he was rewarded beyond his deserts.

Halifax, the leader of the "Trimmers," who kept

even balance between Whigs and Tories, was given the post of Privy Seal, an equally unpopular appointment among the Whigs, who had never forgiven his support of the Exclusion Bill. They were still more disgusted at the appointment as Secretary of State of Nottingham, whose well-known principles were thought to be a guarantee to the clergy and Tory country gentlemen that the Church would be justly dealt with. The Whig Shrewsbury held the other secretaryship. Herbert, the bearer of the invitation to William and the commander of his fleet on the voyage to Torbay, was rewarded with the First Commissionership of the Admiralty. Godolphin, of eminent business abilities and easy principles, was at the Treasury. The great places of the household were reserved for the King's Dutch friends, for Bentinck and Zulestein. Henry Sidney was made a Gentleman of the Bedchamber, and created Viscount Sidney and Earl of Romney.

## CHAPTER III

### QUEEN MARY

AMONG all the grave difficulties of State by which William was now engrossed, or the innumerable petty annoyances to which he was subjected in England, he had one friend alone, who never irritated him with jealousy, though she had cause to do so, who was always loyal, faithful, self-effacing. Queen Mary, "the one respectable Stuart," as Thorold Rogers calls her, has revealed herself in her letters, and the few scattered pages of her private diary<sup>1</sup> that have been preserved, as few people of her time have done. Unlike her contemporaries, she is anxiously, nervously introspective, and her searchings of heart are faithfully recorded in the pages of her diary, especially in the few years of her life in England, when she keenly felt the want of a trusted friend in her solitary and responsible position.

Married while a girl to a man she had never seen, and who spoke her language imperfectly, Mary would have had every excuse for conforming to the

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Mary Queen of England*, ed. by Dr R. Doebner.

morals of the courts of her father and uncle ; but once arrived in her new home in Holland, she set herself to order her life according to her own taste and conscience, independently of her husband, of whom, at all events at first, she saw little. Her first care was to provide a private chapel for her own use. She gave up her dining-room for the purpose, and took her meals in a "dark parlour." When the arrangements were almost complete, William was called in to see them. "And as there was a step or two at the communion table . . . he kicked at them with his foot, asking what they were for? Which being told in a proper manner, he answered with a 'hum.'" The narrator is Mary's chaplain, Dr Hooper, Dr Lake having been left behind,—“laid aside,” as he says wrathfully in his diary.

Dr Lake was evidently on the look-out for any falling away on the part of his former pupil. He notes in his diary the year after Mary's marriage that he "was very sorry to understand that the Princess of Orange, since her being in Holland, did sometimes play cards upon the Sunday, which would doubtless give offence to that people"; and the next year he finds that she is becoming infected by her husband's latitudinarian principles:—"About this time I had a letter out of Holland from Mr Lee that the Princess was grown somewhat fat and very beautiful withal, that she did sometimes go to the English Congregation at the Hague, whereat I was much troubled, and so were all other honest and loyal persons who had note

of it, for this Church is served by a Nonconformist chaplain out of England.”

Dr Hooper got into trouble with the Prince for trying to correct this too tolerant tendency on the part of his royal mistress. He supplied her with the most orthodox works, and the Prince, coming into his wife's room and finding her reading Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, inquired into the matter, and afterwards sounded her chaplain on his view of according toleration to dissenters. These he found so little in accordance with his own convictions that he concluded their conversation with the ominous reproof, “Well, Dr Hooper, *you* will never be a Bishop.” And afterwards, commenting on the chaplain to a friend, he remarked that if he ever came into power, “Dr Hooper would be Dr Hooper still.” The Princess seems to have been much attached to her chaplain. When he wished to settle in England, according to himself he yielded to very earnest entreaties on Mary's part to bring his wife back with him and continue in her service. He did so, but, being a man of some dignity and independence, he notes that he “did not suffer her to eat at the Prince's table, knowing the Prince's great economy.”

It became a standing joke among the ladies of Mary's little court that though the Prince often spoke of “saluting Mrs Hooper,” he never did so. When the time came that Mrs Hooper, for family reasons, wished to return home and settle in England, Mary gave her a silver-gilt cup and a salver; and William,

who appears to have omitted to pay the chaplain any salary, sent him through Bentinck £70 in cash. The doctor proudly records that, taking a crown from the bag, he gave it to the messenger, stating that he was in no need of ready money, and that what was due to him might be paid on his return to London. As a year and a half's salary to a court chaplain, £70 does not seem magnificent; perhaps the Prince thought that his services were dear at the price. Long afterwards Dr Hooper was made Bishop of Bath and Wells by Anne, but on his return to England at this time Mary's influence secured him the Deanery of Canterbury. For this, he says, the Prince "chid her," and she was afterwards found in tears; and he adds with some spite, and we will hope equal mendacity, that this was an event of almost daily occurrence.

Mary was obliged to practise rigorous economy in her household expenditure. Her father never made her any allowance, and she had only £4000 a year for all her expenses; and out of this, so husbanded her resources that she was able to dispose large sums in charity, "and the good grace with which she bestowed favours did always increase their value."

The King, her father, gave her no appointments to support the dignity of a king's daughter, nor did he send her any presents or jewels, "which was thought very indecent, and certainly was a very ill-advised thing." On the other hand, James set spies about her. Bentinck informs Sidney of a court intrigue, which William had accidentally discovered.

Mary's chaplain, Dr Covell, had for a long time acted the part of a malicious spy in the house, and had busied himself with spreading abroad mischievous and mendacious reports. "Madame l'a fait chasser," without inflicting on him any other punishment, out of consideration for his cloth. Two of her ladies had been found to be acting in concert with Covell, and were sent away the same day. "C'est une chose horrible," comments Bentinck, "que des gens soit assez méchants pour vouloir nuire à ceux qui leur donnent le pain." ("It is a horrible thing, that people should be wicked enough to wish to injure those to whom they owe their bread.") James also tried to convert his daughter to Roman Catholicism by means of letters and emissaries, and in a carefully thought out answer she assured her father of her unalterable adherence to the Protestant faith and her reasons for it. There is no reason why this letter should not have been the Princess's own composition. She had a fund of shrewd common sense, and had been well instructed in religious principles, however much her education in other respects was defective.

Her devoted servant, Dr Burnet, had a high opinion of both the Princess's understanding and information. He says that she "possessed all that conversed with her with admiration. Her person was majestic, and created respect. She had great knowledge, with true understanding and a noble expression. There was a sweetness in her deportment that charmed, and an exactness of piety and virtue that made her a

pattern to all that saw her. She had read much both in History and Divinity. And when a course of humours in her eyes forced her from that, she set herself to work with such a constant diligence, that she made the ladies about her ashamed to be idle."

Her influence over her ladies was great even as an inexperienced girl. Dr Hooper comments on this when on her first going into Holland she travelled all over the country in a barge with her ladies, and read, and worked, and played cards with them, "and by her great prudence had so great an authority over them that if she looked but grave at anything said by any of them there was an immediate silence."

To a woman of a peace-loving nature and strong affections like Mary, the strife between her father and husband was no light matter. She never hesitated, however, in her allegiance to William: "To think that my father is guilty of so horrible a crime, and that, humanly speaking, there is no other way to save the Church and State than that of my husband's going to dethrone him by force, are most distressing thoughts," she wrote; and she tried to soothe her anxious heart by attendance at Holy Communion on the first Sunday in the month, but could not fix her attention on the solemn sacrament, for "the devil was busy about me." She consulted her physician in great distress of mind to account for this inability to control her thoughts, and he ordered her to be bled.

Her anxiety was intense when the Prince actually sailed. She took leave of him at Brill, "et lorsqu'il

me quitta c'était comme si l'on m'eut arraché le cœur."<sup>1</sup> "But," she writes, "everyone is extraordinarily kind." She found consolation at this trying and difficult time in constant devotions, which were interrupted by a visit from the Elector and Electress of Brandenburg. She reproaches herself for neglecting her prayers in order to entertain them.

"The circumstances of time," she writes, "were such we could have no publick entertainments, but only treating them at my several houses, which I did, and played cards out of complaisance so late at night, that it was ever near two before I got to bed ; but I bless my God, I did not neglect prayers in the morning, but went both to French and English once in my own house, but . . . . I neglected going to church in the afternoon when they were there." "As soon as they were gone," she continues, "I bless my God, I returned to my old solitary ways of living, and found myself very sensibly touched with a sense of my neglect during their stay. One thing pleased me very much, which was, that tho' I had seen the Electress dance, I was not tempted, so that I believed I had overcome that which used to be one of my prettiest pleasures in the world, and that I feared might be a sin in me, for loving it too well."

The Princess shed as many tears at leaving her adopted country as she had done at her first coming to it, for she notes that—

"My self-love made me shed a flood of tears at the thought of leaving a country, where I had the esteem

<sup>1</sup> "When he left me it was as if my heart had been torn from me."



QUEEN MARY.

*(From the portrait by William Wissing.)*

*Emery Walker.*

TO THE  
LIBRARY OF

of the inhabitants, where I had had a life so suited to my humour, . . . abundant cause to make me love it, and no small reason to doubt if ever I should be so happy in my own country."

At last the weary days of uncertainty and waiting were over, and Mary sailed for England. She has left a most touching and vivid picture of her meeting with her husband, which leaves no doubt of their mutual affection at this time, an affection which never wavered during the few remaining years of Mary's life; though, as she says herself, she was not blind to his faults.

"I had a joy greater than I can express to come to the Prince, but I found him in a very ill condition as to his health; he had a violent cough upon him, and was grown extremely lean. He could not restrain as soon as we were alone; we both shed tears of joy to meet, and of sorrow for meeting in England, both wishing it might have been Holland, both bewailing the loss of the liberty we had left behind, and were sensible we should never enjoy here, and in that moment we found a beginning of the constraint we were to endure hereafter, for we . . . dried up our tears lest it should be perceived when we went out."

Greatly beloved as Mary came to be in England, her demeanour on her first arrival created general disapproval and was widely censured. It was thought that the King's daughter, coming to take her place in the palace and the kingdom from which her husband had

just driven her father by force of arms, should appear with a befitting gravity and show a sense of the solemnity of the occasion. Instead of this, "she came into Whitehall," says Evelyn, "laughing and jolly as at a wedding, so as to seem quite transported. She rose early the next morning, and in her undress, as it was reported, before any of her women were up, went about from room to room to see the convenience of the house ; lay in the apartment where the Queen lay, and within a night or two sat down to play at basset [the fashionable game of cards of the moment], as the Queen her predecessor used to do. This carriage was censured by many. She seems to be of a good nature, and that she takes nothing to heart." The mischief-making Lady Churchill would naturally think this behaviour "very strange and unbecoming." But even Burnet, who was always the Princess's most devoted adherent, was surprised, and thought "a little seriousness had done as well." "I had never seen the least indecency in any part of her deportment before, which made this appear so extraordinary, that some days after I took the liberty to ask her, that what she saw in so sad a Revolution as to her Father's person, made not a greater impression on her"; when she with her usual goodness explained that the Prince had written to her saying that though the late transactions were entirely distasteful to her, it was necessary she should at first appear so cheerful as to disarm suspicions, and in her anxiety to meet her husband's wishes she had perhaps overacted a part that did not come naturally to

her. How far Mary was from feeling any indecent gaiety at this time may be seen from the pages of her diary, where she writes:—

“My heart is not made for a kingdom, and my inclination leads me to a retired quiet life. So that I have need of all the resignation and self-denial in the world.”

She was surprised and shocked at the lack of seriousness and devotion in England. There is scarcely time for private prayers, whereas in Holland she attended public prayers four times a day. “From a strict retirement, where I led the life of a nun, I am come into a noisy world full of variety.” She tried to make people observe Sunday better, but so much company came to see her that “that was counted an idle day.” Her high sense of her responsibilities and her influence for good led her to exercise it beyond the confines of her court. She intervened to check the performance of a play at Southwark Fair, where, says a diarist, the earthquake in Jamaica was “profanely and ludicrously represented in a puppet play or some such lewd pastime, which caused the Queen to put down that idle and vicious mock show.” The same writer laments the atheism, profaneness, and blasphemy among all classes, which he thought portended some judgment. Other sober-minded people set themselves to amend the general disorganisation of manners, morals, and religion; and societies of Reformation, as they were called, were formed to bring offenders to justice and provide for social amendment. The Queen encouraged these good

designs by letters and proclamations and all means in her power.

Very soon after her arrival in England, the King returned to Hampton Court. His health was very obviously suffering from his confinement at Whitehall. He missed the fresh air and exercise to which his continual hunting had accustomed him at home. He became more taciturn and irritable, shut himself up in his closet for the execution of business. He grew "peevish" from overwork and ill-health. His friends urged upon him the necessity of being accessible, and of making himself agreeable, or, as they said, that he would set about being more open, visible, and communicative. But he made ill-health his excuse, and within a short time removed to Hampton Court, coming into town on council days. Here was cause for general disgust. The gaiety and diversions of the open court kept by the last two Stuarts disappeared, and though the Queen tried by all the means in her power to make up by her vivacity and charm for what was offensive in the aloofness of her husband, yet when people found that she had no influence over, and was resolved not to meddle in, public affairs, and that nothing was to be gained by paying court to her, few came, "though she gave a wonderful content to all that came near her."

London was not only affronted at their new King's desertion : there was much grumbling at the heavy expense that would be entailed in making Hampton Court habitable, and the expenditure of a large sum in

building at a time when the national resources would be heavily taxed to restore order.

At Hampton Court the Dutch Prince sought to reproduce on the banks of an English river something of the familiar beauties of his favourite palace of Loo. Temple has told us how the Dutch loved to decorate the interior of their houses. William's only recreation, besides hunting, which seemed to him poor sport in England, was architecture and gardening. Hampton Court, as everyone knows, had been the palace of Cardinal Wolsey, and was by him presented to Henry VIII. Since that date it had often been used as a royal residence, though it had many inconveniences, but its pictures and tapestries were famous. Charles Hatton, visiting it in 1687, and walking round the outside, wrote to his brother that "it was very meane." . . . "I was so disgusted to see ye back and front side, I admire how anyone can fancy it." William employed Christopher Wren to design his new buildings. Mary was no less glad than her husband to escape from London. At Hampton Court she rejoices in having recovered leisure for a little serious reflection. She and the Prince take the sacrament together there at Easter. From here she writes to a Dutch correspondent:—<sup>1</sup>

"I am just now in the country at a place which has been very neglected, it is about 4 leagues from London. The air there is very good, but it lacks many of the conveniences of Dieren [although the house has 4 or

<sup>1</sup> Mademoiselle La Baronne de Wassenaer d'Obdam.

500 rooms], it lacks also as good a neighbour as Madame de Rosendalle."

But their peaceful retirement was to be short-lived. William felt the necessity of making some concession to public opinion, and bought Lord Nottingham's house at Kensington for 18,000 guineas. Evelyn, who saw it after it had been altered to suit the requirements of a court, describes it as "yet a patched building, but with the garden, however, it is a very swete villa." Mary gives an account of this transaction to a friend in Holland. "The misfortune of the King's health, which hindered him living at Whitehall, put people out of humour, being here naturally lazy. The King had bought Lord Nottingham's house to please them, but that not being ready, he resolved to borrow Holland House the meanwhile. Thither we came the 16th October. There, though I was very ill accommodated all manner of ways, yet the Lord gave me grace to spend my time well."

The Queen now set herself to perform the public duties which she always seems to have felt so irksome. Two public dinners, which were held, gave general satisfaction, and, noting this, the Queen thought she ought perhaps to celebrate the King's birthday by a ball. This, though she regarded all public festivities as out of place in the unsettled state of affairs, would probably be popular, "such is the depravation of this age and place where I live."

Her diary is filled with regrets at her want of ease and leisure. "I was so unsettled at Holland House, I could

not do as I would. This made me often go to Kensington to hasten the workmen, and I was too impatient to be at that place, imagining to find more ease there. This I often reproved myself for, and at last it pleased God to show me the uncertainty of all things below, for part of the house, which was new built, fell down. The same accident happened at Hampton Court ; humanly speaking, it was the fault of the workmen, yet showed me the hand of God plainly in it, and I was very humbled."

In these lonely and harassed years of her life in England, Mary was deprived of the companionship and friendship that she might reasonably have expected from her sister Anne. Of limited intelligence and weak character, Anne was already entirely under the domination of Sarah Jennings, Lady Marlborough, and of her unscrupulous husband, whom Mary's native shrewdness had already appraised as a man she could neither like nor esteem. At her first coming over Anne met her in a friendly spirit, and Mary was "really extream glad to see her." But it was not long before Mary noted that "she had a very sensible affliction also at this time, to see how my sister was making parties to get a revenue settled, and said nothing of it to me" ; . . . and she adds, "She avoided carefully, ever since I came from Hampton Court, all occasion of ever being alone with me."

William, detesting, like most men, any occasion of family squabbles, forbade his wife to mention the subject to her sister, and commissioned Lord Shrewsbury

to offer Anne £50,000 to be settled on her, besides the payments of her debts. The suggestion was made to the Princess through Marlborough, "who begged he [Shrewsbury] would not own he found him; his wife would by no means hear of it, but was like a mad woman." Lady Churchill, it must be remembered, wanted her own share of the Princess's income. She declared Anne should retire if her friends would not help her. Application was then made to Anne herself, who said she had met with so little encouragement from the King that she could expect no kindness from him, and would rather trust to her friends. This was too much for a devoted wife, and Mary taxed her sister with it, "upon which we parted ill friends." The matter was afterwards settled by Parliament. "But the King thought it an ungenerous thing to fall out with a woman, and therefore went to her and told her so, upon which, she said, he should find by her behaviour she would never give him cause." She never alluded to this conversation, however, to her sister, and the coldness between them continued.

Early in 1690 the King's visit to Ireland was decided upon, on which, wrote the Queen, "I fell into a great melancholy. He said much to comfort me, and desired to talk no more on so sad a subject." William proposed to his wife that the government should be in her name, but she declined, being, as she said, very ignorant in all kinds of business, for "I have ever used myself not to trouble the King about business, since I was married to him . . . when he could get from it

he was glad to come to me and have his thoughts diverted by other discourse." On this occasion she wrote : "The King gave me a very kind answer, assuring me his kindness was too great not to take all the care of the world of me in all manner of waies."

William went to Ireland, having appointed a council of nine to advise the Queen in his absence. Meanwhile, Anne was making difficulties again. Her sister felt that it was useless to remonstrate with her, though she was evidently deeply hurt at her continued coldness. "I should not have scrupled speaking to her of it, but I saw plainly she was so absolutely governed by Lady Marlborough that it was to no purpose." In a thousand petty ways Anne created a contentious atmosphere. She took the sacrament in her own chapel, which at once caused much gossip. She and the High Church party laughed at the afternoon sermon that Mary had instituted at Whitehall, and as the Queen adds comprehensively, she was continually "doing in little things contrary to what I did," so that Mary had "no hopes of a lasting kindness." Added to these petty, but poignant, annoyances, there was the real anxiety of her husband's absence in Ireland—"which was the terriblest journey to me that he ever took. . . . The concern for his dear person, who was so ill in health when he went from hence, the toil and fatigue he was like to endure, the ill air of the country he was going ; his humour, when I knew he would expose himself to all dangers, then again the cruell

thought that my husband and father would fight in person against each other.”

All these circumstances—her husband's absence, her sister's unkindness, the troubled state of the country, which she says made her fear the worst—continued so to prey on the Queen's spirits at this time that she wrote, “all the crosses I met with made me melancolly and even wish to dye.” She had no friend, no one in whom she could trust, no child to comfort her. In a pathetic passage she comforts herself for this, “*puisque l'homme ne voit point ce que le seigneur voit*”<sup>1</sup>; and the frequent dangers which her husband has to incur, would have been insupportable to her if the future of his children had been involved. In the spring she had a sore throat; it grew so bad that she “set all things in order,” being rather glad than sorry to think she would die, and prepared for death with all imaginable satisfaction. But the danger passed away, and presently Anne came and made friends and begged her pardon. Mary gave her sister a kind answer, but she “laid hold on that” to ask for an addition to her income of £20,000 a year. So the reconciliation was illusory after all, and Lady Marlborough's doing, thinks Mary.

Meanwhile, this melancholy year had sped to September, and “the Lord kept all quiet and kept me from committing any great fault,” and on the 7th came the news, “the welcomest in the world,” of William's landing in England. On the 18th she met him at

<sup>1</sup> “Since man sees not what God sees.”



*The most Noble and Mighty Prince*  
**THOMAS DUKE OF LEEDS, MARQUIS OF CARMARTHEN, EARL OF DANBY,**  
Viscount Latimer, Baron Osborne of Kington, President of His Majesty's most Hon.<sup>ble</sup> Privy Council,  
Lieutenant of the three Ridings of Yorkshire, Govern<sup>r</sup> of the Town & Fort of Kingston upon Hull,  
And Knight of the most Noble Order of the Garter.

Emery Walker.

THOMAS OSBORNE, EARL OF DANBY, AND AFTERWARDS DUKE OF LEEDS.

(From a portrait in the National Portrait Gallery.)



Hampton Court, in perfect health, which makes amends for all, and she says proudly, "he was very much pleased with my behaviour."

During William's next absence in Holland, the Queen was happier, though she says, "I love my husband too well to be very easy in his absence." The business that she was forced to undertake on these occasions was distasteful to her, and the men the King left in office, when not actually disloyal to him, took advantage of the absence of his controlling hand. "I saw all those I was to trust to together by the ears," says the Queen on one of these occasions. "A general peevishness or sylleness in them all except Lord Sidney." She thought it politic to play Comet and Basset every night while the King was in Holland, to appear at the play, and to celebrate her sister's birthday by a dance. When Anne was quiescent her husband made difficulties. Prince George declared his intention of going to sea, and when the Queen forbade it by her husband's orders, he sulked and retired to Tonbridge.

Like many pious people Mary attributed all the troubles that befell her to a direct intervention of Providence in judgment for some shortcoming of her own. The death of Lady Dorset, for instance, whom she really loved, was an obvious judgment on her for wishing that one among her ladies, who was sick, "might make room for Lady Nottingham, of whom I had heard so much good and liked so well, that I thought my set could not be more mended than by the

change." Another time she was rejoicing in the most delightfully human way at getting rid of the workmen at Kensington, and pleasing herself with the convenience of her house, and neatness of her furniture, when she was taught the vanity of all such creature comforts by a fire. "This has truly weaned me, I hope, from the vanities I was most fond of, that is, ease and good lodging."

Mary had one consolation besides that of religion, her husband's increasing affection for her, on his return from his frequent absences. In October 1691 she notes, "How kind he is, and how much more of his company I have had." It was, indeed, a tribute to the King's generosity that he should have betrayed no resentment when he found that his wife's father was implicated in plots against him. The Queen's distress and anxiety were poignant. "He who I dare no more name Father was consenting to the murder of my husband," she wrote, and added bitterly that she was ashamed to look anyone in the face. "I feared it might lessen my husband's kindness to me, but he was so kind as not to love me less, for that my great and endless misfortune." Later she added, "My husband's kindness makes up for all,"—all her father's treachery, and the continued coldness of her sister, whom she says sadly, "no kindness could work upon."

But at one time the King's health was in so critical a state that this last earthly prop of his "kindness" seemed to be failing her, when the Queen wrote, "I take sanctuary in God alone."

In 1693 her difficulties culminated. "This year I have met with more troubles as to public matters than any other." Her interest in public affairs was always of the keenest, and she naturally felt a lively indignation at the treachery of the King's servants, of which he could not afford to take cognisance. Two disasters abroad helped to aggravate discontent in England: the Smyrna merchant fleet was destroyed and captured by the French, and William was defeated at the battle of Landen. Mary writes that "no orders are obeyed, no faults punished, consequent on the ill-intelligence among those in authority and the dissensions in the Council." She seems at least once to have asserted herself with some firmness: "Lord Bellamont behaved himself impertinently. I turned him out, and was censured for it by all." One feels convinced that he richly deserved it. Luttrell notes the fact in an entry in his diary for 30th March: "Lord Bellamont was displaced from being Treasurer to the Queen." He says that it was supposed to be in consequence of his supporting the Bill for Triennial Parliaments, and adds that the place was worth £2000 a year. In April he notes that "a patent is passing the seals for settling £500 on Lord Bellamont in consideration of his past services."

In an illuminating passage the Queen explains how intolerable her position was in having to cajole the disloyal servants of her husband in his absence. "I am allwaies apprehensive of letting myself grow angry, especially where it will signify nothing; for as long as

people are to be managed, etc., and know it, they will be insolent, and do what they please, believing themselves very necessary, if they are but a little so." Worst of all, this year the King "disapproved allmost everything."

But the diary concludes in a more peaceful tone :—  
"I continue still in an earnest desire of doing good, but alas ! I do not find I have made any great progress. . . . Oh, my God . . . . give me grace to increase in zeal, and do thou assist me and put the same earnest desire into my husband. . . . And thus in very good dispositions of mind I bless my God and end this year 1693." Before another year had ended the Queen's brave heart had ceased to beat.

## CHAPTER IV

THOMAS OSBORNE EARL OF DANBY, MARQUIS OF  
CAERMARTHEN, AND DUKE OF LEEDS

OF the appointments made by William, the one which gave the greatest offence to the Whigs was that of Thomas Osborne Earl of Danby. His abilities were undeniable, his official experience invaluable, and he had every reason to consider the new King indebted to him. He had been largely instrumental in bringing about the marriage between William and Mary; he had signed the invitation to the Prince of Orange to come over; he had raised the North in his interest, and had shown determined opposition to the scheme of Regency.

Sir Thomas Osborne was a Yorkshire baronet, who had raised himself to the distinguished position he occupied by his own eminent abilities. On election to Parliament in Charles II.'s reign, he soon attracted attention by his capacity for business, and his adroitness as a debater. As Lord Treasurer he assumed the principal control of affairs after the fall of the Cabal in 1673, and was created Earl of Danby. Macaulay's

verdict on him, that "he was greedy of wealth and honours, corrupt himself and a corrupter of others," appears harsh when it is remembered how few of the politicians of his day had clean hands ; and Danby was far from being a mere scrambler after private gain at the country's expense. He had definite views, and a distinct policy, and he deliberately organised means of carrying them out. If he did not invent, he perfected the arts of bribery, and distributed the places and pensions within the range of his patronage so as to secure a solid phalanx of votes in the House of Commons, that could be depended upon to support the Government. Burnet describes and criticises his innovations in the art of bribery :—"He took a different method from those who were in the ministry before him. They had taken off the great and leading men, and left the herd as a despised company, who could do nothing, because they had none to head them. But Lord Danby reckoned that the major number was the surer game, so he neglected the great men, who he thought raised their price too high, and reckoned that he could gain ten ordinary men cheaper than one of these. This might have succeeded with him if they that did lead his party had been wise and skilful men. But he seemed to be jealous of all such, as if they might gain too much credit with the King."

Danby had an exalted idea of the royal prerogative, and attempted to rally round Charles II. the Church party, the old Cavaliers, and the country gentlemen,

whose loyalty had supported the throne in the days of Charles II.'s father. "It was said the King had all along neglected his best and surest friends," and Danby ingeniously sought to rouse royalist sentiment again. He recovered and had erected near Charing Cross an equestrian statue of Charles I. that had been cast in 1633 by Le Sœur for the Earl of Arundel. Parliament had ordered it to be sold and broken up, but one John Rivet, a brazier of Holborn, bought it, and contenting the authorities by exhibiting some pieces of broken brass, he buried the statue whole. This ingenious man continued to make an honest living for some time afterwards by the sale of knife and fork handles purporting to be made from the statue of the royal martyr.

In pursuance of his loyalist policy Danby aimed at getting rid of all opposition to the Crown by introducing a Bill in 1675 which compelled all officials, justices of the peace, and members of Parliament, whether Lords or Commons, to make a declaration that bearing arms against the King, "on any pretence whatsoever," was unlawful, and to take an oath never to attempt any alteration in government or religion as established by law. Had this measure passed, it would have thrown exclusive power into the hands of the Church and Cavalier party, but it was eventually dropped after violent debates, in which swords had been drawn in the House. But Danby had also recourse to surer methods for securing his master's position. His admirable management of finance relieved the King

of the tiresome necessity of continually applying to Parliament for money. When he took over the business of the Treasury, he had to cope with arrears for dockyard works, arrears of wages to sick and wounded sailors ; he had to pay off the army and navy at the conclusion of the war with Holland in 1674 ; and he had to reduce the household debts. He expended over £200,000 to meet the deficit on the dockyard works and wages bill ; he paid off the disbanded soldiers and sailors at the rate of £100,000 a month for fifteen months ; he made a reduction of £79,000 in the household debts : and yet, on his impeachment in 1679, he left £100,000 in the Exchequer where he had found debts and confusion.<sup>1</sup>

Danby's foreign policy was in the main patriotic ; he resented the contemptible position of England as a dependency of France, and made no secret of it, talking "against the French interest with open mouth," as Burnet phrased it, so much so that the French ambassador Rouvigny warned him that "the King of France was the King's best friend and truest ally,

<sup>1</sup> For an admirable summary of Danby's financial measures see Mr John Pollock in *The Cambridge Modern History*, p. 215, vol. v. :— "On his arrival at the Treasury Danby found the Government in enormous arrears for dockyard works and for the wages of sick and wounded sailors. On these counts alone he gradually paid out £136,000 and £93,000 respectively. The household debts were soon reduced by £79,000. The army and navy left on his hands at the conclusion of the war were paid off at the rate of over £100,000 a month for fifteen months [in cash, not promissory notes], and on his fall from office in 1679, left over £100,000 in an exchequer which, before his control of it, had hardly ever been a penny to the good."

and if he [Danby] made the King forsake him, and depend on his Parliament, being so tempered as they were then, both the King and he might come to repent it when it was too late."

Danby replied that he would act as a faithful servant to his master, and he sought to strengthen the alliance with Holland by supporting the marriage of William and Mary. It was he who persuaded Charles to consent to his niece's marriage; but, on the other hand, his love of power and place induced him so far to connive at his master's disgraceful monetary transactions with the King of France that they involved his downfall.

Danby was already unpopular. Charles II. had sent down a message to the House asking for £300,000 additional revenue for life. This was at once rejected without a division, whereupon Danby, by the King's command, gave instructions to his minister in France, Ralph Montague, to arrange a peace with Louis XIV. on the terms of a grant of £300,000 a year for three years, to do away with the necessity of calling a Parliament. When this came out it was believed that Danby's scheme was to keep up the army that had been raised with Louis XIV.'s money, so that the King should not only be independent of Parliament, but could bring the nation under military rule; "so that Lord Danby became the most hated minister that had ever been about the King, and people said now they saw the secret of that high favour he had been in so long, and the black designs he was contriving."

Ralph Montague, who became the instrument of his downfall, was a worthless, unscrupulous man, with sufficient cunning to save his own skin. Charles had commissioned him to seek out an astrologer who had correctly prophesied the day and year of his Restoration some time before it took place. Montague found the astrologer, found also that he had his price, and paid him to concoct prophecies which should serve his own ends with the King. He was foolish enough, however, to confide this secret to the Duchess of Cleveland, of whom Charles II. had tired, and who was at this time in Paris. "Montague," says Burnet, "was 'bewitched' by her, but she, in a fit of jealousy, took all the ways she could think of to ruin him, reserving this of the astrologer for her last shift; and by it she compassed her ends, for Montague was entirely lost upon it with the King." This story, whether trustworthy or not—and Burnet did not always sift his evidence—is a curious piece of contemporary gossip. Montague had meanwhile secured a seat as Member of Parliament for Northampton, and, coming over without being recalled, took his seat in the House. He had succeeded in convincing the French ambassador that Danby was really an enemy to France, and that he might be got rid of, if it were made worth Montague's while to contrive it. He was given a substantial sum to secure the downfall of the minister.

Danby, determined to be beforehand, took measures to have Montague accused of treasonable correspondence with the papal Nuncio at Paris, and ordered his

papers to be seized. By this means he hoped to recover his own letters. But Montague "understood the arts of a court too well to be easily caught." He had put Danby's letters into safe keeping, and sat silent in his place in the House while a debate on the question of the breach of privilege involved in seizing the papers of a member of the House went on round him. Finally, he produced the incriminating letters from Danby. Danby had at first urged Montague "to leave this whole negotiation as private as possible, for fear of giving offence at home"; but he wrote subsequently that he had felt no uneasiness as to the consequences to himself of the correspondence, as he wrote "by the King's command upon the subject of peace and war, wherein his Majesty alone is at all times sole judge and ought to be obeyed not only by his ministers but by all his subjects." Charles had added a postscript in his own handwriting, "I approve of this letter.—C.R." It was, however, in vain that the minister pleaded in extenuation that he was acting by his master's orders, and in vain that he produced letters from Montague to prove that in the court of France he (Danby) was regarded as an enemy to their own interests; his own supporters were confounded, his impeachment was voted and carried by a majority of over seventy. Charles tried to save his servant.<sup>1</sup> He gave him a sealed pardon, created him Marquis of Caermarthen, and dissolved

<sup>1</sup> Danby's daughter Bridget had married a natural son of Charles II., the Earl of Plymouth.

the House. But when the House met again Danby's impeachment was renewed, and he was committed to the Tower, where he remained five years.

Ralph Montague, the instrument of Danby's downfall, was a son of Lord Montague of Boughton. He was made a duke by Anne, and is otherwise memorable as having built Montague House in Bloomsbury, on the site of what is now the British Museum.

On Danby's impeachment showers of lampoons and scurrilous verses testified to the virulence of popular indignation against him. These topical songs, which are frequently too coarse for quotation, were sung to popular tunes. One such runs :—

“What the devil ails the Parliament?  
 Sure they were drunk with brandy  
 When they did seek to circumvent  
 Thomas Earl of Danby.

I never heard of subject tell,  
 Nor can one in this land be,  
 Deserves a halter half so well  
 As Thomas Earl of Danby.”<sup>1</sup>

Another ballad concludes :—

“Tommy was a lord of high renown,  
 And he was raised from a low degree ;  
 He had command o'er every town,  
 And was never a one as great as he.  
 But he, like an ungrateful wretch,  
 Did set his conscience on the stretch,  
 And now is afraid of Squire Ketch,  
 For Tommy will ne'er be beloved again.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roxb. Ballad.

Pepys describes Danby as “a comely gentleman,” but his enemies were less kind :

“ He is as stiff as any stake,  
 And leaner, Dick, than any rake.  
 Envy is not so pale,  
 And though by selling us all  
 He has brought himself into Whitehall,  
 He looks like a bird of gaol . . .”

The excitement over Danby's impeachment was merged in the hysteric commotion caused by the discovery of the Popish Plot, in which his enemies tried to implicate him. The perjuries of the infamous Oates and the mysterious murder of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey are not within the province of this chapter. Danby's confinement in the Tower was not very strict ; his friends were allowed access to him, but his health suffered from the confinement. He kept some sort of rough journal while he was there, and some of its pages may be seen by the curious at the British Museum. They are headed :—

“Memoirs taken out of my pocket-book in the years written in the margent, viz. :—

“1679. Mar. 24.—The Lords ordered my committment. At the same time I received a message from the King by Lord Bath that he would have me go, and not to appear, so that I never delivered my staff [of office] to the King, but it was carried the 2nd and 3rd day after, by my son Latimer. I know not by what order. (Mem. : to enquire.)”

On 26th January of the next year he wrote :—

“The Parliament met and was prorogued to the 16th of April, by which day I shall have been a compleat year in the Tower.”

Danby made more than one attempt to get bail. He availed himself of the Habeas Corpus Act to be brought before the Court of King’s Bench, and asked for bail, pleading his own cause. His health and affairs were suffering, he argued, and he had his Majesty’s pardon and pleasure that he should be bailed; but the judges, though they expressed sympathy, dared not override a parliamentary impeachment, and he was remanded.

The plea of his health was quite genuine, for Luttrell notes that on 18th June 1683 he was prayed for in the London churches, “being much indisposed.” One can imagine that the fallen minister’s friends fought shy of him at first, and early in his imprisonment he had petitioned in vain to be allowed to see his wife, who was ill. But in 1683, John Evelyn, visiting him on 7th December, found Lady Danby with her husband. “I went to the Tower,” writes the diarist, “and visited the Earl of Danby, the late Lord Treasurer, who had been imprisoned four years; he received me with greate kindness. I dined with him, and staid till night. We had discourse of many things, his lady railing sufficiently at the keeping her husband so long in prison.” A few months later Danby’s long imprisonment came to an end. He was bailed in the following February, and bound in recognisances of £10,000 by the Dukes of Somerset and

Albemarle. The Earls of Oxford and Chesterfield were his sureties for £5000 each. Sir John Reresby says that the Earls of Rochester and Sunderland opposed his being let out of the Tower, as they feared he might join with Halifax to oppose their interest. This writer has left an account of a little scene between the King and Danby after his release, which he witnessed. "Lord Danby came the same day to kiss his Majesty's hand in the bedchamber, where I happened to be present. The King received him very kindly. When the Earl complained of his long imprisonment, his Majesty told him he knew it was against his consent, which his lordship thankfully acknowledged; but they had no manner of private discourse together. My Lord Privy Seal [Halifax] came into the presence presently after, and the two lords saluted each other, but it was very slightly done on both sides. The next day, however, I went from the Lord Privy Seal to wait upon the Earl, when his lordship desired me to present his service to him, and to tell him that he should have taken a more particular sort of notice of him, but that he thought it would not prove so much for his service; and the Earl said it was for the very self-same reason he had behaved so indifferently toward his lordship; for there was at that time great jealousy of a friendship between them." Doubtless it behoved a man to be on his guard till he saw how the King received his formerly all-powerful minister, for the Lord Privy Seal told Reresby that "he himself had been Danby's chief friend in his enlargement."

In the years that elapsed after Danby's fall from office the indignation against him had died away; he was still an influence with the old Cavalier party, and even the Whigs remembered that he had been loyal to the Protestant religion, and had in the main been actuated by patriotic motives, so that he was accepted as the spokesman of the Tory party, with Nottingham, at the conferences with William's envoy Dykvelt. The important part he played in the Revolution, in signing the invitation to the Prince of Orange, in raising the North for William after his arrival, and in the discussions as to the Revolution settlement, have already been described. The Earl of Clarendon, whom we have already had occasion to mention, has left a curious little tribute to Danby's caution in these unsettled days, when it was unsafe for a man to trust anyone less deeply involved than himself. Clarendon had been one of the last men to give his adherence to William, and was one of the first to betray him; but in the brief interval that elapsed, being a timorous, anxious man, he was horribly perturbed to know what was being done by other men in whose councils he had not been included. "The Bishops of Norwich and Ely dined with me," he notes in his memoirs on 27th December 1688. "After dinner they went to see my Lord Danby. They came to me in the evening, and told me his Lordship was very reserved, and they could not make any discovery of his mind."

Clarendon made another attempt to find out what part Danby was taking:—"1st Jan. In the evening I

visited Lord Abingdon, who told me he had not yet been able to have much discourse with Lord Danby ; that he seemed troubled the King was gone ; but Lord Abingdon said he fancied he was reserved to him, but he should quickly find him out." Later on in March the Bishop of Ely came to warn the Earl that "by what my Lord of Danby had let fall to my Lord of Canterbury in a visit he made to him on Friday last, I should be worse used than anybody," on which Lord Clarendon "resolved to go out of town this evening."

Danby hoped that his great abilities, his political experience, and his services to the Prince of Orange, would be rewarded with the position of Treasurer. But William did not entrust that office to one man. Danby was given his choice of being President of the Council and a Secretaryship of State. He grudgingly accepted the former, and, disgusted at not having been given a more eminent position, he spent most of his time in the country sulking, and sneering at the Government, and making the plea of ill-health an excuse for seldom appearing at the Council Board. Meanwhile the chief power fell into the hands of Halifax, who was virtually Prime Minister. Sir John Reresby, commenting on his attitude, says : "The Marquis of Halifax told me that the Marquis of Caermarthen's going into the country, pretending to be sick, and seldom coming to the Council, gave new jealousies of him ; that he heard he had said that things could not continue thus, that his relations and friends

spoke dangerously and himself very openly ; that he found the new Marquis would not be inward with him or be his friend, that he still looked upon him as the cause he had not the Lord Treasurer's staff, though he did not altogether deserve it. For of all men the King would never have put him into that office, nor, indeed, into any other very considerable at this time, as he would find if things continued fair till September. I heard some things, which I told my Lord Privy Seal, which gave ground to suspect my Lord President was discontented. As to himself, his lordship told me he found the King very fair towards him personally, and he had it from their hands that his expressions were kind of him behind his back, for he gave him few troubles either on his own or other people's account, and the Lord President was constantly importuning him."

## CHAPTER V

### GEORGE SAVILE MARQUIS OF HALIFAX<sup>1</sup>

HOWEVER diverse were the views held by Sir George Savile's contemporaries as to his motives and political morality, there was but one opinion as to his pre-eminent abilities. "He was a man of great and ready wit," wrote Burnet; Sir John Reresby calls him "a man of extraordinary parts"; later historians have only emphasised their estimate of his greatness. Ranke describes him as "one of the finest pamphleteers that ever lived"; and Macaulay believed him to be "among the statesmen of those times in genius the first." His associates bear eloquent witness to his personal charm, brilliant wit, keen and sometimes indiscriminate satire, while as an orator he was unrivalled. Living in an unstable age, when the majority of politicians adopted the simple expedient of adhering to the winning side, Halifax's keen perceptions and settled principles held him aloof from the extremes of partisanship. He appeared enigmatic and apparently

<sup>1</sup> We wish to acknowledge our indebtedness for references to documents, etc., to Foxcroft's *Life of Savile*.

inconsistent to men possessed of less foresight than himself, and he incurred obloquy, unpopularity, and misunderstanding with such philosophy as he could muster. A nice sense of balance and proportion directed his political life. Exaggeration was repugnant to his nature. "Positive decisions are always dangerous," he said, "especially in politics." "Trimmer" was the nickname given him contemptuously by more ardent partisans, and he adopted and defended the title in his famous tract, *The Character of a Trimmer*.

Like Danby, with whom in early life he had been on friendly terms, George Savile was a Yorkshire baronet. His mother was left a widow when he was only ten years old. She was a zealous Royalist, and was besieged by the Parliamentary army in Sheffield Castle in 1644, and surrendered on honourable terms. George Savile is supposed to have been educated abroad. He married at twenty-three Dorothy, the elder daughter of Henry Spencer, first Earl of Sunderland, who died at Newbury, and of Dorothy, Dowager Lady Sunderland, the sister of Algernon Sidney and Henry Sidney. Savile's political career began early. He sat in the Convention Parliament at the Restoration, and as his wife was niece to Shaftesbury, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his own uncle William Coventry was secretary to the Duke of York, he had from the first influential connections as well as wealth, and a position of considerable provincial importance to aid his own brilliant abilities. He early assumed a prominent place among other such rising



GEORGE SAVILE, MARQUIS OF HALIFAX.  
(From an engraving in the British Museum.)



young men as Sir Thomas Osborne and Sir John Reresby, who with himself were associated with the fortunes of the all-powerful favourite the Duke of Buckingham. Staid John Evelyn, receiving a visit from the young baronet about this time, describes him as "a witty gentleman, if not a little too prompt and daring."

In 1665 the court was obliged to leave London to escape the plague, and the Duke and Duchess of York were entertained by Savile at his Nottinghamshire seat of Rufford, where later on he spent some of the few peaceful days of his strenuous life. In return for this hospitality, his uncle William Coventry secured from the Duke the promise of a peerage for his host. The Duke reported the matter to his father-in-law, Lord Chancellor Clarendon, telling him that "Sir George had one of the best fortunes in England, and lived the most like a great man; that he had been very civil to him and his wife in the North, and treated them at his house in a very splendid manner." Himself and the Duchess, he said, "were equally engaged to make Sir George Savile a viscount." Clarendon, who was jealous of the increasing influence of both Coventry and Buckingham, objected that Savile "was a man of a very ill reputation amongst men of piety and religion, and was looked upon as void of all sense of religion, even to the doubting if not denying that there is a God, and that he was not reserved in any company to publish his opinions."<sup>1</sup> The Duke was,

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon's *Cont. of History*.

however, quite undeterred by these charges, and preferred his request to Charles, who, much to his brother's mortification, declined to grant it. The Duke did what he could, in compensation for the disappointment to the Saviles, by taking into his service Sir George's younger brother Henry, whom Clarendon describes as "a young man of wit, and incredible confidence and presumption." The charge of atheism here levelled against Savile by Clarendon was unmerited, though he was always indiscreet in speech. "He let his wit run much on matters of religion," says Burnet, "so that he passed for a bold and determined atheist; though he often protested to me he was not one, and said he believed there was not one in the world . . . he believed as much as he could, and he hoped that God would not lay it to his charge, if he could not digest iron as an ostrich did, nor take into his belief things that must burst him." Burnet adds that "in a fit of sickness, I knew him very much touched with a sense of religion."

Savile's early friendship with Danby endured some time, and he wrote to him in the most intimate and familiar terms.

"FOR THE HON. SIR THOMAS OSBORNE.

"SIR,—I am ever disappointed in my intentions to wait upon you, which I would not omitt if the coming to you now would not be a greater rudeness than staying away, the meezles being amongst my children, which maketh me conclude I must bee an unwelcome

guest, and a dangerous one, where there are so many little ones, besides the particular concern I am to have for my goddaughter's pretty face, which I would not have spoiled though but for a week. The letters this post speak more doubtfully of a peace, so that I presume the Parliament must certainly meet. My Lord of Buckingham hath kissed the King's hand.—I am, sir, your most faithful humble servant,

“GEO. SAVILE.”<sup>1</sup>

This letter was written in 1667, when Buckingham, whose influence had suffered a temporary eclipse, was restored to place and favour on the fall of Clarendon, and advanced the fortunes of his adherents. Sir George Savile was made one of a Parliamentary Committee of inquiry into naval expenditure, and created Baron Savile of Eland and Viscount Halifax. About this time began a coolness between Savile and Sir Thomas Osborne. A quarrel between Savile's uncle Coventry and Buckingham involved the retirement of Coventry, and Osborne succeeded to his post at the Treasury.

To write a detailed account of Halifax's career at this time would be to write a history of the reign of Charles II. The case stated briefly was that Charles, after publicly making peace with Holland, had been secretly bought off by France, and was proceeding to Romanise England, by his Declaration of Indulgence, which repealed all penal laws against Roman Catholics and dissenters. Halifax was strongly opposed both to

<sup>1</sup> Spencer MSS., quoted by Foxcroft.

the Dutch war and to the Declaration of Indulgence. He was sent on a mission to France to congratulate Louis XIV. on the birth of a son—a mission that probably was designed to get him out of the way. At the same time the French ambassador warned his master that the Marquis was “à présent contraire à la bonne union qui est entre la France et l’Angleterre,” and that “il ne sait rien de la ‘grande affaire’”; that is to say, of the intention of enforcing Romanism on England. “My lord is arrived here safe,” wrote Halifax’s secretary on landing, “though he hath not been exempt from the effects of the sea.” The unhappy ambassador had been kept tossing for twelve hours outside Calais before it was possible to disembark. It was at this time that William of Orange, who had assumed control of the Dutch forces, and was engaged in his unequal struggle with France, repudiated Charles’s exorbitant demands as the price of peace.

When Halifax returned to England he opposed the policy of the court, and took a prominent part in Parliament in opposition to the Declaration of Indulgence. His speech in the House of Lords gave bitter offence to the Duke of York. Halifax said, if we could make good the Eastern compliment, “O King, live for ever!” he could trust the King with everything; but since that was so much a compliment that it could never become real, he could not be implicit in his confidence. The Duke of York never forgave Halifax for this invidious allusion to himself, and hated him henceforth, and the King, in the face of

the strenuous opposition to the measure, withdrew the objectionable Declaration. The Test Act which was then passed to compel all persons holding office under the Crown to take the sacrament according to the rights of the Anglican Church, was actively supported by Halifax. This Act resulted in the retirement of the Duke of York from all his offices, as he had already been publicly received into the Roman Catholic Church. At the same time the powerful Cabal Ministry came to an end, for Clifford was obliged to declare himself a Roman Catholic and retire, while Buckingham and Shaftesbury, with the adroitness that characterised the politicians of that day, joined the opposition and attempted to make their peace with the nation. For a minister to incur popular odium was to court the risk of impeachment, the Tower, and execution, and national feeling ran high when it was fully realised that a design had been on foot to impose popery on the nation. When Parliament met in January 1674, the Lords debated as to the surest means of safeguarding Protestantism. Halifax proposed that all Papists should be disarmed, and that members of the Royal family should be obliged to marry Protestants, or should otherwise be incapable of succession. The King, however, prorogued Parliament in the next year.

