



3 1761 01303747 8

THE HISTORY

OF

THE LATER PURITANS.

LONDON:
C. F. HODGSON, PRINTER,
GOUGH SQUARE, FLEET STREET.

THE HISTORY
OF
THE LATER PURITANS:

FROM THE
OPENING OF THE CIVIL WAR IN 1642,
TO THE
EJECTION OF THE NON-CONFORMING CLERGY
IN 1662.

BY
J. B. MARSDEN, M.A.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.
PATERNOSTER ROW.
T. HATCHARD, PICCADILLY.

BX

9334

M35

1852

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

A. D. 1642—3.

	PAGE
Opening of the civil war	1
The puritans take part against the king	5
Reasons for their conduct	8—24
Occurrences of the war	25—27
Lord Brooke, Hampden, and lord Falkland	27—35

CHAPTER II.

A. D. 1643—4.

The hierarchy dissolved	36
The Westminster assembly	38
Committee for scandalous ministers	39
Sufferings of the clergy	40—45
Were they treated with justice?	45—49
Opening of the Westminster assembly	50
Its composition	54—57
The presbyterian system	57—61
Archbishop Ussher's scheme	62
The independents	63, 64
The erastians	66
The Scotch representatives	68
The sectaries	70
The solemn league and covenant	74—79
The assembly's directory	82
The catechism	84

	PAGE
Character of the assembly	85—92
Battles of Newbury, Bolton, and Marston-Moor	92—94
Trial and execution of Laud	95—102

CHAPTER III.

A. D. 1643—5.

Real character of the puritans at this time	103
State of religion in London	105
Marshall, Manton, Calamy, Hugh Peters	112—125
State of religion throughout England	126
Baxter's sermon during the battle of Edge Hill	127
Writes the Saint's Everlasting Rest	129
State of religion in the puritan army	131
Cromwell's fourteen squadrons	133
The army chaplains	136—140

CHAPTER IV.

A. D. 1645—8.

Treaty of Uxbridge	141
Demands of the parliament. Presbyterianism	142—145
The Irish question. The treaty failed	146
The question of a <i>jus divinum</i>	147
The liturgy proscribed	149—151
The independents oppressed	152
The presbyterians intolerant	152—158
The selfdenying ordinance	158
Cromwell's power increases. His conduct	161—170
The presbyterians and the parliament decline	171
Battle of Naseby. The Naseby papers	173—177
Was Charles concerned in the Irish massacre?	177—185
His former duplicity about Rochelle	187
His treaty with the Irish rebels	188—194
Bitterness and retaliations of the parliamentary army	193—196
Siege of Latham house and Wardour castle	198—207
Cruelties practised by the royalists at Oxford	208—211
Progress of the war. The king retires to Newark	213
Siege of Colchester	213—220

CHAPTER V.

A. D. 1646—8.

Religious state of England at the close of the war	221
The antinomians	223—226
Antinomianism in the army	228
Growth of the sectaries	230—234
Rise of quakerism. George Fox	234—242
Progress of the independents	242
And decay of the presbyterian party	243
Deplorable condition of the church of England	245—250
New doctrines arise	250—252

CHAPTER VI.

A. D. 1647—8.

A military despotism	255
The army subdues the parliament	256—263
The universities reformed. Cambridge	264
Oxford. The episcopalians resist	268—278
Evils of the covenant. Treaty of Newport	279—286
Increasing violence of the republicans and the army	286—288

CHAPTER VII.

A. D. 1648—9.

The trial of the king	289
Were the puritans guilty of his death? The question discussed at length	292—315
The execution of Charles	315—320
Conduct of Owen and Milton	321
Execution of the three royalist lords	322
Cromwell's Irish campaign	328

CHAPTER VIII.

A. D. 1649—53.

Puritanism triumphs, but dangers are at hand	331
The religious puritans involved with the ruling powers	332

The government oppressive and insincere.....	334—338
Cromwell invades Scotland.....	338
The battle of Dunbar. Presbyterians and independents fight	342
Execution of Love	346
Leaders of the commonwealth rapacious	351
Battle of Worcester. Severities that followed.....	353—356
Moral and religious state of England and of the army	356—358
A great apostacy was at hand. Its causes	359—368

CHAPTER IX.

A. D. 1653—8.

Cromwell continues to rise. Barebones parliament	369—373
The law of marriage.....	373
Cromwell's new constitution	375
The triers. Their proceedings	378—384
Cromwell's respect for learning	385
The fifth monarchy men	386
Another parliament dissolved. Cromwell despotic	388—389
Basis proposed for a national church.....	390
Independent's synod of the Savoy.....	392
Cromwell wishes for the crown	393
His sickness, death, and character.....	396—409

CHAPTER X.

A. D. 1659—62.

Richard Cromwell. The restoration.....	410—413
Dejection of the puritans. They assist in the restoration..	416—420
The presbyterian chaplains appointed	421
They ask for ecclesiastical reforms.....	422—427
The bishops oppose them	428—430
The king disposed to conciliate. Bishopricks offered.....	431—433
The Savoy conference. No concessions made.....	435
Venner's conspiracy. Persecution of the quakers	442—445
The act of uniformity. Its melancholy consequences.....	446—456
Final ejection of the nonconformist clergy	462—466
A universal decay of piety. Conclusion	466—474

THE
HISTORY OF THE LATER PURITANS.

CHAPTER I.

THE close of the year 1642 was memorable in

CHAPTER

VIII^a

ERRATA.

The reader is requested to correct the following errors of the pen or press :—

- Page 2, line 22, instead of "*Newarket*," read "*Newmarket*."
- 20, line 4 from the bottom, instead of "*with him*," read "*with them*."
- 32, last line, instead of "*ordinary*," read "*ordinary*."
- 168, line 6, instead of "*Cromwell's known character refutes his adversaries*," read "*refutes his apologists*." The reader will perceive that the error in this instance destroys the sense.
- 218, "*Lord Goring escaped to France*." This is incorrect. He had previously fled abroad, but he had now returned. He was taken and imprisoned with Lord Capel till 1649. See p. 323.
- 308, in the note, the lines quoted as from Pope belong to Cowper.
- 446, line 8, for 1642, read 1662.

LAWS OF THE KINGDOM, &c. &c. &c.

the people, and to levy war against the king.* The house of lords was appalled; the commons passed a hurried vote, forbidding the servants of the crown at their peril to arrest the accused or any of its members; and both houses requested

* Clarendon, Hist. of the Rebellion, i. 357, Oxford ed. 1712.

	PAGE
The government oppressive and insincere	334—338
Cromwell invades Scotland	338
The battle of Dunbar. Presbyterians and independents fight	342
Execution of Love	346
Leaders of the commonwealth rapacious	351
Battle of Worcester. Severities that followed	353—356
Moral and religious state of England and of the army	356—358
A great apostacy was at hand. Its causes	359—368

 CHAPTER IX

RICHARD CROMWELL. THE RESTORATION	410—413
Dejection of the puritans. They assist in the restoration . .	416—420
The presbyterian chaplains appointed	421
They ask for ecclesiastical reforms	422—427
The bishops oppose them	428—430
The king disposed to conciliate. Bishopricks offered	431—433
The Savoy conference. No concessions made	435
Venner's conspiracy. Persecution of the quakers	442—445
The act of uniformity. Its melancholy consequences	446—456
Final ejection of the nonconformist clergy	462—466
A universal decay of piety. Conclusion	466—474

HISTORY OF THE LATER PURITANS.

CHAPTER I.

THE close of the year 1642 was memorable in England. A revolution had begun, and both parties, the king and the parliament, had made the last appeal to arms. Alarmed for his own safety, and still more perhaps for that of the queen, Charles abruptly left his palace of Whitehall—to which, except as a captive, he was never to return—on the 10th of January. A great storm had burst. He had sent a message by his attorney-general to the two houses of parliament, impeaching of high treason lord Kimbolton, and five members of the house of commons—Denzil Hollis, Sir Arthur Haslerigg, Mr. Pym, Mr. Hampden, and Mr. Strode. They had traitorously conspired, he said, to subvert the fundamental laws of the kingdom, to alienate the affections of the people, and to levy war against the king.* The house of lords was appalled; the commons passed a hurried vote, forbidding the servants of the crown at their peril to arrest the accused or any of its members; and both houses requested

* Clarendon, Hist. of the Rebellion, i. 357, Oxford ed. 1712.

CHAPTER
I.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1642.

time for consideration. The next day the king himself went down in person, attended only by his guards, and without making any previous intimation of his purpose, to arrest the five members upon the very benches of the house of commons. They had just received a timely warning, and escaped into the city; and the king retired, confounded, to Whitehall. The parliament was calm although indignant; but London was infuriated and all England was aroused. The queen, who was supposed to have instigated this rash outrage, was removed to Holland as a place of safety. The king in vain endeavoured first to justify and then to excuse his conduct. Angry crowds assembled daily before the windows of his palace to applaud the parliament, and with vociferous shouts and exclamations to express their abhorrence of his tyrannical attempt. In shame and apprehension Charles retired from Westminster; and after a short and restless sojourn at Hampton court, at Windsor, at Theobalds in Hertfordshire, and at Newarket, he finally retired, in the month of March, to York. Here, in a city which was still the vice-capital of England, he remained during the summer, in princely state, and with something even of feudal grandeur. He had calculated much on the fidelity of his subjects in the north, and his reception was equal to his hopes. The gentry and great nobles of Yorkshire and the adjacent counties, with few exceptions, hastened to their sovereign. A great number of peers soon followed from all parts of England;

and even the house of commons was represented in the persons of more than sixty of its members.* Some of these belonged to the popular party. There were amongst them those who had voted for the impeachment of Strafford and of Laud. Though averse to revolution they were still anxious for improvement, and they carried over to the royal cause the confidence of great numbers of the people. If passion and prejudice had not crushed them there was still the nucleus of a party who might have saved the monarchy. From these materials the king without difficulty constructed a great council, or parliament; and thus gave to his proceedings some at least of the venerable forms of the constitution. At the same time the secession of so many members of both houses served to distract the nation and to embarrass the parliament in London. Men asked themselves, of the two rival legislatures which must be obeyed—the king at York with at least the shadow of a parliament, or the parliament at Westminster without even the shadow of a king? But in revolutions the gravest questions are decided by the fears and passions of the multitude. While the cautious were perplexed the great body of the people had resolved; choosing their party either from their general sense of right or by the pressure of some private grievance. When they were now, in fact, girding on the sword the question of constitutional right had

CHAPTER
I.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1642.

* Clarendon, i. 459.

CHAPTER

I.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1642.

become insipid. Men took their places variously, as they were impelled by different motives. The aristocracy in general adhered to the king; for they had not felt the insults and oppressions under which the people groaned. They had lived on their estates, in no fear of Laud or of the star-chamber or of the court itself, regarding themselves indeed as the equals and companions rather than as the subjects of the monarch. The baronial spirit of feudal independence was not extinguished, and they heard the complaints of the multitude only from a distance. The great towns with scarcely an exception, and a decided majority of the industrious classes, the yeomen, the merchants, and the traders of England were staunch supporters of the parliamentary cause. The labouring poor seem to have been equally divided; great numbers fought on both sides, and apparently with equal ardour: a proof that the nation, though misgoverned, was not unhappy. It was a war of principles. The questions at issue were those indeed which affect national prosperity in its most vital points; but they were not those which press at once upon the comfort of the poor, and remind the cottager by his own sufferings of his duties to the cause of freedom and of the state: food was abundant, and trade was not in decay. The prelatic party, lately so powerful as to guide the king and crush the parliament, was no longer in existence; the bishops were in exile or in prison; and the clergy were terrified or dispersed.

The great party to whom the name of PURITANS

has been assigned in history, was ranged almost to a man against the king. It is difficult, however, to give an exact explanation of the word as it was now made use of. With the royalists, to be devout was to be a puritan. With the exception of profligates and Laudians, the title comprehended all. Even bishop Sanderson, a high-churchman, the chosen friend and spiritual comforter of Charles in his deepest sorrows, complains that he was not exempted from the scandal;* he too was called a puritan.

In its general acceptance, the word was understood to mean, that those to whom it was applied were the successors of Cartwright and Brown in the reign of Elizabeth;—the men to whom prelacy had always been distasteful, and who had all along been disposed in favour of a presbyterian or a congregational church. But the confines of the party were now enlarged: there was a vast accession of new men, who were as little disposed to walk in the trammels of Cartwright as in those of Whitgift. They regarded the old contests as in a great measure obsolete; they saw that the religion of Laud and his party, however sincere, was superstitious, and dangerous to liberty; and they determined to resist it. They were chiefly laymen; and while they had resolutely set themselves against Laudian prelacy, they had never carried their speculations so far as to inquire

* "Could that blessed archbishop Whitgift, or the modest and learned Hooker, have ever thought, so much as by dream, that men concurring with them in opinion should, for some of these very opinions, be called puritans?"—Pax Ecclesiæ, 64.

CHAPTER
I.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1642.

what substitute should occupy its place. They resisted an enormous evil; they had not, even in thought, advanced to the bare contemplation of the fearful chasm which its overthrow would make. This is the course which a reformation, honestly begun, not unfrequently takes. Men of ulterior designs are prepared to impose some favourite scheme when the propitious moment shall arrive;—men of perfect honesty are often surprised at their own successes, and vanquished by their own triumphs. They did not look beyond the present; they felt the dangers of a dominant superstition, and they strove against them; and long after the struggle had begun they still looked no farther. Thus the opponents of Laud contended for simplicity and purity in Christian worship, and they sought for nothing more. These men formed the great body of the puritans when the war broke out. There were some of them whose aim was chiefly political: they felt more for the dangers of the state, and less for the perils of the church. Still they were not two parties, but the same men influenced from time to time by different but concurring motives. To speak of the political as distinct from the religious puritans is, we conceive, to misrepresent the facts of history. The war had two objects: it was a struggle for liberty against an arbitrary sovereign, and for religion against tyranny and popery as represented by the Laudian party and the court. It was impossible to sever in practice these two independent aims. The parliament in London became puritans to a man; and the reli-

gious puritans, without exception, became the firm adherents of the parliament. So far the fusion was perfect; and we shall, therefore, speak of the parliamentary and of the puritan cause as one. As events pressed upon each other, feuds broke out and secessions occurred. Still, however, upon the whole, it was a war between the puritans on the one side and the adherents of the king and his prerogative upon the other. For the share which the people of England took in the war against the king the puritans are responsible. The character of the party is deeply concerned in the decision we form upon their conduct in this affair. No point in their history has been more severely censured; none has been more misrepresented or less generally understood. If success be the measure of right, they were wrong undoubtedly; for though they conquered Charles, they perished from the earth, and their name was made a by-word of reproach. But this coarse estimate suffices no longer. The time has come when we wish to take a juster view. Two centuries have passed, and with them something at least of the rage and clamour which have long distorted this period of our history. We begin to perceive that measures may have been wise which were not successful; and that even success is to be measured by its remoter consequences rather than its immediate results. A great question, then, lies at the threshold of our history—Were the puritans justified in taking arms against the king? Was the civil war a vulgar instance of mere

CHAPTER
I.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1642.

rebellion,—the resistance of those who refuse to obey whenever obedience can no longer be enforced? Or was it a patriotic enterprise, which the constitution justified, which the happiness and well-being of the state demanded, and over which religion, the pure religion of the gospel, threw her sublimer sanctions?

It is true that Charles was the first to draw the sword and to proclaim war, but the responsibility of arousing the nation against the king rests upon the parliament, that is, upon the puritans. They accepted the appeal to arms with alacrity; they had been preparing for this issue; they regarded it as the lesser evil; they were persuaded that it was only thus, upon the field of battle, that their lives, their rights, their protestant faith, could be secured. When Charles had dissolved the last parliament abruptly, the friends of the popular cause could not conceal their satisfaction. Saint John, a leader of the puritans, was overjoyed; he returned home exulting in his defeat. “It all goes well,” he said to Mr. Hyde; “things must be worse yet, before they can improve!”* And this was the general opinion.

For many reasons it is difficult to do justice to the puritans. The subject is overlaid with prejudice, and upon a superficial glance appearances are much against them. When the king took the field, the parliament were already in a false posi-

* Clarendon, i. 141.

tion. The reasons they assigned were not sufficient to justify an armed resistance: and this the leaders of the popular party well knew. The grounds upon which they professed to excuse themselves were indeed either frivolous or unconstitutional or palpably unjust. In the first place they insisted that the king should return to London, for his absence in the north was a capital grievance: it shewed his majesty's distrust of his loyal subjects, his dislike of the house of commons, and his disregard of his people's welfare. All this was but an indifferent pretext for a civil war. They had already excluded the prelates from the house of peers, and set aside the royal prerogative of dissolving parliament, unless with its own consent; they now demanded the control of the militia and the Tower, the power of creating peers, of disposing of the royal children in marriage, of appointing and dismissing the king's ministers—in short, the destruction of the crown as an independent estate of the realm. "Should I grant these demands," said Charles, "I may still be waited on bare-headed; I may have my hand kissed; I may have swords and maces carried before me;—but as regards any true and real power, I should be but the mere shadow of a king."*

The parliament, again, professed to arm, not against the king but against his evil counsellors, holding the constitutional fiction that the king

CHAPTER

I.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1642.

* Rushworth's Collections, i. 788.

CHAPTER
I.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1642.

can do no wrong. But this made their conduct still more perplexing. The royal prerogatives ought to have been safe beneath the sacred maxim, even had the king's person been assailed. The evil advisers of the sovereign should, however, have been singled out and punished without injury to their master. The parliament drew no such distinctions. The king's prerogative and his privy councillors shared one fate and fell beneath the same desolating storm. Wentworth the prime minister died upon the scaffold as a traitor, and the king's undoubted rights perished soon afterwards in the house of commons. Laud was in prison as a pernicious adviser ; but still the attack upon the sovereign was keenly pursued elsewhere. The command of the army was his by ancient law and usage ; and the right of influencing his own children in the affair of marriage belonged to him by nature ; yet he was deprived of both. If the parliament fought against the king, their demands were unreasonable ; if against his advisers, their behaviour was unjust. It was evident either that they were wrong, or that there was some motive for their conduct which they had not disclosed. Their professions and their actions were at variance ; at least there was an obscurity which seemed to wait for its explanation. And this was in truth the real cause of their perplexity : they did not venture to trust the whole of their case to the decision of the nation at large, to whom their proclamations were addressed. The decisions of history may have been taken from their

own statements, but those statements were imperfect. Whether necessity or policy dictated their reserve, it has been upon the whole injurious to their character.

The king had no such difficulties to cope with. Wherever lay the merits of the quarrel, he had the advantage of a cause well defined and clearly understood. Assisted by the ablest members of his council, by Hyde (better known to us as lord Clarendon, the historian of these eventful times), and lord Falkland, Charles drew up and dispersed through the whole kingdom a series of manifestoes, which seemed for a time to revive the devotion of his subjects and to threaten the cause of the parliament with utter ruin. These were the more implicitly received, because Charles had now no recent acts of tyranny to justify, or even to excuse.* Since the death of his favourite minister, lord Strafford, more than a year before, he had in fact ceased to govern; his power had been transferred to the parliament; and the generosity of the English character induced thousands to forgive the past in consideration of his fallen and altered fortunes. He protested that he contended for the antient laws of England, and for the rights of the sovereign as the sovereign had enjoyed them ever since the conquest. He was the representative of the antient monarchy, and of the English constitution as it stood beneath the Tudors and Plantagenets; and he

CHAPTER
I.
CHAS. I.
A. D. 1642.

* Guizot, Hist. Eng. Revol. i. 241.

CHAPTER
I.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1642.

summoned his people, in the name of all their venerable institutions, to rally round their king. The parliament found it far more easy to denounce the royal manifestoes than to answer them. As far as they went they scarcely admitted of an answer. For in truth the great fault of the king lay not in demanding more than his predecessors but in conceding less. In states in which the monarchy acts without control, or where the control is irresolute and feeble, the personal character of the sovereign decides the character of his government. The same institutions are made either to crush or to protect the people, as the hand that wields them is unfeeling and capricious or wise and patriotic. Charles had been a bad imitator of great examples; and he had made the common mistake of feeble minds, that in order to be strong it is necessary to be violent. He had copied the severity of former sovereigns with great exactness; but he had seldom had their pretexts, and never their successes. The worst points in his career have a singular parallel in the events of the reign of the most popular of English monarchs. In those instances in which he has been most severely blamed he could have pleaded the example of Elizabeth herself. He had brought on a revolution and thrown the kingdom into the wildest uproar by attempting what she had done with perfect impunity. He had gone down to the house of commons to seize five members on a charge of treason: they escaped, and he apolo-

gized; but his kingdom was in flames. Elizabeth had threatened the house, had silenced the speaker, had seized an obnoxious member on the benches, and hurried him without pretence of trial to a prison;* he was confined for several years, and scarcely a murmur rose. Charles had employed the star chamber and the court of high commission to oppress his subjects; but the star chamber was no new device of recent tyranny; nor had the court of high commission passed the boundaries of its time-honoured cruelties. Even ship money was but, under another name, a repetition of those *aids* and *benevolences* which the kings of England had often imposed by their own authority. Laud, again, it was true, had been severe against the puritans; but Whitgift had consigned them to the gallows. If Charles had married a papist, Elizabeth had at least contemplated a union with one—the duke of Anjou. But unhappily the king understood neither his people nor himself. He did not perceive that the circumstances of the nation had undergone a marvellous change, and in consequence the relation of king and people to each other. He wished to govern as his ancestors had governed, but it was impossible; he might as reasonably have attempted the revival of the crusades, and imposed a tax for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. He would have no innovations; forgetting the wise observation of lord

CHAPTER

I.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1642.

* In 1587, the case of Morrice, see Hist. Early Puritans, p. 196.

CHAPTER

I.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1642.

Bacon, that he who resists all change is himself the greatest of all innovators. Still his case as he presented it to the world was clear; and it was free from violent inconsistencies. He thought himself a good man and he wished to be an absolute, if not an arbitrary, sovereign.

The true cause of the war may be explained in one word; it was the king's inveterate duplicity. The parliament felt that it was never safe. The popular leaders had to treat with an enemy whose word, whose oath, it was impossible to trust. Whatever the pretext that glossed it over, the war was, on the side of the puritans, a war of self-defence. Of late years, public opinion has inclined more and more to the popular cause. We do not attribute this to the increase of democratic opinions, or to a growing indifference to the horrors of civil war. It is sufficiently explained by the more intimate acquaintance we have gained with the character of Charles I. The publication of innumerable papers, pamphlets, and diaries of that restless age enables us to form a judgment in many respects more comprehensive and more correct than the decisions of those who were actors in the scene. And all that has come down to us from republican or royalist, from the court of Charles or the camp of Cromwell, confirms the suspicion which the parliament entertained, that the king was not only indifferent to truth, but that he habitually held its sacred obligations in profound contempt. Dissimulation is too mild a word; there was in

him the utter want of the kingly virtues of integrity and honour. Charles had lately passed all their bills, and conceded some of their most unreasonable demands (for they had begun, as desperate men, to be most unreasonable); but now the very facility of his concessions excited their distrust. What he gave up without a struggle he might one day reclaim with vengeance. Every day his tone changed with his circumstances. Slowly retiring from London, he professed his anxiety to conciliate the parliament at whatever cost. Arrived at York and now surrounded with his friends, "he resolved," says lord Clarendon, the wisest of all his advisers, and the greatest of his chroniclers, "to treat them in another manner than he had done." In fact, "he would now have nothing extorted from him that he was not very well inclined to consent to."* On the 15th June he published a declaration, countersigned by thirty-five peers, besides the commoners of his privy council, in which he affirmed that he was basely slandered by those who charged him with the design of making war upon the parliament. "He professed before God, and declared to all the world that he always had, and did still abhor all such designs." At the same time another proclamation was addressed to the people in which he again protested, "before Almighty God and his Redeemer, that he had no more thought of making war against the parliament than he had against his children."† Yet the queen was then

CHAPTER
I.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1642.

* Clarendon, i. 459.

† Clarendon, i. 456.

CHAPTER
I.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1642.

in Holland selling and pawning the crown jewels and raising the munitions of war; he himself was busied with military preparations; and on the 23rd August,* being now equipped for a campaign, he set up his standard, and in due form proclaimed war upon the parliament! Such falsehoods could proceed only from the weakest counsels or the most infatuated mind. They probably deceived none but they irritated thousands. And the men of virtue began already to retire from a cause which, whether good or bad, was content to call in the succours of deceit and falsehood.†

Whether the king's misconduct arose from weakness or from vice, from want of firmness or want of principle, is a point which, deeply as it touches his personal character, cannot be allowed to have the least weight in the question between

* Clarendon says the 25th; Whitlock, the 22nd; others, the 23rd; and Ludlow, the 24th: a strange discrepancy on a point of such importance.

† I spare my readers and myself the pain of multiplying instances of Charles's confirmed duplicity, and of the ruin he thus brought upon himself. I intended to have enlarged the dark catalogue in justice to historical truth; but it is unnecessary, and therefore it would be ungenerous. I quote one instance only from the memoirs of col. Hutchinson. "The king, who had received money, arms, and ammunition, which the queen had procured in Holland by pawning the crown-jewels, sent out commissions of array to arm the people in all counties.

. . . Thus he got contributions of plate, money, and arms in the country. While these things were in transaction the king made a solemn protestation before the lords, as in the presence of God, declaring that he would not engage in any war with the parliament, but only for his own defence; that his desire was to maintain the protestant religion, the liberties of the subject, and privilege of parliament. But the next day he did some action so contrary to this protestation, that two of the lords durst not stay with him, but returned to the parliament; and one of them coming back through Nottinghamshire, acquainted Mr. Hutchinson with the sad sense he had in discovering that falsehood in the king." p. 113.

himself and the popular leaders. The consequences to others were the same. If the protestantism of the nation was outraged, if its liberties were endangered, it was of little importance to those who undertook their defence at the hazard of their own lives, whether Charles's heart or his head was most in fault. His great apologist describes him as one with whom the most clamorous advisers were always the most successful. If he had not displayed a strength of character on some occasions which is scarcely consistent with it, the charitable supposition might be entertained that he was merely a weak man, rash in judgment, and easily diverted from his purpose. It is probable that he often surrendered his own judgment to worthless advisers, and was the dupe of their cabals. If we may trust the representations, not of factious republicans, but of his most faithful servants, his household was little better than a nest of traitors. His closet and even the queen's bedchamber were haunted with spies. His secret whispers were repeated, his most confidential counsels were divulged. With high vaunts of honour, which stood them in the place of religion, the cavaliers who surrounded the king and formed his court were devoid of truth and virtue. Levity, selfishness, a disdain of moral restraints, and an audacious contempt of religion, marked them as a body. But habitual falsehood seems to have been the master-vice. It would be unjust to charge the depravity of the courtiers entirely upon the

CHAPTER

I.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1642.

CHAPTER

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1642.

king ; but it is difficult to believe that a sterner adherence to the truth in the king himself would not have imparted a purer tone to the morals of his household. The vices of the great are always contagious, and a court addicted to falsehood indicates a want of veracity in its head ; at least it is certain that neither friend nor foe could place the least reliance upon the royal word of Charles.'

There is one circumstance which explains, and in some measure perhaps extenuates, the king's habitual insincerity. He was governed by the queen. This, indeed, in the eyes of his puritan subjects, was an aggravation of his guilt, and their conclusion was not altogether unreasonable : her influence certainly increased their danger tenfold. Henrietta Maria was the evil genius of Charles. Her influence was always in exercise, and it was always bad. She was a papist and a foreigner ; cold, heartless, and intriguing ; capable of the most winning graces, but naturally insolent and proud. Of her beauty, the portraits which her devoted husband loved to multiply, and which still adorn the stately halls of Windsor, leave nothing to be said. In her presence the king was impotent. Her tears, her rage, her feigned love, her unaffected arrogance subdued him, and still she retained firm possession of his heart. To pacify the queen, promises were not held sacred, and principles vanished like a mist. Without one English sentiment, without affection for its people or love for its sovereign, except so far as

love was selfishness,* she governed the council by intrigue, and the king by her personal influence. Whether Charles deserved the odium which assailed him may possibly be questioned; but no champion will appear to defend the heartless woman who forced her too complying husband into danger, and basely fled and left him to be a captive, and to die alone, when her own violent counsels were beginning to produce their fruit. We are disgusted with the brutality of the sectaries who denounced her in their prayers by name, and invoked the vengeance of Heaven upon "Jezebel;" but even such acts of violence produce no reaction in her favour: for we are compelled to feel that, however unbecoming, they were not unmerited. The worst actions of Charles's life may be traced at once to the queen's pernicious influence. His consent to the death of his minister and favourite lord Strafford, within a week of the day on which he had written with his own hand to assure him that he had nothing to fear, is known to every one. He seemed meanly to sacrifice his minister in order to save himself; but in fact he yielded to the clamours of the queen, supported unhappily in this instance by the Laudian clergy about the court. It was the queen who plotted the mad attempt to seize the five members in the house of commons. It was she who prevailed upon the king to sign the bill

CHAPTER
I.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1642.

* While revising this sheet, I have seen Mr. Warburton's collection of papers—"Prince Rupert and the Cavaliers." His character of the queen is still more unfavourable than my own. Her moral conduct, as a woman and a wife, was, it appears, by no means faultless.

CHAPTER
I.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1642.

for the degradation of the bishops, and their exclusion from the house of lords. Those who knew him most intimately believed that no possible emergency could induce him to consent to a measure so hateful to his feelings, and so fatal to his cause. But the queen triumphed: and some of his best advisers immediately withdrew from the council; others determined, in sheer despair, to be carried quietly along the stream.* There could in fact be no doubt as to the queen's intentions. She meant her husband to govern after the fashion of her native land, and she meant her children to be educated in the Romish faith. The weakest minds entertain the most gigantic projects. She thought herself capable of making the sovereign despotic, and of restoring the nation to the see of Rome. And we must add, that but for the puritans she would probably have succeeded, for a while at least, to the utmost of her wishes.

These were the real motives by which the puritan party was induced to dare the fearful hazards and certain miseries of intestine war. To judge fairly of their conduct, we must place ourselves in their circumstances, and calculate, if we can, the conflicting perils of submission and resistance. If they trusted too much or too soon, they were undone; and civil liberty and the protestant faith fell with him. On the other hand, they seem to have miscalculated their own strength. They made too vast an effort, and overshot the mark. The king was not so power-

* Clarendon, i. 429.

ful, nor they themselves so weak, as they supposed. The vessel was already in the storm, among rocks and shoals visible to the naked eye, and they spread every sail. The speed of the chariot was impetuous, and yet they lashed the horses. There were amongst themselves and in the parliament, men warmly attached to the popular cause who were of this opinion. Enough, they said, had been already done; the king was humbled; protestantism was safe; the constitution was delivered. Foremost in this small party was sir Benjamin Rudyard, a fervent patriot, a calm sagacious statesman. He was an orator in the highest sense. His speeches remind us of the sententious wisdom of Tacitus. They were published at the time on fly sheets, and made a strong impression. On perusing them we feel how rich our country must have been in great men, since even Rudyard has been forgotten in the crowd. "No doubt,"* said he, in his place in parliament, on the 9th of July, 1642, "no doubt there is a relative duty between a king and his subjects: obedience from a subject to a king; protection from a king to his people. The present unhappy distance between his majesty and the parliament makes the whole kingdom stand amazed in a terrible expectation of fearful calamities." He then proceeds to urge upon the house of commons the duty of conciliation. He implores them to contrast their present triumphs with their recent position. "If any one

CHAPTER
I.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1642.

* Harleian Miscellany, vol. v. 77. The speech was originally "printed for Richard Lownds, 1642."

CHAPTER
I.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1642.

had told us three years ago that we should have a parliament, that ship-money would be done away with, that monopolies, the high commission court, the star chamber, and the votes of bishops would be abolished, that the jurisdiction of the privy council would be regulated and restrained, that we should have triennial parliaments,—nay, more, a perpetual parliament, which no one but ourselves could have the right to dissolve,—truly we should have thought this too much to be real. Well,” he adds, “all this is come to pass, and yet we do not enjoy it ; we still call out for more guarantees. The actual possession of all these privileges is the best guarantee that we can have, for they protect each other.” Who shall tell us what the history of our country and the fate of the puritans would have been had his concluding words fallen upon attentive ears ! “Let us take care, in seeking an imaginary safety through so many dangers, we do not put in peril that which we possess already. It is now that we are called upon to exercise all the wisdom of which we are capable ; for we are on the eve of fire and chaos. If once ‘blood touches blood,’ we fall into a certain evil to obtain an uncertain success. Every one has a right to make a last effort to prevent the effusion of blood ; for the shedding of blood is a sin which calls aloud for vengeance ; it stains a whole country. Let us save our liberties and property, but in such a way that we may also save our souls.” These were wise counsels ; they became a senator and a christian ; but they were unavailing. And yet, when war was resolved

upon, Rudyard himself adhered to the popular cause.

CHAPTER
I.

If there be a divine right in kings, as the courtiers of Charles, and still more of his sons,* affirmed, an armed resistance is of course a crime. Under all circumstances it is rebellion, a foul outrage against the sovereign, a heinous sin against the more awful majesty of God. Such doctrines have been popular amongst us, and they may be

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1642.

* By a decree in convocation, July 21, 1683, "against certain pernicious books and damnable doctrines, destructive to the sacred persons of princes, their state and government, and of all human society," the University of Oxford unanimously denounced twenty-seven propositions, all and every of which they declare to be false, seditious, and impious, and most of them to be also heretical and blasphemous." A few of the propositions (which they recite in order to condemn) are as follows:—

"3. That if lawful governors become tyrants, or govern otherwise than by the laws of God and man they ought to do, they forfeit the right they had unto their government.

"4. The sovereignty of England is in the three estates, namely, king, lords, and commons. The king has but a co-ordinate power, and may be overruled by the other two.

"8. The doctrine of the gospel concerning patient suffering of injuries is not inconsistent with violent resisting the higher powers in case of persecution for religion.

"9. There lies no obligation upon Christians to passive obedience when the prince commands anything against the laws of our country."

The unanimity with which these propositions were condemned at one of our great seats of learning, proves the tendency to extreme theories of government even in strong and educated minds. The authors are cited from whose writings the several propositions are extracted; all members of the university are interdicted from reading the said books, under the penalties prescribed by the statute; and the books are ordered to be publicly burnt. Amongst the writers condemned, we find men of the most opposite views. Buchanan, Bellarmine, Milton, Goodwin, and Baxter, for instance, are quoted as the authors of proposition 3. Vide State Tracts, privately printed in the reign of king Charles II., page 153. These decrees were repealed by the university in 1710.

CHAPTER I.
 CHAS. I.
 A.D. 1642.

so again. But if consistently with the duty that we owe to God, and, indeed, (for so the puritans maintained) as part of our allegiance to the King of kings, the obligation sometime devolves upon the subject of resisting an otherwise lawful prince on account of the wickedness of his conduct, then the question is not so easily dismissed. Was the war inevitable? Had negotiation, had forbearance, been carried to their utmost limits? Would the parliament have deserved better of their country had they listened to men like Rudyard? Or would they have flung away with more than childish folly the last hopes of liberty and of the protestant faith in England?

To set at rest these doubts, is to establish or to destroy the reputation of the later puritans and of the patriots of 1642. We think, upon the whole, they were precipitate; we cannot charge them with rebellion. Yet even here our pen hesitates; for we judge them in the light of facts, which in their day no wisdom could foresee. Men are not to be blamed because their knowledge is imperfect, nor because they bring human weakness to the purest cause; for these are the sad conditions of our race under all circumstances. It is enough to justify the puritans if, upon the whole, their motives were pure and their conduct wise; and, after all, we leave the subject—where, indeed, while history is read, it must ever dwell—in the deep musings and dispassionate thoughts of those who ponder the events of past ages with the hope (alas too often vain) of teaching moderation

to those who shall come after, by displaying the virtues, the errors, and the calamities of generations that have passed away.

CHAPTER
I.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1642

The occurrences of the civil war it is not our purpose to relate. Incidentally they will often claim our notice, as they illustrate the motives of the contending parties, and more especially the conduct of the puritans. The armies first met in battle on the 23rd of October, upon the plain of Edge Hill. The conflict was long and fierce. At night five thousand men lay dead on the field. The king had hoped in a single encounter to close the war; to press on to London, and there dictate his own terms to the rebellious parliament. But the battle produced no results; each side retired in good order, and each side claimed the victory. But the project of the royalists was entirely broken. Instead of pressing on to London, the king retired to Oxford with his forces; and there the winter was spent. There were many skirmishes, with various success, and some feeble attempts were made on both sides for an accommodation; but, upon the whole, the king's affairs had a favourable aspect in the spring. The queen returned from Holland in the summer, bringing with her large supplies both of men and money. Her energy and promptitude contrasts strangely with the king's uncertainty of purpose. She brought with her two thousand infantry, a thousand cavalry, a hundred waggons of ammunition, and eight pieces of artillery. The house of commons betrayed its sense of her importance by

CHAPTER
I.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

impeaching her of treason. The war had now spread into every part of the country; and great men fell in murderous skirmishes, which inflamed the passions on both sides without contributing to the lasting success of either. Hampden was killed at Chalgrove, near his own house, by a foraging party headed by prince Rupert; and lord Brooke, an enthusiast against prelacy, at Lichfield, by a random shot from the cathedral. The parliamentary forces under lord Fairfax were defeated at Atherstone on the 30th of June, and again under sir William Waller at the battles of Landsdown and Roundwaydown, on the 5th and 13th of July. Most of the western counties now submitted to the king. His nephew, prince Rupert, took the city of Bristol after a short siege, and Charles himself invested Gloucester for several weeks: it was relieved at the last extremity by the sudden appearance of the parliamentary forces under the earl of Essex. The king and prince Rupert then combined their armies, intercepted Essex on his return to London, and gave him battle at Newbury. It was a dreadful struggle, and the result was in favour of the parliament: for during the night the king retired, leaving the field in possession of the earl of Essex. And here the great and virtuous lord Falkland fell. Thus ended the campaign of 1643, but not the war, of which the termination seemed as remote as ever. Charles returned, with his army dispirited, if not beaten, to Oxford. Essex was received in London with enthusiasm. The parliament and the citizens felt that they had had

a great deliverance, and their exultation was unbounded. The house of commons went in a body to salute their general and to return him thanks. The lord mayor and aldermen waited upon him, to represent the city, and proclaimed him the saviour and protector of their lives, their fortunes, their wives and children. The tide of success had suddenly turned, and it never afterwards forsook the parliament. The battle upon which the fate of the monarchy was in fact suspended was fought on the 20th of September, 1643.

The war had swept away three great men, whose influence, had they lived, must have impressed itself upon the times, and might have changed the character of English history. These were lord Brooke and Hampden on the popular side, and lord Falkland among the royalists. Had Brooke survived, it is probable that a republic would have been established on broad and perhaps permanent foundations. Had Hampden lived, a constitutional monarchy might have been restored in the person of Charles I. Had lord Falkland been alive to support the moderate counsels of Hyde, ^{B. Falkland} the king would never have been betrayed, by worthless counsellors and the queen's intrigue, into those acts by which he forfeited the lingering affections of his subjects and his own self-respect. The loss of these men may be distinctly traced in the events which followed.

Lord Brooke was an extreme puritan, resolute and stern; he regarded the whole hierarchy as a part of antichrist, not merely an encumbrance,

CHAPTER
I.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

but an imposture. His mind was rough and manly ; but the finer distinctions in which purer intellects discover the boundaries of truth and error were unknown to it. If he had not declared himself a republican, he was one in heart. He was as much Cromwell's superior in piety as in bold and soldier-like simplicity, and in courage he was at least his equal. Had Lord Brooke been living, there would, we suspect, have been one man at least whom Cromwell could neither cajole nor terrify. There might have been a commonwealth, but there would have been no protectorate; Cromwell at least would not have been the lord protector. We owe to an entry in the diary with which Laud beguiled his imprisonment some particulars of his death, which explain the archbishop's not less than the soldier's character. Lord Brooke was killed by a shot from the leads of Lichfield cathedral. He was cased in armour, but his visor was raised and the ball entered his eye. A stone yet marks the spot on which he fell. "First," says his grace, "observe that this great and unknown enemy to cathedral churches died thus fearfully in the assault of a cathedral : a fearful manner of death in such a quarrel. Secondly, that this happened upon St. Chad's day, of which saint the cathedral bears the name. Thirdly, that this lord, coming from dinner about two years since from the lord Herbert's house in Lambeth, upon some discourse of Paul's church, then in their eye upon the water, said to some young lords that were with him, that he hoped

to live to see that one stone of that building should not be left upon another; but that church stands yet, and that eye is put out that hoped to see the ruins of it.”* CHAPTER
I.
CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

But in an age of great men Hampden was perhaps the first. His character will never perish. It is enshrined in the magnificent portraiture of Clarendon; it has been drawn afresh, and some of its less noticed or more questioned honours placed in a clearer light by the most brilliant of living writers.† But had no historian embalmed his memory, even tradition would have been loath to part with so great a name. Hampden, a country gentleman, residing on his ancient estate in Buckinghamshire, the representative in parliament of a neighbouring borough and afterwards of the county, was amongst the first to resist the unconstitutional exactions of the court. The king had been advised to impose a tax under the name of ship-money, without the consent of parliament. Thousands murmured, but Hampden refused to pay the illegal impost, which amounted to no more than twenty shillings. He was prosecuted, and the question was argued in the exchequer court at Westminster. Four of the judges were in his favour, but the majority decided that the tax was legal. Still, in the public discussion of the subject, Hampden had gained a great victory, the honours of which no adverse

* Neal, Hist. Puritans, iii. 16.

† Macaulay, Essay on Hampden, &c. The character of Hampden given by Hume, Hist. vol. vii. 521, and note G G, scarcely deserves even this brief notice.

CHAPTER
I.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

decision could tarnish. The calmness and self-possession he maintained on this occasion at once placed him high in the opinion of all parties. He seemed rather to meet the prosecution as a lofty patriot than as the factious leader of a discontented party; as if he were anxious to defend the law, rather than to shield or justify himself. He appeared to plead on behalf of the constitution, the rights and liberties of England, and he was equal to the task. It concentrated all his powers, but he was without agitation or disturbance. Nothing so much affects us with the notion of true greatness as tranquillity in the heat of argument or the midst of danger. Even ordinary lookers on perceived in his unaffected courtesy and perfect repose of mind, when he himself was most exposed and when all around him was a hurricane, that Hampden was a great man. His influence was now unbounded, both in parliament and with the nation; and his firmness in opposing the court began to assume a sternness to which he had hitherto been a stranger. When the question of resisting the king in arms was at length debated, he was resolute for war; and when the war had once begun, he was the advocate of the most vigorous measures in pursuing it. He raised and took the command of a regiment composed of the neighbouring yeomen his tenants and constituents; and Hampden's "green coats" were famous alike for valour and good conduct. He fell wounded in a severe skirmish within a few miles of his house at Hampden. He returned home in great pain, and lingered through a week

of mortal agony. But his mind was calm and his soul was not dismayed. His thoughts were divided between his unhappy country and his own eternal prospects. He dictated letters to the parliament, urging the necessity of a more vigorous prosecution of the war; and he again and again expressed his happiness in God, and the blessed hope he possessed, through the merits and passion of his Son, of soon exchanging his bed of anguish for a mansion in the world of peace.* The greatest minister of the last age† expired with a prayer for his country upon his lips. Hampden in his last moments uttered the same petition nearly in the same words—"O Lord, save my bleeding country." Enlarging on the thought he had thus expressed, he added, "Have these realms in thy especial keeping. Confound and level in the dust those who would rob the people of their liberty and lawful prerogative. Let the king see his error, and turn the hearts of his wicked counsellors from the malice and wickedness of their designs." Here the patriot was for an instant lost in the humble believer. "Lord Jesus," he exclaimed, "receive my soul." The thought of his country returned, and again oppressed him. He mournfully uttered, "O Lord, save my country. O Lord, be merciful." Here his speech failed him, and in an instant his spirit fled. The tidings of his death were received with exultation in the royal army, and by the parliament with a sorrow that bordered on dis-

CHAPTER
I.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

* Lord Nugent's Memorials of Hampden, ii. 439.

† William Pitt.

CHAPTER
I.
CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

may. He was carried to the grave by his own regiment, singing the 90th Psalm as they went, and the 42nd on their return. In the same vault his wife had recently been laid; and the reader who would learn how tender and yet how wise John Hampden was—affectionate without weakness, and pious without affectation—may turn aside to the sequestered church of Great Hampden, and read the exquisite memorial which describes her virtues and his own bereavement. In private life he seems to have been revered: a man of ancient family, accomplished, eloquent, and brave. “He had,” says lord Clarendon, who wrote of him not without a strong tinge of prejudice, “the most absolute spirit of popularity of any man I ever knew.” His weight in parliament was such as at that time no man possessed. As a Christian his life was exemplary; and Baxter, in the greatest of his writings, anticipates, as one of the joys of heaven itself, that he shall again converse with Lord Brooke, and Pym, and Hampden amongst the spirits of just men made perfect.*

Within a few weeks of Hampden’s death, lord Falkland fell. It is one of the calamities of a civil war, that very slight differences compel men to fight on opposite sides. Opinions which would scarcely divide a cabinet or produce a hostile vote in parliament in ordinary times, now arm those

* The passage occurs in “The Saint’s Everlasting Rest,” in the earlier editions. It was struck out after the restoration, but, as Baxter assures us in his autobiography, not because his judgment was altered with respect to those great men.

who substantially think alike against each other. If we calmly investigate lord Falkland's principles, and compare them with those of Hampden, we shall find that they had the same end in view; they differed only as to the means of bringing it about. Falkland was in heart a friend to liberty; Hampden was in heart loyal to the throne. They saw with equal dismay the frightful inroads of tyranny in church and state, and each to his last hour distrusted the intentions of the king. Had they sat in council together, they would probably have agreed to lay the very same restraints upon Charles, and to crush the high prelatie party. When the appeal to the sword was made at last, the one felt the dangers of tyranny and was insensible to other perils: the other, perhaps more sagacious, was keenly alive to the dangers of arbitrary government but he apprehended the remoter evils of a triumphant democracy. Falkland again, as brave as Hampden, was of a gentler mould, and a more hesitating spirit, and naturally regarded war with more aversion. Two years before the war broke out, there appeared no reason why Falkland and Hampden should not fight upon the same side, if indeed it were possible to conceive that they should fight at all. Lord Falkland's character is known to us, and will now be known to all ages, by Clarendon's imperishable tribute to the memory of his friend. Meditating often upon this (one of the most affecting passages in modern history), we have arrived at two

CHAPTER

I.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1643.

CHAPTER

1.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1643.

conclusions, neither of which was it the purpose of the noble historian to reveal. Falkland was dissatisfied with the cause for which he fought, and Falkland was in heart a puritan. He was Charles's secretary of state, but he had accepted the office with great reluctance. The king's service, he said, as then managed, required a compromise of principle which he was not disposed to make. The intrigues of diplomacy disgusted him. He was ashamed of the equivocations and subterfuges and mean evasions of which others made their boast. He was still urged to accept office, on the plea that the king's emergencies justified the proceedings he disliked. He replied that if they were justifiable in others, they would be wrong in him while his conscience was dissatisfied. At length, overwhelmed by importunities, and by personal affection for the king, he accepted office and of course espoused the royal cause. He embraced it with perfect integrity but without warmth and without enthusiasm. He dreaded the triumph of the parliament, but he perhaps dreaded scarcely less the triumph of the king; for he saw Charles unchanged, and his ruling counsellors possessed with a spirit of the blindest infatuation. His spirits fell; he mused in solitude and in society; and as he muttered to himself, unconscious of the presence of others, "peace, peace," were the words which fell for ever from his lips. On the morning of the battle of Newbury he dressed himself with more than usual care: he was weary

of the times he said ; he longed for peace, and should have done with the world before night ; and he wished his body to be found in decent plight. He soon met with the death he sought. We cannot believe that so much virtue existed apart from religion—the pure religion which in the royal camp branded its possessor with the title of a puritan. The Romish party had made strenuous efforts to win lord Falkland to popery. His correspondence shews that he was well versed in the controversy, and well grounded in a purer faith. It was not the fashion with the royalists to speak much of piety ; at the best, it was rather tolerated than approved. And had it been otherwise, none would seek in the pages of the cold and stately Clarendon for the intimations, however slight, which are meant to reveal to others the spiritual condition of those of whom he writes. Be this, however, as it may, with the death of lord Falkland wisdom and moderation forsook the counsels of the king, and faction selfishness and violence rushed in. And with the death of Hampden a spirit (perhaps the only one) was withdrawn that might still have guided the house of commons repressed its turbulence and yet directed it in the pursuit of every safe and constitutional reform. But the great arbiter of the destinies of men and nations had otherwise decreed.

CHAPTER
I.
CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

CHAPTER II.

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1643.

THE cares of the parliament and the hopes of the puritans were not confined to the management nor bounded by the issues of the war. Another object of vast importance divided their attention. They were intent upon a second reformation. By an act dated 10th of September, 1642, (which was to take effect from the 5th of November, 1643,) the hierarchy was dissolved, and the church of Elizabeth, of Parker and of Whitgift, was denuded of its splendours. Meanwhile the disposition grew every day more apparent to destroy it altogether, and to replace it with another. Various motives concurred to produce this hostile feeling. The delinquencies of the high prelatie section of the church had been very great. The Laudian party, though crushed in London, was still powerful with the court; it had undergone no change; it still verged on popery. To subjugate the people to their priests, and to assimilate the usages of the church of England to the pomp of the church of Rome, was the whole of its ambition. Reformation it abhorred, in the sense in which reformation was understood by the parliament and people. From the Laudians, therefore, there was nothing to hope. Again, the indiscriminate

severity with which all the dignitaries and bishops had been treated by the parliament (moderate as some of them were known to be) had driven them for refuge to the king; some indeed had fled abroad and some were in prison. It was therefore impossible to assemble a legal convocation; and even had it been assembled the majority would not have undertaken the reformation of the church; the minority might reason and protest, but it was evident that a minority could accomplish nothing. A thorough reformation, such as the times required, must be effected, if at all, by rougher hands, and in a manner of which the forms of the constitution in church or state afforded no example. Besides, as the breach widened with the king, the parliament felt, no doubt, that it was politic to strengthen their cause with the aspect of a religious quarrel. This was necessary to their influence with the nation; for there was still a loyalty abroad which would have forbidden the people to fight against the king, had they not believed that the popular cause was that of the protestant faith and of pure religion. The difficulties of the parliament were great, and in part they were owing to themselves. The disorders of the church required a searching remedy, and their own violence had alienated those moderate churchmen who, perhaps, knew best the seat of the disease, and certainly were by no means indisposed to apply a pungent though not a destructive remedy. Deprived of their assistance, it seemed, upon the whole, more easy to the parlia-

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

ment to overthrow the national church than merely to amend it; it was safer to rebuild than to repair the antient edifice. In this embarrassment they devised two measures; the one was meant to clear away the difficulties which hindered the work of demolition, the other was designed to reconstruct the church upon more popular, and, as they hoped, more scriptural foundations. First, they instituted an inquiry into the morals and fitness of the clergy then beneficed in England; this was to be managed by a committee of the house of commons. And, secondly, they convened a great assembly or conference of puritan divines and laymen, to advise upon the constitution of the future church. This was the origin of the once famous WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

The machinery for cleansing the church of unfaithful ministers was already in existence. The parliament had not sat three days when, on the 6th of November, 1640, the house of commons resolved itself into a committee of religion.* The state of public feeling was evident from the labours which instantly devolved upon the new tribunal. Almost every parish had a grievance, and the table of the house was laden with petitions. Some ministers were "scandalous," some were "of mean parts," some were "ill affected," and parliament was earnestly implored in every case to afford redress. The house of commons, at this early period, was by no means hostile to the

* Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy; London, 1714, part i p. 62.

national church : it contained a solitary presbyterian, the rest were episcopalians.* We conclude at once that some great abuse existed, and that there were grievances which ought to have been redressed. Overwhelmed with business, the committee of religion, which consisted of the whole house, appointed several other committees, to receive complaints against the clergy and to assist in the work of reformation. There were at least four of these, known by their chairmen as White's, Corbett's, Harlowe's, and Deering's committees. White's was the most famous, and it seems to have absorbed the rest. It was "the committee for scandalous ministers;" and its duty, as indicated by its title, was to inquire into the morals of the clergy, and in general to investigate their fitness for the sacred office. It entered upon its task without reluctance, and within a few months had received above two thousand petitions against various ministers; while, at the same time, Corbett is said to have boasted that his own committee had received nine hundred more.† A Scythian warfare followed against the hapless clergy; and before the war had broken out a thousand had been deprived. At first the concurrence of the house of lords was necessary; but after the war began, the house of commons became every day less episcopalian and more democratic. It now dispossessed the scandalous clergy on its own authority, and appointed others

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

* Baxter on one side, and lord Clarendon on the other, give this account of the long parliament when it first met.

† Walker, part i. p. 65.

CHAPTER
II.
CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

in their place. During the whole of the war "the committee of religion" continued sitting, and the work went on. At length, few adherents of the royal cause, and perhaps not one of the Laudian party, remained. The benefices of England were now in the hands of the puritans.

It is impossible to compute the amount of suffering inflicted by these measures. A proscribed clergy in a civil war, with the popular and victorious party opposed to them, must have been in a pitiable state. Whether designedly or not, much injustice was done, and grievous were the hardships which some exemplary ministers endured. Hammond, Sanderson, Pocock, and Bryan Walton, men whose renown as casuists, as divines, as oriental scholars, has not grown dim, were soon deprived. Archbishop Ussher languished in poverty, and bishop Hall in absolute want. Prideaux, bishop of Worcester, was both deprived and plundered. He lived till 1650 in cheerful submission to his hard lot, and died in great want, leaving to his children, as he said in his last testament, "no legacy but pious poverty, God's blessing, and a father's prayers."* Perhaps his determined support of the royal cause may in some measure excuse his opponents. He had pronounced a sentence of excommunication throughout his diocese upon all who took up arms against the king; an offence which, in a civil war, was not likely to be forgiven. It

* Fuller, Church History, vol. ii. 232.

would not be difficult to present the reader with a hundred names of clergymen expelled and beggared, equally virtuous, perhaps equally learned, and only less illustrious. A record of the sufferers was published after the restoration by Walker, a clergyman of Exeter. Some of his statements have been challenged. He certainly displays a bitter spirit; and when he speaks of the motives of the puritans, he, like most of their opponents, is to be heard, if heard at all, with hesitation. But in the mass of facts which he has rudely thrown together, there are some of which we must avail ourselves. A single column of his folio furnishes the names of two ejected ministers whose expulsion is a disgrace to the parliament: these are Fuller and bishop Pearson. Fuller, the author of the well-known "Church History," himself a puritan—so stigmatized, at least, in the days of Laud; and again at the restoration when Laudian principles revived—a man whose catholic principles breathe through every page of his historical writings, whose sagacity and gentle humour are apparent in his lives of the "Worthies of England," and of whose fervent piety some flashes appear in his "Holy State." Pearson was afterwards bishop of Chester. We can add nothing to the sentence in which the historian of the sufferings of the clergy records his name. "Instead of all eulogiums and characters, let it be said that he was the expositor of the Apostle's Creed."* The exact

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

* Walker, part ii. p. 68.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

number of the expelled ministers it is not easy to determine. Walker gives a list of more than four thousand parishes, from which, he says, the incumbents were sequestered or expelled; and he computes the number of the suffering clergy at six thousand; or, including their families and children, at no less than thirty thousand.* Calamy, an eminent leader of the presbyterians, who replied to Walker, and convicted him of some mistatements, computes that not more than two thousand suffered. But even accepting this, the lowest computation, two thousand ejectionments present a melancholy array of suffering: and, in many instances, we know that it was undeserved; in some few, it fell upon the brightest lights of christendom. The long parliament, however, expelled the episcopal clergy just as, a hundred years before, the reformation had expelled the Romish priests. The expulsions, indeed, were far more unsparing. At the reformation, it is certain that not three hundred of the old clergy were actually dispossessed; now at least two thousand were deprived. The reflection may perhaps occur, that more severity at first, and a more searching discipline in purging the reformed church from a superstitious clergy, might have prevented the sufferings which we now relate. To the Romish leaven which still pervaded it the puritans ascribed the necessity for their worst excesses.

To vindicate these proceedings, and perhaps

* Ibid. i. p. 99.

further to inflame the people against the old parochial clergy, White was instructed to publish what is now one of the most curious documents which the civil wars produced. He was chairman of the committee of the whole house for religion, and of the sub-committee for scandalous ministers; and in both he played his part with great alacrity. He had been amongst the first to assert, in a speech in parliament, that bishops were unscriptural;* and in his preface he now maintained that the prelatie church, as a part of anti-christ, should be totally destroyed. His treatise, a quarto pamphlet of fifty pages, published by authority of parliament in November 1643 is entitled, *The First Century of Scandalous and Malignant Ministers*; and it contains a record of the crimes for which a hundred of the clergy had been sequestered or deprived. It seems to have been intended as the first of a series; but whether the public taste revolted, or the work were sufficiently well done to need no repetition of the blow, a second century was not published.† It is well for the character of the clergy of that age that a few copies of this rare work exist. For no honest mind can rise from its perusal with-

* A speech of master John White, counsellor, concerning episcopacy, printed by William Cooke, 1641.

† Baxter mentions a second century, but he does not appear to have seen it. Walker (*Suff. Clergy*) had heard that a second century was published, but he had never been able to obtain it. Probably they referred by mistake to some other work bearing a similar title. Walker in his *Hist. Independency* gives "a first century" of republican plunderers who were enriched with the sequestered estates of the royalists. For party purposes the same title would suit on either side.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

out feeling that if their morals were impeached, their loyalty was often most in fault. The gravamen of the charge is their hatred of the parliament and its proceedings; the pretext for depriving them is the immorality of their lives; and the two charges are so oddly blended, that, painful as the subject is, we are diverted and amused. The accusations are such as these:—The vicar of Muchholland in Essex boweth twelve times to the east when he goeth into the church, and preacheth that baptism doth wash away sin; and hath affirmed that he never knew any good that the parliament did, unless it was to rob the country.—The vicar of Redburn in Hertfordshire is a drunkard, and hath expressed much malignity against the parliament.—The vicar of Farnham lived in adultery, and hath betaken himself to the army of cavaliers.—Hepworth frequents ale-houses, and is incontinent, and also he affirmed that the parliament were a company of factious spirits.—Thomas Heard, vicar of West Tukely, is a drunkard; he refused to administer the sacrament except to those who receive it kneeling, and he hoped to live to see all the puritans hanged.*—Southern, vicar of Malendine in Essex, frequented the ale-house, was a swearer, refused to administer the sacrament except to those who knelt, and then in one kind only. But these charges were not sufficient; and the eager centurist proceeds to relate more flagrant crimes. Southern had compared painful preachers to

* First Century, &c., 4, 47, 97; from a copy in the British Museum.

ballad singers ; he had persecuted his hearers for going to other churches when there was no sermon at home ; above all, “ he had expressed malignity against the parliament ; and is vehemently suspected of living incontinently, and hath been several times presented by the churchwardens.”* Such were the promiscuous charges against the English clergy as hurled by their most formidable foe. With some show of justice there is enough of malice to excite indignation and yet of folly to provoke a smile.

Still the question upon which issues of great moment hang is not determined by these considerations. Not only the character of the clergy of those days, but that of the puritans themselves (whom we identify through this discussion with the parliament) is at stake. Were the great body of the clergy scandalous and profane, or was the parliament tyrannical ? The truth of an accusation is one thing ; the wisdom, the temper, with which the charge is insisted on is another.

It is not pretended that the episcopal clergy were altogether blameless. Their warmest advocates allow that it would be false and even ridiculous to affirm that there were not amongst them some men of wicked lives, a reproach and scandal to their office.† The disordered state of public affairs for several years, and the want of all other discipline than that which was enforced against puritanism, had produced its natural

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

* First Century, &c., 97.

† Walker, part i. 72.

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1648.

effects. Baxter declares that in the counties with which he was acquainted, Worcester and Shropshire, six to one at least of the sequestered clergy were, by the oaths of witnesses, proved insufficient or scandalous, or both, and especially guilty of drunkenness or swearing.* Earnestness in religion was suspected and decried: it was natural that sloth should luxuriate. When the hand of vengeance fell heavily upon the most laborious of the clergy, it is probable that those who wished to commend themselves to the ruling powers would prove their zeal by scoffing at the piety as well as the scruples of the puritans. For many years complaints against the clergy had now been loud. The vacant livings had been filled with a much more keen regard to the political opinions of the clergy, and their abhorrence of puritanism in every form, than to the more important considerations of learning, zeal, or piety. Had the inquisition been fairly conducted by the parliament, the results might have been very painful, but churchmen would have had no reason to complain. As spiritual guides, a vast number of the clergy were utterly incompetent; and the mischiefs of utter incompetence, not to speak of open vice, in a christian minister, are of such dreadful consequence, that we are disposed to regard severity in such a case with no disapprobation. A minister who is not apt to teach is not fit for his office. His parishioners have a right to christian instruction. To affirm that mere incompetence does not

* Baxter's Own Life and Times, book i. p. 74.

justify the removal of a minister, or at least the compulsory introduction of an efficient assistant, is simply to sacrifice the flock; to maintain, in fact, that whatever redress the clergy may have for the recovery of their rights, the people shall have none.

Upon these grounds a searching inquisition was necessary; and the parliament would have entitled themselves to the gratitude of future times, had they conducted it fairly and with temper. But the clergy as a body were maligned as profligates, in order that, as royalists, they might be ejected from their livings. Baxter himself allows that "some able godly preachers were cast out for the war alone," simply because they were royalists; but, he adds, "comparatively they were very few."* Few or many, they were all that could be found. Public opinion soon revolted and prepared the way for the reaction which took place at the restoration. Those who really believe that the clergy of those times were such men as White describes must be prepared with reasons for so harsh a decision. That the hatred of puritanism led to a contempt of real piety in some, and to what was more disgraceful an affectation of contempt in others, is not unlikely. But between the absence of religion and the sensual vices of Tiberius at Capreæ there is still a chasm. The clergy did not live in convents, where vice was unobserved; nor in a state of celibacy, at once an excuse for lust and its temptation. They mingled

CHAPTER
II.
CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

* i. 74.

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

with their parishioners in daily life; they were surrounded by their own families. It was an age of great religious knowledge, and now for thirty years of free and violent discussion. And the moral character of English society was at least as high as at any previous period of our history. It is very improbable that any considerable number of the parochial clergy, then, were men of abandoned lives: it is, we fear, too true that few of them were able teachers of the new testament; for, under the plea of fencing the church against schismatics, Laud and his party had succeeded in keeping out of its benefices almost every man of evangelical piety. But whatever they may have been, the real cause of their ejection was in many cases, perhaps in most, their attachment to the king. It was the unhappiness of Charles that he had made the pious clergy his opponents. It was the calamity of the loyal clergy to suffer for the king's misconduct rather than their own. Yet the position of the puritans was here again one of extreme difficulty; and upon the decision of the question as to the necessity of the war, their justification after all depends. If the war were right, the exclusion of the loyal clergy may have been one of the direful necessities the war involved. It was impossible to contend against the local influence of ten thousand clergymen residing in their own parishes, with access to every house, and a confidential intercourse with every parishioner, and all of them secretly or openly banded against the parliament; and it would have been well for

the reputation of the parliament if they had honestly announced their measure and defended it on these grounds alone, as a measure of precaution forced upon them by the necessities of a civil war. Of the revenues of the sequestered livings, one-fifth was reserved for the ejected ministers; an act of justice, stinted as it was, which ought to be recorded to the honour of the parliament; and one that was not copied by the royalists when the days of retribution came and the puritans were in their turn expelled in 1662. It is said indeed that, in the convulsions that followed, the scanty pittance was seldom paid; but in a civil war this may have been a wrong which it was impossible to prevent. The rest of the tithe was given to the new incumbent if the income were small; in richer livings the parliament seized the lion's share to carry on the war.

It was one of the fatal errors of the long parliament to destroy existing institutions without having considered how to supply their place. This indeed was their singular defect. If sincere reformers, they were not great statesmen; if they were courageous in removing abuses, they were weak in forethought, and weaker still in the power that gives to forethought expression and stability. The gratitude they really deserve is that which belongs to those who devote their lives to a contest with oppression. They gained many a victory both in arms and politics, but they threw away most of their advantages, and left the battle to be fought again.

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

They had destroyed the high prelatie party. They had abolished episcopacy. They were pruning the church with no unsparing hand. Its revenues were within their power. So were its venerated shrines. They had begun to despoil its churches and cathedrals of their decorations with a ruthless barbarism on the pretext of removing superstition, and its revenues they squandered. In every parish there was some note of change, and the hope or dread of a revolution in the church. The future was all uncertain. A national church was to be retained; upon this point there was no difference; but what should be its character, its forms and usages, was still to be considered. These had suddenly become perplexing questions to the parliament, and they called to their assistance a council of lawyers and divines. Thus the Westminster assembly arose out of the emergency of what we may properly term the puritan crisis.

The parliament had for some time contemplated an assembly of this description, and had more than once requested the king to sanction it. But there were some points upon which the king and his advisers were more sagacious than the parliament, and Charles withheld his consent. An assembly of divines of differing parties might give excellent advice upon some specific measure; but they could do nothing when the broad question lay before them, how to fabricate a national church: for nothing could be done without a compromise, and the compromise involved the aban-

donment of principles which the divines on both sides thought it would be sin to part with. Here concession was not disgrace but apostasy : episcopalians must argue for one form of government, and presbyterians for another. The former in general denied that a church could possibly exist without episcopacy ; the latter set out with the assumption that bishops were nothing more than presbyters ; to erect them into a separate order was to corrupt the institutions of Christ. The stone of stumbling lay at the threshold, and honest men of each party, with the rigid views each entertained, felt that there was no rolling it aside. And there was a third party now coming into sight, the independents or congregationists, less at present in numbers than either of the other two, but quite equal to them in zeal and determination, and destined at no distant day to triumph over both. From elements thus compounded, unanimity it was in vain to seek ; from the deliberations of such a body no practical measure of sufficient width to embrace the spiritual wants of a nation could be supplied. Much was expected from the Westminster assembly : it was ushered in with the solemnity, and something of the pomp, of a general council ; but its work has failed, and its fame has perished ; and its failure might have been foreseen.

Political considerations were not wanting to render the affair still more embarrassing. The parliament wanted the assistance of the Scotch against the king, and all Scotland was devoted to

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1648.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

the presbyterian cause. The general assembly who control the kirk of Scotland, (and who at this juncture controlled both the church and nation,) assembled in Edinburgh in July, 1642; and the English parliament addressed to them a letter, describing the perilous state of their affairs and their desire to obtain help from Scotland. They added an expression of their deep anxiety to promote a godly reformation both in church and state. The assembly answered on the 3rd of August, expressing their sympathy, and recommending a closer union in religion. They desired "that in all his majesty's dominions there might be one confession of faith, one directory of worship, one public catechism, and one form of church government." In a word, they recommended the subversion of episcopacy, and the establishment of a presbyterian church, similar to their own, in England. Upon this correspondence the ungenerous assertion has been founded that the Scotch imposed presbyterianism upon England as the condition of taking arms against the king. This is scarcely true; but at the same time we may admit that the wishes of a neighbouring state, which had an army of twenty thousand men to lend, were likely to have more than their just weight with the leaders in the war. The transaction was not dishonourable to the Scotch; in their circumstances the wish was natural; at the same time it embarrassed the parliament, and gave the presbyterians in London a commanding influence, which

their position would not otherwise have secured.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

The assembly was at length convened* by the sole authority of the two houses of parliament. The ordinance (for so their acts were styled, now that the concurrence of the crown was withheld,) bears date June 12, 1643, and the title runs thus : “ An ordinance of the lords and commons in parliament, for the calling of an assembly of learned and godly divines and others, to be consulted with by the parliament, for the settling of the government and liturgy of the church of England, and for vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the said church from false aspersions and interpretations.” It sets forth that the present (it would have been more correct to say the recent) church government, “ by bishops, archbishops, deans, chapters, archdeacons, and so forth, is evil, offensive, and burdensome, an impediment to reformation and religion, and very prejudicial to the state.” It had been resolved, therefore, that the hierarchy should be removed, “ and that such a government should be settled in the church as might be most agreeable to God’s holy word.” An intimation followed, “ that it should be brought into a nearer agreement with the church of Scotland and other reformed churches abroad.”

* For the history of the Westminster assembly, see Neal’s Hist. of the Puritans, iii. chap. 4—6; Clarendon’s Hist.; Fuller’s Church Hist.; Baxter’s Life (by himself); Milton, in his Hist. of England, and the Assembly Man (both in Harleian Miscell. v.); and of modern writers, Hetherington’s Hist. of the Westminster Assembly; Chambers’ Life of Bishop Reynolds; Price’s Hist. of Nonconformists; Palmer’s Preface to Calamy’s Ejected Ministers. These I have consulted, and several others.

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

To accomplish this, and “for the better clearing of the doctrine of the church of England from all false calumnies and aspersions,” the assembly was convened. They were to consult and advise of such matters and things, touching the premises, as should be proposed to them by either house of parliament. And they were commanded to meet in Henry VII.th’s chapel on the first day of July. The ordinance appoints and enumerates the members of the assembly, and enjoins their attendance, and it declares that their sittings shall be removed from place to place, or be finally dissolved, as parliament shall direct. And they are strictly charged in their discussions to confer and treat among themselves of such matters as should be proposed by both or either of the said houses of parliament, and no other; to deliver their opinions from time to time as both or either house required; but not to divulge anything, by printing, writing, or otherwise, without the consent of parliament. The parliament even appointed the chairman or prolocutor. It provided that in case any difference of opinion should arise, the disagreement, together with the reasons for it, should be referred back to the two houses. It undertook to pay each member of the assembly during his attendance the moderate, and yet perhaps sufficient, sum of four shillings a day, at the charges of the commonwealth. It discharged the members from the penalty of non-residence, and provided for the filling up of any vacancies in the assembly which death might occasion, by the two houses themselves. And,

lastly, it forbad the assembly or any of its members "to assume any jurisdiction, power, or authority, ecclesiastical or otherwise, except what was herein expressed."

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

To the assembly were summoned a hundred and twenty-one divines, to whom one-and-twenty more were shortly added. Four Scotch ministers were invited, and two lay assessors. To these we must add ten English peers and twenty members of the house of commons, making an apparent total of upwards of one hundred and seventy. But these numbers existed only on the parchments upon which they were inscribed. On the first day sixty-nine were present; the attendance afterwards varied from sixty to eighty, and this only during the earlier sittings. The composition of this body deserves attention. The thirty laymen, members of the two houses of parliament, were introduced more, we suspect, to watch the proceedings and curb the excesses of the clergy, than to give dignity to the assembly by their presence. Of the divines there were three parties, or, including the episcopalian clergy, four; but the latter were few, and their canonical habits amidst the Genevan cloaks of the majority, led a spectator to the shrewd conclusion that times were changed indeed and they themselves the nonconformists.* Archbishop Ussher, Westfield bishop of Bristol, Brownrigg bishop of Exeter, Nicholson afterwards bishop of Gloucester, with Sanderson and

* Fuller, Church Hist. iii. 448.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

Hammond and Dr. Featley, were the chief of this small body, which did not exceed twenty.* The bishop of Bristol was present at the solemn opening; but the king had by proclamation a few days before forbidden the assembly, declaring its acts illegal, and threatening those who should take part in it with his severe displeasure; and when this was known in London the episcopal clergy retired. Walker asserts that the primate of Ireland sat for a while, but afterwards attending the king at Oxford, and refusing to return, was formally expelled. It must be admitted that, except as to the disparity of numbers, the episcopalian party could not have been more ably represented. And they were probably summoned with a sincere desire on the part of the parliament to benefit by their advice. The king's proclamation forbidding the assembly, compelled them to retire. But another event took place within a few weeks which would have had of necessity the same effect; this was the imposition of the solemn league and covenant. But in revolutions events succeed with the speed of lightning, and to the actors themselves they come as unexpectedly. When the assembly was convened the covenant had not been thought of; and when it was imposed the bishops had previously withdrawn.

The majority of the divines represented the opinions which Cartwright had formerly espoused. They were presbyterians, or as it has been more correctly expressed by one who knew them well, "they

* Clarendon, vol. i. 530.

either favoured the presbyterian discipline, or in process of time were brought over to embrace it.”* Yet they had received episcopalian ordination and had lived hitherto in communion with the church of England. So rapidly did men change their opinions, or so unsettled had their principles become. Yet the presbyterian party were not ordinary men, nor men of fickle minds. Amongst their leaders were Calamy, Corbet, Gataker, Hildersham, Sperstowe, Vines, and others whose names are still dear to nonconformists; most of whom left to the world some record of ministerial ability, of solid learning, or of zeal and piety, which time has not destroyed.

The system of church government which the presbyterians were anxious to introduce was in a great measure that which now prevails in the kirk or national church of Scotland. It admits of no superiority of one minister above another. Every presbyter regards himself as a bishop of the new testament. Still each parish is not a republic independent of the rest; for in this point, and in this alone, lies the essential difference between the presbyterian and the independent or congregational system. Strict obedience is enforced on the part of every congregation and its minister to superior judicatories, of which there are several, rising one above another in authority. The lowest of these is composed of the ministers and lay elders of the parish, and is termed in Scotland the kirk session or parochial consistory. It pos-

* Fuller.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

sesses considerable power, and is in fact a body politic for its own domestic government. Then the ministers of a number of contiguous parishes, together with certain representatives from the parochial consistories, form a presbytery; a higher court, having power to revise the decisions of the lower. A plurality of presbyteries, differing according to circumstances, form a provincial synod; and the general assembly of the church, composed of representatives from the prebyteries (and in Scotland from the universities and some other public bodies) forms the last supreme tribunal. The whole number of the general assembly in Scotland is three hundred and sixty-four; of whom, it is to be observed, one hundred and sixty-two are laymen. Every court is bound to lay the record of all its proceedings from time to time before the tribunal which is its immediate superior; any part of its proceedings may be brought by appeal or complaint under the review of a higher jurisdiction; and every minister, when he receives orders, comes under a solemn engagement to maintain and defend the doctrine, discipline, and government of the church; and never to attempt anything, directly or indirectly, which may tend to its subversion or prejudice. Thus the general assembly, as the court of last resort, revises every litigated decision; and has the power of enforcing, without control, obedience to its decrees: it is a supreme tribunal; and, with the concurrence of a majority of the presbyteries, it may enact laws for the government of the

whole church.* In England it was designed to establish a similar church government. There were to be four courts, the parochial, classical, provincial, and national, corresponding to those in Scotland. But there was one point on which the house of commons was inexorable, and its firmness was fatal to the rigid presbyterian party. From the inferior courts there must be a last appeal, and the question was whether it should lie to a secular or a purely spiritual court. The presbyterians maintained that in spiritual things it was a dishonour to Christ himself, the church's sole head and king, to permit a secular body to sit in final judgment on its own previous decisions. The parliament was of another mind: it contemplated with little satisfaction the setting up of a spiritual tribunal independent of itself. No arguments could move it here. If presbyterianism meant a supreme spiritual court, over which it could exercise no control, a pure presbyterian church in England it would tolerate no more than prelacy itself. An accommodation, a modified presbyterianism, was the consequence; and the mortification of the extreme presbyterians was undisguised.

Waving the question of the divine authority of particular forms of government, presbyterianism is not without its advantages. The regular gradation of its course produces order; the equality

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

* From a paper drawn up by the rev. George Hill, principal of St. Mary's college in the university of St. Andrews, inserted in Dugald Stewart's life of Robertson the historian.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

of its ministers, a general contentment; and the admission of the laity is at once a check upon ecclesiastical intolerance and on that professional bias to which even the strongest minds are subject; and at the same time it affords to laymen a field within which, without irregularity, the high ambition of being useful to the great cause of religion may be fairly exercised; the tyranny of ecclesiastics seems to be prevented; and the affairs of the church cannot, in the most drowsy periods, devolve exclusively upon the clergy, as in England during the last century. Thus two prolific sources of mischief are cut off. The system is well framed for giving considerable energy to its own decisions, and for maintaining a due subordination amongst its component parts. Its principal defects are its somewhat democratic character and its power of crushing individuals. It has been said, that had it been introduced without restraint in England, the people would soon have learnt that the episcopal jurisdiction they had cast off was nothing in comparison with the tyranny they had established. And this is supported by the argument, that while under an episcopal government the bishop is the judge, in presbyterian churches it is the minister and elders who decide. The parish consistory has the power of excommunication. If the delinquent appeals to a higher court, to the presbytery, or higher still, to the provincial synod, in each case it may so happen that his own minister who inflicted the censure, and the elders who

concurred in it, are members, influential members, of the higher court; and at all events the appellant who feels himself wronged suffers, for the present, beneath the odium of disgrace; and yet upon him it lies to prove himself aggrieved.*

But a presbyterian would probably reply, that our objections are rather fanciful than real. The Scotch, though presbyterian are not republican. King James's oracular aphorism, "no bishop no king," still waits for its accomplishment. A presbyterian nation is found after centuries of trial to retain its love of regal and its dislike of episcopal government with the same tenacity; and with regard to church censures, it must in justice be allowed that in Scotland cases of oppression do not frequently occur. Church censures are not uncommon: with us they are scarcely known; for our preposterous affection for the antient canon law makes excommunication a civil sentence; that is, it makes it in most cases impossible, in others, contemptible or worse. And as to milder censures, the penance of standing in a winding-sheet at the church door is at variance with the habits and the common sense of modern times; and therefore equally useless as an example or a punishment. It only serves to give fools an occasion to make a mock of sin. On the question of discipline, it would scarcely be wise to challenge a comparison with some presbyterian churches.

Between prelacy and presbyterianism there was a middle path. And if the fact, that it was

* Short, Hist. of the Church of England, sect. 591.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

advocated by one of the wisest, of the meekest, and of the best men that any church possessed, could in these frenzied times have had weight, it would certainly have received attention. Archbishop Ussher proposed a system which he termed reduced episcopacy. He would have retained the episcopal office, he would have abandoned its superfluous splendours. In each rural deanery (generally including twenty or thirty parishes) he would have placed a suffragan bishop. Once a month the bishop was to assemble a synod of the incumbent pastors within his jurisdiction, and by their votes decide the questions that might come before him. Once or twice a year there was to be a diocesan synod, in which the suffragans and their clergy, or a certain number of them, should meet in the presence of a superintendent or archbishop of the diocese; and here the transactions of the monthly synods were to be revised. And, lastly, he proposed a provincial synod, consisting of all the bishops, diocesan and suffragan, and such of the clergy as should be elected out of every diocese. The primate of either province might be the moderator, or, in his room, one of the bishops appointed by him. This synod might be held every third year, in each of the two ecclesiastical provinces into which England is divided; or, if the parliament were sitting, one national synod might be formed, in which all appeals from inferior courts should be received, and all ecclesiastical affairs determined.*

* Neal, vol. ii. 374.

The fate of this intermediate scheme was singular. Perhaps it was not without force that moderate men remarked that its rejection seemed a token of the divine displeasure against the spirit of these unhappy times. When it was first presented, it satisfied the puritans but neither the bishops nor the king. Afterwards, the king offered this very scheme at the treaty of the Isle of Wight; but now neither the parliament nor the puritans would listen to it. At the restoration of Charles II., the presbyterian clergy once more presented it as a scheme with which they were at last contented; but now both the king and the bishops again rejected it with scorn.* But in revolutions compromise is treason, and he who urges, with whatever wisdom, the counsels of moderation, sits with Canute on the sounding beach and rebukes the lashing tide.

The independents formed another party, small indeed at present, says a quaint writer, but like the cloud seen by the prophet's servant already portending danger and destined ere long to overspread the whole hemisphere of presbytery. They had five leaders, whom the majority styled the dissenting brethren. These were, Nye, Simpson, Bridge, Burroughs, and Thomas Goodwin. Laud's severities had once driven them to Holland; and here, at Rotterdam and Arnheim, they had erected congregational or independent churches. Holland had long been the refuge of the Brownists, and they now returned, eager to destroy the

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

* Neal, ii. 376, and Baxter, Life, i. 62, and ii. 238.

CHAPTER
II.

church which to them at least had been no tender parent.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

The difference between the independents and presbyterians on church government is by no means great. This was admitted at the time by the best of the presbyterians.* They held that every particular congregation of Christians has entire and perfect jurisdiction over its own members. But they allowed that each congregation was to a certain extent bound to submit to the decision of neighbouring churches. If, for example, any one church or congregation gave offence, it must submit to an open examination conducted by the other churches, who might exclude it from christian communion and leave it isolated. This they say is all the authority of ecclesiastical power that one church may exercise over another, "unless we call in the civil magistrate, for which we find no authority in scripture." They rejected episcopacy, but professed agreement in doctrine with the articles of the church of England. Their spirit was more generous and catholic than that of most of their antagonists. They found, they said, much to blame in the church of England; yet they allowed "multitudes of its parochial churches to be true churches and its ministers true ministers of Christ." While abroad, they had gladly held occasional communion with it, and had themselves received to the Lord's supper those English churchmen whom they knew to be devout. They

* Neal, iii. 114.

had also lived on terms of christian charity with the Dutch churches, holding a brotherly correspondence with their divines, and admitting some of the members of their churches to communion with themselves in the sacrament and other ordinances.*

CHAPTER
11.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

Thus the extreme sections of the elder puritan body as it existed in the reign of Elizabeth, and they only, were represented in the assembly. There were the successors of Cartwright and the disciples of Brown; but the church puritans, the successors of the men of the reformation, were in effect shut out; and the few who sincerely desired to render the church efficient but not to overthrow it, deprived of their countenance, were outvoted and put down. The event shewed that in forbidding the assembly the king had not been well advised. His conscience, however scrupulous, was not responsible for its proceedings. He had not summoned it; he could not prevent it. Had he then waited patiently, he might still, if he possessed the power, have annulled its proceedings when conciliation and arguments had failed. His precipitation compelled the churchmen to withdraw, and left their opponents a victory without a contest. Within a few weeks the greater rashness of the parliament would have transferred the odium of expelling the episcopalians to themselves. By adopting the covenant and imposing

* Apological Narration of the Independents, presented to the house of commons, 1644, by Goodwin, Simpson, Nye, Burroughs, and Bridge, the independent leaders.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

it on the assembly, the old church party would have been driven out. Had they not retired already, then at least they must have been expelled. Their presence in such scanty numbers did not indeed promise much for the interests of episcopacy; still Ussher and Sanderson and a few such men must have made their presence felt. When they withdrew episcopacy was lost.

The Erastians formed a third party: they were so called from Erastus, a physician of Heidelberg, who had written a treatise on church government in the year 1568. His theory seems to have been, that the minister of Christ is a mere lecturer upon divinity, without power of any kind, except the power of persuasion and of argument. The punishment of all offences, whether civil or religious, belongs to the magistrate. Baptism, the Lord's supper, and all the institutions of Christ, are free to every man. The minister may explain the necessary qualifications, and dissuade the bad from communion, but he may not refuse the rights of fellowship with the church, nor inflict any kind of censure. The tendency of this theory is evidently to make the church completely dependent upon the civil power. We learn therefore, without surprise, that Erastianism was equally cherished by the parliament and abhorred by the assembly. It is said that only one of the divines, Thomas Coleman of Lincolnshire, was thoroughly Erastian. Sometimes Lightfoot came to his assistance. They were two men of great oriental learning, and their attachment to the study of Hebrew

literature and customs led them to the conclusion that the christian church ought to be constituted after the Jewish model;* that as in Israel the jurisdiction, both civil and ecclesiastical, was vested in the Hebrew monarch, there ought to be the same kind of blended government under the christian dispensation. The chief strength of the party within the assembly was in the lay assessors, the representatives of the parliament. Selden, White-locke, and St. John, backed by the house of commons, and in a short time by the whole civil authority then existing in the nation, were no unequal match for the rest of the assembly. What they wanted in force of argument they made up in wit and sarcasm; weapons scarcely suited for grave divines, nor very safe for theologians to employ against a house of commons. Selden, "the learned Selden," seems to have treated the whole of their proceedings with an easy ridicule; such at least was the opinion of his contemporaries. "Selden visits them," says the caustic author of the *Assembly Man*, "as the Persians used, to see wild asses fight. When the commons have tired him with their new law these brethren refresh him with their mad gospel. To speak truth, this assembly is the two houses' attiring-room, where the lords and commons put on their vizards and masks of religion."† The legal attainments of St. John, the solicitor general, were scarcely less formidable than Selden's wit; and the calm de-

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.* Hetherington, *Hist. West. Assem.* 142.† *The Assembly Man*, *Harleian Miscel.* v. 99.

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

termination and thoughtful reasoning of Bulstrode Whitelock silenced many whom perhaps it did not convince. Scotland was represented in the assembly by six commissioners ; and never were stranger materials, and more discordant, moulded into six human forms. Lord Maitland and Johnston of Warriston were the leaders ; and they were assisted by four divines. Maitland now professed to be a thorough presbyterian ; but he was a bad man—bad beyond the powers of language to express. After the restoration of Charles II. he became a furious prelatist, and, when duke of Lauderdale, headed a ferocious persecution against his countrymen and former allies the Scottish covenanters. The duke of Alva might have envied him the number of his victims, and the grand inquisitor himself have learned, with such gratitude as fiends can feel, the diabolic art of inventing torments and making cruelty a jest. Johnston seems to have been one of the originals from which modern writers have drawn the character of a gloomy presbyterian. He had studied law with care ; his intellect was vigorous, his memory was extraordinary. To him the presbyterian cause was all the world, and more. He regarded the covenant as nothing less than the setting up of Christ upon his throne ; and his zeal for it passed all bounds. For this his family, and everything besides, was neglected. He was a fluent speaker, and vehement and therefore popular. He had iron strength and nerves. Three hours' sleep sufficed him for the twenty-four. His devotions

were prolonged every day for many hours. In his family worship he would often pray two hours at once; and while thus engaged whatever struck his fancy he regarded as an answer from above, and by such impressions his conduct was determined.* We turn with more satisfaction to the clerical representatives of the kirk. Henderson appears to have been learned and zealous, and great in council. George Gillespie, though one of the youngest members, was one of the ablest debaters in the assembly; with the fire of youth he had the wisdom of age. Baillie was a man of great sagacity, but cunning and of a narrow mind. He had but one object in view, to establish a presbyterian church in England; and men with him were good or bad as they thwarted or assisted in his darling project. Rutherford was eminent in his own day as a controversionalist. To us his controversial writings are of no importance. We know him, and the followers of Christ of every name will know him long, as the writer of a simple volume of religious letters. Such is the dignity of pure religion, and such its stability in a world of change. The Westminster assembly is only known in history; his connection with it would not have saved the name of Rutherford from entire oblivion; but a little book of pious thoughts, the confiding effusions of a spiritual mind, hastily thrown off at leisure hours, still secures for Rutherford the veneration of grateful

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1643.

* Burnet, Hist. of his Own Times, vol. i. p. 37. Burnet was Warriston's nephew.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

thousands. A humbling thought, and yet consolatory: the recreations of leisure the real business of life!

The sectaries who had first broken out in the reign of James I. still continued to increase. Some years had now passed since bishop Hall enumerated in the house of lords no fewer than four-score, congregations of several sectaries, which were all taught, he said, to spit in the face of their mother the church of England, and to defy and revile her government.* While they confined their assaults to the prelacy the parliament felt no uneasiness; but now, their numbers still increased, though prelacy was extinguished; and every wild and blasphemous opinion had its appropriate oracle. The sectaries, as troublesome to the parliament as they had once been to the bishops, were of course unrepresented in the assembly of divines. But so too were the anabaptists, who still laboured under a degree of popular odium unexplained, and therefore probably unmerited.

The church of England had decided that the baptism of infants was in anywise to be retained, as most agreeable to the word of God; and so thought the Westminster divines. But a calm discussion of a question which had now been rankling in the heart of the reformation from its early dawn, and still acquiring strength, would not have been unseasonable. In the judgment of the sternest presbyterian, an anabaptist was at

* Shaking of the Olive Tree, 426.

least not worse than an Erastian; yet discussing at great length the principles of the latter, they passed over the tenets of the former with contempt.* This tacit compact to exclude those who doubted the validity of infant baptism from the christian family produced bitter fruits in after years. And the same exclusiveness is still hindering that perfect union within the church of Christ for which every believer prays. And even amongst the sectaries there were shades of difference: all were not equally absurd; all were not blasphemous. They were schismatics; but a schism may be healed; and the only salve is kindness and expostulation. It reflects no credit on the assembly that these emollients were never tried.

Such was the composition of the assembly. Their first task, undertaken at the parliament's command, was the revision of the thirty-nine articles. Ten weeks were spent in the consideration of the first fifteen. Whether this long deliberation amidst the horrors of civil war be an evidence of the calmness or of the insensibility of the Westminster divines; whether it were solemn trifling under circumstances in which to trifle was no common act of folly; or whether it bespoke real

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

* Dr. Featley was an eminent member of the assembly; from which he was expelled for holding correspondence with archbishop Ussher, after Ussher had been himself expelled as a royalist. I suppose he was the author of a work which bears his name with the amusing title of "Dippers dipt, or Anabaptists ducked and plunged over head and ears." London, 4to. 1645. To such scurrility did even learned and good men descend.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

greatness of mind and a lofty determination, the reader will decide. The alterations made, after all, were few and chiefly verbal. In the second article the words “who truly suffered,” referring to the Redeemer’s sacrifice, are explained to mean, that “the Redeemer for our sakes truly suffered most grievous torments in his soul from God.” In the third article, the descent into hell is thus expressed: “As Christ died for us, and was buried, so it is to be believed that he continued in the state of the dead, and under the power and dominion of death, from the time of his death and burial until his resurrection, which has been otherwise expressed thus; he went down into hell.” In the sixth, which enumerates the canon of scripture, there is no mention of the apocryphal books. The eleventh article, on justification, is expressed rather more at large, but without alteration of the sense: and the same remark applies to the fourteenth, on works of supererogation. In the fifteenth article, the words “all we the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ,” are altered thus: “all we the rest, although baptized and regenerate.” The correction is remarkable. The Westminster divines chose to assert that “all we,” that is, “all baptized persons, except Christ only,” are in some sense “regenerate;” and they preferred this expression to the more general language of our reformers, “born again in Christ;” they erase the one and introduce the other.

The revision went no farther than the fifteenth

article ; for while the assembly were thus employed in revising that which, by the confession of their own few, yet often unimportant, alterations, scarcely required amendment, men of sterner minds elsewhere were preparing measures of another character.

The war throughout the summer had been favourable to the king, and the parliament anxiously sought assistance from the Scots. The parliament were now no longer attached to episcopacy. The difference between Scotland and themselves was little more than this ; the one were eager to impose what the others were not at the juncture unwilling to accept. Events no doubt soon shewed that the parliament had little sincere regard for presbyterianism. They seemed, however, now ready to embrace it as an alternative. It was necessary to re-establish the church of England in one form or other ; and the presbyterian model was accepted. Under the circumstances this was the only course within their reach, unless indeed they would restore episcopacy. English commissioners were sent to Edinburgh from the parliament and the assembly of divines with ample powers, and the result of their conference was the solemn league and covenant. It was framed by Henderson, and amended in some points by sir Harry Vane and the commissioners from England. It was submitted to the general assembly in Edinburgh on the 17th of August, and passed unanimously amidst an enthusiasm which shewed itself in the shouts of some, and “ the bursting tears of a deep, full,

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

and sacred joy of others.”* When the document reached Westminster it was re-considered by the assembly, and after a few days’ debate adopted, one voice alone dissenting.

The 15th of September, 1643, witnessed one of the strangest events in the ecclesiastical history of England, or perhaps of christendom. The house of commons and the assembly of divines met in the church of St. Margaret, Westminster, and, with all the solemnity which prayer and fervent exhortation and a solemn oath could give, renounced for ever, for themselves and their children after them, the church which reformers had established and martyrs had sprinkled with their blood. The service was begun with prayer. Mr. Nye then addressed the audience in a speech which lasted for an hour, pointing out the scriptural authority for such covenants, and their manifold advantages. Henderson followed and confirmed his statements. Then came the closing scene. Nye ascended the pulpit, and, slowly pausing at the close of every article, read aloud the solemn league and covenant. The whole congregation, statesmen and divines, the representatives (so they at least maintained, and so in fact they were,) of the nation and of the church of England arose, and, like the Jews of old, lifted up their right-hands to heaven, and swore by the great name of God to accept and maintain the covenant. The members of the house of commons then subscribed the deed upon one roll of parchment and

* Hetherington.

the assembly of divines upon another. Prayer and praise were offered up by Gouge, an eminent puritan minister, and the service closed. The covenant was taken by the house of lords with the same solemnities a few weeks afterwards; for the lords were now submissive to the commons; they merely registered their edicts and did their bidding.

The covenant consisted of six articles. In the first, the covenanters pledged themselves to the reformation of religion, and to "the endeavour to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity, in religion, in confession of faith, form of church government, directory for worship and catechizing." In this article they also pledged themselves to preserve entire the church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government. The church of Scotland was the model to which England and Ireland must be conformed. The pledge in fact amounted to the acceptance of a presbyterian church. Secondly, they promised to endeavour the extirpation of popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, and profaneness. The meaning of prelacy had given rise to some discussion; it was explained to signify "church government, by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissaries, deans, deans and chapters, and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy." The third article binds them to preserve the rights of the parliament and the liberties of the kingdom, and to defend the king's person and authority. In the

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

fourth, they promise to discover all malignants, incendiaries, or others who shall hinder the reformation of religion, divide the king from his people, or excite any factions among the people, contrary to the league and covenant; to bring them to public trial and condign punishment. Fifthly, they profess their regard for peace and union; and lastly, they declare in the most solemn manner their determination never to forsake the covenant, never directly or indirectly to be withdrawn from the pious confederacy, nor even to become indifferent or neutral in a cause which "so much concerned the glory of God, the good of the kingdom, and the honour of the king." A confession of national and private sin follows; with a vow, that each would amend his own life and urge repentance upon others. "And this covenant we make," they say in conclusion, "in the presence of Almighty God, the searcher of all hearts, with a true intention to perform the same, as we shall answer at that great day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed; most humbly beseeching the Lord to strengthen us by his Holy Spirit to this end," &c.*

The covenant had already been embraced in Scotland, where it was subscribed by citizens of every rank with the greatest enthusiasm:—essentially it was a Scottish measure. In the preamble, when it was printed afterwards, Scotland has the post of honour. It is said to be "designed for the peace of the three kingdoms of

* Hetherington, p. 128.

Scotland, England, and Ireland, agreed upon by commissioners from the parliament and assembly of divines in England, with commissioners of the convention of estates and general assembly of the church of Scotland, and by both houses of parliament and assembly of divines in England.”* But in England it awakened no enthusiasm. The king issued a proclamation in the month of October, in which he denounced it as “being in truth nothing else but a traitorous and seditious combination against himself and the established religion of this kingdom,” charging his subjects on their allegiance not to presume to take it.† In vain the parliament ordered it to be enforced on all persons above the age of eighteen years; in vain the assembly of divines prepared an exhortation urging its adoption. The people of England were not disposed to cast off one spiritual despotism merely to embrace another. Baxter, the lecturer of Kidderminster, had more influence for miles around than the Westminster divines and the Scotch assembly though backed by the house of commons. He tells us that he prevented its being taken, not merely in Kidderminster, but through the whole of Worcestershire, except, he adds, in the city of Worcester, where he had but little influence.‡ Such is the weight of character: one country clergyman prevailed against the rulers of two kingdoms! However, two hundred and twenty-eight members of

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

* Baxter, Life, ii. 391. Hetherington, 128.

† Rushworth, v. 482.

‡ Life, i. 64.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

the house of commons subscribed the covenant. Amongst the number appears the name of Oliver Cromwell. We do not stop to ask how faithfully he observed its conditions, or how far it is probable that he and many others ever meant to do so. But let the reader check his rising indignation. Contempt of solemn oaths is not peculiar to roundheads and usurpers. King Charles II. twice subscribed, twice swore, to this self same covenant; at Spey, on the 23rd of June 1650; and again at Scone, on the 1st of January 1651, the day of his coronation, as a part indeed—and in the eyes of all those who placed the crown upon his head and risked their lives in his service, the most essential part—of his coronation oath; the very tenure by which he held his sceptre.

The imposition of the covenant was a disastrous measure. With unquiet spirits it became unpopular because it was enforced. A rigorous conformity, such as the prelates had been unable to command, was bound upon their necks with the additional torment of an oath. Then, it soon appeared that amongst those who had imposed it, and who had solemnly embraced it, there was no real unanimity, in some of them perhaps not much sincerity. In a short time a violent quarrel raged between the presbyterians and the independents; and the presbyterians had no other weapons to wield against their opponents than those which their prelatie oppressors in former days had wielded to so little purpose against themselves. They

declared the presbyterian to be the only true and scriptural church government. It existed, they said, *jure divino*. Just so bishop Bancroft had argued for prelacy in 1588, for the first time since the reformation; and incalculable mischief to the church party followed. The assembly of divines now asserted, in an evil hour, the same dogma on behalf of the presbyterian scheme, and it was the rock on which presbyterianism split and foundered. Whatever their capacity for state affairs the assembly were at least polemics and logicians; and they should have known that, with a keen-sighted adversary already on the field, nothing is more hazardous than to begin the fight with peremptory assertions which can neither be mitigated nor explained. But the controversy will find a place in our relation of the occurrences of later years.

To return to the assembly. It continued to sit with occasional interruptions till 1649; when it was changed into a committee which sat weekly for the trial and examination of ministers. In March 1652, Cromwell forcibly dissolved the remains of the long parliament, and with it the lately renowned assembly broke up and separated without any formal dissolution. In order to place before the reader at one view the theological labours of the Westminster assembly, and to offer some remarks upon its character, we shall suspend our narrative, and place in one group the fruits of its six years'

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1643.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

existence, and the result of its one thousand one hundred and sixty-three sittings.*

Its contributions to theology are too important to pass unnoticed. They consist of a confession of faith, a directory for public worship, a larger catechism, and a lesser one for children. The confession of faith derives additional importance from its adoption by the general assembly of the church of Scotland. At the reformation the reformed churches in general drew up a document of this kind, which in some instances formed a treatise of considerable bulk—a dissertation or body of divinity, in rather striking contrast with the studied brevity of our own confession contained in the thirty-nine articles. The assembly's confession was modelled after these examples, and is perhaps inferior to none of them, except in originality. It does not however detract from the real merit of these later divines, that they availed themselves of the labours of the reformation; or that Bullinger and Calvin, especially the latter, should have left them little to accomplish, except in the way of arrangement and compression. The Westminster confession should be read by those who cannot encounter the more ponderous volumes of the great masters from which it is derived. It is in many respects an admirable summary of christian faith and practice. None can lay it down with a mean opinion of the Westminster divines. The style is pure and

* Hetherington. 326.

good, the proofs are selected with admirable skill, the arguments are always clear, the subjects well distributed, and sufficiently comprehensive to form at least the outline of a perfect system of divinity. On the other hand, one fault pervades the whole: it is cast in the most exact and rigid mould of ultra-calvinism; and treats the most difficult questions, those of God's eternal decrees and purposes, with an air of confidence which has always repelled the great majority of English christians. Our national dislike of extreme opinions has here, as well as on other abstruse speculations, social and religious, proved our safeguard. Preterition and reprobation, both of men and angels, lay before them as anatomical subjects prepared for spiritual dissection,* and they seem to operate with a dexterous and untrembling hand. Had they but always written upon the divine decrees as in their concluding sentence, they would have done well; and their confession of faith would then have survived the odium in which the assembly itself, with whatever justice, has been overwhelmed. "The doctrine," they say, "of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with especial prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1643.

* Chapter iii. of God's eternal decrees, sections iii. iv. v. vi. vii.; chapter x. of effectual calling, section iv.

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1643.

admiration of God; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel."

The directory* prescribes the new form of public worship; for the prayer-book was now suppressed, and divine service was henceforth to be conducted in the manner which, for want of a better term, we designate extempore. But the directions for public prayer, both before and after the sermon, are copious and exact. The assembly meant to furnish presbyterian ministers not merely with instructions, but with materials for public prayer. Like the bidding prayer in our 55th canon, the directory suggests, in methodical arrangement, a number of topics suitable for devotion; and this in language which scarcely needs the slightest alteration to give it the character of prayer. If a minister committed to memory the section "of public prayer before the sermon," he could offer memoriter before the congregation an act of intercession varied, solemn, and appropriate, though far inferior, we still think, to our sublime and simple litany.

There is a chapter "on the preaching of the word," and every sentence is admirable. So much good sense and deep piety, the results of great and diversified experience and of a knowledge so profound, have probably never been gathered into so small a space on the subject of ministerial teaching. It is one that has received attention in successive ages from teachers of

* Neal, vol. iii., appendix ii.

different schools and of various tastes and habits of mind. Chrysostom among the fathers was a teacher of sacred rhetoric; and of the moderns, Claude and Porter, the abbé Maury and the venerable Simeon, have written what the student for the ministry will not venture to disregard. But a brief chapter of four pages here comprises an amount of wise instruction which will not readily be found elsewhere. The divines of Westminster were amongst the masters of this sacred art; whether we estimate their power by the enthusiasm of their crowded congregations, by the better test of their writings and printed sermons, or by the still higher touchstone of permanent success—success, not in laying the foundations of a strong party, or in reconstructing a national church, for in both they miserably failed, but in turning sinners from the error of their ways, in edifying the church, and fitting men for God. If the fiction so long believed were true, that the pulpit at this period echoed only to the strains of rant and rhapsody, the Westminster divines were not in fault. After a variety of lessons, marked by great judgment and good sense as to the choice of texts, the method in which they are to be analyzed and divided, the manner in which doctrines are to be deduced and objections answered, the subject brought home to the conscience of the hearer, (a work, they well remark, of great difficulty in itself, requiring much prudence, zeal, and meditation, and, to the natural and corrupt man, very unpleasant,) they proceed to considerations

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1643.

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1643.

of a still more solemn kind, and conclude with a series of admonitions to the preacher to look to the condition of his own heart, and to keep alive the flame of love and holiness within.

Of the catechisms it is unnecessary to speak at length. The confession was drawn up first, and the catechisms were afterwards constructed on its model: it was determined that there should be no proposition in the latter that was not contained in the confession. The shorter catechism is now most known. It is generally used by the church of Scotland, and by almost every class of orthodox dissenters in England. In many respects it well deserves the celebrity it has obtained, though it is not entirely free from the ruggedness of ultra-calvinism, and several of the questions turn upon points in theology which scarcely pertain to the education of a christian child; and thus too much of a hard scholastic tone pervades it. On the other hand, many points of fundamental doctrine are well explained; and, above all, the conditions of the gospel are expounded with force and clearness. On the doctrine of the sacraments we do not perceive a shade of difference from the teaching of the church of England.*

* We make the following extracts from the shorter catechism:—

“91. Q. *How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?*

“A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.