On the fall of the Cabal, Halifax's old friend, Sir Thomas Osborne, now Earl of Danby, had succeeded to the Treasurer's white staff and was leading minister. Their friendship did not long survive when Danby

was in office and Halifax in opposition. He took a vigorous line in opposition to Danby's Test Oath Bill, intended to strengthen the Cavalier party. "With that quickness, learning, and elegance that are inseparable from all his discourses, he did make appear, that as there really was no security to any state by oaths, so also no private person, much less statesman, would ever order his affairs as relying on it; no man would ever sleep with open doors, or unlocked treasure or plate, should all the town be sworn not to rob; so that the use of multiplying oaths had been most commonly to exclude or disturb some honest conscientious men, who would never have prejudiced the Government." The Commons rejected the Bill, and Charles, who had just got another French subsidy, prorogued Parliament for fifteen months. Shortly afterwards Halifax was dismissed from being a Privy Councillor; he was disliked by the Duke of York, and had given incurable offence to Danby. The Lord Treasurer had frequently been charged with corruption, and a case in which he was concerned was brought before the Privy Council.

"About this time," says Burnet, who relates the incident, "there was a proposition made for farming the revenue in Ireland. And Lord Danby seemed for some time to favour one set of men, who offered to farm it. But on a sudden he turned to another. The secret of this broke out, that he was to have great advantages by the second proposition. The matter was brought to the Council table and some were examined

to it upon oath. Lord Widdrington did confess that he made an offer of a round sum to Lord Danby, but that he did not accept of it. Lord Halifax was yet of the Council. So he observed that the Lord Treasurer had rejected that offer very mildly, but not so as to discourage a second attempt; it would be somewhat strange, if a man should ask the use of another man's wife, and if the other should indeed refuse it but with great civility. This nettled Lord Danby, who, upon that, got him to be dismissed from that board; at which the Duke [of York] was much pleased, who hated Lord Halifax at that time more even than the Earl of Shaftesbury himself." The dismissal of Halifax took place in January 1676. Sir John Reresby, now a member for one of the Yorkshire boroughs, wrote to condole with him on this circumstance and on an illness that followed:—

"As cowards, my Lord, dare not open their eyes till ye danger be past, I durst not so much as enquire after your Health till I hear of y<sup>r</sup> Recoverie. Far from that I was afeard of every Letter I received, knowing that ill news flys fast from all hands wher soe many have a concerne my Lord for your Politicke misfortunes; ye have some freinds that bear soe great a share of them (for your own sake) that I am confident ye remainder can not be very grievous to y<sup>r</sup> Lord<sup>sp</sup>." <sup>1</sup>

When Parliament met again in 1677, after fifteen months' prorogation, the opposition in the Lords, led by Shaftesbury, Salisbury, Wharton, Buckingham, advanced

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Foxcroft from Bodleian MSS.

the theory that the prolonged prorogation had of itself dissolved Parliament. The four lords were sent to the Tower, a high-handed proceeding against which Halifax protested on the grounds that "here would be a precedent to tip down so many lords at a time and to garboil the House as often as any party should have a great majority." The next year, 1678, saw the beginnings of the Popish Plot and the fall of Danby. Now as always, Halifax maintained a moderate attitude. "I wished," says Burnet, "they would not run too hastily to the taking away men's lives upon such testimonies," such worthless evidence; and he adds, "Lord Halifax was of the same mind." We have already mentioned Halifax's younger brother Henry, who had been taken by the Duke of York "to wait upon him in his bedchamber," as a consolation to Sir George's disappointment over his promised title in 1665. He was a gay, affectionate, irresponsible young man, who later in life developed diplomatic ability as envoy to the court of Louis XIV. In his early days the Duchess of York was reported to look kindly upon him, and Pepys comments on her having "fallen in love with her new Masters of the Horse, one Harry Sidney and another Harry Savile." To this brother, then in Paris, Halifax wrote an account of Danby's fall.

"I make use of this minute to write by this gentleman who is just now going towards you. It will be no news to you by that time this reaches you that my Lord Treasurer hath resolved to lay down his staff; and it will be as little to tell you that the world is still



CHARLES TALBOT, DUKE OF SHREWSBURY, K.G.

(From the portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller.)

*Emery Walker.*



jealous he may take it up again in a convenient time, or else keep such a station near the King as may make him the same omnipotent figure as before under the disguise of some other name. This, you may imagine, the hard-hearted Commons of England will be very willing to prevent, and therefore in all probability they will go on with their impeachment. . . . I am called upon in haste, and therefore can add no more. Adieu. —Yours.

“ My old Lady Sunderland hath been very ill, and is not yet out of danger.”<sup>1</sup>

Lady Sunderland's daughter, Halifax's first wife, had died in 1670, leaving him with several small children, and he had since married again Miss Gertrude Pierrepont, who was distinguished for her beauty ; and had moved from the house in which his first wife had died, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, to the new and magnificent Halifax House in the most fashionable quarter of the town, in the neighbourhood of what is now St James's Square.

In Temple's Council of Thirty, which came into being after the fall of Danby, Halifax, Essex, and Sunderland were the leading ministers, though Charles II. had (said Temple) “kicked at” the inclusion of Halifax, whose outspoken opposition to the suggestion of the title of Marquis for Danby as the reward of treason, he had profoundly resented. Halifax writes to his brother :—

“ I find you suppose me amongst others by this time restored to grace at court, but I am so ill at making

<sup>1</sup> *Savile Correspondence*, p. 76, letter lxii.

steps as they call it, and the good impressions that have been made of me do so remain, that you may reckon me amongst the incurable except there be a miracle made on purpose for me, and that you will say is not very likely. Your late friend (Danby) takes up all our time, and is almost as great a grievance to us now he is falling, as he was when he remained in power. . . . I write this in the committee chamber, and am just now going into the house, which sits this afternoon. Adieu."

But the most crucial point of Halifax's career was at hand. Across the centuries some breath of the passionate violence of the Exclusion contest and the heat of the opposing factions seems to be wafted. Very shortly after the formation of the new Council, the Commons resolved on a Bill to exclude the Duke of York from the throne on the ground of his being a Papist. The question loomed large in the consideration of every class of society. It was the one theme of pulpit and press alike, it divided families and friends. The English constitution and Church could never be safe with a Papist on the throne, it was argued on the one hand, while the anti-Exclusionists objected that the Divine Right of the Duke of York to inherit the crown could be annulled by no earthly power.

To the bewilderment of his friends Halifax from the first ranged himself on the side of the anti-Exclusionists. The ill-feeling between the Duke and himself was a matter of common knowledge, and he had frequently scoffed at the superstitious veneration for hereditary monarchy. Burnet expresses the general feeling when

he says :—"Lord Halifax's arguing now so much against the danger of turning the monarchy to be elective, was the more extraordinary in him, because he had made an hereditary government the subject of his mirth, and had often said 'Who takes a coachman to drive him, because his father was a good coachman?' Yet he was now jealous of a small slip in the succession ; but at the same time he studied to infuse into some a zeal for a commonwealth." Burnet concludes a summary of the arguments used for and against the Exclusion Bill by another reference to Halifax. "Tillotson [the Archbishop] and I," he says, "who thought we had some interest in Lord Halifax, took great pains on him, to divert him from opposing it so furiously as he did, for he became as it were the champion against the Exclusion . . . . this was like to end in rebellion or in abject submission to the humours of the court."

The action of Halifax in opposing the Exclusion Bill does not seem so inconsistent to posterity as it did to his contemporaries. Apart from his constitutional repugnance to extreme measures, his political sagacity foresaw that if matters were pushed too far, civil war might be the result, for there was serious reason to fear that Charles II.'s favourite natural son, the Protestant James Duke of Monmouth, then at the height of his popularity, might be substituted for his uncle as successor to the throne. As the street ballad-mongers had it, in the song of *Old and Young Jemmy* :—

“Maliciously they vote to work Old Jemmy’s ruin,  
And zealously promote a Bill for his undoing,  
Both Lords and Commons must agree to pull his Highness  
down,  
But (spite of all their policy) Old Jemmy’s heir to th’  
crown.”

Charles put an end to the discussion by proroguing and afterwards dissolving Parliament in 1679. For this step Halifax was blamed, so much that there was some talk of an impeachment. Unfortunately Halifax, who had taken so strong a line when it was proposed to make Danby a Marquis, now chose this very inauspicious moment to accept an earldom for himself. “Since the world were such fools as to value these matters, a man must be a fool for company,” he said to Burnet. “He was much set on raising his family,” adds the Bishop in explanation. The physical strain of his position, and the unpopularity he had brought upon himself, combined to prey upon his health. In the autumn of 1679 Halifax was seriously ill, “much from vexation of mind,” and “his spirits were oppressed, a deep melancholy seizing him.” And Sir William Temple graphically describes the perturbed condition of the harassed statesman : “When we were left alone all our talk was by snatches ; sickness, ill humour, hate of town and business, ridiculousness of human life ; and whenever I turned anything to the present affairs, after our usual manner, nothing but action of hand or eyes, wonder and signs of trouble, and then silence.”

Halifax retired to his country seat of Rufford, where his mother-in-law, "old" Lady Sunderland, wrote to him: "My brother Harry [Henry Sidney] wrote to me your being in the country is the worst news he has heard a great while: he is so silly as to write to *me* to beg of you to come again." But the Earl was writing to *his* brother Harry a leisurely letter describing the charms of Rufford, which had been newly restored:—

"I am once more got to my old tenement, which I had not seen since I had given order to renew and repair it. It looketh now somewhat the better than when you was last here; . . . and it hath something more to recommend itself to your kindness than when it was so mixed with the old ruins of the abbey that looked like a medley of superstition and sacrilege, and, though I have still left some decay'd part of old building, yet there are none of the rags of Rome remaining. It is now all heresy, which in my mind looketh pretty well, . . . and notwithstanding the forest hath not its best cloaths at this time of the year [February], I find something here which pleaseth me, whether it be the general disease of loving home, or whether for the sake of variety, . . . I grow every day fitter for a coal fire and a country parlour, being now come to the worst part of my elder brothership in having so much a greater share of years than you."<sup>1</sup>

When Halifax returned to town in the autumn of the year, there appeared to be small chances for the success of those who were opposed to the passing of the Bill. Early in the contest the Duke of York had

<sup>1</sup> *Savile Correspondence*, p. 137.

himself written to the Prince of Orange, 1st June 1679 :—

“You will have seen by your last letters from England how violently they proceed against me, and that the Bill for depriving me of the succession has had one reading and was to be read again on Monday last ; so that except his Majesty begins to behave himself as a king ought to do, not only I, but himself and our whole family are gone.”

His prospects now, in the autumn of 1680, were at their worst. The supple Sunderland was seceding to the Exclusionists ; the Duchess of Portsmouth (induced, says Dalrymple, by the bribe of £100,000 from the Whig party), to gain the King to their side, “threw herself at his feet, shed a flood of tears, and conjured him by his own safety to yield to that House of Parliament which had brought destruction upon his father for opposing its desires.” It was believed that Charles would yield.

In November Parliament met : the Exclusion Bill passed the Commons, and was rejected by the Lords by a majority of thirty, through the unsurpassed eloquence of Halifax. The King himself was present at the debate, which lasted for nearly seven hours. The oratory of Shaftesbury, supported by many able adherents, was matched against the inexhaustible versatile wit of his brilliant nephew. Feeling ran so high that members laid their hands on their swords, and for a moment it seemed as if there would be bloodshed. But the oratory of Halifax won the day.

“Of powerful eloquence and great parts were the

Duke's enemies who did assert the Bill," wrote Lord Peterborough,<sup>1</sup> who was present, "but a noble lord appeared against it, who that day, in all the force of speech, in reason, in arguments of what could concern the public or private interests of men, in honour, in conscience, in estate, did outdo himself and every other man; and in fine his conduct and his parts were both victorious, and by him all the wit and malice of that party was overthrown."

The interest in the first part of Halifax's career culminates in this dramatic moment. His success earned him the virulent animosity of his opponents, which he supported with dignity. "When upon enquiry I think myself in the right," he wrote to his brother in January 1681, "I confess I have an obstinate kind of morality, which I hope may make amends for my want of devotion. . . . I am at this hour threatened with more thunder from the House of Commons to-morrow; whether it will be so, or in what manner I do not yet know, but where there is infinite anger, there is reason to expect the worst; for which I have recourse still to my small philosophy. . . . Although I agree with you this is not an age for a man to follow the strict morality of better times, yet sure mankind is not yet so debased but that there will ever be found some few men who will scorn to join in concert with the publick voice, when it is not well grounded; and even that popular fury which may now blow in my face will

<sup>1</sup> For Peterborough's report see Macaulay.

perhaps with a little patience not only abate, but turn against these very men that now appear against me.”<sup>1</sup>

These last words were curiously prophetic of the fate of Shaftesbury, who was imprisoned for treason the same year, and died in Holland a year later. In 1682 Halifax was made a marquis and accepted the office of Lord Privy Seal; but Charles's death in the beginning of 1685 entirely changed his position. “Certainly no man was in greater favour with him, when he unfortunately died,” says Reresby; but James's assurance to Halifax in their first interview, that “he would remember nothing that was past, except his behaviour in the business of the Exclusion,” went for nothing. Halifax found himself relegated to the Presidency of the Council, while Rochester became Treasurer, and his brother Clarendon was made Privy Seal at the same time. James, with characteristic Stuart duplicity, explained to the French ambassador “that he knew him [Halifax] and could never rely upon him; that he admitted him to no share in the real secret of his affairs, and that his office of President would only show the little credit he was in.”

It was, indeed, impossible that the King could have continued to employ a minister who was opposed alike to his assumptions of arbitrary power and his attempt to impose Roman Catholicism on the nation, and Halifax having definitely and frankly declared that he would never consent to the repeal of the Test Acts, was dismissed from office in October 1685.

<sup>1</sup> *Savile Correspondence.*

## CHAPTER VI

### SHREWSBURY AND NOTTINGHAM

CHARLES TALBOT Earl of Shrewsbury, one of the new Secretaries of State, was only twenty-eight years old when William of Orange landed in England. He came of a distinguished family, for his ancestor John Talbot had been famous in the French wars of Joan of Arc. His parents had had a less enviable distinction, for his father's death in a duel with Buckingham was one of the most notorious scandals of the day. Buckingham was the lover of the beautiful Lady Shrewsbury, and she was said to have held his horse, disguised as a page, while he fought her husband, and that she afterwards received his embraces while he was still wearing the shirt stained with her husband's blood. Reresby mentions that Buckingham "was called to the bar of the house of Peers for scandalously living with the Lady Shrewsbury as man and wife, he being a married man, and for having killed my Lord Shrewsbury"; and Pope has embalmed the incident in the lines:—

"Gallant and gay in Clieveden's proud alcove,  
The abode of wanton Shrewsbury and love."

Cliveden was "that stupendous natural rock, wood, or prospect of the Duke of Buckingham," as Evelyn calls it.

The Countess of Shrewsbury was supposed subsequently to be in the pay of Louis XIV.; she lived in France, and was active in Jacobite intrigues, in which she unfortunately involved her son. Charles Talbot succeeded to his father's title at eight years of age, and Halifax, who was a connection, became his guardian. He grew up not only one of the most gifted, but one of the most popular young men of his time, and his irresistible personal charm and sweetness of manner earned him the title of "King of Hearts."

In a kind of early seventeenth-century *Who's Who?* John Macky, its author, writes of Shrewsbury:—

"Never was a greater mixture of honour, virtue, and good sense in any one Person than in him. A great man, attended with a sweetness of Behaviour and easiness of conversation, which charms all who come near him. Nothing of the stiffness of a Statesman, yet the capacity and knowledge of a piercing wit. He speaks French and Italian as well as his native language; and although but one eye, yet he has a very charming countenance, and is the most generally beloved by the ladies of any gentlemen in his Time."

The violent death of his father was not the only tragic incident in the career of the young Earl, for his younger brother also, Lord John Talbot, was killed in a duel with Henry Duke of Grafton, and the shock of his father's and brother's sudden deaths was supposed



DANIEL FINCH, EARL OF NOTTINGHAM.

*(From an engraving in the British Museum.)*



to have contributed to the weakness and indecision of character which Shrewsbury retained through life, and which wrecked a career that had had such a brilliant opening. The Duke of Grafton is principally interesting because the story of his marriage, told by Evelyn, is curiously illustrative of the manners and morals of society under the later Stuarts. He was the son of Charles and the Duchess of Cleveland, and the King arranged a marriage for him with Lord Arlington's little daughter. Evelyn was present at the wedding ceremony with the twelve-year-old bride, which took place at her father's lodgings at Whitehall, in the King's presence. Evelyn condoled with the little lady's mother on the marriage, "but she said the King would have it so, and there was no going back." So, adds Evelyn, "this sweetest hopefulest, most beautiful child was sacrificed to a boy that had been rudely bred, without anything to encourage them but his Majesty's pleasure . . . tho' as the Duke of Grafton affects the sea, to which I find his Father intends to use him, he may emerge a plaine useful and robust officer and even be polished a tolerable person, for he is exceeding handsome."

Like all his family, Shrewsbury had been brought up in the principles of the Roman Catholic faith, but at the time of the Popish Plot he began to be assailed with doubts of the efficacy of the religion in which he had been educated, and made a searching examination into its tenets. He first consulted his own priests, and afterwards the wise and good Tillotson, who became

Archbishop of Canterbury under William, and of whom the King said he "never had a better friend." After a careful study of the arguments on both sides, which occupied two years, he declared himself a Protestant, appearing for the first time at a Church of England service at Lincoln's Inn Chapel in May 1879.<sup>2</sup> Shrewsbury's conversion excited immense interest among his contemporaries; the conduct of the distinguished convert was jealously watched and criticised. "Some thought," says Burnet, "that though he had forsaken Popery he was too sceptical, and too little fixed in the ways of religion"; but he adds, that "he seemed to be a man of great probity, and to have a high sense of honour." That Shrewsbury's private character was not quite beyond reproach, is shown by a letter of remonstrance to him from Dr Tillotson, which Macaulay calls "a model of serious friendly and gentlemanlike reproof."

This letter was written on Tillotson's learning that his convert was "engag'd in a Conversation which might prove dangerous to his virtue, as well as to his character" :—

"MY LORD,—It was a great satisfaction to me to be anyways instrumental in the gaining your Lordship to our religion, which I am fully persuaded to be the truth. But I am, and always was, more concerned that your Lordship should continue a virtuous and good man, than become a Protestant; being assured that the ignorance and errors of men's understanding will find a much easier forgiveness with God, than the faults of the will. I remember that your Lordship once told

me that you would endeavour to justify the sincerity of your change by a conscientious regard to all other parts and actions of your life. I am sure you cannot more effectually condemn your own act, than by being a worse man after your profession to have embraced a better religion. I will certainly be one of the last to believe anything of your Lordship that is not good ; but I always feared I should be one of the first that should hear it. . . . Let me have the satisfaction to be assured from your Lordship, either that there has been no ground for this report, or that there shall be none for the future ; which will be the welcomest news to me in the world. I have only to beg of your Lordship to believe that I have not done this to satisfy the formality of my profession ; but that it proceeds from the truest affection and goodwill that one man can possibly bear to another. I pray God every day for your Lordship, with the same constancy and fervour as for myself, and do most earnestly beg that this council may be acceptable and effectual.”

Shrewsbury refused to return to the Church of Rome on James II.'s accession, though it would have been to his interest to do so. He took part in the coronation ceremonies, and the King extended special marks of favour to him—“as we might call it in a meaner person, even courted him on all occasions . . . and seemed to take a delight in his appearance at Court,” though the Popish party, “took it to be a dangerous thing to admit any person of his dignity to be received with distinction by the King, and yet pretend to a kind of neutrality, which they understood

to be the design of a pretended indolence as to all measures of business, to make himself as a spy at Court." Shrewsbury was deprived of the position he held as Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire for refusing to be instrumental in James's illegal measures for providing Catholic judges and officers.

He afterwards wrote to the Prince of Orange a sort of tentative letter containing general expressions of goodwill :—

"I could not, Sir, let Mr Howe, who goes away this afternoon, part, without making some humble acknowledgements to your Highness for the kind expressions in your letter ; if the state of affairs here will anyway permit, I will not fail this summer to pay them in person, and shall be disappointed of a journey I very earnestly set my heart upon, if things should come to such an extreme as to prevent me. The only considerable news I can learn here is, that there has a disagreement happened between my Lord Sunderland and Fra Peters<sup>1</sup> : how that may be composed, or what consequences it will have if it continues, I dare not decide. Though we constantly talk of a Parliament, yet I imagine our ministers are a little at a stand in their councils."

He goes on to allude to a report, then current, that there had been an attempt to poison the Prince, and after begging, "in the behalf of millions," that he will take care of himself, Shrewsbury concludes—

<sup>1</sup> Father Peter or Father Petre, a Jesuit who was a prominent figure in James II.'s court.

“It seems hard that one should be solicitous for other’s sake, when one is not naturally so for oneself. But the same generosity that in ordinary cases makes one despise a life, in so extraordinary a circumstance as yours obliges you to be careful, since the security and happiness not only of many men, but many nations depend upon it ; be, Sir, but as zealous to preserve yourself for the common good as you have been forward to expose it for the same cause, and all your servants will remain satisfied with your care. That it may be effectual shall be the daily and hearty wishes of,” etc.

This letter, which is quoted by Dalrymple, probably differed little from dozens that the Prince must have been receiving at the time from nervous influential men—“cant letters” as Dalrymple calls them—assuring him of their services. It was, however, followed by another rather less non-committal letter from the Earl of Shrewsbury, written on 14th May of the year 1688. It will be seen that Shrewsbury had not had the courage to go openly to Holland and throw in his fortunes with William ; he was still waiting for some favourable opportunity, for some excuse for visiting the Prince :—

“We live here, Sir, in a country where one must be of a very temperate constitution, not to meet with vexations that will more than try one’s patience. I confess I had so set my heart upon the hopes of kissing your Highness’s hands this summer, that it is with great regret that I see myself in danger of being disappointed of what I shall always esteem my pleasure as well as my duty : but wiser people assure me that the

jealousies of our superiors augment so fast, that such a journey would be unserviceable to you as well as unsafe to me. There is not a day that Mr Sidney and I do not heartily lament this disappointment, and when one considers that these suspicions are merely grounded upon their own action, and the resentment they guess we may have of them, but not upon any occasion we have given, it seems a little too severe to be punished and restrained because one has already been ill used. If I am a little warmer upon this subject than I ought, you would soon pardon me, if you knew how much I abominate all excuses ; because commonly they are but shifts ; and now to be forced to make one to your Highness, who of all men living I honour and esteem the most, is a hardship I cannot easily forgive ; but I will not yet absolutely despair, there are many accidents may happen to give me a pretence ; and the least plausible one, I assure you, shall serve my turn ; and in what part of the world soever I am, I shall always be, Sir," etc.

When Shrewsbury's loyalty was put to the test, no one among the Prince's supporters acted with more decision or threw higher stakes. His conduct at this time was, indeed, in marked contrast to the hesitancy and vacillation he showed later on,—and attributed by his friends to the physical weakness that followed on an accident in the hunting field, from which he never seems quite to have recovered. When Russell confided to him the scheme on hand for bringing over the Prince, he at once threw in his lot with the six conspirators, Danby, Devonshire, Lumley, Compton, Russell, and

Sidney, and signed the invitation to William. "Immortal Seven" as Dalrymple calls them, "whose memories Britain can never sufficiently revere." He staked his fortune on the decisive step. "For," says his anonymous biographer, "pretending to go to France, he and Mr Russell, one of the Grooms of the Bedchamber to King James, hired a boat privately, and went over to Holland to the Prince of Orange, having first borrowed £12,000 upon his estate to support him there, part of which was from Father Peters" (a curious source of income). "In Holland he declared openly for the law and liberties of his country, and was the chief instrument of bringing about the glorious Revolution which happened soon after."

Shrewsbury plays an important part in the Revolution settlement. His marriage, which took place long afterwards, excited at least as much attention as his political career. An account of it is given in a contemporary biography:—

"His failing health obliged him to seek a warmer climate, and he spent some time in Rome, where his enemies in England, who made his distemper only a state trick, affirmed that he had there become reconciled to the Catholic Church. While here he frequently spent his evenings at the Princess Carpignon's, where he first saw the present Duchess. She was widow to a Comte belonging to the late Queen of Sweden, and was remotely descended from that Dudley who was the husband of the Lady Jane Grey. As she had a great many engaging qualities, and he of a generous as well as amorous

temper, there became a strict friendship between them, which afterwards concluded in a marriage, which, however, was not celebrated till he got into a Protestant country, and she made an abjuration of the Romish faith. . . . The story that went current, that he was bullied into this marriage by two of her brothers in Italy, is entirely false, for he was gone from her above six months before the marriage, and her brother, who now commands a regiment of dragoons in Flanders, and was said to be the person that bullied him, he never saw till six weeks after the marriage."

That the marriage was by no means a success, and that Shrewsbury had no grounds for congratulating himself on his relations-in-law, is, however, attested by Lord Dartmouth's account of her after Shrewsbury's death :—

"His wife was very little considered, and was in truth a vain, impertinent woman without virtue or sense, not enough even for the art of her country. I had an opportunity of knowing a good deal of her character, and the duke's management of it, which seemed to take up more of his time and thought than all his other private and his public concerns did, and all this from the hopes he had of concealing what all the world knew. The whole of this transaction affords a most eminent proof that he who wants courage should never want prudence, and that all the afterwisdom that can be excited may not in every case be able to cure or to cover even a single folly. His life was not only disquieted by this care for her, but he was continually

disquieted by her brother for money, who at last came into England, mad with pride and poverty, and having in his rage murdered a chairman or a servant, was hanged here for that offence."

In conclusion, his biographer shall have the last word, in the nature of an epitaph :—" He was one of the finest gentlemen of the age he lived in, very handsome in his person, of an admirable address, a charming way of speaking, the kindest master to his servants, and the justest to his creditors that was ever known."

## II

## NOTTINGHAM

"Daniel Finch Earl of Nottingham, Secretary of State, is eldest son to Mr Finch, Lord Chancellor in the reign of Charles II. This gentleman never made any considerable figure till the Revolution, when he zealously opposed King William's coming to the throne, yet was made Secretary of State by that Prince to oblige the Church, of which he sets up for a mighty champion. . . . He is a zealous promoter of absolute power in the State, and implicit faith in the Church, to that degree as hardly to be in common charity with those of more moderate principles. He hath also the exterior airs of Business and application enough to make him very capable. In his habit and manners very formal; a tall thin, very black man, like a Spaniard or Jew."

Thus the discriminating Macky sums up the leading characteristics of the second Earl of Nottingham. He came of an old family. His grandfather, Sir Heneage Finch, was Speaker of the House of Commons when Charles I. came to the throne, and lived at Kensington in the house which William III. bought for himself and turned into Kensington Palace. His son, another Heneage Finch, distinguished himself in Charles II.'s reign in the House of Commons, was made Solicitor-General, Treasurer and Summer Reader of the Inner Temple, where he entertained the King in the Great Hall, accompanied by the principal officers of the Crown and attended by a distinguished crowd of gentlemen, "for the greater honours to him and to the society." Charles came by way of the river in his barge from Whitehall.<sup>1</sup> At the stairs where this gallant company landed stood the Reader in his official robes to receive him, and "on each side as his Majesty passed, stood the Reader's servants, in scarlet cloaks and white tabby doublets, there being a way made through the wall into the Temple garden; and above them, on each side, the Benchers, Barristers, and other gentlemen of the society all in their gowns and formalities, the loud music playing from the time of his landing till he entered the hall, where he was received with 20 violins, which continued as long as his Majesty staid. Dinner was brought up by fifty select gentlemen of the society in their gowns, who attended all dinner-while, none appearing in the hall

<sup>1</sup> Collins' *Peerage*, 1779.

but themselves." This Sir Heneage continued to consolidate the fortunes of his family, became Lord Chancellor, and was subsequently created Earl of Nottingham. A curious incident is related in connection with the death of Anne Heneage, daughter of Sir Heneage Finch by his second wife, and step-sister to the Lord Chancellor. She married Edward Earl of Conway, and dying on 23rd February 1678, was (by the famous Van Helmont) "preserved in spirits of wine, with a glass over her face in her coffin, above ground, that her Lord, who was in Ireland when she died, might see her before her interment; which was at Arrow in Warwickshire, Ap. 17, 1679."

Daniel Finch, who succeeded to his father's honours in 1682, was educated at Christ Church, Oxford. He was an upright and honest man, and had inherited his father's gift of oratory, in a style impressive, though apt to become wordy and tiresome, and a solemnity of diction that, combined with his stiffness of bearing and swarthy complexion, had earned him the nickname of "Don Dismallo." He was enthusiastically loyal to the Church of England, both in theory and practice, and zealously upheld the Royal Prerogative till he could no longer conscientiously do so.

In 1679 Nottingham had been appointed a commissioner of the Admiralty, and was soon afterwards made a Privy Councillor. He supported Halifax in opposing the abrogation of the Test Act. "Nottingham and Halifax said the test was the best fence they had

for their religion ; if they gave up so great a point, all the rest would soon follow ; and if the King might, by his authority, supersede such a law fortified by so many clauses, . . . it was in vain to think of law any more : the Government would become arbitrary and absolute.”

To the policy of James II.'s later years Nottingham was bitterly opposed, and when Dykvelt was sent over to London by William, Nottingham was among the select few who were in his confidence. His name is mentioned as one of those “persons chiefly trusted who met frequently at Shrewsbury's house” ; but when it was proposed to invite the Prince over, and Danby and Compton, who heartily approved of it, suggested that Nottingham should be approached on the subject, he shrank, like Halifax, to whom Sidney had already made tentative advances, from so definite and dangerous a step. “The design was proposed to the Earl of Nottingham, who had great credit with the whole Church party ; for he was a man possessed with their notions, and was grave and virtuous in the course of his life. He had some knowledge of the law, and of the records of Parliament, and was a copious speaker, but too florid and tedious. He was much admired by many. He had stood at a great distance from Court all this reign, for though his name was still among the Privy Councillors, yet he never went to the Board. He upon the first proposition entertained it and agreed to it ; but at their next meeting, he said he had considered better of the



ROBERT SPENCER, EARL OF SUNDERLAND.

*(From the engraving of the Duke of Buccleuch's miniature in the  
British Museum.)*

TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE  
COMMISSION

matter, his conscience was so restrained in these points, that he could not go further with them in it : he said he had talked with some divines (and named Tillotson and Stillingfleet) in general of the thing, and they were not satisfied with it (though they protested to me afterwards that they remembered no such thing). He confessed he should not have suffered them to go so far with him in such a secret till he had examined it better ; they had now, according to Italian notions, a right to murder him (as a treacherous conspirator) ; but though his principles restrained him so that he could not go on with them, his affections would make him to wish well to them and be so far a criminal as concealment could make him one."

In spite of Nottingham's withdrawal from committing himself to the counsels of the conspirators, he continued to continue on good terms with both parties without sacrificing his conscience, for, says Dalrymple, "by a delicacy of honour in all points, he preserved his respect to the King by not quitting him, and to his friends by not betraying them. It is reported," he adds, "that Lord Cutts, seeing him go to court, proposed to despatch him ; but Lord Danby prevented the intention, saying, 'Lord Nottingham is the only man in England who can appear at court, and yet not discover the concern he is under.'"

A note of Dartmouth's to Burnet gives a more circumstantial account of this curious incident :—

"The Duke of Shrewsbury told me, that upon this declaration by Lord Nottingham, one of the Lords

(whom he named) said he thought things were brought to a short point, either Lord Nottingham or they must die, and proposed shooting of him upon Kensington Road, which he would undertake to do in such a manner, that it should appear to have been done by highwaymen. Lord Danby said he thought there was more danger in meddling with him, than in letting him alone, for he believed he durst as little discover, as join with them, for he must needs think that any prejudice he did them would certainly be revenged. Upon which they agreed to have nothing more to do with him, unless this design miscarried ; in which case Lord Danby thought they had reason to prevent his claiming any merit to the other side by any means whatever."

Nottingham, unconscious of the ticklish position he had been in, but anxious to secure a safe retreat for himself, had favourably received overtures from William's emissary Dykvelt. In May 1687 he had written the following letter to the Prince :—

"The great ambition I ever had of serving your Highness, made me most readily obey the commands I received from you by Herr van Dykvelt, who has encouraged me to the presumption of this humble address to your Highness. I have taken several opportunities of discoursing with him those things which I thought might be of use or satisfaction to you ; I shall not trouble your Highness with any account of affairs here at this time, for he has so fully informed himself of them, that he can give you a very exact account of them, and of one thing especially he may assure you, and that is the universal concurrence

of all Protestants in paying the utmost respect to your Highness, for you are the only person on whom they found their hopes, as having already seen you a refuge to the miserable, and a most eminent defender of their religion.

“And among the many votaries your Highness has here for your long life and increase of honour, none can be more zealously so than myself, who am resolved, with the greatest fidelity, to endeavour by all the actions of my life to obtain the title of . . . .” etc.

This ingeniously non-committal letter he followed up by another in September of the same year in reply to one from the Prince, who was anxious to know whether there was any prospect of calling a Parliament. The Earl’s epistolary style, verbose and discursive, bears out a previous description of his parliamentary oratory:—

“May it please your Highness,—I was much surprised to receive the honour of a letter from your Highness by Mr Zuleystein; your acceptance of my service obliges me to the utmost fidelity and is an ample reward of it too.

“I understand by Mr Zuleystein that your Highness would know what likelihood there is of the calling of a Parliament; and if there should be one, what probably may be the success of such a meeting. ’Tis very hard to foretell what will be the issue of the present councils; for though the end at which they aim is very plain and visible, yet the methods of arriving at that end have been very variable and uncertain, so that although in other times the best prophecies are the conjectures of wise men, yet now,

perhaps, they are the worst, and to guess right is rather luck than wisdom, which makes me presume to lay before your Highness my apprehensions, and to hope for your pardon if I should be mistaken, since wiser men may be so too."

After this cautious preamble he explains at great length that though there is some intention of calling a Parliament, he thinks it improbable that such a step will be ventured on. The next year, when the invitation to William had been sent, Sidney wrote to inform the Prince that Nottingham was timorous:—

"You will wonder, I believe, not to see the number 23 among the other figures; he was gone very far, but now his heart fails him, and he will go no further. He saith, 'Tis scruples of conscience,' but we all conclude 'tis another passion; everybody else is as well as one can wish, and I pray God they may live to do you the service so much desired by all honest men."

Nottingham's heart failed him not only on his own account, but on the Prince's account; without being very explicit, he evidently intends to convey to William that there is no imminent danger to the religion and liberties of the English people.

"May it please your Highness,—The honour of being in your Highness's good opinion, and the continuance of your favour, of which you were pleased to assure me in your letter by Mr Zuleystein, would make me undertake any task to render me worthy of it, if I could hope to perform it to your satisfaction; but to give your Highness a just account of affairs

here, not as news, but to judge rightly of them, is so very difficult that I must not pretend to it. Nevertheless, in obedience to your commands, I have acquainted Mr Zuleystein with my apprehensions of some of the latest occurrences here that he may humbly represent them to your Highness. The birth of a Prince of Wales, and the designs of a further prosecution of the Bishops, and of new modelling the army, and calling of a Parliament, are matters that afford various reflections. But I cannot apprehend from them such ill consequences to our religion, or the just interests of your Highness, that a little time will not effectually remedy, nor can I imagine that the Papists are able to make any further considerable progress."

This letter was written in July 1688, and in the following October Nottingham made a dignified protest against the presence of the Jesuit Father Petre at the Council Board, and refused to sit with him. When James could no longer shut his eyes to the projected invasion, he sent for Nottingham and asked him if he had invited the Prince of Orange over, a question to which he could honestly reply in the negative. He was, indeed, one of the very few honest men the King had about him at this moment. His correspondence with the Prince had never been other than what a loyal Protestant might have with the heir-apparent to the throne of his country. True to his unswerving adherence to the Church of England, he refused even in this extremity to sign a petition to the Crown to call a Parliament, if Rochester, who had sat on James's illegal ecclesiastical commission, took any part in it.

“Lord Nottingham,” says Clarendon, who relates this little incident, “said he had all the regard imaginable for my Lord Rochester, but having sat in the ecclesiastical commission, it was not fit he should join in the petition, for the reason that my Lord Halifax (who had also opposed it) had given . . . . Good God ! what partiality is this ; that two Lords must think to impose what they please upon the rest ! We are like to be a happy people. God help us !”

Nottingham, with Halifax and Godolphin, was appointed a commissioner to treat with the Prince of Orange, a barren compliment when one remembers that this was only a ruse of the King's to gain time.

“Le roi n'a consenti à envoyer des députés que pour se donner le temps de pourvoir à la sûreté de sa femme et de son fils,” wrote the French ambassador. Nottingham's part in the Revolution settlement and his support of the Regency scheme have already been described.

## CHAPTER VII

### WILLIAM'S FIRST MINISTERS

SELDOM has a ruler had more distracting difficulties to contend with at one and the same time than William III. at the beginning of his reign. In addition to the anxiety of the menace from France, which alone was enough to occupy the entire ability and energy of one man, he had in a short time to cope with a war in Scotland, where Graham of Claverhouse ("Bonny Dundee") had raised the standard of James in the Highlands; and with a much more serious war in Ireland, where Tyrconnel, James II.'s Lord-Deputy, had united the Irish against the English, and forced them to take refuge in Londonderry and Enniskillen, and where James himself had landed in March 1689. Almost every department of the Home Government was in urgent need of settlement. The army and the navy were in great want of reorganisation, and were suffering in all departments from maladministration. The disturbed condition of ecclesiastical affairs in the late reign, and the internecine feud of the Church of England and dissenters, called for some pacific legislation, while the

credit of the Government itself was disorganised, and the necessity for funds was urgent. Lastly, the King was suffering in health, and was already disliked, misunderstood, and mistrusted. So much was this the case, that men who were best able to judge, were of opinion that nothing but James's religion prevented a counter-revolution. "There seemed now to be great discontents among all sorts of men," wrote Reresby; "affairs looked somewhat embroiled; and I heard Lord Privy Seal [Halifax] say 'that in the posture the nation now stood, the King [James], if but a Protestant, could not be kept out four months.' Lord Danby went further, and averred 'that if he would but give us satisfaction as to our religion, as he easily might, it would be very hard to make head against him.'"

The Church, which of all classes had benefited most by William's advent—owed its continued existence to it, in fact—was signal in its ingratitude. The King belonged to the Low Church party: he had been brought up a Calvinist, and had broad religious views. He was anxious to establish toleration for all Protestant sects, and to introduce some scheme of comprehension which should include the nonconformist element. From the first the High Churchmen, with Sancroft at their head, assumed a hostile attitude. William's appointment of the faithful Burnet to the See of Salisbury immediately on his accession was extremely unpopular. Burnet was distrusted as a latitudinarian, as well as for the freedom

with which he had criticised his clerical contemporaries. Sancroft refused at first to consecrate him. But the Archbishop was a weak, vacillating man, and he subsequently issued a commission permitting his suffragan to perform the ceremony in his name, so avoiding the danger he would have incurred by defying the King's authority. "Thus," says Burnet, "he did authorise others to consecrate me, while yet he seemed to think it an unlawful act. This was so mean, that he himself was ashamed of it afterwards ; but he took an odd way to overthrow it, for he sent for his original warrant, and so took it out of the office and got it into his own hands."

The Toleration Act was passed without difficulty. It was, indeed, after all a very limited measure. It permitted freedom of worship to dissenters, but left untouched their political disabilities ; while Papists, or any who denied the existence of the Trinity, were expressly excluded from its operation. Burnet says, however, that Papists "enjoyed the real effects of toleration, though they were not comprehended within the statutes that enacted it." It was an essential part of William's policy to avoid alienating all the Catholics of Europe by persecution in England, though there were those who were anxious to pass severe measures against them. "Wise, good men," says Burnet, "did very much applaud the quieting the nation by the toleration," though "the clergy began now to show an implacable hatred to the nonconformists, and seemed to wish for an occasion to renew old severities against

them." The Comprehension Bill, on the other hand, failed to pass. The schism had become too profound between Churchmen and nonconformists to be bridged. A further split in the Church was caused by the refusal of seven of the bishops, and about three hundred clergy, to take the new oaths of allegiance and supremacy which were imposed on all place-holders both in Church and State ; they were in consequence obliged to resign their benefices.

The army resented the ignominious part it had played in the late Revolution, and its professional pride was wounded by the continued presence of Dutch soldiers. The smouldering discontent flamed out into a mutiny that had to be repressed by Dutch troops under Ginkel.

"He brings his nasty croaking crew  
Unto his father's gate,  
Dismiss his own, makes them his guard,  
O dismal turn of fate,"

sang the discontented in the streets.

Such were the general difficulties with which the King had to deal, while the incessant contentions among the men by whom he was immediately surrounded were intolerably irksome to a man of his temperament. So much so, that he came to the determination of retiring to Holland, and leaving Mary on the throne ; for if he, the King, was unpopular, the Queen at least was beloved. Even the scurrilous lampooners who vented their spleen in doggerel verse always spared her. The popular view of Mary and William and

their relations to one another are reflected in the following lines :—<sup>1</sup>

“Then bespoke Mary, our most royal Queen,  
‘My gracious King William, where are you going?’  
He answered her quickly, ‘I count him no man  
That telleth his secret unto a woman.’  
The Queen, with a modest behaviour, replied,  
‘I wish that kind Providence may be thy guide,  
To keep thee from danger, my sovereign Lord,  
The which will the greatest of comfort afford.’”

From his intention of leaving England William was fortunately dissuaded, but the events that led up to it gave him sufficient excuse. William himself had leanings towards a high ideal of the prerogative. He “saw cause enough to dislike the heat he found among those who expressed much zeal for him, but who seemed at the same time to have with it a great mixture of republican principles.”

The union of all parties which brought about the Revolution fell asunder almost before William was seated on the throne. The Whigs, it is true, at first regarded him with an affection more irritating than the disaffection of the Tories. They saw in him a party leader under whose guidance they would perpetrate a triumphant revenge on the Tories, at whose hands they had suffered in the last reign. William, then, had to steer between Scylla and Charybdis. He had to avoid alienating the Whigs on the one hand by too great leniency to the Tories, and to avoid

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Macaulay from private MSS.

throwing the Tories into the arms of James by neglect of their claims. His attempt to avoid both these pitfalls by an admixture of the leading men of both parties in the Government, was far from being a success. While Danby resented not having been offered a more important post, the Whigs thought he ought not to have had one at all, and against Halifax they cherished a bitter indignation for his betrayal of their cause in the Exclusion Bill. Nottingham's appointment was designed to reassure the High Church party, who expected that "the opposition they had given the King's advancement would throw him into the hands of those from whom they might look for 'severe revenges.'" The annoyance of the Whig party at his appointment was heightened by the uncompromising attitude he assumed, and "he gave them daily cause to be more displeased at it, for he set himself with a most eager partiality against the whole party, and against all the motions made by them, and he studied to possess the King with a very bad opinion of them."

Shrewsbury, the other Secretary of State, was extremely popular with the Whigs. No exception could be made to his appointment except on the score of his youth, and he had the greatest share of the King's confidence at this time. Herbert, who had been the bearer of the invitation to William to the Hague, and had commanded the Dutch fleet on its passage to Torbay, was First Commissioner of the Admiralty. "He tried to dictate to the Board, and when he found that did not pass upon them, he left

it, and studied all he could to disparage their conduct, and it was thought he hoped to be advanced to the high trust alone."

At the Treasury Board Godolphin soon became pre-eminent, to the great mortification of his colleagues, Lord Mordaunt, afterwards created Earl of Monmouth, and Lord Delamere, who were both Whigs, and "who soon saw that the King considered him more than them both; for as he understood Treasury business well, so his calm cold way suited the King's temper."<sup>1</sup>

It had been provided that after 1st March no person should sit or vote in either House who had not taken the new oaths of allegiance and supremacy. Considerable excitement was caused by the apprehensions that the Jacobites would now show themselves in their true colours. It was said that not more than two bishops would take the oaths, that the Duke of Grafton would take refuge with his uncle, James II., rather than consent, that all the supporters of the Regency scheme would be consistent in withholding their recognition of the usurping King. But all this agitation was proved to be unfounded. A week after the prescribed date, about a hundred peers and several bishops had taken the oaths, including the Duke of Grafton, who had appeared on the earliest possible date. The Queen's

<sup>1</sup> Henry Sidney was Lord Sidney, and later Earl of Romney. He subsequently held the offices of Secretary of State and Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, "but he was so set on pleasure that he was not able to follow business with a due application."

uncles, Rochester and Clarendon, took different lines on this occasion. Rochester took the oaths. He had a pension of £4000 a year, which he did not care to jeopardise. Clarendon, on the other hand, refused to take them. The Earl records a conversation he had with the Bishop of St Asaph on the subject, which illustrates the comment on "how far the engagement of interest and parties can run men into contradictions."

Clarendon, always timorous and nervous, had previously been dissuaded by the Archbishop from taking the new oaths, but was anxious to know what everyone else would do in the matter. Sancroft had told him that St Asaph would not take them either, so that when that prelate came to visit him on the 1st of March, "the discourse quickly fell upon the new oaths. I told him I could not take them, thinking myself bound by the oaths of allegiance and supremacy I had already taken. He told me these oaths did no longer oblige me than the King to whom I took them could protect me; and that I was free from my allegiance to King James, and that these new oaths were no more than to live quietly under King William." Clarendon objected that he had "taken the oaths according to the plain and common sense therein expressed, and could not admit of any explanations to be put upon them, which would look, in my opinion, but as equivocations against the letter of the oath, and which we condemn so justly in the Jesuits." St Asaph replied that "he could very well take the oaths

. . . . but he would not take them yet, because he would not separate from the rest of the bishops." But when he opened the subject with one of his own order, Lord Chesterfield, he said he looked "upon them to signify no more than that he did swear to pay him all lawful obedience ; which was nothing, if ever King James came back again." So, for one reason and another, Clarendon found himself in an uncomfortably small minority, and on 7th March agreed with his family that his brother, Lawrence Hyde, "should move my Lord Nottingham to get me a pass to go beyond the sea."

As soon as the oaths had been taken, the revenue settled, the Church to some extent set in order, and William had on his side taken the coronation oath to uphold the Protestant religion as settled by law, Parliament rewarded him by a resolution against the policy of France, and war was declared on 13th May. France, in supporting James in Ireland, had already practically declared war on England. It was time for the State to strain every nerve, and tax all her resources to restore peace and order within her gates, before she concentrated her efforts on the European war. But the country was soon found to be unequal to the strain. On all sides abuses and corruption revealed themselves, a heritage for which William was in nowise responsible, but which produced failures for which he was most unjustly blamed. As he was unfamiliar with the details of English administration, the King was compelled to depend on

ministers, whose personal animosities crippled his action at every turn. The two secretaries, Shrewsbury and Nottingham, both strove to gain their master's ear. Nottingham urged that the Tories were his natural supporters, and by means of his spies hastened to acquaint him with every Whig cabal in the city. Shrewsbury was equally pertinacious in urging the claims of the Whigs on the King, but though he had more of the King's favour, yet he had not strength to resist the Earl of Nottingham's "pompous and tragical declamations."

But it was over the proposed Bill of Indemnity that the hottest and most acrimonious quarrels raged. In March 1689 the King suggested that it would make for quiet and order if a Bill were passed granting a general pardon to all, with only such exceptions as were necessary for the public safety. To this the Commons "were often and much pressed" by the King, who "thought nothing would settle the minds of the nation so much as an Act of Indemnity." Some attainders had been reversed, but in the Bill of Indemnity the Whigs saw their opportunity. They proposed so many exceptions that it became a Bill of Vengeance rather than one of grace. The inquiries of the Commons implicated many of the ministers even of Charles II. ; they called for Commissioners of Customs, and for the accounts of the Secret Service money since 1682 ; there was no distinction made between great and small, and "public accusation, private whispers, severe inquisitions were numberless. Men

were stabbed by their best friends.”<sup>1</sup> When it appeared evident that the Bill could not be passed in that session, the more violent Whigs, Howe, Sacheverell, and Hampden, proceeded to attack Caermarthen and Halifax.