“92. Q. *What is a sacrament?*

It has been the hard fate of the Westminster assembly to encounter the censures of English historians of the most opposite opinions, unanimous alone in this, to spurn the memory of a body whose existence was ushered in with so much pretence, and whose end was mean if not ridiculous. Clarendon overwhelms them with lordly scorn, and Milton with resounding periods of magnificent abuse. Neal, the puritan champion, awards that faint praise which is virtual censure. And Walker provokes a smile

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1643.

“A. A sacrament is an holy ordinance, instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

“93. Q. *What are the sacraments of the new testament?*

“A. The sacraments of the New Testament are, baptism and the Lord’s supper.

“94. Q. *What is baptism?*

“A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord’s.

“95. Q. *To whom is baptism to be administered?*

“A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.

“96. Q. *What is the Lord’s supper?*

“A. The Lord’s supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ’s appointment, his death is shewed forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporeal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all its benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

“97. Q. *What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord’s supper?*

“A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord’s supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord’s body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience, lest coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.”

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1643.

by the ludicrous violence of his pretended contempt and undissembled hate. In Scotland only the memory of the Westminster divines is still cherished, and their conduct is exhibited by living writers to the admiration of a people who revere them as the men who reared the edifice which Knox began. But time wears away the keen edge of censure, just as it stills the first tumults of applause. We can no longer believe, with Clarendon, that some of them were infamous in their lives and most of them of mean parts in learning, if not of scandalous ignorance; men of no other reputation than that of malice to the church of England.* Nor can we accept Milton's diatribe as within the fair limits of the most declamatory censure. They were men, he says, who had preached and cried down with a great show of zeal the avarice and pluralities of bishops and pluralists; they had said that one cure of souls was a sufficient employment for one spiritual pastor, if not a charge far above human strength. Yet now they were not unwilling to accept (besides one, if not two or more, of the best livings,) college masterships in the university, and rich lectures in the city, setting sail to all winds that might bring gain to their covetous bosoms. Milton's temper was always harsh, if not vindictive; and we must, in justice, bear in mind that he had already—to avenge himself upon his wife, who had left his roof on some trifling quarrel—published his unchristian "Doctrine of Divorce," and that

* Clarendon, vol ii. 530.

the maligned assembly had already censured it. But it is difficult to represent to modern readers with adequate fidelity the deep and bitter intensity of hatred with which the assembly was visited. "The Assembly Man" is, perhaps, one of the finest pieces of satirical prose-writing in our language; its unknown author pursues these puritan divines with shafts of envenomed malice; compared with him Milton is calm, and Clarendon generous.*

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1643.

But all this, and more that might be quoted to the same purpose, is exaggeration. The truth is, the weakness and consequent failure of the assembly was inherent in its birth. Its feeble constitution was ill adapted for the rough wear of troublous times. It was the mere child of the long parliament; its toy at first, and then, as it grew fretful, its annoyance. It had no legitimate character of its own. It was not a convocation of the church of England; it was not a general assembly after the manner of the kirk of Scotland; it was not even a synod, much less a general council. It was a mere convention of the parliament, † a sort of clerical committee to the house of commons, which might advise when its advice was asked, and could do no more. It was proposed at first, that in order to its formation, two delegates should be sent from each county: but this was not done;

* The Assembly Man, written 1647. It is in the Harleian Misc., vol. v.

† Rushworth so terms it. "The assembly of divines at Westminster was, properly speaking, the parliament's convention. Members of both houses to a great number sat in this assembly, and had the same liberty with the hundred and twenty divines to debate and give their votes in any manner."

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

in fact, it was a packed assembly. Clarendon and Milton agree in this (and they have not been contradicted), that the members of the assembly were elected on the nomination of the members of the house of commons ; and that they were chosen with a view to their political opinions, rather than with regard to higher qualifications ; so that men who might have been expected there, were not invited, and others, who had no weight except what they derived in revolutionary times from holding extreme opinions, were selected in their place. “ A certain number of divines were called, neither chosen by any rule ecclesiastical, nor eminent for either piety or knowledge above others left out, only as each member of parliament thought fit in his private fancy.” So Milton writes ; and lord Clarendon to the same purpose. “ If,” he says, “ an orthodox divine of high character were named in parliament by one who had not the confidence of the ruling faction, this was argument enough against him, and he was at once rejected.” These charges, we repeat, have never been denied ; and we are bound to admit their truth. The parliament had resolved upon a revolution, at least in spiritual matters ; and in revolutions the leaders are soon compelled to seek their instruments from the most willing and determined, not the most judicious and profound.

Thus the assembly became obsequious to the parliament, just as the parliament had become obsequious to the Scotch. They sanctioned the solemn league and covenant with all the solem-

nities of religion ; and if oaths and treaties could have done it, would have imposed a presbyterian church upon the nation. But the real effect of this daring measure was to disgust the people ; though to complete, it is true, the destruction of the old episcopacy. In London only was it popular ; for London was submissive to the parliament ; and the citizens who refused to adopt the covenant were disqualified to sit in the common council or to vote at elections. As a political measure its effect was to gain the assistance of the Scotch, who crossed the border in the spring and joined the parliamentary forces. But it could not add to the credit of the divines of the assembly that they had been concerned in such an enterprise. Episcopalians detested them because they overthrew the church ; independents because they endeavoured to set up a rigid presbytery ; patriots and men of peace, because they fomented an internal war by the introduction of what was then considered a foreign soldiery. Politicians saw through their assumption and their vanity : they made use of them, despised them, and threw them off. After this the conduct of the parliament towards the assembly soon began to express indifference, and at length contempt. Their debates were interrupted ; their weekly payments were withheld. If they plunged unwarily into state affairs they were reminded, without any excess of courtesy, to abstain from matters in which they had no concern. The parliament had its thirty members sitting with them ; to overawe them

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1643.

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

with their presence, and to report their misdemeanors : all they resolved upon had again to be submitted to the decision of parliament, where not unfrequently their theology was questioned and their decisions were reversed. It was a mighty scheme—the reformation of the reformed religion ; and one that in their hands profoundly failed. In Scotland their success was greater ; but in Scotland presbyterianism had taken root, and there the solemn league sustained a very different character. There men lifted up their hands to heaven and swore, with the enthusiasm of patriots and the fervour of confessors, to defend the only true form of worship they or their fathers had ever known, from the powers of antichrist. In England men were asked to swear by the same form of adjuration that they would renounce the church in whose happy communion some of the holiest men of their generation, as they well knew, still lived, and in defence of which the most illustrious of their ancestors had died. They were to denounce as antichrist the church of archbishop Ussher and bishop Hall, of Jeremy Taylor and of Hammond ; the church of Ridley and of Latimer, and of the noble army of the English martyrs in the cruel days of Mary. Even in the midst of civil war, enough of moderation and good sense was left to forbid the mad attempt. The taking of the covenant in Scotland was perhaps the most solemn scene in the religious history of nations. The forced imposition of it in England was an insult and a burlesque.

In short, the Westminster assembly has left to ecclesiastics of every church, and in all ages, this useful caution; that public assemblies of divines, if they meet to discuss beneath the patronage of the civil powers, are too apt to run into the extremes of obsequiousness or of faction; that if the questions before them are not few and of instant moment and well defined, they will launch out into interminable discussions and break up into narrow parties. The cause of God and of undefiled religion owes but little gratitude to synods, or convocations, or national councils. The necessities of the church may sometimes call for them; but they are the church's medicine and not its nourishment. They engender strife; and seldom fail to give to those who take the lead in them a distaste for the humbler, yet in truth far nobler, duties which are the proper calling of the christian minister. The assembly of divines, during the six years through which their tedious sessions were prolonged, accomplished nothing. They had scarcely broken up before their work had perished. But their parishes meantime had received many a wound; and in the absence of the faithful pastor, false doctrine, heresy, and schism had lifted its head—not soon to be destroyed. The tendency of clerical parliaments has always been the same. It is to unfit the mind for vigorous action except beneath excitement; to impart a relish for publicity and an itching for debate. The bustling member of a convocation may not, it is true, be an unfaithful steward; but of all faithful ministers

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1643.

CHAPTER he stands in the most exposed, and the most peril-
II. ous condition.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1644.

While the parliament and the assembly of divines were thus occupied, the king remained at Oxford with his court and army, and the war went on. The campaign of 1643 closed with the battle of Newbury and the death of Falkland. Each side was eager to renew the conflict, and the year 1644 opened with a dismal prospect. No decisive advantage had been gained by either party; but their wounds rankled, and their passions were inflamed. Every thing foreshewed a long and bitter contest and a widening breach between the contending powers. The parliament met in Westminster on the 22nd of January, but only twenty-two members of the upper house were present; the house of commons numbered three hundred and eighty. On the same day the king met his council at Oxford—his mongrel parliament, as he styled it, in a confidential letter to the queen. Forty-five peers assembled; nearly an equal number were absent on his service, or in prison, or abroad. In all, eighty-three members of the peerage still clung to the royal cause. The lower house at Oxford consisted of one hundred and sixty-five members, seceders from the parliament in Westminster. The parliament opened the campaign with an overwhelming force of thirty-six thousand men, besides the Scotch allies, who numbered one-and-twenty thousand. The royal army was less numerous, though increased by ten Irish regiments. The parliamen-

tary generals opened the campaign with several advantages in the western counties, which were barely compensated by prince Rupert's gains in Lancashire. Amongst other towns, he reduced Bolton and Liverpool. They were insignificant places then; but they resisted bravely; and the horrors which modern readers associate with the peninsular war and the triumphs of Napoleon had their counterpart in these provincial sieges. In the streets of Bolton the slaughter was indiscriminate. Women, and infants at the breast, were massacred unsparingly, together with soldiers who had laid down their arms, and with four clergymen of the town, who of course were puritans: their names were Heycocke, Tilsbury, Harpur, and Fogge.* If we may credit a Lancashire minister who lived and wrote at the time, and almost upon the spot, eighteen hundred souls perished in the sack of Bolton. At Liverpool, which surrendered upon quarter, three hundred and sixty, friends and foes, were indiscriminately slaughtered in the streets.† On the 29th of June the king in person engaged sir William Waller at Cropredy near Oxford. Waller was defeated, and the joy of Charles was great; but it was soon turned into sorrow. On the 2nd of July the battle of Marston Moor was fought beneath the walls of York. Prince Rupert

CHAPTER
II.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1644.

* Whitlock, p. 85.

† Life of Adam Martindale, from his MSS. in the British Museum; edited by the rev. Richard Parkinson, canon of Manchester. 1845. pp. 38—41.

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1644.

commanded, with twenty thousand men, for the king. The earl of Manchester commanded for the parliament; and second in command, but first in daring, and in the power of infusing his own mind into other men at will, was Cromwell, his lieutenant-general. The battle was decisive. At night three thousand royalists lay dead; there were sixteen hundred prisoners; and to Cromwell and his cavalry, by the acclamations of the field, re-echoed through the kingdom, was the victory ascribed. In the north of England the royal cause was now lost, and in a few days even York surrendered. In the west of England the earl of Essex gained many advantages for the parliament; of which the least was not, that the queen, who had left Oxford in affright, and now resided at Exeter, where she had given birth to a daughter, retired to Falmouth, and from thence to France; never again to meet her unhappy lord. On the 26th of October, Essex arrayed his army against the king in the second battle of Newbury. Charles was again unfortunate, after a murderous struggle; and the next morning he retired to winter quarters at Oxford. Two years had passed since he unfurled his standard at Nottingham, and since the first battle of Edge Hill. There had been sieges and skirmishes in every county; four pitched battles had been fought, and the land was everywhere defiled with blood. Thousands longed for peace upon any terms; but the leaders on each side were stern. The parliament was

resolute, and the king was false as ever, and unforgiving.

The year 1644* closed with a dismal tragedy. The archbishop of Canterbury had for upwards of three years been a prisoner in the Tower. He was now impeached by the house of commons, and brought up for trial on the charge of high treason before the shadow of an upper house, which still sat at Westminster. The prosecution was managed by the commons; and by an ordinance of both houses he was condemned to die. The indictment was contained in ten articles; but the main heads Laud, in opening his defence, reduced to two.† In six, he was charged with attempting to subvert the laws of the land; in the remaining four, with the design of overthrowing the protestant faith and restoring popery. These crimes, it was said, in the aggregate amounted to high treason. The trial continued through seventeen days; the charges were urged by the commissioners of the house of commons with all the advantages of numbers, of legal skill, and of well-practised eloquence. Bitterness, personality, and invective lent

CHAPTER
II.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1644.

* It may be necessary to remind the reader that the year then closed on the 25th of March; but many writers had already begun to date it from the 1st of January. This is a source of constant perplexity, and has given rise to numerous mistakes. A respectable modern writer, for example, is in doubt whether Charles was beheaded in 1648 or 1649. Our forefathers felt the inconvenience, and attempted to redress it by writing the year from the 1st of January to the 25th of March thus:—January &c. 164 $\frac{1}{2}$.

† Canterbury's doom; or a history of the trial of Laud, late archbishop, &c.; by William Prynne; published by order of the house of commons, 1646.

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1644.

their aid. An Englishman who now reads the trial may indeed commiserate the old man who pleaded at the bar; but stronger emotions and a deeper sense of shame steal over him as he reflects that the scene was in the house of lords, and that the actors were his countrymen. Laud, no doubt, was a great delinquent; had he been deposed from his sacred office, had he been heavily fined, had he been imprisoned for the remainder of his days, his sentence would have been well deserved. More than any living man he was responsible for the destruction of the church of England which had recently taken place, and for the war which was then raging. He had tampered with popery, and forced upon a protestant people its detested symbols. The pope had even shewn his gratitude by the offer of a cardinal's hat. The archbishop indeed declined it: he did not mean, we are persuaded, that England should actually submit herself to the popes of Rome; but the offer itself was infamy. In civil affairs he had invariably urged those measures which were most opposed to liberty. He would have governed with an iron sceptre. He was for uncontrolled dominion in the king, implicit submission in the people. Like lord Strafford, he would have had the king to govern without a parliament if possible; and if not, by a parliament who should be his tools. The most violent proceedings of the star chamber and the court of high commission were congenial to his nature: he had exulted in the sentences inflicted there; and his meanness did not forbid him to receive a share

of the enormous fines which his myrmidons imposed. CHAPTER
II.

But these delinquencies were not high treason ; and his prosecutors were driven to repeat the wretched subterfuge they had invented to accomplish the destruction of lord Strafford. No one of the crimes alleged was treason in itself ; yet when put together they were treason by accumulation ; as if, to quote lord Strafford's memorable answer, a given number of black rabbits could make one black swan ! The archbishop defended himself with eloquence and with undaunted courage, even by the admission of his enemies. But until the sentence was passed, and he came forth to die upon the scaffold, we see nothing of the meekness of the christian martyr. Treated with insult, he returned it with contempt. More than once he forgot the dignity of his calling and of his sacred office, and descended to abuse. His death alone has retrieved his character. While generosity is esteemed a virtue, men will be ashamed to deal roughly with one upon whom retributive vengeance fell so heavily. In private life he might have been respected and beloved. The few friends he had were devoted to him. His learning was great, and he was a patron of learning in others ; but his understanding was mean and his temper violent. Still the man must have but little charity who can read his speech and prayer upon the scaffold, and doubt that, in death at least, he was a humble christian. He was credulous and frivolous. He had great faith in

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1644.

CHAPTER

11.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1644.

omens ; and alarmed himself with his own dreams, which he carefully remembered. Before his committal to the Tower, he was confined for ten weeks in the house of the usher of the black rod ; and the impression he made upon the usher's wife, Heylyn, his biographer and chaplain, has thought it worth while to record. Simple as it is, it perhaps reveals his character more than any laboured composition. The archbishop, she said, was one of the best men and most pious souls ; but withal one of the silliest fellows to hold talk with a lady that ever she met with in all her life.* But if Laud was weak and vain, the violence of the parliament was therefore less excusable. Besides he was old and harmless, and hastening to his grave. His death was a pitiful triumph to the parliament ; and as an example its edge turned against themselves. The cause seemed weak which dreaded an aged and defenceless churchman ; and their own experience in the star chamber might have taught some of them that there is no more certain method of raising insignificance to the dignity of heroism, and embarking in its behalf the sympathy of millions, than excessive punishment. Passion, however, and a mistaken policy, blinded them to these considerations. They condemned the archbishop to suffer the penalties of high treason—to be hanged, drawn, and quartered : nor was it without difficulty that the house of commons was induced to remit any part of the ferocious sentence. On his own humble petition, and at the twice repeated

* Heylyn, *Life of Laud*, book v. p. 11.

remonstrance of the house of lords, he was at length permitted to die by the axe. The sentence, thus mitigated, was executed on Tower Hill, on the 10th of January, 1644—5.

The archbishop was destroyed to gratify the Scotch. Writers of the most opposite parties concur in this. The "covenant," said the royalists in scorn, required a noble victim to confirm it, and the rebels of two nations cemented their compact in the blood of Laud. The puritan historians admit the imputation without shame and without apology.* Laud's conduct had aroused the deepest indignation in the north. His delinquencies at home were great; but they had been greater still in Scotland. There he had fomented civil war by leading Charles to subvert the constitution. He had been the king's chief adviser in his rash endeavour to overthrow the presbyterian kirk by violence, and on its ruins to erect a prelacy; an injury, and to an angry nation an insult, not to be forgiven. The scheme proved utterly abortive; but the exasperation it caused was fatal to the archbishop, and eventually to the king himself. But the parliament was not reluctant to assist in his destruction; and the citizens of London were wrought into a state of frenzy. After the sentence was passed, many closed their shops, and vowed never to open them again while the

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1644.

* So Ludlow writes: About the 16th of January the Scotch marched into England: the lords and commons, for their encouragement, having sentenced and caused execution to be done upon William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, their capital enemy, on the 10th of the same month.—Memoirs, p. 33.—Ludlow was general of horse in the parliamentary army.

CHAPTER

II.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1644.

archbishop lived. The city thirsted for his blood, as though a curse impended which nothing else could expiate. "This malice and madness," says Isaac Walton, with his accustomed simplicity, "is scarce credible; but I saw it."* The Westminster assembly was then sitting. But it offered no protest against the deed of blood: from the puritan divines no whisper of regret was heard. They saw with complacency, we are afraid with approbation, a hoary minister, the chief bishop of the church of England, after a long imprisonment, reviled and insulted during the bitter ordeal of his trial, and then led out to a violent death. Marshall, one of the chief of the presbyterians, by the parliament's order, attended him upon the scaffold; and sir John Clotworthy, a lay member of the assembly, stood there too, tormenting the victim in his last moments with unfeeling and fanatical impertinence. The archbishop had made his last address to the people, and his last prayer to God: "O eternal God and merciful father, look down upon me in mercy; in the riches and fulness of all thy mercies look down upon me; but not till thou hast nailed my sins to the cross of Christ, not till thou hast bathed me in the blood of Christ; not till I have hid myself in the wounds of Christ so that the punishment of my sins may pass over me." He rose from prayer and undressed himself. "God's will be done," he said; "I am willing to go out of this world; none can be more willing to send me."

* Isaac Walton, Life of Sanderson.

Clotworthy interfered. What, he asked, was the most comfortable saying for a dying man? Laud meekly answered, in Latin, "I desire to depart and to be with Christ." Again Clotworthy demanded, how a dying man ought to express in the fittest manner his assurance of salvation. The archbishop gently answered, "that such assurance was to be found within, and that no words were able to express it rightly." His unfeeling tormentor demanded, a third time, some text of scripture whereon such assurance might be truly founded. The dying man made answer in general terms, that "it was founded on the word of God concerning Christ and his dying for us." Clotworthy still persisting, Laud turned to the executioner as to the gentler and discreeter person, and in a few moments his headless trunk lay bleeding on the scaffold.* It was a day of shame for the Westminster assembly. The storm of revengeful passion was furious, and they bent before it. In their collective capacity they did not lift a hand to stay the madness of the people, nor whisper a request to parliament, nor offer up a prayer to God, for mercy to the prisoner. Heart and hand they joined in his execution. Yet some of the assembly were great men, most of them were sincerely good. If these men became insensible to right and indifferent to scenes of blood, what must have been the peril of common natures in a civil war! But when hatred and revenge step in, coloured with the pretext of zeal

* Heylyn, Laud, part ii. pp. 54, 55.

CHAPTER II. for God, the consequences are always terrible.
CHAS. I. The admirers of the Westminster divines must
A. D. 1644. regard their acquiescence in this unrighteous
sentence with silent shame and sorrow; and their
enemies can say of them nothing worse than
this,—that a body of christian ministers, sitting
in calm deliberation from day to day in the city
in which he was tried and beheaded, looked on
with composure, if not with secret exultation,
when archbishop Laud was put to death.

CHAPTER III.

RELIGION, it has been said, operates most upon those of whom history knows least. Its benign influences are chiefly to be traced in private life. It eludes the grasp and touch of history. The historian cannot penetrate the hearts of men where religion has its seat. He may describe their conduct, and trace it to what appear to him the most likely motives. But even here his disadvantages are great; for the conduct of religious men is conversant, to an extent unknown in other affairs, with matters which pass in secret between themselves and God. Ecclesiastical writers, who understand the importance of their work, have always felt the difficulty: and to some extent it is insuperable: it belongs to the very nature of their task.

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643-4-5.

Yet by this clue, imperfect as it is, we must endeavour to ascertain the real character of the puritans during the stormy period of the civil war. Their conduct lies open, in the broad face of day. No party, civil or religious, was ever less anxious for concealment. Their sincerity is not now to be impeached. We dismiss at once the sweeping charge of hypocrisy with which popular historians have so long amused us, and we dismiss

CHAPTER
III.

CHAS. I.
A. D.
1643—4—5.

it with contempt. It is true in the same sense, and probably to the same extent, in which it would be true to deny that the troops at Waterloo were brave, because a few recruits fled from their ranks and hid themselves in ditches. Of their motives it is more difficult to speak. In excited times men change their motives and put off their moral sameness rapidly: and few men are so calm as not to imbibe the contagion of external uproar, and transmit it to their inner man. Thus motives are exchanged for mere impulses. A lofty principle still abides within, but it is governed in its modes of action by circumstances and by the passions of the majority.

There is something in great calamities which conceals their magnitude till they really appear and are present with us. This is the case with war. Till the fight begins, the question of peace or war has been the intellectual strife of statesmen. The mustering of the hosts for battle, the drill and the parade, has been the sport of children; a splendid pageantry and nothing more. Then comes the stern reality;—the first battle and its consequences; the agonies of thousands on the field, the shame of defeat, the insolence of triumph, the desolated street, and the despairing widow. The puritans, if they had precipitated the conflict, had at least a becoming sense of the difficulty and peril of the solemn crisis when at length it came. Having accepted the alternative of civil war, they entered upon it in a spirit of deep devotion. They believed that the cause and the

battle were the LORD'S; and to Him they appealed for help against the mighty. Society was disturbed to its lowest depths. There was not a heart in England capable of reflection that did not beat high with hope or fear, or with the distress of an uncertain vague anxiety. Thousands prepared for battle; tens of thousands knelt and prayed. Whenever there is danger, fear no doubt assumes the aspect of piety, and we are liable to mistake the expression of mere alarm for that of sincere devotion. This must be admitted, and some allowance must be made; but still the devotion of the puritans is not thus explained; it was part of their habitual piety. And the state of religion during the war, in the *metropolis*, in the *country*, and in the puritan *camp*, requires our attention.

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643—4—5.

LONDON was entirely devoted to the parliamentary cause, to presbyterianism, and to the Westminster assembly. Here puritanism in England achieved her greatest triumph. The principles which she proclaimed elsewhere were here enforced, and all her practices were eagerly embraced. All the puritans of later days refer with pride to puritan London in the civil war, and their boast is not unreasonable. No European metropolis has ever displayed a higher character for purity of morals, for calmness in the midst of danger, for disinterested patriotism (even if it were misled) for a universal respect for religion, united with earnestness and zeal in the discharge of all its duties. An almost perfect unanimity pre-

CHAPTER III.
 CHAS. I.
 A.D.
 1643.—4—5.

veiled, and enthusiasm ran high. The offerings of the wives and daughters of the citizens to the parliamentary chest resembled those of the Hebrew women to the tabernacle. Wedding rings and jewels were literally poured out in bushels. Money and plate were furnished in the same profusion. To the royalists it seemed as if a strange kind of frenzy had smitten the citizens.* They appeared all at once to despise their wealth, to impoverish their families, and to neglect themselves, for the sake of the public cause. Yet the pursuits of trade went on : commerce was not impeded in the river or on the seas ; and even literature was undisturbed. The consciousness of power, or the more invigorating consciousness of right, imparted an air of tranquillity strangely at variance with the perils which threatened the city from day to day. When the royal army was drawn up at Brentford there was some disturbance, and London prepared for an assault. But even then Milton wrote his sonnets in Aldersgate-street,† and the learned Gataker, the pastor of Rotherhithe across the Thames, pursued his philological speculations on diphthongs, linguals, and bivocals, or upon the awful mysteries of the tetragrammaton and the sacred name Jehovah, like Archimedes, undisturbed.‡ The press was at work incessantly.

* Bates, *Hist. Civil Wars in England*, p. 43. He was physician to Charles I.

† “Captain or Colonel, or Knight at Arms,” &c. written when the city was threatened, 1645.

‡ His “*Dissertatio de Nomine Tetragrammato*,” and his “*Dissertatio de Diphthongis, sive Bivocalibus*,” were both published during the war.

Passing by the rush of political writings which every day, and almost every hour, produced, the calmer walks of literature were as crowded as before; and theology, not only in the shape of sermons and appeals, but in its higher forms of critical and systematic divinity, had never been so popular. Where so much was published, many must have read. Scholars pursued their studies; and merchants and their families relaxed themselves with books; through the whole of London and its suburbs, order and sobriety prevailed. Play-houses and public spectacles were prohibited, and the once favourite bear-garden was closed. If not sinful, they were at least unsuited to a season of national distress. Sunday was hallowed with a seriousness unknown before. Ships were not permitted to unload the most perishable commodities; neither fruits nor fish were sold; milk was forbidden to be "cried" in the streets or sold after nine o'clock. There was a profound cessation from all worldly business: the streets were still, the churches were crowded. There were no private entertainments, no fashionable walks; but within the family circle, religious conversation, the exercises of devotion, the reading of God's word, and catechising, filled up the day: and on the morrow the puritans came forth by thousands from a day of perfect rest—the rest not of a mind that stagnates, but that more refreshing and profound repose which an entire change in the direction of our tide of thought

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643—4—5.

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643—4—5.

supplies—like giants refreshed with wine. Aiming to be a saint, each man unconsciously became a hero. Familiar with the thoughts of death, and assured that God was upon his side, the royal army was no longer formidable; and some of the greatest battles were decided by the courage of the unpractised Londoners. The profound repose of a great city on the sabbath impresses the most unthinking. Between the restlessness of other days and the sudden stillness of the day of rest the contrast is sublime. Nature herself seems to have paused in adoration of her Maker, and man appears to have recovered the sense of his immortality. Whatever were its vices, the age was not frivolous; the puritans were not men of vacant minds, and the Sunday rigidly observed was not a weariness. But the monthly fast was even more solemn than the weekly sabbath. The parliament set apart the last Wednesday in the month as a day of humiliation. It was the strongest engine in the whole of their artillery, and the king himself acknowledged its importance. He annulled their ordinance, appointed another day by proclamation, and issued a suitable form of prayer. On both sides, after a time, this public humiliation became a political pretence; and our fathers, like the Jews of old, fasted for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness.* At first, however, it was observed in London with the deepest seriousness. Little was

* Isaiah lviii. 4.

eaten through the day, and the value of the mid-day meal was by assessment contributed to the state. Mirth and business ceased; the city sat solitary; and from morning till night the only sounds were those of prayer and supplication and other exercises of religion. Burgess and Marshall were eminent divines, and often conducted these services; on one occasion they preached and prayed for seven hours before the two houses of parliament upon a fast-day. They received a vote of thanks and a present of silver plate. The service, long as it was, must have interested an audience proverbially impatient of tedious speeches and verbose harangues. The services before another congregation, as related at the time, are no exaggerated picture of the manner in which these devotions were conducted in perhaps every parish church in London. Dr. Twiss (he was prolocutor to the assembly of divines) commenced the public service with a short prayer. Mr. Marshall followed, and prayed with great power and pathos for two hours. Mr. Arrowsmith then preached an hour, and a psalm was sung. Mr. Vines now prayed nearly two hours; Mr. Palmer preached an hour; and Mr. Seaman followed and preached nearly two hours. Henderson, the great Scotch divine, then addressed the congregation on the evils of the times and their remedies; and at length Dr. Twiss closed a service of at least nine hours' duration with a short prayer.* Its benefits, spiri-

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A. D.

1643—4—5.

* Life of Marshall, in Brook's Lives of the Puritans.

CHAPTER
 III.
 CHAS. I.
 A. D.
 1643-4-5.

tually considered, must have been very questionable. It must have left the hearers prostrate in body and dangerously excited; and then enthusiasm in its worst forms was not far remote. But the recurrence of such a fast the king, no doubt, would have reason to deplore.

The pulpit of the metropolis displayed a galaxy of light and genius such as it had never before, and perhaps has never since, exhibited. Its influence was never greater. Whether its power were rightly used, it is not so easy to determine. Political topics were freely introduced; and, if we accept the popular canon which excludes from the pulpit the slightest reference to political affairs, the puritan divines of this period fall beneath a sweeping censure. But in times of public agitation (when alone its application is important) it is impossible to apply the rule. A national fast, for instance, brings together a congregation who feel or fear some great calamity; it may be a civil war. Is it meant that the preacher shall abstain from any reference to the subject with which every mind is burdened? If so, he mocks the expectation of his hearers. The best sermon upon a commonplace would be so much impertinence. It would neither warn, nor comfort, nor direct. Shall he discuss the sins of the age, and, holding the balance fairly, exhibit with equal justice the faults of each of the contending parties? Then each party, as it feels in turn the keen edge of his reproof, decries him as a politician. Availing himself of his special mis-

sion as the ambassador of a God of love, shall he counsel peace? It is well if the stronger party, and that which is most averse to peace, do not denounce him as a traitor! To decide the matter calmly, we must ask ourselves whether, if the sermons of these great divines had overflowed with loyalty, and invoked the enthusiasm of the people in behalf of Charles, we should have felt them still open to the same objection. For the rule which restrains a puritan must of course condemn a royalist. The question is of great importance; nor has it yet been discussed with all the attention it deserves. It will be found on consideration, we suspect, that the objection is to the abuse rather than the practice—to the coarse handling of political questions in the pulpit, than to the right of the christian minister to introduce them. It is a disgrace to religion that some of the most violent political diatribes should have been listened to in the house of prayer. Religion has often been debased in this manner, and politics have not been sanctified. Angry passions have been kindled against others, and religion has been made to tear open the wounds she should have healed—a spectacle unnatural and hideous. The great puritan preachers did not, however, thus degrade their office. With a few exceptions, their language was at this period decorous and their manner calm. Their printed sermons in vast numbers are still extant, and these sufficiently vindicate their reputation. They were no adventurers. They had been brought up in the church

CHAPTER
III.

CHAS. I.

A. D.

1643—4—5.

CHAPTER III. of England ; they were entitled to its best prefer-
 CHAS. I. ments ; and they might have held them in their
 A. D. youth from Laud, in their grey hairs from Charles
 1643-4-5. II., had not their own consciences forbidden.
 Assuming the necessity of the war, and the jus-
 tice of their scruples, their conduct commands
 respect, and they stand in the first ranks of those
 who have bravely dared and nobly suffered in a
 righteous cause. During the first two or three
 years of the war, the self-restraint of the puritan
 divines both in language and conduct is remark-
 able. They speak of the king with as much re-
 spect as if he were still in the palace of his fathers.
 His errors they attribute to his evil counsellors ;
 their own sufferings and insults are seldom men-
 tioned. In public and in private they still prayed
 for Charles, and even for the queen. Amongst the
 more eminent of the clergy of whom we speak,
 were Marshall, Manton, Calamy, and Burton.
 All of these preached in London during the war,
 and in the history of those times, their names and
 labours must always find a place.

Stephen Marshall, the lecturer of St. Margaret's
 Westminster, was a constant preacher on special
 occasions before the house of commons. His
 abilities were great, and as a divine his attain-
 ments were considerable. But it was in the pul-
 pit that he triumphed. By general consent he
 was the greatest preacher of the times. His
 manner, like his mind, was ardent, and when he
 began to speak he was swept along with a fervid
 eloquence which seemed to spurn control. He

had espoused the great quarrel with the utmost resolution; and the topics he selected kindled in his hearers intense emotions. "Meroz cursed" was the title of a sermon preached upon a fast-day. "The song of Moses the servant of God," was "opened in a sermon before the house of commons" on a day of thanksgiving for a recent victory. The very texts, thus used, were shocking to the royalists; and if it were true that Marshall prostituted them to faction and rebellion, no censure can be too severe. The cursing of Meroz was but too congenial to the taste of the puritans; for their theology was now deeply tainted with the Jewish leaven, a fact which explains their severity, and yet redeems much of their conduct from the charge of wilful cruelty. They drew no distinction between the precepts of the new testament and the facts and histories recorded in the old. We deplore their ignorance and blame their violence, yet we respect the feelings of devout and fervent gratitude which found utterance in solemn allusions to the songs and harmonies of heaven. Funeral sermons were now in great repute; and Marshall, together with his unrivalled eloquence, had feeling and discernment; so that his efforts in this difficult and peculiar walk of ministerial science were highly prized. His sermon upon the death of Pym produced a vast impression. Pym had been one of the managers of the impeachment of Strafford, and again of Laud; and one of the first to urge the necessity of appealing to the sword. No regrets for the past troubled

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643—4—5.

CHAPTER III. him when death appeared. He was still, he said, loyal as ever to the king. He was justified in all that he had done by the laws of the realm and the indisputable right of parliament. Marshall visited him during his last illness, and describes the serenity of his mind. He was calm and cheerful, "with the same evenness of spirit which he possessed in health, and a clearer evidence of God's love in Jesus Christ." He died a year after the war began. He longed for the triumph of the cause, and was about to quit the scene amidst darkness and disaster. But he uttered no complaints. His submission to the will of God was perfect. To himself, he said life and death were equally welcome ; if he lived he would do what service he could to God and to his country ; if he died he should dwell in the presence of the Lord he served, who would carry out his work by other hands. His family weeping around his bed, he told them that he had looked death in the face ; he knew the worst of it, and feared it not ; and he assured them his heart was filled with more joy than his tongue could utter.* His enemies circulated a report that, like Herod, he was eaten of worms and died accursed. The parliament in consequence exposed his body for several days to public view, and published an attestation from ten physicians in contradiction of the slander. But Marshall's funeral sermon was a nobler vindication. Hitherto Pym had been revered as a patriot and a statesman ; and as an orator he had been

* Marshall, funeral sermon for Pym before parliament, 1643.

listened to in the city and in parliament with profound delight. Now the impression was deeper and more tender. Pym had lived a patriot but he had died a saint. And Marshall, who had portrayed his virtues with an eloquence only inferior to his own, almost succeeded to his vacant honours. Clarendon affirms that Laud himself never had such influence with Charles as Marshall with the parliament. But the preacher himself did not survive many years. It has always been the favourite practice of earnest christians to treasure up the last words of holy men, and those of Marshall deserve to be recorded. In answer to some complimentary remark he exclaimed, "I cannot say, as you do, I have not so lived that I should be afraid to die: but this I can say, I have so learned Christ that I am not afraid to die."* He was buried with great mourning, in Westminster abbey; but at the restoration his grave was violated, and his body, with that of Pym and others, contemptuously disinterred. A mean revenge; but the royalists could point to a precedent still more infamous. The heartless fanatic to whom the house of commons had assigned the palace of Lambeth after the death of Laud, had torn open the coffin of an archbishop, and thrown his remains upon a dunghill. And one outrage must be avenged with the commission of another!

Foremost, again, amongst the spiritual leaders of the puritans was Dr. Manton, the rector of

* Neal, vol. iv. p. 130.

CHAPTER
III.
CHAS. I.
A.D.
1643—4—5.

CHAPTER III.
 CHAS. I.
 A.D.
 1643—4—5.

Newington, and afterwards of Covent-garden. Wanting Marshall's vehemence and power, he had other qualities of a high order. His judgment was clear, his imagination rich, his memory strong, his elocution graceful. With him the unhappy condition of the country was not, as with Marshall, an absorbing theme. He dwelt chiefly upon spiritual things; and upon these he spoke, says one who heard him, with a holy zeal, as though he had a living faith within of the divine truths he taught. The effects of his ministry were visible in the crowds who thronged around him, and in the sacred influences shed upon his hearers. While his judgment and learning were admired by men of education, the poorest heard him with profit and delight. One of his biographers relates a story worth a thousand eulogies. He had been preaching at St. Paul's upon some public occasion, when, as he returned home, a poor man pulled him by the sleeve and told him that of the sermon he had just preached he could understand but little. "I came," said he, "hoping to get some good to my soul, and I have been disappointed." Dr. Manton felt the deserved reproof, and replied with tears: "Friend, if I did not give you a sermon, you have given one to me."* The name of Calamy is justly dear to non-conformity. For upwards of a century the Calamys were amongst its leaders; men not eminently great, but in general consistent, wise, and temperate; not wanting in zeal, but chastening zeal

* Calamy's Ejected Ministers, art. Manton.

with prudence ; at once the helm and ballast of an impetuous party. Dr. Edmund Calamy the elder (for his son and grandson bore the same name, and bore it with distinction,)* was the minister of a church in Aldermanbury. He was unruffled by the storms around him ; sedate and calm ; yet his gentle manner was full of interest to his hearers. For twenty years he held a week-day lecture, and had a crowded congregation. It is a curious fact, and illustrates the times, that on these occasions seldom fewer than sixty coaches were counted at the door. These twenty years extended over a space in which England saw more changes, in civil and religious politics, than at any other time in centuries. Yet his popularity continued. In the base and shameful times of Charles II., “a lady of the court” was impeded in her way through Newgate-street by a throng of carriages. She was curious to learn the cause of the delay. It was neither a pageant nor an execution. But one Dr. Calamy lay in Newgate for preaching a sermon, in which he had said “that the ark of God was lost, and the glory was departed from Israel.”† And the civic aristocracy of London were calling at his prison to pay the just tribute, since they could do no more, of their affectionate respect. Her influence with the king at once obtained his release !

There were other ministers in London of the

CHAPTER
III.

CHAS. I.
A.D.
1643—4—5.

* Historical Account of my Own Life ; by Edmund Calamy, D.D. ; 1731 ; (the grandson ;) vol. i. p. 52, &c.

† Calamy's Historical Account, i. 56.

CHAPTER III.

CHAS. I.
A.D.
1643—4—5.

highest reputation, and their influence was thrown into the popular cause. Some of them still loved episcopacy (Gataker, for instance), but not one of them denounced the war. Some of them had been sufferers in the days of Laud; all of them dreaded the return of prelacy and absolute power, and thought it right to resist it with the sword. There was one, in particular, of whom the very sight was a sermon against oppressors. Dr. Burton was the rector of St. Matthew's in Friday-street: he preached constantly; he was to be seen in the pulpit from week to week without his ears! The full history of his sufferings is too long, if not too shameful, to be told. After various prosecutions for libels, so called, against the prelates and the pope, ending with suspension and imprisonment, he still dared to protest, in a sermon preached in Friday-street, against the archbishop's innovations. He was again imprisoned and prosecuted in the star chamber; Prynne and Bastwick were included in the same indictment. It is a waste of words to say they were condemned. Burton was deprived of his benefice, and degraded from his ministry. Prynne was a lawyer and Bastwick a physician, and they were degraded from their professions. Each of them was fined five thousand pounds, condemned to stand in the pillory in Westminster, to have his ears cut off, and to be imprisoned for life in one of the remotest castles in England. They underwent their punishment in Palace Yard with triumph, in the presence of an im-

mense, indignant, multitude, whose sympathy it was impossible to restrain. They regarded themselves as martyrs in a glorious cause, and exulted in their sufferings. Burton possessed that mother-wit which always delights the multitude. Pointing to the pillory he exclaimed, "The gospel will yet shine upon England, even *through those holes!*" In a few days they were sent to their dungeons. Burton was consigned to Lancaster castle, and one hundred thousand citizens escorted him as far as Highgate. His friends contrived to visit him at Lancaster; he was therefore removed to Guernsey, where the sentence of solitary imprisonment could be thoroughly enforced. But these outrages were not long to be endured: the tide turned; the long parliament met; Charles and Laud were undone within a single week; and in a tumult of indignation the sentences of the three sufferers were at once reversed, and their fines remitted. After three years' absence, the prisoners now returned to London; and London, famous for its shows and spectacles, had never witnessed such a sight. The procession formed on horseback at Brentford, and for eight miles the crowds along the road were such that it could scarcely move one mile an hour. Between Charing-cross and Guildhall three hours were spent. The roads were strewed with flowers and branches, the streets were hung with garlands, and hundreds of thousands bid the patriots welcome with blessings, and huzzas, and tears of joy. Burton quietly returned to his

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643-4-5.

CHAPTER III.
 CHAS. I. A.D. 1643—4—5.
 church in Friday-street; and here he was to be seen in his pulpit from Sunday to Sunday during the whole period of the war. It was not in the power of malice to desire, or of ingenuity to suggest, a weekly spectacle so hurtful to the royal cause. If a gleam of returning loyalty or reverence for the ancient prelacy appeared, a sight of the deaf and maimed old minister of Friday-street dispelled it in a moment. Burton was caustic rather than violent, and his punishment seemed the more outrageous. He was one of the few London clergy who retained their livings and yet opposed the presbyterians. He formed his church in Friday-street upon the congregational system. His sufferings secured for him forbearance and respect from the dominant party, whose cause indeed he had been amongst the foremost to advance.

When the storm rolls heavily, the monsters of the deep are thrown upon the shore. The convulsions of the state now produced some rare specimens of human nature in its most unaccountable forms. Under the same circumstances similar eccentricities return; for though a revolution may call into action the energies of great men, it is more likely to give importance for a time to the vain, the ambitious, and the bad. And there is a certain class which is not, and never can be, known till society has broken loose—common men in ordinary times, boding spirits when the night is dark and the tempest rages. Hugh Peters was such an one. His character, as drawn by writers of the royal party after the restoration, is that of a mon-

ster of hypocrisy, cunning, lewdness, and ferocity. But we are now approaching a time when the statements of either party, even with respect to facts, are not to be implicitly received : prejudice and passion begin to warp the greatest minds and to obscure the brightest intellects. If Hugh Peters had been such as the royalists describe him, he would have no place in history : he would merely stand amongst ruffians and assassins. To the mass of mankind his life would afford no lesson, and his death no warning. There have been such men, no doubt ; but Hugh Peters belonged to another order.

His youth was thoughtless. He had been disgraced at the university, if not expelled : but in the midst of a career of folly, the solemn discourses of Sibbs, and other excellent men whose names adorn the annals of the puritans, arrested his attention and appeared to have wrought a marvellous and abiding change. He entered the ministry deeply impressed with the importance of his work, and preached for some time at St. Sepulchre's in London. There he had six or seven thousand hearers ; "and I believe," he wrote when he was a dying man, "above one hundred were persuaded every week from sin to Christ." A mere youth as he was, he must have been a greater prodigy of grace than, according to the royalists, he was of every vice, had he not felt the evil influence of a maddening popularity. He was soon charged with some rash expressions. He had prayed for the queen, "that light might shine into her soul, and

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1648—4—5.

CHAPTER III. CHAS. I. A.D. 1643—4—5.

that she might not perish in the day of Christ." Laud was in power, and Hugh Peters found himself a close prisoner in Newgate. Here he lay some time, though several noblemen interceded for him, and offered bail; at length he was released. He escaped to Rotterdam, where he gathered a congregation, and formed an independent church. After a few years we find him in New England, the pastor of a church at Salem. Here he remained seven years, esteemed and useful, as a minister of Christ. Most unhappily for himself, he was deputed by the puritans abroad to visit England, to obtain some relaxation of their fiscal burdens from the parliament. When he arrived the war had begun; and from that moment the character of Peters seems to have undergone a total change. He was frenzied with the roar of cannon and the sight of blood. His infatuation lasted him for life, and brought him to a hideous death at last. He became a zealous preacher in the army; and either his own ambition, or the force of his character and the current of the times, placed him at the head of the fanatics—a numerous and dreadful party, and an hourly increasing one. He stood ostentatiously close to Laud upon the first day of his trial, in the house of lords; and though a mere spectator, was allowed to upbraid and contradict the prisoner.* When the archbishop was brought to the scaffold Mr. Peters stood there too, belted with a sword. Many of the puritans were shocked, but the parliament rewarded him with a grant of

* Canterbury's Doom, p. 56.

a part of the archbishop's library. From this time his career recalls to mind the mailed bishops of the dark ages, who could either shrive an army or lead it into battle. He was present at the siege of Lyme, of which he gave "a large relation" to the house of commons.* He was at the siege of Bridgewater: the defence was obstinate, and it was resolved to storm it; and, "the Lord's-day before, Mr. Peters encouraged the soldiers to the work." He was with the storming party in the field at night, and at the last moment "exhorted them to do their duty." Within a week he presented himself before the house of commons with letters from Fairfax the general: again he made "a large relation" of the siege, and was rewarded with a hundred pounds "for his unwearied services."† He was at the siege of Winchester and the storming of Bristol; and was again deputed by the successful general to bear to the house of commons the tidings of his victory. Peters was rewarded with £100 a year for himself and his heirs; and as the war closed, the parliament, though now compelled to levy a weekly tax, were still in a condition to grant their faithful servant an annuity of £200 a year.‡ He now girded on the sword in earnest, and became the colonel of a regiment in Ireland. He was at the fall of Drogheda, and wrote to the speaker in laconic terms: "Sir: the truth is, Drogheda is taken; 3552 of the enemy slain, and 64 of ours. Colonel Castles and colonel

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643—4—5.

* Whitlocke, p. 88.

† Ibid. p. 157.

‡ Ibid. p. 204--222.

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643—4—5.

Simons of note. Ashton the governor killed, none spared. We have also proceeded to Trim and Dundalk, and are marching to Kilkenny. I come now from giving thanks in the great church. We have all our men well landed. I am yours, Hugh Peters.”* Yet this wretched man, when freed from the trammels of a direful fanaticism, was not inhuman. He had thoroughly convinced himself that the saints should have a two-edged sword in their hands, and the praises of God upon their lips. This was one of a favourite class of texts with himself and with his party. His religion was soured with this Jewish leaven. But where its influence did not extend, he was generous and even humane. The sufferings of the Irish protestants who survived the popish massacre had touched his heart; and he went over to Rotterdam and begged thirty thousand pounds for their relief: a prodigious sum to be raised by the exertions of one man, and alike honourable to himself and to the German churches. He repaid the Hollanders for the sanctuary they had afforded him with valuable diplomatic services; and he was an earnest solicitor in behalf of the protestants of the valleys of Piedmont, who were suffering the most inhuman persecutions from the duke of Savoy.† Religion at home still occupied his care; and the parliament requested his advice how Wales should be evangelized. He gave a lion’s counsel. It was, to sequester all the livings, appropriate the tithes, and

* Brooke’s Lives of the Puritans, vol. iii. 355.

† Ludlow, p. 368.

send out six preachers to evangelize the country on a stipend of £100 a year. The parliament approved of his advice, and acted on it. Wales was placed under the six evangelists, and their own coffers were replenished. In the interval of his laborious missions Peters continued to preach in London. He had now attached himself to the extreme democratic party in the house of commons, and to the army, which, conscious of its power, had begun to dictate to its former masters. In the pulpit his hand, like Ishmael's, was against every man. He improved the whole of his time, says one of his rivals and cotemporaries, in preaching against the presbyterian government, against the assembly, against uniformity, against the common council, against the city of London; and (towering above all other delinquencies) he preached in favour of a universal toleration.* Such were the strange contradictions in this man's character: good and evil, the extremes of liberty and of a griping bigotry by turns prevailing. That his influence was great, we may infer from the respect paid to him by the house of commons; and he contributed his full share to the introduction of that gloomy ferocity which began to distinguish the parliamentary cause towards the conclusion of the war. His faults were great; but still he had some virtues; and he is a fearful instance that a man of weak judgment and impetuous feelings may lend himself to the commission of the great-

CHAPTER
III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643—4—5.

* Edwards's *Gangræna*, p. 88—156; a furious book against the sectarians and independents.

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643—4—5.

est crimes, and yet delude himself with the notion that he is acting in obedience to the will of heaven. At the restoration Peters was excepted from the general amnesty, and suffered death as one of those who had sat in judgment on the king. He had been a minister of Christ and yet a man of blood, and he perished unregretted. In him all men acknowledged the fulfilment of God's own decree; whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. He met his dreadful death undaunted; and had he lived like a saint, we should have been forced to own that he died like a martyr.

The state of society and religion throughout England at this period must be collected from such incidental notices as gleam here and there upon us through the miseries of a civil war. The vindictive passions were not all at once let loose, nor did rapine and lawlessness prevail. In Devonshire, it is true, a body of "clubmen," marauders who fought and plundered indiscriminately, gave some uneasiness; but they were soon suppressed. Elsewhere the current of life was not much ruffled for a state of war. Except where the armies lay, or where a town was besieged, the affairs of life proceeded in the usual course. The land was tilled, the markets were thronged, the parish church was crowded. Individual hate and personal rancour had not yet appeared to any great extent. There was even an interchange of courtesies between the rival parties. Newsbooks, as they were termed, were now profusely distributed

through England. In 1643 their number was enormous; yet, upon the whole, the temper they display on both sides is less acrimonious than that of our modern newspapers upon slighter provocations. Judging by these productions, posterity will say of us, that the reform bill occasioned more bad passions than the civil war. But this forbearance could not last. Nor must it be assigned entirely to the influence of religion. The same absence of revenge and cruelty had been observed two hundred years before, in the wars of York and Lancaster; and Philip de Comines, an illustrious foreigner, who chanced to be then in England, relates with admiration the forbearance of the two hostile parties, except upon the field of battle.

Baxter was preaching in the village of Alcester when the roaring of the cannon announced the battle of Edge-hill. It was fought on Sunday: as was the second battle of Newbury. The puritans held the Jewish doctrine of the sabbath to its full extent, but they drew different conclusions from the Jews of old. The Jews, if we may believe the author of the book of Maccabees, perished unresisting on the sabbath; the puritans fought without a moment's hesitation; for they regarded the work before them as the special work of God. The distant thunder of the cannon increased, but it disturbed neither the preacher nor the congregation; the people sat and the worship of God went on. When the sermon was done, in the afternoon, the report was still more audible, "which made us all long," says Baxter,

CHAPTER
III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643—4—5.

2/138

CHAPTER
 III.
 CHAS. I.
 A.D.
 1643—4—5.

“to hear of the success.”* Was it the eloquence of the great puritan preacher that entranced his hearers, and suspended their alarm, within hearing of a battle in which five-and-twenty thousand of their countrymen were arrayed against each other? If so, the recorded eloquence of ancient or of modern times certainly relates no triumph to be compared with Baxter’s. In a moment of intense excitement he stilled the most ungovernable feelings to which man is liable; anxious suspense, and fear, and passionate expectation. The scene in Alcester church is not less sublime, though Baxter’s merit may be less, if we suppose that in this calmness and self-control there was nothing unusual, that it was nothing more than the habit of profound abstraction from passing things, into which puritan divines had schooled their congregations. After a time the recurrence of battles and scenes of blood, no doubt, produces apathy, and the soldier’s wife who follows with the camp shares the courage of her husband. But the parishioners of Alcester had not been trained to war: it was the first battle fought on English soil for centuries. Their parish minister, Mr. Samuel Clarke, for whom Baxter preached, was himself eminent amongst the puritans, and he had taught his people, it would seem, the noble lesson of peace in the midst of danger: he had taught them, in a word, to put their trust in God.

Amidst the wild uproar of the war there were still scattered through the land innumerable

* Baxter’s Life, i. p. 43.

households which, to use the puritan phrase (much ridiculed, but most appropriate), waited upon God. The miseries of a war at home exasperated some to madness; but they tutored others in the best lessons of adversity, and taught them the necessity of a closer intercourse with heaven. From many a parlour the incense of family worship went up unceasingly; in many a home the brightest graces of the christian character blossomed pure and lovely, like flowers in snow, amidst surrounding horrors. It was in such a home that Baxter, with broken health and in the full prospect of its blest enjoyment, wrote his meditations on "The saint's everlasting rest." He lived long and wrote much; but he left nothing behind him which will bear comparison with this sweet and solemn treatise. The turmoil of a busy life, hitherto spent amidst confusion, seems to have been a help, and not a hindrance, to his soul; he saw the vanity of earthly things, and felt, or at least described, as no other writer uninspired has ever done, the instant realities of an eternal state. He unfolds the gates of heaven, and permits us for an instant to be ravished with its celestial splendours, and to hear the distant melody of its everlasting songs. His descriptions of an outer world of darkness few can read without an awful sense of the realities of hell. The misery of a lost spirit, its remorse and anguish and despair, the torments of the body and the stronger torments of the soul, once impressed, can scarcely be forgotten. Here indeed lay Baxter's fault: he is

CHAPTER
III.

CHAS. I.

A. D.

1643-4-5.

CHAPTER III. often distressing to a timid or an anxious mind.
 CHAS. I. The consolations of the gospel are not always al-
 A. D. lowed their full pre-eminence, and there is in con-
 1643—4—5. sequence a lowering shade, a want of perfect light
 and joy, such as implicit faith in the great sacri-
 fice for sin imparts. Still the work, immortal in its
 way, stands, with Milton and “the Pilgrim’s Pro-
 gress,” on a height from which it has long defied
 the shafts of criticism. The reader who is not
 acquainted with it knows little of the puritans.
 Addison took up by chance a leaf of one of Bax-
 ter’s writings, and the author of the Spectator
 was so charmed with it that he purchased
 all the rest. “The Saint’s Rest” was written
 amidst the din of war and the depression
 of sickness. It was begun in Derbyshire, and
 finished within a few months under the hospitable
 roof of Sir Thomas Rouse in Worcestershire.
 Happily, Baxter had neither books at hand nor
 strength to read them: he communed with his
 own heart and with his bible. And thus after
 two centuries his book is fresh and natural, and
 happily free from the decorations (of which Bax-
 ter deplored the want) of Occam’s Dialectics,
 Thomas Aquinas, or St. Augustine. It was
 published just as the war in England closed, and
 passed at once through several editions. The
 spiritual appetite of the country must have been
 vigorous and extensive; it must have spread far
 and wide. “The Saint’s Rest” appealed to no
 passions and stirred no controversy. Its sudden
 popularity is a token that there were thousands

of the puritans whose piety the war had left untarnished; men whose affections were set on things above, amidst the wreck and dissolution of all around them. The wide circulation of Baxter's work enables us to detect their existence, and to form some conjecture as to their numbers. But still the domestic piety of England during the civil war, among puritans and royalists, is involved in much obscurity. Many journals were kept by excellent men on both sides. But they chiefly relate to public affairs; the deliberations of the parliament or the assembly, and the movements of the camp. Without any disposition to under-rate their value, we should thankfully exchange whole volumes of these political diaries for a few pages of some unpretending record which might admit us into the confidence of a pious English family in those days,—which would make us acquainted with the real character of their home religion, and lay bare, if possible, the true condition of their hearts.

As if, however, to compensate for this deficiency, the character of the army is presented to us without the least reserve. We can form an intimate acquaintance with its officers and men. We are, in fact, as well informed of the true condition of the parliamentary forces, with regard to conduct, habits, and religion, as with that of our own troops abroad during the recent war; and, by the admission of friend and foe, no such army was ever marshalled. The men were as peculiar as the cause for which they

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643—4—5.

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A. D.

1643—4—5.

fought. At first, when the drum was beat, all comers were enlisted. And the parliamentary army was a rabble, like the king's, of serving-men without employment, loungers at the public-house, and the refuse of the village, the usual prey of the recruiting sergeant. Hampden's regiment was an exception. His boundless popularity had long stirred the whole county of Buckingham, and his regiment of green coats was raised among the yeomanry and freeholders. In a few instances the tenants and retainers of the great landlords followed with their patriarch to the field. But this feudal custom was chiefly visible on the other side; for the old nobility shared the fortunes of the king. In London the troops were of a higher station in society. The students of the inns of court and their friends formed themselves into a life-guard for the earl of Essex: they brought not only zeal and courage, but that aptitude for new pursuits of the most unlikely character which is peculiar to young men of education. They drilled themselves for a few weeks under a person experienced in military affairs, at the artillery ground in London, and were at once expert in war; and from their corps, not amounting to a hundred, a considerable number of the parliamentary generals, afterwards so renowned, were chosen.* But these were exceptions: it was reserved for Cromwell's penetra-

* Generals Fleetwood, Ludlow, and Harrison, and colonels Rich, Tomlinson, Twistleton, Fiennes, and Whitley, all famous in the war, were of this corps.—Ludlow, *Memoirs*, p. 17.

tion to perceive that in a cause like theirs the parliament must rely for its soldiers upon the middling classes of society, upon men who had both property and conscience, who had something to lose as well as much to gain. Writing to his friend and cousin Hampden, when disheartened by a few unsuccessful skirmishes, "I will raise men," he says, "who will have the fear of God before their eyes, and who will bring some conscience to what they do, and I promise you they shall not be beaten."* Cromwell represented Cambridge in parliament, and his influence was great in the eastern counties. There he went beating up for recruits, not at the tavern and the market-cross, but in the assemblies of the puritans, where men discussed the wrongs of their country, and the dishonour which popery and Laud had done to God. He raised fourteen squadrons of horse. They were yeomen's sons; men of character and substance; and, outwardly at least, of fervent piety. Their discipline was admirable. Their presence was hailed with satisfaction wherever they appeared. They were the guardians of property and morals. In this regiment a man was fined a shilling for an oath; if drunk he was set in the stocks "or worse;" if he called his comrade a roundhead he was cashiered. Cromwell himself was at once the general and chief pastor: he guided their devotions and he commanded in the field. Clarendon, whose insight into character, and power of describ-

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643-4-5.

* Carlyle, Letters, &c. of O. Cromwell, i. p. 163, &c.

CHAPTER
III.

CHAS. I.

A. D.

1643—4—5.

ing it, is, amongst English historians, unrivalled, fails to present us with any just view of Cromwell as a religious man. There were elements in the rude soldier which the philosopher and statesman could not comprehend. Cromwell, he says, spent much of his time in praying with his soldiers and in religious conversation; and he resolves the peculiarity of his conduct into the vulgarity of mind which had given him a distaste for society and elegant pursuits. But the example of Cromwell and his legion infected the whole army. The commanders held prayer-meetings as officers in general hold councils of war. The two, indeed, were never separated. The plan of a battle was devoutly spread before the Lord. Deliberation followed earnest prayer; and prayer was preceded by the reading of the scriptures. Nor were they merely read: they were consulted for authorities and precedents, with the same confidence with which a lawyer consults the statute-book or refers to previous judgments of the court. The common soldiers joined in similar devotions. In some regiments, from every tent the murmurings of prayer arose and the louder voice of praise. Religion was the recreation of the puritan soldiery. The hours that were not spent in discipline were devoted to improvement, to religious conference, to singing hymns and psalms, in which they took great delight, and hearing sermons. Martindale was chaplain to the troops which defended Liverpool against prince Rupert. He says, "I lived in peace in the beleaguered town,

and enjoyed sweet communion with the religious officers of the company, who used to meet every night by turns, to read the scriptures, to confer of good things, and to pray together.* Their pious demeanour was not, as in most armies, an exception to the general practice; for we can scarcely turn over a page of the military memoirs of the puritans without finding some such intimations. The battle-cry on both sides was significant. The royalists chose some patriotic sentiment: "the queen," for instance, in one fight; "for God and the king," in another. The puritans, when they gained the ramparts in the storm of Bristol, shouted with a voice that rose above the clash of arms and the ringing of their musquetry, "for the Lord of hosts." At Naseby their cry was "God is with us!" The appeal went to every heart and gave fresh courage: it was feebly answered from the royalists with an idle sentiment, which stirred no emotion now that the question was of death or victory—"for the Queen Mary!" Before an engagement the sound of prayer and singing, and the awful tones in which some fervent preacher was denouncing the enemies of God and of his saints, floated on the wind to the royal camp, and filled many a brave heart and many a proud spirit with dismay. Amongst the royalists, no doubt, these fervours were easily explained: it was a vulgar fanaticism, and nothing more. But the terror was not lessened by the explanation; for who so formidable as an armed fanatic? And

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A.D.

1643—4—5.

* Martindale's Diary, Chetham Soc. Ed. p. 37.

CHAPTER

III.

CHAS. I.

A. D.

1643—4—5.

there were those in the king's army who keenly felt and helplessly deplored the contrast between the rebels and themselves. In the enemy's camp, a morality lofty and severe; fervent prayer and exhortation before the fight, and louder thanksgivings afterwards offered upon the very field of blood. In the king's army licentiousness and oaths, and, in general, a contempt of all seriousness in religion that disdained to be concealed.

In the parliamentary army under the earl of Essex, the first commander-in-chief, each regiment had its chaplain. The appointment was felt to be of great importance. It was not left to novices and men despairing of preferment; the best of the presbyterian divines were to be met with in the camp. Too often the chaplain of a regiment is in danger of contempt. Soldiers are apt to despise the man who claims authority and yet retires from danger; and they undervalue the patient virtues of the christian minister which hazard neither life nor limb. The parliamentary army was an exception. It received its impulses, we might say its commands, scarcely less from its chaplains than from its officers. On the night before the battle of Edge Hill, Stephen Marshall, himself chaplain to the general, went from tent to tent and fired the soldiers with a determined courage by his fervent exhortations and more fervent prayers. The clergy who attended the earl of Essex's army, says Baxter, "were famous and excellent divines." To mention the names of some of them is all that is neces-

sary to justify this high praise. Dr. Burgess, deputy-chairman of the Westminster assembly, was, as well as Marshall, chaplain to the commander-in-chief. Byfield, the assembly's scribe or secretary, was chaplain to sir Henry Cholmondely's regiment; Perkins to colonel Goodwin's; Simeon Ashe to the earl of Manchester's; Dr. Spurstowe, Hampden's friend and the rector of his parish, was also chaplain to his regiment. The presbyterians had few greater men. He had been one of bishop Hall's opponents in the famous episcopalian controversy; he was afterwards master of Catherine hall, Cambridge. In all the deliberations of the assembly of divines his name had weight,—and in the counsels of those in power, who often sought for his advice. A long life gave him the opportunity, which others wanted, of proving his integrity by suffering for the cause in which he had embarked. Without retracting any of his earlier opinions as to the justice of the war, he bitterly deplored the king's death. He refused to own Cromwell's authority and was deprived of his mastership. Yet he was a nonconformist to the last. After the restoration he defended the old cause against its old opponents the prelatie churchmen; he was driven into obscurity, and died as he had lived a cheerful benevolent and holy man. Six alms-houses which he built and which still exist at Hackney, prove that his own misfortunes had not steeled his heart to the wants of others. Baxter was solicited by Cromwell to become his chaplain; he declined the invitation and lived to

CHAPTER
III.

CHAS. I.

A. D.

1643—4—5.

CHAPTER III.
 CHAS. I.
 A.D.
 1643-4-5.

regret his unwise decision. There were several points in Baxter's character which fitted him in a remarkable degree for such a post. He had talents eloquence and zeal ; and an amazing love of disputation, to which he could always bring no small share of dialectic skill and learning. He liked the rigid presbyterian system as little as Cromwell himself : and the general proposed that he should form, not a presbyterian, but " a gathered church " among his squadrons. At this early period of the war Cromwell would probably have felt (and without shame he might have been willing to confess) the influence of such a mind as Baxter's. The fate of Cromwell and of the puritan cause, nay of England and her happiness for a century to come, perhaps quivered in the scale when Baxter refused to march with Cromwell's regiment. One ill consequence appeared immediately. It was now that Cromwell, not choosing a presbyterian, and perhaps not willing to ask the services of any inferior man to Baxter, became the chaplain as well as the general of his own squadrons. This amazingly increased his influence ; he now held the two swords, the temporal and spiritual. In his troops the spark lay hid which soon overspread the army with its insane excesses, and covered England with innumerable sectaries of the wildest kind. The contagion spread through the army rapidly, for it was in accordance both with the logic of the camp and its prepossessions, that Cromwell's being the bravest troops, should

be the most enlightened christians. But if Cromwell intruded into the ministerial office, there were ministers of the gospel, besides Hugh Peters, who, in return, aspired to military command. Palmer, a Nottinghamshire clergyman and a zealous preacher, appeared with a captain's commission at the head of a troop of horse; and "one Mr. Coates, a minister, an honest, godly man,"* was the captain of four hundred infantry; and yet neither Coates nor Palmer abandoned their sacred functions. Palmer proved himself a coward, and laid down his commission; but he resumed the ministry without objection, and was esteemed among the nonconformists as a preacher in the days of Charles II.† These instances must have been uncommon: still there was a strange fusion of the clerical and military character. It is a curious fact that each of the chaplains wore a sword "for form's sake," as one of them expresses it; and the men who abhorred a surplice girded on with pride the symbols of destruction, and the implements of death. But such it appears was the fashion of the times.‡

The chaplains had joined the army under the impression, which was universal on both sides, that one battle, or at least a short campaign, would conclude the war. When it became apparent that the struggle was likely to be prolonged they grew weary of the service. One after another

* Hutchinson, pp. 175, 208.

† Ibid. p. 429.

‡ Martindale's Diary, p. 37.

CHAPTER
III.
CHAS. I.
A.D.
1643-4-5.

CHAPTER III.
CHAS. I.
A.D.
1643—4—5.

they silently withdrew. The consequences were in every way unfortunate. In losing its presbyterian chaplains the army lost its best advisers. They were not only men of piety but of cultivated minds. Their passions were subdued, their experience embraced every change of human life. They had lived in dungeons, in exile, and in want ; and, more trying still to virtue, they had been caressed by parliaments and applauded by the multitude. In heart and soul they were loyal to the king ; none of his own chaplains were more sincere than they when they prayed, as they never failed to do, that he might reign once more upon his father's throne and in the hearts of a loving people. Their retirement left the army to itself ; it soon became rebellious, and broke out into the wildest excesses of uncontrolled fanaticism.

CHAPTER IV.

THE necessities of the king and the urgent representations of his council at length induced him to offer proposals for a treaty. The parliament, though elated with its tide of recent success, could not easily decline a conference to which it was urged by the whole kingdom, now longing for repose. Commissioners from both sides were appointed, and a period of twenty days assigned for their deliberations. They assembled at Uxbridge on the 30th of January, 1645. The treaty opened with an ill omen. It was remarked, that while the deportment of the royalists was full of hope and confidence, the parliamentary commissioners were reserved and cold. On the first day Love, who was chaplain to the parliamentary garrison at Windsor, preached a furious sermon in the parish church. The king's commissioners, he said, came there with hearts full of blood; there was as great a distance between this treaty and peace as between heaven and hell; it was intended only to amuse the people till the royalists had power to injure them.* The king's commissioners remonstrated against the insult, and the parliament

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1645.

* Clarendon, b. ii. p. 579. Whitelocke, p. 123.

CHAPTER IV. sent for Love and heard his explanation ; but he escaped unpunished. But the chances of civil war, and the changes through which men pass, are strange. Love, protesting against Cromwell's usurpation, and still avowing his allegiance to the Stuarts, perished on Tower-hill six years afterwards, by the same axe which had been moistened with the blood of Laud and of so many of the royalists.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1645.

The parliament made three demands ; of which the first had reference to religion ; and the commissioners entered upon this point at once. It was proposed that episcopacy should be immediately abolished ; that the book of common prayer should be totally suppressed ; that the directory, which was just issued, should be introduced and authorized ; that "such a national church should be established as might be most agreeable to God's word and the practice of the best churches;" and lastly, that the king himself should take the covenant, and oblige his subjects to accept it. The king was assisted by his chaplains Drs. Sheldon, Potter, Hammond, and others ; the parliamentary divines were Henderson, Vines, and Marshall. The church politics of the parliament were now complicated with various difficulties, and its conduct often appears, at first sight, a confused heap of contradictions. As the price of the Scotch alliance it had plunged into the toils of the solemn league and covenant. Against all comers it was bound to defend the presbyterian cause. Consistency obliged the commis-

sioners to force it upon the king. But few of the leaders in the house of commons were sincere. The covenant had been purposely so expressed as to leave a shade of ambiguity, of which, all along, they intended to avail themselves. Fervent presbyterians, in their simplicity, believed that the church which "should be most in accordance with God's word and the practice of the best churches" must of course be presbyterian. The sectaries and independents secretly reserved this point. They considered themselves pledged only to subvert prelacy and popery; and then, having cleared the ground, to build anew. Thus Henderson and Marshall, at Uxbridge, were mere puppets, moved about in a game they did not understand, and by men whose intentions they were not allowed to penetrate. In the management of their argument they fell into the common error of endeavouring to prove too much; and in doing so, ruined their cause with its lukewarm friends as well as with its adversaries. They maintained, before the commissioners on both sides, that presbyterianism was prescribed in holy writ. They were not satisfied to urge that it was the best or the most convenient form; it was the only one; it existed *jure divino*. The constitution of the christian church was a part of God's revelation to mankind; and that constitution was presbyterian and nothing else: no other church was lawful. In the assembly they had to maintain this dogma against the independents; at Uxbridge, against the episcopal divines.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1645

The latter, not to be outdone, advanced the same claim on behalf of their own church government. They took up the position of bishop Bancroft, in the days of Whitgift, and asserted, with equal if not with greater vehemence, the exclusive and divine right of episcopacy.* “My lords,” said the marquis of Hertford, “here is much said concerning church government in the general; the reverend doctors on the king’s part affirm that episcopacy is *jure divino*; the reverend ministers, on the other part, affirm that presbytery is *jure divino*: for my part, I think neither the one nor the other, nor any government whatever, to be *jure divino*; and I desire we may leave this argument, and proceed to debate upon the particular proposals.” The question was repeatedly proposed, by Hyde and others, to the parliamentary commissioners, whether episcopacy were unlawful. Was it, in its own nature and *per se*, a sinful institution? But they failed to extort a direct answer. The Scotch commissioners, Maitland, Johnstone, and the rest, were held in check by the representatives of the English parliament; and the selection of such names as St. John, Whitlocke, Denzil Hollis, and the younger sir Henry Vane, who regarded presbyterianism, some of them with aversion, and all of them with indifference, told significantly that the house of commons viewed the presbyterian claims with jealousy. The king himself advanced one argument, through his divines, which required no

* Whitlocke, p. 123.

proofs to make it plain. He was bound, he said, by his coronation oath to defend the rights of the church: in his conscience he could not consent either to abrogate episcopacy or to alienate the church lands, which latter, he thought, would be direct sacrilege.* Hyde, now the king's chancellor of exchequer, was one of the commissioners. In private conversations with the other party he discovered that none but the Scotch, and the Westminster divines, were in earnest in the matter. In short, the parliament was more unconcerned and less united in what concerned the church than upon any other point discussed at Uxbridge.†

The remaining demands of the parliament were, that the militia should be placed at its disposal, and that the king should prosecute the war against the Irish rebels with vigour, notwithstanding a treaty he had lately made with them. Even those of the parliamentary commissioners who were most anxious for peace insisted, both publicly and in private, upon having the whole command of the militia by sea and land, and all the forts and ships of the kingdom at their disposal; without which, to repeat the words of Clarendon, they looked upon themselves as lost, and at the king's mercy. The most reasonable amongst them thought these securities necessary to their safety. "To refuse them could, they believed, proceed from nothing else but the resolution to take the highest vengeance upon their rebellion."‡ So low had sunk

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

* Clarendon, book viii. p. 586. † Ibid. p. 581. ‡ Ibid. p. 589.

CHAPTER the reputation of Charles's honour and veracity.
IV.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

The Irish question was debated with great asperity on both sides. The king was roundly charged with abetting the rebels; and his commissioners replied by charging on the parliament the whole guilt of a rebellion which had even forced his majesty to call in the assistance of the Irish papists. In short the treaty failed; the commissioners left Uxbridge at the expiration of the twenty days; and each side prepared, with animosities hitherto unknown, to renew the war.

The contest for presbyterian supremacy which had now been waged, in the assembly against the independents and sectaries, and at Uxbridge against the episcopalians, was advanced in the course of the summer against a more powerful antagonist. As it was intended to erect ecclesiastical courts and to cover the nation with a network of novel jurisdictions, it became necessary to settle and define their limits, as well as the nature of their powers. For the highest of the presbyterian courts the Westminster assembly claimed the supreme right of excommunication. The parliament, however, insisted upon an appeal from the ecclesiastical to the civil tribunal—from the national synod to themselves. The assembly remonstrated against this impiety; and in return the parliament informed them that they had violated its privileges and incurred the penalties of a premunire. The discussion was prolonged with

some interruption for a whole year. So jealous had the parliament now become of the power of ecclesiastics that even exclusion from the Lord's supper was a question on which it insisted on hearing an appeal from the excluded party. This was Erastianism without disguise, and the assembly chafed beneath it. Touching the question of a *jus divinum*, the parliament propounded to the assembly of divines a series of questions, which the historians of that grave body speak of with indignation, and which certainly throw an air of ridicule over the high pretensions of the presbyterian champions. They desire, for instance, to be satisfied upon the following amongst other points :

1. Whether congregational and parochial elderships appointed by ordinance of parliament, or any other congregational or presbyterial elderships, are *jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?—and whether any particular church government be *jure divino*?—and what that government is?
2. Whether all the members of the said eldership, as members thereof, or which of them, are *jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?
3. Whether the superior assemblies or elderships, viz., the classical, provincial, or national, whether all or any of them, and which of them, are *jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?
4. Whether appeals from the congregational elderships to the classical, provincial, or national assemblies, or any of them, and if so, which of them, are *jure divino*? And are their powers upon

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

such appeals *jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?* And thus they proceed through the presbyterian system. And lastly, they demand, whether there be anything in the word of God which forbids the supreme magistracy in a christian state from determining what are the notorious and scandalous offences which deserve church censures, and what shall be the manner of suspension for the same?—and in what points, they ask, concerning such offences, is the supreme magistracy by the word of God excluded? The assembly were required to give their proofs from scripture and in writing. But they found it an easier, and no doubt a much safer task, to close the controversy with an opponent that, in the last resort, could wield the terrors of a *premunire*† in the general terms of the following proposition:—“The Lord Jesus, as king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church officers distinct from the civil magistrate.”

The conduct of the house of commons at this period was not unlike that of Henry VIII. while the reformation was in progress. Undetermined

* Hetherington, p. 281.

† *Premunire*, a barbarous word for *premonere*; it took its original from the exorbitant power claimed and exercised by the pope in England. The punishment was, that the convicted party forfeited his lands and property to the king; that he was imprisoned during pleasure, or even during life; and further, he was placed beyond the protection of the law, he could bring an action for no injury, however atrocious, nor obtain a remedy for any grievance he might suffer. Blackstone, Comment. book iv. chapter viii.

themselves, they forbade the right of choice to others. Their reformation hitherto had gone no further than the dislike of prelacy had forced it: they had rejected much, they had established nothing in its place; but as their difficulties increased they shewed a still increasing aversion to the ancient service. The directory was published in January: it set forth that the liturgy had proved an offence to many of the godly, and to the reformed churches abroad, and it was to be therefore set aside.* This was a great advance upon their first intentions, which had been merely to revise and amend the ritual. But their prejudices still gathered strength, and in the month of August they forbade the use of the common prayer-book altogether, not only in any church, chapel, or public place of worship, but in any private place or family within the kingdom of England; under a penalty of five pounds for the first offence, ten pounds for the second, and for the third offence, one whole year's imprisonment, without bail or mainprize.† At the same time, the use of the directory was enforced; the clergy were commanded to conform to it under a fine of forty shillings for each omission; and "whoever depraved it, in preaching, writing, or teaching," was liable to be convicted in a summary manner, and fined not less than five pounds for each offence. Thus presbyterian worship was established, though not the presbyterian discipline.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

* Ordinance, &c., die Veneris, 3 Januarii, 1644.

† Ordinance, &c., 23 Aug. 1645.

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

The puritans had not profited by the lessons of adversity. They too had their penal statutes and their act of uniformity. To those who are disposed nicely to adjust the balances of crime, their conduct seems right or wrong as it is worse or better than that of their opponents. Such writers have remarked, on the one hand, that the punishments which the ordinance inflicts are light in comparison with the prisons and gibbets of Whitgift and his school; and, on the other, that the episcopal act of uniformity of 1662 is lenient in comparison with this inglorious specimen of puritan oppression. The act of 1662 only affected the clergy; this included the laity. That did not forbid private or family prayer, although extempore; this forbade the use of the book of common prayer even in the domestic circle, under the monstrous penalty of five pounds for the first, and one hundred pounds for the third offence.* The independents joined with the presbyterians in these merciless measures, though they themselves were at the time exposed to similar exclusion; and the puritans of 1645, as a political or as a religious body, or in both characters combined, are responsible to posterity for an act of which there are few parallels in the dreary records of intolerance. It admits, unhappily, of no excuse. Revenge or retaliation must not be pleaded in justification of those who rule men, or of those who fear God: as senators or as christians, they are beyond the worthless shelter

* Walker, Sufferings, &c., part i. p. 28.

of such apologies. Nor will necessity avail. A state of war confers, it is true, the rights of war; but they are to be exerted sparingly, and only when necessity compels. Had the king systematically availed himself of the occasions when the liturgy was read to foment his quarrel with the parliament—had the use of the prayer-book been the signal of his party—perhaps it might have been difficult to blame his opponents for snatching from his hands the machinery of war. The same principle of self-defence upon which the saying of mass was forbidden to papists when the kingdom was in danger, might possibly have excused, but only for a time, the suppression of the prayer-book. But when the ordinance was made no such pretence existed: the battle of Naseby had been fought, and Charles was no longer formidable. Two years afterwards, when the war was at an end and the king a prisoner, the parliament voted “liberty to tender consciences by way of indulgence;” but within two days, as if alarmed at their own concessions, they reconsidered the question, and resolved, “that the indulgence as to tender consciences shall not extend to the book of common prayer.”* Rivals may exult and zealots may excuse; it is for those who have made the wrongs of the puritans their own, who have felt their sorrows through the persecutions of a century, and who abhor oppression more than they love a party, to review these measures with the deepest shame, and to give utterance to the loudest indignation.]

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

* 16 Oct. 1647. Whitelocke p. 276.

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

The independents were treated with only less severity than the adherents of the liturgy. To relate the various turns of the conflict through which they struggled for equal rights against parliamentary committees and majorities of the assembly of divines, would be wearisome and unprofitable. The independents differed but little from the presbyterians on church government, and in doctrine not a shade. They asked to be included in the national church about to be founded, on two conditions; namely, to reserve the right of ordination to themselves, and to be exempted from the jurisdiction of the classes or presbyterian courts. They did not intend, they said, a total separation from their brethren; they would hold occasional communion with the presbyterian churches in baptism and the Lord's supper; their ministers should preach for each other; and in cases of difficulty they would call in their assistance and advice; they would even desire the presence and approbation of presbyterian ministers at the ordination of their own clergy, and they would submit to have but a few places of worship licensed for uneasy consciences. On these terms they prayed to share the privileges of the national church. The presbyterians answered, that the concession of their demands would introduce confusion into families; would confer upon members of the independent churches privileges denied to the establishment; would destroy the whole work on which the parliament had been so long and earnestly employed, and countenance a perpetual schism. In short, said they, if you can commu-

nicate with our church occasionally, we know no reason why you may not do so constantly, and then your separation will be needless. Separation is schism. If the church impose anything that is sinful, you need not nor ought you to comply; you may suffer, but you must not separate: and this, they said, was the practice of the puritans in the late times. And they closed the argument with reminding the independents that their own brethren in New England (the pilgrim fathers of Boston and New Plymouth) allowed no such toleration as that for which they now pleaded at home. The assembly triumphed: the committee of accommodation, consisting of the lords and commons, broke up; and the successors of the Brownists found themselves cast out by the successors of Cartwright; just as they themselves in time past had been ejected by the prelates. The circle of intolerance was complete.*

Toleration was a word which roused those violent passions which are formidable or ludicrous as the subjects of them are invested with the power, or deprived of the opportunity, of carrying their wishes into effect. To collect from some of the greatest writers of the age the sentences in which they denounced the doctrine of toleration, meaning thereby the liberty, not of imposing a schismatic creed on others but of observing it oneself, would be to present the reader with a set of phrases the bitterness of which has never been surpassed. "To let men serve God according to

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

* Neal, vol. iii. chap. vi.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

the persuasion of their own conscience," says one writer, "is to cast out one devil that seven worse may enter in." Prynne, who had lost his ears in Palace-yard, and felt the vengeance of the star chamber, still thought that "the independents and all others were bound to submit to the will of parliament on the pain of obstinacy." Most of the sermons before the house of commons, at their monthly fasts, spoke the same language, and called upon the magistrate to draw the sword against the sectaries.* "If you do not labour," said Calamy, "according to your duty and power to suppress the errors and heresies which are spread in the kingdom, all those errors are your errors, and those heresies are your heresies; they are your sins, and God calls upon you for a parliamentary repentance this day."† Edwards, the minister of Christ-church, London, published a treatise, which was printed with the approbation of a large number of ministers from all parts of the nation. "A toleration," he exclaims, "is the grand design of the devil, the masterpiece and chief engine he works by at this time to uphold his tottering kingdom; it is a most transcendent, catholic, and fundamental evil for this kingdom of any that can be imagined. Other evils are but against some one or few places of scripture; this is against all; this is the Abaddon, the Apollyon, the destroyer of all religion, the abomination of desolation and astonishment, the liberty of perdi-

* Neal, vol. iii. p. 244.

† Price, Hist. Non-con. vol. ii. p. 327.

tion (as Au'stin calls it), and therefore the devil follows it night and day, working mightily in many, by writing books for it, and other ways; all the devils in hell and their instruments being at work to promote toleration. O let ministers," he cries, "oppose toleration, as that by which the devil would at once lay a foundation for his kingdom through all generations."* Never had the worst measures of the bishops aroused a stronger indignation than the presbyterians now displayed against this fearful monster. The presbyterian divines of London met from week to week at Sion college, to consult on the best methods to extend the influence of religion. One of their schemes was the suppression of all who differed from themselves. They wrote a letter to the parliament, imploring them to oppose with all their might this idol, this great Diana, as they termed it, of the independents, and not to suffer their new establishment to be strangled in the birth by a lawless toleration. The presbyterians of Lancashire echoed the harsh tones of their London brethren. Eighty-four of these reverend men set forth a document entitled, "The Harmonious Consent of all the Ministers, &c. to the Truth of Jesus Christ." The harmony they contemplated was that with which our British ancestor upbraided the legions of Agricola: they would have made a solitude and called it peace. "A toleration," they exclaim, "would be the putting of a sword into a

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

* Gangrena; or a catalogue, &c. of the many errors, heresies, blasphemies, &c. of the sectaries in England; 1646; vol. i. pp. 58—85.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

madman's hands, a cup of poison into the hand of a child, a letting loose of madmen with firebrands in their hands, an appointing a city of refuge in men's consciences for the devil to fly to, laying of a stumbling-block before the blind, a proclaiming liberty to the wolves to come into Christ's fold to prey upon the lambs, a toleration of soul murder (the greatest murder of all), and for the establishing whereof damned souls in hell would accuse men on earth.* Scotland took up the clamour and gave it a national expression. The Scotch parliament, through their president, addressed the two houses at Westminster thus:—
 “It was expected that your honourable houses would add the civil sanction to what the pious and learned assembly have advised; I am commanded by the parliament of this kingdom to demand it, and I do, in their names, demand it. The parliament of this kingdom is persuaded that the piety and wisdom of the honourable houses will never admit toleration of any acts or schisms contrary to our solemn league and covenant.”† Even Baxter, who abhorred the violence of the presbyterians, felt it necessary to purge himself from the imputation of not favouring intolerance. “My judgment,” he says, “I have always freely made known. I abhor unlimited toleration, or toleration at all.”‡ There were, of course, amongst the independents, and in the house of commons, some minds upon whom a clearer light had broken

* Price, Hist. Non-con., vol. ii. p. 331. † Neal, vol. iii. p. 243.

‡ Scripture Proof of Infant Church-membership, p. 246.

in ; men who reasoned for toleration, not merely because they disliked the presbyterians, but from hatred of oppression and reverence for the truth. The illustrious Dr. John Owen was a presbyterian, but he saw the errors of his party. He published a short essay on church government, which contains some thoughts far beyond the wisdom of the men around him. He declared that he knew no church government existing, of the truth and necessity of which he was in all particulars convinced. His sagacity led him to foresee that all national disputes about church government would prove abortive,—mere “birthless tympanies.” His love of charity taught him to protest against such “big words” as those with which the presbyterians inflated their own pretensions and denounced their adversaries. Blasphemy, he maintains, ought to be punished by the magistrate, but not heresy ; and he explains wisely the reasons of his opinion, and shews the difference between the two offences. The presbyterians would have put a man to death for a denial of the trinity. In fact, a socinian very narrowly escaped the halter if not the stake this very year. Their argument was, that such errors are destructive to men’s souls. “And so,” replies Owen, “are many things, which yet are not punishable with death ;” and he challenges his opponents, if sincere, to carry out the principle and gird themselves to an indiscriminate slaughter of pagans and mahometans. Heresy, said the persecuting party, is a cancer, and must be extirpated. “It is a spiritual cancer,” answers Owen,

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

CHAPTER
IV.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

“let it be prevented by spiritual means; cutting off men’s heads is no proper remedy. If state physicians think otherwise, I say no more but that I am not of the college.”* Such sentiments were not consistent with a warm devotion to presbyterianism as it then existed, and Owen soon passed over to the independents.

Thus for the present the independents were crushed, the presbyterians were triumphant, and toleration was denounced. But a change was coming. Presbyterianism in England had even now received its death-blow, and the parliament at Westminster was already provided with a master.

While terms of peace were idly discussed at Uxbridge, the parliament at Westminster was more seriously employed upon the self-denying ordinance. This measure has been made the butt of ridicule since the day on which it passed, and its quaint title may provoke a smile. But it forms an epoch in the war. Like a mark upon the rocks from which we measure the ebbing of the tide, it shews to what height the puritan cause once rose, in simplicity of heart and honesty of purpose, and withal how credulous it was, and open to the intrigues of knavery.

As an instance of infatuation in a deliberative body, the self-denying ordinance has in the history of senates but one parallel. The national assembly of France, in the revolution of 1789, in a similar way disrobed themselves, in a paroxysm of political frenzy, of their manorial rights and

* Orme’s Life of Owen, p. 43.

ancestral honours, and reduced themselves to insignificance. The English parliament was more deliberate, and therefore more infatuated. The army was commanded by presbyterians; by the lords Essex, Manchester, and Denbigh, of the upper house; by Sir William Waller, Colonel Massey, and others, of the house of commons. These were men of moderate counsels. The earl of Essex was anxious to bring the king to reason, and then to restore him to his throne; not by any means to overthrow the monarchy. Manchester and Waller had the same intentions. The revolutionary storm had not hurried them before it. They occupied the same position on which they stood in 1642; they sought reform and reasonable liberty; they fought not against the crown, but against its slavish maxims and tyrannical practices; and all Scotland as well as the presbyterians at home still adhered to them. But not so the house of commons. It was already much altered. Amongst those who had retired and joined the king were some who had once been its ornaments. Several of its greatest men were dead. The anxieties of the times, to say nothing of the calamities of war, had swept away no inconsiderable number, and others were engaged upon the field. The vacancies were not yet filled up, but they made way for men of inferior parts and of a lower standing. At length, though not without a severe discussion, the house of commons resolved to recruit its numbers, and by its own authority to issue writs for the election of new

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

members in the place of all those who were deceased or who had retired to Oxford. Thus the name indeed remained, but little more was left of that famous parliament which in 1640 had denounced oppression and proclaimed the rights of England and of the reformation. In these five years the declension of the house of commons had been remarkable. Its eloquence had grown dim, and its statesmanlike capacity had shrivelled into small dimensions. The speeches delivered in 1641 and 1642 are as much above the usual level of parliamentary eloquence as those of 1645 are beneath it. The former are manly in thought and chaste in language; the latter, with the exception of such men as Selden, Whitelocke, and St. John, whose opinions must always command respect, are mean and vulgar, and overlaid with a certain religious jargon, as remote from the expression of simple piety as the language of adulation is from that of honest friendship. The transformation, it is true, was not yet complete. The elections for new members did not take place till August, when the self-denying ordinance had passed. But already members hitherto but little known began to take the lead; new intentions began to be avowed; and a party was formed, of which Cromwell, Vane, and Martin were the head. For some months there had been a coldness between the generals and the parliament. The earl of Essex was ill in London, desponding and alone; but he still retained the chief command. The second victory at Newbury had been won by his army,

but under the command, in his absence, of the earl of Manchester. When the news arrived in London, although a day of thanksgiving was appointed, thanks were not voted to either of the generals, and Manchester was charged by Cromwell, in his place in parliament, with having intentionally permitted the king to escape, and with not having pursued his advantages to the utmost. He defended himself in the upper house, but Cromwell and his friends in the house of commons continued to repeat the accusation. A violent quarrel was at hand. Still the army was attached to its generals; mutinies were reported from day to day; even Cromwell's legion was disaffected; and it was evident that if a collision should take place, the parliament was impotent against thirty thousand men in arms. A painful consciousness was felt that the seat of government was about to be transferred from the senate to the camp.

The self-denying ordinance brought on a crisis. Without seeming to strike a blow or to use an effort, Cromwell by this measure reduced the generals and the army into complete subserviency to himself; made the parliament first his instrument and then his victim; seized at the instant the reins which fell out of its hands, and grasped them firmly for the remainder of his life. The way was cautiously prepared. The nation, it was said, required rest; the war which exhausted its energies ought to be closed, for it covered the land with blood; meantime the tone of public principle

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1645.

CHAPTER IV.
 CHAS. I.
 A. D. 1645.

was deteriorated ; religion itself decayed ; and no wonder, since the two houses of parliament were everywhere charged with selfishness and ambition. They were brave and patriotic, it was admitted, but they were mistaken ; they neglected the business of the state to gather laurels on the field of battle ; and the time had now arrived when they ought to give the nation a noble example of self-denial. Legislation was their proper business ; the pursuits of the soldier were unfit for them ; and they ought at once to resign their commissions. These hollow murmurings announced the approaching storm. Just at the time, a few reverses which had occurred in the west of England to sir William Waller served to give a still more solemn tone to these feigned or real apprehensions. God was displeased, and the people must abase themselves. A solemn fast was appointed, and the preachers were carefully chosen by Cromwell and the independent party. The pulpit now began to share the degeneracy of the parliament, and to echo the intentions of the ruling powers. The word fanatic this year enriched our language ;* it was coined to describe a set of men who transferred the impassioned fervours of devotion to politics, contaminating both at once. The text itself was often a gazette, and it frequently conveyed to the audience the first intimation of some approaching change. There was of course the greatest unanimity among the preachers, and the people joined with unsuspecting fervour in ser-

* So Clarendon says.

vices which continued eight or ten hours without interruption. The preachers deplored the continuance of the war, and expressed their fears that so long as the chief commands were held by members of the legislature it was not likely to come to an end; the nation would grow poor while the parliament grew rich. They even ventured to affirm that the parliament was no less corrupt than the court itself. It had as much pride, as much ambition, as many private ends to serve, and as little true regard for the public welfare; and they prayed that God would take his own work in hand; and if the instruments employed were indeed unworthy to complete the glorious task, to make use of others, and fit them for the work. The next day Sir Harry Vane opened the debate, insisting chiefly upon the wonderful unanimity (if we may credit Clarendon's* minute and apparently accurate relation) which had appeared in the discourses and lamentations of all the godly ministers in so many churches, "which could therefore proceed," he said, "only from the immediate Spirit of God." He deplored the sins of the parliament, and admitted its selfishness. He, for one, was ready to accuse himself. He was joint-treasurer of the navy: he would resign his office; and apply its emoluments to carry on the war. The ice thus broken, Cromwell followed. His eloquence was obscure and vulgar but still it was effective. It has been usual to regard the style and matter of his speeches

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1645.

* Clarendon, viii. 566.

CHAPTER
IV.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

as proofs of a consummate hypocrisy : they were rather perhaps the utterance of a deep fanaticism. He now spoke like one in whom every feeling of personal ambition was subservient to the cause of God. He commended the preachers for their faithfulness ; acknowledged the sins of parliament and his own ; and enlarged on the vices and corruptions of the army, its profaneness and impiety, and the absence of all religion. Unless it were remodelled, and governed under a stricter discipline, success, he said, could not be expected. God had so blessed their army notwithstanding, that it contained excellent officers, capable of higher command than they now possessed : nay, if the highest offices were vacant, they could be filled up at once. To believe that the success of the army depended on its present leaders, (whose valour he highly praised,) was to trust in an arm of flesh,—as if such a cause as this depended on one man ! He proposed, at length, an ordinance that no member of either house of parliament should retain office or command in the army, or any place or employment in the state ; and, in proof of his sincerity, he offered to lay down his own commission. The motion thus introduced was long debated. It was vehemently opposed by the Scotch commissioners then in London, and by the whole force of the presbyterians, including the house of lords. But the proposal was plausible with the people, who are seldom indeed displeased when those in power renounce their honours. Zouch Tate

led the way in the house of commons, and moved the adoption of the self-denying ordinance, in a speech “ which he introduced with the similitude of a boil upon his thumb.”* We see at once how much the house of commons had declined, when a business of such importance was intrusted to a vulgar fanatic. A fast was ordered, and the self-denying ordinance was read. Whitelocke displayed one of those feats of statesmanship which it is to be hoped may always be uncommon : he spoke admirably against the ordinance, and voted for it. It passed unanimously, and was sent up to the lords for their concurrence : the lords hesitated ; the commons urged them to proceed : the lords delivered to the commons their reasons against the bill ; the commons suspended all private business for eight days, and the whole house went up to the peers to importune them to pass the ordinance. They still hesitated ; and the house of commons, resolving to wait no longer, proceeded at once to remodel the army : the destruction of the upper house must be dated from this quarrel.† The earls of Essex and Manchester, sir William Waller, and the rest of the commanders, immediately resigned. All the Scotch officers were dismissed ; and the Scotch alliance was henceforward treated with indifference. Sir Thomas Fairfax was chosen lord-general on Cromwell’s recommendation.‡ He was in truth Cromwell’s nominee : a man chosen for the openness

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1645.

* Whitelocke, 113. Ludlow, p. 56.

† Whitelocke, 118.

‡ Clarendon, viii, 569. Baxter, i. 48.

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1645.

of his character, as much as for his valour and abilities. He was religious, valiant, and resolute; an unsuspecting soldier; very fit for action; neither too great nor too cunning to be governed by the parliament. He was led into the house of commons, where a chair was placed for him, but he modestly refused to sit. "The speaker told him somewhat of Agamemnon and the old Romans, which," says Whitelocke, "I have forgotten." Another curious instance of the altering character of that assembly is, that the speaker selected his models for the new chieftain neither from the old testament nor from English annals, but from the republicans of classic history. Fairfax was invested with the command of the army, which he immediately joined at Windsor, his headquarters. Cromwell too rejoined his own regiment, and their mutinous disposition was instantly allayed. The parliament soon received from Fairfax a request that Cromwell's presence at Westminster might be dispensed with, for he stood in need, he said, of his assistance and advice: the house of commons gave him leave of absence for forty days. In a few weeks the general petitioned that Cromwell might be allowed to serve during the remainder of that campaign: the house again consented. Cromwell turned the opportunity to the best account; and in a few days he had beaten the royalists in the west of England in five engagements. In the name of Fairfax he now remodelled the army: he disbanded and cashiered at pleasure; he drafted

refractory presbyterians into regiments which possessed his confidence ; he promoted his friends Ireton, Desborough, Harrison, Fleetwood, Whalley, and others, independents or republicans, to posts of importance ; he broke up his own famous squadrons and distributed them amongst six other regiments ; and thus by their means the whole army was reduced beneath his influence. For some time he had been its idol ; he was now its master. The parliament confirmed him in his military employments and made him its lieutenant-general. It was no longer a secret that the whole army, including the generalissimo Fairfax and the brave and honest Shippon, commander of the cavalry, were obedient to his will. The self-denying ordinance had passed both houses (for the lords at length gave way) ; the presbyterians were vanquished ; the army was remodelled ; and Cromwell held the fate of three kingdoms in his hands. He was already in effect supreme.

His eulogists in general hasten by the self-denying ordinance with a rapid step. They describe him as the victim of circumstances ; equally sincere in urging forward the self-denying ordinance and resigning his commission in the house of commons, and in resuming his command at Windsor a few days afterwards in the face of all his solemn protestations. A marvellous conjuncture, they affirm, arrested his intentions and compelled him to do violence to himself. The will of a nation, if not the providence of God, imposed a necessity from which he could not shrink. But such apologies have very little weight. Unfortu-

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

CHAPTER
IV.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

nately these happy conjunctures return upon us too often; and their recurrence renders them suspicious. An ordinary character may escape unscathed from one dilemma; but a repetition of equivocal circumstances is ruinous to the best. Cromwell's known character refutes his adversaries. He was cast in an iron mould; he was always an impracticable man. Had he really persuaded himself that the self-denying ordinance was necessary, neither the persuasions of Fairfax, nor the clamours of the army, nor the commands of parliament, would have disturbed his purpose. It was well known that he and his party had ulterior views: the vision of a republic already floated mistily before them. Cromwell himself despised the parliament, and had begun about this time to whisper, in his confidential moments, how easy it would be to get rid of the masters whose weakness was apparent.* With a tenth part of his sagacity, Cromwell must have foreseen that his services could not be dispensed with. Everything conspired to make his presence wanted in the camp. He knew his position in the army and was alive to its importance. The complaint was that the commanders wanted resolution; they were afraid to push their advantages against the king. But into this error at least Cromwell had never fallen. His language to his troops from the first had been, "Should I chance to meet the king in battle, I would as soon shoot him as any private man;" and he told his soldiers that if their consciences would not permit

* Ludlow, p. 72; and Clarendon, viii. p. 562.

them to do so, they were not fit for him; they had better join some other regiment.* The self-denying ordinance was no sooner passed than this stern resolution was avowed; and the words which implied that the commissions were issued "in the king's name," and that they were to be used on his behalf, were erased. Fairfax at first remonstrated; but his scruples were overruled in parliament and the fiction ceased. Can it be supposed that Cromwell, the author of these counsels, was really of opinion that his own absence from the army would contribute to their success? Again the licentiousness and irreligion of the army was complained of; but Cromwell's legion was not included in the censure. Baxter, who was no sycophant of Cromwell's, declares that his old regiment "had made itself famous for religion and valour."† Would the morals of the army then be improved by the retirement of the general who had trained this exemplary soldiery? The evils complained of were those which, of all men, Cromwell was the most likely to remove! If the ordinance was not intended simply to force him into power, still it must be confessed that no measure could have been devised which, sooner or later, would more certainly have led to that result. There are periods in the lives of public men when they pass for an instant through a flash of light. The self-denying ordinance was this ordeal: it revealed Cromwell's secret motives to the world; and it left him scorched for ever with the brand of knavery and

* Clarendon, x. p. 110.

† Baxter, i p. 49.

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1645.

political chicane. His advocates have lately defended his conduct on the plea of necessity; and some there are who, dazzled with his greatness, think all his conduct worthy of an indiscriminate admiration. This hero worship, this adulation even of real greatness, is unworthy of a christian nation. If it should become general it would bespeak a degenerate and degraded people; a dwarfish race who admire what is above their reach with idle wonder. The incapacity to distinguish between great powers and the right use of them, marks a weak or a perverted mind; it obliterates the distinctions of vice and virtue, and substitutes the pagan superstition which burnt incense at the shrines of good and bad fortune. When a nation once arrives at this point it is utterly debased. All pure morality is undermined; the love of virtue for its own sake, and as that which is most acceptable to God and most like himself, vanishes away; and men sink to the condition of the brutes, who crowd around the tall and stately deer, but chase it, wounded, from the flock and leave it to die in solitude.* Success becomes the sole standard by which virtue itself is to be applauded or condemned.

* I have read with the attention due to its author's name and character the "Vindication of Cromwell" lately published by Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, and need scarcely add that I am dissatisfied with it. He dismisses the subject of the self-denying ordinance in a few sentences. "Cromwell prepared to take leave of his general Fairfax: but circumstances which seemed to proceed from the hand of God prevented him. Hostilities broke out afresh, and Oliver did not think it right at such a moment to return his sword into the scabbard." This is not a vindication!

The power of the presbyterians was now at an end. The independents and sectaries had combined against them, and their victory was complete. But it was dearly purchased; for the blow meant for the presbyterians felled the parliament. It retained indeed the power of naming its commanders, and seems to have calculated upon their dutiful submission to its orders. It expected the army to be as docile as before. But the army was no sooner remodelled than it began to assert its independence, and to act as if the great quarrel between the nation and the king had been submitted not merely to its valour in the field, but to its final arbitration. Everything portended change; a new order of things was evidently at hand, though none could yet foresee what the future might bring forth. It was under these circumstances that presbyterianism was at length established. On the sixth of August the house of commons sent up to the lords the ordinance for settling the government of the church. Yet it refused, soon after, the petition of the assembly to be allowed to suspend profane and ignorant persons from the sacrament; voted a petition, which prayed for the establishment of presbytery "as the discipline of Jesus Christ," to be scandalous;* and when the Scotch remonstrated with it upon its tardy zeal and imperfect reformation, had the petition burnt by the common hangman. The lords, after some delay, passed the ordinance, and presbyterianism became

* Whitlocke, p. 159.

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

the established church by law ; but it was never so in practice ; and presbyterians say, with truth, that in England their system was not fairly tried. London was presbyterian already, in the judgment of its clergy and the temper of the citizens. Lancashire adopted the discipline. In no other part of England does it appear that any vigorous effort was made to carry it into operation. The cause was lost by the folly of its advocates. The parliament justly dreaded another ecclesiastical despotism. The nation remembered but too well the spiritual courts of the prelates, and viewed with aversion the machinery of presbyterian judicatories, with which it was proposed to overspread the land. Provincial synods and classical assemblies had a new and suspicious sound : they afforded endless mirth to the royalists, and met with no encouragement from any party. Selden and the lawyers denounced them ; the people were anxious ; and the soldiers laughed in scorn. The scheme was utterly unpopular ; and, as the king rejected it by proclamation, presbyterianism could not be accepted even as a compromise between the two great parties. But, in truth, the institutions of a nation are like the habits of a man : they may be altered and improved by gradual change : but to root them up at once, and to supply their place with others, belongs to Him who only can regenerate either men or nations.