John Howe had been made Vice-Chamberlain to Queen Mary. He was a violent, ill-conditioned man, and represented Cirencester in the House of Commons. He was notorious as the author of bitter lampoons, and his aggressive volubility in debate soon attracted attention to him. It was said that his personal courage was not equal to the effrontery of his attacks on his neighbours :—

“First for Jack Howe with his terrible tallent,  
Happy the female that 'scapes his lampoon,  
Against the ladies excessively valient,  
But very respectful to a dragoon.”

Howe now declared that no man who had been a minister of the two last Stuarts was fitted to hold a similar position under William, and he moved an address to the King that any person who had previously been impeached by the Commons should be dismissed from the King's service. This was, of course, aimed at Caermarthen (Danby). William sent Dykvelt to remonstrate with Howe during the adjournment of the debate, but without effect. Danby's enemies, however, did not venture to divide the House on the motion.

The attack on Halifax was likely to be more successful. A contemporary writer says that Danby “could not

<sup>1</sup> Dalrymple.

bear the equality, or rather the preference, that seemed to be given to Lord Halifax, and therefore set on the storm that quickly broke out against him." Halifax was, moreover, the principal adviser to the Crown, and was thus regarded as being pre-eminently responsible for all the disasters in Ireland, the wretched condition of the Protestants, and the temporary success of James and Tyrconnel, and his enemies accused him of intentionally neglecting them in order to make a new government indispensable. Howe, especially, declared that Halifax was responsible for all the failures in Ireland ; while Monmouth (Charles Mordaunt) and Delamere were no less anxious to exclude the Lord Privy Seal from office. Monmouth, whose flighty energies were now concentrated on a campaign against the Tories, told the King that Whigs exclusively should be employed in the public service. "I have done as much for your friends as I can do without danger to the State," replied the King, "and I can do no more."

The enemies of Halifax brought in a resolution before a committee of the whole House, declaring it advisable that he should be dismissed from the service of the Crown. They were able to bring no definite charge against him. His abilities were not well adapted to deal with a situation that required resolution and decision of character, and he was besides weakened in health and broken in spirit by recent family bereavements. His defence was ably undertaken by his only surviving son, Lord Eland.

"My father has not deserved," he said, "to be thus

trifled with. If you think him culpable, say so. He will at once submit to your verdict. Dismissal from court has no terrors for him. He is raised by the goodness of God above the necessity of looking to office for the means of supporting his rank."

On a division the Lord Privy Seal was acquitted by a small majority, and in August Parliament rose for the recess. Halifax afterwards wrote to his friend Lady Russell :—<sup>1</sup>

"MADAM,—I must own that my reason is not strong enough to bear with indifference the losses that have lately happened in my family ; but at the same time, I must acknowledge I am not a little supported by the continuance of your Ladyship's favour to me, in the obliging remembrance I have received from you, and in your condoling the affliction of the man in the world that is the most devoted to you. I am impatient till I have the honour of an hour's conversation with your Ladyship, to ease my mind of the just complaints I have, that such returns are made to the zeal I have endeavoured to express, in my small capacity, for the good of England. I cannot but think it the fantastical influence of my ill stars, very peculiar to myself, all circumstances considered ; but whilst I am under the protection of your Ladyship's better opinion, the malice and mistakes of others can never have the force so much as to discompose, Madam, your Ladyship's most obedient servant,  
"HALIFAX."

"LONDON, *July 23, 1689.*"

<sup>1</sup> Lady Russell, widow of the Lord Russell unjustly executed in the reign of Charles II.

Lady Russell's reply deserves to be printed once again for the sake of her feeling remonstrance at her friend's expressions of affected indifference, and her dignified and touching allusions to his past kindness to her in her trouble.

“MY LORD,—For my part I think that man a very indifferent reasoner that concludes that to do well he must take with indifference whatever happens to him . . . they are the receipts of Philosophers I have no reverence for, as I have not for anything is unnatural. . . . The Christian religion (believe me, my Lord) has only the power to make a spirit easy under great calamities . . . I am sure I owe more to it than I could have done to the world, if all the glories of it had been offered me . . . and I do sincerely wish your Lordship may experience the truth of my opinion. You know better than most, from the share you have had of the one, what they do afford, and I hope you will prove the tranquillity the other can give. If I had a better or a larger wish to make, your Lordship's constant expressions of esteem for me, and willingness, as I hope, to have me less miserable than I am, if you had found your power equal to your will, engages me to make it ; and that alone would have bound me, though my own unworthyness and ill fortune had let you have forgotten me for ever after my sad lot ; but since you would not do so, it must deserve a particular acknowledgement for ever from your Lordship's humble servant,

“R. RUSSELL.”

Caermarthen (Danby) also affected indifference to the personal attacks on him, for he wrote to Halifax that

he was laid up at Wimbledon with an attack of "chollick," and added, "I heare yr Lordship and I had the honour of being namid this day in the house of Commons, but I assure y<sup>u</sup> my chollick is much more injurious to me than that can be, whatever the malice of my enemies."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile James II. arrived in Ireland in March 1689 to support his Lord Deputy Tyrconnel; but he was as usual his own worst enemy. He held a Parliament in Dublin which repealed the Act of Settlement regulating the grants of land to Protestant emigrants, which had for years been the basis of society; issued a false coinage, and passed an Act of Attainder which included from two thousand to three thousand names.

The reaction in James's favour in England was checked by his sanction of this wild legislation. The blockade of Londonderry, where the Protestants were at bay, was watched with intense anxiety, and the relief was great, when the news came of the relief of the town, and of the Protestant victory of Newton Butler.

Everything was expected from the expedition which landed in Ireland at the end of August under the gallant and heroic Schomberg, one of the most popular and distinguished soldiers of his time. But William had to reap the fruits of mismanagement and corruption of twenty years' standing. The Department of Foreign Affairs he had kept in his own hands; but it

<sup>1</sup> Foxcroft, from Devonshire House MSS.

was impossible that he could within a few months set in order every province of the State. The Chief Commissary, Henry Shales, supplied the army with uneatable food, and drew money for supplies which never reached the troops. The following extracts from Schomberg's letters to his master illustrate the state of affairs far better than any description at second hand. They are quoted from Dalrymple :—

“I have been forced to give five hundred muskets to almost every regiment, both because the new soldiers break them, and because they are ill enough made, and very old, and perhaps because Mr Henry Shales, who had the inspection of them, may have taken presents to receive bad arms.”

He writes again on 27th August from Carrickfergus :—

“Hitherto I have been obliged to take upon me all the burden of the provisions, the vessals, the artillery, the cavalry, all the payments and all the detail of the attack of the place. . . . The officers of artillery are ignorant, lazy, and timorous. I discover that in the artillery there has been a great deal of roguery. The bombs ill-charged, the cannon ill-cast, the arms ill-made, and many other things too long to tell your Majesty ; to which I believe Mr Henry Shales has contributed much.”

The King wrote urging dispatch, haste, decisive action. To all these letters Schomberg replies in his concise, official style “that with regard to our marching to the enemy, that could not be done hitherto, as we

had not a single cart to carry provisions"; and "I should desire much to do the things which your Majesty is so eager for," but "all the army is without shoes." Shales was meanwhile letting out the troop horses to English farmers. In October Schomberg's letters still reveal an almost incredible state of confusion and dishonesty. Lack of funds to pay officers and men was one of the least evils. "Never were seen so many people so desirous of stealing," he writes in despair on 8th October. "I hope every minute that the rest of our artillery horses and provisions and the Scotch troops will arrive, and that the shoes which were bought above two months ago will be found again." Treason and pestilence undermined what little discipline the troops had, and the men got drunk sitting upon the dead bodies of their comrades.

Such was the condition of affairs when Parliament met again in October. But now the war of factions became more violent than ever. The Whigs resolved to secure their preponderance in Parliament for the future by bringing in a Corporation Bill, which if it had passed would have disfranchised the Tory party. It was defeated by a small majority, but the quarrels broke out afresh over the Indemnity Bill, now converted into a Bill of Pains and Penalties.

It was then that the King, worn out by the perpetual struggle of parties, arrived at that despairing resolution of retiring to Holland and leaving his wife on the throne. "He thought he could not trust the Tories, and he resolved he would not trust the Whigs. He fancied the

Tories would be true to the Queen, and confide in her, though they would not in him." It is easy to imagine the consternation of both Whigs and Tories when the King told them of his decision, and that "he had a convoy ready and was resolved to leave all in the Queen's hands, since he did not see how he could extricate himself out of the difficulties into which the animosities of parties had brought him." Caermarthen, Shrewsbury, Nottingham, and a few more pressed him vehemently to lay aside such desperate resolutions and to comply with the present necessity. "Much passion appeared among them; the debate was so warm that many tears were shed." In the end the King allowed himself to be prevailed upon to modify his resolution of going to Holland into one of going to Ireland to conduct the war there in person. The Whigs cried out against this resolution; they said the air of Ireland would be fatal to the King's weak constitution. "Les Wigs," he wrote contemptuously to Portland,<sup>1</sup> "ont peur de me perdre trop tost avant qu'ils n'ayent fait avec moy ce qu'ils veulent." ("The Whigs fear to lose me prematurely before I have served their purpose.")

The King prorogued Parliament in person and afterwards wrote to Portland:—

"Vous vaires mon harangue imprimée, ainsi je ne vous en direz rien. Et pour les raisons qui m'y ont obligé, je les reserveres à vous les dire jusques à vostre retour. Il semble que les Toris en sont bien

<sup>1</sup> William Bentinck, first Earl of Portland, *q.v.*

aise, mais point les Wigs. Ils estoient tous fort surpris quandt je leur parles, n'ayant communiqué mon dessin qu'à une seule personne. Je vis des visages long comme un aune, change de couleur vint fois pendent que je parlois. Tous ces particularités jusques à vostre heurous retour."<sup>1</sup>

The Tories testified their satisfaction by holding a farewell dinner at the Apollo Tavern near St Dunstan, and sending a deputation to wait upon the King and assure him of their service.

<sup>1</sup> "You will see my speech in print, so I will not tell you anything about it. And for the reasons which obliged me to make it, I will keep them to tell them to you on your return. It seems that the Tories are well content with it, but not the Whigs. They were all greatly surprised, when I spoke to them, as I had only communicated my intention to one person. I saw faces an ell long, that changed colour twenty times while I was speaking. All these details on your happy return."

## CHAPTER VIII

### JACOBITES AND TORIES

IN the new Parliament which assembled in March 1690 the Tories had a working majority ; but though some changes had been made in the dispositions of the offices of State, the principle of a ministry constituted solely of men of one party, or of one shade of political opinion, had not yet established itself. Halifax had already retired. Macaulay suggests, that the subtle philosophy in him, which amused a *flâneur* like Charles II., irritated a man of action like William, who was accustomed to decide promptly, and to put his decision into execution. "His mercurial wit was not well suited with the King's phlegm"; and Avaux, who had been formerly French envoy at the Hague, and who was afterwards in Ireland with James, writing to a correspondent from Dublin, reports that Halifax "a eu une reprimande sévère publiquement dans le Conseil par le Prince d'Orange pour avoir trop balancé." But though Macaulay's view sounds plausible, borne out as it is by the testimony of a close, if sometimes prejudiced, observer like Burnet, it must, however, be

taken into consideration that a man dispirited by poor health and domestic losses was likely enough to shrink from incurring the attacks of his enemies. Moreover, his own account of his resignation of the Seal does not bear out Macaulay's assertion that he had lost the King's favour. The passage is quoted from the Spencer House Journals in Foxcroft's Life :—

“Delivered the Seal to (the King) ; told him it was for his service I did it. Hee said he doubted it was not for his service, and that he did not know where to place them in so good hands, etc. I told him, I had weighed it, etc., and in this he must please give me leave to overrule him. Hee argued earnestly against me, and as I was going out, shut the door, and said, he would not take the Seal, except I promised him I would come into employ<sup>t</sup> again when it was for his service. I said, I would if my health would give me leave. Tush, replyeth hee, you have health enough. I said again I must make that exception.”

Several changes took place at the Treasury. Sir John Lowther now sat first at the Board. Monmouth, Delamere, and Godolphin had retired. Monmouth accepted a pension and continued on good terms with the court, but Delamere cherished a bitter resentment which was unappeased by lavish rewards for his services. Sir John Lowther was prominent among the country gentlemen of the day in wealth, birth, and parliamentary experience ; he was a man of distinguished probity, and had a formal, old-fashioned courtesy of manner. He had, in short, all the solid

English virtues, without any of the brilliance and readiness of wit necessary to a man in his position.

Caermarthen (Danby), who had gradually superseded Halifax in influence, was virtually Prime Minister, and now it was that he perfected that system of bribery for which he became notorious in his own day. His principal agent in this traffic was the Speaker of the House of Commons, Sir John Trevor—described by a contemporary as a bold and dexterous man, who knew the most effectual ways of recommending himself to every Government. He had been Master of the Rolls in the reign of James, and had been knighted by Charles II. He had the unenviable distinction of being cousin to the notorious Jeffreys, and, if not equally brutal, was equally corrupt. He had risen from humble beginnings as a lawyer's clerk in the Temple. He was never countenanced by Tillotson, and a story, possibly apocryphal, relates that, meeting the Bishop in a casual encounter near the House of Lords, Trevor was overheard to say, "I hate a fanatic in lawn sleeves," and that Tillotson retorted, "I hate a knave in any sleeves."

A Tory in principle, Trevor undertook to manage that party, "provided he was furnished with such money as might purchase some votes; and by him began the practice of buying off men, in which hitherto the King had kept to stricter rules." At the Admiralty some changes also took place. Thomas Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, was made head of the naval administration, greatly to the chagrin of Torrington.<sup>1</sup> Pembroke's

<sup>1</sup> Earl of Torrington, formerly Admiral Arthur Herbert.

chief title to fame should be that to him was dedicated Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, in acknowledgment, Locke says, of "a long train of favours I have received from your Lordship ; favours, though great and important in themselves, yet made much more so by the forwardness, concern, and kindness, and other obliging circumstances, that never failed to accompany them."

Pembroke was "a man of eminent virtue, and of profound learning, particularly in the mathematics. This made him," says Burnet, "a little too speculative and abstracted in his notions : he had great application, but he lived too much out of the world, though in a public station : a little more practice among men would have given him the last finishing. There was something in his person and manner that created him an universal respect ; for we had no man among us whom all sides loved and honoured so much as they did him." This is high praise, but, as we must now have realised, the impulsive Burnet's vivid portrait-sketches are apt to be strongly coloured by his own prejudices. Yet they never fail in suggestiveness, and the characteristic aloofness of the student is subtly indicated in this description of a man, whom a great station and great responsibilities could not veneer with the commonplace social varnish. Torrington resented bitterly his relegation to a subordinate position, and at first resigned his commission. He was eventually placated, for Narcissus Luttrell notes in his diary at the end of April that "the Earl of Torrington is now better satisfied, and

hath his commission for admiral to put in or turn out any officers as he thinks fitt ; and the King hath given him a promise of a grant of £3000 per ann. of the lands belonging to the late Queen Mary (of Modena).”

The settlement of the revenue occupied Parliament at its first assembling. It was now put on a permanent footing instead of being collected under Acts passed for a short period only. The hereditary revenues, amounting to between £400,000 and £500,000, were given to the King and Queen. There were in addition other excise and customs duties amounting to about £900,000 a year. These had been granted to James, and William hoped to receive them for life also, but even the Tory majority was too cautious to risk rendering their King independent of Parliament. They granted William £300,000 a year from the excise for life, while the balance of £600,000 rising from the customs was granted for four years only. Sir John Lowther warmly protested that the grants should be made to the King and Queen for their joint and separate lives. William was deeply annoyed at this want of confidence in himself. He asked Burnet why they “should entertain a jealousy of him, who came to save their religion and liberties, when they trusted King James so much, who intended to destroy both ?” and was not convinced when the Bishop replied that “they were not jealous of him, but of those who might succeed him.” Burnet adds that “when the supply was raised it came far short of the estimates, so that there were deficiencies to be taken care of in

every session of Parliament, which ran up every year and made a great noise, as if the nation was through mismanagement running into a great arrear."

The House soon proceeded once more to factious disputes: this time on a proposed Abjuration Bill. This was a Whig scheme for compelling all place-holders to take an oath abjuring King James. The main body of the Tories declared they would never take any such oath, and opposed it vehemently with "long and copious arguing." Luttrell describes it as "a perfect trick of the fanatics to turn out the bishops and most of the Church of England clergy." The Bill was rejected by a majority of 192 votes to 163. But the Whigs were still undaunted; an Abjuration Bill was brought into the Lords, and the King went down to hear the debate. Shrewsbury headed the Whigs, Caermarthen the Tories. But William had now determined once and for all to put an end to these scenes. Caermarthen was commissioned by him to present to the House of Lords an Act of Grace from the Crown. "It is," says Macaulay, "one of his noblest and purest titles to renown." It proclaimed an entire oblivion for all political offences up to the date of its being written, with the exception of the still surviving regicides and about thirty others. Of these some were dead abroad, but those who were in England remained unmolested. The Act was passed and Parliament prorogued.

The Earl of Shrewsbury resigned the Seals shortly before the King's departure for Ireland. This step had been contemplated by him for nearly a year. He

had seen his master's gradual alienation from that Whig party to which he belonged ; his timorous and indecisive temperament inclined him to withdraw from a position that was becoming increasingly difficult. As early as September 1689, he wrote to the King, making his ill-health a pretext for retiring from the ministry.

“LONDON, *Aug. 27/Sept. 6.*

“SIR,—I have lain in hopes ever since Sunday to have waited upon your Majesty myself, but it seems with very little reason ; for instead of that happiness, I have not been able to rise out of my bed, and when I shall God only can tell ; but it is like to be so long, I should be very wanting to your Majesty, my country, and myself, if I did not now lay before you your own interest, as well as my condition. I am sure, Sir, your affairs want somebody whose vigorous health, as well as zeal, might carry them on, with greater spirit and dispatch, than hitherto they have seemed to move with. Everything at present appears to be at a stand. . . . I do not endeavour to excuse myself from my share of blame in this ruinous lethargy ; but really, Sir, my indispositions of late have been so frequent, and I have the comforting prospect of so very ill-health for the future, that I am very sensible how incapable I am to supply a place where diligence and industry are absolutely requisite. They are talents that naturally I never had, and have now more reason than ever to despair of attaining, since ill-health, as well as a lazy temper, join to oppose it. . . . The tediousness of this letter has already taken up too much of your time. I shall expect no other answer, but somebody to demand the seals, and that they may

be bestowed in honest and able hands, is the hearty prayer of," etc.

William's reply to this letter was brief and to the point. His letter is dated, apparently though some discrepancy, in Coxe's *Shrewsbury Correspondence*—

“HAMPTON COURT, Aug.  $\frac{18}{28}$ , 1689.

“I cannot conceal my surprise at the contents of your letter, which I received yesterday, as I did not imagine that you would propose to quit your post at this particular time, which would prove very prejudicial to my service as well as to my kingdom. With the view, therefore, to explain my sentiments, I shall send Lord Portland to you to-morrow, to whom alone I have communicated your letter, and I will not mention it to any other person. You will please follow the same example, and no one can have more esteem and friendship, I beg you to believe, than I have.”

Shrewsbury acquiesced reluctantly in the King's commands, but after the interview with Portland he wrote again to his master :—

“Sept.  $\frac{1}{11}$ .

“I make no question, Sir, but my Lord Portland has done me the right to inform your Majesty how entirely I am resigned to whatever you may command, but at the same time, I am sure his judgment is so good, and his affection for your service so real, that he could not but be convinced what I proposed was for the public good, and I hope, though he would not promise me, he represented it as such to your Majesty.”

He continues to urge his failing health, which prevents his undertaking personally the whole burden of affairs, and the impossibility of finding loyal and trustworthy persons to whom it may be delegated. This letter the King disregarded, and Shrewsbury again applied to Portland, requesting that he might receive an answer to it. On this the King wrote again :—

“ I entreat you to relinquish at present your intention of resigning the Seals, as it would be greatly prejudicial to my service and to the welfare of my kingdom.” He adds kindly, “ I will use all my endeavours to render your post as little troublesome as possible.”

Shrewsbury was therefore forced to remain in office ; but he saw with dismay the King's increasing alienation from the Whigs, and endeavoured to dissuade him from proroguing Parliament.

Affairs reached a climax at the time of the Abjuration Bill, and Shrewsbury, who warmly supported it, deeply resented the King's intervention. A friend found him in an excited state, on the point of going to expostulate with the King in person, and fortunately was able to dissuade him. “ The Earl of Shrewsbury was at the head of those who pressed the Abjuration most ; so, upon this change of counsels, he thought he could not serve the King longer with reputation or success. . . . The credit that the Marquis of Caermarthen had gained was not easy to him, so he resolved to deliver up the Seals. I was the person to whom he first discovered this, and he had them in his hands when he told me of it ; yet I prevailed with him not to go that night.

He was in some heat. I had no mind that the King should be surprised by a thing of that kind; and I was afraid that the Earl of Shrewsbury might have said such things to him, as should have provoked him too much, so I sent the King word of it. It troubled him more than I thought a thing of that sort could have done: he loved the Earl of Shrewsbury and . . . sent Tillotson, and all those who had most credit with the Earl, to divert him from his purpose."

Shrewsbury, however, remained firm in the matter. He conveyed the Seals several times to the King, who refused to receive them, and finally they were delivered by the hands of the Earl of Portland, Shrewsbury having become seriously ill from mental agitation. He had perhaps already wavered in his allegiance. He seems to have suffered from a reaction after the vigour and decision of the part played by him in the Revolution. Of that part he already repented. He was too weak to be entirely honest, too honest not to suffer under his own disloyalty. Macaulay suggests that the mischievous influence of his mother, well known to be deep in Jacobite intrigues, induced him to commit treason. Be that as it may, James laid a paper before the French Government which contained the following passage:—

“Il y a le comte de Shrewsbury, qui étant secrétaire d'état du Prince d'Orange s'est défait de sa charge par mon ordre.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “There is the Earl of Shrewsbury who, being Secretary to the Prince of Orange, has relinquished his office by my order.”—Macpherson, *Original Papers*.

The King's preparations for his departure for Ireland, which took place in June 1690, were now complete. On the eve of his journey he had an interview with Burnet, whom he called into his closet. "He seemed to have a great weight upon his spirits, from the state of his affairs, which was then very cloudy." He expressed pleasure at the thought of the ensuing campaign, in which he should be more at home than in governing England, regretted the factions and heats of party and their fomentation by the clergy, whose business should have been to pacify them. "He only pitied the poor Queen, repeating that twice with great tenderness, and wished that those who loved him would wait much on her or assist her." In conclusion, he demanded the good Bishop's prayers, and dismissed him, "very deeply affected with all he had said."

William realised to the full the difficulties that either James's death or capture would entail. He gave orders to his captains that if James were taken at sea he was to be conveyed unharmed to Holland, and he scornfully repudiated an offer made of kidnapping the exiled King and landing him either in Spain or Italy. He "would have no hand in treachery," he said. On the other hand, those who surrounded James lost no opportunity of inflaming his resentment against his children. Dalrymple relates an anecdote which he observes, "though not strictly suited to the dignity of history," marks the state of the exiled court, and may be pardoned. "James was one day complaining to his courtiers of his eldest daughter, but speaking with

tenderness of the Princess Anne. Captain Lloyd of the navy, who liked not the last part of the conversation, quitted the room ; but turning back his head as he shut the door, muttered aloud, ‘ Both bitches, by God.’ ”

The Queen has herself described her difficulties with the Council of Nine, that her husband left to advise her, but Shrewsbury related that the King had often said to him “ that though he could not hit on the right way of pleasing England, he was certain she would, and we should all be very happy under her.” The council was composed of Whigs and Tories, but Caermarthen and Nottingham, who took the lead, gave to the Tories a preponderance which annoyed the Whigs, though the Queen “ balanced all things with an extraordinary temper, and became universally beloved and admired by all about her.” At the time William was starting for Ireland, England was threatened with a Jacobite insurrection at home and a French invasion from abroad. The King’s absence in Ireland seemed to offer to the leaders of the conspiracy a favourable opportunity for action. Clarendon, the Queen’s uncle, and Viscount Preston, who had been Secretary of State to James, were the two most prominent men concerned. Dartmouth, who had taken the oaths of allegiance to the reigning sovereigns, proposed to undertake the betrayal of England’s interests at sea, by the bribery and corruption of those who were already disaffected.

The Quaker William Penn was writing to James that King William’s supporters feared nothing so much as an invasion, and that if one took place it would

soon show James to have more friends in the country than ever. Penn had been suspected, arrested, and released, as the evidence against him was insufficient. Preston was a Scottish peer and an English baronet, and had been imprisoned by the Lords for attempting to claim the privileges of an English peer. James had written to him to hold himself still Secretary of State, and he was so regarded by the Jacobites. In different parts of the country there were secret assemblings and disquiet, and men were preparing arms. Meanwhile, the secret agents of communication between London and St Germain's sometimes filled their own purses by betraying both sides. Among such was William Fuller. He had been page to one of Mary of Modena's ladies, and, following the court to France, was employed on secret missions. In the spring of 1690 he was entrusted with some letters of great moment. They were written in invisible ink and sewn into his buttons. He was accompanied by a fellow-conspirator called Crone. Fuller had already made terms for himself with the English Government. He now immediately made his way to Kensington, and handed the despatches over to William. The seemingly innocent letters became sufficiently incriminating when the invisible ink appeared on the application of heat. Crone was at once sought for. He had delivered his letters, but his indiscreet garrulity under the influence of drink betrayed him.

This was the state of things which William was obliged to leave behind him. "Je plains la pauvre reine qui est en des terribles afflictions," he wrote to

Portland. Mary's position was peculiarly isolated : she had none to trust. Of her relations in England, Anne was alienated from her by the Churchill influence, while her uncle Clarendon was known to be in constant communication with the exiled court. On 30th May Clarendon records a conversation his brother had had with the King, "who talked very freely to him of several things, and at last told him I had been very busy in caballing against him ; that he was satisfied I had been so, and could show it under my hand ; that he had been moved to except me out of the Act of Grace, but that he would not do it for the Queen's sake ; that I would do well to be careful, for it was no jesting matter." Clarendon asked Rochester, when he saw the King again, to assure him that "I desired nothing but to be quiet, and would live as obediently to the Government as any man could do." The diary makes careful notes of the arrest of Fuller, Crone, and of the Jacobite agent Mrs Clifford, but the entries do not suggest that the writer has any cognisance of them.

Meanwhile Crone's trial was postponed, as Fuller was too ill to appear and give his evidence. He says himself that "they [the Jacobites], finding their whole design unravelled, and that I had discovered all I knew, and Mr Crone safe and to be suddenly tried, which might make him confess, they got me poisoned in hopes to have prevented Crone's trial, but it pleased Almighty God to restore me to my health after ten weeks' sickness." Fuller asserts (though evidence from such a source is untrustworthy) that he was

offered a free pardon from Versailles, and £500 down if he would return to France and recant his confession. This was after Crone's trial and conviction for high treason, and while the execution of the sentence was held over in the hopes of inducing him to confess—which he ultimately did, the day before Clarendon was arrested. The Queen signed the warrant for his apprehension, saying, as she did so, that there was "too much against my Lord Clarendon to leave him out," though his brother-in-law, Sir Henry Capel, attempted to defend him.

Clarendon's confinement was at first strict and rigorous. His wife, who came with some other relations to see him on the afternoon of his being taken to the Tower, was not allowed to see him except in the presence of a gentleman porter, which, he says, "I thought a little strange, there being no mention in my warrant that I was to be a close prisoner. . . . About ten at night, just as I was in bed, Mr Dod, the gentleman-jaoler, set a padlock on my chamber door, so that if I were ill my servant could not get to me. This, I confess, looked a little odd." Lawrence Hyde had meanwhile appealed to Nottingham to get his brother released, but was told there were no hopes of it "till the French fleet was gone off the coast." This phrase is significant, for the Government not only had to cope with the danger of an insurrection at home, but with the prospect of invasion from abroad.

The French fleet, under Tourville, the most accomplished naval officer of his country, was lying off the

Isle of Wight. Torrington was despatched to meet them, reinforced by a Dutch squadron. Torrington left the Dutch contingent unsupported. Tourville was victorious off Beachy Head, and was left in command of the British Channel. The crisis was so acute that private differences were once more forgotten; the nation rallied round the Queen and eagerly supported energetic preparations for defence. Even Shrewsbury, shamed into activity, hastened to offer his services to Mary and to join the fleet. "Lord Shrewsbury was at my dinner," the Queen wrote to her husband, 13th July. "I told him I was glad to see him so well again; he said he had been at Epsom for the air, or else he would have been here sooner. . . . Lord Shrewsbury was again here at my supper, and, as I thought, took pains to talk, which I did to him as formerly, by your direction."

Torrington was meanwhile sent to the Tower. The Queen's difficulties were at their height at this time. She has told us of the dissensions and disaffection of her Council of Nine. She wrote continually to William, keeping him informed of all that happened. Now it is the Queen Dowager who has omitted to have the prayer for the King's success read in her chapel, now it is the dissensions of her advisers, or the difficulty of obtaining money. "As for the building . . . . I have . . . . so much use for money and find so little, that I cannot tell whether that of Hampton Court will not be a little the worse for it." And again: "I have been obliged to write this evening to M. Schulenberg

to desire him to advance money for the six regiments to march, which they say is absolutely necessary for your service as well as honour. The Lords of the Treasury have made me pawn my word for it." And just at the time of Fuller's plot she writes: "I was last night at High park [Hyde Park] for the first time since you went. It swarmed with those who are now ordered to be clapt up"—with Jacobites insolent with their anticipated success. Her health suffered. She complains of a swelled face, and of her eyes, which will only allow her to write a little at a time, when so much has to be written that cannot be delegated to another hand.

On 16th July she writes: "I have hardly had time to say my prayers, and was feign to run away to Kensington, where I had three hours' quiet, which was more than I have had together since I saw you." (One cannot help wondering how many the King was likely to have had.) "That place made me think how happy I was there when I had your dear company; but now — I will say no more, for I shall hurt my own eyes, which I want now more than ever." And in that exquisitely human touch one sees the weary, anxious Queen bravely wiping away the tears that will hurt her tired eyes.

When things seemed at their worst came the great news that there had been a decisive battle in Ireland. The King was victorious at the Boyne; he had been wounded, but so slightly that he had been in the saddle for nineteen hours. The reaction from the

tension of anxiety sent London delirious with joy ; it was a seventeenth-century Mafeking.

In September the King returned to England. James had once more fled to France, and the government of Ireland was entrusted to Sidney and two other Lords Justices, while Ginkel and Marlborough, left in charge of military affairs, finished off the campaign. In London William found himself for the moment a popular hero ; but he had short time in which to bask in the sun of public approval. He wished to go to the Hague at the earliest possible moment, because of a congress to be held there of representatives of the European powers inimical to France. There was plenty to be done in the months before his departure. The Houses of Parliament, which met in October, moved votes of thanks to the King and Queen, and granted William an Extraordinary Aid of over four millions. The greater part of the session was employed in discussing ways and means. Torrington was tried, acquitted, but dismissed the service. The Whigs at this time were concentrating all their malice against Caermarthen. He was made the target for virulent lampoons. His friend Lowther, in common with all his family, shared these attentions. Godolphin had returned to the Treasury and now presided at the Board, which was a weakening of Caermarthen's influence ; and a further source of annoyance to him was the appointment of Sidney in Shrewsbury's place,—an appointment which had been made by the King without consultation with his chief Minister of State. Caermarthen, in

fact, seemed "again falling under an universal hatred." It was not an unusual fate for any politician enjoying office at that time. "In a House of Commons every motion against a minister is apt to be too well entertained ; some envy him ; others are angry with him ; many hope to share in the spoils of him and his friends that fall with him ; and the love of change and the wantonness of mind makes attacking a minister a diversion to the rest." Shrewsbury was a leading agent in the attack in Caermarthen's case ; but while it was in progress, circumstances arose which diverted the attention of the minister's enemies.

The King's leniency to the conspirators in 1690, at the time of Fuller's confession, had encouraged Jacobite plots, and the occasion of his absence on the Continent seemed to offer a favourable opportunity. Once more Preston, Dartmouth, Clarendon, Penn, and the Bishop of Ely renewed treasonable communication with the court of St Germain's. In December a meeting of the most active Jacobites was held. Apparently the conspirators were exclusively Protestant, and consequently they attempted to safeguard England in the event of James's return. If he was restored by foreign arms, they said, it must be clearly understood that England could neither be governed as a Roman Catholic country nor by force of arms. The King must also give some pledge that he would govern according to law and with the advice of Parliament. Viscount Preston was selected to carry the letters of the conspirators to St Germain's.

Preston was accompanied by John Ashton, a consistent Jacobite, who had been Clerk of the Closet to Mary of Modena. They hired a barge secretly at night above London Bridge, and boarded the smack that they had engaged to carry them to France under the pretence of being smugglers. Ashton took the precaution of securing their papers with a string and a weight attached, so that it might be thrown overboard in case of discovery. But the uneasiness betrayed by the conspirators excited the suspicions of the master of the smack. Guessing that his supposed smugglers had some design against the Government, he reflected that it might pay him better to give information against his passengers than to carry them to France : he therefore informed his owners, who at once sent word to Caermarthen. He lost no time in sending after them a swift yacht, belonging to his son, Lord Danby. Dalrymple says that Caermarthen's messenger was directed to the name of the smack by overhearing the complaints of a waterman who had rowed the conspirators to the barge, and who had lent one of his fares a coat, for it was cold on the closing night of 1690. This coat, in the haste of their secret departure, they had forgotten to return. The pursuing boat overtook the smack. Preston and Ashton hid themselves in the ballast, and so lost the opportunity of throwing overboard the incriminating letters. They were seized ; the packet found hidden in Ashton's breast was put into the hands of Nottingham and Caermarthen, and was by them laid before the King.

It was sufficiently damning. Lord Dartmouth sent a list of the fleet. The ambiguity of phrasing of the letters left no doubt as to the real meaning. Clarendon wrote that "now is the time to make large advantages by trading, the sea being freer than it has been these two months past . . . opportunities are to be used, they cannot be given by men." The Bishop of Ely, addressing the King as "Mr Redding," wrote: "I speak in the plural because I write my elder's brother's sentiments [the Archbishop] as well as my own"; while notes in Preston's hand were still more disquieting, as they suggested that the common seamen could not be relied upon, and that many of the great Whig lords were implicated. Ashton and Preston refused to turn informers. Ashton, preserving a dignified silence, was executed. Preston, more cowardly, was remanded. When the King returned from Holland he was brought before him, and, urged on by Caermarthen, was proceeding to incriminate on hearsay great Whig families. William, always discreet, leant over his minister's chair and touched him on the shoulder, saying, "My Lord, there is too much of this." Clarendon spent some six months in the Tower, and was afterwards allowed to retire to the country. Dartmouth died in the Tower after a short imprisonment. Penn and Turner were permitted to take refuge in France. The informer, Preston, was pardoned.

## CHAPTER IX

### TURNCOATS OF THE REVOLUTION

#### “A TURNCOAT OF THE TIMES”

“But now I am at court  
With men of the better sort,  
And purchase a good report ;  
I have the eyes and ears of many noble peers,  
And slight the poor cavaliers.  
Poor knaves! they know not how  
To flatter and cringe and bow ;  
For he that is wise and means to rise,  
He must be a turncoat now.”

“THOSE Englishmen who served William most faithfully,” says Macaulay, “served him without enthusiasm, without personal attachment, and merely from a sense of public duty.” There was lukewarmness among them all ; few indeed could resist the contagion of flirtation with the ever busy Jacobite agents. On the one hand were the men who were making all safe for themselves by expressing contrition and receiving assurances of pardon from their late master the King “de jure,” while they continued to serve the King “de facto.” On the other hand were the men who actively plotted

and conspired to restore James and overthrow the existing Government. We have alluded already to Shrewsbury's defection, and the qualms of conscience from which he suffered. Still more conspicuous among the traitors by whom William was surrounded was Godolphin. Cautious, prudent, timorous, of indefatigable industry, he was indispensable to any Government from his brilliant financial ability and supple tactfulness. "Sidney Godolphin," said Charles II., at whose court he had been a page, "is never in the way, and never out of the way." He has been elsewhere described as "the most silent and modest man that was perhaps ever bred in a court. He had a clear apprehension, and despatched business with great method, and with so good much temper that he had no personal enemies ; but his silence begot a jealousy, which has hung long upon him. His notions were for the court, but his incorrupt and sincere way of managing the concerns of the Treasury created in all people a very high esteem for him." Godolphin's taciturnity begot in him a passion for gaming, for, as he explained, cards delivered him from the obligation to talk much.

He had thrown all the weight of his influence into the scale of the Exclusion Bill. "Nothing," said James to Rochester, "would go well till Godolphin and all the rotten sheep at the end of the gallery were turned out." In 1684 Godolphin was made First Commissioner of the Treasury ; and on James's accession, in spite of his known adherence to

the Prince of Orange, and his previous support of the Exclusion Bill, he was made Chamberlain to the Queen. Hopes were even entertained of his becoming a Catholic, prayers for his joining the Popish Church were said daily in the King's Chapel, and "there can be little doubt," says his biographer, Hugh Elliot, "that Godolphin gave assurances concerning his religious opinions which were held by James to be satisfactory, and were morally indistinguishable from a public declaration of the old faith."

At any rate, in 1686 he succeeded Rochester for the second time at the Treasury, when Rochester would not comply with his master's wishes in publicly joining the Roman Church. On William's accession Godolphin had supported the Regency scheme, and his appointment to the Treasury excited the indignation of the Whigs. He was now First Commissioner of the Treasury; he had received many marks of esteem from the King; he had no possible ground of complaint against the Government. Perhaps his natural cautious timidity induced him to become a traitor—his desire to make all safe in case of a counter-revolution; perhaps the extent to which his treachery went was overstated; perhaps, as Macaulay suggests, he was dominated by the stronger influence of a more powerful and more unscrupulous nature, that of Marlborough. At all events, early in 1691 Godolphin was induced to listen to the suggestions of the Jacobite agent, Captain Henry Bulkeley. This man had once been on intimate terms with Godolphin; he now called on his former

acquaintance, but found him cautious in avoiding any mention of James. Bulkeley was, however, resolved to try what another visit would bring forth, and on a second occasion told Godolphin that "he was in admiration to find his lordship in employment again, he having assured him before he left England he was resolved never to take any for the future." Godolphin allowed himself to be drawn. He explained that he had promised the Prince of Orange to come in again at his return from Ireland, and that William kept him to his word.<sup>1</sup> "He then inquired after the court of St Germans, but with a seeming despondency." Bulkeley sought to encourage him, and pressed him to send some message by himself to his late master expressing his willingness to serve him; but Godolphin, so far remembering his habitual caution, put an end to the interview by rising from his chair; and, saying he would quit his employment as soon as he could, he left his interlocutor.

The account of this incident, to be found in James II.'s memoirs, is followed by another statement, less credible, that it was through the support of Halifax that Godolphin was encouraged to send definite assurances of his allegiance to James. According to Bulkeley's own account, encouraged by Godolphin's "coy beginning," the intermediary went next to Halifax, "who received him with open armes, and laying his brest naked, sayd, He would doe all that lay in his power to serve his Majesty and forward his return: This lord

<sup>1</sup> He had retired in 1690.

it seems was of a temper never to be satisfied, if he was controverted in anything. This had alienated him formerly from the King ["when on the throne" —these words were added by the Pretender], and now the Prince of Orange, finding his Politicks tho' nice and subtil in speculation yet seldom good in practise, they two did not hit it long." This free assurance encouraged other discontented noblemen, who were more diffident, and "my Lord Halifax giving Mr Bulkeley leave to acquaint my Lord Godolphin with his sentiments, and that he would concur with him in anything for the King's good, made that Lord boulder likewise upon the matter." This statement seems on the face of it unlikely, and not in keeping with the rest of Halifax's character and career; but Foxcroft's "Life" notes certain entries in the Devonshire House Notebook which show that Captain Bulkeley certainly had some intercourse at this time with Halifax of which Godolphin was the subject. "B[ulkeley ?] told mee, that L. Godol[phin] had very lately given assurances," etc. Foxcroft, in summarising the probabilities of Halifax's direct complicity, says: "The probability of a reaction was ever before the mind of Revolution statesmen, and we fancy that a kind of assurance against political accident, to be cheaply purchased at the modest premium of a few soft speeches, was, in the case of Halifax, as of so many others, the real object of quasi-Jacobite coquetries." Godolphin, encouraged, as Bulkeley affirms, by the concurrence of Halifax, "made all the protestation imaginable of his good will to the

King." He promised to "quit all and be entirely at his Majesty's service and disposal," so soon as the Prince of Orange should return from Holland. The ever-faithful Sidney wrote meanwhile to warn William of Godolphin's intention of resigning, and intimated that there was an ulterior motive.

"I must tell your Majesty," he says, "that my Lord Godolphin's quitting your service is now no secret, for my Lord Halifax told it me the other day. . . . What my Lord Godolphin does in the Treasury I cannot tell, but I see his proceedings in other places are not with that zeal for your service, as might be expected from him ; he scarce ever comes to Counsel, and never to the committees upon the taking of several ill-affected persons, and at the examination of them he never was present ; what the reason of it is, I cannot tell."

In another letter Sidney explained that in the course of a conversation with Godolphin he seemed determined to retire. "He lays it most upon his wife, and saith it will not be convenient for a man of business that is not very young to bring a wife near the court" : an excuse that might have served well enough in the time of the last two Stuarts ; but it was casting rather an unwarrantable aspersion on the character of Lady Godolphin to suggest that she could not be trusted at the court of Mary, where the principal diversions of the ladies appear to have been needlework and reading aloud.

On these representations William wrote to Godolphin.

The King's letter seems to have caused its recipient some qualms of conscience, for he showed it to Lord Halifax, who notes<sup>1</sup>: "Ld. Godol. . . . showed me a letter to him from the K. [William] out of Holland, expressing great trouble at his intention of leaving his employment." He showed it also to Bulkeley, for in the account of the whole transactions in James II.'s memoirs it is said: "He (Godolphin) made a conscience (he said) of betraying his trust . . . . he therefore resolved (he said) to disengage himself from any such tye, notwithstanding the Prince of Orange had writ to him from the Hague (which letter he showed Mr Bulkeley), complaining how many difficulties lay hevy upon him at present, in reference to the Confederates as well as other affairs, but that nothing troubled him so much as his thoughts of leaving his service in such a conjuncture, he being the person he had most confidence in, and most kindness for of any Englishman, and therefore charges him not to think of doing it; but he made show as if all this weighed little with him in respect of his duty to his lawfull sovereign."

The Jacobite negotiations with Marlborough properly belong to another chapter, but that servant of the Crown, who seems to have found a pastime in lying, even when it was not strictly necessary, wrote several letters to William at this time extolling his own good offices in urging Godolphin to remain in the King's service. He had gone out of his way to ask

<sup>1</sup> Foxcroft, from Devonshire House Notebook.

William to write to Godolphin. "That you will in a kind letter tell him that you have so much personal kindness for him that you deserve better than that he should abandon you at this time, when you have so much need of his services." Marlborough also saw the letter that the King had written to Godolphin :—

"Feb. 13, 1691.

"My Lord Godolphin showed me your Majesty's letter to him, which was so full of kindness that I hope the more he thinks of it the better it will be ; although I must own to your Majesty that he has not yet altered his resolution ; but he writes to you at large on this subject, so that I shall give you no further trouble, but assuring you that I will lose no occasion of letting him see the obligation he has in return to your Majesty's kindness, to spend his life in your service, which I do with all my heart wish for."

In another letter the King's specious correspondent says : "I do not find that I prevail much on him [Godolphin], any otherwise than that I find it makes him melancholy."

Godolphin himself wrote to the King<sup>1</sup> :—

"I am humbly to acknowledge the honour of your Majesty's letter of the 6th, and the great goodness you are pleased to express in it as to my particular ; as it is no surprise to me, who have already received so many proofs of your Majesty's kindness to me, so I hope you will be pleased favourably to consider the im-

<sup>1</sup> This letter is dated in Dalrymple, 13th Feb. 1690/1, but Halifax's entry in the Devonshire House Notebook is dated May of the same year, so that the letters mentioned may not be identical.

possibility I am under, with regard to my present circumstances at this time, to depart from the humble request which I presumed to make to your Majesty before you went away,<sup>1</sup> and that you will have so well considered into what hands to put the care of your business in the treasury, that my absence from that place shall rather prove an advantage to your Majesty's service there, than bring any further difficulties upon it . . . . but this I know, that in all places and in all conditions I shall still retain the same duty and gratitude for your Majesty, and the same sense of your favours to me as if I were every moment under your own observation, and had therefore to continue always near your Majesty."

In April 1691, Marlborough, who had by that time secured his own position with James, requested<sup>2</sup> "that he [James] would please to write to my Lord Godolphin, and assure him of forgiveness too; in which letter the Queen must insert a few words likewise to testify her being reconciled to him, and yet at the same time to order him to keep his employments, to be more serviceable as it was pretended, so that in fine they were to be pardoned and in security in case the King returned, and yet to suffer nothing in the interim nor to give any proof of their sincerity."

Meanwhile William's Continental diplomacy had been entirely successful. He had formed a powerful coalition, which included the Duke of Savoy, on whose alliance Louis XIV. had counted. Louis had

<sup>1</sup> William sailed for Holland on 18th January.

<sup>2</sup> James II.'s memoirs.

indeed captured Mons, but no very important military results followed on this initial success; the main armies in Flanders, under the command of Luxembourg and of William, remained practically inactive. Furthermore, William's position as the mainspring of the European Coalition was strengthened by the assurance that with the collapse of the Irish Rebellion his hold on the throne of England had become more secure.

It was fortunate that this was so, for another signal example of treachery was given by Admiral Russell. "He was," says Macaulay, "emphatically a bad man, insolent, malignant, greedy, faithless." This was the historian's summing up after reviewing his career in the after-light of events, and with the damning evidence of his treachery before him. His contemporaries estimated his character more leniently. Edward Russell has been mentioned more than once already. He was a connection of Lord William Russell, who died on the scaffold. He had been brought up at sea, and was in the Duke of York's household, but retired from court after his relative's death. He was one of the chosen few who met at Lord Shrewsbury's to concert measures for bringing over the Prince of Orange to protect the religion and liberties of England; he went over to the Hague, where he had a sister living, to interview the Prince of Orange, and was commissioned by many influential men to ascertain his views and intentions. Burnet saw him on this occasion, and had some confidential talk with him, and

wrote of him later that "he was a man of much honour, and great courage. He had good principles, and was firm to them." Russell it was who had ordered Burnet "to go to prayers, for all was lost," when the pilot went astray on the passage to England. His great services at the time of the Revolution had been rewarded lavishly: he was an admiral of the fleet, commander of the united naval forces of England and Holland, and treasurer of the navy. He had a pension of three thousand a year, and had received a grant of property of great value near Charing Cross. In Russell's own opinion, however, his services were inadequately requited. Like others, he thought that the Whigs were neglected, and that undeserving men had profited by the Revolution; for Russell was always a sincere Whig, even when he was listening to Jacobite agents. William suffered much from English letter-writers; there were always a number of men who vented their spleen in complaining of one another, or their own ill-appreciated virtues. But the letter of Russell to William is an extreme instance even of the kind of complaints to which he was habituated. The King had paid a short and busy visit to England, returning to Holland in May 1691. The letter was one of those in King William's cabinet, and is given by Dalrymple.