The new-modelled army was spoken of with scorn by the royalists ; for its numbers had been reduced from thirty-six to twenty-one thousand

men; and its officers were in general plebeians. But it soon made its power felt: the decisive struggle came; and the last great battle was fought on the 14th of June, 1645, upon the field of Naseby, near Northampton. The king was on the field in person, and his nephew prince Rupert commanded the cavalry. Fairfax, Cromwell, Shippon, and Ireton led on the puritans; and when the day was over, the royal cause was hopeless. The king was the last to quit the field, on which he had displayed at least the heroic virtues of a cavalier. When the battle was all but lost, he placed himself at the head of his only regiment in reserve to confront the dreadful Cromwell. The earl of Carnwarth, alarmed for his safety, or struck with a sudden panic, caught at Charles's bridle and turned his horse. The contagion seized the officers who surrounded him, and all fled. The king waved his sword and cried, "One charge more and we recover the day:" but all was lost. He retreated with two thousand horse, the wreck of his army, towards Leicester. Six thousand prisoners were taken; and amongst them, six colonels, eight lieutenant-colonels, eighteen majors, seventy captains, eighty lieutenants, eighty ensigns, two hundred inferior officers, about a hundred and forty standards, and the royal standard amongst the number, the king's footmen and servants, and the whole train of artillery and baggage. The slaughter was not great; for it soon became a panic rather than a fight. The prisoners and the standards that were taken were carried

CHAPTER in triumph through London to Westminster.
 IV. The standards were hung in Westminster hall.
 CHAS. I. The prisoners were secured in the artillery-ground
 A. D. 1645. in Tothill-fields. Such as promised to take no
 further part in the war were dismissed. By far
 the greater number, still loyal to the king, refused
 the easy condition, and were shipped off to foreign
 parts. Within two days Leicester capitulated.
 Bristol, Winchester, Bath, and Bridgewater fol-
 lowed; the king was hopeless, and his army was
 no more.*

But the loss of his army was not the only calamity which befel the king at Naseby. His cabinet was amongst the spoils. It contained his secret diplomatic correspondence and copies of his private letters to the queen. The loss of the cabinet completed his ruin. The disaster at Naseby might have been retrieved. A generous and forgiving nation might have conceded to a king subdued what they had scorned to surrender to a king in arms. All but a few ambitious soldiers were weary of the war. A republic existed yet only in the dreams of a few headlong zealots, and in the penetrating ambition of Cromwell. But the loss of character admits of no redress. A perfidious sovereign can only reign by force amongst those who are conscious that they may one day be made the victims of his treachery; and the publication of his private correspondence placed the treachery of Charles beyond all further doubt. The parliament was aware

* Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, p. 59. Ludlow, lieutenant-general of horse to the parliament, was present at the fight.

of the greatness of its prize. The cabinet was deposited at Guildhall, and its contents were read aloud before thousands of the citizens. A few dejected loyalists affected to believe, or endeavoured to persuade themselves, that the papers were a forgery. The apology, such as it was, added to their misfortune. The originals were ostentatiously displayed. The curious, the malicious, those who hated the royal cause, and those who trembled lest some exposure of their own villany should undo them, rushed in crowds to the Guildhall from day to day. The seal, the handwriting, the well-known signature, could not be mistaken. The parliament printed the correspondence; and doing so, they inflicted upon Charles a blow, compared with which the stroke was merciful that took away his life. All that can be alleged in the king's behalf has been said by Clarendon; though he himself abhorred the king's duplicity, and often dared to protest against it; for he was a man of pure integrity, in a court where integrity was rare.

The publication of "the Naseby papers" has often been made the subject of grave accusation against the puritans; upon what grounds, it is difficult to perceive. They are charged by Clarendon with a want of honesty in publishing garbled extracts; by Hume, with want of delicacy in exposing to the vulgar eye letters designed only for the queen. But the cabinet was seized upon the field of battle, and it is absurd to say that confidence was either imposed or violated. Had its contents been made public merely to de-

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1645.

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1645.

grade the king, and to exhibit him to his subjects as a weak, uxorious man, the victim of his wife's caprice, the charge of malice might have been sustained ; and some of the leaders in the popular cause were generous enough to deplore, even at the time, the violation of that respect which is due to a matrimonial correspondence. But though addressed to his wife, the letters printed are in fact on affairs of state ; few of them are of a private nature ; and several were suppressed by those to whom the captors assigned the work of publishing the correspondence, out of compassion to the king,—a service for which they were rewarded at the restoration.* Charles had no reason to complain ; for the publication of the Naseby papers was not a matter of retaliation, but of self-defence. The puritan leaders had entered on the war deeply convinced of the king's duplicity and heartlessness, but unable at the time to lay the proofs and evidences before the public. These papers supplied them with all that was required : they shewed that he was governed by the queen ; they revealed his hatred of the parliament, and his resolution to be avenged upon it when the time should come ;

* Ludlow, p. 60. The Naseby papers are printed at the end of Ludlow's memoir. There is one letter which delicacy ought to have suppressed, in which Charles writes to the king of France with pitiful complaints of the queen's misbehaviour, and the insolence of her woman, Madame St. George. Yet even this was of importance, as it shewed the thalldrom in which the king was held, soon after his marriage, not only to the queen, but to the court of France. It is dated 12 July, 1626. Except in the suppressions alluded to above, there seems to be no pretext whatever for Clarendon's charge of garbling the correspondence.

they disclosed his project, a hundred times denied, of obtaining the assistance of the king of France, the duke of Lorraine, and all the sovereigns of the continent, against his own subjects; above all, they discovered his tenderness to the papists and his favour to the Irish rebels; the fact that he had solicited their assistance, and had already made with them a dishonourable peace. "All which," says Milton, "though suspected vehemently before, and from good grounds believed, yet by him and his adherents peremptorily denied, were, by the opening of that cabinet, visible to all men under his own hand."* The parliament, then, were justified: as upright men, it was their duty to clear themselves from the charge of aspersing the king unjustly; as leaders in the state it was no less their duty to inform the people of the real intentions of the sovereign, and "on what terms their duty stood, and the kingdom's peace."†

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

Ireland had now been for several years in a state of insurrection. In 1641 a frightful massacre first announced the intention of the papists to extirpate the protestants; and with such ferocity was the design pursued, that not less than one hundred and fifty thousand victims fell a sacrifice to their murderous rage. The number has been disputed; it has been reduced to fifty thousand on the one hand, and exaggerated to three hundred

* Eiconoclastes; published by authority; 1649; ch. xxi. p. 181.

† Ibid. p. 182.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

thousand on the other.* On one point both sides agree: a plot was formed, under the direction of the priests and native chieftains, for the total extirpation of the heretics in Ireland; and comparatively few escaped. It was executed with a barbarity of which, except in the annals of the church of Rome, Europe has had few examples; and although an accurate census was then unknown, the protestant population of Ireland must have been capable of a computation sufficiently exact to furnish an approximation at least to the true number of the sufferers. The massacre subsided into an armed rebellion, organized by sir Phelim O'Neile, MacMahoun, the earl of Antrim, and others. The utmost ferocity still marked their progress, and nature recoils from a bare recital of the horrors which were inflicted and endured. Thousands of the protestants were murdered in cold blood, without distinction of age

* Hume says, that probably the sufferers must have been, by the most moderate account, near 40,000. On which Harris, a writer of extraordinary research (*Life and Writings of Charles I.*), observes: "It were to be wished Mr. Hume had told us where this moderate account is to be found; for my own part, I have sought for it in vain." (p. 337.) Clarendon says, "Forty or fifty thousand were murdered *before they suspected themselves to be in any danger*, or could provide for their defence." (Book iv. 29.) Milton gives 154,000 as the number of massacres "in Ulster only, by their own computation." (*Eiconoclastes*, ch. xi.) He adds, thoughtlessly enough, that this sum, added to the other three provinces, makes up a total of slaughter four times as great. But Ulster was the only protestant part of Ireland, and the slaughter was of course nearly confined to it. May (*Hist. Long Parliament*, book ii. p. 4.) gives 200,000 "in the space of one month;" and sir John Temple, master of the rolls in Dublin, 300,000 "within two years." *Hist. Irish Rebel.* p. 12.

or sex. Thousands were stripped to their very shirts, and so turned out to perish of cold and misery. Great numbers were burnt alive, or drowned, or mutilated. In Antrim, nine hundred and fifty-four were murdered in one forenoon. In Armagh, Tyrone, and the neighbourhood, five thousand prisoners were slaughtered in three days.* “All the waters of the sea,” says the earl of Castlehaven, himself a member of the church of Rome, “cannot wash out the guilt of that rebellion, which began most bloodily against the English in a time of settled peace without the least occasion.”†

The king had all along been suspected of conniving at this rebellion. The rebels boasted of the queen’s favour, and shewed a commission, authorising their appearance in arms, signed by the king himself. Of the queen’s misconduct there is no doubt whatever. The earl of Antrim fled, soon after the massacre broke out, to her court, where he not only found a shelter but was treated with consideration, and sent back to Ulster with secret instructions and supplies of ammunition. He was an Irish papist, a leader in the rebellion from the first. He boasted publicly at the restoration that he had acted throughout under the king’s authority; and his estates, which had been forfeited, were restored to him by Charles II. on the express ground that “what-

* Temple’s Irish Rebellion, &c. All the writings of that age abound in facts which refer to the Irish rebellion.

† Harris’s Charles I. p. 336. Bates, Troubles of England, p. 45.

CHAPTER IV.
 CHAS. I.
 A.D. 1645.

ever intelligence, correspondence, or actings the said marquis had with the confederate Irish catholics was directed and allowed by letters, instructions, and directions" ("from our royal father and our royal mother").* The only possible answer to these charges is that which Hume advances; that Antrim, though concerned no doubt in the rebellion, was not implicated in the massacre, having joined the rebels two years later. A feeble apology if true; but unhappily for the royal cause at variance with the facts. Ludlow commanded the parliamentary forces sent over to Ireland to quell the rebellion, and must be supposed to have known who were his opponents. His words are these: "It is well known that the earl of Antrim had his head and hands deeply and early engaged in that bloody work."† The correspondence of lord Strafford, published at his death, proves that, before the massacre broke out, Antrim had applied to the king for permission to arm his followers; that the minister had resisted, on the ground that Antrim was a papist, and a dangerous discontented man; that Charles had, notwithstanding, insisted on his being allowed to raise and commission a body of troops; and that the remonstrances of Strafford, then Mr. Wentworth, were finally overborne by a flat command from the sovereign. Lastly, the lords and commons, in their declaration concerning the rise and

* A letter written by command of king Charles II. concerning the marquis of Antrim, to the duke of Ormond, July 10, 1663. Ludlow, in appendix.

† Memoirs, p. 383.

progress of the Irish rebellion, dated July 25, 1643, mention the earl of Antrim by name as “a notorious rebel,” who had already been seized by the Scots in Ulster on suspicion of high treason; had broken prison and fled to the queen at York, and was now again in Ireland.* And all this had happened, and the declaration was published to the world, long before the expiration of those two years, at the close of which he is said, by Hume and the king’s apologists, for the first time to have joined the rebel army. It is in vain to argue, as they do, that the king and queen had no motive for such treachery. There is an end of history if authenticated facts are to be set aside on such uncertain grounds; but it is sufficient to make answer thus: the queen was a papist; she had often sacrificed her husband’s character to her church; it is not impossible that, zealot as she was, she might even be willing to sacrifice his Irish crown: as to the means employed, she was never scrupulous; as to the end in view, she would undoubtedly have chosen rather that Ireland should obey the pope and rebel against the king, than that Ireland should be a protestant nation under her husband’s rule, disowning the pope’s authority. Besides, without having recourse to these extreme suppositions, it was evident that a war in Ireland would divert attention from the quarrel betwixt the king and parliament; it might even put an end to the king’s embarrassment, by furnishing the unruly spirit of the

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

* Harris, p. 350.

CHAPTER
IV.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

puritans with congenial employment in fighting against popery so near home; above all, if the papists should succeed, Charles might employ their victorious arms in his own cause, proclaim himself their leader, and for ever sweep the puritans and their cause from his three kingdoms. In fact, the rebels, in their pretended commission from the king, advanced this as a plausible reason for his conduct. Charles was made to say that he aroused the Roman catholics of Ireland to defend himself his crown and kingdom against the "vehemence of the puritan party." The document was universally believed in Ireland; and it must be confessed, that without any great want either of judgment or charity, it might readily be credited in England by those who had had experience of the king. He was not a papist, but he loved a papist far better than he loved a puritan.

The rebels boasted the queen's favour, we have no doubt with perfect truth; but when they proceeded further to shew a commission, under the great seal of Charles himself, to justify the seizure of his castles and of all his protestant subjects and their property, we are bound to give the king the full benefit both of his own denial and of the obscurity which envelopes the whole transaction. In all likelihood the commission was a forgery. The seal upon it was cut off an old patent, it is affirmed, in Farnham abbey,* in the presence of several priests and others, who afterwards confessed

* After all, this is one of the vexed places of history. While a doubt remains, it is both humane and just to give the king the advan-

the fraud. The character of Charles we may venture to believe was unsullied by this dark delinquency; but at the same time we are bound in equal

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

tage of it. That Charles designed the massacre of his protestant subjects in Ireland, is a supposition so contrary to his nature,—which, though false, was never cruel,—that it may be dismissed at once, as utterly improbable, if not monstrous. But the question of the commission to the rebels is distinct from this, (though to encourage the rebellion was in effect to promote the massacre,) and it is involved in considerable uncertainty. Godwin has examined the evidence with great acuteness, though not, I think, with strict impartiality, and he decides in favour of the genuineness of the commission. (See his *Hist. of the Commonwealth*, vol. i. p. 225, and vol. ii. p. 102—122.) Many of his arguments seem, however, until further evidence can be produced, to admit of no satisfactory answer, and upon the whole, the memory of Charles cannot be said to be clear of the imputation of having caused the Irish rebellion. At least the clamour and the revilings which have stunned the puritans from the day of the restoration of Charles II. to the present generation, out of mere decency ought to be heard no more. Men can act and determine only on the evidence they possess, and the balance of evidence during Charles's life was decidedly against him. The strongest arguments in his favour (that is, in favour of the supposition that the proclamation was a forgery,) are:—1. His own constant assertions. 2. The ignorance of his privy council. 3. The confessions said to have been made by the rebels. 4. And especially the dying testimony of the rebel chieftains, sir Phelim O'Neile and Lord Macguire. On the other hand, it is replied:—1. That the king's assertions, when not sustained by proofs, are worthless. On matters of state policy he thought intrigue, and even falsehood, allowable. The strongest denial is contained in the *Eicon Basilikè*, a small volume of prayers and meditations, published the day after his death, in the king's name, but of which the real authorship is very questionable. 2. That the ignorance of the privy council is explained by Charles's intriguing disposition. It is very probable that he would not venture to ask their advice on so nefarious a transaction. Neither Ormond the viceroy of Ireland, nor Digby the king's minister at home, were allowed to be acquainted with the instructions given, for example, to Glamorgan. 3. The confessions said to have been made by the rebels were not published till thirty years afterwards, when the morals of public men were utterly depraved, and historical falsehoods uttered every day, by writers of every rank, without a blush. 4. The question turns at last upon the testimony of O'Neile and others, which, if admitted, decides the controversy in favour of Charles. Ker, dean of Ardagh, in a paper given under his hand and seal, February 28th,

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

justice to admit that the puritans had but too much reason to draw the opposite conclusion, and to believe that the king himself had hounded on the Irish papists to their work of slaughter. He had

1681, declares that he was present at the trial of O'Neile, in 1653, who confessed then, and afterwards on the scaffold, that the commission was forged, and that he had instructed one Michael Harrison to cut off the seal from a patent that he had found at Charlemont. Harrison, being then in court, acknowledges that this is true. But Perinchief, a contemporary biographer of Charles I., says expressly that the seal "was taken from an obsolete patent in Farnham abbey, by one Plunkett, in presence of many of their lords and priests, as was afterwards attested by the confession of many." It is evident that one or other of these statements must be untrue. It is possible that both are so; for the commission was dated from Edinburgh, and bore the great seal, not of England, as Clarendon says, but of Scotland, as indeed it is asserted by Rushworth. How came the great seal of Scotland to be affixed to a patent in Farnham abbey; or, still more improbable, to a patent at Charlemont in Ireland? Such are some of the painful perplexities which obscure the subject. They are quite sufficient (which is the purpose of this note) to shew that whether Charles were guilty of this atrocious act or not, the puritans had but too much reason to be suspicious. Until the execution of O'Neile and Macguire, the evidence indeed was entirely against the king.

The following horrible account of Macguire's execution is from a contemporary writer: "Nor is it to be omitted that the sheriff, having adjured Macguire, by the dreadful tribunal of God, before which shortly he was to appear, and the clearing and easing of his conscience, which was then or never to be done, that he would ingenuously confess whom he knew to be guilty of the same crime (the Irish rebellion); though the rope was about his neck, and he half up the ladder, yet by name he acquitted king Charles from being any ways privy to it; solemnly professing that he knew no Englishman but one, and he a papist, that had any hand in the matter. Nay, and being cast off the ladder, and when, after he had tried what hanging was, he was a little reprieved, and had no small hopes given him of a pardon, he still persisted in the same protestation. But in the pulpits, clubs, and public pamphlets, the crime was charged upon king Charles; nor did the rebels blush to asperse even the sacred and innocent majesty of the king with so heinous a guilt; hoping, that whilst they continued so boldly to vent their calumnies and slanders against him, some of them at least would stick." Bates, *Troubles of England*, p. 46.

long ago been guilty of an act of treachery which even this would not have surpassed. In the first year of his reign (the year too of his disastrous marriage) he had betrayed the protestants of Rochelle to the vengeance of the French king. These huguenots were in alliance with England, and had a diplomatic agent at our court; Charles* had encouraged them to defend their religion and their rights against the tyrant who then governed France, with whom he was at war. They returned his kindness with the warmest gratitude, and exhausted themselves to furnish provisions from their own stores for an expedition of the English against the isle of Rhè. Our forces were repulsed, and Louis prepared to avenge himself upon Rochelle. Meanwhile peace was made with France, and it was secretly determined to betray the huguenots. A fleet, consisting of one ship of war and seven armed merchant vessels, was sent under sir John Pennington to the French coast, where a suspicion arose amongst the officers and men that they were to fight against the protestants. The fleet was on the eve of a mutiny when Pennington returned with it to the Downs, declaring that he was ready to be hanged in England, rather than fight against his brother protestants in France. † Fresh orders were issued, the nature of which was a profound secret, and the fleet sailed once more for France, as the unhappy huguenots

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

* Wellwood's Memoirs, p. 82; where the reader may see two letters from Charles to the Rochellers, assuring them of his assistance. He says, "Hold out to the last; I am resolved that my whole fleet shall perish, rather than you be not relieved." "May 19, 1625."

† Rushworth, vol. 1. pp. 175—325.

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

believed, to their relief; for they had no suspicion of treachery. The fleet, however, was immediately placed under the commands of Louis. The sailors were justly enraged, and deserted in a body, both officers and privates, with the exception of only one man. One ship broke through and returned to England, and Pennington fired into it as it passed. The broadsides of the English fleet were then turned against the ships of the huguenots, and "mowed them down like grass." Rochelle was lost, and with it thirty-two strongholds of the protestants in Languedoc, Piedmont, and Dauphinè; and the huguenots, abandoned by the English court, suffered inhuman cruelties. Charles was accused as the author of their ruin; all christendom believed that he was a traitor to their cause. It was not the French king, said the harassed and bleeding huguenots, for then we could have borne it; but it was the king of England, a professed protestant, that betrayed us! They published their grievances, and charged him with "horrid perfidiousness and deep dissimulation." Subise, their agent at the English court, remonstrated. Charles muttered something about "the knavery of Pennington," and was silent. The puritans had no doubt of his guilt, but the proof of his wickedness was not yet patent to the world, and a whole consensus of historians has long numbered up their suspicions of the king in this affair as the basest instance of their disloyalty and prejudice. Amongst the king's papers which fell into the hands of the parliament, was a copy of Charles's warrant

commanding Pennington to place his fleet at the disposal of Louis.* But the charge died away, and was in the course of time discredited. The treachery was so great that his apologists were willing to think it incredible; and his enemies paid but little attention to events which, when the disclosure was made, belonged to a former generation. But the patient researches of antiquarians have at length changed the aspect of the controversy. The original warrant has come to light, in which Charles commands the villany he was afraid to own.† He himself betrayed the huguenots, and handed over to the French king the fleet equipped for their protection, to be the instrument of their slaughter. The providence of God is exercised not less in protecting his ser-

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

* King Charles's Case; with an addition concerning Rochel, &c. &c.; by John Cooke, barrister, 1649. The warrant is not printed in the Naseby papers, in Ludlow. Cooke, solicitor-general at the king's trial, had not seen it, as he infers the king's guilt, in this instance, from the duplicity of which the Naseby papers convicted him in other matters in which the papists were concerned. Ludlow must have seen it. "Sir John," he says, "received a letter from the king, signed Charles Rex, which was afterwards found by the parliament amongst his papers, requiring him to dispose of those ships as he should be directed by the French king; and if any should refuse to obey those orders, to sink or fire them." (Mem. p. 2.) These are almost the very words of the warrant, as the reader will see below.

† The original was, in 1810, in the possession of George Duckett, esq., F.A.S., and was communicated by him to the Royal Antiquarian Society of London. It is printed in their Transactions, p. 110, and, being little known, is here transcribed.

"CHARLES R.

PENNINGTON,—These are to charge and command you, immediately upon sight thereof, that, without all difficulty and delay, you put our former commandment into execution, for the consigning of the shippe under your charge, called the Vantgarde, into the hands of the marquis d'Effial, with all her equipage, artillery, and munition; assuring the officers on the said shippe, whom it may concern, that we

CHAPTER
IV.

vants than in bringing to shame the craft of their oppressors !

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

The Naseby papers, and some other documents found in the popish archbishop of Tuam's carriage soon after, completed the loss of Charles's character. With regard, in particular, to the affairs of Ireland, it was now evident that the puritans had not been anxious without a cause. Their suspicions were confirmed: the king felt but little sympathy for the Irish protestants; his indignation, his hatred, was reserved for the rebels at Westminster. When the massacre broke out he could do no less than issue a proclamation against the Irish rebels. It was now discovered that he had strictly forbidden the printer to strike off more than forty copies, which were to be sent, with the signature blank, to the king himself.* It appeared that in another document, where the word rebels had been used, he, with his own hand, had erased it, and written Irish. He had impeded the military supplies which the parliament, before the war began, had

will provide for their indemnity. And we further charge and command you, that you also require the seaven marchant shippes, in our name to put themselves into the service of our dear brother, the French kinge, according to the promise we have made unto him; and in case of backwardness or refusall, we command you to use all forceable means in your power to compell them thereunto, even to their sinking. And in these severall charges, see you faile not, as you will answer the contrary at your uttermost perill, and this shall be your sufficient warrant. Given at our court at Richmond, this 28 of Julie, 1625.

“ To our trusty and well beloved John Pennington, capitaine of our shippe called the Vantgarde.”

* An order to the king's printer, &c., 2 Jan. 1641. See Ludlow or Harleian Miscell., where also the Naseby papers are printed.

raised under the earl of Leicester to attack the rebels; had detained the earl in England against his fruitless remonstrances, and at length had seized the horses which he had collected for his own service.* Sir Kenelm Digby, it was discovered, was then at Rome imploring a loan† from the pope; to which his holiness (supported keenly by the king of France, and by the queen, who was now at Paris,) replied by insisting upon these two conditions—peace with the Irish rebels, and a repeal of the penal laws against the Roman catholics in England. The king had already promised the one, and done the other! There was nothing in Charles's nature, or in his conduct, to afford the least shadow to the plausible conjecture of modern writers, that his concessions to the Roman catholics indicated a liberal policy beyond the spirit of his age. He wanted their assistance against his parliament; and he undertook to reward their service in the field, since he had no money, with civil immunities. It was thus he stated the matter in his own letter to the queen. It was a mere barter, a vulgar affair of business.‡ No relief was offered to other classes of his subjects. He would have granted the papists all their demands; at the same time he would have crushed the presbyterians and independents, and forbidden, if he could, the exercise of their re-

* Leicester to Algernon Sidney, Sept. 1642.

† Lord Jermyn to lord Digby. Paris, 9 June, 1645; and St. Jermains, Aug. 5, 1646.

‡ 16 March, 1644, and 5 March, 1645; and the King's letter to Ormond, viceroy of Ireland, 27 Feb. 1645.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1645.

ligion,—and this too in an age when thousands of living men still remembered the atrocious plot of Guido Faux and the jesuits against the king his father and the whole parliament of England. Such affection for the papists joined with such hatred of the presbyterians, could not be mistaken for the love either of truth or liberty.

It was known already that the king had agreed upon a truce with the rebels for one year, professedly to give his troops repose, but in fact to enable him to employ them in the war at home. This “cessation” aroused the worst suspicions of the parliament, and gave great offence even amongst his own friends, for the rebels were giving way on all sides, and the English army seemed on the point of success in every direction. But it was now discovered that the cessation was but a prelude. The earl of Glamorgan, the son of the marquis of Worcester, and himself a papist, had just concluded peace in the king’s name with the Irish rebels. The treaty itself was found in the carriage of the titular archbishop of Tuam, commander of the rebels in that province, at the battle of Sligo, where he was killed, October the 17th.* It was published with the Naseby papers; and now nothing more was wanting to complete the indignation of the puritans and the degradation of the king. He had treated with the rebels upon an equal footing, as if with a sovereign state; and their leaders were mentioned in honourable terms. The articles of agreement were made

* Whitelocke, p. 193.

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

with the usual ostentation of diplomatic courtesy, between the earl of Glamorgan, by virtue of his majesty's authority, and under his signet and royal signature, on the one part, and the right honourable Richard lord viscount Mountgarret, lord president of the supreme council of the confederate catholics of Ireland, for and on behalf of his majesty's Roman catholic subjects and the catholic clergy of Ireland, on the other.* There was not a word of pardon, much less of punishment; no traitors were excepted; no amnesty was sought or offered. It was a treaty of peace and alliance made upon equal terms. The preliminaries were dated from Oxford in the month of March; just when he stubbornly refused to acknowledge the two houses at Westminster to be a parliament, and while indeed he continued to style them rebels. Until the treaty of Uxbridge, at the beginning of the year, he had never been persuaded to address them as a parliament: a private letter to the queen was now published, in which he apologized for this weak concession. He would not have given up the point, he said, if but two members of his council had supported him: but he stood alone: yet still he had acted under a protest, which he had had carefully transcribed into the journals of his privy council.† Nor would he have yielded even then, except upon the jesuitical "condition and construction," expressly made, "that the calling them such did no ways acknowledge them to be a parliament." And this, he

* Ludlow, appendix, p. 500.

† To the queen, 2 Jan., 1645.

CHAPTER IV. says, "was the argument that prevailed with me."

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

The terms and conditions of the treaty were even more offensive than its courtesies. The rebels were confirmed in the possession of their plunder since the massacre broke out in October 1641, whether land or tithes; the Romish clergy were secured in the tithes and benefices they had seized upon; and the king engaged to remove one and all of the disabilities and restraints which the caution of successive generations had imposed on Roman catholics. A religion which admits of no rival and allows no freedom of conscience was on the point of being re-established by pike and sword in one third of his dominions by the king's sole act, whether (for this was the subject of a special clause) the consent of parliament should ever be gained or not. But the king was playing a desperate game, and on this last throw he had hazarded all that he could lose. And what were the advantages he proposed to himself? They were simply these: to relieve himself from his embarrassment in Ireland, to propitiate the papal sovereigns of Europe, and the pope himself, whose nuncio a duly accredited agent of the court of Rome was already in Ireland; and above all to obtain assistance from the rebels against his people and the parliament at home. The treaty contained a stipulation to that purpose. By the seventh article the confederate catholics agreed to send over ten thousand men to serve his majesty in any part of England, Wales, or Scotland,

armed half with muskets, the rest with pikes: they were to form one entire body, and their officers and commanders were to be named by the supreme council of the said confederate catholics. The treaty was no sooner published than Charles, with habitual duplicity, denied that Glamorgan had his authority to conclude a peace. Glamorgan was a cavalier and a man of honour, and he was silent. But such falsehoods were now utterly useless; they had been repeated too often, and imposed on none: the king sunk in public respect, not so much from another lie, which might have passed unnoticed, as because he betrayed a faithful servant in Glamorgan.

Ten thousand savages were thus let loose on England. Many of them had already appeared, and it was no question how, upon their part, the war would be carried on. Five regiments landed at Chester, the great northern seaport, and were met by the parliamentary forces at Nantwich in Cheshire. They were beaten; and on the field of battle the puritans found, with mingled feelings of horror, indignation, and disgust, the bodies of one hundred and twenty Irish women* armed with long knives, the weapons of a cut-throat. The atrocities of the Irish massacre were too recent to be denied much less forgotten; and the introduction of ten rebel regiments, containing thousands, it was supposed, of the very men who had steeped themselves in the blood of the unoffending

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1645.

* Whitelocke, pp. 71, 97.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

protestants, seemed to justify the alarm of those who dreaded a repetition of similar atrocities at home. By a public ordinance of parliament, quarter was forbidden to every Irishman found in arms; and the puritan soldiers for some time executed the stern commission with remorseless vengeance. When a troop surrendered, whatever were the terms, the Irish were singled out and shot, if indeed they escaped a worse fate. Multitudes were hanged. At Conway, a number were tied back to back and thrown into the sea.* The slaughter was too often indiscriminate: no pains were taken to ascertain each man's guilt. At York, a company of Walloons, prince Rupert's mercenaries, were mistaken for Irish soldiers, and not one of them was spared. In various places great barbarities were practised. At Padstow an Irish ship was taken: its papers shewed that it was in the service of the rebels; it carried thirty men, and they were put to death by the townspeople. In the west of England, prince Rupert, in revenge, hung up the mayor and several of the chief citizens of the town of Dorchester, and carried on a system of reprisals. Thus, as in civil war it always happens, one outrage produced another; the war became every day more cruel, and each side gave way to the deadly passions of hatred and revenge.

It is not easy to assign to either party its proper share of blame, except that in such matters the first aggressor is always the most culpable;

* Whitelocke, p. 224.

and Charles, in bringing over the Irish troops, had aroused the parliament to vengeance. Each side, however, could at length point to some deed of cruelty in the other as a pretext for its own. Besides the introduction of the Irish, many atrocities were charged upon the royalists; and the character of the chief commanders was such as almost to ensure without inquiry the truth of these accusations. Prince Rupert, second in command to the king himself, was rough and passionate;* or, as described by his enemies, fierce and cruel. Goring, general of the horse, who was entrusted with the command of a separate army in the west of England, had not the slightest sense of religion, truth, or justice. Even honour, the idol virtue of the camp, was utterly unknown to him. To gain his ends, no wickedness was too gross, no action too foul. He was uncontrolled by any fear of God or man. He could break the most sacred trust and commit the basest treachery with a light heart and for any trifling consideration. In short, had it not been that he wanted application, he would have been as eminent in wickedness as any man of the age he lived in or of any age before.† Lord Wilmot, also a general-in-chief of cavalry, was a debauchee, who possessed no more integrity or honour than lord Goring; he was only more timid or more cautious in his vices; and yet no man in the army had more influence with the soldiers.‡ From these commanders the army took its character. There were men of high

* Clarendon, viii. p. 554. † *Ib.* p. 555. ‡ *Ib.* pp. 481 and 555.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1645.

rank it is true in the king's service, whose conduct was in every thing the opposite to these; men who abhorred the licence and the levities with which they saw too many corrupted. Such were lord Hopton and sir Jacob Astley;* but they wanted the force of character to stem the tide which overflowed the camp with vice. The royal army too became at the conclusion of the war, in the military sense, demoralized. Repeated defeats and a hopeless prospect had made it reckless, and in a beaten army recklessness is always cruel. The provocations offered by the royalists were great no doubt. They were enough to justify the puritans, according to the usual practice of the camp and the current opinions of mankind. They did but retaliate; they met cruelty with revenge; they returned evil for evil; they acted as ordinary men act under similar provocations. But this was not enough, for theirs was no ordinary quarrel. They had taken up arms in defence of law and righteousness, on behalf of religion and in the name of God, and their conduct was unworthy of their cause.

But the long continuance of the war is sufficient to account for the bitterness which both sides displayed. It is surprising that at the close of such a conflict the christian virtues should still have found a home in England. The character which by degrees the war assumed was the most unfavourable to personal religion and the domestic virtues of gentleness and charity that can well be imagined. Besides the great battles where the

* Clarendon, viii. p. 482.

armies met each other in the field, there was a sort of guerilla warfare in every county, almost in every parish—a contest of individuals, of man with man. Every fortified house—and all the houses of the nobility and chief gentry were then fortified—became the centre of military operations: it either contained a garrison or stood a siege. The tenants of the estate on one side, and the neighbouring townsmen on the other, met in opposite array beneath its walls. Neighbours and relations were intermixed in battle: the animosities at length were personal; the dying man told by what neighbour's hand he had received his wound; and the tenant of the next farm or the tradesman of the village was branded for life with the guilt of his blood. The stories of the siege of Lathom house and Wardour castle are amongst the romantic episodes of English history; and while they shew the valour of our ancestors they expose the miseries of a war at home, and explain too forcibly the causes of the decay of piety. Lathom house in Lancashire was the noble residence of the earl of Derby. He was absent with the king's army when his castle was invested by the forces of the parliament. It was defended by the countess and by a brave garrison, whose courage was sustained by her example. The siege opened with a sermon on the previous Sunday, in the parish church of the neighbouring town of Wigan. One Bradshaw was the preacher; no illiterate fanatic, for he had been educated at Brazenose, Oxford. "Put yourselves in array against Babylon round

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1645.

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1644.

about : all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows : for she hath sinned against the Lord,"*—was his text. He gave the marks and signs of antichrist : he proved that the countess, who was of foreign descent, was the scarlet whore of Babylon ; he shewed that Lathom house, with its seven towers, was a mystic Babylon itself ; he foretold its coming desolation, and reserved the next verse† to solemnize the triumph which he assured his hearers was at hand. On Tuesday the house was invested, and the next day a letter was delivered to the countess from sir Thomas Fairfax, courteously demanding her submission. A lofty answer was returned : her ladyship, notwithstanding her present condition, said that she remembered both her lord's honour and her own birth ; and she conceived that it would have been more knightly for sir Thomas Fairfax to wait upon her than she upon him. Proposals were soon repeated, and they were by no means severe ; but they were all rejected with disdain. Though a woman and a stranger, divorced from her friends and robbed of her estate, she was ready, she declared, to receive the utmost violence of her enemies, trusting in God both for protection and deliverance. The besiegers were led on by gentlemen of the neighbourhood, men of good estate and family, who had no doubt lived on kindly terms with the great lord of Lancashire, and

* Jeremiah l. 14.

† " Shout against her round about : she hath given her hand : her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down : for it is the vengeance of the Lord : take vengeance upon her ; as she hath done, do unto her." Jer. l. 15.

shared his princely hospitalities. They were now in arms against his palace and his wife. Their numerous cannon, a granado, and above all a mortar which projected stones eighty pounds in weight, the terror of the garrison, shivered the battlements and scattered wounds and death through the princely courts and chambers. Nor were the besieged inactive while their enemies were thus employed. In return, sallies and assaults were made with terrible success: in one of these thirty men were killed; in another, seven fell by one man's sword. The siege had now lasted for six weeks: the earl had written to his wife to express his willingness that she should give up Lathom and spare herself; but she still held out undaunted. The two puritan captains, Ashton of Middleton, and Moore of Bank hall, (the latter a mansion in sight of the towers of Lathom,) now published a letter "to all ministers and parsons in Lancashire, well wishers to their success against Lathom house," in which they deplore their want of success, and desire them "in public manner, as they shall please, to commend their cause to God;" and the besiegers themselves suspended their operations and devoted four days to prayer and fasting. At length a breach was made and the castle was in many parts a heap of ruins; and Rigby, the puritan commander, sent in a drummer to demand an immediate surrender, the garrison trusting for their lives to the mercy of the parliament. The messenger was threatened by the countess with the

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1644.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1644.

gallows on the instant ; but after a short parley, was sent back with a message which might have provoked gentler spirits than those who with pikes and lighted matchlocks stood like dogs at bay frowning round the ditch and gates of Lathom. “Thou art but,” says she, “the foolish instrument of a traitor’s pride. Carry this answer back to Rigby,” (with a noble scorn tearing the paper in his sight,) “and tell that insolent rebel he shall neither have persons, goods, nor house. When our strength and provisions are spent, we shall find a fire more merciful than Rigby’s ; and then, if the providence of God prevent it not, my goods and house shall burn in his sight ; and myself, children, and soldiers, rather than fall into his hands, will seal our religion and loyalty in the same flame.” This was spoken aloud in her soldiers’ hearing, and was answered with a shout,—“We will die for his majesty and your honour. God save the king!” Despair now lent its energies. “It was a hard choice for any good man,” says an eye-witness of the scene, himself too one of the besieged, “either to kill or to be killed ; either sheepishly to receive death, or manfully to return it.” It was resolved to sally out the next morning and venture all. And there was no time to lose : Rigby had prepared for the last assault ; his batteries were moved on, and against every breach and entrance his ordnance were planted. The garrison numbered but three hundred, and these had now been cooped up for nine weeks. The assailants, not to mention their advantages

in ammunition, guns, provision, and, above all, in health and vigour, were three thousand men. Rigby, sure of his triumph, had invited his friends to witness the fall of Lathom, which he assured them was to surrender before night, or with its obstinate defenders be consumed and levelled with the ground. But a desperate sally made at four in the morning changed the face of the whole affair. The puritans, too secure, were surprised and slaughtered in great numbers: their cannon were spiked, their works levelled. The action lasted for an hour, and with the loss on the part of the garrison of only two men. The assailants returned with captured arms and drums, and with five prisoners, preserved by a captain Chisenhall, "to shew that he had mercy as well as valour." Thanksgivings were offered by the chaplains of the castle; and the soldiers amused themselves with the jest that Rigby's friends had come in time to console him under his disgrace, now that he had been routed by a lady and a handful of men! Another month passed, and the siege was still maintained. Another message was sent in, and another defiance was returned. It was carried by captain Moseley, and summoned the countess to submit to "the mercy of the parliament." "You have made a mistake in the paper," said the countess, "in saying *mercy* instead of *cruelty*." "No," said he, "the *mercy* of the parliament." "The mercies of the wicked are cruel," she replied. Moseley, seeing her inflexible, and perhaps moved

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1644.

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1644.

with pity, intimated that if she would only surrender the house she might have her own conditions. This too she refused. The same night it was rumoured through a spy that prince Rupert was already in Cheshire marching to her relief. It proved true; and in a few days the siege was silently raised, and the besiegers marched away to the protection of Bolton. It was on the 29th of May that Rupert entered that town by storm. He was related by birth to the countess of Derby; and now he took a frightful vengeance, "leaving sixteen hundred of her besiegers dead in the place, and carrying away seven hundred prisoners." The next day he presented her ladyship, by the hands of a distinguished messenger, with twenty-two of the colours which, three days before, had been proudly flourished before her house. The earl of Derby was with prince Rupert at the storming of Bolton; and here one of those tragic conflicts happened which give to civil war its interest and its bitterness. He encountered captain Bootle, one of his own household in happier days, but more recently the commander of a troop against Lathom house, as he rushed into Bolton, "and did him," says our historian, "the honour of too brave a death, in dying by his lord's hand." The earl was foremost in the assault upon the town: he took the first ensign, and cut down the cornet who carried it. It had lately been waved in defiance before his own castle and now the house of Derby was avenged. Such were the triumphs and the miseries through

which our forefathers passed, on their way to a liberty and peace which their children's children were one day to enjoy.*

Wardour castle, in Wiltshire, was held by general Ludlow for the parliament. For the unadorned story of its memorable siege we are indebted to his military pen. It was defended and attacked with equal bravery: it held out long, and surrendered upon honourable terms: but in this it differed little from a hundred sieges in the history of the war. We are more interested now with the characters of the two parties than with their successes or defeats. The disruption of the social bond, and with it the destruction of the charities of life and of pure religion, can be learned only in the minute accounts which an eye-witness

* "*Væ miseras belli civilis!*" is the affecting commentary inscribed in the burial register of St. Maurice, Winchester, upon the funeral of an eminent citizen, who was shot while standing at his own door by a cannon ball from Cromwell's forces on the hill which commands the High street. The misery and loss the war occasioned is inconceivable. And yet the calmness with which it is spoken of on both sides, by those who were actors or sufferers, is one of the most striking proofs of the real greatness of that age. The sack of Bolton was the most frightful event of the whole war and (if it can be excused only by the plea of avenging Lathom house) by far the most atrocious. The numbers who fell, as given above, differ from Martindale. He and the chronicler of the siege of Lathom were both Lancashire men, living at the time: the former a puritan, the latter a royalist. Other writers give, apparently at random, different estimates of the probable number of the slain. In the first triumph, perhaps, the numbers were exaggerated by the royalists; but when the severities of Rupert, a few years afterwards, had excited general abhorrence, and were universally condemned, it was politic to diminish the number of the sufferers. The account of the siege of Lathom house is related in a MS. of captain Halsall, who was one of the garrison: the original is in the Ashmole Museum, Oxford; and there is a copy in the British Museum. It has been printed several times.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1644.

CHAPTER
 IV.
 CHAS. I.
 A. D. 1664.

furnishes of such occurrences. Ludlow, in religion an ultra-puritan, in politics a republican, was descended from an ancient family in Wiltshire, and was himself, in a high sense, a soldier, a scholar, and a christian gentleman. He drew his sword against the king, as he modestly tells us, with his father's approbation; and because he thought it his duty as an Englishman to defend his country from oppression, and the institutions of God from the inventions of men. And he thought the justice of the cause to be so evident, that his decision was attended with no difficulty when he took his part with the men who had the laws of God, of nature, and of reason, as well as those of the land, upon their side.* He raised a troop of horse in Wiltshire, with which he took Wardour castle; and was then, in his turn, besieged in it by the royalists. But the cause, of which the justice was so clear to Ludlow, wore another aspect to the consciences of many of his neighbours. Within the castle and around it, friend and foe, the old acquaintance and the near relation, were strangely intermixed. Conversations were freely held from the walls and rampart between the besieged and their opponents. "One company of the royalists was commanded," says Ludlow, "by a relation of mine, one captain Henry Williams." The siege was afterwards placed under one colonel Barnes: "he was brother," he tells us, "to an honest gentleman who was chaplain to my father." One of the royalists fell mortally

* Memoirs, pp. 16, 17.

wounded by a bullet from the walls : he had seen the hand that levelled the piece, and just lived to relate that he had fallen by his own brother ! Ludlow writes like a soldier, and seldom stops to moralize ; but here he makes the following comment : “ If it were so, he might justly do it, both by the laws of God and man : it was done in the discharge of his duty and in his own defence.” However this may be, such a warfare soon becomes malignant. The quarrels of families are of all contentions, not only the most unnatural, but the most rancorous ; and the troops in Wardour castle and around it, like an infuriated clan, turned their swords against each other with private animosities : their mode of warfare was nefarious. The castle had scarcely been invested when means were found to introduce a lad twelve years old, who easily obtained admission on account of his youth, to turn the spit and perform other servile offices. Something about the boy excited the suspicion of the guard, who threatened to hang him, and were in fact carrying their intentions into effect, when he confessed his errand. He had been bribed with half-a-crown to poison the water, the cattle, and the beer : the poison was found in his pockets. One of the great guns on the top of the castle had burst in firing : he had been instructed to introduce into the cannon a compound “ of a red colour and of the shape of a candle,” which had caused the explosion ; and it was discovered that he had thrust it into two other guns. Every day increased the exasperation

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1643.

CHAPTER IV.
CHAS. I.
A. D. 1644.

upon both sides. A breach was made, and an officer summoned the castle to surrender : he was warned to look to himself, and a shot was fired which brought him to the ground. He lay where he fell till night in agony, for the besiegers were afraid to come to his assistance. His wound gangrened, and after two days he died. A mine was exploded and an assault was made, but without success. A soldier of the garrison was buried in the rubbish. Ludlow humanely sent to request that the enemy would dig him out and carry him away as a prisoner, or permit him to do so unmolested ; promising to deliver up the wounded man. Both requests were refused ; and the poor wretch survived nearly three days in this horrible condition, starving and mangled, beneath a heap of stones. At length another mine was ready to explode : the house was in ruins ; and the reluctant Ludlow was compelled to surrender by his own officers and men. He merely demanded quarter for himself and the garrison : but the royalists, who knew well the influence of a puritan chaplain, excepted Mr. Balsome their minister. Ludlow was firm ; he refused to sacrifice his chaplain ; and at length his terms were granted, quarter without distinction, and the little garrison marched out. The royalists, however, had resolved upon their victim ; and as they could neither shoot nor hang him by the laws of war, they resolved to murder Balsome privately. Three common soldiers were despatched upon this infamous business : they broke into his room and surprised the man of

God on his knees in prayer: they were struck with awe and stood confounded. He rose calmly, looked steadily at them, and demanded their business. The soldiers turned aside, whispered with each other, confessed their shameful errand, and at once offered their services to convey him beyond the reach of danger. He was too generous to accept of his own safety at the expense of theirs, and was transmitted to the common gaol at Oxford, where it was resolved to hang him with the forms of law. He had even received the high sheriff's message to prepare for death; but the approach of the parliamentary army suspended his execution, he escaped by an exchange of prisoners, and became chaplain to the earl of Essex. Two private soldiers of the garrison were less fortunate: they had been impressed for the king's service against their consciences, and upon the first opportunity had gone over to the parliament: they were now shot as deserters, in contempt of the terms on which they had surrendered.*

The repetition of such scenes is sufficient to explain the bitterness displayed on both sides before the war closed. The royal army was ill disciplined; and under Goring and prince Rupert atrocities were committed at which one shudders.

Early in the war Cirencester was taken by surprise; and Rupert carried his prisoners, eleven hundred in number, stripped almost to their shirts, barefooted and bareheaded, and knee deep in mire and snow, for it was early in Fe-

* Ludlow, pp. 26, 40.

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1643.

bruary, to Oxford. The king, the princes, and the court came out a mile to view their captives, many of whom were gentlemen of quality; but they expressed no compassion at the shameful spectacle: they seemed rather to share in the unfeeling exultation of the crowd. Many of the common soldiers entered the king's army; the rest were thrown into the castle with other prisoners taken in the war; and the decencies of literature forbid us to reveal the disgusting treatment, and to expose the horrors, they endured. Whatever the reader may have read or conceived of the scenes which Howard witnessed,—of dungeons crammed to suffocation with the living the dying and the dead; of filth and stench; of wounds—honourable wounds, in this case, received in battle—unheeded and uncleansed; of the can of muddy water denied to the frantic sufferer in his agony and thirst; of the faltering petition for light, or friends, or water, answered with blows and manacles; of starvation carried to its extremest point short of death itself; of men brought to the gallows with a halter round their necks and then again remanded; of gentlemen caned like dogs, and cursed by their keepers with appalling maledictions; of suicides committed in moments of despair, and of madness such as misery engenders: all this and more, which we cannot utter, was undergone at Oxford by the parliamentary prisoners of war under the king's provost marshal general. The prison allowance daily was a can of small beer and a pennyworth of bread. On the slightest

pretext the beer was stopped, and water with a halfpenny-worth of bread was supplied instead. Some of them were laid in irons on the cold pavement of the castle yard for two and three days together, without a morsel of food or a drop of water, and cruelly deprived of their outer coats. The imprisonment lasted six months, and in some instances even nine; but death released numbers after a shorter agony. Nine captains, a lieutenant, a merchant of London, two clergymen (one of whom, an aged man, a doctor of divinity, broke his neck in an attempt to escape) were soon numbered with the dead. Pens, ink, and paper were of course denied; but the prisoners contrived to lay their sufferings before the king and his council. They were not relieved, nor could they learn that their petitions had even been discussed. No less than seventy of them presented a relation of these "their transcendent cruelties" at the bar of the house of commons, by the hands of a fellow-sufferer, and they confirmed the statement upon oath before the house of lords.* And thus it was that the puritans became revengeful and cruel in return.

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1643.

The puritan army endured much before it be-

* 1. The inhumanity of the king's prison-keeper in Oxford; or a true relation of the most transcendent cruelties, &c.

2. Petitions and articles presented to the king, against Smith, his provost-marshal-general, &c.

3. A letter to the speaker, subscribed with seventy prisoners' hands, &c.

4. A letter from a gentleman imprisoned at Oxford to his friend.

5. The insufferable cruelties exercised upon the Cirencester men in the castle at Oxford. Published by authority of parliament, and in the Somers tracts, p. 281.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646.

came unfeeling, and the provocations it received were such as in the maxims of war to justify retaliation, if not to demand it. But it must not be concealed that fanaticism on the side of the puritans, like a poisoned drug, dyed their warfare with a sanguinary hue. After the battle of Naseby few of the presbyterian chaplains continued with the army; and their retirement seemed to be the signal for the revival of a more glowing piety. It was but a delusion, and soon shewed itself in its true character; but it appeared at first as if the presence of the chaplains had been a restraint upon religion. In fact they had at least guided the rising spirit of enthusiasm through safe channels when it was impossible to repress it; whereas it now burst every barrier and filled the camp with turbid inundations. Each officer had for some time considered himself well qualified to become a spiritual guide and teacher; each private soldier now began to think himself the commissioner of heaven; he was an avenger to execute judgment; the executioner of a sentence which eternal justice had decreed; and he learned to look with indifference on the sufferings of his victim because he was inflicting the just punishment which God himself had awarded. The new-modelled army seemed to be more religious when in truth it was more profane; for religion means not the fervours of an audible devotion, but the submission of the heart and conduct to the will of God. The army displayed the one while it renounced the other; and

England saw to her dismay antinomianism no longer noisy in the pulpit or rampant from the press, but fierce and well disciplined in battle, the genius of war and the mistress of the camp.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646.

After the battle of Naseby the king retired to Hereford, and thence to South Wales. He was for some time a fugitive, hurrying from day to day, without a plan and without rest, from one town to another, as his fears or hopes prompted him; but his cause was lost, and he was conscious of it. The virtues of the Stuarts shone only in adversity; and it is now that we begin to form some acquaintance with what was truly great in Charles's character. He was calm when all around him were distracted, and firm when they were idly turbulent. Even the fiery Rupert wrote to his royal uncle that everything was lost; and he counselled peace upon whatever terms the parliament would grant. "If," replied the king, "I had any other quarrel than the defence of my religion, my crown, and my friends, you had full reason for your advice. Speaking either as a soldier or statesman, I must say there is no probability but of my ruin; but as a christian, I must tell you that God will not suffer rebels to prosper or his cause to be overthrown. Whatever personal chastisement it shall please him to inflict upon me must not make me repine, much less to give over this quarrel."* Bristol and Chester were still his own; and while they were faithful the communication with Ireland was free to him

* Clarendon, vol. viii. p. 90.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1645.

either for the introduction of troops or, at the worst, for a safe retreat. On the 11th of September prince Rupert surrendered Bristol on the first assault: the king in just displeasure dismissed him from his service. Charles hastened to relieve Chester, which was also in a state of siege. A time-worn inscription upon one of its venerable towers still relates that the unhappy sovereign of a distracted realm stood there on the 24th of September, 1645, and saw his troops defeated on the plains beneath. This battle of Rowton heath completed the destruction of his army; and already, though he was not yet acquainted with the fact, all his hopes in Scotland were at an end. The battle of Philiphaugh had been fought on the 13th; the Scotch royalist army had been destroyed; and Montrose, his general, was now a fugitive and an outlaw. Charles spent the winter at Oxford, his cheerless monotony disturbed only by fresh tidings of some new disaster. In April, Fairfax, having subdued the west of England, the seat of Charles's strength, advanced by forced marches to the siege of Oxford. The king, attended by Hudson, a clergyman, and Ashburnham, his valet, left Oxford in disguise; he carried their portmanteau behind him on his horse, and passed as their servant. It was conjectured by his friends in Oxford that he would go to London, appeal to the magnanimity of parliament, and trust to that passionate outburst of returning loyalty which the presence of their king, once more in the midst of them, might create amongst the citizens.

Charles himself seems to have entertained the project which might have saved his crown ; but at Brentford his resolution failed ; he left the high road, and crossed the country to Harrow. From the summit of this beautiful hill, Westminster abbey and the lofty spire of St. Paul's lay beneath him and full in sight. He reined in his horse and gazed in silence. Could he trust his safety with the parliament ? Should he make a last attempt in person ? Could he hope to stir the enthusiasm of the city ? But his resolution again failed, if these indeed were his intentions : he had no advisers at hand ; and who would have dared to advise a king upon such a venture ? He rode on towards St. Alban's, dejected and silent ; and in a few days it was known in London that he had found a refuge in the Scottish camp at Newark. He was from this time in fact a prisoner.

But the war did not close immediately. The garrisons of the royalists were reluctant to surrender ; either hoping for some change in the king's affairs or fearing to trust themselves to an irritated and conquering foe. Colchester held out two years after the king's flight from Oxford, and was one of the last places that submitted to the parliament. The exasperation on both sides was great. The puritans were furious, the royalists were in despair. Colchester was situated in the heart of the six associated counties which had been the first to espouse the parliamentary cause and the strongest to support

CHAPTER
IV.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646—8.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1647—8.

it; it stood alone, and yet breathed defiance to the last. The siege began early in the month of June, 1648, and was conducted by Fairfax in person; the defence by lord Goring, lord Capel, sir Charles Lucas, and others. Goring had been by name excepted from the indemnity in which the parliament had offered free pardon to all who would lay down their arms: and Fairfax refused to accept the submission of the inhabitants except on the condition that the officers in command should be absolutely at his mercy. The eyes of all England were fixed upon the siege, and Fairfax sent to the parliament almost every day an account of his progress. Never in English warfare were the horrors of a state of siege more bitterly felt. Hundreds were slain in frequent sallies, in which large numbers were engaged, and several battles were fought beneath the walls. In one of them the royalists brought out a thousand horse and three hundred foot, with whom two or three regiments engaged; and these encounters took place repeatedly. The parliamentary general made an assault upon the gatehouse; a soldier threw a hand grenade which fell upon the magazine; it exploded, and forty men were blown up, forty were cut to pieces by the assailants, and sixty were made prisoners. The garrison fired the suburbs in self-defence, and for above a mile together the houses were one sheet of flame.* Within three days the garrison again refused the summons to surrender. The miseries of famine

* Whitelocke, p. 316.

had set in, and they had begun to eat horse-flesh. Fairfax cut off the pipes which supplied the town with water, and their food was now muddy water and the vilest carrion. The soldiers of the garrison one day in desperate merriment roasted a whole horse at a mock feast. The parliamentary general sent in proposals fastened to the heads of arrows, so as to disperse them among the common soldiers and the townsmen. If they would deliver up lord Goring, lord Capel, and some others of the chief men, the rest, he said, should have quarter and passes, and be at liberty to go to their own homes: but, wretched and starving as they were, the proposal was treated with contempt. A hot cannonade was continued from week to week; the churches fell in ruins, and whole streets were utterly demolished. Fairfax wrote on the 5th of August that he could now take the town by storm, but that he prolonged the siege out of mere mercy, since it must very soon surrender. Many deserters came out daily, driven by famine and despair; they said the allowance of bread was abated from fourteen to ten ounces a day, and even the horse-flesh was putrid. Thirty horses were slain and cured with gunpowder; and the resolution of the garrison, or however of its officers, was taken, to die but never to surrender. The cannon of the besiegers slew many, but now the bloody flux slew more. In the midst of these horrible details it is a relief to the jaded spirits to read that "on the fast day a collection was ordered by the parliament for the poor people

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1648.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1648.

who are come out of Colchester.” Within the city the horrors still increased; and the cries of the women and children and of the poorer of the inhabitants were heartrending. The deserters reported on the 19th of August that all the dogs and cats and most of the horses were already eaten. The women, frenzied with hunger and their children’s cries, crowded to lord Goring and clamoured for relief. Maddened himself, he told them they must eat their children: the women answered with a riot, and the threat of putting out his eyes. Hitherto the women and children, forbidden to pass the besieging camp, had been permitted to remain in Colchester; but five hundred women were thrust out of the town a few days after this affair. They rushed towards the camp of the puritans; and colonel Rainsborough, whose regiment they approached, hesitating between humanity and policy, ordered them to be received with a discharge of blank cartridges. But noise and smoke were impotent; and the women still pressed forwards. Unwilling to shed their blood, he commanded the soldiers to strip them naked. The threat was enough, and the wretched creatures immediately retired. The governor refused to re-admit them, and they crouched in a body around the walls, and lay for some days beneath a sheltering canopy of smoke and flame and the incessant hail of shot and bullets. Yet even there their lot was enviable; for within the walls there were only the agonies of hunger and despair. On the 22nd August a trooper and his horse were killed beneath the walls.

Their frightful necessity impelled the citizens to attempt the rescue of the hideous prize: they came out to secure the dead carcass and perished by the muskets of the besiegers. The next day others returned and cut off pieces of the flesh to satisfy their hunger. At length suffering had reached its utmost limits; the people of the town joined by the common soldiers resolved to mutiny. The gates were thrown open, and on the 28th of August Colchester at last surrendered. As the besiegers entered in triumph they were awed and subdued by the sadness of the spectacle, and tears ran down their iron cheeks. The city was a ruin; the inhabitants were ghastly spectres; at every step they were surrounded with some fresh tokens of misery, desolation, and despair. It would have been magnanimous at least to have closed the war with an example of forbearance. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Fairfax knew the precept, but he failed to practise it. It was resolved to make an example of two of the commanding officers: and sir Charles Lucas and sir George Lisle were told to prepare for instant death. They were led out and shot the same day, and died like brave men in a righteous cause. Lucas fell first; Lisle ran up to his dead body, and embraced and kissed it: then, after kneeling down and offering a short prayer, he rose with a cheerful look, and addressing his executioners requested them to come nearer. "I'll warrant you, sir," said one of the soldiers, "we will hit you." "Friends," he

CHAPTER
IV.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1648.

CHAPTER
IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1648.

answered with a smile, “ I have been nearer to you when you missed me ;” and in an instant he fell dead by his companion’s side.* Lord Goring escaped to France ; Capel was spared, but only for a more formidable death in Palace yard.

Fairfax had the reputation of great humanity ; and it is said in his behalf that he was urged on by Ireton, who was with him, to these excesses. But in truth he seems to have felt but few compunctions. In his letter to the parliament he says “ he had taken this satisfaction as due to military justice, and to avenge the innocent blood of which they had been guilty, and the mischief they had brought on the town, country, and kingdom ;” and “ he desires that God may have the glory of his multiplied mercies.” In a resolute soldier this may perhaps create no surprise : it is more painful to remember that Dr. Owen was chaplain to Fairfax, and that he saw in these proceedings nothing to censure, nothing to condemn. He preached before the troops on the day of thanksgiving after the fall of Colchester, and his sermons are in print. If we exclude Owen and the men who would have acted as he did from the list of good and great men, the roll of English worthies of that generation will be written in a narrow space : yet we suppose no man now reads these specimens of prejudice and passion without a sigh. Owen’s indignation against oppression was great. “ Arguments for persecution,” he says, “ have been dyed in the blood of christians for a long

* Clarendon, book xi. p. 178. Whitelocke, pp. 320, 329.

season. Suppose you saw in one view all the blood of the witnesses which has been shed on false pretences; that you heard in one voice the doleful cry of all pastorless churches, dying martyrs, harbourless children of parents inheriting the promises, wilderness-wandering saints, dungeoned believers,—perhaps it would make your spirits tender as to this point.” Then he seems to change his note: he revels in the scenes where Englishmen had plunged their weapons into each other upon English soil; he exults in fields of blood. When a tribe for its transgressions was cut off from Israel, the victors returned home with lamentations and in tears; they came into the house of God and lift up their voices and wept sore.* Owen displays another spirit; and when Colchester is taken he is only jubilant with praise. “God came from Naseby, and the Holy One from the west. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise; he went forth in the north, and in the east he did not withhold his hand.”† When the moral sense of Owen was thus perverted, how depraved must have been the conscience and how blunt the feelings of a common soldier!

But the wisest and best men regarded these proceedings, and still more the temper they revealed, with unfeigned alarm. Could a nation be regenerated by an assembly so unwise as the parliament and so unscrupulous? Could religion be purified in the hands of a barbarous soldiery?

* Judges, xxi. 2.

† Orme, Life of Owen, p. 63, &c.

CHAPTER

IV.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1648.

Were these the instruments that God employs, except when he moves in wrath? Such were the misgivings of thousands of the puritans. The war was at an end; the puritan cause had triumphed; but the prospect of a lasting settlement was uncertain and remote both in church and state. Piety was on the wane, and divisions were increasing fearfully even amongst themselves.

CHAPTER V.

THE war at length concluded. The king himself requested the few brave garrisons which still held out for him to consult their safety and surrender on their own conditions. The Scotch army at Newark gave up their royal prisoner to commissioners from the English parliament; receiving in return two hundred thousand pounds, their arrears of pay, and engaging to return home. The storm was lulled, though soon to break out again; and we take advantage of the interval to describe the state of religion amongst the puritans at so critical a juncture.

CHAPTER
V.
CHAS. I.
A. D. 1646—8.

The evils of civil war, however justifiable the war may be, are tremendous. While it continues the foundations of the earth are out of course, and when it closes society is in a state of dissolution; a shifting sand tossed and whirled round with the slightest breeze. With the multitude every principle is unsettled, for every principle has been by turns in triumph and in disgrace. Power has been in many hands, and the possession of power suggests the opportunity of using it. The restraints of law and conscience have been relaxed; ambition in the great, and vanity in the least, have been largely gratified. Projects

CHAPTER

V.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1646—8.

of a good not to be attained on earth have been indulged : and the disappointment of the successful party, its internal quarrels and vexations, are now in proportion to the greatness of its triumphs. The causes of the war in England were both religious and political : consequently these evils shewed themselves both in religion and in civil politics. In religion the Laudian system had been in fault, because it obscured the simplicity of divine truth, and because it forbad inquiry. In politics the great fault had been in the ruling party, a blind and servile imitation of the past, with a preposterous reliance upon the right of kings as of something unquestionably divine and absolute. Each of these errors generated its own extreme upon the other side. From the semipopery of the Laudians and the slavish prostration it demanded, the rebound was into antinomianism and the contempt of all church discipline whatever. So in politics, from the divine right of kings and the doctrine of passive obedience, grew the dogmas of republicans and levellers. The extravagance which appeared at the close of the war was the legitimate offspring of the violence by which it had been preceded. When, for instance, the superstitions of Laud and his party were exposed with respect to the sacraments, there would be a probability beforehand, amounting to conviction, that multitudes of sincere undisciplined minds would rush into the contrary extreme and depreciate the sacraments altogether. The absolute and divine authority of Charles to govern as

he liked being once disposed of, it was equally probable again that men would deny the divine authority, and even the utility, of civil government under any form whatever. The absurd excesses of opinion which now appeared were indeed nourished by the war, as exotics in a hotbed; but the seeds had been transplanted from another soil. The distractions of the times now suspended the restraints of church discipline; opinions monstrous and prodigious started up every day, and were broached with impunity in public and in private, and multitudes were led astray. The number of new sects, religious and political, with which England swarmed appears almost incredible. The sober puritans were confounded. The state of England reminded them of the fabulous description of the sands of Lybia, where scorching suns produce new monsters every year.

Antinomianism was the most grievous error of the times. It was both religious and political; it was, in fact, the parent of the rest. In religion it set aside the law of God; in politics it denied the authority of all human institutions. If the Laudian principles represent the doctrines of abject slavery,—antinomianism, its rival in extravagance, represents with equal truth man in a state of endless uncontrolled rebellion. The contrast is instructive: the Laudian doctrines subdued the worshipper by obliging him to defer to the church and to antiquity; the antinomian scheme accomplished the same end by the promise of a boundless liberty from all restraints whatever. The

CHAPTER
V.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646—8.

CHAPTER

V.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1646—8.

Laudians silenced reason by an appeal to authority ; the antinomians by an appeal to the sentiments and feelings of each individual. The Laudian party forced on the dissolution of civil government by their preposterous demands of passive obedience ; as if the people were made for the government, not the government for the people. The political antinomians would, if successful, have brought about the same catastrophe, though in another way. They taught that since God imposed no law, man's law could be nothing else than usurpation. For how could it be allowed that man should exercise a power which his Maker had renounced ; and why should he be bound on earth who was already loosed in heaven ; made obedient to man's law, who was not amenable to the law of God ? The proposition from which the antinomians set out in theology was this : " That God neither does, nor can, nor will, see any sins in these times in any of his justified children." " Since the death of Christ upon the cross, sin itself, its guilt and punishment, are so utterly abolished that there is now no sin in the church of God, and God now sees no sin in us." In these very words they state their confession of faith, with this anathema subjoined : " Whosoever believeth not this point robbeth this time (the gospel dispensation) of her glory, and Christ of the full efficacy of his blood, and is undoubtedly damned."* Wild as these opinions

* Quoted from the works of Dr. Crisp, Randall, Simpson, and Lancaster, the antinomian leaders, by Gataker, in his " God's Eye on his Israel," &c. 1645.

may seem, they were sustained by a considerable shew of argument and by an appeal to scripture. They still linger in obscure congregations, chiefly among the anabaptists, by some of whom they were at first espoused. In general we denounce them with abhorrence, or speak of them in these days with mere contempt. It may be questioned whether our conduct is wise in this respect. The great puritans certainly took another course. The learned Gataker bent all his powers to the subject, for even his own congregation was infected, and answered the antinomian leaders as Hooker answered Cartwright; with the same profound love of truth, the same ponderous and varied learning, the same gentle spirit, (while his adversaries shrouded themselves in invectives and abuse,) and the same devoted adherence to evangelical doctrine, which he shewed to be as much opposed to formalism on the one hand as to these excesses on the other.

The clergy, who had suffered much from the Laudians in asserting the doctrines of grace, were astonished to hear the charges of popery, will-worship, and ignorance of the gospel clamorously urged against themselves. Their faith, they were told, was dead; they were protestants in name, but in the main points of salvation they were papists; lispng in speech and limping in practice; sliding back to the legal teaching of the old testament in promising rewards to the followers of righteousness and threatening punishment to transgressors: they mingled the law and

CHAPTER

V.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1646—8.

?

?

'

CHAPTER the gospel together, and thus they overthrew the
 V. gospel and all the benefits of it.*

CHAS. I. Under these and similar charges still more
 A.D. 1646—8. bitterly expressed this accusation was conveyed :
 namely, that the puritan clergy taught the neces-
 sity of obedience to the moral law not as a con-
 dition of salvation, but as an evidence of grace.
 According to the antinomians, this was a great
 injustice and no slight indignity to the church of
 Christ : nothing but their own language can do
 full justice to their absurdity. The teachers of
 the old puritan doctrine, they say, “ bring forth a
 rod to whip, if she tread her foot a little awry,
 the bride in her marriage attire, the queen in her
 royal robes ; they pull the wedding garment off
 over the bride’s head, and put on her a mourning
 garment of blows ; stripping the queen and bride,
 and making her stand naked to be whipped with
 rods of crosses and afflictions at her marriage
 feast.”† Disgusted with this extravagance, the
 reader will perhaps conclude that antinomianism
 was but another name for sin ; an hypocritical
 pretext for a vicious life. And that such is its
 tendency no reasonable man will doubt ; but there
 is a vitality in the doctrines of the cross which,
 however they may be mangled and distorted, they
 never lose entirely. As a body, the antinomians
 after all were not immoral ; their leaders were not
 men of impure lives ; some of them, with con-
 fused heads, were guileless as infants. The disease
 which disturbed the understanding did not reach

* Dr. Crisp’s Honeycombe, &c., in Gataker, as before.

† Ibid.

the heart. Dr. Crisp himself, the founder or at least the apostle of the sect, was such an one.*

Of a wealthy family, he declined preferment, and spent a plentiful estate in christian hospitality: he gave himself wholly to the preaching of the word and the most laborious duties of the ministry; his life and conduct were unblameable, and his household was, even amongst puritans, religious and exact. He is described as meek lowly and affectionate. Whatever the tendency of his writings might have been, the force of his example put the best construction on them, and, while he was alive, corrected to a great extent the mischiefs they have since produced. He was fond of expressions which alarm and paradoxes which astonish; and yet a person skilled in theology will perceive that many of his statements are capable of a sound interpretation. But they misled the ignorant and occasioned grievous errors. These, however, in a religious age, were congenial to the taste of multitudes, who, without casting off religion, were anxious to get rid of its restraints. And this is still the character of antinomianism: it comprehends men of weak intellects, who are often sincerely pious; men of perverted reason, but sound in practice; and with these, a clamorous and noisy host to whom religion is a mere name if not a mask,—a delusion to themselves if not a deception upon others.

It was in the army these opinions had their strongest hold: here their connection with politics

* Life of Crisp. Brook, Lives of the Puritans, vol. ii. p. 471.

CHAPTER V. was openly avowed; and here it was, nursed in a camp and taught its first lessons amidst the din of arms, that a fierce sectarianism, hitherto unknown, arose. The army at the conclusion of the war represented not only the military prowess but the intellectual bravery of England. Of its original soldiery (for it was now swollen by deserters from the king's army who were of another stamp) there was scarcely one who did not think himself capable of a supreme command: and to do them justice, says lord Clarendon, there were few who were not capable; they were equal to their own high ambition. It was the policy of Cromwell and his party to disengage the army from the presbyterians, and for this end to encourage the utmost freedom of discussion, and to countenance, or however to connive at, each new fancy which might serve to engage attention for the moment. Cromwell, prescient of his greatness and conscious of his power, trusted implicitly to the future, not doubting that he should one day be able to reorganize this unruly chaos, and, when it had served his purpose, reduce it to subjection. The assembly of divines was in great distress at these irregularities, and remonstrated against the proceedings of the army to the house of commons. The house of commons saw the danger and made an effort to restrain it. It passed an ordinance by which it forbid lay-preaching in the army; but the army and the lay-preachers treated the ordinance, and we may add the presbyterian divines and the assembly too, with merciless contempt.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1646—8.

In the jeering language of the camp, presbyters, divines, and assembly-men were transformed into *military Levites, priestbiters, dryvines, and dissembly men.** The confusion was indescribable, and in spiritual things the insubordination was complete. Never did an army present so strange a sight. Between the soldier and the man there was no sameness. The soldier was moral, valiant, and perfectly obedient; the man, a prompt disciple if not a teacher of discord, insolence, and anarchy; and yet the soldier and the man was equally sincere; the soldier had no more intention of disobeying orders than the man had of submitting to authority. It was a singular spectacle and full of contradiction; and to those who love the study of mankind, and can profit by it, its interest is profound. Some argued for a democracy in the state; others, or rather the same men at another time, for a democracy in the church; sometimes they argued against forms of prayer, and sometimes against infant baptism; sometimes against set times of prayer or the discharge of any religious duty except at the suggestion of the Holy Spirit; sometimes in favour of free-will and sometimes against it; and so through all the points of antinomianism and arminianism. But, towering above all this, liberty of conscience was their frequent and most angry thesis. Here, they denied the right of the civil magistrate to interfere; every man might not only hold and preach, but, in matters of religion, he might practise what he pleased—a doc-

CHAPTER
V.
CHAS. I.
A. D. 1646.—8.

* Baxter, Life, part i. p. 51.

CHAPTER
V.
CHAS. I.

A.D. 1646—S.

trine the truth of which turns upon what is meant by matters of religion. It is capable of a safe and wise construction, or of being perverted so as to countenance the foulest morals or the most audacious tyranny. It seems to set the subject free from control whenever he may think fit to plead the rights of conscience. Before the proposition can be assented to, these rights of conscience must, then, be carefully defined. Baxter, who was at this time with the army, tells us that the men who reasoned thus were “fierce with pride and self-conceitedness.” Their doctrine filled him with alarm: “it struck me to the very heart, and made me feel that England was lost by those whom it had taken for its chiefest friends.”* In a paper of proposals offered to the parliament in the name of fifteen regiments, the opinions of the army upon this point are expressed thus: “Matters of religion and God’s worship are not at all entrusted to any human power, because therein we cannot admit or exceed a tittle of what our consciences dictate to be the mind of God without wilful sin. Nevertheless, the public way of instructing the nation (so it be not compulsive) is referred to the parliament’s discretion.” This paper was presented in November, 1647.† Thus explained, the feelings of the army scarcely justify Baxter’s extreme alarm.

There was one sect more dangerous than all the rest, and the Jesuits it was supposed had set them on. Their rapid growth and sudden maturity, the extravagance of their opinions, the incon-

* Life, &c., part i. pp. 51—55.

† Whitlocke, p. 278.

sistency of their doctrines with each other and with all government civil or religious, their union, their violence bordering on ferocity, all seemed to indicate the presence of jesuitical intrigue. These were the levellers so called a few years afterwards, who, though severely punished, tormented Cromwell through his life. They declaimed at first upon all those doctrines which are in dispute between the jesuits and dominicans, the arminians and calvinists. Then they cried down the English translation of the scriptures and derided its authority. All orders of the ministry in England, and all its churches, episcopalian, presbyterian, and independent, were denounced. They vilified public worship, especially singing psalms, and family devotions. They were vehement against the king and against all forms of government except democracy. They denied the right of magistrates to intermeddle in religion, and yet they trusted more to intrigue and scorn and the power they possessed in consequence of Cromwell's favour than to argument. They disputed fiercely on the slightest opposition, and seemed ready to draw their swords on the instant upon their opponents. They were ambitious of command, and always contrived to displace those with whose promotion they were dissatisfied, and to fill the vacancy with one of their own party.* These men were the dregs of a revolution; turbulent and clamorous but comparatively few in number. In the army they were chiefly confined to one regiment, indeed

* Baxter, *Life*, part i. p. 55.

CHAPTER
V.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646—8.

to one troop of horse, of which Bethell was the captain. He fell at the storming of Bristol, and but for the countenance of Cromwell the cause of the levellers might have perished with him: it spread to some extent and was eagerly embraced by the most ignorant of the populace of London and a few great towns. But in England the management of the revolution never for an instant descended to the mob. The injury done by the levellers was confined to the disgrace they brought upon their cause, and the condign punishment they brought upon themselves.

Amongst the wildest and most wicked of the sects there were some who denied the existence of a God, and others who maintained with the Greek sophists that the deity pervaded everything, and that in fact they were gods themselves. There was a class that believed that every dream was an inspiration from above, and another which taught with Mahomet that women had no souls.*

Besides these there was a host of other sectaries, whose number was not great and whose names have well-nigh perished. The old sects ripened on a sudden, and under new names displayed a new existence. The anabaptists, the brownists, and the family of love, revived. The socinians now first appeared as a body, and they spread rapidly. The seekers and behmenites and perfectionists headed that large class of mystics who generally infest the church in troublous times. The Westminster assembly issued a declaration touching

* Sewell's Hist. of the People called Quakers, p. 11.

heresies and errors, in which they condemn the following prevalent opinions amongst others : viz., —that the scriptures are not of divine authority ; that the deity has a bodily shape ; that there is no trinity of persons ; that the moral law is not the rule of life ; that there is no church, or sacrament, or sabbath ; and that the soul of man is mortal, sleeping with the body till the day of judgment. In the same paper they condemn the arminian doctrine of Dr. Hammond and John Goodwin, namely, that Christ died for the sins of all mankind, and also their doctrine of free-will.* Besides these there were the students of Overton's Martin Marpriest and the disciples of John Lilburn. Overton seems to have taught that the office of the christian ministry was a priestcraft, and Lilburn that civil government was a tyranny. For all these sects a generic term was wanted. It was readily supplied, and they were called malignants against the ministry. Hitherto malignant had been the name of reproach for a royalist ; it was now transferred to the sectaries, because these were supposed to be infected with the same malignity in matters of religion as the royalists in matters of civil liberty. But after all, these men of every name, though turbulent, were comparatively few. Baxter, we have seen, viewed their progress with alarm, and he afterwards wrote against them with great severity in a tract which he entitles, " One Sheet for the Ministry against the Malignants of all sorts." We may therefore accept his statement of their numbers with some

CHAPTER
V.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646—8.

* Neale, vol. iii. p. 305.

CHAPTER V.
 CHAS. I.
 A.D. 1646—8.

degree of confidence. He admits that one half of the army was untainted ; of the other half a moiety was sound though confused in judgment. A fourth part of the army, then, or a body of about five thousand men, remains—the “ malignants of all sorts.” Through the kingdom the proportion was probably much less. It was, we suspect, rather the suddenness of the evil than its extent that excited so much alarm. Five thousand armed fanatics, it is true, has a formidable sound ; but these men were in the presence of fifteen thousand fellow-soldiers, and the whole were governed by the strong hand of Cromwell. When Baxter wrote against them, ten years later, it is evident that contempt, and not apprehension, was uppermost in his mind. “ Blind wretches !” he exclaims, “ it is the devil’s game they play, and his interest and kingdom they promote. Wretches ! you shall shortly see your master, and he will pay you your wages contrary to your expectation.”* He enumerates the quakers amongst other malignants ; and the reader may sigh as he reflects that the saintly Baxter was so far behind one class at least of his opponents in charity and christian love.

The rise of Quakerism and the personal history of its founder George Fox belong to this period. The most original minds are moulded to some extent by the times in which they live ; and the institutions which astonish us most by their seeming novelty trace their parentage to the circumstances amongst which they first

* “ One Sheet against the Malignants of all sorts,” by Richard Baxter, Kiderminster, 1657.

appeared. England had been stunned for twenty years with religious polemics. The forms of church government,—presbyterianism and prelacy, the claims of the independents and the clamours of the sectaries, the respective rights of the pastors and the people,—were discussed in every pulpit; they distracted every parish and every house. The din was incessant, and it is surprising that true religion was not deafened by the clamour. But while piety and a right sense of the importance of what is real in religion continued to exist, those who were beneath its influence must have deplored the infatuation which diverted good men from whatever was most important; fixing their attention upon the accidents and circumstances rather than upon the true work of the church of Christ; upon the mode of its existence rather than the great ends for the sake of which its existence is decreed. Such were some of the anxieties of George Fox. In appearance he was a simple youth in humble circumstances, remarkable from his youth for strict veracity and a solitary life. At twenty his relations would have had him married; but he replied he was but a lad and must get wisdom. They urged him to join the parliamentary army; but though the bravest man in England perhaps, if moral courage is bravery, he detested the business of a soldier. Far other thoughts possessed his mind. He had been religiously educated by puritan parents of the church of England, and he was now awakening to the consideration of his eternal state. A

CHAPTER

V.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1646—8.

CHAPTER V.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646—8.

young man of one-and-twenty, aroused to the contemplation of his future being, and withdrawn, by the instant pressure of a world unseen, from the opening charms of life and its joyous prospects, presents a scene of moral grandeur with which the man who is unaffected must rank amongst the depraved or the brutish of his kind. With these reflections young Fox was totally absorbed; he knew that he was a sinner, and he wanted the assurance of forgiveness; he felt his ignorance, and he sought instruction. In the pursuit of his business, for he was a shoemaker, and hoping, too, to meet with some wise adviser, he travelled from town to town, still seeking rest and finding none. He went to London in this miserable state; he found great professors there, but their understandings, he thought, were much darkened. He visited Coventry, which was full of the puritan clergy who had fled there for safety in the war, but they could give him no assistance. He returned to Drayton, his native place, and told his sorrows to "the priest;" for so in derision the minister was named by the new sect, and the church they called "a steeple-house." The puritan was struck with his scriptural knowledge and with the justice of his sentiments, the substance of which, he said, he would embody in his next sermon; "for which," says his simple-minded biographer, "George did not like him." He removed to Mancetter in Warwickshire, where he again consulted an aged priest, the minister of the place, to whom he discoursed upon the grounds

of his despair and the nature of his temptations. "The priest bid him take tobacco and sing psalms ; but George signified he did not like tobacco, and as for psalms he was not in a state to sing."* Thus he roamed about, passing much of his time in the lonely mountains of Derbyshire : his troubles and temptations still continued ; he fasted much ; he walked abroad in solitary places with his bible for his companion ; he sat down in hollow trees and lonesome places till night came on ; and frequently in the night he walked mournfully about surrounded with many sorrows—the deepest of all sorrows, the sorrows of a wounded spirit. When he came to a town, he hired a chamber to himself, and tarried sometimes for a month, seldom longer ; for he was afraid of the conversation of the world. His dress was of leather, partly for its simplicity, and because such a clothing was strong and needed but little mending or repairing. He joined no church, and he revered no priest. For a while he sought instruction from the sectaries, but he soon discovered that none of them could help him. Still he continued to read his bible in solitude with many prayers and tears.

At length, when he had ceased to look for assistance from man, a light from heaven broke in upon his soul. His faithful disciple † thus relates the change : "When all his hopes in men were gone, then he heard, according to what he relates himself, a voice which said, there is one,

* Sewell's History of the People called Quakers, pp. 8—12.

† Ibid, p. 13.

CHAPTER V. even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition. He having heard this, his heart leapt for joy ; and it was shewed him why there was none upon the earth that could speak to his condition, namely, that he might give the Lord alone all the glory, and that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence. He then, experimentally knowing that Christ enlightens man, and gives him grace, faith, and power, his desires after the Lord, and his zeal in the pure knowledge of God, grew stronger ; so that he wished to increase therein without the help of any man, book, or writing. Yet he was a diligent reader of the holy scriptures, that speak at large of God and Christ ; though he knew him not but by revelation ; as he who had the key did open.”

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646—8.

He now entered upon his mission, which, according to his own perception of it, was simple and sublime. It rested upon one idea, the greatest that can penetrate the mind of man : God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Pure religion in its essence is the contemplation and adoration of God. This is the religion of angels. Besides this everything is accidental. It pertains to the form and not to the substance of religion ; it will disappear ere long when the earth shall pass away ; the substance will survive throughout eternity. This is quakerism, and these were the doctrines of George Fox. But he went still further. With him all forms were superstitions, even the sacraments of Christ. He saw the best

men of his times pursuing two separate objects, which appeared to them indeed to be the same, but betwixt which his penetrating intellect was at no loss to discover a mighty chasm. The one was the glory of God ; the other was the setting up of some idol of their own, some model of immaculate church government. It was neither the splendour nor the corruptions of prelacy that disgusted him, for they were not in existence. Quakerism opposed itself at first to priests and steeple-houses, when ministers wore a Genevan gown and preached extempore, and when the prayer-book was banished from the parish church. Its early quarrel was not with liturgies and organs, but with the somewhat bald simplicity of presbyterian worship. George Fox perceived in this something that he thought unworthy of the divine nature ; and yet good men were struggling for it as for life itself. To-day the minister in the pulpit set forth with heavenly warmth the doctrines of salvation ; but to-morrow he declaimed with equal fervour against some rival sect, or perhaps in favour of his own. The effect upon many minds was to question the preacher's sincerity in both instances alike. But Fox drew this conclusion ; that religion was hampered by the institutions of man, and that all religious institutions which then existed were purely human. They were carnal ordinances ; they were contrivances that debased religion ; they detained the soul from its highest privilege, immediate fellowship with God ; they immured the believer amongst the tombs with those possessed of devils

CHAPTER

V.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1646—8.

CHAPTER

V.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1646—8.

and unclean spirits, when he ought, with Moses and Elijah, to stand on the mount rejoicing in the presence of his Lord; and though some of them might seem to be warranted by an express command and by the Saviour's practice, still the real meaning of the scriptures, when rightly understood, was opposed to their continuance. Origen silenced the voice of scripture in early times by forcing it to speak in allegories; and Fox accomplished the same end with regard to the sacraments and the institutions of a church, by spiritualizing its meaning. Spiritual worship was the one idea to which everything must bend.

Fox began his ministry at Manchester, in 1648. He gained a few converts, who accepted him as their leader and followed him from town to town. He still continued to spend much of his time in solitude and prayer; he spoke mysteriously; and, if we accept Paley's definition of insanity, as an incapacity of distinguishing between impressions on the mind and impressions on the senses, he was not altogether free from this disease. He heard voices in his breast, and he saw visions in the sky. He had revelations in his dreams by night, and secret intimations of the mind and purposes of heaven by day. Wherever he went he denounced sin with the authority of a prophet, and he met with a prophet's reward. He was reviled, whipped, imprisoned. In return he declaimed against priests and steeple-houses, and courted persecution by interrupting public worship and contradicting the minister before his

congregation. He entered Nottingham one Sunday morning, and as he looked down from the neighbouring hill upon the great church, he felt, he says, that it was required of him to cry against that idol temple and the worshippers therein. The preacher in his sermon taught the people that all doctrines, religions, and opinions were to be tested by the written word. Hearing this, Fox cried out, "Oh no, it is not the scripture, but it is the Holy Spirit by which the holy men of God gave forth the scriptures, whereby opinions, religions, and judgments are to be tried. This it was that led into all truth and the knowledge thereof."* A dangerous error as well as a great indecency; for if this doctrine were correct, our last appeal on doubtful questions would be, not to the bible, but to ourselves—not to the written word, authenticated as it is by miracles and prophecy, and bearing on every page the signature of God, but to those unauthenticated impressions on the mind which each private christian may consider to be divine. Fox was seized and immediately imprisoned in the common jail, and would have suffered from the fury of the people; but fortunately colonel Hutchinson was at that time the governor of Nottingham castle: he dispersed the crowd, who would have destroyed quakerism in the bud together with its founder, with a troop of soldiers.† Fox was at length released and immediately renewed his uncouth ministry at Woodhouse, entering the church and declaring the

CHAPTER
V.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646—8

* Sewell, p. 21.

† Mrs. Hutchinson, Memoirs, p. 226.

CHAPTER

V.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1646—8.

truth, as he believed, to the priest and people. The congregation fell upon him, and beat him with their hands, sticks, and bibles; they then dragged him to the stocks and assembled round him with their horsewhips. But the magistrates interfered and released him with many threatenings. The rude people had their revenge, however, and stoned him out of the town. At Market-Bosworth he was stoned again. At Twycross an infuriate man rushed on him with a naked sword. "Alas! poor creature," he exclaimed, "what wilt thou do with thy carnal weapon, which is no more to me than a straw;" and the man dropped his sword at once. At Derby he was committed to prison for blasphemy; and here he lay for a year and a half, issuing from his cell solemn warnings against oppressors, and letters of advice and consolation to his friends. When he was released, quakerism had taken firm root in England, the dynasty of Cromwell was at hand, and under him religious persecution ceased.

Meanwhile the independents were gradually rising into power, and the presbyterians were to the same extent losing it. The elections which took place at the close of the war gave the independents a large majority in the house of commons; and at the same time, in contempt of the self-denying ordinance, restored many of the officers of the army to seats in that assembly. All of these were opposed to the presbyterians, whom the revolution had now left behind. Many of them were Cromwell's private friends. At this period

we take leave of the presbyterian party. They now cease to be important, absorbed in other sects or driven from the field. Yet we cannot see them retire without a strong feeling of respect. They failed, indeed, because they were at once rash and timid. They created an appetite for change which they were afraid to gratify. By overthrowing episcopacy they alienated the moderate men; by refusing to overthrow the regal institutions they disappointed the violent; and there was no considerable party between these two on whom to rest; for the friends of presbyterianism, those who would have thought it worth a revolution to establish a presbytery, were few indeed. Thus presbyterianism fell by aiming at once at too little and too much. A less scrupulous party might have been more successful, a less honest one might have been more secure. Yet we should be unjust to withhold the praise which is due to the men who once had the moulding of the religion of England in their hands. They were as free from personal ambition, at least in its baser forms, as any great party of laymen or ecclesiastics has ever been; they were zealous for religion; their clergy preached and laboured in their parishes with a warmth and an ability, and frequently with a success, that has not often been surpassed; the parliament in the most anxious periods of the war had never forgotten the spiritual wants of the country. The house of commons in 1645 voted an inquiry into the state of religion and the best methods of promoting it: a committee

CHAPTER
V.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646-8.

CHAPTER V. was ordered, and it seems to have pursued its task with diligence.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646—8.

In the midst of the political storm which shook it to its centre, there were times when the presbyterian parliament exhibited a sublime repose. Its solemn fasts and its days of thanksgiving were frequently and fervently observed; and all other cares were lost, as far as the penetration of man could see, in the discharge of those acts of piety which are due to God. Besides the stated fast, every enterprise was preceded by its day of deep humiliation. Every victory was celebrated with thanksgivings. Not only the greater battles, but the sieges of castles and private houses, as one by one they fell into the hands of the parliamentary forces — Bristol, Belvoir castle, Lathom-house, and Basing-house—were devoutly acknowledged with a national thanksgiving. The proceedings of the Westminster assembly were carefully reviewed from day to day; and the most urgent public business was suspended to discuss a new version of the psalms in metre, or to prevent the circulation of an incorrect translation of the bible. No pains were spared to fill vacant benefices with pious ministers. The difficulty was great and many parishes were grievously neglected. To a great extent this was inevitable. If the parish minister was a puritan, he fled or was imprisoned when the royalists approached; if he was an episcopalian, the same thing happened when the parliament's army made its appearance. Many pulpits were vacant, many parishes relapsed into

barbarism and heathen ignorance. The parliament rigidly enforced the covenant, and this increased its difficulties. It obliged the new incumbents, as well as the new members of the house of commons, to embrace it; thus excluding many upright men from the service of the country both in church and state. Still, neglect of the interests of religion cannot be charged upon the presbyterians while they held the reins of power in England. They did not encourage an ignorant or an idle ministry; they did not permit a scandalous life.

CHAPTER
V.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646—8.

The condition of the church of England was at this time deplorable. Throughout the war episcopalians had been regarded as the enemies of the popular cause and treated accordingly. War calculates roughly, and takes no account of lesser differences. The church of England was already divided into those two parties which under the designation of high and low church still continue. There were the Laudians on the one hand, and the church puritans on the other. In their reverence for episcopacy and their love for the institutions of the book of common prayer they had a common bond; in their views of christian doctrine they had a mutual quarrel. The Laudians connected justification with the sacraments; the church puritans with faith alone. The Laudians delighted in the pomp and glitter with which, in submission to the tastes and passions of queen Elizabeth, the reformers had consented to invest it; the church puritans regarded these outward

CHAPTER
V.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1646—8.

splendours with jealousy, as savouring of the church of Rome. The Laudians had long enjoyed the favour of the court, and devoted themselves to the support of its prerogative. The church puritans had dwelt for nearly a century beneath its frown, and were little anxious to extend its power. In 1642, when the revolution opened, they filled the house of commons; yet in 1648, when the war had come to an end, they were to be found, so far as they were yet a party, upon the side of the king. And yet they had little confidence in Charles, or he in them. They deplored his errors; he blamed their want of zeal in his service. The ground of their attachment to the king was quaintly but very well expressed by the old knight who charged his sons never to desert the crown, though the crown should hang upon a holly-bush. It was a high tribute to the integrity of the leaders of this party, that they received alternately from the king and parliament the homage both of ill usage and respect. They were the true reformers of the age, in religion and in politics. They saw the wants of the times and would have redressed them; and had not the infatuation of the court and the frenzy of the people driven them from power, they would probably have settled the nation very nearly on the basis of the revolution of 1688. The miseries of a civil war, the insolence of Cromwell, the viler profligacy of Charles II., and the cruelties of his still more despicable brother, might then have been spared to the blushing annals of Great Britain. But this was not the course which He who

rules over the nations of the earth permitted. In the house of commons, church puritanism melted away; we have seen that a great number of its original members forsook their seats and joined the king at Oxford; those who remained renounced episcopacy; they became presbyterians, then independents, or gradually retired from public life. It was so with the clergy: great numbers of those who retained their livings as presbyterians, and even as independents, neither had nor professed any great devotion to either of those systems. They acquiesced in that which seemed to be the national will; they asked themselves not whether these forms of discipline were the best, but simply whether they were lawful. Should they resign their cures, or should they forego episcopacy? It seemed expedient and lawful to remain, and good for the present necessity; and upon this principle they acted. It was thus the great body of the doctrinal or church puritans disappeared, the clergy becoming moderate presbyterians, and their parishioners following their example. In the reformation in the previous century the first generation of the reforming clergy had been Romish priests; so now with scarcely an exception the presbyterian and independent clergy had received episcopal orders. Most of them yielded to the pressure of the times, though some no doubt heartily approved the change.

There were others who, regarding episcopacy and the forms of the church of England with still higher reverence, adhered under peril and discou-

CHAPTER
V.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646—8.

CHAPTER V.
 CHAS. I.
 A.D. 1646—8.

agement to that which they believed to be the only pure and apostolic church. They retained its forms as far as possible, and still made use of its liturgy in public. Many of the clergy exposed their lives, and several lost them, through violence and ill usage, not less fatal than a public execution, in thus resisting the will of the majority, sanctioned as it was by an ordinance of the parliament. Various motives of course prevailed among the clergy who acted in this manner; in some a sentiment of loyalty, in others of devotion. The parson of Hadley was assailed by the populace in his church while reading the service: he drew a stiletto and dared them to the attack. In a different spirit Harrison, the rector of Sandwich, with a file of musketeers drawn up before the pulpit, calmly proceeded in his duty. In his prayer before the sermon, the officer commanded him to come down, but he went on apparently unconcerned. The officer gave the necessary words of command, to make ready, then to present, but perceiving him still unmoved he hesitated to give the last word and commanded the soldiers to go and drag him from the pulpit, which was done at once. He narrowly escaped the fate of Thomas A'Becket, was carried in triumph to the guard-house, and thence to prison.* The curate of Saxton in Yorkshire was reading prayers when some parliamentary soldiers burst into the church: one of them held a pistol to his breast, assailed him with abuse, and swore if he did not immediately desist he would

* Walker's Sufferings, part ii. p. 266.

shoot him dead upon the spot.* Such scenes were not uncommon. Driven at length from public places, the devout services of the prayer-book found a home in many a retired house and upper chamber. Bared of its splendour, episcopacy survived, more precious to churchmen because distressed. The storm gathered round the bishops with the greatest fury, for an archbishop had been Charles's adviser in his worst measures, and the whole order suffered indiscriminately for the vices of its head. The army was clamorous for its pay and the parliament was in want of money. The church lands were now sold, and the bishops' estates and residences. A large sum, upwards of eight hundred thousand pounds, was thus raised, and episcopacy seemed to have perished with this last disaster. A fifth was reserved, but seldom paid, for the support of the ejected bishops. Most of them were royalists, and this was held sufficient to exclude them from the grant. Hall of Norwich, a bishop of apostolic zeal, a saint of primitive piety, was used, the axe excepted, as harshly as Laud himself; imprisoned, plundered, threatened, exposed for weeks to the yells and hootings of an unrestrained and lawless mob, and cast aside to die in poverty, if not in want. Archbishop Ussher was treated with more kindness. He took the negative oath, by which he bound himself not to oppose the existing government, and was permitted to preach at Lincoln's inn. A gleam of generosity softened for a while the bitter-

CHAPTER
V.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1646—8.

* Walker's Sufferings, part ii. p. 412.

CHAPTER

V.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1646—8.

ness of the house of commons ; for a motion for a committee to examine what delinquent ministers preached, or read the book of common prayer, and silence them, “was much opposed by divers, as contrary to that liberty of consciences which they themselves pretended to insist upon as due to every christian.” This was on the twentieth of December, 1647. An amusing circumstance revived within a few days all the presbyterian bigotry. Notwithstanding an ordinance to the contrary, the citizens of London closed their shops, and made holiday on Christmas day ; upon which the houses sat in alarm the same day and empowered a committee to examine and punish the delinquent ministers.*

Jeremy Taylor, for some time in attendance upon the king at Oxford, found a retreat amidst the mountains of South Wales, at the mansion of lord Carbery, whose hospitality he richly recompensed. It was here, amidst congenial scenes and remote from the seat of war, that his ardent spirit, stimulated and soothed by turns, hearing only of battles and seeing only the most glorious handiwork of God, discharged itself in the finest of his gorgeous writings. In many private houses of the royalists the chaplains were retained and the ancient services of the church ; and for some time a number of eminent clergymen were in attendance on the royal armies ; but it was at Oxford only that the church of England still appeared in something of its former dignity. Charles himself was a religious man, especially now that trouble had chastened

* Whitelocke, ii. pp. 85, 86.

him. Of his own court, he was probably the best example, as he was the highest. His habitual duplicity he learned in his cradle; it was a part, and the most important part, of his father's kingdom. He had been taught to consider it right. He practised it without hesitation, without remorse, and, it is to be feared, without repentance. On this one point his conscience was insensible to the last; in other respects he was a virtuous man and his religion was sincere. He was fond of the society of the good and wise, and found more pleasure in strolling through the libraries of Oxford with his chaplains than in the noisy revels of his court; and Sheldon, Sanderson, and Hammond were companions with whom certainly no irreligious man would have wished to live.

But before the court finally broke up at Oxford the seeds of two great evils had been sown which ripened into miserable fruit. The first of these was a new form of vice, hitherto unknown in England. Licentiousness now for the first time began to parade its triumphs, and lust under other names was greeted with applause. The court of James had been coarse, and that of Elizabeth would now be thought indecorous if not indecent; but this new debauchery was unnatural, not practised in secret and with shame, but cultivated as a polite accomplishment. At Oxford was nursed, in defiance of the king's frown and the exhortations of his chaplains, that heartless profligacy which came to a monstrous manhood in the court of Charles II. Of all vices,

CHAPTER

V.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1646-8.

CHAPTER
 V.
 CHAS. I.
 A.D. 1646—8.

those which were thus canonized were the most degrading, and to national happiness the most fatal. Other crimes pollute the army or the senate, this defiles the sanctuary of home: the stream of pollution arises where, against other national crimes, the last barrier is erected. It is of the astonishing mercy of God, and of that alone, that England has recovered from this detested curse without being condemned to pass like other nations through a discipline of fire and blood. This airy, systematic, shameless licentiousness first shewed itself in the royal court at Oxford.*

It was at Oxford too, during the civil war, that a new school of divines appeared, of whom Hammond was the most learned, and Jeremy Taylor the most popular. Between the Laudians and the doctrinal church puritans, it occupied the intermediate space. It avoided some of the errors of both parties, to whom, however, it made ample satisfaction by new errors of its own. It did not push ritualism and the benefit of the sacraments to the extravagant lengths of the Laudians: it avoided two great mistakes, into which many of the church puritans had gradually fallen, namely, that of ultra-calvinism, and of a mode of preaching in which moral duties were rather implied than

* "Divers remarkable passages of the ladies in parliament assembled in 1647." In the Somers tracts. I am ashamed to call attention to this paper, which is a *jeu d'esprit* from the pen of a royalist; but it is necessary to give my authority for the statement I have made above. The Somers tracts are not likely to fall into improper hands, and happily, should they do so, the obscenity would not be understood by those unacquainted with the facts and allusions of the times.

taught. In the new school which now appeared morality was everything; while its views of christian doctrine were vague and indistinct. Its teachers were rather christian philosophers than christian ministers: they taught morality in connection with religion; the great verities of christian doctrine they either did not fully appreciate, or fully understand. Jeremy Taylor alarmed his wiser friends by the wildness of his speculations on the corruption of human nature and the doctrine of original sin. Some remonstrated; Sanderson deplored the errors of his friend with tears.* From this time however carelessness of doctrinal truth degenerated into indifference, and indifference into contempt. The church of England saw in another generation a resolute and in some respects a successful attempt (for the contagion spread far and wide and lasted for a century) to dis sever christian practice from christian doctrine; to teach the one and obliterate the other.

Tillotson was perhaps the best specimen of these divines. The clearness of his intellect, his noble simplicity, his courageous yet modest spirit, must always command respect. But who could gather the doctrines of the gospel from all that Tillotson has left behind him? An admirable system of morals, keen and searching remarks on human nature and practical life, are to be met with; much to instruct and much to edify; but the one thing which his profession called for, and which he was

* Heber's Life of Jeremy Taylor.

CHAPTER

V.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1646—8.

set apart to teach, is carelessly passed over or studiously concealed. The doctrines of the reformation may be recognised, but they are not distinctly enunciated. The gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God may be admitted, but it is not preached. With what effect the substitution of moral philosophy in the place of doctrinal teaching and spiritual piety was attended, the profligacy of the nation after the restoration, and the profound and apathetic irreligion which followed, and which covered England with its gloomy mantle till the accession of George III., bears painful testimony. The experiment was long tried and the result is now inscribed in history. At length we have learned this important lesson, that without true religion there is no true morality.

CHAPTER VI.

THE war had scarcely closed when a military despotism followed. For the long period of thirteen years a puritan army gave its law to England. That ultimate authority which exists in every state, from which there is no higher appeal, was transferred to the army, and there it lay until the ancient constitution, or at least its usages and forms, were revived at the restoration of Charles II. The army was the sovereign, and Cromwell was the favourite; like other favourites, alternately insulted and caressed, and at times supreme, but never in fact allowed to control his masters except by those arts to which a favourite descends. From this period the institutions of the country, the courts of law, the once formidable parliament, and the protector himself at the summit of his pride and greatness, were held in submission to the army. The real power was in the soldiery.

The parliament, which had for some time felt a growing jealousy of the army, was naturally anxious to disband it. The Irish rebellion still continued and had lately broken out with new fury. This supplied a pretext. Twelve thousand troops were ordered to sail for Ireland. Three

CHAPTER
VI.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1647—8.

CHAPTER

VI.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1647—8.

regiments only were retained for service at home, together with the soldiers employed in the few garrisons which it was thought necessary to retain in a military posture. The rest of the army was ordered to be disbanded. At the same time the parliament betrayed its fears of Cromwell and the generals by ordering that no officer above the rank of a colonel should go with the army to Ireland. Its suspicions were not unfounded. "These men," said Cromwell to Ludlow, who sat next to him during one of the debates, "these men will never leave their places till we turn them out by their ears." As a parliament he saw that they were useless ; and the ancient forms of the constitution were not so venerable to him as to induce him to respect them with any traditional superstitions. On receiving these orders the whole army as one man protested against the insult, and resolved neither to disband themselves nor to separate their regiments from each other. They were not hirelings, they said, but citizens ; they were not a band of janissaries ; they neither fought for pay nor plunder, but for the country, for God, and for themselves. The kingdom was still distracted ; no form of government was settled ; the parliament was not supreme ; it derived its authority solely from the people ; they too, no less than the parliament, were the guardians of the people's rights. This was the substance of their message to the house of commons. They appointed two courts : the one a superior court, consisting of the officers of each regiment ; the other

the court of agitators, elected from the private soldiers by themselves, and by these representatives their solemn protestation was carried in due form to Westminster. At first the parliament was disposed to treat the army and its complaints with haughty contempt. It voted them to be mutinous and seditious; and the citizens of London, still faithful to the presbyterian cause and to the house of commons, drew up in common council some insulting resolutions calling for the punishment of a seditious soldiery. Cromwell was often in his seat in parliament, and affected to deplore the disaffection of the army; but he was suspected of fomenting its *disorders* (the mild word now made use of, since *mutinous* became a hazardous expression), and the house of commons had resolved to seize and detain so dangerous a person. The quarrel had now continued for several months; the army growing every day more resolute and the parliament less firm. Twelve months' pay was due; the parliament offered an instalment for the last six weeks. They now levied sixty thousand pounds a month, and they promised this and the spoil of the church lands, in further payment of arrears. The army declared itself dissatisfied. The parliament made a further concession, namely, that the commander-in-chief of the detachment for Ireland should be styled field-marshal, and that their favourite general Skippon should have the post, with colonel Massey for his lieutenant-general. When the parliamentary commissioners repeated this, however, to the army, a universal shout was

CHAPTER
VI.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1647—8.