"ON BOARD THE 'BRITANNIA,' *May 10, 1691.*

"SIR,—Since the accidents of war may possibly put it out of my power of having the honour to see your Majesty again, I beg, with all imaginable submission

and respect, you will give me leave to lay some things before your Majesty which truly my bashfulness would not permit me to do by word of mouth, when your Majesty was in England. I am sensible, Sir, with how little justice I can pretend to any share in your Majesty's favour, having never in any kind deserved the favours and honours you have pleased to show me, nor am I conscious to myself that I have ever been troublesome or importunate with your Majesty, for anything that might better my own condition, unless it was for the grant of Rigate, which I as soon desisted in, as I found your Majesty backward in granting, concluding from that time your Majesty did not think me deserving of a small favour, when at the same time you was pleased to bestow on others great gifts. But that which afflicts me, Sir, is that I should have a brother, who appeared one of the first in your interest and service, who chose rather to lose all his appointments in the late King James's service, which were very considerable, than not show a zeal for his country's service. . . . But, Sir, a lieutenant-colonel of horse will not keep him ; his expenses in Ireland, to appear as he ought, have made him in his own fortune so much a worse man, that he has been forced to quit the service, and seek a subsistence by marrying an old widow, rather than spend all he has, and run the hazard of wanting afterwards."

He goes on to say that he himself has incurred debts in the King's service, and so could not save his brother from his matrimonial fate, and continues :—"I have, Sir, a sister who, during King James's reign, never failed of being paid her pension, though I think not any of

our family was ever very serviceable to him ; but since your Majesty came to the throne she has never received anything of it, though she is informed several others have received from your Majesty that grace and favour. . . . These things have given me great mortification, that you are pleased to show the world my family is less deserving of your favour than others. It was my luck to be so favourably thought on, when the design was laid of your Majesty's coming over, by most people that were able to do service or to obstruct, I mean the military men both by sea and land, that they believed me in what I said, and depended on the credit I had with your Majesty to render them service when God was pleased to settle you here ; but such has been my ill-fortune, that I have not been able to recommend them to your favour, and most of them are in a worse condition in point of income, than in the late reign : it has convinced them how little regard your Majesty has for what I say in their behalf ; and they see great places and rewards given to men who gave you what opposition was in their power, while themselves, who were the chief instruments of your meeting no stop while you marched in England, reduced, if not to want, to a much greater necessity than they ever knew before. These things I thought it a duty incumbent upon me to lay before your Majesty, as also a justice to myself. I pray God bless your Majesty, and send you both by sea and land good success. Now I have troubled you with my afflictions, I shall be at ease, and whatever your pleasure is, and whatever condition

mine or my family is, your Majesty shall always find me, with all faith and duty, your Majesty's most obedient," etc.

While Russell was thus querulously nursing his wrongs, he encountered the Jacobite agent, David Lloyd or Floyd, and, yielding to his persuasions, allowed the agent to assure James of his own intention of bringing over the fleet if a suitable occasion offered. On the critical day of La Hogue, Russell acquitted himself honourably, but for some years he, in common with other leading statesmen, continued to proffer vague assurances of loyalty and service to James. Russell seems to have been equally dissatisfied with both James and William, for the following letter suggests that he had been complaining of his treatment by the court of St Germain. The letter is headed, "Instructions by the Countess of Shrewsbury to the Earl of Shrewsbury, Lord Churchill, and Lord Russell." And it is quoted here, though it anticipates the course of events, to show how widespread was the treachery of the men in William's pay—in words at least, if not in deeds. The letter is dated 16th October 1693 :—

"It is his Majesty's pleasure that you let Admiral Russell know that his Majesty [James II.] desires him to endeavour to get the command of the fleet from the Prince of Orange : that his Majesty trusts in what the admiral sent him word of, by Earl of Middleton and Mr Floyd ; and assures him that on his part he is ready to perform what he has promised at his desire ; that he is so far from giving any ground to any to write the

contrary, that of all things, he desires, that they will let him know the authors of the calumny, that he may show them his dislike, by the punishment he will inflict upon them."

The other Jacobites are urged "by all means to keep Admiral Russell to these ways, which may secure him the command of the fleet; and let all their resentments if possible stop, since upon this occasion, the fewer enemys he raises to himself, his affairs will go the smoother on, which is much his Majesty's interest."

Further instructions of the same date, and by the same channel, direct—

"That his Majesty expects, upon this conjunctions, that the Earl of Danby<sup>1</sup> will do him what service he can, and most particularly, by giving him time how to act against the Prince of Orange, and by letting him know as near as he can what the said Prince's designs may be, and how he can prevent them; and if he can answer for his son, he by no means permitt him to lay down his employment at sea. Earls Shrewsbury, Danby, Godolphin, Churchill, Russell, etc., that they do, what in prudence they can, to hinder money or retard it, and hinder the going out of the fleet, so soon as it might do otherwise."

We shall refer again to this correspondence, which, it may be noted, took place after the battle of La Hogue. At that critical time, Russell was true to his

<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted here as elsewhere that James calls men by the titles they held in his own reign, thus ignoring and declining to recognise any conferred on them by William.

trust, for it happened that he was out of temper with James. That king notes in his memoirs that many of his adherents were dissatisfied with the terms of his declaration, and that "no one seemed to be more so than Admiral Russell, who now having the command of the English Fleet, and still pretending to be in the King's interest, there appear'd a necessity of doing all that was possible to content a person who held the crown of England so far in his hands as that it was in his power to set it again on his Majesty's head if he really designed it."

Later on King James observes that though he "had good hopes of many officers," he "endeavoured to have matters so ordered as not to depend upon so dubious a foundation, especially the faint assurances of Admiral Russell himself"; and then follows a shrewd estimate of the men he had to rely upon: "He knew that fear alone would make those mercenary soules his friends, and that nothing but the preparations where he was, could produce that effect." In other words, a sufficiently strong force provided by the "most Christian King," Louis XIV. While William made use of his ministers and servants with the full knowledge of their insincerity, James feared to trust the word of those men by whose advice he proposed to act.

## CHAPTER X

### MARLBOROUGH

MARLBOROUGH'S treachery was so much the more malignant in that he had a more alert imagination and was more fertile in resource than the majority of his contemporaries. He was the second son of a Sir Winston Churchill who had fought in the Civil Wars as a Royalist, and there was enough family influence to secure for him a place as page in the household of the Duke of York. His promotion at this time was not, however, due to his own merits, but to the interest of his sister Arabella. Arabella Churchill had no share of her brother's beauty. Grammont describes her as "une grande créature, pâle et décharnée,"<sup>1</sup> but she had none the less attracted the errant fancy of James, and became his mistress. "The only feeling of her family was joyful surprise that so homely a girl should have attained such high preferment." Her brother may be said to have retaliated by securing the ardent if transient affections of another royal mistress,

<sup>1</sup> "A great pale lean creature."

the Duchess of Cleveland,<sup>1</sup> from whose favour he derived large financial advantages—for even as a young man he was greedy.

When only twenty-three he served with distinction in the Duke of Monmouth's regiment against Holland under the great Turenne, and was employed on a diplomatic mission to the Prince of Orange in 1678. He had at this time just married a young lady in the household of the Duchess of York, Sarah Jennings, whose violent temper never alienated the ardent affection expressed in his early letters to her. "I do with all my heart's core long to be with you," he wrote to his young wife from Holland, "you being dearer to me than my own life. . . . On Monday night I shall be at Breda, where the Prince and Princess of Orange are ; and from thence you shall be sure to hear from me again. Till when, my soul's soul, farewell."

On James's accession Churchill was created Baron Churchill, and employed on a mission to Paris to notify to Louis XIV. his master's accession to the throne. It was during this embassy that, in a conversation with Lord Galway, Churchill declared "that if the King was ever prevailed on to alter our religion, I would serve him no longer, but withdraw from him." These words, which Galway repeated afterwards, show Churchill to have been so far honest in intention, whatever may be said against his manner of "withdrawing" from James. Burnet describes the rising young soldier at this time as "a man of a noble and graceful

<sup>1</sup> She was a mistress of Charles II.



JOHN CHURCHILL, FIRST DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.

(From the portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller.)

*Emery Walker.*



appearance, bred up in the court, with no literature ; but he had a solid and clear understanding, with a constant presence of mind. He knew the arts of living in a court beyond any man in it. He caressed all people, with a soft and obliging deportment, and was always ready to do good offices. He had no fortune to set upon : this put him on all the methods of acquiring one. And that went so far with him that he did not shake it off when he was in a much higher elevation, nor was his expense suited to his posts ; but when allowances are made for that, it must be acknowledged that he is one of the greatest men the age has produced." He was, in short, stingy and faithless, but a genius.

Churchill acted on the resolution he had expressed to Lord Galway in the spring of 1687, soon after the Declaration of Indulgence that James had issued in April. Through William's agent, Dykvelt, and Russell and Henry Sidney, he conveyed to the Prince assurances of his loyalty to the Protestant religion. He used his influence with the Princess Anne to induce her to take the same course, and wrote to the Prince of Orange in his facile, plausible style to assure him of the Princess's and his own adherence :—

"The Princess of Denmark having ordered me to discourse with M. Dykvelt, and to let him know her resolutions, so that he might let your Highness and the Princess her sister know that she was resolved, by the assistance of God, to suffer all extremities, even to death itself, rather than be brought to change her

religion ; I thought it my duty to your Highness and the Princess Royal by this opportunity of Monsieur Dykvelt, to give you assurances under my own hand, that my places and the King's favour I set at nought in comparison of being true to my religion. In all things but this the King may command me ; and I call God to witness, that even with joy I should expose my life for his service, so sensible am I of his favours. I know the troubling you, Sir, with this much of myself, I being of so little use to your Highness, is very impertinent, yet I think it may be a great ease to your Highness and the Princess to be satisfied that the Princess of Denmark is safe in the trusting of me ; I being resolved, although I cannot live the life of a saint, if there be ever occasion for it, to show the resolution of a martyr."

It was in the summer of this same year that an incident took place which is related in the contemporary *Life of Marlborough* by one of those present at the time. James had been touching for the King's evil in the cathedral at Winchester, with two Catholic priests officiating as chaplains. The King, who was dining afterwards at the Deanery, walked in the garden attended by Lord Churchill, and asked him : "Well, Churchill, what do my subjects say about this ceremony of touching in the Church ?" "Truly," replied Lord Churchill, "they do not approve it, and it is the general opinion your Majesty is paving the way for the introduction of Popery." Subsequently, at dinner the King's manner showed how much he resented this liberty of speech, for he addressed his conversation,

which ran on the subject of passive obedience, almost entirely to the Dean, who was standing behind his chair.

In August 1688 Churchill wrote to the Prince of Orange :—" If you think there is anything else that I ought to do, you have but to command me, and I will pay an entire obedience to it, being resolved to die in that religion that it has pleased God to give you both the will and the power to protect."

There is no reason for doubting Churchill's sincerity. It is a matter of everyday observation that the most pious people are frequently the most uncharitable, and that men of sincere religious principles do not permit them to affect inconveniently the practical affairs of life. Churchill shrank with detestation from abjuring his religion, and was even prepared to make some sacrifices for it, but it could not imbue him with the most elementary sense of honour. He owed his initial promotion to the mistress of James, and the nucleus of his fortune to the bounty of one of the most shameless women of her age. He now treacherously deserted the King to whose favours he was indebted for the brilliant position reared on these foundations. It was on the occasion of Churchill's desertion at Salisbury to join the army of the Prince of Orange that the unfortunate James exclaimed, "Oh, if my enemies only had cursed me, I could have borne it." These words, quoted in Clarke's *Life*, are underlined in the original by the Pretender. Archdeacon Coxe, the biographer of Churchill, indignantly denies, however,

the story quoted by earlier writers, that on the occasion of his desertion, Churchill proposed to seize James and carry him to the Prince of Orange, and that he was only prevented by the attack of bleeding at the nose, from which the unfortunate King suffered for several days. Churchill left a letter for his master assuring him that his desertion could proceed from nothing but the "inviolable dictates of my conscience, and a necessary concern for my religion, which no good man can oppose." Macaulay suggests that Churchill was quick-witted enough to perceive that if James's schemes succeeded, Protestants would have small chance of employment or aggrandisement in a reconstituted Catholic State.

Churchill's services at the Revolution were rewarded by the Earldom of Marlborough, he was made a Privy Councillor and a Lord of the Bedchamber, and was employed in the Irish campaign. "I know no man who has served so few campaigns, equally fit for command," said the King to him on his return. He was one of Mary's Council of Nine, though she neither liked nor trusted him. On his departure for Kinsale she wrote to William :—"This morning Lord Marlborough went away ; as little reason as I have to care for his wife, yet I must pity her condition, having lain in but eight days ; and I have great compassion for wives when their husbands go to fight."

In the early part of 1691, Marlborough opened communication with St Germain's through the intermediary Bulkeley. The Jacobite agent, meeting

Godolphin with Marlborough one day in the Park, and encouraged by his recent success with Godolphin, determined to approach Marlborough. Finding them, in his own words, "mighty glad to see him," Bulkeley invited them both to dine at his lodgings—where he resolved to sound Marlborough. But Marlborough spared him the pains, and took the initiative himself by sending for another Jacobite, Colonel Sackville,<sup>1</sup> "who, waiting on him (though with some reluctance), was hugely surprised to find him in appearance the greatest penitent imaginable. He begged of him to go to the King and acquaint him with his sincere repentance, or to intercede for mercy, that he was ready to redeem his apostasy with the hazard of his utter ruine, his crimes appearing so horrid to him that he could neither eat nor sleep but in continual anguish, and a great deal to that purpose." Colonel Sackville hastened to discuss this with his fellow-Jacobites, for the return of so important a prodigal seemed too good to be true; but they, "conceiving that a person of so great credit with the army, and so considerable a post in the Council, would be of mighty consequence in the King's affairs," encouraged him to pursue this incredible piece of good fortune, but advised him to walk warily and "to search him to the quick, and try whether by informing them readily of what he knew, they might depend upon his sincerity as to what he pretended."

To this intent Sackville and another Jacobite agent Lloyd had several meetings with Marlborough, who,

<sup>1</sup> Clarke's *Life of James II.*

“without the least hesitation gave them both an account of all the forces, preparations, and designs both in England, Scotland, and Ireland . . . he gave likewise an account of the fleet, and, in fine, of whatever was intended by sea and land.” He promised to bring over the English troops that were in Flanders if King James required it ; “and upon the whole he appeared the most sollicitous imaginable for the King’s interest, and the most penitent man upon earth for his own fault, sayed a thousand things to express the horror he *had of his vilanies to ye best of Kings, and yt would be impossible for him to be at rest till he*<sup>1</sup> had in some measure made an attonement.” Marlborough’s repentance appeared so genuine that Lloyd sped to St Germain’s to acquaint James with what had taken place. Marlborough hastened to follow up these interviews by letters. He was ready, so he protested, to “abandon wife, children, and country” ; but when asked to give an earnest of his promises by bringing over the English troops in Flanders, he excused himself, though he presently demanded a written pardon from James, which was granted. Coxe attempts to excuse his perfidy on the ground that the Jacobite agents exaggerated his promises in reporting to James, and that in any case the promises themselves were “merely illusory and intended to secure an indemnity in case of a counter-revolution.” There may be some truth in the first suggestion, but the second, far from extenuating his treason, merely aggravates it.

<sup>1</sup> Underlined by the Pretender.

Marlborough's intercourse with St Germain's was not at first suspected by William, who took him abroad in May 1691. He returned in October of the same year, and three months later, on 10th January 1692, Marlborough was dismissed from all his offices. Several circumstances combined to induce William to take this step. The family quarrels which were alleged at the time to be its cause were a very small factor in his motives, though the mischievous influence of both the Marlboroughs over the Princess of Denmark (Anne) could not be a matter of indifference to him. But when Marlborough had excused himself from bringing over the troops from Flanders, he had proposed instead to endeavour to get all foreigners sent out of the kingdom. The Dutch were at this time very unpopular, and Marlborough undertook, with considerable prospect of success, to move an address in the House of Lords that all foreigners might be dismissed the King's and Queen's service. The moment was a crucial one for William. If such an address were carried, he was faced with the awkward alternatives of fighting Parliament, or of deserting all his best friends; moreover, Marlborough could count on the support of the army, with whom his military success and ingratiating manners had won him popularity; and he could also count on their jealousy of the Dutch.

But the Jacobites could not bring themselves to confide in Marlborough's sincerity. It was more probable, they argued, that if he succeeded in ousting William, he would put his puppet Anne in his place,

than attempt to restore James II. We have already mentioned Elizabeth Villiers, the plain but brilliant woman who had in earlier days been the mistress of the Prince of Orange. Her family had now considerable influence. One of her sisters, Lady Fitzharding, was in the household of the Princess Anne; another had married the Earl of Portland. It is possible that Lady Fitzharding played the part of spy. Portland himself had no reason to love Marlborough, who spoke of him contemptuously in public as "a wooden fellow." At any rate the scheme was disclosed to Portland. He at once acquainted the King with it. The danger was so urgent that prompt and firm measures were taken. Marlborough was dismissed summarily from all his offices, and his appearance at court was forbidden. Even Burnet appeared not to know the secret history of Marlborough's dismissal, and attributed it to a quarrel between the Queen and the Princess Anne. "The Earl of Nottingham came to the Earl of Marlborough with a message from the King, telling him that he had no more use for his services, and therefore he demanded all his commissions. What drew so sudden and so harsh a message was not known, for he had been with the King that morning, and had parted from him in the ordinary manner. It seemed some letter was intercepted which gave suspicion: it is certain that he thought he was too little considered, and that he had on many occasions censured the King's conduct and reflected on the Dutch."

It was, indeed, not publicly known why Marlborough was dismissed ; but it is a curious and interesting fact that Burnet did really know, for his account of the incident as he originally wrote it, as it may be seen in his MS. at the British Museum, is remarkably different from that which subsequently appeared in print :—“ Marleburrough,” he wrote in September 1692, “ set himself to decry the King’s conduct, and to lessen him in all his discourses, and to possess the English with an aversion to the Dutch ” ; and further, “ The King said to myself upon it (Marlborough’s dismissal) that he had very good reason to believe that he had made his peace with King James and was engaged in a correspondence with France. It is certain he was doing all he could to set on a faction in the army and the nation against the Dutch.”<sup>1</sup> Further, King James in the clearest terms has described the situation in England, writing in November 1692 : “ My friends designed last year, to recal me by the Parliament. The plan was concerted, and Lord Churchill was to propose in Parliament to drive all strangers out of the Council and army, and even out of the kingdom. . . . They had . . . . already begun to execute their project, and had gained a considerable party, when some loyal subjects, who were indiscreet, believing that they served me, and imagining that what my Lord Churchill did was not on my account, but on account of the Princess of Denmark, had the

<sup>1</sup> Burnet probably excised the passage in the reign of Anne out of regard for the Queen’s predilection for Marlborough.

imprudence to discover the whole to Bentinck and thereby diverted the blow.”<sup>1</sup>

While the gossips of the town and the court were attributing one and another cause for Marlborough's dismissal, and censuring the King's action in the matter, the whole situation was still further complicated by the discovery of Young's plot. It was a moment of great danger. The French were preparing for a descent upon England, while William was in Holland, where he had gone early in March. James, encouraged by the exaggerated accounts of his agents, had continually urged Louis XIV. to invade England, a step that had been opposed by the war minister, Louvois. But Louvois was now dead, and the French King had at last collected an army on the coast of Normandy, while two fleets were assembled at Brest and Toulon. Russell, who was in command of the fleet, was disaffected, and sided with Marlborough—“almost upbraided the King on his behalf,” and “was so out of humour that it was doubtful if he would act against the French.”

While the country was in this unquiet state, a man of no character, called Young, another disciple of Oates, invented a bogus plot for the restoration of James, in which he implicated Marlborough among others, by a clever forgery of his signature. Marlborough was immediately sent to the Tower on a charge of high treason. But on 19th May 1692 took place the decisive victory of La Hogue, public

<sup>1</sup> Translated and published by Macpherson in his *Original Papers*.



WILLIAM BENTINCK, FIRST EARL OF PORTLAND.  
(From the portrait by Rigaud, in the possession of the Duke of Portland.)  
The portrait was painted during Bentinck's embassy to France.

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anxiety was relieved, Young's imposture was exposed, and he paid for it in the pillory, while Marlborough, though still in disgrace, was released on bail.

There is another point of particular interest with regard to the battle of La Hogue, in that the victory was in a measure due to the invincible propensity which James had of marring his own prospects. Shortly before the battle he had issued a Declaration. This monumental piece of indiscretion contained no assurance that he would resign his claim to the Dispensing Power ; no assertion of an intention to preserve the English Constitution ; no promise of amnesty for the past. On the contrary, it was a threat of vengeance on those who had in any way served the existing Government. He did, indeed, promise to send back the French troops, who were to effect his restoration, so soon as the country was peaceably settled ; but it was quickly noticed that nothing was said about the Irish Papist regiments. After a long preamble, James proceeded with his list of those vowed to vengeance. By an artful stroke the list of exceptions to his pardon was made to include Marlborough, in order to divert suspicion from him. It included besides all those who had had any part in the condemnation of Jacobites, even jurymen or gaolers ; all who had communicated any intelligence of the councils at St Germain's ; it included even the crowd of ignorant fishermen who had handled the King roughly on his flight to Feversham. All magistrates were ordered to proclaim the Declaration,

all keepers of prisons were immediately to set at liberty any Jacobite prisoners or be excluded from any benefit of pardon. The Jacobites, on the most moderate computation, admitted that at least five hundred persons would be hanged. . . . Mary, with characteristic shrewdness, had the Declaration printed with elucidatory comments, and circulated it!

In James's Life the general dissatisfaction is described:—"They thought his Majesty's resentment descended too low to except the Feversham mob; that five hundred men were excluded, and no man really pardoned, except he should merit it by some service; and then the pardons being to pass the Seals, looked as if it were to bring money into the pocket of some favourite. . . ." No one was more dissatisfied with the Declaration than Admiral Russell. He told Lloyd that "the people were inclined enough to be of his side again, if his Majesty took a right way to make them so; but that if he would reign a Catholic King over a Protestant people, he must forget all past demeanours, and grant a general pardon, and that then he would contribute what he could to his restoration." He added that "if he met the French fleet he would fight it, even though the King himself was on board."

At the same time Russell's tardy resolution was strengthened by a letter from the Queen expressing her confidence in the patriotism of her fleet, with orders to her admiral to read it to his captains. At the decisive moment Russell showed no signs of

wavering. The French fleet was destroyed piecemeal. The tension of anxiety in England was once more relieved. Marlborough's scheme had failed, and he was no longer a source of danger ; he was released, but not pardoned.

Once again in 1694 he was guilty of treacherously scheming the destruction of his only military rival, Talmash, at Brest, in the hope of thus paving the way for his own reinstatement. But the death of the Queen in the same year, and the reconciliation which followed between Anne and the King, put Marlborough in a different position. The succession of the Princess of Denmark was now assured ; there was no longer any question of divided interest. Marlborough served the King thenceforward to the end of his reign ; and though he was to be once again implicated in Fenwick's plot, he was so far trusted and honoured that William appointed him one of the governors of the little Duke of Gloucester, Anne's one surviving child, a promising boy, whose premature death seated the Hanoverians upon the English throne.

## CHAPTER XI

### ANNE AND LADY MARLBOROUGH

PROBABLY few things are more irritating to the normal man than the family quarrels of his feminine relations. Tiresome and paltry as they seem to him, he cannot escape being more or less involved in them. William III. was an abnormal man, as far below the average in physique as he was above it in the height of his genius and the depth of his affections; and in his case the quarrels of his wife and sister-in-law had the additional provocation of involving State matters of the utmost moment. Mary had come over to England full of goodwill to her sister. Their intercourse had been all that was friendly, and Anne was the one person in the country on whose kindness and loyalty the lonely Queen might have reasonably counted. She was "extream glad to see her" on her first arrival; but Anne, far from giving her sister the moral support for which she hoped, very soon began to make difficulties. The pages of Mary's diary have revealed her mortification and disappointment at her sister's defection, and her indignant annoyance at Anne's tactics

about the question of the settlement of her income ; but the quarrel that took place over the question of Marlborough's dismissal was far more serious, and ended only with Mary's life.

Anne was one of those people, often met with in private life, where they are comparatively harmless, who cannot stand alone or act on their own initiative, but who are always under the influence of a will stronger than their own. She was neither intelligent, nor well-educated, nor refined ; but, married to a good-natured, sensible man, she might have found an outlet for her undoubtedly warm and tenacious affections, and acquiesced in his authority.

Court gossip said that Anne's affections were given to John Sheffield, Lord Mulgrave, who in 1703 was made Duke of Buckinghamshire.<sup>1</sup> His memory survives in Buckingham Palace : "The House that Jack Built," the wits of the day called it. John Sheffield was neither attractive in manners nor appearance, if one may trust to contemporary ballads. He was nicknamed "Lord All-Pride," and sometimes "Haughty"; and the latter name and the gossip about Princess Anne survive in a contemporary street song which runs :—

"For 'tis found out that naughty  
Nan is mad to marry Haughty."

Prince George of Denmark, whom she did marry, was a nonentity. Few men in so prominent a position can have left less impression on their contemporaries,

<sup>1</sup> His title was "Duke of the County of Buckingham."

or a smaller mark upon history ; he deserves chiefly to be remembered for his uncle's epigram. "I have tried Prince George drunk, and I have tried him sober," said Charles II.; "and, drunk or sober, there is nothing in him." In William's reign he practically only appears when he wants something that it is inexpedient he should have, and sulks because he does not get it. Only once does this ineffective person appear to have exercised any influence, and then, as it were, by the weight of inertia. The Jesuit Father Petre, who played so important a part in James's reign, writing to a friend, says of George of Denmark: "He is a Prince with whom I cannot discourse about religion. Luther was never more earnest than this Prince. . . . He has naturally an aversion to our society, and this antipathy does much obstruct the progress of our affair." The last two words, of course, allude to the introduction of popery, so that Prince George was quite unconsciously of some use to the country of his adoption. Macky, including his portrait among that of his contemporaries, says: "He is very fat, loves news, his bottle, and the Queen, by whom he hath had many children, but none alive. He hath neither many friends nor enemies in England. On the Queen's accession to the throne he was towards fifty years old."

With such a husband it was not surprising that poor, stupid, affectionate Anne should have turned for congenial intercourse and intimacy to her early companion Sarah Jennings, who was now Lady Marlborough.

Sarah Jennings had been introduced into the house-



*Emery Walker.*

GEORGE, PRINCE OF DENMARK, HUSBAND OF PRINCESS ANNE.

*(From a portrait in the National Portrait Gallery.)*

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hold of the Duchess of York at twelve years of age, and became the playmate of the Princess Anne. She was made a Lady of the Bedchamber at Anne's "own earnest-request," on the retirement of Lady Clarendon, "who talked like a scholar, but looked like a mad-woman," as Lady Marlborough charitably observes in her defence of herself.<sup>1</sup> She adds that the Princess "distinguished me by so high a place in her favour as perhaps no other person ever arrived at a higher with Queen or Princess, and if from hence I may draw any glory, it is, that I both obtained and held this place without the assistance of flattery, a charm which in truth her inclination for me, together with my unwearied application to serve and amuse her, rendered needless."

Anne had none of the dignity of her position. "A friend was what she most courted. . . . She was fond even of that equality which she thought belonged to friendship." Hence the nicknames of Morley and Freeman, which the two employed in their correspondence. The Duchess says that the quarrel of the two sisters was merely the climax of a series of slights put upon the Princess. It was, she says, "impossible that they should be very agreeable companions to each other; because Queen Mary grew weary of anybody who would not talk a great deal; and the Princess was 'so silent that she rarely spoke more than was necessary to answer a question.'" And she adds: "Whatever good qualities Queen Mary had to make her popular, it is too evident by many instances that she wanted bowels."

<sup>1</sup> "Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough."

There had not been wanting difficulties with Prince George, who, like other stupid people, stood much on his dignity, and was quick to take umbrage. He had resented William's refusal of his permission for him to go to sea; and the unfortunate substitution of Portland for himself in William's coach on the journey to Ireland was a deep ground of offence. Nevertheless, the sisters had lived amicably, at least in public, till "the King was pleased (without publicly assigning any particular reason) to remove my Lord Marlborough from all his employments." In all quarrels there are faults on both sides—of judgment at least, if not of temper. What actually took place appears to have been that on 9th January 1692 what Marlborough's biographer calls an "indecorous altercation" arose between the two sisters.<sup>1</sup> It was on the next day that Marlborough was dismissed. It is impossible that his wife could have been ignorant of the cause of his dismissal, and Mary certainly acquainted Anne with it. The Countess accounts for it by saying that "Lord Portland had ever a great prejudice to my Lord Marlborough, and that my Lady Orkney [then Mrs Villiers, the King's mistress], though I had never done her any injury, except not making court to her, was my implacable enemy." The Countess retained her post, and she and her husband continued to reside at Whitehall for three weeks after his disgrace. The Queen ignored the bad taste of her sister in allowing this; and Lady Marlborough, emboldened thereby,

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay more politely speaks of it as a "painful explanation."

had the effrontery to accompany the Princess to court. Mary, though stung to the quick by the insult, forbore to take immediate action out of consideration for her sister's delicate condition. With the dignity natural to her, she avoided a scene. The next morning, however, she wrote Anne a letter of remonstrance :—

“ KENSINGTON, *Friday, Feb. 5th.*

“ Never was anybody suffered to live at court in my Lord Marlborough's circumstances. I need *not repeat the cause* he has given the King to do what he has done, nor his unwillingness at all times to proceed to such extremities . . . it is very unfit Lady Marlborough should stay with you, since that gives her husband so just a pretence of being where he ought not. . . . I have all the reason imaginable to look upon your bringing her as the strangest thing that ever was done.”

She goes on to explain that she only forbore taking immediate action because of her sister's delicate condition, and continues :—

“ It was very unkind in a sister ; would have been very uncivil in an equal.”

She expresses regret for being obliged to insist on Lady Marlborough's dismissal, and concludes with many expressions of affection :—

“ I have all the real kindness imaginable for you. . . . I do love you as a sister, and nothing but yourself can make me do otherwise . . . it shall never be my fault if we do not live kindly together.

Nor will I ever be other by choice but your truly loving and affectionate sister,  
M. R."

"No one, I think," says Lady Marlborough ingenuously, "can be so foolish as to imagine the Queen's dislike to me was only on account of my being the wife of Lord Marlborough, who happened then to be in disgrace with the King." The real cause was the "court's dislike that anyone should have so much interest with the Princess as I had." She adds that it was Godolphin who advised her to present herself at court.

Anne was far from any intention of complying with her sister's request. It is noticeable that in her reply she does not seek to justify Marlborough, but only dwells on her attachment to his wife. Mary's command, she exclaims, "is the greatest mortification in the world to me . . . and I must as freely own that I think this proceeding can be for no other intent than to give me a very sensible mortification, so there is no misery that I cannot readily resolve to suffer rather than the thought of parting with her." This letter, Anne requested her uncle, Lawrence Hyde, Lord Rochester, to take to the Queen; but he viewed with suspicion the absolute influence exercised over Anne by the Countess and her husband, and declined to intercede for them. A messenger was therefore sent with the letter to the Queen. She replied by commissioning the Lord Chamberlain, Dorset, to command Lady Marlborough to leave the palace. Thereupon the Prince and Princess, and their household, also removed from Whitehall to Sion House at Isleworth, on the

Thames, then the property of the Duke of Somerset, who placed it at their disposal.

In her "Conduct" Lady Marlborough pretends that the cause of her husband's disgrace, to which Mary alludes in her letter, was the discovery of Young's plot, forgetting that this did not take place till some months later than his dismissal.

Anne continued obdurate, and every mark of the Royal displeasure was shown her : she was deprived of her guard of honour ; the foreign ministers no longer attended on her ; the Queen's ladies were not permitted to wait upon her ; for "she would see nobody that went to her sister." The incumbent of St James's Church, where the Princess attended service, was prohibited from paying the usual attentions of causing his text to be put in her place, and bowing to her from his pulpit.

All this, which must be accepted with reservation, is related by Lady Marlborough. She has at least one piece of circumstantial evidence to support her. A letter was sent to the Mayor of Bath, signed by Nottingham, prohibiting him from paying Royal honours to the Princess when she visited the city. He was, says Lady Marlborough contemptuously, "a tallow-chandler" :—

"SIR,—The Queen has been informed that yourself and your brethren have attended the Princess with the same respect and ceremony that have been usually paid to the Royal family. Perhaps you may not have heard what occasion her Majesty has had to be dis-

pleased with the Princess, and therefore I am commanded to acquaint you, that you are not for the future to pay her Highness any such respect or ceremony, without leave from her Majesty, who does not doubt of receiving from you and your brethren, this public mark of your duty.—Your most humble servant,  
NOTTINGHAM.”

If even a part of this is true, it was a paltry revenge for Anne's stupid and obstinate insubordination, and it had a most unfortunate effect, for all this time no one knew why the Earl had been dismissed. William and Portland knew ; James and his agents knew ; but the court and the general public knew nothing. The action of the King and Queen had the worst possible aspect. The gossips of the day must have had a rich harvest. Burnet knew, but that genial and garrulous raconteur must have kept his own counsel. Evelyn, generally well informed and associating with people who were in a position to give him intelligence, wrote in his diary on 24th January :—

“Lord Marlborough, Lieutenant General of the King's army in England, Gentleman of the Bed-chamber, etc., dismiss'd from all his charges, military and other, for his excessive taking of bribes, coveteousness and extortion on all occasions from his inferior officers. Note this was the Lord who was entirely advanc'd by K. James, and was the first who betrayed and forsook his master.”

Even the Dutch ministers could only report that various causes were assigned for his dismissal. He





*Emery Walker.*

ANNE, PRINCESS OF DENMARK, AND THE LITTLE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER.

*(From a portrait in the National Portrait Gallery.)*

had allowed an important military secret to leak out ; he had used unbecoming terms in talking of the King and Queen ; he had made mischief between the Princess of Denmark and her sister ; he had been in correspondence with St Germain's.

In her intercourse with Lady Marlborough, Anne was accustomed to use stupidly abusive terms in speaking of William, such as "the monster," and "Caliban," and it was well known that the Marlboroughs promoted ill-feeling in the Royal family. Burnet has left a confused but significant sentence to that effect (Harl. MS., 6584). "Marlborough did all he could," he says, "to lessen the King, as well as his wife, who was so absolute a favourite with the Princess, that she seemed to be ye mistress of her whole heart and thoughts ; were alienating her both from the King and Queen." The Jacobites hoped to gain some advantage from these dissensions. "The enemies of the Government tried what could be made of this to create distractions among us, but the Princess gave no encouragement to them. So that this misunderstanding had no other effect but that it gave enemies much ill-natured joy, and a secret spiteful diversion."

There was another ground of offence that the King and Queen had against Anne, though they were probably ignorant of it. Marlborough, having provided for all possible contingencies, as he believed, in his own case, thought it advisable that Anne also should make her peace with her father. She had

therefore "writ to the King [James] a most penitential and dutiful letter ; which considering the great power my Lord and Lady Churchill had with her, was a more than ordinary mark of that Lord's sincerity in what he professed." In this letter Anne expresses herself "very desirous of some safe opportunity to make you a sincere and humble offer of my duty and submission to you, and to beg you will be assured that I am both truly concerned for the misfortune of your condition, and sensible, as I ought to be, of my own unhappiness as to what you may think I have contributed to it ; if wishes could recall what is past, I had long since redeemed my fault."<sup>1</sup> There was much more to the same effect ; but this letter, attributed to Anne in James II.'s memoirs, is much in advance of her usual epistolary style.

Anne wrote to Lady Marlborough on Marlborough's arrest :—

"I hear Lord Marlborough is sent to the Tower ; and though I am certain they have nothing against him, and expected by your letter it would be so, yet I was struck when I was told of it ; for methinks it is a dismal thing to have one's friends sent to that place. I have a thousand melancholy thoughts, and cannot help fearing they should hinder you from coming to me, though how they can do that, without making you a prisoner, I cannot imagine. I am just told by pretty good hands, that as soon as the wind turns westerly, there will be a guard set upon the Prince and me. If you hear there is any such thing designed,

<sup>1</sup> Clarke's *Life of James II.*, 476.

and that it is easy to you, pray let me see you before the wind changes ; for afterwards, one does not know whether they will let us have an opportunity of speaking to one another. But let them do what they please, nothing shall ever vex me, so I can have the satisfaction of seeing dear Mrs Freeman ; and I swear I would live on bread and water between four walls with her, without repining ; for as long as you continue kind, nothing can ever be a real mortification to your faithful Mrs Morley, who wishes she may never enjoy a moment's happiness in this world or the next, if ever she prove false to you." <sup>1</sup>

No such steps were ever taken. It is not impossible that if Anne's clandestine correspondence with her father were known, they may have been discussed.

When Marlborough was sent to the Tower, Anne was for a short time separated from his wife, and wrote to her from Sion House more in the tone of a humble suppliant craving an audience than a Princess addressing a Lady of the Bedchamber :—

“And dear Mrs Freeman [you ?] don't say when I can see you, if I come to town ; therefore I ask what day will be most convenient to you ? For though all days are alike to me, I should be glad if you would name one. I confess I long to see you, but am not so unreasonable to desire that satisfaction till it is easy to you.”

In another note after Lady Marlborough had offered to retire, the Princess says : “I really long to know how my dear Mrs Freeman got home ; and now

<sup>1</sup> Coxe's *Marlborough*.

I have this opportunity of writing, she must give me leave to tell her, if she should ever be so cruel to leave her faithful Mrs Morley, she will rob her of the joy of her life ; for if that day should come I should never enjoy another happy minute ; and I swear to you I would shut myself up and never see a creature." Again, writing to her of her husband's imprisonment, Anne says tenderly : "Have a care of your dear self and give as little way to melancholy thoughts as you can . . . my heart is always with you ; and if wishes signified anything, you would have no uneasy minute."

Years afterwards, when Lady Marlborough's imperious temper had worn out Anne's patience and she had been supplanted, the discarded favourite wrote a description of her former friend's character : "Queen Anne had a person and appearance not at all ungraceful till she grew exceeding gross and corpulent. There was something of majesty in her look, but mixed with a sullen and constant frown, that plainly betrayed a gloominess of soul, and a cloudiness of disposition within. She seemed to inherit a good deal of her father's moroseness, which naturally produced in her the same sort of stubborn positiveness in many cases, both ordinary and extraordinary, as well as the same sort of bigotry in religion." Of her remarkable memory Lady Marlborough says : "She chose to retain in it very little besides ceremonies and customs of courts, and such like insignificant trifles ; so that her conversation, which otherwise might have been enlivened by so great a memory, was only made the more empty

and trifling by its chiefly turning upon fashion and rules of precedence, or observations upon the weather.

“Her letters [oh, faithless friend!] were very indifferent both in sense and spelling, unless that they were generally enlivened with a few passionate expressions, sometimes pretty enough, but repeated over and over again without the mixture of anything either of diversion or instruction.” Under the influence of anger, the Countess says, Anne “would descend to the lowest and most shocking form of contradiction.”

“Her friendships were flames of extravagant passion, ending in indifference or aversion. Her love to the Prince seemed in the eye of the world to be prodigiously great; and great as was the passion of her grief, her stomach was greater; for that very day he died, she eat three large hearty meals, so that one would think that as other person’s grief takes away their appetites, her appetite took away her grief. . . . Even to such as she professed to love, her presents were very few, and generally very insignificant, such as fruit, venison or the like.”

In another place the Duchess writes of her former mistress: “She was extremely well-bred, and treated her chief ladies and servants as if they had been her equals, and she never refused to give charity when there was the least reason for anyone to ask it.”

Lady Marlborough’s own character is described to herself in a letter from her friend Dr Hare. He expresses the most affectionate esteem for her “fine understanding and good sense,” but he continues:

“The more I esteem and admire what is excellent in your Grace, the more concerned I am to see any blemishes in so great a character. Ill-grounded suspicions, violent passions, and a boundless liberty of expressing resentments of persons without distinction from the Prince downwards, and that in the most public manner and before servants, are certainly blemishes.” This outspoken, frank remonstrance gives as true a portrait of the Duchess of Marlborough as the lapse of two centuries can afford. Coarse and indiscreet invective was one of her salient characteristics ; but she was at the same time not incapable of strong though overbearing affection, and of acts of kindness and generosity. A less indulgent picture has been left by another contemporary :—

“CHARACTER OF A CERTAIN GREAT DUCHESS  
LATELY DECEASED.

Who with herself or others from her birth,  
Finds all her life one warfare upon earth.

Full sixty years the world has been her trade,  
The wisest fool that time has ever made.  
From loveless youth to unrespected age,  
No passion gratified except her rage.

Who breaks with her provokes revenge from Hell,  
But he's a bolder man who dares be well.  
Her ev'ry turn with violence pursued,  
Nor more a storm her hate, than gratitude.

Offend her, and she knows not to forgive ;  
Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live.”

## CHAPTER XII

### WILLIAM BENTINCK EARL OF PORTLAND

IT is difficult, says William, in one of his letters to Bentinck, to reason at a distance ; and it is not easy in the twentieth century to find reasons for the contradictory impressions which William Bentinck, the Earl of Portland, made on the men of his time. It is hardly more easy to explain reasonably his attitude towards William, his benefactor and his oldest and greatest friend, during the later years of the life of both of them. Perhaps the secret of the explanation is racial. Bentinck was a Dutchman ; and there is hardly any nation which Englishmen find harder to understand than the Dutch. That is perhaps because we suppose them to be near us in race, and are therefore less prepared to find in them a difference of disposition than we should be in the case of the French—though there is probably more racial similarity between a Norman and a Londoner than between a West-countryman and a Hollander. The essential difference in disposition between Dutch and English was hardly realised

in England even in the events which led to the Boer War.

Bentinck had many of the qualities of those vigorous opponents of England who fought us in South Africa. He was a good soldier and a determined diplomatist. Hard-fisted and hard-headed, he was adroit in spite of an appearance of being slow both in thought and action ; and he was steadfast to the point of obstinacy. There was a charming side to him, but it became apparent only in congenial circumstances and company. England was not congenial to him either in its people or in the circumstances of its politics ; to those whom he had neither the intention nor the need to please he was, as Marlborough said of him, "a wooden fellow." But the Duc de St Simon, whom nobody will accuse of being a partial critic of his contemporaries, says of Bentinck's bearing at the court of Louis XIV. that his politeness, his courtly and gallant manners, charmed everybody and made him universally popular. No ambassador is a hero to his own secretary, and Matthew Prior, who accompanied Bentinck on the embassy to Paris, wonders to think with how little learning a man such as Bentinck might shine in courts, lead armies, negotiate treaties, obtain a coronet and garter, and leave a fortune of half a million. Matthew Prior's wonderment sums up some phases of Bentinck's career very well. He did shine at the court of the Roi Soleil ; he was responsible directly or indirectly for more than one historical treaty, and he did accumulate honours and wealth.

In the last circumstance reside some of the reasons why he was disliked in England. In the two revolutions which had taken place within a generation many estates and much wealth had changed hands, many, who had been rich and honoured, were now poor or exiled or both; and though it could not be said of Bentinck, as of others, that he had grown fat on the adaptability of his principles and adherence, yet he was one of those who had gained money and rank. He was thought of as a hungry Dutchman who had come to England to be fed and had betrayed a ravenous appetite. If he was disliked in the country and was no favourite among his fellow-courtiers, he was detested by the House of Commons. He was suspected, not without reason, of being the inspiration of the King's policy whenever it came into conflict with the Commons' will; and if he was not its inspiration, he certainly was its obstinate supporter. By way of reprisal the Commons attacked him at each convenient opportunity, and their love for him grew less at each unsuccessful engagement.

In his private character most that we know of him testifies to his fidelity. To his lifelong friend William he was attached by bonds which transcended those of interest, and no prince ever had a more faithful servant, or one whom he could trust more implicitly. To those who have examined Bentinck's career without pausing to inquire into his character, his devotion to William may have appeared to be marred by unreason, and, while it prospered under the stimulus of reward,

to have withered under the breath of jealousy. But that we believe to be a view of Bentinck's character which will not survive examination. He never ceased to serve William even when the "glad confident morning" of their intercourse was at an end; and when Bentinck retired from court he did so against William's urgent entreaty and against his own inclination. We know him to have been an honest man; in his attitude at the time of his retirement we believe his reasons to have been mistaken and his judgment wholly at fault; but it was obstinacy—let us say obstinacy of principle—which led him into mistake. In the course of our narrative of his career, we believe it to be possible to show, by letters hitherto unpublished, that history has never done justice to his character or to the strength of his principles.

Bentinck's first glimpse of England was obtained while he was quite a young man. This was in 1670, when in his capacity as Gentleman of the Bedchamber he accompanied the Prince of Orange to England to secure the sums owing to William from Charles II. and his brother James. The family pedigree gives the date of his birth as 20th July 1649: so that at this time he was twenty-one years of age. His family was a noble one, and the influence of his father, Henry Bentinck of Diepenheim in Overysse, and of his uncle, a general officer in the service of the States of Holland, had sufficed to attach him to the household of the Prince of Orange as a page of honour, a post which was exchanged for that of Gentle-

man of the Bedchamber. It is more than likely that the seeds of the lifelong friendship between William and Bentinck had taken firm root at the period of the first English visit. The first letter of the correspondence between them, which is preserved by the Dukes of Portland in the archives at Welbeck Abbey, is dated two years earlier. It was a message from William condoling with Bentinck on the death of his father. It runs :—

“DE LA HAYE,

“le 13<sup>e</sup> d’Aoust 1668.

“C’est avec beaucoup de deplaisir que j’ay appris par la lettre que vous m’avez escrit, la malleureuse mort de Monsieur vostre Pere, je vous puis assurer avec verite qu’il n’y a personne qui prant tant de part a l’affliction que vostre maison en a receu que moy et principalement de vous, car je suis tellement de vos amis que tout ce qui vous arrive je le prans comme si cela arrivoit a moymesme : je schercherai tous les occasions et lieux pour vous le temoigner par effect et combien je suis vostre tres affectione amy.

“G. H. PRINCE D’ORANGE.”

“Car je suis tellement de vos amis que tout ce qui vous arrive je le prans comme si cela arrivoit a moymesme”—“all that befalls you is as if it befell myself”—in that sentence is summed up the true affection of these strong, self-contained men ; and over and over again in the correspondence between them these phrases of deepest trust and affection recur, expressed with a winning frankness when William writes, more stiffly but not less sincerely in Bentinck’s letters. The

letters are written in old French, the spelling irregular, the punctuation usually absent, the writing, in William's case, spidery, but quickly legible when once the eye becomes used to it.

The war between the United Provinces and France (seconded by England) began two years after the first visit to England; and the war was still in progress when William fell ill of small-pox at the Hague. Sir William Temple, who was then at the Hague, records that Bentinck nursed the Prince;<sup>1</sup> and his first-hand evidence completes the impression of the close friendship between the two young men. "I cannot here forbear," writes Sir William, "to give Monsieur Bentinck the character due to him, of the best servant I have ever known in Prince's or private family. He tended his Master during the whole course of the Disease, both Night and Day; nothing he took was given him, nor he ever removed in his Bed, by any other hand; and the Prince told me that whether he slept or not he could not tell, but in sixteen days and nights he never called once that he was not answered by Monsieur Bentinck, as if he had been awake. The first time the Prince was well enough to have his head dressed and combed, Monsieur Bentinck, as soon as it was done, begged of his Master to give him leave to go home, for he was able to hold up no longer. He did so, and fell immediately sick of the same Disease, and in great Extremity; but recovered just soon enough to attend his

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Temple, *Memoirs*, 1672-1679.

Master into the Field, where he was ever next his Person.”

The war<sup>1</sup> with the United Provinces lasted till 1678 ; but in June 1677, peace conferences were being held at Nymwegen, and William sent Bentinck on his first individual mission to England, to discuss the terms of peace between Holland and France. The marriage between William and Mary was followed by the conclusion of peace a few months later, and Bentinck did not again visit England till 1683, when he was sent to offer congratulations on the conclusion of the Rye House Plot. In these years the letters which are preserved at Welbeck relate almost exclusively to domestic affairs ; but they express none the less clearly the growth of an almost passionate attachment. In one of them, dated 5th August 1679, written to convey to Bentinck William's concern at the illness of his wife and the hope that Madame Bentinck may soon recover from her fever : “It is impossible to express to you with what grief I quitted you this morning. . . . If ever I have felt that I loved you it is to-day : I conjure you to return as soon as your wife is out of danger.” And again (3rd March 1681), in writing to congratulate Bentinck on the birth of his son, “I wish you joy at the birth of your son [William], who I hope will live long enough to become as honest a man as you are. And if I have children I hope that they will love each other as we do.”

In 1685 the correspondence assumes, or rather con-

<sup>1</sup> England had made peace with Holland in 1674.

tains matter of, a more political character. Bentinck had been sent over by William to offer James assistance in suppressing the Monmouth rebellion; and the ambassador was not very warmly received, though William's private letters to him leave no doubt of the sincerity of his professions.

James acknowledged William's offer formally: but he was not eager to accept it. William writes to Bentinck, 14th July 1685, from Honslaerdyck:—

*(Translation)*

“I have to answer your two letters. . . . I am pleased to learn that the king has received you so well, and that he is satisfied with the offers you have made him from me, as he testifies in a letter which I received yesterday. . . . I hope soon to hear of the defeat of the rebels, but the fewness of my Lord Feversham's troops leaves room for disquiet, as I cannot imagine that Monmouth will be as easy to overcome as Argile. I much fear that they despise him too much, and that thus they may be deceived and not take proper measures, but people who reason at a distance as I do are still more easily deceived. . . . I am extremely impatient to see you again.”

Bentinck was shortly to engage in missions and negotiations with regard to England of a very different character. On his shoulders fell the task of conducting the delicate negotiations which William devised so as to secure the benevolent neutrality of the princes of Northern Germany; and especially with the heir-presumptive of the possessions of the House of

Orange, the young Elector Frederick III. of Brandenburg. We must pass over the details of these and similar negotiations, remarking them only in relation to the diplomatic ability which Bentinck showed in carrying out William's instructions. Not less arduous, less responsible, or less delicate were the long negotiations and preparations which had to be carried out with those Englishmen who sought to call the Prince of Orange to England, and with whom Bentinck acted as intermediary. These again are negotiations which we cannot do more than summarise ; but a summary of their character, and of the position of implicit trust and complete responsibility which Bentinck occupied, is afforded by a letter which William writes to him from Loo on 27th August 1688 :—

*(Translation)*

“At last Mr de Sidney has arrived here safe and sound, having been a long time at sea. . . . He came incognito. . . . On Sunday morning he will be at Lassum, the place I indicated to him, since he dare not go to La Haye for fear of being known. . . . You must go there with Mr Herbert on Sunday morning. . . . The most important thing which you must arrange together is the sending of someone to England.”

*(Second Letter, same date : Translation)*

“You must write to-morrow to the Prince of Waldec in answer to the memoir which he has sent me, as I have marked in the margin. . . . My Lord Danby's letter troubles me not a little, seeing that he is himself uncertain whether the enterprise should

be attempted before winter or deferred till spring. Besides, the affair now begins to make a noise everywhere, and I confess that the small advance we have made in our necessary preparations puts me in terrible anxiety and uncertainty, and that I have more than ever need of Divine guidance, not being sufficiently clear what course to take. I beg you to confer long and well with the Pensionary and M. De Dycvelt together, and read to them and explain the draft of my declaration or manifesto, which Mr de Sidney brought me, in which I see there is something to alter. You will see by the conclusion that I put myself entirely at the mercy of a Parliament, although I much fear that this cannot be otherwise, and yet to entrust one's fate to them is not a little hazardous. . . . I am greatly distressed to learn that your wife is not better. Assuredly, after yourself, no one is more feelingly grieved for her than I am."

This letter, like all the others, is written in French. One of them, written at this time, concludes, "Il est impossible de vous aimer plus tendrement que je fais tousjours et je vous aime tousjours de mesme." It is signed with the letter "G" for Guillaume, and nearly every letter that the Prince wrote to his friend preserves these two characteristics. In hardly any of them is some expression of affection absent; in nearly all of them is the little letter "G," a sign-manual of their understanding. Most of the letters of the earlier years bear some reference to the condition of health of Madame Bentinck, to whom Bentinck appears to have given as much devotion as his busy

life could spare, but who, poor lady, died shortly after her husband had sailed with his master for England.

A friendship founded on such a communion of mind and employment as this could not be altered by any alteration in William's interests or position. Rather was it strengthened. The Dutchmen understood one another. Bentinck comprehended, as no Englishman could, his master's policy, and the place which England occupied in it. Among men who were alien, Bentinck stood as one who by character, race, and interest was supremely to be trusted, and who in every action of his life gave assurance of his fidelity. Even had William found a parliament and a court eager to welcome him with open arms he must needs have kept Bentinck at his right hand ; and unless he had been as ungrateful as the Stuarts, he must have given him honour and position. A few days before the coronation of William and Mary, Bentinck became Baron Cirencester, Viscount Woodstock, and Earl of Portland. According to Burnet it would have pleased Bentinck better had his master been crowned King, with Mary as Queen-Consort merely ; and that is very likely true, though Bentinck was much too careful a diplomatist to commit himself. Clarendon has recorded the expression on his part of a quite different opinion ; for, visiting him after he had received the news of his wife's death,<sup>1</sup> he reports Monsieur Bentinck as saying, "Though there are not ill men wanting who give it out that the Prince aspires

<sup>1</sup> 4th December 1688.

at the Crown—which is the most wicked insinuation that could be invented ; that though three kingdoms would be a great temptation to other men, that the Prince preferred his word before all other things in the world.”

Gentleman of the Bedchamber, Privy Councillor, Groom of the Stole, and Keeper of the King's Gardens—a post that reflected Bentinck's taste for gardening and for the formal Dutch garden which became the fashion in England—the friend became a powerful favourite in the popular sense of the expression. As such he was accordingly hated ; but he had none of that pliability which is the usual attributes of favourites, and no minor court of flatterers, such as favourites generally gather about themselves, surrounded him. His only flatterer was the King ; and one can see Bentinck, irresponsive in outward appearance even to this delicate incense, going steadfastly about his business, too self-contained to be anything but indifferent to the opinions, the advances, or even the enmity of those about him.

These were perhaps the happiest years of his life. He was, with Halifax, Danby, and Nottingham, a member of that inner Cabinet Council which the King most relied on ; and he found employment as a soldier. But he was pre-eminently the King's ambassador, a diplomat who by training, character, and experience was fitted to act for the King, and was the repository of William's confidence, his intentions, and his policy. There is little doubt which was the master

mind : but Bentinck served a double purpose. There is an operation known to philosophers as clarifying one's mind by expressing it. William clarified his policy by communicating its design to his confidant ; and in that confidant found also a perfect instrument for carrying the designs into execution.

To Bentinck, who was employed alternately in diplomatic missions in Holland and Flanders, and as the King's confidential agent in England when William was himself in Holland in prosecution of his European policy, all the details of difficulties at home and abroad were communicated. William writes to him in Holland concerning the Bill of Indemnity :—

“ 28 Jan. 1690.  
7 Feb.

“ You will see my printed speech (proroguing Parliament). . . . It seems that the Toris are well pleased about it, but not the Wigs. They were all much surprised when I spoke to them, as I had communicated my design to one person only. I saw faces as long as an ell change colour twenty times while I was speaking. All these details when happily you return. So you see that now all depends on good success in Ireland. . . . I pity the poor Queen, who is in terrible straits.”

Parliament, as William remarks in several letters, strongly disapproved William's voyage to Ireland “on divers grounds” ; though it was an essential part of William's foreign policy that a vigorous campaign in Ireland should be carried to a successful conclusion.

It was vitally necessary to William in order to enable him to secure the best terms for negotiation of treaties abroad, notably that with the German princes. But the English Parliament had no disposition to see eye to eye with William in these matters. "One loses patience," he exclaims to Portland, "in seeing the slowness of these people in everything they do." And in a later letter :—

“ *28 Feb.*  
*10 March* 1690.

“Parties are so hot against one another that I fear I shall suffer as well as the public. I am in greater distress for money than can be imagined. I do not know how it will end. I shall not lose courage so long as I can keep it. I hope that the good God will help and not abandon me. I am ever in unspeakable impatience to see you again. . . . If it were possible, without abandoning everything here, I would embark to-morrow to see you in Holland, as I am convinced by the reasons you give for the necessity of my presence, . . . but it is impracticable. . . . After the campaign in Ireland, if it pleases the good God to allow me to return safe and sound, I will certainly cross to Holland.”

There are several letters in which William speaks despairingly of the strife of parties—which obscured national interests—and of the “changing humours” which prevailed in England. William used the expression seven years later : but in one respect the changeable humour of Parliament was constant. It continually hampered a king, who was a model of

thrift in his private life, for the money which was necessary for public expenditure. It is perhaps one of the greatest evidences of Portland's diplomatic ability that, when in 1696 the King was desperately pressed for money for his designs in Holland, Bentinck should have been able to screw £200,000 from the Bank of England. William was at the time in Holland. He wanted money for the payment of troops; and wanted it so badly that he was trying to persuade the gentlemen of Amsterdam to lend him a few thousand pounds. Bentinck was sent back to England to obtain it; but several negotiations had failed. "I am vexed to see that all the good hopes you have given of finding £200,000 have vanished," writes William gloomily on the 20th August from the camp of Attere. Five days later Bentinck writes triumphantly: "I am at last delighted that I am soon likely to return. The Directors of the Bank of England, after long debate and much opposition, have resolved to propose to the General Court to advance £200,000 to your Majesty."

That was in 1696, and we have omitted many things in Bentinck's career in the intervening years—his employment in negotiations abroad, his share in the Irish campaign, his voyage to Holland with the King, his conflict with Marlborough, and his continual conflicts with the House of Commons. When William refused in 1694 to assent to the Place Bill (which denied to persons holding place or office the right to sit in Parliament), so strong was the feeling against Portland,

who was known to be opposed to it, that a resolution was passed by the Commons denouncing all who had advised the Crown on this occasion to be public enemies. The dislike of the Commons was manifested again in the affairs of the East India Company. The chairman, Sir Thomas Cook, was known to be a thief. But a conditional indemnity was granted him because it was hoped that inquiry would disclose bribery of Bentinck. When the dealings of Cook were exposed, however, it was found that £50,000 had been offered to Bentinck by the Company, and that after it had been long pressed on him he indignantly rejected it. Portland's only feeling was that it was "disagreeable to be exposed to such an accusation here, where corruption is too general" (*Lexington Papers*, 81). It seems astonishing that the accusation should ever have been preferred, or the suspicion entertained, except on the ground of that general corruption of which Bentinck so scornfully speaks.

The years between 1694 and 1697 were occupied also by Bentinck in Flanders, alternately negotiating and fighting. It was in 1696 that Bentinck came home to raise the £200,000 of which we have already spoken; and in the next year both he and William were in England together.

Then came a bolt from the blue: one of those sudden, apparently inexplicable occurrences which, until the secrets of all hearts are opened, must make the writing of history an uncertain thing. Bentinck quarrelled with the King; and though nearly all historians have

assigned the date of the rupture to the year 1697, its first symptoms, as the letters at Welbeck make clear, occurred a year earlier. Among the Dutch gentlemen (we are quoting Macaulay) who had sailed with William from Helvoetsluys to Torbay was one named Arnold Joost Van Keppel. "Keppel had a sweet and obliging temper, winning manners, and a quick, though not a profound understanding." He had been a page in the King's household, and apparently had aspired to no higher post, till suddenly, in Burnet's words, "he was raised with the highest degree of favour that any person had ever attained about the King . . . . he was made Earl of Albemarle, and soon after Knight of the Garter"; and by a quick, unaccountable progress he seemed to have engrossed the royal favour so entirely that he "disposed of everything that was in the King's power."

Burnet exaggerates: but Albemarle's rise was amazingly sudden and rapid. In the Shrewsbury correspondence, Mr Montagu, writing to the Duke of Shrewsbury, February 1-11, 1697-98, speaks of a design of Lord Wharton and Mistress Villiers, the King's mistress, to advance Albemarle in favour; and it is also said<sup>1</sup> that Sunderland and Mistress Villiers had first conceived the design of employing Keppel to supplant Portland. Be that as it may, Bentinck's aversion with regard to Keppel was manifested earlier than 1697. In spite of the handsome testimonials which Macaulay gives the young favourite, Keppel had not a savoury reputation.

<sup>1</sup> Noble's *Continuation of Granger*.

The Duchess of Marlborough says he was notable chiefly for his impudence and his vices. She was spiteful and a scandalmonger, but she was not a prude ; and her observation is confirmed by the lampoons of the day. Burnet, whom we could expect to know, or to have heard, says nothing to Keppel's discredit ; but Burnet was misinformed as to the time and the occasion of Bentinck's difference with the King on the subject of Albemarle's position.

Albemarle had a reputation which was not improved by his rapid advancement. He became the object of scandalous insinuations which grew in number to keep pace with his progress. There can be no doubt that Bentinck was jealous of him. How should he not be ?—the old friend with a lifetime of services rendered, who was in danger of being supplanted, as he thought, by a young man who had never done anything ? It is probable that his jealousy coloured his dislike and turned it to a feeling for which hatred is not too strong a term. But if he was jealous of Albemarle, he was also jealous of the King's good name. He believed that the King's growing friendship with a man who was a loose liver was prejudicial to the King ; and he said so. He wrote in 1697 to implore the King to break with Albemarle : and he added that the King's good name was suffering not only in England, where the Jacobites seized every opportunity of calumny, but among the troops in Flanders.

William replied in letters where dignity struggles with affection. He was frankly amazed that Bentinck's



THOMAS, LORD WHARTON.

*(From the engraving of Kueller's portrait in the British Museum.)*



jealousy should have been inflamed to the point of taking up this unexpected attitude, but he reasons with him rather than reproaches him. Bentinck would not listen. He resigned the King's service. He quitted the court. William was in despair. He wrote to his old friend a letter such as few kings can ever have written to a subject. It is dated March 1697, and it is endorsed by Lord Portland "ayant quitté la Cour."

The King writes :—

"I can scarcely keep myself from coming to find you in your apartment after the cruel resolution which they tell me you have taken of leaving my service. It is no longer a question of reasoning with you on a subject in which you are very wrong ; it only remains to me to beg you by all the bonds which are dearest to you to change this disastrous resolution, and I assure you that if there remains with you the least friendship for me you will not refuse this prayer, hard as it may seem to you. I only beg that you will try it for a year longer, and that for the last time you will allow me to guide you during this period. And I assure myself that you will not repent it ; at least you shall then execute your present resolve without opposition from me. And it will be less prejudicial to your reputation as well as to your family. And if you will grant this prayer, which I make to you with all possible earnestness, I shall feel more obligation to you for it, if it is possible, than for all the good and faithful services which you have rendered me during the thirty-three years which you have been at my side. And although we are both unhappy enough, which you do not wish to believe, I

protest before the great God who knows all hearts that I love you as much as I have done all my life."

The letter is signed with the little "G," as well as with the kingly initials; and it has a postscript in which it begs Bentinck, if his heart is so hard as to refuse this prayer, to refrain from answering till the next morning, and then to send a message by Sunderland. "It would be too overwhelming to have so hard a refusal under your own hand."

Even this letter did not immediately move Bentinck: but the King, setting his dignity on one side, left nothing unsaid or undone to convince him of his folly. Finally, he referred the matter privately to the Prince de Vaudemont, telling Bentinck to consult with him "so that at least one man of spirit and good sense may reason with you and show you your error." This seems to have been effective, for in June 1697 William writes from the Camp de Promelle, in Flanders, that he cannot sufficiently express his joy at what the Prince de Vaudemont has told him—"that at last you have resolved to return to me."

Bentinck had agreed to stay for another year. He may have hoped that Albemarle's star would have sunk in that time. For his own part he became immersed in what was the most fruitful and important diplomatic work of his life, the informal negotiations with Boufflers, in which all the real work which preceded the Treaty of Ryswick was done, and the embassy to France. Lord Rosebery remarked some years ago, at the time of our dispute with the

Boers, that if the English and the Dutch statesmen could meet in a village inn remote from diplomatic forms and usages, the differences between them could be settled easily. That is what happened between a Dutchman and Marshal Boufflers, the representative of France in 1697. Bentinck rode over to see the French marshal at Hal, a town about ten miles from Brussels; and the two negotiators, left together in an orchard, walked up and down and in two hours did more business than the plenipotentiaries at Ryswick could accomplish in as many months.

Portland's embassy to France in 1698 was a mission of a very different character, charged with all the seriousness and circumstance of courts and ceremonious conferences; and it was the most ostentatious if not the most vital service which Portland rendered to his King and his adopted country. It is discussed at some length in a subsequent chapter. It is only necessary to say here that both before and after Bentinck was despatched on it, the expressions of affection, which had never been absent from William's letters to his friend, are still to be found in the correspondence between them. They met on the same familiar terms as heretofore; and in public as well as in private the King showed to Bentinck an unchanged consideration and regard. In the last letter he wrote to Bentinck on the eve of his embassy to France, William speaks of the solemn assurance he had given to him of his sincerity, and of his unalterable affection.

But if William was willing to do all in his power to

soothe his lifelong friend, he was too proud a man, and too just a one we think, to withdraw favour he had bestowed on any man, without cause. Moreover, Albemarle's great intelligence and agreeable disposition were grateful to a king who was little courted; and they were in marked contrast to Bentinck's growing surliness and ill-temper. William continued to favour Albemarle; and by an unhappy mischance, with which probably Mistress Villiers had something to do, when Portland returned from his magnificent embassy it was to find Albemarle in possession of lodgings which he regarded as his by virtue of his offices in the King's household. That in itself was a small matter: but it cut Bentinck to the quick to see, that in spite of all his protests, Albemarle, far from diminishing in the King's favour, seemed to be advancing in it.

It was too much for his jealous spirit. He brooded over it, and every overture of the King to him was discounted in advance. At last he repeated his intention of retiring, and recalled the fact that he had promised to stay only another year. What conversations passed between the two we can but conjecture, but on 28th April 1699 the King wrote:—

“ A KENSINGTON,

“ *ce 28 d'Avril 1699.*

“ Pour ne point entrer en auqu'une contestation avec vous au sujet de vostre retraite je ne vous en dire rien, mais je ne puis m'empescher de vous en temoigner ma douleur extreme qui va plus loin que vous ne sauries vous imaginer et m'asseure que si vous en senties

la moitié vous changeries bientôt de résolution, ce qu'il plaise au bon Dieu de vous inspirer pour vostre bien et mon repos, au moins j'espere que vous ne me refuseres pas de garde la cle, puisque je suis content que cela ne vous obligera a rien, et de plus je vous conjure de me voir le plus souvent que vous pouvez, ce qui me sera une grande consolation en l'affliction que vous me causes ne peuvent m'empeche[r] de vous aimer tousjours tendrement. G."

It is endorsed in Portland's handwriting, "Receue a Windsor, le 28 d'Avril 99," and may be translated :—

"In order not to enter upon any dispute with you on the subject of your retiring, I will say nothing about it ; but I cannot refrain from telling you of my extreme grief, which goes further than you can imagine, and makes me certain that if you felt one half of it you would very quickly change your resolution, the which may it please the good God to inspire you to do, for your good and my repose. At least I hope you will not refuse to keep the key [the key of office], for I am content that it should not compel you to anything ; and, moreover, I conjure you to see me as often as you can, which will be a great consolation in the affliction which you cause me, for I cannot help loving you ever tenderly."

To this almost broken-hearted appeal Bentinck was not altogether insensible, though his resolution was not changed by it.

It seems that Bentinck almost relented. But when friendship, like steel, is stretched beyond a certain limit, it cannot regain its elasticity. It was perhaps

best that these two friends should part. They did not part altogether. Bentinck, at the King's request, continued to serve him and to undertake diplomatic business. But the old communion was gone : it could not be cemented. The two met in spirit again only on the King's deathbed.

## CHAPTER XIII

### RETURN OF SUNDERLAND

To the student of politics and economics the years 1693-1694 are among the most interesting and important of English social history. In these years were originated such fundamental national institutions as the National Debt and the Bank of England; and in them a Cabinet formed of members of a politically united ministry was evolved. Curiously enough, and much to the surprise of Sunderland's contemporaries, it was he who was instrumental in influencing the King towards the formation of a ministry composed exclusively of Whigs.<sup>1</sup> It was he, too, who at this time appeared to have the greatest share of William's confidence and favour—a privilege which he lost no time in requiting by attempting to reopen negotiations with James II. In October 1692 the King returned to England from the Continent. He was received in London with acclamation; the crowd lined the road to Kensington and cheered him as he passed. But when Parliament met

<sup>1</sup> Completed in 1697.

next month abundant causes of dissatisfaction had accumulated.

Since the victory of La Hogue there had been no further successes in the Continental war. Louis had taken the important fortress of Namur and defeated William at Steinkirk; at sea a disconcerting consequence of England's naval victory and the destruction of the French fleet had been that of covering the Channel with French privateers, who wrought havoc among British merchant shipping.

While the country at large clamoured against the naval administration, Nottingham and Russell quarrelled perpetually. Russell, inflated with his victory at La Hogue, and with a well-justified contempt for Nottingham's practical knowledge of naval and military matters, would neither accept the suggestions of his colleague nor substitute for them a course of action of his own. Nottingham occupied an almost unique position in the Government as an honest man. Formal and correct in bearing, and quite conscious of his own rigid integrity, he was in every way the antipodes of Russell, who was unscrupulous, coarse, and violent in his manners, and who had the practical man's contempt for a theorist. The bad terms on which the Queen was with her sister Anne, and the severe treatment of Marlborough (who was, it was hinted, a martyr to William's military jealousy), contributed to the general dissatisfaction. A cold wet summer had ruined the harvest, and even rich men were obliged to exercise economy in their households. The diarist Evelyn, who

always took note of the weather, observed in April that no spring had yet appeared ; and he chronicled in June a great storm of rain and wind, which stripped the trees not only of their fruit but of their leaves, as if it had been winter ; no fruit ripened : “the like had not been known since 1648.” The bad season brought in its train suffering and disorders. The country even close to London was in a most dangerous state ; no roads were safe from gangs of armed robbers. Marlborough himself was robbed of five hundred guineas not far from St Albans, and the diaries of the time record frequent incidents of this kind. The tax money from the north of England, conveyed in a waggon to London, was stopped in Hertfordshire by one of these gangs, who arrested passers-by, and guarded them in a field, while the booty was carried off ; and afterwards releasing their prisoners, they killed all their horses, sixteen in number, to avoid pursuit. In London itself bands of housebreakers attacked and rifled private houses.

“Seven persons at five in the morning broke into Lady Reresby’s house in Gerard Street,” notes Narcissus Luttrell, “and bound her with two daughters, the maids, with two footmen, and then rifled the house in plate, money and jewells to the value of £800.” A few days later, in the same month, January 1693, he writes: “Three coaches were robbed in one day on the Epsom road,” and the streets were so disorderly that a watchman,

venturing to remonstrate with three drunken bullies for smashing windows, was immediately run through the body. These incidents were of such daily occurrence that Luttrell chronicles them without comment. Footpads infested the streets, and highwaymen the roads.

William put down these disorders with a firm hand ; offenders were taken and hanged without mercy. Among them was the famous James Whitney, a renowned highwayman. He made strenuous efforts to regain his liberty and pardon : he offered to serve in the Continental war as captain of a band of mounted highwaymen of his own raising ; he pretended, to gain time, that he could divulge a Jacobite plot. Finally, he resorted to another ruse. "He had his taylor make him a rich embroidered suit, with perug and hatt, worth £100 ; but the keeper refused to let him wear them, because they would disguise him from being known." The King let justice take its course. "Yesterday," says Luttrell, 2nd February 1693, "Capt. James Whitney, highwayman, was executed at Porter's block near Cow Crosse in Smithfeild ; he seemed to dye very penitent, was an hour and a half in the cart before turn'd off."

Such was the condition of affairs when the King met his Parliament in November 1692. The House of Commons was not only split up into internal factions of Whig and Tory, but had a standing quarrel with the Lords over the court of the Lord High Steward. Outsiders were becoming weary of party quarrels,

while business was neglected ; as a contemporary song says :—

“After thinking this fortnight of Whig and of Tory,  
This to me is the long and the short of the story :  
They are all fools and knaves, and keep up this puthor  
On both sides, designing to cheat one another.”

The King's speech was well received. He regretted that the naval victory had not been followed by successes on land, and intimated that further sacrifices were necessary. The House then formed itself into a sort of Committee of Public Safety to discuss the state of the country, beginning with naval administration. But the inquiry was immediately resolved into a quarrel between the two houses. A vote was passed in the Commons which reflected on Nottingham, who immediately laid before the House of Lords all the correspondence between himself and Russell, and “aggravated Russell's errors and neglect very severely.” The Lords supported Nottingham, and sent down a message to the Commons that Russell ought to be called on to justify himself. The Lower House, without even reading the paper sent down by the Lords, passed a vote vindicating Russell's fidelity, conduct, and courage, and the more zealous Whigs were anxious to pass a vote of censure on Nottingham. Lowther protested that the King “had no more zealous, laborious, or faithful servant than my Lord Nottingham.” A conference of Lords and Commons to discuss the question was then called ; but the Commons were weary of the whole subject. The Grand Com-

mittee came to an end without anything having been done. The King, however, dismissed Russell, who was given a place in the Household, and put the command of the fleet into the hands of Killegrew, Delaval, and Cloudesley Shovel, of whom the first two were so strongly inclined to James, that it was said William had been advised to his own destruction.

The economic history of this session must be touched on in passing. The country was supporting the cost of the foreign campaign, and money had to be found to carry it on. A rising young financier of the Whig party, Charles Montague,<sup>1</sup> now first became conspicuous. His reorganisation of the Land Tax, fixed for the year 1693 at four shillings in the pound, raised what seemed in those days the immense sum of £2,000,000. But this was still insufficient, and Montague therefore devised a loan which became the origin of the National Debt. At the end of the seventeenth century the wealth of the country was greatly increasing, but individuals had hardly any means of investing their money, so much so that they were reduced to hoarding and concealing their accumulated capital. As a consequence of this numberless bubble companies were being started. Montague therefore instituted a Government loan, the interest of which was secured by new duties on beer and other liquors; the lenders were life annuitants, and the debt was to be extinguished on the death of the last survivor.

<sup>1</sup> To be distinguished from the Ralph Montagu who betrayed Danby.

Meanwhile, social reformation had not yet made much progress, as was shown by the attitude of his peers towards Lord Mohun's brutal murder of the favourite actor Mountford. One of the most brilliant and popular actresses of the day was Mrs Bracegirdle. She had distinguished herself early, and had created the parts of Angelica in *Love for Love*, and Almeria in Congreve's *Mourning Bride*. She retired early from the stage, owing, it was said, to jealousy of her charming rival, Nance Oldfield. A contemporary describes her as "of a lovely height, with dark brown hair and eyebrows, black sparkling eyes, a fresh blushy complexion, . . . having continually a cheerful aspect and a fine set of even white teeth, never making an exit but she left the audience in an imitation of her pleasant countenance." She bore an unblemished reputation, and was conspicuous for her charity to the poor of Clare Market ; so popular was she, that "if anyone affronted her they would be in danger of being killed directly. . . ." Her rich patrons vied with her poor neighbours in doing her honour. It was reported that "Lord Halifax, overhearing the praise of Mrs Bracegirdle's virtuous behaviour by the Dukes of Dorset and Devonshire and other nobles, said, 'You all commend her virtue, why do we not present this incomparable woman with something worthy her acceptance?'" His Lordship then deposited two hundred guineas, which the rest made up to eight hundred and sent her.

Equally charming and gifted among the actors of

his time was William Mountford, whom even Queen Mary had commended. Mrs Bracegirdle was pursued by an unsuccessful lover, a certain dissipated Captain Hill. He had a friend who at eighteen was still more worthless and vicious than himself—Charles, Lord Mohun. Hill, finding his advances rejected by the charming actress, believed he had a rival in Mountford. He and Mohun, with the help of some soldiers, first tried to abduct Mrs Bracegirdle on her way to Drury Lane ; but the crowd rescued her. The two then went in search of Mountford and stabbed him. Hill got away; Mohun was arrested. His mother besought the King to intervene. “It was a cruel act,” was William’s reply, “I shall leave it to the law.” Unfortunately for the ends of justice, Lord Mohun came up for trial by his peers in the court of the Lord High Steward, and he was acquitted in spite of the general outcry against the iniquity of such a decision. “After five days’ trial and extraordinary contest,” says Evelyn, “the Lord Mohun was acquitted by the lords of the murder of Mountford the player, notwithstanding the judges from the pregnant witnesses of the fact had declared him guilty.” Perhaps “in commiseration of his youth, he being not 18 years old, though exceeding dissolute.” The King was present during the trial, and the Queen must have followed the proceedings with interest, for she exclaims in her diary : “So universal a corruption ! (the whole nobility giving such a proof of it in their behaviour at Lord Mohun’s tryal) that we seem only prepared for vengeance !”

The summer of 1693 was marked by a disastrous foreign campaign. William was defeated at the battle of Landen, and a more trying misfortune to English commerce was the loss of the great Smyrna fleet, which, sailing from London with more than a year's supplies for the Eastern markets, was set upon and destroyed by French vessels off Cape St Vincent in June. The loss to English merchants was severely felt. But France, none the less, was becoming exhausted ; rumours of peace overtures reached William. Now was the moment to prosecute the war with renewed vigour, and take advantage of the enemy's weakness. For this purpose the King strongly felt the necessity of united support, and therefore, during the next two years, he acted on the advice of Sunderland and gradually formed a united Whig ministry.

We took leave of Sunderland at the time of the Revolution, when, after he had been in the confidence of James, and had incurred the hatred of the people, by at least posing as a Roman Catholic, he tried, through the friendship of his Countess with Henry Sidney, to make a way of escape for himself into William's good graces. He and his wife had taken refuge in Holland, and on 8th March 1689 he wrote to William thanking him for ordering his release at Rotterdam, where the Prince's too zealous subjects had imprisoned the fugitive :—

“If I had not followed the advice of my friends, rather than my own sense, I should not have been out of England at this time, for I thought I had served

the public so importantly in contributing what lay in me towards the advancing of your glorious undertaking, that the having been in an odious ministry ought not to have obliged me to be absent; but nothing makes me repine so much at it, as that I could not give my vote for placing your Majesty on the throne, as I would have done with as much joy and zeal as any man alive, and do now most heartily wish you all the greatness and prosperity you deserve, which is to wish you more than any man had."

Sunderland went from Rotterdam to Amsterdam, where he reverted to the Protestant religion. Lady Sunderland wrote to acquaint her friend Evelyn of that prudent step: "I thank God, my Lord is come to a most comfortable frame of mind, and to serious consideration of his past life. Which is so great a comfort to me, that I must call upon my good friend to thank God for it." Their only desire, she continues, is to live quietly in Holland till they receive permission to retire to Althorp. Her husband, she protests, never did anything, "besides going to chapel as hundreds did, who now value themselves as good Protestants, and is now heartily and most Christianly sorry for what he has done."

From Amsterdam Sunderland went to Utrecht, where his attendance at the Protestant church was very conspicuous. He was specially anxious to clear himself from the stigma of popery, and, despite the well-known facts, boldly repudiated it. But there must have been many to remember against him a

popular poem on *The Converts*, in which Sunderland is described :—

“ But a right statesman in grimace,  
 The sneer, the cringe, and then by turns  
 The dully grave, the frowns and scorns,  
 Promises all, but nought performs.  
 But howe’er great he’s in promotion,  
 He’s very humble in devotion:  
 With taper light and feet all bare,  
 He to the Temple did repair,  
 And, knocking softly at the portal,  
 Cry’d, Pity, Father, a poor mortal,  
 And for a sinner make some room,  
 A prodigal returned home.”

About this time Sunderland tried to secure the support of Halifax, with whom he was connected by marriage :—

“ My wife telling me that you gave her leave to wait upon you, and to speak to you of my concerns, encourages me to beg of you to be so generous as to have some care of a man into whose family you thought fit to match, and who is Uncle to your children. . . . I hope reports will not be able to prejudice anybody, and therefore that the opinion of my being a Papist will not hurt me, for I am none, nor never was. I never abjured, I never received their way. I never had a Priest in my house, and bred my children not onely Protestants, but strictly so. I know I cannot excuse my weaknesse in suffering such a thing to be said, but those who did say it, did not think it, as was very plain by their manner of using me.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Foxcroft, from Spencer MS.

After begging Halifax's protection and assistance, he continues:

"I doe, nor never will, desire anything, but to live at home; for if I were so confined to my own house, that it were treason for me to stir out of it, I should be as well content as any man in the world; and more than ever I was in the Court. . . . I beg your Lor-ps Pardon for giving you this trouble, which I hope you will not refuse to allow to, my Lord, your most faithful and most humble servant,

"SUNDERLAND."

Sunderland returned to England in the spring of 1690; and though he was expressly excluded from the Act of Grace, was admitted to a private audience at Kensington, and then retired to Althorp, his country-seat, of which Evelyn has left a description. Evelyn at least exonerated the volatile Countess from all unworthy accusations, and saw in her only a most wise and noble lady. He visited her at Althorp while Sunderland was abroad. "It is situate in a garden exquisitely planted and kept, . . . and . . . govern'd by a lady, who without any show of solicitude keepes everything in such admirable order both within and without from the garret to the cellar, that I do not believe there is any in this nation, or in any other, that exceeds her in such exact order . . . the meanest servant is lodged so neat and cleanly, the service at the general tables, the good order and decency—in a word, the intire œconomy, is perfectly becoming a wise and noble person. She is one who from her distinguished

esteeme of me, from a long and worthy friendship, I must ever honour and celebrate."

In 1691 Evelyn notes that both the Earl and Countess came to kiss the King's hand at Kensington, 24th April, on his return from Holland. "This is a mystery," he comments. From that time Sunderland made cautious advances to reinstate himself. In 1692 he took his seat once more in the House. In August 1693 a correspondent wrote to Halifax: "The great news is about the meeting of the Great Men . . . . at Althorp, viz. the Lords Shrewsbury, Godolphin, and Marlborough, and Messrs Russell and Wharton, and every Politick is making his own reflections about it; if you please, you may make yours." Sunderland had, in fact, effected an alliance with the Whig party. William was gradually forced to rely upon them. Not only were they more inclined to support the war than the Tories, but they were becoming a united and organised body under the group of leaders afterwards known as the Junto: Russell, Montague, Wharton, and Somers. As for Sunderland himself, William cannot have been in any doubt as to his treachery, but that was a matter of small moment where all were treacherous; and he might have taken into consideration that Sunderland's double apostasy would have rendered him odious in the eyes of James beyond the hope of forgiveness. The Queen saw this change of policy with distress and apprehension. Writing of this year 1693, she says:—

“I saw parties so much encrease and a kind of affectation to do all that was insolent to the King without fear of punishment, that he could not punish his own servants, nay that he durst not punish them, but was obliged to keep those in his service, who least deserved it, and who he might be pretty sure would not really serve him. . . . When I saw one who had served him longest and most faithfully so discouraged that he was ready to leave him [Nottingham?], when I saw himself forced to disoblige the party he thinks alone will support the throne, and court those who use him ill, and will never be satisfied, 'twas impossible not to be extremely melancholy and discouraged.”

When Parliament met in November 1693 William at once appealed for funds to prosecute the war more vigorously than heretofore, and the Commons proceeded to discuss naval affairs. The Whigs succeeded in carrying a motion that the loss of the Smyrna fleet was due to treacherous mismanagement. They then tried to inculcate the two Tory admirals Killegrew and Delaval, but round these their own party rallied and defeated the Whigs by a small majority. The King, however, in pursuance of his new policy, dismissed them, and reinstated Russell as First Lord of a new Commission of Admiralty—a popular appointment, for the public only knew him as a distinguished admiral. Russell's reinstatement involved the retirement of the King's one honest servant, Nottingham. “The King,” wrote Mary, “thought his case so bad that he was forced to part with Lord Nottingham to please a party that he cannot trust.” The King parted from him

with expressions of regret at being forced to take the step. He offered the Seals to Shrewsbury, who refused them, and took refuge in the country, pleading in excuse his weak health and desire to travel, being in truth ashamed of his entanglements with St Germain.

Shrewsbury contrived to evade taking office from November till March, when he was forced to submit to the King's determination to employ him. The history of the negotiations is curious. William employed Elizabeth Villiers<sup>1</sup> as intermediary on this occasion. It is much to be regretted that this remarkable woman has left no personal record; that she appears among her contemporaries only in brief glimpses. She evidently had great charm; but that quality is singularly lacking in her letters, which are clumsily expressed and quite without grace or art. The King thought so highly of her abilities that though his early infatuation for her had cooled, as the Queen's claims on his affections asserted themselves, he employed her in a difficult and delicate negotiation in a critical moment. Swift's acrimonious pen bears witness to the attractions of her society. "Lady Orkney," he wrote to Stella, "the late King's mistress, and I are grown mighty acquaintance. She is the wisest woman ever I knew." And again: "I dined yesterday with Lady Orkney, and we sat alone from two till eleven at night." No small tribute this from such a source. He tells Stella in another letter: "Lady Orkney has given me her

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Countess of Orkney. She married George Hamilton, and was given the title on her marriage.

picture; a very fine original of Sir Godfrey Kneller's. He has favoured her squint admirably; and you know I love a cast in the eye."

Elizabeth Villiers now wrote to Shrewsbury on his having personally declined to accept the Seals from William :—

"I found the King in a temper I wish you could have seen, because I cannot expect it, for your being gone into the country. . . . I took the liberty to judge of your reason for your avoiding to hear. I said I believed you so sincere, that it could be no other but your not being convinced, that he wished you to serve with the esteem the world has of you. He assured me, that when he valued anybody, as he did you, he could easily forget some mistakes. In short, my lord, I write now by the King's commands, to assure you, that he desires you to come back and serve him and the nation; and since you have the justice done you to be popular, I must say you ought to return. I cannot think you can refuse him. I said I thought it was impossible."<sup>1</sup>

This letter was conveyed to Shrewsbury by a particular friend of his, a Mrs Lundee, daughter of the treacherous governor of Londonderry. Shrewsbury, however, returned an uncompromising refusal. Mrs Villiers' "sincere and generous proceeding in this business" has obliged him more than is possible to express, but he begs to be excused "because of the unfitness of his own temper for the present circumstance of affairs." Mrs Lundee, however, returned to the

<sup>1</sup> Coxe's *Shrewsbury*.

charge with all the epistolary arts and graces in which her more distinguished friend was lacking. Mrs Villiers is angry, she tells him : "I heard her say your obstinacy was even to a passion." She praises his firmness of mind, the guardian of all other virtues ; hints ingeniously at the rewards in store for him : "There were a great many advantageous things designed for you, to recompense the trouble of the Seals ; a Dukedom was to have been given you immediately, and in so pretty a manner, you were not to know it till your patent was passed for it."

As Shrewsbury continued "obstinate even to a passion," Wharton<sup>1</sup> was employed to write to him as well as Russell ; while Mrs Villiers urges that his compliance "will unite the whole party for ever," and Mrs Lundee is sure that "he will compliment her [Mrs Villiers] with his yielding." Shrewsbury replied that he was unfit for a court, and was about to start for Spain. To Mrs Villiers he protests his unwillingness to replace Nottingham. He will be hated by the Tories for replacing a man whom they regard as a martyr to their cause, while he does not feel fully in agreement with the Whigs. Mrs Villiers tried to arrange a personal interview, and Shrewsbury, evidently reduced to a desperate state of nervous irritation, writes to Mrs Lundee that he is "infinitely surprised to find there must never be an end of this matter. Could I have thought it possible, I would have buried myself yonder this winter in the snow." He adds significantly, "It

<sup>1</sup> Lord Wharton, *q.v.*, Chap. XV.

is most certain one cannot refuse to attend Mrs Villiers." He appears, however, to have successfully evaded it till the spring of 1694, when, after an interview with the King, he accepted the Seals and was rewarded with a Dukedom and the Garter.

The explanation of his final compliance is to be found in the memoirs of James II. A discredited Jacobite, Sir James Montgomery, visiting Shrewsbury, talked sympathetically of the late King; and though the Earl received his advances very cautiously, the incident was at once reported to William, who sent for Shrewsbury, and after telling him that his refusal of the Secretaryship showed how little he valued his service, and receiving the usual excuse of bad health, said pointedly, "That is not the only reason. When did you last see Sir James Montgomery?" And "the Prince of Orange telling him when he saw him last, and what discourse they had, amazed him very much." Shrewsbury, collecting himself, protested that he had given no encouragement to a man that would tempt him from his loyalty. "No," replied William. "I know you are a man of honour, and if you undertake it you'll serve me honestly." The Jacobite agent Lloyd soon apprised James of the fact that Shrewsbury had accepted office. He reported to his master: "I went to wait on the Countess of Shrewsbury, who was sick . . . she . . . told me how her son, the Earl of Shrewsbury, had been obliged to accept of an employment . . . which she told me he did only in order to serve your Majesty more effectually hereafter."

Marlborough, conveying the same intelligence to James, assured him that though Shrewsbury was obliged to alter his condition he would not alter his inclinations. It does not, however, follow that the reports of either Marlborough or Lloyd are to be relied upon.

There were now a majority of Whigs in the ministry. Trenchard and Shrewsbury were secretaries ; Montague, Chancellor of the Exchequer ; Somers, Lord Keeper. There only remained the Tories, Caermarthen (Danby) and Goldolphin. Montague owed his promotion to the success of his financial measures, especially the establishment of the Bank of England, which had taken place this year.

## CHAPTER XIV

### SOMERS AND MONTAGUE

AFTER the subtle genius of Halifax, the wayward brilliancy of Wharton, the callous craftiness of Sunderland, contemplation of all the solid virtues in the person of John Somers is something humdrum. He should belong more properly to another school and another age. There is a quality of gaiety and attractiveness in the unscrupulous irresponsibility of the men of the Revolution period. William seems to stand among them like some grave magician, penetrating dispassionately their paltry artifices, and scorning to resent them. But the name of Somers stands for integrity, for consistency, for industry, for all that is worthy of respect. The patron of Addison can have had little in common with the beautiful Sidney or with witty and disreputable Tom Wharton ; he belongs to the more sober eighteenth century.

John Somers, like several of the eminent men of his day, came of a respectable but undistinguished country family. He was born about 1650 at the ancient conventual house of the White Ladies, in Worcestershire,

which had been in the property of his family since the dissolution of the monastery, whose name it commemorated. It was held in so much respect by the townspeople, that they resisted its demolition in the civil wars of Charles I., and it was then described by a diarist as "a strong stone building capable of holding five hundred men with safety." Here Charles II. came before the "Crowning Mercy" of Worcester, and considerably left behind him "his garters, two pair of fringed gloves, a waistcoat, and other parts of his apparel in possession of the family"; here, from motives of safety, John Somers the elder placed his young wife; and here was born John Somers, the future Lord Chancellor. His father was at this time commanding a troop of Cromwell's horse. Two anecdotes are preserved relating to the elder Somers' military career: one that he lodged a bullet in the sounding-board of the pulpit where his parish priest was haranguing the congregation in the Royalist interest; the other that he thought it prudent at the Restoration to obtain full pardon under the Great Seal for all "murders, rapes, felonies and misdemeanours of every kind" committed by him before that time. After the conclusion of the Civil War, Captain Somers resumed his vocation of attorney, and the younger John Somers grew up in a peaceful, patriarchal atmosphere; for within the capacious walls of White Ladies were lodged several related families; and the picture of this Arcadian colony, given by a member of it, describes their way of life:—"Their

mornings were employed by each in their respective occupation, the culture of a large farm ; the cloathing trade, then in a flourishing state, the producing and manufacturing teasels, woad, madder and all dying materials, the making bricks and tiles in immense quantities to supply the demand occasioned by the rebuilding the ruined city and suburbs, and superintending the operations of about 20 families, who earned their subsistence under them, and dwelt in cottages near the White Ladies, constructed for their comfortable accommodation. The labours of the day over, they repaired for refreshment to one common table, in the great hall of the old nunnery, where sat down no fewer than twenty or thirty ; relations and friends of the family assembled daily, and spent their evenings in the utmost cheerfulness and conviviality."

The young Somers was educated at a local school. He was a "sober-blooded boy," says his biographer, "and by the exactness of his knowledge and behaviour he discouraged his father, and all the young men that knew him ; they were afraid to be in his company."

John Somers the elder was steward of the young Earl of Shrewsbury's estate of Grafton : the retreat and refuge of his later years, when he pusillanimously refused to confront Fenwick's accusation of treason. Grafton was lonely and comfortless, and young Shrewsbury, coming to visit his man of business at Worcester in 1672, made White Ladies his headquarters and

there formed a friendship with his steward's son. Young John Somers was entered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1674, and a year later became a student at the Middle Temple. He appears to have kept his university and legal terms simultaneously; he certainly had a passion for industry, and a vitality that enabled him to subsist with very few hours' sleep. After his entry at the Temple, Shrewsbury introduced him "to the choicest spirits of the age," including the Opposition leaders. With his natural ability and industry, aided by such an influential friendship, Somers was bound to make his way; and in this society he perhaps acquired the second of the qualities which Addison ascribes to him: "He enjoyed in the highest perfection two characters which do not often meet in the same person, the greatest strength of good sense and the most exquisite taste of politeness."

In 1676 Somers was called to the Bar, and by 1688 had sufficiently made his mark as an able lawyer to be engaged as junior counsel for the Seven Bishops. Pollexfen, afterwards Lord Chief-Justice, declined, it is said, to take part in the defence unless Somers was associated with him; for no man, he declared, would be more painstaking or more thorough in his researches for precedents. Somers' speech on this occasion, brief and trenchant, established his reputation as a speaker and a lawyer. He first sat in the House of Commons in the Convention Parliament, and distinguished himself in the debate in defence of the word "abdicate" as

applied to James's flight, to which the Lords had taken exception, as not known to the common law of England.

The long discussion over this point is commemorated in a Jacobite ballad :—

“ Now curst be the word ! and no less the knaves  
That ruin our traffic to render us slaves ;  
That send English money to Holland by barrels,  
And spill English blood in foreigners' quarrels.

May they all repent 'um,  
And to Holland be sent home,  
On condition we lose all the money we lent 'um ;  
May King James return to his primitive state,  
In spite of the devil and the word abdicate.”

The impression he made may be gathered from the fact that, young and inexperienced as he was, Somers should have been included in the committee of ten appointed to draw up the Declaration of Right. His progress was steady, his success assured. He became Solicitor-General, and conducted the prosecution of Preston and Ashton in 1691 with a dignity and impartiality new to such tribunals. As Attorney-General his reputation was still further increased. He had now made his mark not alone as a lawyer and parliamentary orator, but as a man of letters and a patron of literature. His early political tract against the dispensing power claimed by Charles II. was described by a contemporary as “ the best-written paper in all that time.” He was also a versifier, though his verse was rather limping, as the following example

of his translation from the Latin will sufficiently testify :—

“With cruel haste to distant lands you fly,  
You know not whose they are, nor where they lie:  
On Carthage and its rising walls you frown,  
And shun a scepter which is now your own.”

In 1693 Somers was made Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. Luttrell relates that Sir John Somers, having been summoned to Kensington, and “being called into Council, was told by the Lord President (Caermarthen) that his Majesty, being satisfied of his integrity and abilities, pitched upon him to be Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England, that he would admit of no excuse, and accordingly was declared Lord Keeper.” With the Seal, Somers received a patent which conferred on him a pension of two thousand a year from the day on which he should relinquish his office. Somers was now only forty-two, and had risen to this point of success in five years since his emergence from obscurity as counsel for the Bishops.

In his new position, Somers, even in that rancorous and factious age, won the respect alike of Whigs and Tories for his unswerving and unquestionable integrity, his penetrating intellect, weighty judgment, and varied and exact knowledge. “He was,” says Burnet, “very learned in his own profession, with a great deal more learning in other professions, in divinity, philosophy, and history. He had a great capacity for business with this extraordinary temper; for he was fair and gentle, perhaps to a fault, considering his post; so that

he had all the patience and softness, as well as the justice and equity, becoming a great magistrate. He had always agreed with the Whigs, and studied to bring them to better thought of the King, and to a greater confidence in him."