CHAPTER raised, *Fairfax and Cromwell! and we all go.*
 VI. But Fairfax was not disposed to undertake an in-
 CHAS. I. glorious campaign in Ireland, and Cromwell was
 A.D. 1647—8. engaged in measures which required his presence at Westminster. In June the army, some of the regiments marching without their colours and several troops in great disorder, moved from Triplow heath, near Cambridge, towards London. The impotence of the house of commons appeared at once. On the 3rd of June it passed a hurried vote of ten thousand pounds for the non-commissioned officers, with other concessions; wrote to acquaint the general with what the house had done in pursuance of the desires of the army; implored him to preserve its discipline; and, lastly, razed the declaration in which it had charged the army with a mutinous spirit from its journals. It even carried its obsequiousness so far as to send a message to the lords, entreating them to do the same. The next day a note was delivered to the two houses which overwhelmed them with consternation. The king was at Holmby house, near Nottingham, guarded by commissioners and soldiers of their own. Joyce, a cornet of dragoons, had presented himself with a troop of cavalry before the gates, and was immediately admitted. With a loaded pistol in each hand, he demanded an audience with the king. His majesty had retired for the night; but, after much remonstrance from his servants, Joyce, thus armed, forced his way into his chamber and told his message. Charles re-

ceived him with the calmness which never forsook him in moments of danger and surprise, and promised in the morning to comply with his instructions. The king must go with him. "But where?" said Charles. "To a place where your majesty will be in safety," he replied. "But where is your commission?" said the king. "There," said Joyce, pointing to his troop which was drawn up in the court-yard. The king at once submitted. "Your commission, sir," he said, "has the fairest frontispiece of any that I ever saw: five hundred proper men on horseback." He was conducted the same day to Huntingdon, and was henceforth the army's prisoner. No settlement of the nation could be made, no form of government could be adopted, in which the disposal of the king, in one way or other, was not a consideration of the first importance. This Cromwell understood; and he had, at one stroke, outwitted the parliament and superseded Fairfax. It was from him and his junto that Joyce had received his instructions. Fairfax, the victor in a hundred fights,* had been quietly set aside by his own officers, who had acted in his name but without his knowledge. Cromwell knew the importance of his prize: "Now," he said, unable to conceal his exultation, "I have the king in my hands and I have the house of commons in my pocket."

The army had arrived at St. Albans when the general received instructions from the parliament

* Vicars, England's Worthies, 1647. He gives a list of one hundred and eleven battles, sieges, &c., in which Fairfax had been engaged.

CHAPTER

VI.

CHAS. I.

A D. 1647—8.

to deliver up the king's person and not to approach within forty miles of London. The parliament had now regained courage; for the trainbands were arming in the city, the shops were closed and the apprentices in thousands came down to Westminster to defend the covenant and demand justice upon the seditious army. Fairfax answered in the name of his officers and men, by sending an impeachment of high treason against eleven members of the house of commons, the leaders of the presbyterians, who had been foremost to censure the proceedings of the army. These were Denzil Hollis, sir Philip Stapleton, sir William Lewis, sir John Clotworthy, sir William Waller, sir John Maynard, colonels Massey, Long, and Harley, Mr. Nicholls, and Glyn the recorder of London. The list embraces some of the chief actors up to this time in the revolution, and some of the ablest soldiers in the army which had subdued the king. Having made this demonstration, the army marched to Berkhamstead and proceeded thence to Uxbridge, the king being detained at Hatfield. The parliament was alarmed; the impeached members fled to Calais; but the demands of the army continued to increase. They now insisted upon a reform of the house of commons, a fairer distribution of the elective franchise, and triennial parliaments, and that the right of petition might be cleared from those monstrous abuses,—the assemblage of mobs and their insolence,—with which it was now disgraced. They required that the powers given to the committees of the house (which were per-

fectly tyrannical,) should be regulated and controlled; and that the accounts of the nation, and especially of the vast sums received for confiscated property, should be audited and published; and lastly, "that public justice being satisfied by some few examples of the worst of the excepted persons, a general act of oblivion should be passed, whereby the seeds of future war or the fear of it may be removed." While these proposals were under discussion, the army retired to Aylesbury. The city and the apprentices resumed their courage and became more insolent. Fairfax at once returned to Uxbridge, advanced to Hounslow, and was evidently preparing to march on London. The helpless and distracted condition both of the city and the parliament was again apparent. The earl of Manchester and Lenthall, the speakers of the two houses, accompanied by about sixty members, fled in the night from London, and presented themselves, Lenthall carrying his mace of office, before the general and the camp at Hounslow. They were received with acclamations. The two houses at Westminster however elected new speakers, and the city prepared for a vigorous defence. The presbyterian clergy from their pulpits moved the people to take up arms, and a solemn fast was kept; the fortifications were repaired, the walls bristled with pikes, the gates and the bridge looked formidable with artillery. But there was no heart within; for presbyterian London had now spent itself. The citizens passed the night in their

CHAPTER

VI.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1647—8.

CHAPTER VI.
 CHAS. I.
 A. D. 1647—8.

guildhall, and received every hour by an express fresh tidings of the army. On the report that it halted, their courage revived, and they cried, *One and all! live and die!* Another scout informed them that it was advancing; and they cried as loudly, *Treat and capitulate!* At two o'clock in the morning, colonel Rainsborough and his regiment appeared in Southwark at the foot of London bridge. It was strongly fortified and well guarded; but the soldiers on each side no sooner confronted their old associates than all other considerations vanished. They shook hands as veterans in a common cause and let down the drawbridge. Not a gun had been fired, but London was surrendered. Two days afterwards, on the 7th of August, the army, headed by Fairfax, Cromwell, Hammond, Rich, and Tomlinson, entered London in military pomp. At Hyde-park corner the aldermen offered Fairfax a ewer and basin of gold valued at £1000: he received them coldly and refused their present. At Charing cross the common council were assembled and made obeisance to their invader. The army passed on through the city, but in the highest state of discipline: not a soldier uttered one angry word; there was not an insulting look, not an action or gesture in the conquerors to give the least offence. Fairfax took up his residence in the Tower, of which he assumed the command. The city waited upon him to thank him for his care of London and to invite him to a public dinner. The clergy apologized for their misconduct. The houses of parliament rescinded all their votes

and declared their proceedings void since the day on which the speakers had deserted them. After these proceedings the once dreaded parliament was to all parties an object of indifference, if not of mere contempt. It was of no other use than to register the edicts of the army, and to give a sort of legal utterance to its will.*

But while, since the beginning of the revolution, power had been transferred through many hands and lodged with various parties in succession, upon certain great and leading points one purpose had all along prevailed. Substantially the puritans had differed rather as to the means to be employed than the objects to be attained. In religion at least their aim was always the same; it was to abolish prelaey and establish in its place a national church in accordance more or less with the churches on the continent. Between the presbyterians and the independents the difference was not so much of religion as of politics. Presbyterians feared the democratic tendency of the independent theory; the independents grudged the formidable powers, approaching to a new kind of spiritual star chamber, which the presbyterians claimed for their ecclesiastical courts. Both alike were anxious for a learned ministry. Both alike were anxious for a ministry whose doctrines should be those of the reformation, as expounded by Jewel and Whitgift, by Bullinger and Calvin. It was only the lowest of the sectaries who affected to depreciate learning. The

CHAPTER
VI.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1647—8.

* Clarendon, b. x. pp. 50—60. Whitelocke, pp. 240—266. Ludlow, p. 75.

CHAPTER

VI.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1647—8.

mass of the puritans carried their admiration, perhaps, even too far. The sermons of their greatest divines are encumbered with it, and they ministered, it is evident, to the prevailing taste. It is strange that contempt of literature should be gravely charged upon a party amongst whom Selden talked and Milton flourished; amongst whom Algernon Sidney and sir William Waller were great names; under whose shelter John Howe, little known as yet, already “mewed his mighty youth.” The cares of sacred literature engaged the parliament during the most anxious periods of the war. To-day the tidings of a battle, to-morrow a discussion upon the price to be paid for an ancient manuscript of the new testament, or a grant of books, the richest spoil of Lambeth, to some favourite divine. Attempts were even made to found two new universities. One was actually opened in London, though it soon perished; the other was to have been fixed at Durham, and richly endowed from the property of that wealthy see; but this too failed, and it was left to us of the present generation to revive effectually these noble projects of our puritan forefathers.

The university of Cambridge was from the first in their hands. Cromwell represented the town in parliament, and such was his influence there that Charles’s cause never obtained a footing in the university. A commission was issued early in the war to the earl of Manchester, assisted by commissioners, to investigate abuses in the university, to dispossess malignants, and in short to

remodel Cambridge in accordance with the solemn league and covenant. A large body of parliamentary troops then lay in the town and lent their officious aid in the work of reformation. The Lady Margaret's professor in his robes, on his way to Great St. Mary's to preach a latin sermon, according to the statute, was one day surrounded by a crowd of soldiers crying, "A pope, a pope!" They followed him into the church, and insisted with threatenings and uproar that he should preach in English. The courts of St. John's college and Pembroke hall were converted into prisons for the royalists; the soldiers were exercised in King's college chapel: monuments and sepulchral brasses, paintings and stained glass, it was their pastime to demolish. What plate remained was seized upon the communion tables of the chapels, and some valuable collections of books, coins, and medals, were destroyed. Still, however, the university, making due allowance for a state of civil war, was by no means harshly used. The chief commissioner, the earl of Manchester, was a man of high breeding, courteous and benevolent. He was never known to insult even those whom he was obliged to oppress.* The rudeness of the soldiers was soon checked by an ordinance from parliament, and the noblest monuments of the university escaped untouched. The sculptures and statuary in King's college survived this frenzy, and still astonish and delight the visitor; and its painted windows, recording the

CHAPTER

VI.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1647-8.

* Clarendon, book vi. p. 211.

CHAPTER

VI.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1647—8.

whole history of the Saviour's life and passion, and many a scene from the old testament, depicted with a lustre which nearly four centuries have done nothing to impair, testify to this day the prompt obedience which the republican army rendered to its superiors. Many fellows of various colleges refused to appear before the commissioners; of these sixty-five were immediately expelled. About two hundred graduates were dismissed; and of sixteen heads of houses ten were ejected. Amongst the latter were Dr. Ward master of Sidney college, and Dr. Brownrigg, bishop of Exeter and master of Catherine hall; Dr. Ward, a church puritan in the days of Laud, but in earlier and better times, with bishop Hall of Norwich, one of the English representatives at the synod of Dort. Dr. Holdsworth, master of Emmanuel, and from that circumstance alone probably a puritan so called, was turned out; he attended the king in his last troubles in the Isle of Wight, and died of grief. In short, with scarcely an exception, as their opponents themselves admitted, the expelled masters were good, wise and learned men; but they refused the covenant, and would no doubt have employed all their influence against the parliament. The covenant, however, was not rigidly imposed: it was offered as a test to those who were suspected, that is, to determined royalists; but great numbers of respectable men who held no extreme opinions were suffered to remain without disturbance. From Trinity hall and Catherine hall

neither fellow nor student was removed. In Queen's college, on the other hand, not one was left. The new masters, elected in the place of the ten ejected, were men of the highest character both for piety and learning. Dr. Ralph Cudworth, the new master of Clare hall, was the greatest teacher of metaphysical philosophy of his age; if not in England the founder of the science. His "Intellectual System" is a work of vast learning and deeper thought: philosophical readers acknowledge its depth and its difficulty. He was long supposed to have founded his system upon the philosophy of Plato. A learned German professor has lately shewn, not only that his principles were new, but that they contain the germ of the doctrines of Kant, the father of modern metaphysics. Another of his works, a treatise on free will, has lately been published for the first time, from the manuscript in the British Museum: so little has time impaired his reputation. We owe it to the puritans that this great man enjoyed the learned repose thus nobly consecrated.* At the restoration he resigned his mastership, but conformed to the church of England. Witchcott, the new provost of King's college, was more successful, says Tillotson, in forming the students to a sober sense of religion than any man of that age: he was an excellent tutor and instructor of youth.† Dr. Arrowsmith was appointed to St. John's. Spurstow, and on his resignation Light-

CHAPTER
VI.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1647—8.

* Blakey, *Hist. of Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 281.

† Tillotson, *Works*, vol. i. p. 277.

CHAPTER

VI.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1647—8.

foot, to Catherine hall; Seaman to Peter-house. All these were eminent in their day. Not one of the new masters was an inefficient man.*

The renovation of Oxford was effected with more severity. During the war the discipline of the university had been relaxed, and sloth and vice were rampant. A provincial city, at once the residence of a court, the head-quarters of an army, and the seat of a university, must have been an unpromising field for the cultivation either of learning or of morals. We can believe that Oxford was dissolute and learning in decay, simply because any other representation would have been incredible. When it fell at length into the hands of the parliament, Fairfax and his soldiers took possession of the city by surrender, and marched into it, according to their custom, without reproach or insult. The next day the shops were opened, every alarm vanished; and Oxford enjoyed a tranquillity and good order unknown for years.

Victorious everywhere in arms, the puritans now provoked a conflict of another kind. The city of Oxford was reduced, but the university appeared to be impregnable. Here the old loyalty prevailed, the theology of Laud was taught and the divine right of kings. Even had the parliament no regard for learning, still it could not leave the university to its opponents. If it were not wanted for the instruction of puritans it was not safe to abandon it to the royalists. The conduct of the parliament

* Neal, vol. iii. p. 93.

was marked at first with great forbearance. It was evidently its wish to conciliate the university, and to introduce a new system under the direction of its present rulers and occupants. First, a deputation of seven of its best divines was sent with authority to preach, both in the town and colleges, in order to soften the spirits of the people, and give them a better opinion of its cause. The towns-people crowded to their sermons—the collegians heard them with contempt and scorn. Reynolds, afterwards bishop of Norwich, was one of the seven, which suggests a doubt as to the justice of the clamour with which they were assailed. One of their proceedings was perhaps unwise. They opened a conference or weekly debate, to solve objections against the new confession of faith and discipline, and to discuss points in casuistry. The students in derision called it the scruple shop. Overwhelmed with ridicule, they returned to London and reported the failure of their mission. The parliament now determined upon a searching visitation, and passed an ordinance of both houses to that effect. The visitors appointed were lawyers and divines: they were empowered to hear and determine all crimes, abuses, and disorders within the university; to inquire particularly upon oath concerning those who had not subscribed to the solemn league and covenant, or taken the negative oath. Their powers extended still further: they were instructed to examine and depose all those who might have opposed the

CHAPTER

VI.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1647—8.

CHAPTER VI. new presbyterian discipline, or taken arms against the parliament, or assisted those who did so.

CHAS. I. The management of the university, its customs, oaths, and statutes, they were to investigate; but if the university or any of its members were aggrieved by their sentence, an appeal was permitted to a committee of the lords and commons.* The university in convocation immediately drew up a solemn protest, chiefly the work of Sander-son, in which they submit their reasons against the covenant, the directory, the negative oath, and the assumed authority and proceedings of this new commission. It was drawn up with elaborate skill and argument, and was in every respect worthy of its authors and of the church of England, whose cause they represented. They objected both to the manner and the matter of the covenant. A covenant, they said, implies a voluntary mutual consent of the contractors; whereas this was imposed by force; and in contradiction to the petition of right, in which the parliament had itself declared such oaths unwarrantable by the laws and statutes of the realm. But even if the covenant had not been imposed at all upon them, but submitted only to their choice and to their own free will, they could not have embraced it; for the king by proclamation had denounced it; and they by their oaths and allegiance were bound to obey all such his majesty's commands as were not in their apprehensions repugnant to the will of God, or the

* Neal, vol. iii. p. 339. Walker, Sufferings, part i. p. 134.

positive laws of this kingdom. Then, addressing themselves to the various points of the covenant, they denied, if they did not indeed disprove, in succession the truth of every one of them. Some they maintained were exaggerated, some were false, some mischievous, and all alike unnecessary. The second article of the covenant required them "to endeavour the extirpation of popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, and profaneness." Upon this they remark as follows: "First," they say, "it cannot but affect us with some grief and amazement to see that ancient form of church-government which we heartily (and, as we hope, worthily) honour, as under which our religion was at first so orderly, without violence or tumult, and so happily, reformed, and hath since so long flourished with truth and peace (to the honour and happiness of our own and the envy and admiration of other nations), not only endeavoured to be extirpated without any reason offered to our understandings for which it should be thought necessary, or but so much as expedient, so to do; but also ranked with popery, superstition, heresy, schism, and profaneness; which we unfeignedly profess ourselves to detest as much as any others whatsoever. And that with some intimation also, as if that government were some way or other so contrary to sound doctrine or the power of godliness, that whosoever should not endeavour the extirpation thereof must of necessity partake in other men's

CHAPTER
VI.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1647-8.

CHAPTER VI. sins, which we cannot yet be persuaded to believe.”

CHAS. I. “Secondly, as to episcopal government; we
A.D. 1647—8. are not satisfied how we can with a good conscience swear to endeavour the extirpation thereof. 1st. In respect of the thing itself, concerning which government we think we have reason to believe, that it is (if not *jure divino* in the strictest sense, that is to say, expressly commanded by God in his word, yet) of apostolical institution; that is to say, was established in the churches by the apostles, according to the mind and after the example of their master Jesus Christ, and that by virtue of their ordinary power and authority derived from him, as deputed by him governors of his church. 2nd. Or at least, that episcopal aristocracy hath a fairer pretension and may lay a juster title and claim to a divine institution than any of the other forms of church-government can do, all which yet do pretend thereunto, viz., that of the papal monarchy, that of the presbyterian democracy, and that of the independents by particular congregation, or gathered churches. But we are assured by the undoubted testimony of ancient records and later histories that this form of government hath been continued with such a universal, uninterrupted, unquestioned succession in all the churches of God, and in all kingdoms that have been called christian, throughout the whole world, for fifteen hundred years together, that there never was in all that time any consi-

derable opposition made there against. 3rd. In respect of ourselves, we are not satisfied how it can stand with the principles of justice, ingenuity, and humanity, to require the extirpation of episcopal government (unless it had been first clearly demonstrated to be unlawful) to be sincerely and really endeavoured by us. Who have all of us, who have taken any degree by subscribing the xxxix Articles, testified our approbation of that government: one of those articles affirming the very book containing the form of their consecration to contain in it nothing contrary to the word of God. Who have most of us (viz., as many as have entered into the ministry) received orders from their hands, whom we should very ill requite for laying their hands upon us, if we should now lay to our hands to root them up, and cannot tell for what. Who have sundry of us, since the beginning of this parliament, subscribed our names to petitions exhibited, or intended to be exhibited, to that high court for the continuance of that government: which as we then did sincerely and really, so we should with like sincerity and reality still (not having met with anything since to shew us our error) be ready to do the same again, if we had the same hopes we then had of the reception of such petitions. Who hold some of us our livelihood, either in whole or part, by those titles of deans, deans and chapters, &c. mentioned in the articles, being members of some collegiate or cathedral churches. And our memories will not readily serve us with any example in this kind

CHAPTER
VI.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1647—8.

CHAPTER
VI.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1647—8.

since the world began; where in any state or profession men, though convicted (as we are not) of a crime that might deserve deprivation, were required to bind themselves by oath, sincerely and really to endeavour the rooting out of that (in itself not unlawful) together wherewith they must also root out themselves, their estates and livelihoods." "Lastly," they add, "in respect of our obligations to his majesty: having both in the oath of supremacy and by our subsequent protestation bound ourselves to maintain the king's honour, estate, jurisdictions, and all manner of rights, it is clear to our understandings that we cannot, without disloyalty and injury to him and double perjury to ourselves, take upon us, without his consent, to make any alteration in the ecclesiastical laws or government, much less to endeavour the extirpation thereof; unless the imposers of this covenant had a power and meaning (which they have openly disclaimed) to absolve us of that obedience, which under God we owe unto his majesty, whom they know to be intrusted with the ecclesiastical law."* The remaining points of the covenant are answered, seriatim, in a similar spirit.

These reasons were printed in Latin and English and widely circulated. No attempt was made to answer them, and the university considered the silence of their enemies an admission of their defeat.

* Reasons of the present judgment of the university of Oxford concerning the solemn league and covenant, &c. Approved by general consent in a full convocation, June 1, 1647.

It would have been well perhaps for their real dignity had they now submitted to the parliament. Might was against them; they had reasoned and protested; it was foolish to prolong the contest. Their historians however record with exultation many an inglorious scuffle for the possession of the halls, the butteries, the chambers, and even the chapels of the colleges, as one by one they yielded to the visitors. The commissioners at last applied for and obtained the assistance of a troop of soldiers; and even now, though the strife was hopeless, the defence was obstinate. They relate, to the honour of Mrs. Fell, the wife of the dean of Christchurch, that when the soldiers had gained possession of the dean's apartments she refused to quit her chamber. She defied their threats and the fumes of their tobacco, and was carried out in her chair and set down in the middle of the quadrangle. The forbearance of the parliament certainly deserves notice. The university had now been permitted to resist its authority and insult its visitors for a year and a half. At length, however, its patience was exhausted. The royalists were expelled; and on the 6th of July, 1648, it was proclaimed by beat of drum before the gates of the several colleges, that if the expelled members remained in Oxford they should be forthwith imprisoned. But the university, so writes its eulogist, even stood this storm; whereupon four days after it was further proclaimed by beat of drum, before every college, "that if any one who had been expelled did still

CHAPTER
VI.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1647—8.

CHAPTER
VI.

presume to tarry in the town, or should be taken within five miles of it, he should be deemed a spy and punished with death.”*

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1647—8.

No doubt the renovation of Oxford was necessary to the puritans; their circumstances required it. At the conclusion of a civil war they could not leave the stronghold of literature and prelacy at liberty to set them at defiance and counterwork their own intended reformation. But now at least their embarrassment began to shew itself in a way no longer to be overlooked. The fatal covenant hung as a millstone round their necks. For the sake of consistency it compelled them to be severe where only lenient measures could prevail; for the sake of uniformity (a uniformity which they now discovered to be impossible) it forced them to repeat, in the spirit of Laud himself, the very oppressions of the former prelatists. They had beaten the royalists and subdued the king; but they had now a harder task,—to subdue the nation to the covenant. Until this were done they governed only by force. Presbyterians, independents, sectaries might obey, but episcopalianians must of course resist. Acting thus, the parliament would legislate only for their party. They might settle a constitution, but it would only suit the conquerors. This was no free government. They might treat the royalists as a conquered faction, they might deprive churchmen of their social position and even of their civil rights; but to do so, was to proclaim not a free government, but

* Walker, Sufferings, part i. p. 138.

simply another form of tyranny. Before the war, puritanism was oppressed; at its close the old church of England. And while this state of things continued there could be no repose for the nation. It was tolerable even to their own party only while the war and the revolution lasted. Thus, when they took the covenant they were guilty of two errors; of which, if the first was pardonable, the second was preposterous. They undervalued their strength upon the field, and yet they overrated their power of dealing successfully with the consciences of the episcopalians and royalists. They submitted to the covenant to gain the Scotch alliance; but they did not foresee how sure and deep the embarrassment it must give them in the possible event of their success. The affair at Oxford brought out the crisis. Men were now violently expelled, whose characters they themselves revered, and without whose assistance no settlement of the nation could possibly be made. The public sympathy was already changing sides, and nothing could well have been devised more grateful to the prelatists (because more useful in recalling the affections of the people) than the sufferings to which they were now exposed. As the tumult of war and its evil passions subsided, men were everywhere shocked to see the dignitaries of the church wandering in country towns and cathedral cities poor and silenced, yet still faithful to their cause; their places occupied by inferior men, sometimes of vulgar minds and manners, and their revenues dissipated without the least advantage

CHAPTER

VI.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1647—8.

CHAPTER
VI.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1647—8.

to the common people, who missed their charities and learned too late how much they had been deluded. The cathedrals were impoverished, but the cathedral cities grew lean upon the spoil; and then it seemed a cruel tyranny to punish inoffensive ministers for their attachment to the prayer-book. So thought indeed the wisest of the puritans, and they would gladly have connived had the malicious industry of a few fanatics and informers permitted them to do so. Sanderson in his parish of Boothby Pagnell, though dismissed from Oxford, still used the liturgy; and even when informed against, a message was conveyed to him expressing the reluctance of those in power to abridge his liberty.* He wisely bent before the storm, and framed a modified liturgy for his own use in his ministry. He was permitted to retain his living, and probably to continue the practice, till the restoration; and he was not obliged to take the covenant. This question of partial conformity was much debated among the episcopal clergy; and Sanderson, as the greatest casuist of the times, was frequently consulted by his brethren. He wrote a treatise for their use, in which his decision, in accordance with his own example, was that expediency alone must determine their scruples. And it was more expedient, he thought, to retain their livings and use, while force compelled them, a mutilated form of worship, than to desert their parishes.†

* Life of Sanderson, by Izaac Walton.

† Bishop Sanderson's Judgment concerning Usurpers.

In other respects the imposition of the covenant was equally disastrous. It was the fatal obstacle to a reconciliation with the king. While he was yet in the Scotch army overtures were made to him; and to prepare the way, Henderson, their great divine, was introduced to remove his scruples and persuade him to embrace the covenant. Had he consented, the Scotch would have espoused his cause, and the presbyterians at Westminster would probably have returned at once to their allegiance. If the papers published in his name were really his, Charles conducted the argument in a manner both wise and temperate. He shewed himself well acquainted with the controversy and well able to maintain it. Both his honour and his conscience, he said, were concerned to support episcopacy in England; it was a divine institution which by his coronation oath he was bound to defend. Henderson failed to shake his convictions; and as he died soon after, the royalists took occasion to assert that Charles had convinced him of his errors, and that he expired of grief and a broken heart.* The controversy was renewed two years afterwards, when the king was a prisoner in the Isle of Wight. It formed an article in the treaty of Newport, and was the only point, indeed, upon which Charles at last refused to surrender his judgment and his conscience to the parliament. Whatever may be his claim to the title of a royal martyr,

CHAPTER

VI.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1647—8.

* Clarendon, book x. p. 31. Neal, vol. iii. p. 264.

CHAPTER

VI.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1647—8.

his defence of the church of England, at the almost certain hazard of his life, must ever command respect from men of every party. The treaty consisted of three articles. By the first, the king was required to revoke all his declarations against the parliament, and to admit "that the two houses had been necessitated to enter into a war in their just and lawful defence," and that the kingdom of England had entered into a solemn league and covenant to prosecute the same. The king was naturally reluctant to admit the truth of these propositions; nor ought they to have been submitted. He willingly offered an oblivion for the past, and this should have been sufficient. This, indeed, was the only basis on which the wounds of the nation could be healed. To make the king assert, in effect, that he himself had been a tyrant, was an insult and a humiliation from which no sovereign could recover. Nor could he with truth admit that the covenant was a national act. He had himself forbidden it; a majority of his subjects had never taken it; its imposers themselves differed about its meaning. To insist on these propositions was an act of needless cruelty, a triumph over a prostrate king, of which men less religious than the puritans might have been ashamed. Charles, however, by the advice of his friends, at length gave way. He well foresaw, he said, the aspersion it would expose him to; but he hoped his subjects would confess that it was but a part of the price he had

paid for their benefit and the peace of his dominions.*

CHAPTER
VI.

The second proposition concerned religion and the church. Lord Clarendon, not without reason, calls it a pregnant proposition containing many monstrous particulars. It contemplated the utter abolition of episcopacy and the alienation of cathedral lands for the use of the state; the imposition of the covenant upon the king himself, and then, by his authority, on all his subjects; the abolition of the common prayer and public liturgy of the church; and, lastly, "the reformation of religion according to the covenant, in such manner as both houses had or should agree after consultation with divines." "This," exclaimed the king, alluding to the last article, "exceeds the implicit faith which the church of Rome demands: she obliges her proselytes to what she does hold, not to what she shall." Four presbyterian divines were in attendance to renew the controversy in which Henderson had failed—Vines, Caryl, Seaman, and Marshal; and the king had the assistance of his ablest chaplains and divines, who were permitted however to be present only as silent spectators. The whole argument in favour of episcopacy on the one hand, and presbyterianism on the other, was fully discussed. The king's acquaintance with the subject, though it was no doubt the great religious controversy of his age, is surprising. At their own weapons he proved himself no unequal match for the four champions

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1647—8.

* Clarendon, book ii. p. 214.

CHAPTER

VI.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1647—8.

of the puritan cause. The utmost that could be extorted from him was a reluctant consent to suspend episcopacy for three years; and at the close of that period, upon consultation with a body of divines, of whom twenty were to be chosen by himself, to determine upon a lasting form of church government for the nation. He would allow those who pleased to take the covenant and to make use of the directory; he would not impose the one or insist upon the other. He would even consent to the abolition of prelacy; that is, he would dissociate the episcopal office from its rank and splendour; for these were conventional, the office itself was of divine authority.

These concessions ought to have been cheerfully embraced. They satisfied the commissioners who waited on the king from parliament; and, in the judgment of Baxter and the wisest of the puritans, they ought to have satisfied their party. For they had not determined entirely to their own satisfaction what was that true and primitive form of church government to which the *jure divino* rights and sovereignties pertained. The question was primary and fundamental, but it was not yet answered. There were more divines in favour of presbyterianism, but there were more soldiers in favour of the independent scheme; and had there been no third party, it was even now uncertain whether the controversy would be determined for England by the sword or by the pen. The very puritan divines who had attended on the king were not of one mind. The solemn league

and covenant was, in short, a mere phantom to scare away episcopalians—it was a violent negation of bishops, deans and chapters. It had yet to be interpreted, and until interpreted it could not be enforced. England might lie waste amidst the ruins of her ancient church; violence and war had brought her to this condition; but the covenant supplied no principles and no materials wherewith to reconstruct her; and then, if episcopacy were indeed so dangerous, and the directory so safe, it might reasonably be hoped that within the three years of probation the nation would learn to acquiesce in a change for which at present it was unprepared. The precipitancy of the puritans was as impolitic as their narrow conditions were unwise. Even had they been right in argument, their conduct gave little hope that the great Head and Master of the church was making use of them to amend the workmanship of Cranmer and the martyrs.

Thirdly, the parliament required that the militia, that is the army, should be entirely at their own disposal; and they claimed the right of levying taxes in order to support it. To this with much reluctance the king gave his consent. At the termination of a prosperous war the parliament demanded on this head no more than was reasonable. To give up the army was to throw away every advantage they had won, and to place the victors at the mercy of the vanquished. The peace which Ormond had made with the Irish rebels was annulled. The king urged that he had not been

CHAPTER

VI.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1647—8.

CHAPTER VI. a party to it; still he was reluctant to concede the point, probably out of a generous regard for the marquis of Ormond's safety.*

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1647—8.

Upon the whole the terms of the treaty were such as conquerors impose. No attempt was made at conciliation; no indulgence was offered to the weaker party. The royalists and episcopalians were even in point of numbers by no means contemptible. True it was that while the presbyterians, the independents, and the sectarists could agree, they were crushed and outnumbered: but the elements of discord were fermenting: their party had been cemented by a common danger; and now that it had passed, their quarrels plainly foreshadowed the speedy dissolution of the compact. The endeavour to crush a body still so powerful as the royalists was impolitic and ungenerous; and as statesmen, or as professors of a purer religion, it was equally dishonourable to the puritans. Liberty of conscience, the right of worshipping God unharmed, was their own justification of the war; and now they denied this privilege to their opponents—to one third at least of their fellow-countrymen. Whoever might be allowed to plead for liberty of conscience, it was to be denied to the king himself and to his chaplains. The scruples of a sovereign with regard to his coronation oath were of no importance. Sheldon, Hammond, Sanderson, Prideaux, and Ussher were not of sufficient account to be listened to in behalf of common prayer! In the view of the great patriots of 1642, who still remained upon

* Clarendon, book xi. p. 215.

the scene, the cause was lost—lost by the vanity, the imbecility, and the bigotry of their successors. They had fought for liberty, but a dominant presbyterianism, which brooked no rival, was as inconsistent with it as Laud and the star chamber. They had fought to retrieve the institutions of England from those who made them instruments of oppression; but the institutions themselves had vanished, the oppressions were renewed. To compel the king and all his subjects to embrace the covenant, this then was of the fruit of so many battles and of six years' of sorrow such as England had never known! The revolution had failed. The cause of the parliament and of constitutional liberty was lost, and its few remaining members had become contemptible.

Charles himself is perhaps the only person whose reputation does not suffer in the Newport treaty; for even his advisers, and sometimes his chaplains from considerations of his personal safety advised concessions which their conscience disapproved. No doubt his firmness was owing in some measure to the impression he entertained that without him nothing could be done: such language was often on his tongue: "They cannot do without me. I must turn the scale at last. The parliament cannot settle the nation without my assistance." Still however in the purest minds the best motives have their alloy, and the praise of Charles I. is, that he stood alone to defend the church of England at the certain hazard of his crown and the very probable forfeit of his life.

CHAPTER
VI.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1647—8.

CHAPTER VI.
 CHAS. I.
 A.D. 1647—8.

Conceding every other demand he firmly resisted this. Such was his veneration for episcopacy that it rose superior in his mind to that duplicity which long habit had interwoven with his nature. During the Newport treaty he even sent private instructions to Ormond to assure him that his concessions went for nothing, and might one day be annulled. Yet his conscience did not allow him to trifle with episcopacy and the church: these were sacred things; this was a province into which diplomacy was not allowed to enter. Strange and incongruous perhaps it may appear, but such was Charles's character.

The treaty, which was opened in September, was brought to a close on the 27th November, 1648; the parliament debating each point in London, while the king and the commissioners were discussing it in the Isle of Wight. But it now became evident that a party had risen up whom no concessions would satisfy. They were republicans; and in the house of commons were represented by the younger sir Henry Vane. He made an angry speech and bitterly denounced the king as a tyrant, the author of all the evils under which the kingdom laboured. The debate upon the treaty lasted for six days. It was interrupted by the news that the army had repeated their old manœuvre. They had seized the king at Carisbrooke castle and carried him by force to Hurst castle on the Hampshire coast. These evil tidings were accompanied with a "large remonstrance," so-called, which six officers on behalf of the whole army presented to

the house of commons. In this, after denouncing the treaty, they demanding that public justice might be done on the chief actors in the late troubles, and calling for a new parliament, petitioned that no king might hereafter be admitted but upon election of the people. The house of commons however behaved, on this the last occasion on which freedom of debate remained, with becoming dignity. It resolved that the removal of the king was contrary to its instructions, and that he should be immediately placed as before under the care of colonel Hammond, the governor of Carisbrook. The army replied with the demand of their arrears and the threat of marching up to London, and sent up a "new declaration" in pursuance of their late remonstrance. This the house refused to take into consideration: it was moved that they should be declared traitors, and that an impeachment of high treason should be issued against the officers, if the army should approach. The answer was emphatically given in the appearance of the whole army in London a few days afterwards. The house of commons immediately borrowed forty thousand pounds from the city for the payment of arrears, and again proceeded to discuss the Newport treaty. After a debate which continued from the forenoon till five o'clock the next morning, it was decided, by a majority of one hundred and forty against one hundred and four, "that the king's answer was a ground for the settlement of the peace of the kingdom." Vane and the republicans were defeated, but they hastened their

CHAPTER
VI.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1617-8.

CHAPTER VI.
 CHAS. I.
 A.D. 1647—8.

revenge. When the house met again it found a guard of musketeers drawn up at the door under the command of colonel Pride, the officers holding in their hands a list of the members, of whom they seized nearly a hundred and confined them in the neighbourhood. In the absence of these members the house met; the former vote was rescinded; and it was resolved "that the king's answer was *not* satisfactory." The house thus purged, and consisting now of a few republicans together with a number of mere sycophants, the tools of the army, expelled the absent members, unless they subscribed to the recent vote against the king. After this audacious measure the English parliament, already humbled and degraded, had no more than a nominal existence: it was not now a legislative assembly; it dwindled into a junto of mere functionaries; its only business was henceforward to throw military edicts into legal forms. It was now at all times the obsequious instrument of Cromwell and the army; more hated of the people, if possible, than it had been once adored. And if ever a public body deserved the opprobrium and contempt it met with, it was the rump parliament of 1648.

CHAPTER VII.

It was now determined to bring the king to trial. The way was prepared by a vote of that fragment of the house of commons which remained, "that by the fundamental laws of the land, it is treason for the king of England to levy war against the parliament and kingdom." Twelve or fifteen peers still sat in the house of lords, and they rejected the bill. "There is no parliament without the king," said the earl of Manchester; "therefore the king cannot commit treason against the parliament." The commons immediately resolved to proceed without their concurrence; and on the 3rd of January 1648-9 passed three memorable votes, which like a chain-shot swept away the king, the lords, the laws and liberties, the fundamental government and property of this nation at one blow. So wrote an historian of the times, himself a presbyterian.* The votes were these:—

1. That the people are, under God, the original of all just power.
2. That the commons of England in parlia-

* Clement Walker, *Hist. Independency*, part ii. p. 56.

CHAPTER VII. ment assembled, being chosen by and representing the people, have the supreme power of the nation.

CHAS. I. 3. That whatsoever is enacted or declared for
A.D. 1648-9. law by the house of commons assembled in parliament hath the force of law.

These resolutions were passed unanimously: they were followed up by an ordinance of the house of commons for the trial of Charles Stuart, king of England, for high treason. A court of one hundred and fifty commissioners, of whom twenty were competent to act, was formed: it contained six peers, three great judges, the leaders of the army and of the house of commons, six aldermen of London, and a few others. The lords refused to have any share in these violent proceedings. And even amongst the republicans there was one illustrious man, Algernon Sidney, the son of lord Leicester, who sternly opposed the measure. With a purity of mind and a penetration surpassing other men's, he perceived the greatness of the crime and foresaw its disastrous consequences. His acquaintance with mankind assured him of the certain reaction in Charles's favour that must follow the outrage. "No one will stir," said Cromwell, in answer to his remonstrances. "I tell you we will cut his head off with the crown upon it." "I cannot prevent you," answered Sidney; "but I certainly will have nothing to do with this affair." He left the council and never returned.* Prynne, forgetting his own

* Lord Leicester's journal, &c., in Godwin, Hist. of the Commonwealth, part. ii. p. 669.

foul treatment in the days of Laud, now boldly rebuked his former party for their betrayal of the cause of justice, which he held to be at all times that of real liberty. Even Fairfax attended only once; and when the court assembled on the 20th of January in judgment on the king, only sixty-nine members were present. The court sat in Westminster hall; and there John Bradshaw, Milton's cousin, a lawyer grave, resolute, and strongly imbued with the fanaticism of his party, arraigned his sovereign on a charge of high treason in the name of the higher majesty of the people of England. The king refused to acknowledge the authority of the tribunal. Cook, the attorney-general, had no opportunity of delivering a long invective, in which the king's errors since he mounted the throne were carefully emblazoned; but it was published by authority, that the world might know how the trial would have been conducted had Charles condescended to plead before it for his life.

CHAPTER
VII.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1648—9.

On the 27th of January the court passed sentence: it condemned Charles to be put to death by the severing of his head from his body, in the open street before Whitehall, upon the 30th of January. These, however, are passages in history with which every reader is acquainted.

Connected with the trial and execution of the king, one subject of deepest interest to religious men has long slumbered in profound repose. The puritans, the regenerators of mankind, the reformers of the church of England,—to what extent

CHAPTER VII.
 CHAS. I.
 A.D. 1648—9.

were they involved, and with what amount of guilt, in the death of Charles I. ? To thoughtful minds, to those, however few their number, who bear supreme reverence to truth, and truth alone, in history, the subject is of deep concern. And, strange as it may sound, it is still graced with the charms of novelty ; it is a new discussion. Much has been written on both sides, but nothing (which has been so fortunate as to gain attention) in the calm spirit of an earnest inquiry after truth.

First of all we encounter those who assume, and not unfrequently assert, that all those who opposed the tyranny of Charles and Laud, and took arms in 1642, are guilty of the excesses of 1649, and of the king's death. With equal reason it might be maintained that the states general, which opened the French revolution in 1789, were guilty of the death of the duke d'Enghien, and of the horrors of the Russian campaign of 1812. Granting that the appeal to arms was rash, yet their grievances were real ; and real grievances in England had often justified an appeal to arms. If this were not the theory of the constitution, at least it was its history. The Magna Charta owed its existence to such a step. To implicate the patriots of 1642 in the military despotism of 1649 and the death of Charles, it must first be shewn that the latter events were the legitimate offspring of the former ; that the man who resists oppression by the sword is necessarily prepared to go to the lengths of treason and of regicide.

Again, the puritans, as a body, are indiscriminately charged with the death of Charles. The truth of the accusation depends, as usual, upon the definition of the terms. If the men whom Laud persecuted, ejected from their livings, insulted in their homes, or degraded from their social position, be intended, the charge is incorrect. On the other hand, they were puritans, no doubt, who heartily approved of the king's death and to the utmost of their power promoted it. How these differences arose amongst the puritans, and by what arguments the views of the several parties were sustained, is an inquiry which yields to none in history either for interest or importance.

Before the war broke out, the sectaries, it will be remembered, already formed a numerous body; as sincerely disliked (though by no means so bitterly harassed,) by the puritans as by Laud himself. Between the sectaries and the puritans there was in fact but this point of union, that they were both oppressed. In 1645 the covenant was imposed, one disastrous effect of which was instantly to break up the old puritan party into two sections, those who retained, and those who forsook, episcopacy. The church puritans, or rather their leaders, adhered to episcopacy and gradually melted away. Ussher, as we have seen, attempted a compromise and failed; the remainder of the old party became presbyterians. From their ranks, however, there was in process of time a constant desertion, chiefly of the younger and more ambitious men, to the independents. And as the independents continued to increase in power and

CHAPTER
VII.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1648—9.

in favour with the army, the presbyterians lost ground. The independents were not strictly puritans. Whatever were the merits or faults of their system, it was at least original. It bore no necessary relation to prelacy; it might have arisen, and in fact it has arisen and matured itself, where prelacy is unknown—as in Scotland, for example. To the presbyterians, the legitimate successors of the elder puritans, the trial of the king and his subsequent execution were as repugnant as to the royalists themselves. In them Charles found at length his best, his only friends. When the tidings of his last calamities and of his intended trial paralyzed the nation, the episcopals could render no assistance. At the hazard of their lives a few of them remonstrated. Dr. Gauden published a protestation; Dr. Hammond sent an humble address to the general and his council; the rest were silent in dismay. They were the vanquished party, whose objections were of no account. The presbyterians received the tidings with feelings of horror. The Scotch protested in a tone of the deepest indignation. They had given up the king when he sought refuge in their camp, two years ago, on the express condition “that his majesty should be treated, with respect to the safety and preservation of his person, according to the covenant;”^{*} by the third article of which they were “bound to preserve and defend his person and authority.” And they now addressed a protestation to their brethren, the presbyterians of the province of London, exhorting

* Clarendon, book x. p. 37.

them to courage and to a determined resistance to the nefarious measures of the house of commons. History has dealt hardly with the Scotch army for giving up the king to his English subjects. But in truth they had no alternative. Unconvinced by the arguments of Henderson, Charles had refused the covenant, and the Scotch at home refused to receive him as their king upon any other terms. Had the Scotch army carried him back to Edinburgh, he must have been a guest or a prisoner. As a guest they could only protect him by force of arms; as a prisoner they had no right to detain him in opposition to his own wishes and those of the English parliament. It was unfortunate that the surrender of the king was connected with the payment of their arrears; but the arrears were justly due, and, paid or not, it is difficult to perceive upon what grounds they could have claimed the exclusive right of disposing of the person of the king. But even granting that the Scotch were mercenary in this affair, they had already nobly retrieved their national character. When to his more cautious friends in England his cause seemed lost, they had poured an army of twenty-six thousand men into the northern counties and penetrated the very heart of Lancashire. Cromwell himself had met and beaten them at Warrington, for they were ill-supported, and the whole adventure was romantic. Yet it shews the depth and earnestness of the presbyterian loyalty of Scotland. Their generous enthusiasm on behalf of one who had few claims

CHAPTER

VII.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1648—9.

CHAPTER

VII.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1648-9.

upon their affection, threw into the shade the measured caution of the English royalists. Charles was no sooner dead than they proclaimed and crowned his son ; and, though already jaded and distressed, plunged into a second war. It is little creditable to English writers that their surrender of the king at Newcastle should be so much censured, and their subsequent devotion to his cause so little praised.

The English presbyterians were not less decided. They regarded the proposed trial and execution of the king with abhorrence and distress. Not a presbyterian layman could be prevailed upon to sit in the high court of justice before which the king was to appear ; not a presbyterian minister could be influenced to give the slightest countenance to its designs. The house of commons, or rather the army acting through its means, was not a little anxious to obtain the consent, or at least the neutrality, of the London clergy. It is a proof how difficult it was to find a clergyman of any shade of doctrine or of politics to undertake the cause, that the mad Hugh Peters was chosen to discuss the subject with the Westminster assembly. He failed in his mission ; they declared unanimously for the king's release. He was then deputed to invite several of the London ministers, Marshal, Calamy, Whitaker, Sedgewick, Ashe, and others, who had all along justified the war, and who had taken the covenant, to a conference with the leaders of the army. The clergy refused ; and drew up instead " A serious and faithful repre-

sentation of the judgment of the ministers of the gospel within the province of London; contained in a letter to the general and his council of war." It bears date January the 18th, 1648—9.

In this address, after giving reasons for declining to confer with officers of the army upon matters of religion, they complain of the outrages of the army, compared with which those of the king himself in former years were trifling. "We remember," they say, "that when the king with a multitude of armed men demanded but a small number of the members of parliament, it was deemed an unparalleled breach of the privilege of parliament; that this very army should so far exceed that act, which was then esteemed without parallel, is what we could not believe had not our eyes been witnesses of it. Both houses saw reason to take up arms in their own defence, and in defence of the protestant religion and the fundamental laws of their country; yet this cannot be pleaded in justification of your usurping an authority over king and parliament, you who are but so many private persons and no part of the legislature. Moreover, though the parliament took up arms in defence of the laws, it was never their intention to do violence to the person of the king or divest him of his authority, much less to overthrow the whole constitution." They go on to remind the general and his council of the obligation under which they had placed themselves by the league and covenant; and they address them in conclusion with an admonition, of which

CHAPTER
VII.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1649.

CHAPTER
VII.

the discriminating wisdom, and from men in their position, the dauntless courage, are equally to be admired :—

CHAS. I.
A. D. 1649.

“ Instead, therefore, of consulting with you, we earnestly entreat you, as the ambassadors of Christ, that you would consider of the evil of your present ways, and turn from them. You cannot but know that the word of God commands obedience to magistrates; and consonant to scripture this hath been the judgment of protestant divines, at home and abroad, with whom we concur; disclaiming, detesting, and abhorring the practices of jesuits, concerning the opposing of lawful magistrates by any private persons, and the murdering of kings by any, though under the most specious and colourable pretences. Examine your consciences, if any number of persons of different principles from yourselves, had invaded the rights of parliament, imprisoned the king, and carried him about from place to place, and attempted the dissolution of the whole government, whether you would not have charged them with the highest crimes ?

“ We desire you not to infer the justice of your proceedings from the success, but to distinguish between God’s permission and approbation, and that God’s suffering men to prosper in their evil courses is one of the severest judgments: the providence of God, therefore, which is so often pleaded in justification of your actions, is no safe rule to walk by in such actions which the word of God condemns.

“Nor is it safe to be guided by the impulses of the spirit, when they are contrary to the written word of God; we are to try the spirits, and to have recourse to the law and the testimony; if they speak not according to them, there is no light in them.”

CHAPTER
VII.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1649.

“If you plead necessity for doing that which yourselves confess to be irregular, we answer, no necessity can oblige men to sin; besides, 'tis apparent, you were under no necessity; the parliament (till forced by you) being full and free: besides, you have engaged by oath to preserve his majesty's person and the privileges of parliament, and no necessity can justify perjury, or dispense with lawful oaths.

“We therefore beseech you to recede from this your evil way, and learn John Baptist's lesson to soldiers, do violence to no man, neither accuse any man falsely, and be content with your wages. But if you persist in this way, be sure your sin will find you out. If our exhortation prevail not, we have discharged our duty, and, we hope, delivered our souls. If it be our portion to suffer, as we are told, we trust we shall suffer as christians; but we hope better things of you, and subscribe ourselves your servants in the Lord.”*

This bold and yet becoming remonstrance bore the signatures of forty-seven of the London ministers. It was followed in a few days by a second paper, addressed to the people, in which they vindicate their own conduct and denounce

* Neal, vol. iii. p. 419.

CHAPTER

VII.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1649.

the proceedings at Westminster against the king. It concluded in these words: "We earnestly beseech all who belong to our respective charges, or to whom we have administered the said covenant, to abide by their vow, * * * to mourn for the sins of the parliament and city, and for the mis-carriages of the king himself in his government; which have cast him down from his excellency into a horrid pit of misery almost beyond example; and to pray that God would give him effectual repentance, and sanctify the bitter cup of divine displeasure which divine providence has put into his hands; and that God would restrain the violence of men, that they may not dare to draw upon themselves and the kingdom the blood of their sovereign."*

To this declaration fifty-seven signatures were affixed; and the two documents included, with scarcely an exception, all that was of worth or weight amongst the puritan clergy of London and the neighbourhood. The presbyterians, whether Scotch or English, are free from the guilt of Charles's death. They denounced it as a grievous crime. They did all that religious men could do in the presence of a victorious army. They reasoned, they protested, they denounced, they prayed. In the eyes of Europe their vindication was complete. In process of time it is true the slander appeared and the sting infixed itself; the presbyterians, it was said, had handed the king over to the independents, and the independents to the

* Neal, vol. iii. p. 421.

scaffold. But the writers of their own times (excepting always the mere scribes of faction, a numerous class in every party), with more justice absolve them from the charge. Upon the continent, where the question was viewed more calmly than at home, there were two points upon which all the protestant churches agreed, viz., that the king's death was a great crime, and that the presbyterians had no share in it. The learned Bochart, a disinterested testimony, writing in 1650 to Bishop Morley, from Caen in Normandy, expresses his perfect satisfaction with the justification of the presbyterians, put forth in their several protests, both Scotch and English. He was intimately acquainted with the Scotch ambassadors in France, and he had never heard them breathe a word except of love and duty to the king. "As to ourselves," he adds, "when the news arrived we were overwhelmed with horror. Then our tears burst forth, and we abandoned ourselves even in public to all the bitterness of grief. We deplored the unhappy lot of the king himself, who deserved so well of us, and who had made so many concessions to his people, cut off in the prime of life by his own subjects; and we were afraid lest the atrocious act committed by those who are generally supposed to be of our own religious opinions should bring a blot upon our (foreign presbyterian) churches which time will never wash out; and lest men should thoughtlessly impute the crimes of individuals to the doctrines they profess to hold."*

CHAPTER
VII.CHAS. I.
A. D. 1649.

* Verebamur etiam ne facti atrocitas, ab iis admissi quos vulgus eandem profiteri nobiscum religionem, labem ecclesiis nostris aspergat

CHAPTER

VII.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1649.

The independents seem to have made no distinct protest of their own. Few of them were incumbents in London, and those few held their livings upon sufferance. They were not members of the provincial assembly in which the presbyterians met, nor were they admitted to those weekly discussions at Sion college where public affairs were discussed and their measures taken. John Goodwin of Christ church in Newgate street, and the more renowned Dr. John Owen, were the only two exceptions. But Goodwin represented no party, and beyond his private circle and the members of his congregation had little weight. His arminianism was in that day an insuperable barrier betwixt the puritans of every class and himself. Owen alone, of all the puritan clergy, had the daring to applaud the proceedings of the army. On the 31st of December he preached two sermons before the house of commons, expressed his admiration of the conduct of the army, and censured those members of the house who (after Pride's purge) voluntarily absented themselves. One of the wisest and most thoughtful of his hearers relates the circumstance, and adds this pregnant comment: "All men were at a-gaze what would be the issue of such proceedings. Some thought it best for them to be reserved as to their opinions, finding everywhere too many talkers and few with much judgment.* The example of Owen was lost upon his party, few

quam nulla deleret ætas; et ne doctrinæ imputarentur vitia personarum.
A prophetic apprehension! pp. 68, 69, Samuelis Bocharti epistolæ,
quâ respondentur tres questiones, viz. &c.