The mildness of his address, the forbearance of his manner, are all the more praiseworthy when it is remembered that, like William, Somers had a feeble constitution, and that his unflinching industry and unyielding self-control under provocation were sustained in spite of a weak and ailing body. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Somers never swerved from his Whig principles, a consistency that earned him the invectives of his former supporter Swift, after the Dean himself had turned Tory. Swift bears witness to the charm of his talk and his excessive frankness at the same time that he charges him elsewhere with formality. It is instructive to compare Swift's opinion of Somers before and after he became a Tory. In the dedication to Somers of *The Tale of a Tub*, Swift says, "I should be very loth the bright example of your Lordship's virtues should be lost to after ages, both for their sake and your own"; and "There is no virtue, either of a public or private life, which some circumstances of your own have not often produced upon the stage of the world." Elsewhere Swift reproaches Somers for being "without the least support from birth or fortune."

But another passage suggests that the Dean had been at some time snubbed by Somers, and that he

took this means of being revenged: "I have hardly known any man with talents more proper to acquire and preserve the favour of a Prince; never offending in word or gesture, in the highest degree courteous and complaisant; wherein he set an excellent example to his colleagues, which they did not think fit to follow. But this extreme civility . . . in private conversation . . . is sometimes censured as formal. Two reasons are assigned for this behaviour: first, from the consciousness of his humble original, he keepeth all familiarity at the utmost distance; . . . the second, that being sensible how subject he is to violent passions, he avoideth all incitements to them, by teaching those he converses with, from his own example, to keep a great way within the bounds of decency and respect. . . . No man is more apt to take fire upon the least appearance of provocation; which temper he strives to subdue, with the utmost violence upon himself, so that his breast has been seen to heave, and his eyes to sparkle with rage, in those very moments when his words and the cadence of his voice were in the humblest and softest manner" (*Last Four Years of Queen Anne*). Finally, "I allow him to have possessed all excellent qualifications except virtue. He had violent passions, and hardly subdued them by his great prudence."

Addison, who knew Somers equally well, also gives a character-sketch of him:—"His life was, in every part of it, set off with that graceful modesty and reserve which made his virtues more beautiful the

more they were cast in such agreeable shades. . . . His religion was sincere, not ostentatious. . . . His great humanity appeared in the minutest circumstances of his conversation. . . . His character was uniform and consistent with itself, and his whole conduct was of a piece. His principles were founded in reason and supported by virtue."

Somers was employed with Montague, Locke the logician, and Sir Isaac Newton in considering the best means of restoring the currency. The scheme he proposed was not accepted by his colleagues, though it was afterwards said that the country would have been saved a million of money by its adoption. The triumph of the Whigs in the successful restoration of the currency, and the re-establishment of the national credit, was signalised by the offer of a barony to Somers, who also became Lord Chancellor in 1697. He had previously refused a title, possibly because his means were too small to support one, for Shrewsbury wrote to him in May 1695 :—

"My Lord, I had his Majesty's commands last night to have waited upon your Lordship this morning with the enclosed ; but being informed that you are not at home, I take the liberty to send it to you. I had directions to have said everything I could imagine to persuade you to accept of a title, and the King is really convinced it is for his service you should. I beg the answer may be a bill for the King's signing. As for arguments I have used all I have already, and of your objections you may give me

leave to tell you, that you are as partial and unreasonable, with too much modesty, as some are with too much ambition.”<sup>1</sup>

During the autumn session of 1696 there was still talk of reducing the standard of the currency, and this resulted in the hoarding of the new coin, so that great scarcity of ready money continued. Somers brought in a resolution in Parliament that in no case should the currency be changed. It was carried almost unanimously, and had the effect of producing the hoarded coin.

When the discovery of Fenwick's plot, and his own implication in it, frightened Shrewsbury into his remote Worcestershire country-seat of Grafton, no one was more assiduous in entreating his early friend to return to London, and by so doing refute the accusation against him, than Somers. His letters to Shrewsbury bear marks of the most earnest solicitude for the vindication of his friend's honour, and he concludes :—

“Good my lord, forgive me for writing in this confused manner. I cannot stay to read over what I have writ, my Lord Sunderland and some of the Treasury being impatiently waiting all this while, and whatever is wrong be pleased to ascribe to my overmuch zeal, and pardon that and all other faults in, my lord,” etc.

Somers wrote again some days later in a still more urgent and unreserved strain :—

“I never was more concerned in my life, than I am now, to convince you, that you are infinitely in the wrong, in entertaining any thoughts of delivering up

<sup>1</sup> Coxe's *Shrewsbury*.

the Seals at this time. . . . All the enemies in the world will not stain your honour so much as such an action would."

Later, on November 19-29, he writes :—

"Nothing but a very extraordinary endangering your health ought to hinder you from making a trial, whether by small journeys you might not get hither. . . . The King never sees me, but he expresses a very passionate desire you would be here ; and this is always attended with as kind expression in respect of you as can be used."

In connection with Fenwick's plot, a totally baseless accusation was brought against Shrewsbury by a spy, Matthew Smith, who accused him of having known of and concealed the assassination plot to murder the King. His innocence had been vindicated by the King and by Parliament ; he was wealthy and gifted, valued highly by his own party, whose letters almost all strike the note of personal friendship, in spite of the formality of address customary at the time : but he could not recover his spirits or his confidence. Henceforward he retires into the background of public life, a melancholy enigma. He persisted in his resignation in spite of the kindly remonstrance of Somers. The later events of Somers' own life, his impeachment and retirement, belong more properly to a later chapter ; but, in conclusion, Walpole's estimate of his character forms an appropriate epitaph :—

"One of those divine men who, like a chapel in a palace, remain unprofaned whilst all the rest is tyranny,

corruption, and folly. All the traditional accounts of him, the historians of the last age, and its best authors represent him as the most uncorrupt lawyer, and the most honest statesman, as a master orator, a genius of the finest taste, and as a patriot of the noblest and most extensive views ; as a man who dispensed blessings by his life, and planned them for posterity."

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## II

## CHARLES MONTAGUE

Charles Montague's name is naturally associated with that of Somers. They both rose to eminence and wealth from poverty and obscurity. Both were versifiers and patrons of art and letters. Both were distinguished parliamentary orators, great financiers, successful statesmen ; and both were consistent Whigs. But here the analogy ends, for while Somers to the end of his life retained his urbane courtesy and suavity, Charles Montague deteriorated under the strain of success. He became vain, ostentatious, and offensively arrogant, though gossip said that in private life he was ludicrously parsimonious. "He was so great a manager," observes the Duchess of Marlborough, "that when he dined alone he ate upon pewter for fear of lessening the value of his plate by cleaning it often." . . . "He was a frightful figure, and yet pretended to be a lover, and followed several beauties, who laughed at him for it." . . . "He was as renowned for

ill-breeding," she charitably adds, "as Sir Robert Walpole."<sup>1</sup>

Montague was not of humble birth. His father belonged to the family of the Earl of Manchester; but his position, as younger son of a younger son, made his early years a struggle with poverty. He was born in 1661 and educated at Westminster School, where he was chosen King's scholar in 1677, and won the commendation of its famous headmaster, Dr Busby, for his extempore Latin epigrams. At twenty-one Charles Montague was entered at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he formed a friendship with Newton and with Matthew Prior. At Cambridge he earned some distinction as a writer of verse, and he wrote, in collaboration with Prior, the now forgotten *Town and Country Mouse*, an ingenious parody of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*. The skit became immediately popular, and earned Montague celebrity in the London coffee-houses as a clever scholar and promising young writer.

Read to-day, the skit is still fresh and full of humour. Dryden's milk-white hind, representing the Church of Rome, is satirised by Montague's white mouse. The author reads the poem to two friends in a coffee-house, expounding the meaning as he proceeds, and anticipating or disarming their criticisms by his own eulogies:—

"And when she had this sweetest mouse in view,  
Good Lord, how she admired her heavenly view."

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<sup>1</sup> Private correspondence of the Duchess of Marlborough.

“What more easy and familiar ! I writ this line for the ladies. The little rogues will be so fond of me to find I can yet be so tender. I hate such a rough, unhewn fellow as Milton, that a man must sweat to read him. I’gad, you may run over this and be almost asleep.”

Montague’s verses on the *Battle of the Boyne* attracted the notice of Sackville Earl of Dorset, “whose elegance and judgment were universally confessed, and whose bounty to the learned and witty was generally known.”<sup>1</sup> Charles Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, as he then was, had completed the grand tour shortly before the Restoration. He was a favourite of Charles II., but “undertook no public employment, being too eager of the riotous and licentious pleasures in which young men of high rank, who aspired to be thought wits, at that time imagined themselves entitled to indulge.”<sup>2</sup> He was given a post in the household on William’s accession. Dorset was the patron of Prior, whom he found as a boy reading Horace in a tavern, and whose education he had undertaken, so that Montague may have owed his first introduction to Dorset to his college friend. It was Dorset who presented Montague to William III., saying, “Sir, I have a mouse to wait upon your Majesty”; to which the King replied, “You do well to put me in the way of making a man of him.”

Montague had been intended by his father for the Church, but he soon found that his vocation was

<sup>1</sup> Dr Johnson.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

neither divinity nor letters, but that of a professional politician. In the House of Commons his reputation as a parliamentary orator was speedily made, and was second only to that of Somers. It was characterised by "great vivacity and clearness both of thought and expression."

From this time Montague's rise was rapid. In 1691 he appeared as leader of the Whig speakers against the Lords' amendment to the much discussed Bill for regulating Trials in cases of Treason, which permitted the accused to engage counsel in his defence. The question became involved in one of privilege between the two Houses, and was not passed till 1696. In supporting it Montague made use of an effective oratorical device. In the midst of his speech "he seemed to be so surprised that for a while he could not go on ; but having recovered himself, took occasion from his very surprise to enforce the necessity for allowing counsel to prisoners, who were to appear before their judges, since he, who was not only innocent and unaccused, but one of their own members, was so dashed when he was to speak before that wise and illustrious assembly."

Montague became a Commissioner of the Treasury in 1692. Here he distinguished himself as the most intrepid and resourceful financier of his time. His scheme of national loans was the origin of the National Debt, and the part he took in establishing the Bank of England earned him the Chancellorship ; while the restoration of the currency, and his expedient of

issuing exchequer bills to tide over the crisis, had re-established the national credit.

All his schemes had been successful ; his detractors might object that he had taken too daring risks, or that the brilliant expedients of which he made use were not his own invention. Their results were unimpeachable. By the beginning of 1697, when the financial crisis had passed, his pre-eminence was indisputable. After Godolphin had left the Treasury Montague was supreme there, while in Parliament he had gained such a visible ascendancy over all that were zealous for the King's service, that he gave the law to the rest ; which he did always with great spirit, but sometimes with " too assuming an air." He had reached the summit of reputation and achievement in less than ten years. He could hardly be blamed if the self-confidence which had stood him in such good stead took on the guise of an overbearing aggressiveness, of " too assuming an air."

Montague had the reputation of a patron of letters, but Swift declares that " good words and good dinners " were the only encouragement he gave to literary men. His old friend Prior's appointment as secretary to the ambassadors at Ryswick, and afterwards to Portland's embassy to France, is said by his biographer to be at Montague's instigation. Prior himself did not seem to think he had much for which to thank his former literary colleague :—

" My friend Charles Montague's perfervid,  
Nor would I have it long observed,  
That one mouse eats while t'other's starved."

Pope did not even credit Montague with hospitality to hungry scribblers :—

“ Received of wits an undistinguished race,  
 Who first his judgement asked and then a place ;  
 Much they extolled his pictures, much his seat,  
 And flattered every day, and some days eat.  
 Till, grown more frugal in his riper days,  
 He paid some bards with port, and some with praise ;  
 To some a dry rehearsal was assigned,  
 And others harder still he paid in kind.  
 But still the great have kindness in reserve,  
 He helped to bury whom he help'd to starve.”

Swift's estimate of Charles Montague bears out that of Pope. Montague wrote to the Dean in Dublin : “ I am quite ashamed for myself and my friends, to see you left in a place so incapable of tasting you ; and to see so much merit, and so great qualities, unrewarded by those who are sensible of them. Mr Addison and I are entered into a new confederacy, never to give over the pursuit nor to cease reminding those, who can serve you, till your worth is placed in that light it ought to shine.” He concludes, “ Upon all occasions that shall offer, I will be your constant solicitor, your sincere admirer, and your unalterable friend.” Swift endorsed the letter with these words : “ I kept this letter as a true original of courtiers and court promises.” On the flyleaf of a small volume of French verse once in his library are the words, “ Given me by my Lord Halifax<sup>1</sup> [Montague], May 3, 1709. I begged it of him, and desired him to remember it was the only favour I ever

<sup>1</sup> Montague was afterwards created Earl of Halifax.

received from him or his party." At the same time, writing to Stella, Swift says: "I told him [Montague] he was the only Whig in England I loved, or had any good opinion of."

We have said that Montague's greediness and overbearing self-confidence made him unpopular in later life. Enemies sprang up in Parliament, and an attempt was made to convict him of speculation. The attack, which was engineered by Sunderland, recoiled on its promoters; and Montague, writing to Shrewsbury, declares boldly: "The malice of my enemies has been very remarkable, but I can assure you it has not given me one unquiet hour; and before many days are past you will hear I have carried the war into their own country. I wish any use could be made of these malicious attacks, for when rage proves impotent, advantages are easily taken. I am sure I should have had no quarter, and I will give none, unless you command me."

In replying to Montague, Shrewsbury urges him to "consider the public and your own interest, before any private resentment; and especially be cautious not to alienate the King's mind from yourself or your friends, by doing anything to confirm the opinion some have laboured to give him, that the Whigs have a natural sourness, that makes them not to be lived with."<sup>1</sup> He goes further and entreats Montague to be reconciled with Sunderland, "provided that there be not such a prejudice in many of our friends that one cannot live

<sup>1</sup> Coxe's *Shrewsbury*, Feb. 1, 1698.

fairly with him without losing them." He no longer has it "in his power to do much mischief, and you could easily get rid of him"; and he concludes artfully: "It is no unlucky circumstance, for those to be at the head of a King's council, to have one joined with them, of whom the nation has so ill an opinion, that, whatever may be advised, contrary to their liking, they are most inclined to lay the blame on him." Words of pacific wisdom that drew from Montague the response: "I thought with you, we could always make a stand; and without you, we should be lost by piecemeal." A saying that was to prove prophetic, since William had to throw one after another of his Whig friends to the Tory wolves. But as for Sunderland, Montague continues, he supposed that getting rid of him would facilitate Shrewsbury's return. The rising tide of unpopularity subsequently became too strong for Montague to resist, but the decline of his fortunes belongs to another chapter.

## CHAPTER XV

### LORD WHARTON

TOM WHARTON, as his friends called him, was a man of immense vitality and coarse audacity. His wit and profligacy were appropriate to Restoration days rather than to the more sober period that produced a Somers, a Montague, and a Harley ; but he had one characteristic that differentiated him from most of his contemporaries — he was an entirely consistent Whig. He was a sportsman and a man of pleasure, equally well known on Newmarket Heath and in the coffee-houses of St James'. He was no courtier, but by virtue of his strong individuality, clever tongue, and bold astuteness he was able to carry all before him in an election or to rally round him the young men of his party in the House. So strong was his personal attraction that it overbore even prejudice against him. Swift, who hated him, and left on record a character-sketch of him which is one coarse bludgeoning, admits that, after doing you an ill turn, " he will to-morrow send for you as if nothing at all had passed, lay his hands with much friendship on your shoulders, and with the

greatest ease and familiarity tell you that the factions are driving at something in the House, that you must be sure to attend and speak to all your friends to be there, although he knoweth, at the same time, that you and your friends are against him in the very point he mentioneth ; and however absurd, ridiculous, and gross this may appear, he hath often found it successful, some men having such an awkward bashfulness they know not how to refuse on a sudden, and every man having something to hope or fear, which often hinders them from driving things to extremes with persons of power."

Wharton was, before all things, thick-skinned ; his youthfulness, his high spirits, his love of pleasure carried him buoyantly past middle age in spite of excesses that would have killed a man of less magnificent constitution. He was indifferent to applause or blame, "without the sense of shame or glory, as some men are of smelling," says Swift. He would receive the most virulent attacks with the cheerful comment that "he had been damnably mauled," and turn indifferently to some trivial topic. All he did was done with a tremendous energy. A fluent and a ready speaker, no one could deny his wit, though some might wince at his ribaldry.

Atheist, republican, libertine, Wharton came of a virtuous, puritanical stock. His father Philip was known as the good Lord Wharton, to distinguish him from his son, the "bad Lord Wharton." The Whartons came of an old North-country family that

traced its pedigree back to a Sir Thomas Wharton who had accompanied Bedford to France when he became Regent in the reign of Henry VI. Philip Lord Wharton, who died in the odour of sanctity, leaving £500 to distribute Bibles among the poor, had in his youth been a famous beau and one of the handsomest men of his time. Like Sir Willoughby Patterne, "he had a leg," and took great delight in displaying his graceful limbs in the stately dances of his day. When old age had shrunk them almost to the bone, he was wont to adorn a moral by pointing to them and saying, "Here are the handsome legs, which I was so proud of in my youth; see what's the beauty of man, that he should take pride in it!" In the Civil Wars Lord Wharton had fought on the Parliament side and served on Cromwell's privy council, but he escaped with impunity at the Restoration, though he was regarded with suspicion by the court as the head of the Presbyterian party. It was at this time that he cultivated his taste for architecture and gardening and beautified with furniture and fine pictures his seat of Woburn in Buckinghamshire. His pictures were famous, his collection of Vandykes and Lelys was said to be unrivalled, and he possessed one of the three replicas of the famous Charles I. on a white horse. He took care to ingratiate himself with Charles II. at his coronation by rivalling all comers in the splendour of his dress. He wore mourning at the time for his first wife, and, "to give his black a look of joy, his buttons were so many diamonds." He was obliged to economise

to repair the expense of several thousand pounds that his coronation dress had cost him, but he left his son, Tom, the then handsome income of £8000 a year.

Such was the parentage of Tom Wharton. Tom and his brother Henry soon "discovered an aversion to the severities of a puritanical life," in spite of the sedulous care lavished on their education by their father; they "indulged themselves in all the pleasures of mirth and gallantry." The writer of a Life of Lord Wharton in 1715 says that Tom Wharton's reverence for his father was so great that he could not be prevailed on to sit down in his presence, even after he had himself become a Privy Councillor; and that there was no more touching and beautiful sight than to see the old man surrounded by his sons, "the most comely, the most brave, the most gallant men of their time."

That may or may not be true: this Life of Wharton is a colourless production, as tiresomely discreet as that kind of panegyric usually is; and admittedly its author had not access to any family papers, but relied for his information on a personal knowledge. No anecdote or flash of wit illuminates the character of the subject of the biography; and no one would suspect that its hero was the same person as the Tom Wharton whose ribald grace before meat has been preserved elsewhere. As the story goes, the son of this grave household was once asked to say grace at an assembly of sober and reverend guests. Rising

with a devout and serious air, he delivered himself as follows :—

“ May it please God to shorten  
 The days of Lord Wharton  
 And set up his son in his place,  
 For he'll drink and he'll . . . .  
 And do many things more,  
 With a grave and fanatical face.”

When Wharton finally emerged from parental control he spent two years in travel: but unfortunately he has left no record of his adventures, for he was not a diarist, and by no means a prolific letter-writer. A few years after his return, his prudent father formed a marriage for him which enlarged his fortune though it did not contribute much to his happiness. The lady was a Miss Anne Lee, daughter of Sir Henry Lee of Oxfordshire. She brought her husband a dowry of £2500 a year. But Tom Wharton was then a young rake of twenty-three; his wife was of a reserved and severe temperament, strict in virtue, and of sober literary tastes. Her verse was greatly admired by contemporary poets, and her paraphrase of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah was highly esteemed. She seems to have been naturally melancholy; the very titles of her poems are depressing; among them were a song, *How hardly I concealed my Tears*, a tragedy in blank verse called *Love's Martyrs*, and an elegy on *The Death of Rochester* (Wilmot, of course, not “Lorry” Hyde). This last drew from Waller a commendatory ode :—

“Chloris in lines so like his own,  
 Gives him so just and high renown,  
 That she th’ afflicted world relieves  
 And shows that still in her he lives.

Then, fairest Chloris, comfort take,  
 For his, your own, and for our sake,  
 Lest his fair soul that lives in you  
 Shou’d from the world for ever go.”

The same poet gives high praise to her paraphrase of the Lord’s Prayer :—

“A decent rapture, so divine a hymn  
 It may become the highest seraphim.”

Such a lady was obviously a daughter-in-law quite after the heart of Philip Lord Wharton, but “decent raptures” were the last thing to appeal to his son, who, “gay and amorous,” as his biographer calls him, had no doubt met many a lively beauty more to his taste. Apart from his wife’s being forced upon him by his father, “her person was not so agreeable to him as to secure his constancy.” The marriage was childless and unhappy, and Mrs Wharton was only dissuaded from leaving her husband by the intervention of Dr Burnet. Wharton’s wedding was characteristic of him. Finding on the day that he was due at Woburn to sign the marriage-contract that he had overstayed his time in town, he drove the twenty-two miles from his father’s house in St Giles’s to the Buckinghamshire seat in two hours and a quarter. That would be good going for a coach-and-six at any time : but in Wharton’s day the

state of the roads made it a feat which was the theme of every coffee-house. Thus early in his life he had an established reputation as the finest whip and the best judge of horses of his day; and his stud was internationally famous. His horses "Careless," "Snail," and "Pepper" were famous at Newmarket, and Louis XIV. unsuccessfully bid a thousand pistoles for "Careless," which was only once beaten. It was one of Wharton's amiable pleasantries to bring one or other of his racers down to local meetings in which Tory squires were running horses, in order to discomfit them.

Amid all his intrigues and his eager pursuit of sport, there was one thing that Wharton took seriously. He was an ardent, skilful, and consistent party politician. The man whose conversation and whose private life were a scandal even among the men of easy morality with whom he associated, was a staunch, honest, and consistent Whig. Though the King's distrust of him was never overcome sufficiently to give him high office, the Whig ministers were eager to have him for a colleague. In 1678 Wharton was elected member for Buckinghamshire. He voted for the Exclusion Bill, and was one of those who carried it up to the House of Lords. He was also one of those who in June 1680 delivered a presentment against the Duke of York to the Grand Jury of Middlesex indicting him for Popish practices and for non-attendance at church. In the new Parliament of James II.'s reign in 1685 Wharton was one of the few Whigs who kept his seat. He was said to have spent £80,000

from first to last on his election expenses, while he sat for Buckinghamshire, but his genius for electioneering excelled itself in the election of 1685.

It was then most important to James to have members returned in the Tory interest, and Wharton, from his action over the Exclusion Bill, was especially obnoxious to the court. A Tory Papist called Hackett, a man sufficiently feeble to be conveniently supine in the House, was put up to oppose him. The Chief-Justice, Jeffreys, came down to superintend the election. The polling was to take place at Aylesbury, and Jeffreys, when he found that Wharton's interest in the district was too strong for him, hit on the expedient of suddenly adjourning the poll to Newport Pagnel, at the furthest end of the county, and engaging on behalf of Hackett and his supporters every kind of accommodation in the place. Wharton and his friends, who far outnumbered the opposition, lost no time in being on the spot, and found themselves forced to tie up their horses to gate-posts and fences, and sleep under hedges, and in ditches, till the Tory sheriff would admit them to the poll. Even good ale, which at Wharton's election was wont to flow freely, was denied them. They bore all with good temper, and Wharton triumphantly carried the poll. The successful candidate spent £3000 on this election, £1500 of which went on Aylesbury.

His success at elections wearied out one Tory opponent, Sir Richard Atkins, who at last determined to join sides with the powerful electioneer, and, riding

over to Winchendon, where Lord Wharton lived after his father's death, announced his intention of dining with him, and becoming his friend, "For, by ——, my Lord," says he, "I find 'tis in vain to be against you." Wharton's electioneering interest was not confined to Buckinghamshire; he was active in York, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, and wherever he owned land. Of three of these counties he was Lord-Lieutenant. His biographer describes his tactics when supporting a candidate at Wycombe.

The High Church candidate, who told the story, found that Lord Wharton had got there before him, and was going the rounds among a throng of his supporters. His opponent, who was not known in the neighbourhood, quietly joined himself to the crowd just as "my Lord, entering a shoemaker's shop, asked where Dick was? The good woman said 'Her husband was gone two or three miles off with some shoes, but his Lordship need not fear him, she would keep him tight.' 'I know that,' says my Lord, 'but I want to see Dick and drink a glass with him.' The wife was very sorry Dick was out of the way. 'Well,' says his Lordship, 'how does all the children; Molly is a brave girl, I warrant, by this time?' 'Yes, I thank you, my Lord,' says the woman; and his Lordship continued, 'Is not Jimmy breeched yet?' The High Churchman crost the road to a friend who was in waiting for him, and cry'd, 'E'en take your horse and begone, whoever has my Lord Wharton on his side has enough for his election.'" No wonder that such a man was the idol

of the common people, and was welcomed with ringing of church bells and received with acclamation when he went among them ; so that on one occasion the people of a Buckinghamshire town strewed flowers before him as he went to Quarter Sessions.

It was natural that a man so well loved was equally well hated ; but it behoved anyone, whether wounded in his honour or his political principles, to be careful how he called Wharton out. It was his boast that he never gave and never refused a challenge; and such was his skill as a swordsman, that he never killed an opponent and was never worsted. He had a knack of disarming his man by flinging up his sword. That sounds like one of the fabled exploits of Dumas' swordsmen, but there is historical evidence that his skill as a swordsman was considerable, and that he preserved it to his later years. When age was stealing on him and he had gone to Bath to take the waters as a remedy for illness, a rash young Mr Dashwood was prompted by the Tory, Seymour, to insult him. Wharton promptly returned the insult, fought the customary duel, and disarmed his antagonist. One of Wharton's duels, at any rate, does him credit. He fought to defend the honour of that sage lady, his first wife. For the character of his second wife the curious can refer to Dean Swift. She was the daughter of the Lord Lisburne who died at the siege of Limerick ; and despite Swift's strictures, she was affectionately mentioned by Wharton in his will.

In the earlier part of his political career Wharton had been on friendly terms with the unfortunate Duke

of Monmouth. They had racing interests in common, and Wharton was suspected of being implicated in Monmouth's disastrous rising. Wharton's house at Winchendon was searched for arms; and though the search was, as might have been expected, unsuccessful, Wharton was sufficiently out of favour to stay at this, his favourite country-seat, during the latter part of James II.'s reign. He was early in communication with William of Orange, and hastened, with several of his friends, to join him at Exeter immediately on his landing. His famous song, *Lilli Bulero*, was composed at this time. Its fame and influence are well known; and it was no idle boast of Wharton's that, by it, he had sung a king out of three kingdoms.

## LILLI BULERO

(*Written when Dick Talbot was made Earl of Tyrconnell.*)

## I

Ho! broder Teague, dost hear de decree?  
 Lilli Bulero, bullen-a-la,<sup>1</sup>  
 Dat we shall have a new deputie.  
 Lilli Bulero, bullen a-la,  
 Lero, lero, lilli Bulero, lero, lero, bullen-a-la.

## II

Ho! by Shaint Tyburn, it is der Talbote,  
 Lilli, etc.  
 And he will cut de Englishman's troate.  
 Lilli, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Said to have been the words used by the Irish Papists in the "Protestant Mass" of 1641. Taken exactly as printed from Wilkins' *Political Ballads*, vol. i.

## III

Dough, by my shoul, de English do praat,  
Lilli, etc.  
De law's on dare side, and Creish knows what.  
Lilli, etc.

## IV

But if dispence is come from de Pope,  
Lilli, etc.  
We'll hang Magna Carta and dem in a rope.  
Lilli, etc.

## V

For de good Talbot is made a lord,  
Lilli, etc.  
And with brave lads is coming abroad.  
Lilli, etc.

## VI

Who all in France have taken a sware,  
Lilli, etc.  
Dat dey will have no Protestant heir.  
Lilli, etc.

## VII

Ara, but why does he stay behind?  
Lilli, etc.  
Ho, by my shoul, 'tis a Protestant wind.  
Lilli, etc.

## VIII

But see, de Tyrconnel is coming ashore,  
Lilli, etc.  
And he shall have commissions gillore.  
Lilli, etc.

## IX

And he dat will not go to de mass,  
Lilli, etc.  
Shall be turn out and look like an ass.  
Lilli, etc.

## X

Now, now de hereticks all go down,  
Lilli, etc.  
By Chris and Shaint Patric, de nation's our own.  
Lilli, etc.

## XI

Dare was an old prophecy found in a bog,  
Lilli, etc.  
Ireland shall be rul'd by an ass and a dog.  
Lilli, etc.

## XII

And now dis prophecy is come to pass,  
Lilli, etc.  
For Talbot's de dog and James is de ass.  
Lilli, etc.

It was long remembered as one of the most successful topical songs, and readers of Sterne will recollect that it was Uncle Toby's favourite tune. William made Wharton Comptroller of the Household, and a Privy Councillor, and he attended the King to the Hague. It was Wharton who, in 1695, engineered the inquiry into parliamentary corruption. It was a magnificent opportunity for party tactics, and, posing as a disinterested patriot, the zealous Whig forced on the inquiry that thinned the Tory ranks by the retirement

of the Duke of Leeds (among others); and it was Wharton himself who, as Chairman of the Committee of Inquiry, conveyed the news of the Commons' impeachment to the Lords. Wharton was a lively and vigorous speaker; even Swift admits his oratorical skill, though his ready wit was not always of a kind suited to the solemnity of the Upper House. Dr Porteous, Bishop of London, rising once to make a speech, prefaced it with, "My Lords, I will divide what I have to say into twelve heads." Whereat Lord Wharton, rising, desired civilly to be excused for the interruption, but that what he had to say could not be said so opportunely at any time afterwards. What his Grace of London had observed reminded him of an experience of his own. While crossing St Paul's Churchyard at midnight, he had seen a drunken sailor leaning under a doorway, as the clock began to strike the hour. The sailor listened till the last of the twelve strokes had died away, and then observed to the Clock Tower, "Blast you, couldn't you say all that at once!"

Though Lord Wharton received many marks of the King's favour, and was given the lucrative post of a Chief-Justice in Eyre in 1697, in addition to his position as Comptroller of the Household, William never trusted him with high office. At the time of Shrewsbury's retirement the Whig politicians were very anxious to establish Wharton in the ministry. William refused: he always disliked men of overbearing manners, and Wharton's reckless temper may have made him hesitate to trust him with a responsible

position in spite of his great abilities and staunch principles. William detested being dictated to in his affairs, and early in the reign Wharton had written him an anonymous letter (though no doubt its authorship was known to the King) vehemently reproaching him for his ingratitude to those who had been instrumental in placing him on the throne. The letter was found after his death in King William's cabinet, and was published by Dalrymple.

Like the other prominent Whigs, Wharton did his best to persuade Shrewsbury to come back to town and boldly face the inquiries into Fenwick's plot. Several letters of his to the Duke have been preserved. He writes in a terse, business-like style, summarising the proceedings. "Your Grace will consider your health above anything," he writes, 8th November 1696, "but as soon as that will give you leave, I would beg that you will come up."

He writes again ten days later congratulating Shrewsbury on its all going well for him, and guardedly expresses that distaste and distrust of Sunderland which all of them except Shrewsbury himself seem to have shared. He alludes also to Godolphin's retirement: "I am pretty sure the noble lord that quitted his employment, some days before, is sensible now that he was not very well advised in it; and I am apt to think there never was more management than in bringing that about. . . . I wish to God your Grace were well enough to think of venturing up. . . . I never wish for your being here, so much

as I do when I think of the gentleman I mentioned last [Sunderland]. I confess I cannot think what he is doing or what he is driving at. I am perhaps too much given to be jealous, especially of some people, and if I do him a wrong I ask his pardon ; but I think in my conscience he is the same man he was always.”<sup>1</sup>

Two days later, writing again from Whitehall, Wharton says : “I was yesterday at Kensington at the King’s dinner, who called me to him afterwards, and talked a good deal to me of several things that concerned your Grace, and seemed pretty solicitous to know how you were in your health, and when it might be reasonably expected that you would be here. He expressed himself with as much concern and kindness upon this subject as can be imagined ; and at last commanded me to let your Grace know from him, that it was his desire and opinion that you should try all the ways you can think of to get better, and bid me tell you that the easiest and safest way you could take of coming up, would be on horseback, on some hunter that walked well, which perhaps is not ill-judged if the weather be tolerable.”

On 11th December he writes with almost affectionate solicitude. He and Montague have been discussing Shrewsbury’s case, and think he should have another opinion. A surgeon, they fancy, might do more for him than a physician. There is a French surgeon, de Rusiere, of some reputation, or one Collbach, “who

<sup>1</sup> Coxe’s *Shrewsbury*.

is so particularly famous for the stopping of blood." Wharton continued to keep Shrewsbury informed of the progress of Fenwick's trial.

In 1697 Shrewsbury was actually prevailed upon to attend the King at Windsor. The interview was disappointing; the King appeared to receive him with some coldness, and Sunderland, who was then much in William's confidence, did not second his suggestions. On this occasion Shrewsbury supported Wharton for the post of one of the Lords Justices of Ireland. William "spoke of him with very particular kindness and esteem; but he could not imagine he would be easy in being one of the three. 'My Lord Wharton has very good parts, but I think no more of his liking to be one of the three in Ireland, than I should to have two joined to me here.'" Wharton would have liked to succeed to Shrewsbury's office of Secretary. The Whigs thought that Sunderland was secretly opposing him. When Trumbull suddenly resigned the Secretaryship and the Seals were given to Vernon without any consultation with the Whigs, Somers hastened to write to Shrewsbury, "We have all of us endeavoured to convince my Lord Sunderland that we had not the least notice of this change." He adds that they have agreed that Wharton is the man to succeed to Shrewsbury's post. William, however, persisted in his refusal to accept Wharton as Secretary. (He wrote later in a private letter to his friend Bentinck :<sup>1</sup> "Now they urge me to make my Lord Wharton

<sup>1</sup> 1698, Welbeck archives.

Lord Chamberlain, of which I have as little liking as of making him a Secretary of State, though there is a difference. . . .”) It was arranged that Shrewsbury, Somers, and Wharton should meet the King at Newmarket in April 1698; but Wharton failed to effect any arrangement, and the failure marks the eclipse of his political ascendancy. The Whig discontent continued, and the Tory reaction which took place put an end to the question.

## CHAPTER XVI

### DEATH OF QUEEN MARY

THE year 1694 saw another signal instance of treachery on the part of Marlborough. In the spring the scene of naval warfare was transferred to the Mediterranean. The French Admiral Tourville sailed there from Brest, and was followed by Russell with the English fleet. The absence of the French fleet, which left the harbour unguarded, seemed to afford England a favourable opportunity for an attack on Brest, and preparations were made with great secrecy. Unfortunately, the secret was not kept closely enough, and Marlborough, after having tried unsuccessfully to worm it out of Russell, became possessed of it and immediately made use of it to send hundreds of his countrymen to certain death. Marlborough was not by any means alone at this time in holding treasonable correspondence with St Germain. In the late autumn of the previous year James had sent the instructions, quoted in Chapter IX., through Lady Shrewsbury to the "Earls Shrewsbury, Danby, Godolphin, Churchill, Russell, etc., that they do what in prudence they can to hinder money or retard it [in

Parliament of course], and hinder the going out of the fleet so soon as it might do otherwise." Danby was further instructed to let James know the designs of William, and the best means of preventing them ; "and that, if he can answer for his son, he, by no means, permit him to lay down his employment at sea."

Macaulay points out that the evidence of Caermarthen's having dallied with St Germain's is very slight, and rests on only one authentic document, the letter quoted above, dated 16th October 1693, and directed through the Countess of Shrewsbury. He censures Hallam for assuming Caermarthen's guilt, and instances the fact that the Jacobites were insulting him as a Williamite at Bath, where he was taking the waters, at the same time that he was regarded as an ally by St Germain's. Caermarthen complained to the Council in September 1693 that seditious libels were dispersed in Bath during his July visit : "The Jacobites being so bold as to sing seditious songs under his window, which they called serenading the marquesse." Luttrell, who notes the incident, has an entry for 29th August of this same year, which makes another explanation possible. He records that the steward of the *Lord William*, the ship on which young Lord Danby held command, was "brought from the fleet in custody for corresponding with France." It is conceivable that a dishonest underling might take money from Jacobite agents under the pretence of being his master's go-between, and the steward may have represented both his master

and his master's father as being secretly inclined to St Germain's, though Caermarthen's great power and wealth under the existing régime made the story "too absurd for any credulity but the credulity of exiles."

In March, when James learned of Russell's reinstatement, he sent Lloyd to him privately to see what might be hoped for from his support. It is difficult to say how far the Jacobite agents exaggerated the results of such interviews, in order to make their reports as favourable as possible.

Lloyd had orders to propose to Russell that he should go out of the way with the English fleet and so give James an opportunity of landing; but though the admiral gave him several meetings, and pretended to have the same goodwill for the King, he would commit himself to nothing definite. "He protested to me in general," reported Lloyd, "that he would undertake the affair, and that Lord Shrewsbury and Lord Churchill should be judges of his actions. He gave me repeated assurances of his resolution and of his loyalty to your Majesty; and we took leave of one another, as I saw that I could not draw anything more positive from him."<sup>1</sup>

Lloyd received a warmer welcome at the hands of Godolphin, who, he says, "explained to me his sentiments towards your Majesty in the most affectionate manner imaginable"; he added, "that Russell would certainly appear before Brest." It was, however, on a letter from Marlborough, received

<sup>1</sup> Clarke's *Life of James II.*

on 4th May, that James took action. In his memoirs, says Dalrymple, there is the following memorandum written by James upon receipt of the letter, in his own hand : " May 4th, Lord Churchill informed the King of the design on Brest." The letter runs as follows :—

" It is only to-day I have learned the news I now write you, which is that the bomb-ketches and the twelve regiments encamped at Portsmouth, with the two regiments of Marines, all commanded by Talmash, are destined for burning the harbour of Brest, and destroying all the men-of-war which are there. This will be a great advantage to England. But no consideration can prevent, or ever shall prevent, me from informing you of all that I believe to be for your service. Therefore you may make your own use of this intelligence, which you may depend upon being exactly true. I must conjure you for your own interest to let no one know but the Queen."

So well was this secret kept that Marlborough's perfidy was unsuspected till many years later, when the publication of the Stuart papers revealed it. Marlborough took occasion at the time of his writing to warn James that Russell was not to be depended upon : " Russell sails to-morrow with forty ships, the rest being not paid ; but it is said that in ten days the rest of the fleet will follow, and at the same time the land forces. I have endeavoured to learn this some time ago from Admiral Russell ; but he always denied it to me, though I am very sure that he knew the design for more than six weeks. This gives me a bad sign of this man's intentions." This letter caused James to take immediate

action; the news of the attack on Brest was sent at once to the French Government.

While the English ships were detained by contrary winds, the great military engineer Vauban repaired the fortifications of Brest, and an army was massed in readiness. Young Danby,<sup>1</sup> whose father was now Duke of Leeds, and who first reconnoitred, reported that the defences were more formidable than had been supposed, but Talmash, who was commanding the land forces, made light of it, and next day, when the ships again entered the harbour, followed by Talmash and his troops, they were received with so destructive a fire that even in their hurried retirement more than a thousand men, including their commander Talmash, had paid with their lives for Marlborough's ambition. Talmash was the only English general whose abilities could compare with those of Marlborough. In the event of his death or disgrace, Marlborough believed that his own services would be indispensable, and so, with an ingenuity equalled only by its cold-blooded cruelty, he had schemed the destruction of his unfortunate rival and those of his countrymen whom he commanded. The letter of Marlborough to James had, according to Dalrymple, a curious subsequent history. In the reign of Anne, the original letter came into the possession of Lord Oxford, and he made use of this damning evidence to frighten Marlborough into voluntary retirement at

<sup>1</sup> His father having become Duke of Leeds, he should be more properly spoken of as Lord Caermarthen.

Brussels. He adds that the Duchess had contrived to get the letter from Oxford's papers after his death, and destroyed it.

The news of the failure at Brest was communicated to William, who was then in Holland, by Shrewsbury. In his reply William expresses surprise at the attempt having been made, since the enemy had had time and intelligence to make preparations for the defence of the place: "For what was practicable two months ago, was no longer so at present." A week later he wrote again, on 1st July: "I am indeed extremely affected with the loss of poor Tollemache,<sup>1</sup> for although I do not approve of his conduct, yet I am of opinion that too ardent zeal to distinguish himself, made him attempt what was impracticable." Shrewsbury, writing a few days later, attempted at this juncture to procure Marlborough's reinstatement: "It is impossible to forget what is here become a very general discourse, the probability and conveniency of your Majesty's receiving my Lord Marlborough into your favour. He has been with me since this news, to offer his service, with all the expressions of duty and fidelity imaginable. . . . It is so unquestionably his interest to be faithful, that single argument makes me not doubt it." To this the King replied on 5th July: "As to what you wrote in your last letter concerning my Lord Marlborough, I can say no more, than that I do not think it for the good of my service to entrust him with the command of my troops."

<sup>1</sup> So William spells Talmash.

During the autumn of 1694 the strife of parties continued. Attacks were made on the Secretary Trenchard. He was not a man conspicuous by birth or ability, but he was unpopular with the Tories for the zeal and assiduity with which he detected and punished treasonable offences on the part of the Jacobites. Since he had been in office, he had had ample opportunities of punishing sedition. In the summer of 1693 occurred the loss of the Smyrna fleet, and the defeat of William at Landen. Such disasters raised the hopes of the Jacobites, who were quick to take advantage of any misfortune to the Government, or any event which tended to make the King unpopular. The pages of Narcissus Luttrell's diary are full of entries which show the various artifices to which the disaffected were reduced in order to embarrass the Government. He notes the seizure of private printing-presses, "with divers new songs, designed to be disperst among the weavers and other discontented persons to make them rise," and "a great number of seditious pamphlets." In the same month, June 1693, orders are given for taking up thirty-six persons concerned in the trade of libels ; and the Grand Jury of London make a presentment against the singers and sellers of ballads.

In August the Jacobites were encouraged to still more open treason. A French priest declared from a London pulpit that the "nation could never thrive without they brought back their banish't King. . . . King of England was *rex diabolorum*, with many other reflections on the Government, upon which he was

seized and brought with his sermons in writing before Mr Sec<sup>y</sup> Trenchard." After the loss of the Smyrna fleet and the defeat at Landen, "great numbers of scandalous papers . . . . taxing the Gazette with false accounts, were thrown about the streets"; and on successive occasions false intelligence of disasters to British arms abroad was disseminated.

One most popular form of sedition was the drinking toasts to the absent King. Everyone has heard of "the squeezed orange"; two more recondite toasts were the "limp" and the cryptic saying, "Box it about, it will come to my father."

Luttrell explains their origin :—

"Sept. 26th.—Several Jacobites being together at dinner at Exeter, they drank healths very freely, the King's, the Queen's, to their return; and at last one of them, an Alderman of the town, began one, To limp, which went round; one desiring it to be explained, they said it was (L) Louis, (I) James, (M) Mary, (P) Prince of Wales. A regiment is quartered at Exeter to have an eye on them."

And again on 27th October he writes :—

"A warrant is out to apprehend several persons, who revelled in Drury Lane on Saturday last, drinking King James' health, being his birthday, and had a bonfire; one health was 'Box it about, it will come to my father,' meaning King James; a second was, 'To the King's fast friend,' meaning Louis XIV."

But by the autumn of 1694 the affairs of the country and of the Government looked more prosperous.

William returning from his Continental campaign, met his Parliament on 12th November, and in a characteristic speech congratulated the Houses on the improved position of affairs.

In the same session he gave his assent to the Triennial Bill for limiting the duration of Parliament to three years. He had before withheld it, as he understood it would limit his prerogative. The King's change of front on this long disputed question was due, said the ill-natured, to his desire to propitiate his people at a time when it seemed not impossible that his title to the throne might be called in question : for at this moment the Queen's serious illness was causing universal anxiety. That winter, smallpox, the horrible scourge of those days, before which medical science was powerless, was raging with peculiar virulence in and about London. Now that vaccination has almost stamped out this deadly disease, its ravages are so forgotten that ignorant and prejudiced people sometimes seek to dispense with the remedy that has freed them from it. One need only take up any diary or volume of letters of the days before vaccination became general, to realise the universal horror of this terrible plague. Those who survived it were crippled in health or rendered unsightly for life. It was not by any means confined to the poor and crowded quarters of the city ; in Kings' houses, where the best medical aid of the day and all known appliances were available, it was no less frequent and no less deadly. No man had more cause to dread its approach than

the King himself. It had cut off his father in early manhood ; it had struck down his mother, while still a young woman, on a brief visit to England to congratulate her brother, Charles II., on the Restoration. It had overtaken the King himself in early youth ; and though, through the devoted nursing of his faithful friend Bentinck, the young Prince had struggled back to life, it was with an impaired constitution.

It had in store for him still one further blow, more terrible than all. The Queen had never had the smallpox, and during the epidemic grave apprehensions were felt by those about her for her safety. The Queen's life seemed at this time of the greatest moment to her people. Though determined in all things by the King's judgment, her great capacity and noble influence had made themselves felt both in Church and State, while her sweetness of nature and irresistible charm of manner were of the greatest importance to her husband in their immediate surroundings. She had reformed the scandalous court to a place of sweetness and order. "She took ladies off from that idleness which not only wasted their time, but exposed them to many temptations ; she engaged many both to read and to work ; she wrought many hours a day herself, with her ladies and her maids of honour working about her, while one read to them all. The female part of the court had been in the former reigns subject to much censure, and there was great cause for it ; but she freed her court so entirely from all suspicion that

there was not so much as a colour for discourses of that sort."

But it was not only the loss of her high and far-reaching moral and social influence that her people feared : the Queen's death might well call in question her husband's title to his crown, and give occasion to his enemies for fresh efforts to upset the Revolution settlement. This reflection, at such a time, was far from troubling the King ; he was absorbed and distracted by personal sorrow ; the removal of his wife's sweet and gracious presence, now that he had learnt to appreciate her at her true worth, would turn his military glory and his political successes to ashes in his hands.

The Queen's illness, which first attacked her on Saturday 22nd December, had at first seemed trifling. Burnet spent some little time with her on the Sunday, and the day after she was sufficiently recovered to go out ; but her illness returning heavily upon her, "she sat herself up in her closet that night, and burned many papers, and put the rest in order," as it were she had some premonition of the end. The Queen then administered to herself some slight remedies. All this time, it appears, no doctor was called in, till Tuesday, when Narcissus Luttrell notes that the Queen's physicians pronounced her to be suffering from measles, though it was at first feared to be smallpox. She was prayed for in all the churches of the city. This was Christmas Day. The contemporary accounts are a little confused, and it is difficult to tell exactly when medical aid was summoned, and when the Queen's illness

definitely declared itself to be smallpox of a virulent type. It is clear that she at first doctored herself, and Burnet says that "the physician's part was universally condemned, and her death was imputed to the negligence or unskilfulness of Dr Ratcliffe." But that famous physician always protested that he had not been summoned till the Queen was beyond human aid.

When the nature of her illness at last declared itself, the King was beside himself with grief. To his wife's faithful friend and servant, Bishop Burnet, he unburdened himself. "He called me into his closet, and gave vent to a most tender passion ; he burst into tears and cried out that there was no hope of the Queen, and that from being the most happy, he was now going to be the most miserable creature upon earth. He said during the whole course of their marriage he had never known a single fault in her ; there was a worth in her that nobody knew besides himself, though he added that I might know as much of her as any other person did." The public grief of the court and people was only less poignant than the private grief of the King. "Never was such a face of universal sorrow seen in a court, or in a town, as at this time ; all people, men and women, young and old, could scarcely refrain from tears." And this testimony of a friend is borne out by that of so dispassionate an outsider as Narcissus Luttrell. "'Tis impossible," he writes, "to express the general grief upon this occasion."

On the evening of Christmas Day the Queen grew

rapidly worse, and the new Archbishop, Tenison, "a plain good heavy man,"<sup>1</sup> who had recently succeeded the saintly and gifted Tillotson, performed the offices of the Church. When the Queen's recovery was beyond hope, he informed the King that "he could not do his duty faithfully unless he acquainted her with the danger she was in"; who replied, "that whatever effect it might have, he would not have her deceived in so important a matter." But the Archbishop, seeking to break the news of her approaching death to the Queen, she anticipated him, saying that she "thanked God that she had always carried the thought of death in her mind," and indeed seemed rather to desire death than to fear it, continuing to the end calm and resigned. All this time the King had hardly left her side. He had had a bed put up for himself in an adjoining room, and personally superintended her nursing. She had made notes of her last wishes, and gave orders that the small desk that she was in the habit of using, and in which they were deposited, should be given to the King. She then gave herself up to prayer. The day before she died she received the sacrament. Burnet was present, and observed that the Queen was able to follow the service, repeating it after the Archbishop. After this last rite was over, the Queen dropped into an uneasy slumber. In the intervals of this she sought to give some last message to the King, but being unable from weakness to express her wishes, she lay silent for many hours.

<sup>1</sup> Macky.

At the last her thoughts wandered, and about one o'clock in the morning of the 28th of December she died.

The King was prostrated with grief; even those who knew him most intimately had not believed him capable of such a passion of emotion. During his wife's illness he was in an agony that amazed the members of his household, accustomed as they were to a master whose coldness and proud reserve had always repelled sympathy and affection. He fainted often, and broke out into most violent lamentations. After Mary's death it was feared that he would follow her to the grave. For some weeks he was incapable of attending to business or of seeing anyone. He was so unnerved that he wrote to Heinsius that he no longer felt fit for military command. But the source of consolation that had supported his wife's brave spirit through the many and great difficulties of her position, stimulated once more the high courage of her husband. In these days "he turned himself much to the meditations of religion, and to secret prayer." The Archbishop spent much time with the King at this time. He had, it is said, been charged by the Queen to give her husband a letter after her death, in which she implored him to break off the intercourse with Elizabeth Villiers; and William's serious intention of becoming "in all things an exact and exemplary Christian" was embodied by Tenison in a sermon with the title "Concerning Holy Resolution,"<sup>1</sup> which was printed by the Royal command on 30th December.

<sup>1</sup> "I have sworn and am steadfastly purposed to keep Thy righteous judgements."

In spite of the disease from which she died, the danger of infection was then understood so little, that the Queen's public lying in state took place with all the officers of her household attending. Four maids of honour, who were relieved every half-hour, stood about her, her crown lay at her head and the sword of state at her feet, and the room was hung with banners and scutcheons ; and the public were admitted without distinction of person from twelve till five every day. Her funeral took place on 5th March, and was of unparalleled magnificence. Both Houses of Parliament were in attendance, a thing that could never have happened before, as the death of a sovereign dissolved Parliament. The Earl of Rochester did indeed raise an objection, on the ground that the writs had been issued in the name of William and Mary, but no one supported him. General mourning had been ordered. The banqueting house where the Queen lay in state at Whitehall had been specially fitted up, and Wren had orders to prepare gravelled walks between rails hung in black from thence to Whitehall. The members of both Houses of Parliament walked in procession before the chariot that bore the Queen's coffin to the Abbey ; the city magnates, in their robes of office, followed. The coffin, on which were placed the crown and sceptre, was laid beneath a canopy, while the Archbishop preached the funeral sermon ; and in the stillness of the Abbey, lighted by gleaming tapers, the minute guns of the Tower could be distinctly heard, solemn and impressive. Mary was buried in Henry

VII.'s chapel, where another Mary Stuart, William's young mother, had been laid many years before.

William's people loyally rallied round him; they felt the Queen's death with a sense of personal loss. Her father alone, with a refinement of petty malice that excited the derision of French courtiers, prohibited wearing mourning for his daughter, and persuaded the most Christian King to follow his example. "The King, my master," wrote Middleton to de Torcy, Louis XIV.'s minister, in communicating the news of her death, "does not consider her as his daughter, because she had renounced her being so in such an open manner. There is even reason to fear that she died in her impenitence." The extreme Jacobites in at least one instance followed his example, and at Bristol some Jacobites publicly rejoiced, and rang the bells for an event which boded so well for their cause. The Queen's death was the means of bringing about a reconciliation with Anne. The sisters had exchanged affectionate messages during Mary's last illness, and William's formal reconciliation with his sister-in-law, which followed, was dictated alike by good feeling and political expediency. He made over to her his wife's jewels and the Palace of St James. The King's grief was shared most sincerely by those who had been employed in the immediate service of the Queen.

"The sad confirmation last night's letters brought me of the death of my most deare mistress, the Queen," wrote Lady Nottingham<sup>1</sup> to her father,

<sup>1</sup> *Hatton Correspondence.*

“gives me so just an affliction that I am but little thoughtful of my neerest concerns. The want of coach horses has, since my Lord’s going, hindered me from waiting of y<sup>r</sup> Losp., and the news this last week of her illness from sending to know how you did. God has been pleased to shorten her days as a reward of her sufferings, w<sup>ch</sup> in this world were not slight, w<sup>ch</sup> w<sup>th</sup> the goodness of her own nature, had formed in her so great a degree of virtu, it might truly be said the world was not worthy of her. A poore lamentation is all the gratitude that can be payd her now for that favor so undeservedly she bestowed on me, is all that now can be returned by, my Lord, y<sup>r</sup> most obedient duttyfull daughter,

“A. NOTTINGHAM.”

In another strain is a letter from George Stepney, the poet, who was employed by William on diplomatic business. He writes to Lord Lexington that he<sup>1</sup> “could only hammer out one distich upon the Queen’s dying resolutely, and the King’s grieving immoderately, which is as follows :—

“So greatly Mary dies and William grieves,  
You’d think the hero gone, the woman lives.”

Which a friend burlesques :

“Since death’s a Jacobite that thus bewitches,  
His soul wears petticoats, and hers the breeches ;  
Alas ! alas ! we’ve erred in our commanders,  
Will should have knotted, and Moll gone for Flanders.”

A more graceful tribute to Mary’s memory was paid by Prior, who wrote from the Hague :—

<sup>1</sup> *Lexington Correspondence.*

“ I am as yet so afflicted for the death of our dear mistress, that I cannot express it in bad verse, as all the world here does ; all that I have done was to-day on Sheveling sands, with the point of my sword :—

“ Number the sands extended here,  
 So many Mary’s virtues were ;  
 Number the drops that yonder roll,  
 So many griefs press William’s soul.”<sup>1</sup>

The affairs of the nation went on without interruption though its head was incapacitated from participating in them, and the strife of parties continued without diminution. This year the Whigs succeeded in ousting not only the Duke of Leeds but his agent Trevor, who, as Speaker of the House of Commons, was employed in securing the necessary majorities for conducting business. The Tory Godolphin was still, however, left in office. Political and official corruption was at this time so general and deeply rooted, and was becoming so increasingly pernicious in its effects, that the attention not only of Parliament but of the nation was called to it ; and the popular interest once roused, investigations were pursued eagerly, as one sensational revelation after another was made : “ the discovery of one mean action leading to another,” as Dalrymple observes, “ in the same way as the commission of one leads to another.” An accident started the inquiry. The borough of Royston<sup>2</sup> complained to the House that

<sup>1</sup> *Lexington Correspondence.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Royston Petition.*—Colonel Hastings hath compelled some officers of his regiment to take their clothes from him at extravagant

some officers were not paying their quarters on the excuse that their own pay was in arrears. On inquiry it was found that the superior officers had defrauded their subordinates, and that the agents employed to transmit the pay had cheated both ; it also appeared that they had been guilty of bribery in public offices. Officers and agents protested that they should not be made the scapegoats for so general a practice. It then appeared that the most highly placed officials were implicated. The Secretary to the Treasury, Mr Guy, had accepted bribes for procuring arrears of military pay. Trevor, the Speaker of the House of Commons, had been paid a thousand guineas by the city for getting a Bill through the House. Immense excitement and interest prevailed ; those who had received bribes dared not too openly oppose inquiry, while those who had not, were eager to know who had profited.

In an inquiry that followed into the accounts of the East India Company, the Duke of Leeds, with a strange lapse from his usual cunning, drew attention to himself by his uncalled-for protestations of innocence. In the House of Lords he had strenuously opposed a Bill against Sir Thomas Cook, the head of the Company, and, laying his hand on his heart, swore that he was not moved by personal motives but by public considerations only. An awkward fact presently came to light. rates, by confining and threatening those that would not comply therewith.

*Illegal Deductions by Agents, etc.*—Colonel Hastings had taken money for the recommending to commands in his regiment, to the great discouragement of the officers who were to serve in his Majesty's armies.

One Bates, a friend of the Duke of Leeds, had been commissioned by the Company to approach him with five thousand guineas. The Duke refused it, but permitted it to be handed over to a confidential Swiss servant Roberts. Bates, however, anxious to save the situation for the Duke, declared that he had been told to keep the money for himself, and that it had been given by him to Roberts for safe-keeping and since refunded. This sounded plausible, but unfortunately for the Duke it was shown that the money had not been refunded till three days before Bates's examination. It rested with Roberts to vindicate his master's honour ; but Roberts had disappeared from the Duke's house and fled to the Continent. The House of Commons voted the Duke's impeachment. A friend hastened to the House of Lords, where the Duke was in the act of speaking, and whispered the news to him. He hurried down to the Commons to make his defence, but his speech was stumbling and ineffective. The Commons wished to proceed with the impeachment, but nothing could be proved in the absence of Roberts. On 3rd May the King prorogued Parliament, and the Duke finally retired from active life.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE ASSASSINATION PLOT

IN spite of the heavy blow William had received in the death of his wife, he rallied sufficiently to bring the campaign of 1695 to an end in triumph, and in so doing to attain the summit of his reputation as a soldier. The struggle in Flanders, whither he had gone in May, was marked by the recovery of the great fortress of Namur, which had been fortified by Vauban, the French engineer of fortifications. "This was reckoned," says a contemporary writer, "one of the greatest actions of King William's life, and indeed one of the greatest in the whole history of war. It raised his character much, both at home and abroad, and gave a great reputation to his troops." For the first time in history a marshal of France surrendered a town, and Marshal Boufflers, who was defending the city, was arrested on his way to France and kept in confinement by Bentinck's orders. The French had similarly violated the provisions of capitulation in the instances of the garrisons of Dixmuyde and Deynse, and Bentinck's action was

a reprisal. The garrisons and Boufflers were released simultaneously.

Shrewsbury had written to the King to congratulate him on the fall of Namur and to suggest that a new Parliament should be called "whilst here every heart is full of gratitude for the labours and dangers you have undergone, and every tongue contending who most shall proclaim your praise." Shrewsbury had already told his master that his enemies at home had "very industriously spread about that a new Parliament is not intended." William wrote in reply on 6th September: "You doubtless rejoiced at the information of our success, by the capture of the Castle of Namur. With all its circumstances it is assuredly a very great event, and we cannot sufficiently offer up our thanks to God for this success, from which we shall doubtless derive considerable advantages. You may readily believe that I have been too much engaged to write to you. Your last letter was of the 16th-26th August. [Shrewsbury had written since, on 9th September.] Since my departure I have never entertained any other thought than to call a new Parliament on my return; you may therefore boldly announce my resolution, and I trust that declaration will remove the unfavourable impressions which have been so maliciously circulated to my prejudice. Some time ago," the letter concludes, "I received a letter from Admiral Russell. I opened it, and find it so extraordinary that I shall keep it till my return and speak to you upon it. It passed through France, and I do not know whether he sent it that

way that it might be opened and read ; but even if that was not his intention, it was inconceivably imprudent."

Russell's letter has fortunately been preserved : "imprudent" was a mild term to apply to it, and there was ample ground for the King's suspicion that its despatch by way of France was an act of deliberate treachery, since it clearly indicated not only his own disloyalty, but the weakness and ill-provided state of the fleet under his command. Shrewsbury and Russell kept up a lengthy correspondence. The Admiral complained of want of provisions, want of money, want of orders, and especially want of adequate recognition and remuneration for his own services. The minister sent sympathy, soothing promises, gossip sometimes in response to his always querulous communications. In the letter, to which William alludes, Russell accuses the King of exposing the fleet to danger in order to save Dutch money ; many ships are so rotten that the winter storms will knock them to pieces ; he is out of pocket, and ruined in health, and has not the least hopes from his Majesty's generosity. Shrewsbury replied with, for him, considerable firmness, censuring Russell for allowing such a letter to fall into the King's hands, and for sending so important private intelligence by way of France.

The King returned early in October, and made a progress through the country, staying some days at the Earl of Sunderland's at Althorp, his first mark of public favour. William took pains at this time to show more than his habitual affability to all who

came in contact with him, to court popularity at the critical moment of the elections. He held his court at Newmarket, where the autumn meeting of those days attracted all that was gayest and wealthiest in contemporary society. Newmarket had been a favourite resort of Charles II. The staid Evelyn went there in 1671, staying with Lord Arlington at Euston, and observing with decorous disapproval Charles II.'s growing fondness for "the famous new French maid of honour, Mlle. Querouaille." Reresby was the guest of Halifax once while the court was at Newmarket, and noted that Charles "was so much pleased with the country, and so great a lover of the diversions which that place could afford, that he let himself down from majesty to the very degree of a country gentleman. He mixed himself among the crowd, allowed every man to speak to him that pleased: went a-hawking in the mornings, to cock-matches in the afternoons (if there were no horse-races), and to plays in the evening, acted in a barn by very ordinary Bartholomew fair comedians." William was not a man to rub elbows with a crowd, but as much as in him lay he unbent.<sup>1</sup> And this year, October 1695, "the weather was fair and pleasant," and he was able to be "every day seven or eight hours on horseback" at Althorp, where he was "treated with all the order and splendour imagin-

<sup>1</sup> William appointed Tregonwell Frampton, who is sometimes spoken of as the "Father of the English Turf," to be "keeper of the running horses at Newmarket," an office which Frampton also held in the subsequent reigns of Anne, George I., and George II. Frampton died in 1727.

able.”<sup>1</sup> The King went a round of visits at this time. He “dined with the Earl of Northampton at Castle Ashby, and was very well pleased with the place, the chase about the house and garden being extraordinary. They hunted a hind and might have had more sport, but the country people broke in upon them, and were got together above 5000 of them.”

Another visit was to the Duke of Newcastle at Welbeck,<sup>1</sup> which, passing long afterwards into the hands of the Portland family, was to become the repository of the letters which William wrote to the founder of the house, the first Earl of Portland.

When Parliament at last met in November the Whigs had an immense majority. It was especially necessary at this moment to tide over the financial difficulties in which the country was plunged. To begin with, a new coinage was peremptorily called for. The practice of clipping the edges of coins had become so general, that even the infliction of the severest penalties did not deter innumerable people from resorting to so lucrative a fraud. Clippers, men and women, were continually apprehended, and brought up at the Old Bailey Sessions; and the state of the coinage had become such that while wages were paid in the ordinary manner, shopkeepers would only take payments in money by weight. With a coinage which in many—

<sup>1</sup> Vernon to Lexington.

<sup>2</sup> At Welbeck there is a paper in the handwriting of the Duchess of Newcastle giving particulars of the King's entertainment on this occasion. The visit lasted five days, and the total cost was £5642, 2s. 2d.

places was only half its proper weight, the sufferings entailed on the poor may easily be imagined. The pressing need of money for carrying on the war was ultimately met by the Bank of England. By the end of August 1696 the financial crisis was over, and by October the credit of England was restored. All this critical time the Jacobites had not been supine. Their hopes had been greatly raised on the death of Mary, but the reconciliation of William and Anne, though it was, in fact, little more than formal, frustrated their expectations.

The King could not trust his sister-in-law with any influential position without virtually entrusting it to Marlborough, who, as Shrewsbury wrote to Russell, "seems very resolved to contribute to the continuance of this union as the only thing that can support her or both." But though the Jacobite hopes of utilising the Princess Anne as a rival to William were disappointed by the reconciliation, the plotters began to scheme attacks on the King's person, which, now that he stood alone, would create so much confusion as to make a Restoration appear easy. James had not, indeed, definitely sanctioned the assassination of his nephew. When it had been proposed to him a year or two before "to seize and bring away" the Prince of Orange, he "would not hear of it, looking upon the project as impracticable, and exposing his friends, when he had no prospect of seconding them." But early in 1695 several Jacobite emissaries were making active preparations in England, especially a former Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, a convert to Rome, called Charnock.

With him were associated two men of notoriously bad character, Porter and Goodman. They confided their schemes to Sir John Fenwick, assuring him that they were only awaiting a signed warrant from James, authorising their attacking the King's person. They were still waiting for this commission, and had decided to act without it, when William sailed for Flanders.

In his absence they were imprisoned for a time for disorderly and riotous conduct in the streets on the Pretender's birthday. In the autumn of the same year a much more formidable attempt was set on foot. The King had returned home after the siege of Namur. It was a favourable opportunity for the assistance from France for which the Earl of Ailesbury had been commissioned to appeal in the spring. A universal rising of the adherents of James was to be supported by French arms. Never had the Jacobites been so confident of success; their assurance and open display of sentiments in drinking their disloyal toasts were evident to everyone, and excited grave apprehensions of what might be secretly on foot among them. "We were all this winter alarmed from many different quarters," says a contemporary, "with the insolent discourses of the Jacobites, who seemed so well assured of a sudden revolution, which was to be both quick and entire, that at Christmas they said it would be brought about within six weeks." This plot, a widespread insurrection, in which all Jacobites were to take part, was under the management of Berwick, who came over to England to complete preparations, while Louis was massing

troops at Calais, and James was making ready to accompany them. There was, however, also another, the Assassination Plot, the secret of which was known only to a few persons.

In November 1695 a certain Sir George Barclay, a Scottish soldier, was summoned by James into his closet and given instructions to repair to London, to confer with Jacobite adherents there. He was given written instructions by James to all his subjects to "rise in arms and make war upon the Prince of Orange, and to do such acts of hostilitie against the Prince of Orange . . . . as may conduce most to our service." These directions admitted of only one interpretation by Barclay and his confederates. He has himself given an account of his experiences. He first met Charnock, who described the abortive plans that had been formed in the spring "to forme a party to fall upon the Prince of Orange"; which, says Barclay, "I did much approve of if it could be carried on with that secrecie and conduct as a thing of that consequence ought to be." Barclay, as well as the others, concluded that this was what the commission authorised their doing. Barclay at first hesitated to confide in Porter, "who was much given to drink, and open-minded." The design was gradually matured. Barclay was of opinion that a hunting party would give them their best opportunity, and the place fixed on was Turnham Green, where bushes afforded cover for an ambush for more than thirty mounted men who were to overpower the King and his guards. Barclay seems to have been a cautious man; his plans were well

laid, his preparations zealous and discreet, and he evidently from the first distrusted a certain Captain Fisher, who had proposed to attack the King between the gates of Hyde Park and St James'. "I never let him know of any designe I had on foot," says Barclay in his memorial of the affair. It was this Fisher who gave intelligence of the plot to Portland early in February. He either could not, or would not, give the names of the conspirators, and immediately afterwards disappeared.

There had been too many informers and false plots for Portland to attach much importance to vague insinuations, and he took no action in the matter. Meanwhile, the plans of the conspirators had matured. On Saturday, 15th February, the King was to go hunting in Richmond Park from Kensington. He was in the habit of going by road to Turnham Green, and there crossing the river in a boat. From the place where he was accustomed to land on his return a lane led to Turnham Green, "something narrow, with hedges and ditches on each hand, so that a coach and six horses cannot easily turn, at least on a sudden." This place was fixed on for the attack. The conspirators, whose number finally reached forty, were to be in readiness in the neighbouring taverns and ale-houses scattered about the green and to assemble at a given signal, when the King's coach arrived. But at the last moment an Irish gentleman, a Captain Pendergrass, was admitted to the secret of the scheme by Porter. He was a Roman Catholic and an ardent Jacobite, but a man of position

and honour, and, refusing to have any hand in the matter, he went straight to Portland and, acquainting him with the imminent danger the King was in, implored him to prevent his hunting on the following day. Pendergrass "owned very freely to the King that he was engaged in interest against him, as he was of a religion contrary to his. He said he would have no reward for his discovery, but he hated a base action, and the point of honour was the only motive that prevailed on him ; he owned that he was desired to assist in seizing on him, and he named the person that was fixed on to shoot him ; he abhorred the whole thing, and immediately came to reveal it."

The King, who treated the whole matter very lightly, consented to postpone his hunting for a week in deference to the anxious and earnest remonstrance of Portland. The news of his delay was brought to the conspirators by one of the spies posted at Kensington Palace. They thought little of it: the disturbed weather, or a passing indisposition of the King, were sufficient to account for it, there was no hint of a discovery. But during the week yet another informer, de la Rue, laid information of the intended assassination. On the evening of the 21st the King, who at last began to believe in the existence of a plot, determined to interview Pendergrass himself. He was accordingly sent for. William flattered him on his character as a man of birth and position, with the reputation of a gentleman and a man of honour. But Pendergrass was obdurate ; for that very reason he could not betray his

associates, especially as he had received great kindness at the hands of one of their number, Porter. But William assured him that he should not be called on to witness against any of them, adding with simplicity "that the life which he had saved could not be preserved unless the persons were known who had contrived to take it away." Pendergrass then consented, late at night, to give a list of names. The next morning those in the plot held themselves in readiness to take up their assigned positions. Pendergrass himself appeared among them to allay suspicion. "They were drinking a last toast at their rendezvous," says Barclay, "when word was brought me the Prince was come back to Kensington in great haste, his horses being in a top sweat ; which I no sooner heard than I suspected a discovery of what we were about." Thereupon the wary Barclay immediately made good his escape to France. The suspicions of the others were allayed, as no immediate measures were taken, but the next night the greater number of them were taken in their beds. Porter, who had been with Barclay the principal instigator of the affair, at once offered to turn informer. "Porter had been a vicious man engaged in many ill things and was very forward and furious in all their consultations" ; he was besides "a man of pleasure, who loved not the hardships of a prison, and much less the solemnities of an execution, so he confessed all."

At the King's interview with Pendergrass there had been present Portland and Lord Cutts, Captain of the Guards, a gallant soldier, who was greatly distinguished

for his intrepid personal courage in action, and who had been nicknamed the "Salamander." He recognised Pendergrass, whose name was not known to him, when he was brought in, and urged him that he should demand his freedom ; but Pendergrass consistently refused to make himself known, and claimed the King's promise that he should not be called as a witness. Only after Porter's confession he consented to make a statement of what he knew, saying that "Porter was the man who had trusted him, and he could not be an instrument to destroy him ; yet he lay under no obligations to any others among them." A proclamation offering a reward of a thousand pounds for taking each of the conspirators, and a pardon to every one of them who should apprehend any other, set all people at work, so that in a few weeks all of them were apprehended except Barclay.

The news of the intended invasion came out at the same time as that of the Assassination Plot. Whereupon the King went instantly to Parliament on Monday, 24th February, and in a speech from the throne acquainted both Houses with the Assassination Plot and the proposed invasion. The House of Commons at once unanimously drew up and signed an association declaring that William was their rightful and lawful King ; that they would defend him against the late king and all his adherents ; and in case he came to a violent death, that they would revenge it on his enemies. The House of Lords followed the example of the Commons ; the enthusiasm

for the King throughout the country was never greater. The assassins were in custody, it remained to take measures against invasion. A special providence seemed to watch over the fortunes of William and the country for whose interest he stood, or, as the French alternatively put it, "Malignant stars still blasted every project that was formed for his [James's] service."

In November of the year before Russell had at last returned home, leaving only a squadron at Cadiz. He arrived in ill-health and ill-humour, which was aggravated by the very chilling reception he not unnaturally received from the King. On his arrival a great fleet was made ready to sail for Cadiz with provisions and stores for Admiral Rooke, who had remained behind there in command. This reinforcement was detained by contrary winds at Spithead from December till February. What, however, during these winter months had appeared to be a misfortune now took on the appearance of a special providence. "Now that this fleet was, as it were, accidentally in readiness to protect our coasts, and that our preservation was chiefly owing to it, it was so extraordinary a thing to see the wind fixed at south-west during the whole winter, that few could resist observing a signal providence of God in it."

With this fleet Russell, who always rose to an emergency, was able to stand over to the coast of France with fifty sail of the line, and was joined by twelve Dutch ships; for "many brave seamen, seeing the nation was in such visible danger," infected by the

general wave of patriotic enthusiasm, "came out of their lurking holes, in which they were hiding themselves from the press, and offered their service."

"Ev'ry seaport all over the land,  
 Seamen come in with joy and delight,  
 Being resolved with courage to stand  
 Still to maintain the Protestant's right.  
 Since their lives they freely venter  
 England's glory still to advance,  
 May Heaven defend them, and blessings attend them,  
 Who fights against all the power of France."<sup>1</sup>

The French harbours were swarming with ships of war, and James was himself at Calais awaiting the embarkation of the land force. The French were amazed at the sudden appearance of the English fleet, for they believed England to be at the end of her resources, and even more exhausted than France herself with the continued drain of the war. Their ships withdrew into shallow water, whither Russell could not follow them. Louis dispersed his armament, and James returned to St Germain, where he thanked God that he had lost his kingdom, since it had been the means of saving his soul.

Meanwhile the trial of the conspirators continued. The first to be brought to trial was Charnock. The secret history of the proceedings was not known till long afterwards, when Somers gave an account of them to Burnet. Charnock sent an offer to the King of a complete list of the names of those concerned in Jacobite schemes, if his sentence might be commuted

<sup>1</sup> *Roxburgh Ballads.*

and he might live in some easy prison. It is probable that in any case the perfidy of William's servants had seldom passed wholly unsuspected ; but on this occasion he replied with characteristic political sagacity, "I wish not to know them," apprehending "that so many persons would be concerned and thereby rendered desperate, that he was afraid to have such a scene opened." At his death Charnock delivered up a paper in which he absolved James of any complicity in the Assassination Plot, as did his fellow-sufferer King. The third convicted, Keys, had formerly been a trumpeter in the Blues, a regiment tainted with disaffection, and it was necessary to make an example of him ; though he was universally pitied as a poor ignorant man, and was convicted on the evidence of Porter, in whose service he had been. Two more conspirators, Sir John Friend and Sir William Parkyns, were executed in April, having with commendable courage refused to purchase their pardon by incriminating others. They were attended on the scaffold and given absolution by three non-juring priests, "a strain of impudence which was as new as it was wicked," says the indignant Burnet, and which created a great scandal. The next conspirators who were brought to trial benefited by the new Act for the Regulation of Trials in Cases of Treason, and were defended by counsel, and with these convictions and executions the capital punishments in respect of the Assassination Plot ceased.

Another more pertinacious conspirator, Sir John Fenwick, was arrested, however, some months later.

To gain time he gave to the Duke of Devonshire a paper of such importance, disclosing the names of his associates, that his trial was postponed till the King's return. For the moment, however, we must consider the King's monetary difficulties.

The King had gone to Holland in May, but the campaign of this year was entirely uneventful. Both England and France were so exhausted, that their commanders were at their wits' end to feed their vast armies. England was by no means as exhausted as France, but William was in equal difficulties for ready money. England was passing through a period of commercial crisis. The new coinage was carried on with all the haste possible, but the new-milled coin was hoarded, so that while the old silver was nearly all called in, the new silver was not forthcoming. "Money exceeding scarce, so that none was paid or received, but all was on trust," wrote Evelyn on 13th May; and on 11th June rich men were still living on credit. "Want of ready money to carry on the smallest concerns," notes the same diarist.

A contemporary song says :—

"We parted with all our old money to show  
 We foolishly hoped for plenty of new,  
 But might have remembered, when we came to the push,  
 That a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.  
 We now like poor wretches are kept under hatches,  
 At rack and at manger like beasts in the ark,  
 Since our burgesses and knights make us pay for our lights,<sup>1</sup>  
 Why should we, why should we be kept in the dark?"

<sup>1</sup> Window tax.

And another :—

“Six winter months our senate sits,  
Five millions for to raise,  
And all the while they wrack their wits  
To find out means and ways ;  
Six summer months our hero spends  
On what you'd please to say,  
On finding out of ways and means  
To squander all away.”<sup>1</sup>

In June William writes to Shrewsbury acknowledging the receipt of £100,000, “which, though a large sum, is in fact but little, when you consider what is owing to the troops, and other demands. For this reason we shall again be involved in the same distress, if you cannot continue to remit large sums or obtain further credit. I own this business of the money in England gives me very great uneasiness. It is, however, necessary to find the least objectionable means to extricate ourselves and re-establish credit, without loss of time, or we must inevitably perish.” The correspondence between the King and Shrewsbury at this time, intimate and detailed as it is, is highly instructive,—the King urgent and insistent in his demands for money. “If we do not soon receive some remittances, the army will be disbanded.” Sometimes he adroitly flatters the minister: “I am so convinced of your zeal for my service that I have no doubt you will do everything that is possible to prevent such fatal evils on which depends the good of the nation, as well as of all Europe.” Shrewsbury, always timid and pessimistic,

<sup>1</sup> Wilkins' *Political Ballads*.

writes despondent letters that must have been very irritating to a man of action and resource. In August Portland arrived, and the Bank of England came to the rescue with £200,000 in cash.

William wrote to Shrewsbury :—

“ *Aug. 24.*  
*Sept. 3.* ”

“ The Earl of Portland has returned yesterday, and has fully informed me of what passed during his journey to England. He cannot say enough in favour of your civilities and frankness, and has acquainted me with your zeal and endeavours for my service, for which I am obliged to you.”

In the light of events so soon to follow, there is something pathetic in Shrewsbury's answer :—

“ *Sept. 1.*  
*11.* ”

“ SIR,—I have not this long while been sensible of so real joy as I was to find by your Majesty's letter of the 24th August that you were satisfied with my endeavours to serve you.”

William returned home in the autumn and met his Parliament in November. The principal business of the session was the Bill relating to Sir John Fenwick, the Jacobite who had been arrested in his absence, and whose trial had been held over because it was supposed he could make important discoveries. Sir John Fenwick was a North-countryman of family and position. He had sat for Northumberland in James II.'s reign. By a curious coincidence, remembered against him now, he had been one of the loyal Tories who carried up the Bill of Attainder against Monmouth to the Lords. In

the early days of William and Mary's reign, when the Jacobites were accustomed to flaunt their sedition in the Park by assembling together, Sir John Fenwick was conspicuous among them, and on one occasion had created a great gossip and scandal by publicly insulting the Queen, by forcing himself on her notice, and staring insolently with his hat on.<sup>1</sup> A contemptible piece of cowardly insolence, of which avenging fate might now remind him, since the King, lenient to all, here permitted justice to take its course. Fenwick at first remained in hiding, and attempted, through the instrumentality of his wife, Lady Mary Fenwick, sister to the Earl of Carlisle, to bribe Porter to abscond. That would only leave one witness in England who could prove his guilt, and one witness was insufficient to convict him. The attempt failed, and Fenwick was soon after taken on Romney Marsh. He hastily wrote a letter to his wife declaring himself a doomed man, unless the interest of his family and connections could save him, or the jury could be suborned. This damning piece of evidence against him was intercepted. His offer to the Duke of Devonshire to tell all he knew was rejected by William. Then it was he wrote to William assuring him that Marlborough, Russell, Godolphin, and Shrewsbury were now in James's confidence, and acting for him. William probably knew just how much or how little truth there was in the accusation. At any rate he acted with his characteristic wisdom and magnanimity. When Fenwick was first arrested,

<sup>1</sup> Luttrell's Diary, April 1691.

Shrewsbury had written to the King:—"He is generally reputed a fearful man. . . . I am confident he knows what, if he will discover, will be much more valuable than his life." A sentence which showed his own conscience to be at that time clear.

William now enclosed Fenwick's accusation in a letter to Shrewsbury:—

"You may judge of my astonishment at his effrontery in accusing you. You are, I trust, too fully convinced of the entire confidence, which I place in you, to imagine that such an accusation has made any impression on me . . . . you will observe the sincerity of this honest man, who only accuses those in my service and not one of his own party."

Fenwick had, indeed, devised an ingenious weapon for breaking up the Whig Government. Shrewsbury alone of the accused men, with less on his conscience than any of them, quailed before the public imputation. He wrote to the King that he had indeed been in communication with the Jacobite agent Lord Middleton and had visited him in the Tower; they were near relations, and such an act of courtesy was only decent. "On his enlargement, they had met at supper, and when he was pretty well in drink," Middleton asked if Shrewsbury "had no commands beyond seas. . . ."

This, replied William, "can by no means be imputed to you as a crime . . . . so far from making any unfavourable impression on me, it will, if possible, in future strengthen my confidence in you; my friendship can admit of no increase."

But Shrewsbury shrank nervously from meeting the King; he took refuge in his remote country-seat in Worcestershire, where a fall from his horse detained him. William returned early in October, and almost immediately wrote a kind letter to the Duke:—<sup>1</sup>

“Your presence is much wanted. I am very impatient to embrace you and to assure you of the continuance of my esteem.”

The Duke responded by begging leave to return the Seals. William replies: “I would never permit you to do what would draw on you so much blame,” in a letter of dignified but kindly remonstrance; while Portland, writing on the same date, October 20–30, strongly insists that such a step as the Duke’s resignation would give his enemies occasion to say that he retired in consequence of Fenwick’s disclosures. Somers writes imploring that he “will not unnecessarily delay one hour. I am confident, were you here, it would be easy to give the right turn to this business which I fear will not otherwise be possible.” Sunderland writes: “We do not know how to move without you”; while Wharton begs that he will come up as soon as his health will give him leave. Shrewsbury did not insist on resigning the Seals, but he refused to leave his retreat. One effect of Fenwick’s confession was the retirement of Godolphin. He was the last Tory in the ministry, and was induced to resign through the artifices of Sunderland, at the instigation

<sup>1</sup> See also letters of Whig ministers to Shrewsbury in preceding chapters.

of the Whig party. "My Lord Godolphin is directly tricked in this matter, and has suffered himself to be cozened into an offer to lay down, and is surprised in having his offer accepted, and, I have reason to think, sees it and repents it," wrote Somers to Shrewsbury.<sup>1</sup>

Fenwick meanwhile had succeeded in getting one of the witnesses against him out of the country. He felt now secure against conviction, but the Whigs were not to be so easily baulked of vengeance; they brought in a Bill of Attainder, which, after a long struggle, passed the Lords by a majority of seven. Fenwick was executed on 28th January 1697. The Whigs were triumphant. Somers was made Lord Chancellor and Baron Somers of Evesham. Russell became Earl of Orford, at which he grumbled because Portland had had the Garter. Montague was made First Lord of the Treasury. The triumph of the party reached its height when the success of William's policy was vindicated by the Treaty of Ryswick in September of the same year and his recognition as King of England by Louis XIV. On his return to England in November William "was received by the City of London in a sort of triumph with all the magnificence he would admit. Some progress was made in preparing triumphal arches, but he put a stop to it. He seemed by a natural modesty to have contracted an antipathy to all vain shows." The Protestant succession was secured, England was at peace and prosperous, Europe was set free from French aggression, England could once more lift her head among nations.

<sup>1</sup> Coxe's *Shrewsbury Correspondence*.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### TORY REACTION—ROCHESTER

WITH the Peace of Ryswick, September 1697, the long and costly war that William had waged with France came to a conclusion. The Nine Years' War had doubled the price of corn in England, and besides its cost in men had accounted for an expenditure of sixty millions sterling. But it had great results. Portland's conduct of the negotiations had left William recognised by Louis as King of England.<sup>1</sup>

William had brought the war to a successful conclusion: he had now not only obtained the recognition of the Protestant succession, he had secured the rights and liberties of England and of Europe against the aggressions of Louis XIV. But he knew it was only a breathing space. The King of France had secured a respite to prepare for another struggle; the death of

<sup>1</sup> William's offer to James II.—to pay an annual jointure to James's Queen, and to bring up his son in England as successor to the throne, provided that the Prince was educated as a Protestant, and provided that James left St Germain's for Italy or the south of France—was rejected by James. It was subsequently mentioned to Louis by Bentinck.

the King of Spain, Charles II., which might occur at any moment, without a direct heir, would produce a European scramble for his vast dominions.

William made a triumphal entry into London, and peace was celebrated by public rejoicings. On 3rd December, Parliament, which had hitherto loyally supported the Crown, met for the last session. But in the interval between the conclusion of peace and its assembling a violent controversy had been carried on. It was contended that with the conclusion of peace the necessity for keeping up a standing army was at an end. Both Tories and Whigs regarded it as the instrument of tyranny; the navy at sea, and the militia at home, it was believed, would suffice to protect England. A war of pamphlets was carried on. In vain Somers, in an astute and diplomatic paper known as the *Balancing Letter*, recommended that a temporary army should be maintained, whose existence should be annually prolonged or vetoed by Parliament.

The King met his Parliament with a plain statement of his own views:—"The circumstances of affairs abroad are such, that I think myself obliged to tell you my opinion, that England cannot be safe without a land force, and I hope we shall not give those who mean us ill the opportunity of effecting that under the notion of a peace, which they could not bring to pass by a war." William had not forgotten Marlborough's attempt, when he was at the height of his Jacobite intrigues, to get rid of a standing army. In a committee of the whole House, Harley, with whose career

we shall presently deal more fully, and who had been for some time making his mark as a leader of the Tory Opposition, proposed and carried a resolution that the army should be reduced to the force that had been maintained after the Peace of Nimwegen in 1679, which the Government interpreted to mean 10,000 men. The speech from the Throne was declared by his enemies to have been inspired by Sunderland. As much was said openly in the House of Commons. Sunderland's supporters in the House were not men of any reputation. Guy had been dismissed the secretaryship of the Treasury for dishonesty; Trevor, the Speaker, who had had to retire, and Duncombe, a wealthy goldsmith, were not men who carried weight. His colleagues in the Ministry were profoundly annoyed at the advancement of Mr Under-Secretary Vernon to a secretaryship of State, to which they had intended that Tom Wharton should be appointed. Vernon had been secretly supported by Sunderland, though he had publicly espoused Wharton's claims; and when, on Trumbull's retirement, Vernon was summoned to Kensington and returned with the Seals, without any consultation with the other ministers, they felt that they had the Lord Chamberlain to thank for it.

Vernon himself was a trustworthy but timid and mediocre man. He had already written to Shrewsbury in October 1697: "You are coming into a strange intricacy. My Lord Chamberlain [Sunderland], in some companies, declared for my Lord Wharton,

and knows there is no such thing intended. My Lord Wharton shows a willingness to accept it, and, at the bottom, has no mind to it, or as your Grace foresees will soon be weary of it. . . . You know one [himself] is secretly designed for secretary, and he is utterly incapable of it." He wrote again acquainting the Duke of his appointment: "God knows I have little joy of it." Thus it came about that Sunderland found himself once more in a slippery position, when his enemies proposed to move an address to the King requesting his banishment from his court and councils. William himself condescended to intervene in order to retain the services of so able a servant as Sunderland, whom he might well consider no less unscrupulous than some of his colleagues. He attempted to bring about a reconciliation between him and Wharton, who returned him a cold and sullen refusal. Sunderland was now thoroughly frightened. He lost his nerve, and without waiting to consult a meeting of his friends, whom he had summoned to his house to advise him, hurried off to Kensington and resigned office. "My Lord Sunderland," wrote Vernon to Shrewsbury, "last night delivered up his key and staff. He was with the King about a quarter of an hour, before the Cabinet sat, and when he came out of the closet he took me down to his lodgings, and said he had pressed the King he might resign, not being able to bear any longer the life he had led. That the King did not think he should leave his key there, but gave him leave to put it into my hands, which he accord-

ingly did, cutting it off from his side." He told Vernon "that there was no rack like to what he suffered, by being ground as he had been between Lord Monmouth and Lord Wharton." "The King," he added, "is very much concerned at his going off." The quarrels in the Cabinet were peculiarly disastrous at this moment, when the vexed question of the resumption of the Crown lands was shortly to be raised.

The Parliament, besides granting a sum sufficient for bestowing temporary half-pay on disbanded officers, and making liberal provision for the navy, had settled on William £700,000 a year for life; public burdens, in spite of some slight reduction in taxation, were still heavy, and it began to be suggested that, if the lavish grants of Crown land made during recent years could be resumed, taxation might be materially lightened. The Opposition attempted in February 1698 to bring in a Bill for resuming all grants of Crown property made since the Revolution; the ministry ingenuously shelved the question by an additional proposal to include the grants of Charles II. and James II., which would have hoist the Tories with their own petard, as these grants had been chiefly made to them.

While an unsuccessful attempt to convict Montague of peculation was going on in the House, the King was occupied with more important matters than party squabbles, which he had in vain tried to adjust. He was engaged in negotiations for the treaty, afterwards known as the First Partition Treaty, for a settlement of the King of Spain's inheritance among

the different claimants. He returned home, and met his Parliament at the end of the year, in December. This Parliament met in a bad temper, and it must be admitted that the difficulties with which William had now to contend were to some extent his own fault. There had been a general election in which a good many new members had been returned, and though they were largely Whig, they were not Ministerialist, and they united with the extreme Tories to form the "Country Party." The Government foresaw difficulties in managing them, but the King, preoccupied with foreign affairs, proud of the success with which he had negotiated a treaty which should preserve the European balance of power by saving from the grasp of Louis XIV. the bulk of the Spanish dominions, could not be prevailed upon to attend seriously to domestic factions. "He did not seem to lay this to heart so much as was fitting, and stayed long beyond sea."

Parliament, which generally met in November, was prorogued till December, owing to the King's delay; the members had to hang about town, which "soured their spirits." When the King did return, the ministers refused to bring in a Bill for an army of 20,000 men. They objected that they could not hope to carry it, and while they were timidly waiting events, a private member proposed to reduce the land forces to 7000 men, all of whom should be the King's natural-born subjects. By this clause would be ensured the dismissal of William's famous Dutch Guards—the veterans who had shared all his danger

and his glories, and whom he might well count as among his only loyal servants—as well as the French Protestant refugees who had also accompanied him to England in 1688. But at this time there reigned an insensate spirit of hostility, both against the King and against all foreigners. It is reflected in the poem of Defoe:—

“Ye Heavens regard! almighty Jove look down,  
And view thy injured monarch on the throne;  
On their ungrateful heads due vengeance take,  
Who sought his aid, and then his part forsake.  
Witness, ye powers! it was our call alone  
Which now our pride makes us ashamed to own.”

(From *The True-born Englishman*.)

The King himself comments on it in writing to Ginkel: “It is not to be conceived how people here are set against the foreigners. You will easily judge on whom this reflects. There is a spirit of ignorance and malice prevails here beyond conception.” In another letter he says: “It is not possible to be more sensibly touched than I am, at my not being able to do more for the poor refugee officers who have served me with so much zeal and fidelity. I am afraid the good God will punish the ingratitude of the nation. Assuredly on all sides my patience is put to the trial.” To the Houses of Parliament he took a tone of quiet dignity: “Though in our present circumstances there appears great hazzard in breaking such a number of the troops, and though I might think myself unkindly used, that those Guards, who came over with me to your

assistance, and have constantly attended me in all the actions wherein I have been engaged, should be removed from me; yet it is my fixed opinion that nothing can be so fatal to us, as that any distrust or jealousy should arise between me and my people." But when the time drew near for the parting with his gallant and faithful comrades-in-arms, the King's heart failed him, and he stooped to ask as a favour what he ought to have claimed as a right.

Lord Ranelagh, Master of the Horse, bore down to the House the following message, written with William's own hand: "His Majesty is pleased to let the House know that the necessary preparations are made for transporting the Guards who came with him into England; . . . unless out of consideration to him the House be disposed to find a way for continuing them longer in his service, which his Majesty would take very kindly."

When their refusal was returned to him the King walked for some time up and down the room in silence, with his eyes fixed on the ground. Then, throwing out his arms with a passionate gesture, "If I had a son," he exclaimed, "by God, these Guards should not quit me." Once more he resolved to leave England, and drew up a speech in which he told the ungrateful country that he had come to save: "Feeling . . . that you have so little regard to my advice that you take no manner of care of your own security, and that you expose yourselves to evident ruin by divesting yourselves of the only means

of defence, it would not be just or reasonable that I should be witness of your ruin." But once more the King's self-restraint got the better of his just indignation: and the Guards went.

The Tories again returned to the attack on Montague, whose well-known rapacity was making him increasingly unpopular, and who had bestowed on his brother the lucrative post of Auditor to the Exchequer with a view to its resumption by himself; but while the House was again discussing the question of the grants of Crown lands, the King prorogued Parliament in May and went to Holland, "to breathe a little beyond sea," as he wrote to Galway.

When he returned in 1699 the Tory reaction was stronger and the temper of the Commons more contentious than ever. Montague, impatient of the attack that had already been made on him, had retired to the peaceful seclusion of the auditorship, that he had held in reserve. But Somers, the great Whig leader, calm and impeccable, was still a target for the Opposition. They first attacked him on a ridiculous charge of having been privy to the exploits of the notorious Captain Kidd, who, having been authorised to destroy the pirates with which the Indian Ocean was then infested, turned pirate himself and out-heroded Herod. A majority of the House exonerated him. Somers himself was at this time in very weak health. He complains in writing to Shrewsbury of his sufferings from the stone, and an acquaintance notes that "his great attendance in the Court of Chancery, the House of

Lords, and at the Council table, had so impaired his health, that every year about that time, he used to be brought very low, and disabled from business." His enemies, the same writer adds, had accused him of malingering. Burnet himself was the next object of attack in the Commons. He had been made preceptor to the little Duke of Gloucester, and his enemies in the Commons attempted to procure his removal : but the majority in his favour was increased by the influence and exertions of Marlborough, who felt that the House might turn their attention from the character and antecedents of the little Duke's preceptor to those of his governor. Defeated once more, the Opposition returned to the charge on Somers for having received a grant of Crown property. Once more they failed, but a more serious weapon was now wielded by them.

The question of the grants of Irish land has already been mentioned. Briefly stated, the position was this : It had been proposed in 1690 to utilise the Irish lands forfeited after the rebellion to the public service ; but nothing further had been done in the matter, and the King, who then assumed that these lands were at his own disposal, had, with more generosity than discretion, bestowed a very large portion of them on his personal friends, on Romney, on Albemarle, and on Portland's eldest son. Lady Orkney had come in for a small settlement amounting to about £4000 a year, and spitefully asserted by the Opposition to be worth £24,000. Here was revenue which should have gone to lighten taxation, instead of enriching favourites and

foreigners, exclaimed the King's enemies. A Bill for the resumption of the forfeited lands passed the Commons, and being tacked to the Land Tax Bill, was sent up to the Lords. A crisis abroad made peace at home of the first importance to William at this juncture. The Bill was passed by the Lords at his own instigation, after which he prorogued Parliament in April 1700. At this time the King's resentment, "which was much provoked, broke out into some instances, which gave such handles to his enemies as they wished for, and they improved those advantages which his ill conduct gave them with much industry, so as to alienate the nation from him."

The repeated attacks on Somers and the impossibility of continuing to govern with so discontented a ministry prevailed on William to attempt the substitution of a Tory Cabinet. Accordingly, he now took the decisive step of requesting the resignation of that one of his Ministers in whom he had the most confidence and esteem. So soon as Somers was sufficiently recovered to come to court, "the King told him it was necessary for his service that he should part with the Seals, and he wished he would make the delivering them up his own act." Somers excused himself for not complying. His friends, he said, had urged him to retain the Seals, since his resignation might be interpreted as fear or guilt. He delivered up the Seals on the King's command. Thus he was discharged from the great office he had held with a reputation for capacity, diligence, and integrity which the most artful attacks of his

enemies could not sully. He was succeeded by a mediocre but honest man, Sir Nathan Wright, a good common-lawyer, but with talents wholly unequal to such a post. He owed his promotion to Rochester.

In December 1700, William dissolved Parliament and summoned Rochester and Godolphin to his Cabinet. Lawrence Hyde, Earl of Rochester, was the second son of the Lord Chancellor Clarendon, and brother of James II.'s first wife. Consequently he was uncle to William by marriage. The pretentiousness of the Hydes in consequence of their intimate connection with the Royal family was ridiculed even in the street ballads of the day—these ballads which, while newspapers were in their infancy or before they had attained to it, played the most important part in commenting on, spreading, or criticising current events and rumours. We have seen that Rochester's eldest brother, Clarendon, adhered to the religion and the interests of the abdicating Royal family, after nervously wavering for a time on the arrival of William. He reverted to his former principles when he saw others preferred before him, and, refusing to take the oath of allegiance, intrigued against the Government. He was leniently treated by William out of consideration for his near relationship to his wife. The younger brother, Lawrence Hyde, was a man of considerable ability. He had travelled as a diplomatist, had seen much of the world, and was a not unskilful writer. At the same time he was irritable, self-sufficient, and uncontrolled. He was incapable of bearing honours with dignified superiority,

or adverse fortune with restrained indifference. He was inflated by prosperity and exasperated by rebuffs, and his want of self-control made him enemies. At the same time he wielded a certain amount of influence. He was a consistent Tory, a zealous churchman, and a loyal supporter of the prerogative. It was Charles II. who created him Earl of Rochester, and gave him the office of First Commissioner of the Treasury. He was opposed by Halifax, whose accusation against him of malversation necessitated the vacation of his position at the Treasury. His subsequent promotion to the position of Lord President provoked the famous comment from Halifax: "I have seen people kicked downstairs, but my Lord Rochester is the first person I ever saw kicked upstairs."

Rochester retained his post at James II.'s accession, and stood high in his favour, but he shall give his own account of this improvement in his fortunes. Lawrence Hyde was wont to indulge in long moral communings with himself, searchings of heart, and self-examinations. In January 1685 he had lost his favourite child, Anne Hyde, wife of the young Lord Ossory, "having been married with all the plenty and greatness that might make her life easy and comfortable." On the anniversary of her death he consoled himself with a "meditation" in a kind of religious exercise in which he attributed the blow that had fallen upon him to Divine vengeance for his sins, and sought in spirit to propitiate the Almighty with penitence and tears. The words were written for his own eyes

only ; there is no reason to distrust the sincerity of his feeling :—

“ After this I was beginning to turn myself to God, in weeping and in prayer ; in bowing myself down under the weight of his mighty displeasure ; in repenting the sins I had committed, by which I had drawn down this untimely death upon my innocent child ; in acknowledging that I had not served him as I ought, and that for the many blessings I had received of his hands throughout a long, uninterrupted course of this world’s happiness. . . . I had been preserved in his Majesty’s favour and countenance, that I seemed to be like a tree planted by the water side, whose leaf did not wither, and whatsoever I did seemed to prosper. That going on to a greater share of the King’s goodness, I was promoted to honour and titles, and places of the greatest trust and confidence . . . and in the midst of this I had my wife lying weak and worn with long and continual sickness ; and now as it were knocked quite on the head with this cruel blow ;—a wife with whom I had lived long and happily, and had reason to be well pleased, whose fainting heart and weak spirit I was to keep up when I had none myself.”

There is a curious mixture of sincere if rather self-conscious piety and bathos in this document that paints the man by his own hand better than pages of description could do. In the midst of his resolutions to lead a retired and amended life, Charles II. died, or, as Lawrence Hyde expresses it, “ In a moment a King is struck with a fit of apoplexy and dies like a common man. . . . And by the grace and favour of his Majesty

that now reigns I became immediately snatched out of these peaceable and quiet intentions and contemplations, to attend him and his service in his entering on the throne, and quickly after was translated in my own person with a more eminent and splendid station in the world than I had been before."

Two letters of the little Lady Ossory to her father have been preserved. He had written to censure her for some irregularity in her husband's accounts. One can fancy the letter, stilted, and with a certain biblical eloquence of denunciation.

His daughter replies in a kind of childish hurry and eagerness to propitiate her "dear papa"—

"The court's being in town made me so much at St James' that I had not time," but "I am sure if you knew the torment and concern I have been in to find I have displeased you, you would think it punishment enough for me ; for I did not sleep all night, and my head aches so I can hardly see to write, so pray let me hear, as soon as you can, that you have forgiven me, if you have any pity for her that is, and will ever be, your most dutiful daughter and humble servant."

She wrote again next day :—

"I can now, dear Papa, begin with telling you that I have been all this day very busy looking over my Lord's accounts, and do find them in very good order. . . . I am great hopes to-night of a letter from you that will tell me you are satisfied with me again ; for once more I assure you, dear Papa, there is no pain in the world like your displeasure."

Poor little Lady Ossory ! She passes across the page

of history in these two letters like a breath of youth and innocence in a greedy and corrupt world. "Her kindness and observance of me . . . hath gained very much upon my affections," wrote her husband's grandfather, Ormond, to Rochester, and one hopes that her husband was more feeling and less wooden than the letter he wrote to her father on her death. She died of a miscarriage, and it was thought her death was partly caused by a mysterious dream which acted on her nervous, sensitive temperament. On the death of her sister she was awakened by a knocking at her door. She called to her maid to answer it, but receiving no answer, went to open it herself, when she saw there a cloaked and hooded figure, whom she recognised as her sister. Upon which she cried out, "Sister, is it you? What makes you come in this manner?" And telling her not to be afraid, the other replied that she had come to tell her of her approaching death.

In spite of his recent ignominious retirement from the Treasury Board, Rochester was made Lord Treasurer, and he had the satisfaction of seeing his late opponent, Halifax, relegated to the Presidency of the Council. Rochester's principles were soon put to the test. As Easter drew near James privately acquainted the three ministers in whom he had most confidence, Sunderland, Rochester, and Godolphin, with his intention to hear Mass publicly with the full ceremonial. The three men behaved characteristically. Godolphin held the office of Chamberlain to Mary of Modena, and already was accustomed to attend her at chapel.

Sunderland was never troubled with any conscientious qualms where his interests were concerned, but Rochester was the avowed and unyielding supporter of the Church of England. He owed his following in the country to his reputation for orthodoxy. He could not afford to jeopardise it by any compromise. He retired into the country till the festival was over. He had no popularity to spare, and his well-known boorishness was commemorated in the ballad *Lamentable Lorry* :—

“ To those that ask boons  
 He swears by God’s oons,  
 And chides them as if they came there to steal spoons.”

As James began to elaborate his policy of proselytising England, Rochester’s position grew increasingly difficult. When moderate counsels failed, he tried to influence James through his mistress, Catharine Sedley. Ugly, like all James II.’s mistresses (Charles II. once said he believed his brother had his mistresses given him by his priests for penance), Catharine Sedley was at the same time clever and audacious. Her father, Sir Charles Sedley, was the famous wit and debauchee who outraged even the London of the Restoration by appearing in a state of nature on a street balcony and haranguing the passers-by. Catharine’s influence over the King was boundless, and surprised no one more than herself, for, as she frankly admitted, she had no beauty, and her Royal lover was incapable of appreciating her brains. Rochester now attempted through her influence to prevent James from giving offence to

the Church of England. Lady Rochester herself stooped to aid and abet the design ; Catharine was coached to point out to James that he was running headlong to destruction. Their schemes were nullified by the Queen. They had not taken into consideration the force of the passion of jealousy that the King's infidelity had raised. Between his priests and his wife, James was driven to discard his mistress, and Rochester had now made an enemy of the Queen. She and her priests were not slow in improving the occasion and influencing the repentant King against him. Rochester's influence declined from that time. His obvious vexation and altered looks were noticed by everybody, and noted by the French envoy Bonrepaux. It was about the same time that Rochester was composing the meditation on his daughter's death, which concludes, "Teach me to number the days of this world's greatness, of which I have so great a share, and teach me to look upon them as vanity and vexation of spirit ; and be Thou pleased to forget some of them and to forgive them all."

While Rochester's influence was declining, Sunderland artfully hit upon a means of getting rid of the Treasurer altogether. He assured James that Rochester was secretly disposed to change his religion, and urged the King to discuss the question with him. James, who had a personal kindness for him, wished it extremely, and after a heated argument in which Rochester perceived what was aimed at, he requested that a conference of Protestant and Popish divines might be

arranged, resolving, with a cunning almost equal to that of Sunderland, that it should be very apparent that he sacrificed his place rather than abjure his religion. The conference took place. Rochester lost his temper, and, answering all the priests, said, "not without some scorn, Were these grounds to persuade men to change their religion?" and the King broke off the conference. Meanwhile it leaked out that it had taken place. Men were saying that Rochester was being instructed in Popery. Barillon, the French ambassador, was commissioned by James to visit the Treasurer, and hinted that his recalcitrancy might be attended by unpleasant consequences. "What do you mean?" asked Rochester bluntly. "That the consequence of my not becoming a Catholic will be that I lose my place?"<sup>1</sup> "I speak of no consequences," replied the diplomatist discreetly. "I come as a friend to wish that you may keep your place."

The very next day, Saturday, 4th December 1686, Rochester went to James and told him "that the thing was not kept secret," and "that there was I know not what whispering of it." It was being said that he was conferring with Popish priests, and that he was to lose his place if he did not turn Papist. "I told the King," says Rochester, "with some emotion and trouble in my spirits, 'Your Majesty, I hope, sees that I do all I can to obey you in everything . . . I will do what I can to believe too as you will have me'; but, he added, 'If I must lose all, I must needs tell you, I shall have

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon Corres., Clarke's *Life of James*.

quite other considerations.'” “Oh Lord!” exclaimed James angrily. “Oh, you must needs.” “Sir, I hope it does not offend you,” Rochester hastened to rejoin. In another fortnight Rochester had resigned the white staff, not without very substantial emoluments. He was acclaimed as a martyr to his Church, and in the admiration of his constancy it was forgotten that he had sat on the illegal Ecclesiastical Commission. Clarendon soon followed his brother, Tyrconnel succeeded him as Lord Deputy in Ireland, and when men saw the King's near relations and Royal friends suffer solely for their religion, they began to look to the Protestant Princess who was heir to the throne, for it was now a question whether even toleration was to be extended to Protestants. Meanwhile Rochester continued to be as inconsistent with his principles as he could be without absolutely abrogating them. As Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire he agreed to influence elections in favour of the Declaration of Indulgence.

It was Rochester who urged James to call a Parliament when William had landed, and who took the lead in the Council of Lords that James at last called in this extremity. Rochester soon learned that he had not much to expect from the Prince of Orange. Burnet told Clarendon that William “had a very ill opinion of my brother; and that he must not expect to be employed.” Clarendon, a shifty, mean man, seems to have done his best for his brother at this time. “I went to Windsor chiefly to carry my brother,” he notes in his diary on 16th December 1688. “When the

Prince came from church, I presented my brother to him : he received him very coldly, and said little or nothing to him." The slight was made more pointed by the Prince's sending a messenger afterwards to invite Clarendon to dine with him, while he was walking with his brother—an intentional omission, thought Clarendon. Later, however, Rochester was admitted to kiss hands, and was civilly received by the King, though Mary refused to see him. He warmly supported the proposal for a Regency, but, always complaisant, he took the oath of allegiance rather than jeopardise his government pension. It was not till some years later that he succeeded in gaining his niece Mary's favour, which he obtained through the good graces of Burnet.

The Bishop soon had cause to regret his intercession, for no sooner did Rochester feel secure of the Queen's favour than he began, with his usual indiscretion and violent temper, to set himself against the Whigs ; and "being naturally warm and apt to heat himself in company, he broke out into sallies, which were carried about and created jealousies even of the Queen herself." Worse still, from the Bishop's point of view, Rochester opposed the leniency that was being shown to dissenters, and "of endeavouring to gain them by gentle and calm methods," and was all for persecution and violence. Rochester discreetly supported Mary in the unfortunate quarrel with Anne, and was made a Privy Councillor in 1692. He never succeeded in gaining the confidence of William, who seems to have quickly

regretted ever summoning Rochester to his counsels in the short-lived Tory ministry of 1700. "He [the King] now saw that the Tories were at heart irreconcilable to him ; in particular he was extremely uneasy with the Earl of Rochester, of whose imperious and intractable temper he complained much, and seemed resolved to disengage himself quickly from him, and never to return to him any more." He told the Bishop of Salisbury "that the year Rochester directed the Council was one of the uneasiest of his whole life."

## CHAPTER XIX

### RELATIONS WITH THE COURT OF LOUIS— ROBERT HARLEY AND THE SUCCESSION

As sometimes, after a day of glorious weather, the sun settles into a deep cloud-bank, and yet, at the moment of setting, penetrates the curtain, and sends its level beams across the country, so the closing years of William's reign were obscured by apparent failure, by dislike and ingratitude—and even it seemed that the brilliance of his genius was clouded. His one friend separated from him by misunderstanding, his life-work in jeopardy from the stupid factiousness and personal jealousies of the English Parliament, his health broken, he declined upon boon companions such as Keppel and Wharton. It is perhaps to this period that the story belongs which is quoted in all seriousness by Dalrymple, a man who was careful in weighing evidence, and who had it from the Duke of Newcastle, the same John Holles who had entertained William at Welbeck on his Royal progress in 1695. "At this period," says Dalrymple, "his [the King's] mind, wasted with vexation, might recruit itself with wine." At one of

William's small private parties, at which he sometimes, like all the men of his day, drank to excess, the talk had turned apparently on modes of government, and turning to Lord Wharton, William said jokingly, "Tom, I know what you wish for, you wish for a republic." Lord Wharton answered, "And not a bad thing, Sir, neither." "No, no," said the King, "I shall disappoint you there ; I will bring over King James' son upon you." On which Wharton, making a very affected low bow, said, with a sneer, "That is as your Majesty pleases." This impertinence was taken in good part by the King, who was wont to allow too much licence at these parties. Another anecdote comes from the same source. The Earl of Pembroke had been invited to one of these dinners, and the King was warned that he was quarrelsome in his cups. "He laughed, and said he would defy any man to quarrel with him as long as he could make the bottle go round. What was foretold, however, happened, and Lord Pembroke was carried from the room and put to bed." When told next morning what he had done, he hastened to the Palace, and threw himself upon his knees. "No apologies," said the King ; "I was told you had no fault in the world but one, and I'm glad to find it is there, for I do not like your faultless people." Then, taking him by the hand, added, "Make not yourself uneasy ; these accidents over a bottle are nothing among friends."

It was Pembroke whom Sunderland cynically suggested should be put upon the throne, when he heard

from his safe retreat at Althorp that William intended to retire from England. "Does he so: there is Tom of Pembroke, who is as good a block of wood as a king can be cut out of. We will send for him and make him our King."

But in regretting a great man's moments of weakness, it must be remembered in extenuation that William was now in a state of health which would have made a lesser man resign the reins of power altogether. An observer, writing of him at this time, says: "The King, who at best was a man of a feeble constitution, was now falling under an ill habit of body; his legs were much swelled . . . the state of things among us gives a melancholy prospect. The nation was falling under a general discontent and a dislike of the King's person and government, and the King on his part seemed to grow weary of us and of our affairs; and partly of the fret from the opposition he had of late met with, and partly from his ill-health, he was falling as it were into a lethargy of mind."

At this time the hopes of the nation in the Protestant succession were dashed by the sudden death of Anne's only surviving child, the little Duke of Gloucester. This promising boy may easily have succumbed to mental overstrain, from his tutor's account of his education. He had been a weakly, delicate child, and his health had probably suffered owing to the anxieties and fatigues his mother had experienced before his birth at the time of her flight to the North in 1688. Burnet,

who had been his preceptor for two years, declares his progress to have been amazing, and his memory wonderful, his religious knowledge beyond imagination. "The last thing I explained to him," says his good tutor with retrospective melancholy, "was the Gothic constitution and the beneficiary and feudal law." The little Duke fell ill the day after his eleventh birthday, 24th July 1700, and his illness being at first imputed to the fatigues of the day, was neglected. His mother bore his death with a singular resignation and piety; but as one who had already buried sixteen other children, her maternal solicitude may well have become attenuated.

In substituting a Tory for a Whig Government, William had only changed the direction of attack from the Ministry to the Opposition, instead of from the Opposition to the Ministry. But in order to explain the personal onslaughts on the King's friends and advisers, it is necessary to say a few words about the foreign crisis, or series of crises, that had engrossed William's attention ever since 1698.

We have alluded already to the question of the Spanish inheritance. The inheritance consisted of Spain, the Netherlands, the kingdom of Naples and Sicily, the Duchy of Milan, besides the American possessions. These immense territories were claimed by Louis XIV.'s grandson, Philip Duke of Anjou, by the Emperor's<sup>1</sup> son, the Archduke Charles of Austria,

<sup>1</sup> Leopold I., 1658-1705.

and by Joseph, the Electoral Prince of Bavaria. If either France or Austria succeeded, the whole balance of power in Europe would be upset. William, of course, feared before all things such an overwhelming accession of power to France. All the diplomatists of the day were anxious to settle this question in advance and avert the catastrophe of a European war, and in October 1698 the First Partition Treaty was agreed upon between England, Holland, and France. It left the bulk of the Spanish dominions to the Electoral Prince Joseph, who, as a comparatively insignificant claimant, could not upset the balance of European power. The treaty was negotiated in its early stages through the Earl of Portland; and his magnificent embassy to France had a double effect in paving the way for a settlement, and in placing the relations between the courts of France and of Great Britain on a new basis. Like many other important negotiations, its success was not immediately apparent, and even bore in some aspects the appearance—to quote an expression used by William—the “appearance of a refusal.” So far as the Spanish succession was concerned, the questions settled had to be reopened, for the Electoral Prince Joseph died in January 1699, and his death made a Second Partition Treaty necessary. But there were other subjects which to Portland and to William were of nearly equal importance.

In the informal negotiations before Ryswick,<sup>1</sup> which the Earl of Portland had conducted with Marshal

<sup>1</sup> Peace of Ryswick signed 1697.

Boufflers, the question of the presence of James II. at the court of Louis XIV. had been one of the chief topics of discussion. Louis was unwilling to withdraw his protection from James. William required an undertaking that plots against himself by James should not be engineered and directed from St Germain's. The difficulty was met, temporarily, by a general clause, on which Boufflers and Portland agreed, that Louis would not countenance the King of England's enemies. The consolidation of this agreement was necessary, and in order to effect it Portland was sent on the embassy to France. The Duke of St Albans had been sent on a complimentary mission; the embassy of Portland was one in which magnificence was joined to its political importance. It was, says Macaulay, the most magnificent that England had ever sent to any foreign court. Twelve men of honourable birth and ample fortune, some of whom afterwards filled high offices in the State, attended the mission at their own charges. Each of them had his own carriage, his own horses, and his own train of servants. Rapin the historian went as tutor to Lord Woodstock, the Earl of Portland's son; Mathew Prior was Secretary of Legation. The citizens of Paris and the courtiers of Versailles, though more accustomed than the Londoners to magnificent pageantry, allowed that no Minister from any foreign state had ever made so superb an appearance as Portland. His horses, his liveries, his plate were unrivalled: and on the day of his public entrance into Paris, in a carriage drawn by eight Neapolitan grays

(with orange ribbons), the streets and balconies were crowded with spectators.

Portland himself enjoyed a popularity which contrasts strangely with the extreme unpopularity he had incurred in England. It is not surprising. He could hardly speak or write English: French he knew as well as Dutch. In England he had prospered and accumulated wealth; in France he appeared as one who disbursed it; for the hospitality of the Embassy was as lavish as its display, and was like a second court of Versailles in its expenditure. In England he was thought niggardly, dull, greedy, surly. In brilliant Paris he was regarded as a model of grace, of dignity, of munificence, a dexterous negotiator and a finished gentleman. He was liked the better for being Dutch: he was at all events no traitor. The noble and the powerful vied to do him honour.

Thus his mission as upholding the dignity, and, by implication, the solidity of the new régime in England was completely successful. Its diplomatic success was less immediately obvious.

The secret instructions in the handwriting of King William, given to the Earl of Portland, are preserved at Welbeck Abbey.

“SECRET INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE EARL OF PORTLAND  
GOING TO FRANCE AS AMBASSADOR-EXTRAORDINARY.

“To devise expedients for preventing a war which the death of the King of Spain without children might cause.

“To use all possible diligence to induce the most Christian King to remove from his realm King James and his family, or at least to keep them as far from his court and the sea-coasts as he can.

“And touching all conspirators against my life.

“KENSINGTON, 8 *January* 1698.”

At first everything went well. The ambassador was received with as much complaisance by Louis as by the Parisians, and no prince or courtier was slow to follow their master's lead. St Simon speaks of Louis as welcoming the ambassador “comme une espèce de divinité”; which, being interpreted, means that Portland was invited to hold a candle in the King's bedchamber and even to go within the balustrade surrounding the Royal couch—honours which, to St Simon's imagination, were little short of celestial. Bentinck writes to William: “It is impossible to convey how highly your Majesty is esteemed here, and what high notions everyone has concerning you, nor how eager all men of quality are in telling me so.”

But the actual progress of the negotiations was slow. Louis would not exile James. James, strong in the conviction that he would not, and having none of that over-refined delicacy which would have induced him to relieve his host of the embarrassment of his presence, aggravated the difficulty of the situation by thrusting his court under the nose of the ambassador. Portland stuck to his point with native obstinacy; and he expressed fierce indignation at seeing on the terraces and in the antechambers of Versailles men who had

plotted against the life of his master. "When they come near me," said he—and his words were reported to Louis—"my blood congeals in my veins." Louis employed Boufflers to smooth matters. Nothing could have suited Portland better : for he knew that what he said would be reported to Louis, and it gave him the desired opportunity of coming to grips with the question. He bluntly said that when he talked with Boufflers they had not contemplated that St Germain's was to continue to be an asylum for outlaws and murderers. Boufflers remonstrated, and said, uneasily, that he had never given a pledge that James was to leave France. No, retorted Portland, but when I proposed it, you suggested Avignon as an alternative—and he added that he proposed to tell his most Christian Majesty King Louis that such had been the agreement.

Boufflers and Villeroy having in vain tried to stir him from this position, Louis himself granted him a long private audience. His Christian Majesty explained that, as a man of honour and humanity, he could not refuse to offer shelter to an unfortunate King, his first cousin ; and being a man of inflexible obstinacy as well as of honour and humanity, even Portland could not induce any change in his attitude. But the ambassador had the satisfaction of thoroughly thrashing out, with a directness all his own, the question of the assassins and plotters who surrounded James ; and though in this matter also Louis endeavoured to evade responsibility, Portland's representations were not without effect.

Portland himself was disappointed, and he wrote to William expressing his dissatisfaction. William was evidently perturbed lest his old friend's temper should be unequal to sustaining the rebuff, and he writes :—

“ $\frac{13}{23}$  Feb., 1698.

“Notwithstanding what has happened I should like you to continue making your court as before, which I believe will irritate you, knowing your temperament as I do. But it is neither my interest nor my inclination to make him angry at present, and you must try to take no notice of what is done only too plainly. I am beginning to be extremely impatient to have you again with me, loving you always the same.”

It was not the only letter which William wrote to prevent Portland from feeling that the mission had been a failure, even when it became evident that James could not be stirred from St Germain's, and the knowledge of it was becoming bruited in England. He writes :—

“26 Feb.  
8 Mar. 1698.

“The refusal you have experienced is beginning to be known here. It was thought better it should come from the Jacobites than from me or from my Ministers. This might make a better effect and impression on the Parliament, but to speak frankly I do not think this will matter one way or the other, since here at present they think of nothing except of turning everything to their own ends. For example, I think if King J. were obliged to withdraw from France they would say there is certainly no more to

fear, and if he stays there they will take not the least notice of it. This is now the prevailing spirit here, where they think of nothing at all but of one party injuring the other."

In yet another letter William assures his friend and ambassador that "if you could see to the bottom of my heart you would be as satisfied with your conduct in France as I am"; and, friendship apart, the King was quite sincere in his assertion. For Portland had established the relations of the two countries on a new footing, as was shown by the new negotiations which Louis himself set on foot in respect of the Spanish succession, and by the despatch of Tallard to England to discuss them. William was the King who mattered, and James could never be more to France or to Louis than an unfortunate guest and relation.

By the Second Partition Treaty the greater part of the Spanish dominions fell to the Archduke Charles of Austria. But the pride and patriotism of the Spanish people were excited by this high-handed division of the inheritance of their imbecile King. Portocarrero, the Spanish minister, supported France. William, it was thought, was too weak to enforce his terms, and Charles was induced to sign a will leaving the whole of the Spanish dominions to Philip, Louis XIV.'s grandson. Louis XIV. accepted the will in defiance of his treaties.<sup>1</sup> "Whatever I do, I shall be blamed," he said indifferently to the ladies of his court who were waiting to hear his decision at the doors of the council-room.

<sup>1</sup> Death of Charles II. of Spain, Nov. 1700.

Meanwhile in England the Partition Treaties were to the last degree unpopular. Somers, writing to William from Tunbridge Wells on this subject earlier, tells him that "there is a deadness and want of spirit in the nation, universally so, as not at all to be disposed to the thought of entering into a new war, and that they seem to be tired out with taxes to a degree beyond what was discerned till it appeared upon the occasion of the late elections." He concludes with an apology that "these thoughts are so ill put together. These waters are known to disturb and discompose the head, so as almost totally to disable one from writing." In the First Partition Treaty, William had not consulted his English Ministers till the negotiations were already completed. Then Somers was directed to consult with his colleague, and return full powers, sealed, with blanks left for the names of Commissioners. Shrewsbury, Orford, and Montague were conferred with by Somers on this occasion. The news of the Second Partition Treaty in 1700 was ill received. Indignation was felt at the secrecy with which the treaties had been conducted, and the danger of involving England in a European war which they had incurred. Nor were the terms popular with anybody. Once more Jacobite hopes revived and French gold poured into England. Philip of Anjou, it was said, had promised the Prince of Wales that in due time he would take care of his interests.

William saw the immediate necessity of reconstituting a European Coalition, but he held himself in great

reserve the better to manage his new Ministers and their party ; and, seeing that the House of Commons was entirely preoccupied in party personal squabbles arising out of corruption in the elections, retired to Hampton Court and stayed there. Meanwhile the Tories were busy with the Partition Treaties. They blamed both the matter and manner of the negotiations, and particularly the secrecy with which they had been conducted. Portland, in self-defence, gave the names of those of his colleagues who had been acquainted with the negotiations. In April he was impeached of high crimes and misdemeanours. Somers demanded and obtained leave from the House of Commons to lay before it a full account of his share in the First Partition Treaty, justifying himself so eloquently that if the question had then been put to the vote, he would have been acquitted ; but his enemies artfully prolonged the debate till past midnight, so that the impression caused by his speech had been forgotten, and, by a majority of seven or eight, he was impeached together with Orford (Russell) and Montague, who was now Earl of Halifax.

The Commons, however, knowing that these impeachments would never be carried in the Lords, voted an address to the King demanding the exclusion of the accused from his presence and councils for ever. The Lords now interfered to protect their own order, and sent an address to William praying that he would take no action in the matter before the trial of the impeached. June 17th was fixed for the trial of Lord

Somers. The Lords took up their places in Westminster Hall with the usual ceremonial. The Commons, who resented the refusal of the Lords to allow them longer time to prepare the impeachment, refused to appear. In the absence of any to accuse him, Somers was declared acquitted. The King shortly afterwards prorogued Parliament, 24th June 1701.

The insolent attitude of the Tory party towards William had been already shown in the Succession Act, almost every clause of which was a criticism on his action. The House of Commons, or rather the new Tory party, had for its leader Mr Harley. He had been chosen Speaker in the new Parliament, and, though he was to be more conspicuous in the next reign, had already gained notoriety. Robert Harley was born in 1661 in Bow Street, Covent Garden. His father, Sir Edward Harley, came of a Puritan family and had sat in the Long Parliament in the Roundhead interest. Conspicuous as an opponent of the court, he had been a prominent Exclusionist, and had been arrested on suspicion of complicity in Monmouth's rebellion. On William's landing he and his son Robert declared for the Prince of Orange and held Worcester in his interest.

After the Revolution had been accomplished, Robert Harley was returned to Parliament first for a Cornish borough, and distinguished himself by a narrow, intolerant Whiggism, hostile alike to Tories, Church, and Crown. But, in opposition to William, the Puritan Whig voted with the High Church Tory, and, in

spite of the initial divergence of his views, Harley gradually assumed the position of leader of the Tory party. He began to make his mark. He had an undistinguished presence, and never became an orator. Pope records that he "talked of business in so confused a manner that you did not know what he was about," but, on the other hand, a studious youth had supplied the deficiencies of his education, which had terminated at a private school in Oxfordshire, as it had been intended that he should make the army his career.<sup>1</sup> He was a well-informed man, who frequented the society of men of letters, and his studious bent and good memory enabled him to master Parliamentary records so as to become an authority on Parliamentary procedure. Burnet describes him as "very eminently learned, much turned to politics, and of a very restless ambition. He was a man of great industry and application, and knew forms and the records of Parliament so well, that he was capable both of lengthening out and of perplexing debates. Nothing could answer his aspiring temper; so he . . . joined with the Tories to create jealousies and raise an opposition." A certain reticence that he cultivated impressed people with a sense of his solidity, and any man who wished to pose as a wit and patron of poets might count on commendation in contemporary literature. Thus Prior has left the panegyric :—

<sup>1</sup> Bolingbroke says of Harley: "A man whom fortune meant to make a spy, or at best a captain of miners; and of whom fortune, in one of her whimsical moods, made a general."

“Fain would I godlike Harley’s worth rehearse,  
Heroic virtue in Heroic verse,  
A constellation of Perfection met  
In one great man which few could singly set ;  
The scholar, churchman, patriot, husband, son,  
Each shining in his sphere and all in one.”

He sympathised with the Tory hostility to foreigners and the Tory dislike of a standing army. It was Harley who led the opposition to a standing army in the House of Commons ; who proposed the resolution in 1698 that the troops should be reduced to seven thousand men.

It was not till the Tory administration of 1701 that the succession to the English throne was finally established after the death of the little Duke of Gloucester had unsettled it. The Succession Act was necessary to place the work of the Revolution on a sure foundation. Both parties had neglected to pass it. It had been mentioned in the King’s speech, but lost sight of in factious squabbles. The new Ministers had spoken of it with zeal at first ; when at last it came up for consideration Harley proposed that it should be postponed again while they settled first certain “safeguarding preliminaries of government.” All of these cast reflections on William and his conduct. The new sovereign, for example, was not to leave the kingdom without consent of Parliament. None except born Englishmen were to be capable of holding office or of receiving grants from the Crown. England was not to be engaged in war for the foreign dominions of the

sovereign. Public business was to be done in the Privy Council, and resolutions were to be signed by those members who advised them. Finally, the successor had to be named. An obscure member, Sir John Bowles, who was then disordered in his senses and afterwards quite lost them, was put up to propose the Electress Sophia, mother of George I., granddaughter of James I., and daughter of the beautiful Queen of Bohemia. The Bill was passed and received the assent of the King, and so was secured the Protestant succession in a way which reflected no credit on either party.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE DEATH OF THE KING

WHEN William prorogued Parliament in June, after the abortive impeachment of the Whig Lords, there were already signs that a reaction in favour of Whig principles had begun and that the feeling of the country was veering in his favour. The country at large, indeed, was wearied of the perpetual personal squabbles in Parliament. General dissatisfaction was expressed at the time wasted in the House of Commons, "and that the King was not supported." People began to say to one another that "they had sowed their corn, and the French were a-coming to reap it." In other words, that while William waited for Parliament to supply him with men and money, Louis XIV. was going to undo all the work that England had achieved at so much cost. This feeling found expression in the Kentish Petition, which was sent up to the House of Commons. "We hope," so ran the petition, "that no pretence whatsoever shall be able to create a misunderstanding among ourselves, or the least distrust of his Majesty, whose great actions for their

nation are written in the hearts of his subjects, and can never, without the blackest ingratitude, be forgotten. We most humbly implore this Honourable House to have regard to the Voice of the People! that our religion and safety may be effectually provided for, that your Loyal Addresses may be turned into Bills of Supply, and that his most sacred Majesty (whose prosperous and unblemished reign over us, we pray God long to continue!) may be enabled powerfully to assist his allies before it is too late."

The House of Commons received this "Humble Petition" with contumely and indignation. It was voted "scandalous, infamous, and seditious," and treated as an outrageous breach of privilege. The five gentlemen who brought it up to the House were summarily imprisoned. The King, however, had now the satisfaction of seeing a still stronger proof that public opinion was on his side in opposition to Parliament. The general indignation roused by the Commons' high-handed proceedings was voiced in "The Legion Memorial," drawn up by Defoe, and so called from the number of its signatures. It was addressed to Harley as Speaker of the House of Commons, and reiterated the views of the Kentish petitioners in much stronger terms. It presented "a short abridgment of the nation's grievances, and of the Commons' illegal and unwarrantable practices."

The Commons are reproached for "addressing the King to displace his friends upon bare surmise, before a legal trial"; for "suffering saucy and indecent

reproaches upon his Majesty's person to be made in your House, particularly by that impudent scandal of Parliaments, John Howe . . . . saying openly that 'His Majesty had made a felonious Treaty to rob his neighbours' (Partition Treaty). . . . This is to make a Billingsgate of the House, and setting up to bully your sovereign.

"Publicly neglecting the great work of reformation of manners, though often pressed to it by the King ; to the great dishonour of God and encouragement of vice.

"Being scandalously vicious yourselves, both in your morals and religion, lewd in life and erroneous in doctrine."

Finally, the House is required "to grant suitable supplies that will enable the King to take instant measures to protect the interests of England against France," and is also reminded that "Englishmen are no more to be slaves to Parliaments than to a king."

William now felt secure of some support from the country at home, while abroad the seizure and retention of the Dutch barrier fortresses by Louis XIV. gave him the opportunity for despatching troops there under the command of Marlborough. He followed himself, and in September<sup>1</sup> was able to conclude the Grand Alliance between England, Holland, and the Emperor ; two months were allowed for peaceful negotiations.

The public were in ignorance of what could not but

<sup>1</sup> 1701.

have been known to William at this time, that his days were numbered. His body was wasted, his legs swelled, his voice weakened to a whisper by asthma; but his spirit remained unbroken, and the vigour of his mind undaunted, when he rallied his failing physical energies to the performance of his last great work, the coping-stone of his career, the rousing of Europe to embark on a final struggle with the most Christian King, Louis XIV., whose insatiable greed and despotic government had laid his own country waste.

Meanwhile, James II. was also drawing near his last days. He had latterly led a retired and religious life, going often to the monastery of La Trappe, where his example of pious humility edified the simple-minded monks. His principal amusement was hunting, but the consolations of religion occupied the greater part of his days. For some time it was apprehended that he would not survive till the end of the year, and when in September he grew rapidly worse, Louis XIV. went to visit him. This King, in whom motives of policy were sometimes overborne by sentiment, now "made a resolve," as St Simon puts it, "more worthy of Louis XII. or Francis I. than of his own wisdom." James had already received the last sacrament, and was fallen into a kind of lethargy, when Louis XIV. came to pay him a last visit. He first acquainted the Queen and her son with his intentions, and then went in to the dying King, whose room was full of people, and assured him that he

might die in peace respecting his family, whom he would take under his protection, recognising his son as King of England. The English who were in the room threw themselves upon their knees; all present shed tears, including Louis XIV. himself, over this mark of unexampled generosity; but the confused noise in the room was too great for James to make himself heard, though he tried to speak. On his return to Marly, Louis repeated to all the court what he had said, and nothing was heard but praises and applause.

A few days afterwards James died (on 17th September 1701), and his son, the Old Pretender, was immediately proclaimed at St Germain, King of England, Scotland, and Ireland, with all the ceremonies usual on such occasions.

Mary of Modena retired to the nunnery of Chaillot, there to find consolation, and from here she wrote the following letter to her stepdaughter Anne:—

“I think myself indispensably obliged to defer no longer the acquainting you with a message, which the best of men as well as the best of fathers left with me for you, some few days before his death. He bid me find means to let you know that he forgave you all that’s past from the bottom of his heart (and pray’d to God to do so too, that he gave you his last blessing and pray’d to God to convert your heart)<sup>1</sup> and confirm you in the resolution of repaireing to his son the wrongs done to himself: to which I shall only add, that I join my prayers to his herein, with all my heart, and that I shall make it my business to inspire into

<sup>1</sup> Underlined by the Pretender.

the young man, who is left to my care, the sentiments of his father; for better no man can have" (27th September).

Though the Princess of Denmark was moved by this letter, says James's biographer, "ambition choked the good seed, the Prince of Orange dying not long after."

James II.'s body lay in state for twenty-four hours after his death, while the masses for the dead were said. He had desired a private funeral, with only a bare stone above his body and the inscription "Here lyes King James," and his wishes were respected. The body was conveyed in the evening to the church of the English Benedictines in Paris, attended only by some few priests and servants, and the Duke of Berwick and Lord Middleton. Here it was buried in a side chapel till the people of England should remove it with due honour to Westminster. So died King James, consistent to the last. Allied to the narrowness of his understanding were the virtues of the fanatic. He sacrificed his crown to his religion, as he would also have sacrificed the liberties of his people. "He had no personal vices but of one sort," says one who was little disposed to judge him leniently; "he was still wandering from one amour to another." For these sins of the flesh he sought to atone in his last years by penitence and self-mortification.

The recognition of the Pretender at the French court was immediately notified to William, and his ambassador Manchester was recalled from France. It is easy to imagine the indignation at the English court

not only among Whigs, but even among Jacobites, when the news arrived that the King of France had presumed to nominate a King of England without reference to his subjects. The country was in a flame. No better intelligence could have reached William. For him the event was providential. It raised a wave of loyalty and enthusiasm all over the country. London set the example, and was followed by the nation in a series of loyal addresses to the King, filled with gratitude for the Revolution, fidelity to William and to the Succession as settled by Parliament. When the King returned from Holland (where both at Loo and at the Hague he had been seriously ill), it was to find himself overwhelmed at Hampton Court by petitions and addresses, many of which begged him to dissolve Parliament : "If he would continue to preserve England from Slavery and Popery, members should be returned who would support his designs."

William had already consulted Sunderland and Somers on this step before his return, and Sunderland advised him to recall Somers, who was really the mainstay of his party. Somers wrote that the temper of the nation made it certain that members would be returned who would support his views. The question was laid before the Privy Council. The ministry struggled hard. Godolphin made it clear that he would resign in the event of a dissolution, but the King's friends carried a resolution in favour of it by a small majority. On the 11th November<sup>1</sup> the proclamation came out. Now

<sup>1</sup> 1701.

flamed out great excitement all over the country ; both sides strained every nerve. The commercial instinct of the nation was roused to activity against France by the French ordinances against English manufactures. French domination in Spain, it was thought, would cut off the English wool supply, and English ships would be excluded from the Mediterranean. It was said that such bitterness of party feeling had never been known ; and nowhere was the contest keener than in Gloucestershire, where Jack Howe, the Legion Memorial's "Impudent Scandal of Parliaments," sought re-election.

When Parliament opened on 30th December the parties were about equally represented. The towns returned Whig members, the country districts sent Tories to Westminster ; but both parties were prepared to rally round the King, though the Tories succeeded in securing the re-election of Harley as Speaker, against William's wishes. For the last time William addressed his Parliament in an opening speech—"the best," says a contemporary, "that he, or any other Prince, ever made to his people." It is known to have been his own composition. "My Lords and Gentlemen," it ran, "by the French King's placing his grandson on the throne of Spain, he is in a condition to oppress the rest of Europe, unless speedy and effectual measures be taken. Under this pretence he is become the real master of the whole Spanish monarchy ; he has made it to be entirely depending on France, and disposes of it as of his own dominions ; and by that means he has surrounded

his neighbours in such a manner, that though the name of peace may be said to continue, yet they are put to the expense and inconvenience of war.

“This must affect England in the nearest and most sensible manner : In respect to all our trade, which will soon become precarious in all the various branches of it ; in respect to our peace and safety at home, which we cannot hope should long continue ; and in respect to that part which England ought to take in the preservation of the liberty of Europe.”

After acquainting the Houses with the alliance he had already concluded, the King continued :—“You have yet an opportunity by God’s blessing to secure you and your posterity in the quiet enjoyment of your religions and liberties, if you are not wanting to yourselves, but will exert the ancient vigour of the English nation ; but I tell you plainly, my opinion is, if you do not lay hold on this occasion, you have no reason to hope for another.” The King then urged on the House the paramount importance of maintaining a strong fleet as well as land forces in proportion to those of their allies, and after a grave and earnest warning concerning the preservation of the national credit, and the proper distribution of supplies, he concluded : “I should think it as great a blessing as could befall England, if I could observe you as much inclined to lay aside those unhappy fatal animosities which divide and weaken you, as I am disposed to make all my subjects safe and easy as to any, even the highest offences, committed against me.”

“Let me conjure you to disappoint the only hopes of our enemies by your unanimity. I will add only this : If you do, in good earnest, desire to see England hold the balance of Europe, and to be indeed at the head of the Protestant interest, it will appear by your right improving the present opportunity.”

William III. never appears in a more noble light than on the occasion of this, his valedictory address. He spoke as a prophet from the mountain-top of his wide experience and intimate knowledge of the intricacies of European policies ; and he spoke with a dignified aloofness to the men before him, whose minds had been occupied so long with petty local interests and personal animosities. Notice how he first appeals to that interest which he knows will most nearly touch them, the commercial instinct, striving to raise the flame of patriotism through their purses. He turns to appeal to their pride of race. Be worthy of your past, he says in effect, and in this great crisis of your nation's history, unite in the face of a common danger and forbear your endless unworthy personal feuds. Forgive one another as I have forgiven the men whose right hand betrayed my counsels while their left hand took my wages ; who served me with their lips and betrayed me with their pen. To you and to you only, he tells them in conclusion, is confided the high mission of preserving the balance of European power that can alone conserve the Protestant religion and the liberties of peoples.

In its brevity, simplicity, and trenchancy it would be

indeed difficult to find a more eloquent and more effective piece of oratory in the history of England. This speech was translated and published in every country in Europe, and rallied their rulers like a clarion-call against France.

With the new Parliament the ministry was to some extent changed. Godolphin had left the Treasury, and was succeeded there by Lord Carlisle. Manchester succeeded Hedges as Secretary. This Earl of Manchester was another Charles Montague. He was one of the wealthy and powerful North-country Lords who had raised the standard for the Prince of Orange at Nottingham on his first landing. He had gone as ambassador to Paris and had been recalled, when Louis XIV. acknowledged the Pretender.

Parliament responded to the King by promising to uphold his alliances, and it was a Tory, Sir Edward Seymour, who proposed that a condition should be inserted in the alliances that no peace should be concluded with Louis XIV. till a full reparation was made to William for the indignity done him by acknowledging James's son as King of England. Secretary Vernon proposed and carried a resolution that a land force of 40,000 men should be raised, and Rooke's motion for 40,000 seamen was also carried; an additional 10,000 marines were afterwards added, and 10,000 foreign troops were to be incorporated with the British army. Both parties had united to give the King all possible support in the prosecution of the war. There had, indeed, been some opposition. There

were still "angry men who showed much rancour against the King, and tried to ruin everything that was proposed." Yet the public interest was now so visible, and the concurrent sense of the nation ran so vehemently for a war, that even those who were most averse from it found it convenient to put on an appearance of zeal.

"God be praised," wrote William to his old friend the Grand Pensionary of Holland, Heinsius, "the difficulties are overcome."

Almost the first act of the Commons was to bring in a Bill of Attainder of the Pretender. The unfortunate little Prince, who was now twelve years old, was declared guilty of high treason in assuming the title of King. Every kind of correspondence with him was strenuously forbidden, and it was made penal to affirm, either verbally or in writing, that he had any title to the throne of England. A more contentious question was that of the Abjuration Bill, by which an oath was imposed on all who held employment in Church or State, abjuring the Prince of Wales and upholding the Protestant succession. This was opposed with some vehemence by the Tories, with Nottingham at their head, on the ground that such oaths gave no additional strength to the Government, but it was ultimately carried.

Meanwhile the King's health seemed to be re-established. He spent one day a week at Hampton Court and rode in the park. He had made the Royal apartments there "very noble, and was much pleased with them."

On Saturday, 21st February, William went out hunting as usual. The hunt was in the direction of Kingston-on-Thames. Against the advice of his grooms, he persisted in riding a young horse that he had never mounted before.<sup>1</sup> All went well till about three o'clock, when his horse, stumbling badly, threw the King, who, falling heavily on his shoulder, broke his collar-bone. To a strong man in good health the accident would have been a slight one: to William it was fatal. He was brought back to Kensington the same evening after the bone was set, the doctors not anticipating any danger. The King himself had felt all the winter that his days were numbered; he had told Portland, both before and after this accident, that he was a dead man. The continual tension of his active, strenuous life had exhausted his feeble constitution; he feared that his strength would be unequal to the fatigues of another campaign. In his last days he must have suffered great and continual pain, for the accident had lacerated his lung. But of this his doctors were ignorant, nor could they have done anything to alleviate his sufferings had they known it, for in those days medical art was powerless except before the very simplest accidents and ailments.

On the 3rd of March the King had a fit of ague, which recurred the following day, and Bishop Burnet, who was with him at the time, observed so visible an alteration in him that he feared the worst. After this

<sup>1</sup> Gossip reported that it had formerly belonged to Sir John Fenwick.

the King sank rapidly. The favourite Albemarle returned from Holland on the 7th with the good news of his successful preparations for an early campaign, but even this failed to rouse the King. He listened with indifference, and shortly afterwards murmured, "Je tire vers ma fin" ("I draw near my end"). On the last day of his life the House sent down the Abjuration Bill for his signature, and the bearers waited for some hours before he was able to affix it. Early on Saturday morning his difficulty in breathing increased. Burnet and Archbishop Tenison remained with him. The Archbishop prayed by his bedside, but William, who could then scarcely speak, gave him his hand and expressed a wish to receive the last sacrament, which he followed devoutly though he was unable to repeat the responses. When this was over he called for Albemarle and delivered his papers into his care. He thanked Auverquerque,<sup>1</sup> the gallant comrade who had once saved his life, and who had fought beside him at Steinkirk and Limerick, for his long and faithful services.

Last of all he called for his earliest friend, whose estrangement had had power to wound him more than anything except the death of his wife. Portland hastened to his bedside; but the King was then beyond speech, and by an action more eloquent than words, the dying man, taking his friend's hand, carried it to his heart with great tenderness. He died between seven and eight o'clock the same evening. He

<sup>1</sup> Overkirk.

died with a clear and full presence of mind, and in a wonderful tranquillity. He had once told Portland that he had never feared death, and had even at times desired to be relieved from the weariness of life ; but now that so great a prospect was opening before him, he could have wished to live a little longer. He died with a high courage, and with the knowledge that the work he had come to accomplish was fulfilled. He had secured the Protestant succession which was to safeguard the liberties of the English people, he had welded together the alliance that should stem the overwhelming preponderance of France, and had at last roused England to a sense of her place among the nations, and raised her up from being the paid hireling of France, to hold the balance of power in Europe.

So died the greatest man and greatest ruler who ever sat upon the English throne, whose reign had seen the beginnings of religious toleration and freedom of the press, and the establishment of public credit on a sound basis. Reserved in religious matters, as in all else, William made no parade of piety, but he set the example of regular and devout attendance at public worship and was constant in his private devotions. Atheism and blasphemous talk were still common among the men at his court who had been brought up in the old bad school of the Restoration, but both were sedulously concealed in his presence. A contemporary writer describes "his sedulous care to reform the looseness and profaneness not only of his own court, but of the whole nation . . . that the

most exorbitant began to see the deformity of their extravagance in the mirour of his example."

With all his great qualities of head and heart, William III. never took root in the hearts of the English people. He had neither the presence nor the art of popularity to impress the crowd, who, noting only his slight stature and strongly marked features, nicknamed him "Hooknose," and were only fanned into paroxysms of enthusiasm by a victory or by fear of French invasion. The coldness of manner grew on him in later years; even his old friends complained of it. A man whose mental horizon is bounded only by a continent lacks the sympathy in little things that make for friendship. The long midday meals with his Dutch friends, which were his only relaxation from work, besides the hunting that was essential to his health, roused resentment, as did also his long summers in Holland, where he went literally to breathe, to escape the asthma that tormented him in England.

No great funeral dignified the end of the man who had done so much for this country. A magnificent ceremony was proposed, but it was objected that the nation was already about to incur the heavy expense of a great war, and so a private funeral was determined on, which, being "scarcely decent, so far was it from being magnificent," was at least in accordance with the personal simplicity that had marked the life of "the man of God's right hand, whom He made strong for Himself."

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