* Whitelocke, p. 360.

of whom shared in his views ; some of the independents denounced the intended trial from the pulpit, and others from the press. As a religious body they were without any great leaders ; and it is possible that Owen's conduct embarrassed though it did not distract them. But upon the whole the silence of the independents is no more to be construed to their disadvantage than that of the episcopalians. Both parties, it is true, were silent ; but their silence is easily explained. The tragedy was over before they were prepared to act.

The presbyterians and independents, too eager to exculpate themselves, permitted the blame to rest upon the sectaries. Their want of generosity recoiled upon their own party. When the day of retribution came, the royalists despised the sectaries and attacked the larger prey ; and the very anxiety of these two great parties to exonerate themselves afforded a ground of plausible suspicion. But there was no party in the kingdom which participated with the army and the parliament, even by connivance, in this fatal measure. Neither seekers, nor quakers, nor behmenites, nor anabaptists ; nor of other sects, however absurd their tenets or their conduct, was there one which could be brought in its corporate capacity to sanction the king's death. From Norfolk, indeed, a petition was presented praying for "justice against delinquents without respect of persons ;" the army sent another to the same effect ; beyond this the parliament received no support whatever.

The nation was taken by surprise. On the 23rd

CHAPTER
VII.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1649.

of December the subject was first mentioned in the house of commons.* The king was then for the first time spoken of as “the great delinquent,” and there were mutterings for justice; but nothing further was avowed. Charles himself believed that he should be assassinated, and the fears of his adherents were all in that direction. On the 2nd of January the ordinance for the trial of the king was carried up to the house of lords; on the 6th it was passed without their concurrence. On the 9th proclamation was made, with drums and trumpet, in Cheapside, at the Exchange, and before Westminster hall, that a high court of justice was about to sit in judgment on its sovereign lord attainted of high treason. On the 30th the dreadful sentence was carried into effect. Within six weeks, and in the depth of winter, the whole terrible design was announced and executed. Nothing can picture the dismay, the astonishment, the dread and the indignation, which suddenly possessed men’s minds. The audacity of the proceeding confounded the nation; the calmness of the actors, their openness and the forms of law under which they acted, filled it with amazement. Still multitudes were incredulous. For credulity itself could not rise to the belief of that which seemed so monstrous and so unnatural. Till the last moment of his life thousands

* And now was set on foot and begun their great design of taking away the king, whom divers in the debate did not stick to name for the greatest delinquent and to be proceeded against in justice. December 23. Whitlocke, p. 358.

refused to believe that Charles would really die upon the scaffold. There was to be the pageantry of an execution but nothing more :* it was meant to insult and to degrade the king but not to kill him. Baxter relates how Cromwell engaged Fairfax in prayer, under the pretence of seeking divine direction, until the fatal blow was given. The story is not true ; but it proves distinctly what uncertainty prevailed. It was a popular opinion that, to the last moment, Fairfax was undecided, and that after all Charles perished while even the leaders of the army were divided on his fate.

CHAPTER
VII.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1649.

When, at the restoration, the service for king Charles's martyrdom was added to the prayer-book Calamy and Baxter protested against it on these grounds. The king's death, they said, was not a national act ; the sin was very great, but it rested not upon the nation. Writers, however, of every shade have thought it necessary to assume the consent of the nation, because it has been supposed that without its concurrence such an outrage could not have been perpetrated. Recent events have taught us the weakness of this reasoning. We have seen governments uprooted, against the sense of millions, by a morning's uproar and the outrage of a mob.

The actors in the king's death have left us a clear exhibition of the motives by which they were guided. Their conduct was deliberate : they acted, as they believed, at the bidding of conscience, not the wild impulse of revenge. They lived to

* Burnet, Own Times, vol. i. p. 64.

CHAPTER
VII.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1649.

acknowledge their mistake, but, with a few exceptions, never to confess that they had been guilty of a crime. They are still on judgment before posterity, and their cause is undecided; for, with a not unrighteous retribution, it has happened that the men who refused a hearing to their king have been denied the same privilege at the bar of posterity themselves.

Cromwell is generally regarded as the chief promoter of the king's death. This he himself denied; but it was part of his character to put forward other men to announce his own measures in the first instance, leaving him at liberty either to fall behind and disengage himself, or to spread all sail and take the lead, as the breeze of public opinion might be favourable or adverse. It will not readily be supposed that the house of commons undertook so daring an exploit without instructions from its masters, the army, or that the army embarked in it without their generals, or their generals without Cromwell. Once begun, none urged the matter forward more eagerly, no man was more impatient to bring it to a fatal close. His motives were various: up to this period of his life Cromwell had been a religious man: his conduct had been consistent: his private life was pure, his affections warm, his devotions fervent; but he was a man of vast ambition; by nature cunning and sagacious, but scarcely wise. His mind too was dis-tempered with enthusiasm; a fault of which at this period the army generally partook.* he be-

* "A woman out of Hertfordshire came to the council of the army

lieved in particular impressions. He fell into the too common error of supposing that the comfort he enjoyed in prayer was the proof of its acceptance; and he often rose from his knees expressing an assurance that his petitions had been answered. It has been said, and sometimes in Cromwell's vindication, that it was on one of these occasions, and after earnest prayer, that the conviction was revealed to him that Charles must die. Cromwell's good sense might have taught him, as we suspect it would have done had the revelation been unwelcome, that supernatural impressions are only to be trusted when supernatural and miraculous powers endorse them. No doubt the divine direction was implored, not only by Cromwell but by many of his party. Solemn fasts were held; fervent prayers were uttered; but amongst the delusions to which the heart of man is liable, one is to substitute the acts of devotion for the spirit of obedience. Prayer may be fervent and yet not sincere. It may be nothing more than the endeavour of the worshipper to overlay and stifle conscience, to crush misgivings, to persuade himself that the tumult of enthusiasm within him is the voice of God; and the man who kneels down in prayer to clamour for an answer which shall agree with his own wishes, offers so profound an insult to the majesty on high, that it is reasonable to suppose he will be left, if no heavier punishment befall him, to be

CHAPTER
VII.

CHAS. I.

A. D. 1649.

sitting at Whitehall, and acquainted them that she had something from God to speak to them, and being admitted *she did much encourage them in their present proceedings!*" Dec. 29, 1648. Whitelocke, p. 360.

CHAPTER
VII.

CHARS. I.
A.D. 1649.

the dupe of his own delusions.* The officers, with Cromwell at their head, were impatient for Charles's death. Brave as they were, fear—a fear which they avowed—urged them forward. How could a king forgive the men who had chastised him, and chased him from his throne—men whom he had so often denounced as rebels? He who draws his sword upon his king must throw away the scabbard, was now on many tongues. There could be no safety for the army, much less for its generals, but in the destruction of their prisoner. The king's insincerity had not yet forsaken him. During the treaty at Newport he had again been playing a double game, and carrying on a secret correspondence, at variance with his professed intentions, both with Ormond and the Scotch. Once restored to power, though by themselves, they were sure to be the first victims of his revenge.†

* A sentiment to which even heathen wisdom groped its way; and which Pope has rendered in a verse not unworthy of Homer:—

“Hear the just doom, the judgment of the skies!

He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies;

And he that will be cheated,—at the last

Delusions strong as hell shall bind him fast.”

† A story is related by Hume, and copied by almost all subsequent historians, which, if true, places the duplicity of Charles, even when the war was over, in a strong light. It is generally brought forward by the apologists of Cromwell to explain his severity to the king. Charles was at Hampton Court, apparently engaged in friendly negotiations with the parliamentary leaders, and the Scotch: they were informed, however, by one of their own spies of the king's bedchamber, that their doom was sealed; and that they might learn all the particulars from a letter which the king had written to the queen, in which he informed her of his resolution. This letter was sewn up in the skirt of a saddle, which was to be carried about ten o'clock that night to the Blue Boar in Holborn, by a man who was not in the secret: there he

These arguments, however, are easily refuted. If we regard the party who urged on the king's death as christians, and still more as christian statesmen, it is enough to answer with the London divines in their protest, that no necessity can compel men to sin; we may not do evil that good may come. Their own safety was at least in no immediate peril. The hazards they foresaw were both contingent and remote: they might never happen. They could not possibly occur until the balance of power was re-adjusted, and a successful and united army was at the mercy of those whose cause it had destroyed. Other securities were within their reach: constitutional safe-

CHAPTER

VII.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1649.

was to take horse and carry it on to Dover. Cromwell and Ireton, disguising themselves as common troopers, and taking one trusty soldier with them, went instantly to the Blue Boar, where they sat drinking beer till the man arrived with the saddle on his head. They seized him, ripped open one of the skirts of the saddle, and found the letter, while the messenger was detained outside the inn by their attendant. Having done this, they delivered the man his saddle, and told him he was an honest fellow, and might go about his business; which he did, and pursued his journey without more ado, not knowing what had occurred. In the letter, the king had written thus:—"My time is come at last. I am now the man whose favour they court. I incline to treat with the Scotch rather than the English army. Be quite easy as to the concessions I may grant. When the time comes, I shall know very well how to treat these rogues, and instead of a silken garter, [the decoration of the garter had been offered to Cromwell,] I will fit them with a halter." From this time Cromwell is made to say, "Finding we were not likely to have good terms from the king, we vowed his destruction."

The story first appeared in Carte's life of Ormond, published after the restoration; and notwithstanding the air of truth which it derives from a narration circumstantial and picturesque, rests, it must be confessed, upon very slender foundation. First, it is related by Carte himself on the authority of one Morris, who repeated it on the authority of the earl of Orrery, to whom Cromwell is said to have related it. But it seems incredible that Ireton and Cromwell should have kept

CHAPTER

VII.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1649.

guards might have been devised: there was exile or imprisonment; or even the deposition of Charles in favour of his son, a measure which he himself, in his present unhappy state, was supposed to contemplate. Violent measures are always short-sighted; yet it is astonishing that the men who urged on this fatal project did not perceive at least its impolicy. It could not relieve them from a single difficulty; it might create embarrassments from which escape would be impossible. The throne would not be vacant because Charles was dead. The king never dies. His eldest son was abroad, beyond their reach, and *de jure* would instantly become the sovereign: and

the matter a secret, with no conceivable reason for reserve, and with every possible reason indeed for parading the letter, as they had done the Naseby papers. But the letter was never shewn; nor would its existence, it seems, have been heard of, had not Cromwell, some years afterwards, mentioned it in a garrulous mood, while riding on horseback in Ireland with lord Orrery, an acquaintance. Besides, the king generally wrote to the queen on such matters in cipher. The Naseby papers were thus written; and they were translated, though in some parts still imperfectly, by Zouch Tate, who had discovered the key. The queen, however, had since resided with the king at Oxford for some months, and nothing would have been easier than to form another cipher. Lastly, the coarse antithesis of the silk garter and the hempen halter, is not in Charles's vein. In the whole of the Naseby letters there is nothing like it; if we except perhaps the single expression "a mongrel parliament," applied to his own friends at Oxford. It resembles the occasional bursts of low buffoonery in which Cromwell indulged, rather than the severe dignity which Charles was scarcely ever known to lay aside. The moral of the tale, however, lies in two sentences. It shews first, that when the deed was done, Cromwell (on the supposition that he really told the story to lord Ormond) felt that some further apology was needed than he and his party had yet given for the king's death. Secondly, that the treachery of Charles was so notorious, that no exaggeration would seem improbable. In forming a judgment on the character of Charles, the story of the letter opened at the Blue Boar ought certainly to have no weight.

Charles had several other children; so that the direct succession was not likely to be lost. More than once it was debated in the council of officers to assassinate the whole of the royal children. It is Clarendon who relates the story, and pays to Cromwell the generous tribute of acknowledging that he abhorred the infamous proposal. To stop short, however, of some such sweeping desolation,—of a massacre of the seed royal such as we read of in Jewish and Assyrian warfare in the old testament, was to do nothing. While a Stuart lived, the blood of Charles would cry for vengeance, and the clamour would certainly be heard.

The leaders of the army had in fact determined on a commonwealth. In their impatience they could not even wait for the king's trial. On the same day on which the proclamation was made of the sitting of the high court of justice, it was voted in the house of commons that the king's name should be omitted, for the time to come, in all public documents: the great seal was broken, and a new one made, stamped on one side with the house of commons sitting, on the other with the arms of England and Ireland, and bearing the inscription, incapable of being misunderstood, "In the first year of freedom by God's blessing restored." And the army sent in a petition, or more correctly, the draft of a new constitution, entitled an agreement of the people of England. To this they desired, and the house promised, a serious and speedy consideration. They demanded a republic.

CHAPTER

VII.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1649.

These were the views of the republicans, amongst whom, however, were men of pure integrity and real piety. Ludlow and Hutchinson were such. They were men of birth and family; they had the noble qualities of English gentlemen; they were pious, but they were not fanatical; they had waded through the war and witnessed all its horrors; they believed that the blood that had been shed had placed the land beneath the curse of God; that the king had endeavoured to enslave the nation; that their resistance had been righteous, and that God himself had blessed them with success; and therefore they concluded that the author, as they esteemed him, of all these miseries ought to suffer condign punishment. "The question"—so Ludlow wrote when age and banishment and deep vexation may be supposed to have tamed his spirit—"the question in dispute between the king's party and ourselves, I apprehend, was this: whether the king should govern as a god by his will and the nation be governed by force like beasts; or whether the people should be governed by laws made by themselves, and live under a government derived from their own consent." He was fully persuaded that an accommodation with the king was unsafe for the people, and in its very nature unjust and wicked: unsafe, as the king himself had proved by the duplicity of his conduct; unjust and wicked, "because," he says, "I was convinced by express words of God's law that blood defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood

of him that shed it (Numb. xxxv. 33.); and therefore I could not consent to the counsels of those who were contented to leave the guilt of so much blood upon the nation, and thereby to draw down the just vengeance of God upon us all; when it was most evident that the war had been occasioned by the invasion of our rights and the open breach of our laws and constitution on the king's part."* Colonel Hutchinson addressed himself to God in prayer: he implored that if through any human frailty or prejudice he were in error, he might not be suffered to proceed; that if he were right, God would confirm his spirit in the truth and lead him by an enlightened conscience; he debated the matter frequently and seriously in public and in private, in conference with the best men he knew, and upon his knees before God. At length he signed the fatal warrant without any misgiving. Both he and others of his friends thought even then "that it might one day come again to be disputed among men;" yet they believed that they must either sacrifice the people or the king; "and therefore," adds his devoted historian, "he cast himself upon God's protection, acting according to the dictates of a conscience which he had sought the Lord to guide."† The motives of other members of the court which condemned the king—Axtel, Cooke, Carew, Harrison, Scott, Jones, and Scroop—we have on their own relation, under circumstances when they had no reason to dissemble. At the restoration the scaffold was again erected, and the regicides were in their turn

CHAPTER
VII.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1649.

* Ludlow, p. 103.

† Mrs. Hutchinson, *Memoirs, &c.*, p. 336.

CHAPTER

VII.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1649.

its victims. It was with the utmost difficulty they could be persuaded or compelled to plead in the usual form, guilty or not guilty. They admitted their share in the king's death, but they admitted no guilt and they felt no shame. Hugh Peters, though not a member of the court, was arraigned as an accomplice. In answer to the usual interrogatory, Art thou guilty of the treason whereof thou standest indicted, or not guilty? he exclaimed, "I would not for ten thousand worlds say I am guilty: I am not guilty." How will you be tried? "By the word of God." Here the people laughed; but the conviction that God's word absolved them was deep in their souls. It sustained them against the jeers of the court, and the more substantial horrors of a public execution. The king had been a great delinquent: he had oppressed the saints; he had fawned on popery; he had betrayed the liberties of England which he had sworn to cherish; he had deluged the land with blood; and the more exalted his station the greater was his guilt and the more righteous his destruction. The utmost admission that could be extorted from them was, that it was possible they might have been mistaken. Against the king himself they one and all declared they had never entertained a feeling of revenge or malice: they had discharged an awful duty; and they had done it openly and before the world. It was thus they talked and reasoned to the last: no hero ever encountered death with more calmness than the regicides, no patriot with more alacrity, no martyr with more boundless joy. To understand the

true character of the high court of justice, we must place ourselves in thought, first by the side of Charles in Westminster hall, while the whole court stands up in solemn silence, and Bradshaw pronounces the dread sentence, and then, after the lapse of ten years, beneath the scaffold of the regicides at Charing cross in 1660, at their own more hideous execution. It is not the use of history to pronounce with dogmatism, but rather to lay bare with an equal hand the faults and virtues whether of parties or of men; and to teach the lessons of wisdom by suggesting the exercise of discriminating justice, and of wise and patient thought. The trial and execution of Charles is still viewed through the same mists of prejudice which overshadowed the actors in that dreadful tragedy. It is an hereditary party question. We decide upon it more by our political and religious sympathies than by abstract justice or a pure sense of right and wrong; and so perhaps it will be, while an Englishman survives to read the history of his country.

Urged by these various considerations, the court resolved to execute the sentence without delay. Charles must have now felt the bitterness of confidence misplaced. The court of France, to which he had been obsequious, was all but indifferent to his fate. The ambassadors of France and Spain offered a heartless protest, and looked on in silence. It was even thought that the king's death was by no means disagreeable to the papists, whether in England or abroad. Strange stories were related of jesuits who could not hide their joy, and of the

CHAPTER
VII.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1649.

queen's confessor exulting in the deed of blood. The queen herself was at Paris; and she now at least behaved in a manner worthy of her sex and of her race: she wrote submissively to the parliament, imploring permission to visit her husband and console him in his last agony: but no answer was returned.* The protestant states of Holland, of all foreign nations, were alone in earnest to save the king of England from the scaffold. They sent two special ambassadors with instructions to use every exertion with Fairfax and the parliament. With difficulty they obtained an audience of Fairfax, Cromwell, and the officers, with the speakers of both houses, and at length with the parliament itself. In the upper house they found very few peers; in the lower, about eighty members. The lords listened to their remonstrances, and resolved immediately that a conference should be held with the commons, and a last effort made to save the king. But the vote was impotent. The day before the execution, as they passed by Whitehall, they observed the dreadful preparations. Taking counsel with the Scotch commissioners,

* Besides the malicious satisfaction of these states in the distractions of England, which Charles's death was so likely to prolong, his continued profession of protestantism gave them constant vexation. It was firmly believed by Roman Catholics abroad that he would avow himself a papist. Peter Berthius, a convert to popery, a man well known in the Arminian controversy, wrote thus soon after Charles's accession:—"Multum tamen sibi de præclara regis Caroli indole pollicentur omnes boni. Sperant enim voventque et matris et aviæ summarum heroinarum, et uxoris divinis virtutibus, fidei que singularis exemplo, ipsum quoque regem ab infamè errore, per Christi gratiam, in viam veritatis et vitæ revocandum esse, cum summâ sua gloriâ, egregio regni sui firmamento, et gaudio totius ecclesiæ."—*Breviarum totius orbis terrarum*, p. 6.

they hurried back and obtained another audience with Fairfax. The general was touched with their entreaties: he declared that he would go to Westminster directly, and recommend the parliament to grant at least a reprieve; and that he would take a few officers of note with him to forward this purpose. At the moment Fairfax was probably sincere; but there is nothing to shew that this last attempt was made.* On the fatal morning of the 30th of January, 1649, all the streets, passages, and squares of London were occupied with troops, and the environs of the city were surrounded with cavalry. No crowd was suffered in the streets, no citizen was permitted to go into the country, no stranger to enter London.† The military were stern and silent: amongst the citizens every face wore anxiety suspense and consternation. Meanwhile the king was brought at an early hour under an escort of soldiers from St. James's palace to Whitehall. Five puritan divines—Calamy, Vines, Caryl, Dell, and Goodwin—waited on him; but the king declined their assistance. "They have often prayed against me," he said, "I will not trouble them to pray with me now, but I will thank them to pray for me." Juxon, bishop of London, administered the sacrament, and attended on the scaffold. His piety was not supposed to possess the fervour which contributes

CHAPTER
VII.CHAS. I.
A.D. 1649.

* Unpublished documents and letters relative to the intervention of the States in favour of Charles I. Despatch No. III. in app. to Guizot, Hist. of Eng. revolution.

† Unpublished documents of the Dutch ambassadors, &c., Despatch. No. III.

CHAPTER
VII.
CHAS. I.
A.D. 1649.

by its presence to console and cheer the dying.* But the king was devout and calm, and the occasion gave sublimity to the parting words both of Juxon and his royal master. "Your majesty has but another stage: it is short and troublesome; but it will carry you a great way—it will carry you from earth to heaven." "I go," replied the king, "from a corruptible crown to an incorruptible, where no disturbances can have place;" and kneeling down he submitted himself to an executioner masked with crape, who at one stroke severed his head from his body. An assistant, disguised in the same manner, held it streaming before the front of the scaffold, and cried, "This is the head of Charles Stuart the traitor." Then arose a cry of horror and distress from the assembled thousands who filled the open street such as Englishmen have seldom uttered; a deep unearthly burst of anguish, a dismal universal groan,† wrung at the same instant from ten thousand hearts, and uttered by ten thousand voices. Numbers fell insensible. A crowd rushed wildly to the scaffold, or crept beneath it, to moisten their handkerchiefs with blood. Opposite to Whitehall, where now stands the Horse-guards, was a mansion on the leads of which was archbishop Ussher. The venerable old man was observed by the few whose attention was for a moment diverted from the scaffold, lifting up his hands, his wrinkled

* Burnet, Own Times, vol. i. p. 69. Ludlow, p. 109.

† The words of Philip Henry. Life by his son, the excellent Matthew Henry.

face streaming with tears, interceding with God for his dying sovereign. When the hollow sound of the fatal axe reached him, he too swooned and fell, in appearance as lifeless as if he himself had received the stroke. Amongst the crowd below was Philip Henry, a leader of the nonconformists, the excellent father of a more distinguished son. He used to speak in his old age of the dismal tragedy, and of the passionate burst of anguish wrung from the spectators, with a devout ejaculation, that he might never listen again to a sound so dreadful. And to his tenacious memory in his green old age we owe another circumstance which the writers of the day had overlooked. A guard of cavalry was drawn across the road at Charing cross, and another at the top of Parliament-street. At the instant of the execution each of these troops moved forward in the direction of the other, and so forced the crowd, hemmed in between them, to disperse. Thus at the moment of their triumph the regicides betrayed their fears. Public opinion was against them, and discussion was not safe. Charles II. might even have been proclaimed upon the spot, and in the sight of his father's bleeding corpse. The nation was outraged, and it was governed only by the sword. Grief and horror and dismay are the only terms by which contemporary writers attempt to transmit some faint idea of the universal anguish of the nation to posterity. England had lost at one stroke both heart and hope. It cowered and wept like a bereaved and broken-heart child. It spoke only

CHAPTER

VII.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1649.

CHAPTER
VII.

CHAS. I.
A.D. 1649.

to bewail itself and to utter its distress. The next Sunday every congregation was bathed in tears, and every pulpit rang with denunciations of bloodguiltiness upon the murderers of a king. It is Clarendon himself who writes, that never had the puritans from their pulpits more loudly or more bitterly denounced the conduct, than they now bewailed the death, of their unhappy sovereign. The protestant divines upon the continent caught up the strain and repeated the same denunciations; fearing most of all lest the protestant cause should seem to be associated with an outrage so audacious and so unscriptural.*

On the day after the king's death Owen preached before the parliament. He published his sermon, with the title "Righteous zeal encouraged by divine protection." Whatever he may have thought, his language was guarded, and he carefully abstained from expressing approbation of the deed which covered the land with mourning. The strongest passage is that in which he says, "when kings command unrighteous things, and the people suit them with willing compliance, none doubts but the destruction of them both is just and righteous." This is very discreditable to Owen's character. It is timid and time-serving. Had he avowed his approbation of the measure, we should at least have respected his integrity. Had he condemned it, we should have revered his

* Pastores toto Galliaë regno celeberrimi tam privatim quàm è suggestu hoc facinus uno ore detestati sunt, ut verbi Divini regulis è diametro oppositum. Bocharti epistolæ, p. 69.

courageous spirit. If it were a deadly sin it was base to heal the wound slightly, and to daub the wall with untempered mortar. If it were a righteous act his audience was entitled, at that critical hour, to all the encouragement a minister of God could offer. It is a dark blot on the fame of a man in many respects both good and great; and when it shall cease to be thus regarded, the moral tone of English feeling will have been already degraded and debased. Milton, with incomparable powers and entire good will, hastened to the regicides' defence. In a few months his *Eiconoclastes* was before the world. Two years later he returned to the charge and published his *Defence of the people of England*.* The one was in English, the other in Latin. The former was perhaps, when it first appeared, the richest specimen of English prose writing in existence; severely simple, full, nervous, and majestic. Scholars have awarded equal praise to his *Latinity*, though on this field no so distinguished honours could be won; for Latin had long been the vernacular tongue of learned Englishmen. It had never been written before with equal force, but often with equal grace. Here his superiority lay in his vast mind more than his deep scholarship. But the two volumes will now for ever stand amongst those models to which the learned and the wise incessantly repair to refresh their taste and to invigorate their powers. And yet all that Milton wrote has in nowise impaired

CHAPTER

VII.

CHAS. I.

A.D. 1649.

* *Eikonoclastes*, &c., the author IM. Published by authority, 1649. *Ioannis Miltoni Angli pro populo Anglicano Defensio*, &c. 1651.

CHAPTER VII. COMMON-WEALTH, A.D. 1649.

the reputation of his king ! No upright historian has recourse to him. In all his might of intellect he is nothing more than a party scribe. He assails the dead with bitterness. Without evidence, and often in open violation of truth, in contemptuous disregard of facts with which he was, or might have been acquainted, he heaps upon the king's memory charges the most unjust—cruelty, prodigality, licentiousness, and lust. In short it is no feeble triumph to the memory of Charles I. that it was assailed by Milton—and assailed in vain.

Once embarked in crime, the regicidal party afforded no exception to the universal law. One sin provoked another. Once stained with blood, their hands with less reluctance were defiled with it again. On the 9th of March the scaffold was once more erected in Palace Yard, and three of the greatest of the royalists were beheaded—the duke of Hamilton, the earl of Holland, and lord Capel ; and the scaffold never witnessed nobler specimens of christian heroism. The duke of Hamilton was addressing the people when his chaplain requested him to turn another way, the sun shining brightly in his face. “No, sir,” he replied, “I hope I shall see a brighter sun than this very speedily :” and, proceeding in his address, he added, “I know that there is a God in heaven that is exceeding merciful. I know that my Redeemer sits at his right hand, and am confident (laying his hand upon his breast) is mediating for me at this instant. I am hopeful,

through his free grace and all-sufficient merits, to be pardoned of my sins and to be received into his mercy. Upon that I rely, trusting to nothing but the free grace of God through Jesus Christ." The earl of Holland followed. There was something in his fate which, even in such illustrious company, excited peculiar sympathy. He had been, says Whitelocke, a very great friend to the old puritans, and when in power had often exerted it on their behalf.* He was condemned by the casting vote of Lenthall, the worthless speaker of the contemptible house of commons; and on the same day, by the same casting vote,† lord Goring, who had been some time a prisoner and was now brought to trial, was reprieved; the one probably the best, the other beyond all doubt the worst of the royalists. Holland had always stood up for the rights of the people; he was full of generosity and courtesy; he was the friend of the oppressed. Goring was selfish, licentious, and degraded; he had one merit and only one, he was a gallant soldier. He never professed the least regard for liberty either civil or religious; but he exceeded the earl as much in his crimes as he fell short of him in his popularity. For several days before his death the earl of Holland had been in great distress and agony—distress and agony the deepest dying men can know. He said he had

CHAPTER
VII.

COMMON-
WEALTH,
A. D. 1649.

* Whitelocke, p. 79.

† Clarendon says the majority was four or five against lord Capel. But Whitelocke was a member of the house and must be taken as the better authority.

CHAPTER VII. no assurance of pardon and of the love of God to him ; he was not prepared to die ; Christ would be of no advantage to him. He was attended by two puritan divines, Bolton and Hodges, who directed him to the great sacrifice for sin. They prayed with him, and he “with wonderful expression” frequently offered up prayer for himself. The day before his death peace broke in upon his soul. He had now prevailed, he told them, through the strength of Christ, over Satan and all his spiritual enemies and temptations. “The Lord has given me an assurance of his love in Christ. I am now both ready and willing to die.” He sat down to supper with his chaplains with no more disturbance of mind or manner than if in the soundest health, and slept with so perfect a repose that he was roused with difficulty. On the scaffold he spoke long and calmly to the people ; expressing his entire satisfaction with the cause for which he died, and his humble trust in Christ. “I look upon myself entirely in him ; and hope to find mercy through him. I expect it ; and through that fountain which is open for sin and for uncleanness my soul must receive it ; for did I rest in anything else I have nothing but sin and corruption in me.” Lord Capel died last, with something, as the by-standers observed, of the lofty bearing of an ancient Roman. As he walked to the scaffold he courteously raised his hat and bowed repeatedly. Arrived at the fatal block, reeking with the blood of his companions, the officer in command inquired, Is your chaplain

here? "No," said he, "I have taken my leave of him." His attendants bursting into tears, he at once reproved them: "Gentlemen, refrain yourselves, refrain yourselves." Then turning to the officer, he asked how the lords spoke; with their hats off or no? He was answered in the affirmative; he then walked to the front of the scaffold, leaned gracefully upon the rail, raised his hat as if giving a slight salutation, and addressed the vast crowd before him. In his cause he gloried. "I die," said he, "for keeping the fifth commandment given by God himself and written with his own finger. It commands obedience to parents; and all divines, differ as they will on other points, agree in this,* and acknowledge that it includes the magistrate." Like the king, and using the king's own words upon the scaffold, he confessed his guilt in consenting to the earl of Strafford's death; "but that," he added, "I doubt not but God Almighty hath washed away with a more precious blood the blood of his own Son, and my dear Saviour, Jesus Christ. It was done through cowardice, for malice against him I had none." And having expressed his perfect charity for all men, he concluded thus: "And so the Lord of heaven bless you all; God Almighty be infinite in goodness and mercy to you, and direct you in

CHAPTER
VII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1649.

* Milton thought otherwise: "Pater et rex diversissima sunt. Pater nos genuit; at non rex nos, sed nos regem creavimus. Patrem natura dedit populo, regem ipse populus dedit sibi; non ergo propter regem populus sed propter populum rex est." *Defensio*, p. 3. This fiction of an elective monarchy runs through the treatise, and renders it, as an argument, of no value.

CHAPTER
 VII.
 COMMON-
 WEALTH,
 A. D. 1649.

those ways of obedience to his commands, and to his majesty, that this kingdom may be a happy and glorious nation again, and that your king may be a happy king in so good and so obedient a people. God Almighty keep you all. God Almighty preserve this kingdom. God Almighty preserve you all." Then turning to the executioner, who in the usual manner kneeled down and asked forgiveness, "I forgive thee from my soul, and not only forgive thee, but I shall pray to God to give thee all grace for a better life." Nobler spirits than those of the three royalist lords have not often been enshrined in human forms !*

The execution of Charles has had many apologists ; the slaughter of these noblemen has had few or none. The ablest modern advocate of the heroes of the commonwealth admits that the proceedings in this business were rigorous and revolting.† Only one excuse is offered, and that amounts to an aggravation of the crime it professes to extenuate. The new government stood at present on foundations narrow and precarious. It was requisite to shew that the builders were in earnest, and that their measures were not to be broken in upon with impunity. It was this consideration, it is said, that impelled men so generous, so benevolent and humane, as the founders of the commonwealth, to consent to these execu-

* Excellent contemplations, divine and moral, written by the magnanimous and truly loyal Arthur lord Capel ; together with some account of his life, &c. 1683.

† Godwin, Hist. of the Commonwealth, vol. iii. p. 43.

tions. A defence which may be more simply stated thus : The regicidal party had seized the helm by violence and were resolved to maintain it by force ; to be in fact the tyrants of the nation, and to impose a government which it abhorred. The nation could not be convinced, it must be terrified. It could not be persuaded, it must be silenced. And these executions were an earnest of what the discontented might expect. That some of the leaders of the faction had been religious men, and that they again assumed that character when death approached them, with seeming sincerity, presents fewer difficulties than we suppose. There are depths of unknown infatuation even in honest minds, a dark abyss which no plummet has ever fathomed. The men had tampered with their consciences, and these were some of the inevitable fruits.

The political history of the commonwealth does not properly belong to us. The condition of public affairs after the king's death may be comprised in a brief summary.

The first attempt of the dominant faction was to bind the people to that form of government, yet undecided, which they might think proper to impose. An oath, called the Engagement, was framed, and, as far as possible, enforced. All those at least who retained offices of public trust were compelled to swear "fidelity to the commons, without a king or a house of lords;" for within a few days of Charles's execution the house of lords was formally abolished. Sixteen

CHAPTER
VII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1649.

hundred and forty-nine was a year of silence and suspense. The royalists were broken up; the moderate men, the patriots of the revolution, were stunned. It was the reign of uproar. The only man who could control the storm was not yet in full possession of his power.

Cromwell's Irish campaign, famous in all history, occurred in this eventful year. He sailed for Dublin in March, and in November he returned, having won, said the newspapers of the day, more laurels in nine months than many a conqueror during a life of hard service. His iron arm had avenged the massacre of the protestants; the rebellion was finally crushed; and he had laid the foundation of tranquillity and good government. Ireland, it is still affirmed by those who are acquainted with her internal history, was never so happy as during the ten years of Cromwell's rule. The boon was great, and might have been lasting if succeeding governments had followed Cromwell's policy. Substantial kindness was mingled with stern justice; and in religious matters protestantism was resolutely upheld, not merely by enforcing its rights, but by insisting on its duties. Under Cromwell the protestant church of Ireland would have become a vast missionary establishment for the evangelizing of the Irish papists; and before it popery would long since have disappeared. His discipline at first was terrible, and his severity has been loudly censured. He had scarcely landed before Wexford and Drogheda were stormed. By fire and

sword the slaughter was appalling : none of the garrison escaped, and many of the helpless and unoffending suffered. But severity, it must be remembered, is sometimes mercy. The fortresses and towns held by the rebels were now terrified into immediate submission, and there was little farther bloodshed. Cromwell and his army regarded themselves as instruments in God's hands to avenge the protestant blood which had been shed like water on every side. The atrocities of the popish massacre and of the ten years' rebellion, cried aloud for vengeance. They could not expect a blessing on their arms until they had purged the land from blood ; and it was better in every respect, more just, nay more humane, to entrust the work of retribution to the army than to the tedious and uncertain forms of legal justice and to the public executioner. If these reflections are just, Cromwell's Irish campaign reflects no shade upon his character. War is always terrible ; but it is the scourge of God ; and in such cases we must inquire, not whether the course taken was severe, but whether it was just. Ludlow succeeded Cromwell as lieutenant-general of the cavalry in Ireland, and Ludlow was humane ; yet he mentions without remorse an act of cruelty which shocks us more than the sack of Drogheda or Wexford. A party of the rebels having taken refuge in a cave, he kindled an immense fire at its mouth, but the smoke and flames escaped through fissures in the rock, and the wretched prisoners within continued their re-

CHAPTER
VII.

COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1649.

sistance for some days. Ludlow had the apertures carefully closed, till the groans from within, heard above the roaring of his furnace, soon explained the horrible effect of his unmerciful device. The few who came out alive were instantly put to the sword.* Such proceedings, which exasperate one party and brutalize both, which are not judicial in their nature nor salutary in their effects, are condemned by the laws of war and by sound reason not less than by humanity and religion.

* Ludlow, p. 163.

CHAPTER VIII.

DURING the commonwealth and the protectorate of Cromwell puritanism enjoyed its triumph. For the first time in its changeful history it was left without an adversary. If it was at times uneasy and disturbed, its dissensions were internal. Its divisions proceeded from itself. The church of England scarcely lifted up her head from the dust, and popery was banished from England with utter scorn. The ruling powers, shifting and uncertain in everything besides, were consistent in maintaining the principles and doing honour to the men who, with considerable diversities both in doctrine and practice, still formed one great party, and still bore the name of puritans. With the nation in their favour, and its preferments in their hands, they now looked forward to a long career of usefulness and honour. There were prizes for the ambitious, fields of vast extent in which the zealous might labour, and quiet resting-places where the weary might repose.

CHAPTER
VIII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1649.

But beneath the surface some evil portents lay concealed. To religion the dangers of prosperity are always great. To a discerning eye the

CHAPTER
VIII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1649.

church of Christ has never long been glorious in seasons of prosperity. The jewels with which she loves to be adorned fade before the noon-day sun, and regain their lustre beneath a clouded sky. It was to be seen whether puritanism would withstand the temptations of prosperity, and bask in the broad daylight, as she had hitherto lived in dungeons and in poverty, without injury and loss of health. To this trial she was now to be exposed; a furnace through which no religious party has ever yet been known to pass but the smell of the fire was left upon their raiment. And there were other dangers likewise, peculiar in their nature and in appearance new, which could scarcely fail to exercise a pernicious influence upon the religious character of the puritans.

The religious puritans were involved with the ruling powers, and implicated in their measures, to a great extent. The connection was unfortunate and at length disastrous. Setting aside those political considerations of necessity or utility by which it is sometimes excused, the government, after Charles's death, was a mere usurpation. The house of commons appointed a council of state, consisting of forty members, with whose assistance it resolved to undertake the supreme control. The council, as indeed the parliament itself, was under the dictation of the army. How carefully the expression of public opinion was suppressed we may learn from the fact, that not only were those members excluded from the house who disapproved of the king's death, but even those who

subscribed a declaration that they approved of the proceedings against the king, and engaged to be true to the commonwealth, underwent a rigorous sifting, and many of them were excluded. Ludlow, who was a member of the council of state, and, upon the whole, a man of rare integrity, is not ashamed to write "that while all possible satisfaction was given in words, the former deportment of every particular member who presented himself was nicely weighed," and his probable conduct for the future ascertained, before he was admitted.* The house of peers having been abolished, three of its members were returned as representatives, and obtained admission, to the house of commons; these were Philip earl of Pembroke, lord Edward Howard, and the earl of Salisbury. They took the same engagement as the rest—to be true and faithful to the commonwealth, as it was now established, without a king or a house of lords. But in fact no commonwealth existed. A commonwealth, or, to use its modern synonyme, a republic, implies something more than the absence of a king and of a senatorial aristocracy. The essence of a republic is government by the people: in classic ages this was effected by their choice of their own rulers; in later times, by their election of their own representatives. The commonwealth now pretended in England had no title whatever to its name: it was a military despotism, or an irresponsible oligarchy, having the faults and possibly the advan-

CHAPTER
VIII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1649.

* Ludlow, p. 113.

CHAPTER
 VIII.
 COMMON-
 WEALTH,
 A.D. 1649.

tages of both. No appeal, however, was made to the people in whose name this government was carried on. A free election, an independent house of commons, would have scattered it to the winds, and probably enough, have dragged its leaders to the gallows. Of this they were fully aware. They grounded their justification, in fact, upon this plea. They had undertaken the nation's interests against the nation's will : it was a froward child ; and they governed it with parental wisdom ; and, it may be added, with something more than parental discipline.

But in all this there was a practical dishonesty most injurious to religion. If we allow the justice of their defence we make a mournful concession to the world. We avow that truth and politics are incompatible ; and that the man who serves his country must abandon the service of his God. We admit the maxim that nations cannot be governed upon christian principles. It is true, no doubt, that if the puritans had boldly made this avowal they would merely have placed themselves upon the common level, they would not have fallen beneath it. The assertion has been echoed in our own times from within the walls of parliament, and it has been loudly cheered. Men in power have enunciated it as a political axiom, and their political opponents have heard in silence and assented. Had the men of the commonwealth maintained this dogma, they would have fallen below the Cecils and Walsinghams of an earlier period, but they would have stood

upon a level with the statesmen of a later age, and, as men of the world, their character would have been unstained. But the leaders in this great movement aspired after a higher fame. They were emphatically religious men, and they gloried in it. They spoke in the language of holy writ ; the phrases of the English bible were their modes of speech ; the precepts and doctrines of scripture were always on their lips ; their aim was to establish a commonwealth based upon the bible. For the old English constitution they had no great respect. For the complicated machinery and conflicting principles of English jurisprudence they had a profound and unreasonable contempt. Cromwell even proposed to sweep away at one stroke the whole fabric of existing jurisprudence ; to regard the statute-book and the decisions of common law as a sheet of white paper—to adopt his own expression—and to write anew upon it a pure code derived from the principles of natural justice and from the law of God. The experiment was to have been made in Ireland ; and, if successful, to have been extended to Great Britain. Had Cromwell lived, the attempt would probably have been made, and the protector might have been known to posterity as one of those heroes whose laws have outlived their conquests. These and other changes, of which some were merely contemplated and others carried out, might possibly have been beneficial ; but they were arbitrary. They were enforced under false pretences. It would have been

CHAPTER
VIII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1649.

CHAPTER
VIII.COMMON-
WEALTH,
A. D. 1649.

manly at least to have claimed the government by the right of conquest, though it might not have been honest to retain it. A usurper may impart blessings which a legitimate government has not conferred. But nothing can excuse duplicity; and the high standard of moral and religious bearing assumed by the leaders of the commonwealth made their inconsistencies the more conspicuous. By what right, except the right of the sword, were they attempting to impose their impracticable commonwealth upon a reluctant people? With what sincerity could they profess to be acting on the nation's behalf when its voice was sternly repressed by frequent executions and swarms of soldiery? The misconduct of the prelates had taught the common people the desperate lesson of an exoteric and an esoteric faith, a professional religion and a personal one, and that there was no necessary connection between the two. In Romish countries the populace, having once explored this mystery, sink into licentiousness. In England they fell away into puritanism. And now the political leaders of the puritans were repeating the very same dishonesty. Sharp-sighted men perceived that they had one standard for themselves and another for their subjects. They had set up their golden image, and its shrine was to be adorned with costly offerings. Their visionary commonwealth must be upheld, if oaths were broken and innocent men oppressed. And for all this they had no other excuse to offer than the hackneyed apology of present necessity, and the possibility of some future good.

At first this insincerity affected the rulers only, but it soon descended to the common people. The engagement, the oath of allegiance to the commonwealth, was vigorously enforced; but those who took it must have felt that it was inconsistent with the covenant, to which they had already sworn. There was prevarication, if not perjury. By the covenant they were bound "to defend the king's person and authority;" by the engagement they were sworn to be obedient to "a government without a king and without a house of lords." It may be said that the power which imposed the covenant had the authority to withdraw it and to annul its obligations. It may be said that Charles being dead, the covenant was no longer binding. These were indeed the defences which the government set up, and which they urged with all the weapons at their command—force and argument and pulpit declamation.* But there is an end of public virtue when a nation trifles with the obligations of an oath. Thousands of sincerely loyal subjects had embraced the covenant; for though it remodelled the constitution, it involved no transfer of allegiance. If the nation were presbyterian, Charles was not less a king. They were now to swear allegiance to his murderers. Honest minds re-

CHAPTER
VIII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1650.

* The majority of the clergy, including all the presbyterians, of course, opposed these measures; and their pulpits were not silent. It was ordered by the house of commons, March 28, 1649, "that no ministers shall teach in their pulpits anything relating to state affairs, but only to preach Christ in sincerity, and that an act be brought in for penalties for those who should do otherwise."

CHAPTER
VIII.

COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1650.

volted. The impression grew deep that the nation was betrayed and that the puritan leaders were false; and the impression was deepest in the lower classes, for they saw all the inconsistency, while they comprehended none of the difficulties, of their political leaders. Events soon followed which completed the alienation of pious men, and converted their admiration of the puritan chieftains into suspicion and disgust.

The Scotch, faithful to the covenant and to Charles II., proclaimed him king, and reassembled their army to support his throne. Various attempts were made in England to revive the royal cause. At Durham a manifesto was issued on his behalf. In the north the presbyterians, "pretending conscience," refused the engagement. From York a minister wrote to inform the parliament of a secret plot for a massacre of the well-affected in the nation. At Shrewsbury the cavaliers openly wore ribbons with the motto "God prosper," and the clergy preached against the government. At Newcastle, one Henderson took upon himself to proclaim king Charles II. at the market-cross. In the west many presbyterians from their pulpits prayed very zealously for the restoration of the king. At Chester the clergy bitterly exclaimed against the engagement, "condemning all that took it to the pit of hell." At Exeter it was scorned; and a fast-day being appointed by the parliament, the clergy left the town and locked up the churches. In London the government, though dreaded, was insulted with

impunity. A private soldier, detected in a treasonable conspiracy, was shot by a court martial. His funeral afforded the opportunity for a political demonstration. The dead body was carried through the city with ostentatious pomp; the mourners, amounting to several thousands, carried in their hands bunches of rosemary steeped in blood, emblems of their undying sorrow or revenge. The procession passed by the doors of parliament, but the government had not the courage to interfere.* Their situation was already critical, if not dangerous. They had gained no hold upon the nation at large: their tenure of power was precarious, and they heard on all sides of risings projected or actually taking place. These rumours were not altogether unacceptable to the parliament. They swelled the cry of danger, and gave a colour to the meditated attack on Scotland. Fairfax still continued to hold the chief command; but he was weary of his post, and Cromwell was anxious to supplant him. Lady Fairfax was a presbyterian, and the general himself was now attached to that party. He declared to his colleagues that he could not march against their own brethren in the cause, the presbyterians of Scotland. If the Scotch invaded England, he was ready to draw his sword and shed his last drop of blood in defence of the commonwealth; but to invade Scotland, and inflict the calamities of war upon a people whose crime was that they revered an oath, was that which his conscience

CHAPTER
VIII.COMMON-
WEALTH,
A. D. 1650.

* Whitelocke, 429, 439.

CHAPTER
VIII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A. D. 1650.

would not consent to. Cromwell, Lambert, Harrison, St. John, and Whitelocke were sent by the council of state to confer with him. "I think it doubtful," said the lord general, "whether we have a just cause to make an invasion upon Scotland, with whom we are joined in the national league and covenant; and now for us, contrary thereunto, and without sufficient cause given us by them, to enter into their country with an army, and to make war upon them, is that which I cannot see the justice of; nor how we shall be able to justify the lawfulness of it before God and man." Cromwell answered that the Scotch, by invading England under the duke of Hamilton, in 1648, had broken the covenant, and—it was only just to requite their hostility first begun upon us. Whitelocke argued, quite in consistence with his character, that it would be a prudent measure to prevent their coming into England by first attacking them in their own country. Harrison urged the probability of an invasion upon their part; and St. John repeated the argument of Cromwell, that the covenant was first broken by themselves, and so dissolved as to us. "I suppose," said Cromwell in conclusion, "your excellency will be convinced of this clear truth, that we are no more obliged by the league and covenant, which themselves did first break." The force of this argument was lost on Fairfax. The covenant was not a compact with the Scotch, but a national vow and promise recorded in the sight of God in St. Margaret's

church at Westminster, as well as in the presbyterian churches of the north. Its agreements were not conditional; no breach of faith on the part of others could release the English covenanters; and with regard to the duke of Hamilton's invasion in 1648, it was undertaken not, as Cromwell and Harrison maintained, to subvert the covenant, but to carry out its literal meaning, and to establish the house of Stuart upon a presbyterian throne. To the argument arising from the probability of another invasion Fairfax replied, that human probabilities were not a sufficient ground for making war upon a neighbour, especially, said he, upon our brethren in Scotland, to whom we are engaged in a solemn league and covenant. "What," he exclaimed, "would you have me to do? My conscience is not satisfied: under the same circumstances none of you would engage in the service: that is my condition, and I must desire to be excused."* The conference was conducted with prayer, which Cromwell opened; most of the deputation prayed afterwards by turns. They felt the greatness of the occasion. The question before them was no less than the utter disruption of the puritan party, and the turning of its arms upon itself. Another war with all its miseries lay distinctly before them. Beyond this there was another, and to us of the nineteenth century, and to all posterity, a far graver question, the dishonour they might do to God, and the contempt which they were likely to bring down upon

CHAPTER

VIII.

COMMON-

WEALTH,

A.D. 1650.

* Whitelocke, p. 445.

CHAPTER
VIII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1650.

that which puritanism through all its fortunes had professedly upheld, true and spiritual religion. Fairfax resigned his commission; and the next day Cromwell, without an adverse vote, and greatly it was thought to his own satisfaction, although he feigned a decent reluctance, was constituted captain-general-in-chief of the forces within the commonwealth of England. Without delay he entered on the war in Scotland. Napoleon justified his crimes by the doctrines of fatalism; Cromwell sheltered his ambition beneath the veil of impulses supposed to be divine. The contrivances are similar. They start from the same point, and they arrive at one goal together. Their origin and their effect is the same. They are the shallow artifices of intense self-will when it becomes desperate; and they take their individual shape and character from the habits and education of their victim. Before he set out, Cromwell spent a full hour with Ludlow in expounding the hundred-and-tenth psalm, believing, or affecting to believe, that he himself was the hero of its triumphs. His campaign in Scotland was to be the fulfilment of prophecy, and the enemies of the Lord were to be subdued before him. The battle of Dunbar followed soon after; it was fought on the 3rd of September, 1650. The Scotch were beaten, and Cromwell was again victorious.

Fanaticism had never yet appeared upon so wide a stage, or played her part in a scene so dreadful. On the field of Dunbar puritan fought with puritan; the independent plunged his steel into the presbyterian; men by thousands threw

away their lives and slaughtered one another to prove that the solemn league was superseded by the engagement, or that the engagement was a violation of the covenant. It was a question much argued by the logicians of the times,* but impatient soldiers, seeing that the argument must drift either towards the restoration of monarchy or the establishment of a republic, had now determined to adjust the question with the sword. So, with solemn words upon their lips, and rising from the attitude of prayer, they fell upon the work of slaughter. Cromwell, having spent a long time in prayer, presented himself with joy upon his face to his chief captains. The Lord, he said, had answered his petitions: in God's name he promised them victory. He gave as the word for the English army, The Lord of hosts. The sign was welcomed through the camp with a dreadful enthusiasm. The general had received a message from the God of battles. The ark was in the camp, and it was the cause of the Most High. Of success there was not a doubt, and those who fell would receive the crown of glory in the realms above. Every regiment, every company, perhaps every individual, in the English army, felt at the

CHAPTER
VIII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1650.

* "And because the presbyterians still urged the covenant against killing the king and pulling down the parliament, and setting up a commonwealth, and taking the engagement, some of the independent brethren maintained, that its obligation ceased because it was a league, and the occasion of it ceased: and some of the Rump said it was like an almanack out of date: and some of the soldiers said they never took it; and others of them railed at it as a Scottish snare, so that when their interest would not suffer them to keep so solemn a vow, their wills would not suffer their judgments to confess it to be obligatory, at least, as to the part which they must violate."—*Barter*, part i. p. 64.

CHAPTER
VIII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1650.

moment the inspiration of these sentiments. On the other side, the Scotch were equally inflamed, and with the same fanaticism. Their battle-cry was, The covenant—the symbol at once of their faith and of their loyalty. Scores of presbyterian ministers were observed by the English as they descended the hill to begin the battle praying and vociferating; some cursing the English, as the enemies of God; some, with prophetic mien, denouncing them for immediate slaughter; but all alike sure of victory, and sure too of the approbation of the Most High. The battle was short and bloody, for the Scotch were no equal match for Cromwell and his veterans; they chased them, to use their own simile, like turkeys from the field; and in the battle and the flight they hewed them down by thousands. Their clergy were regarded as false prophets; and the English on their return related with satisfaction how they smote them to the dust in the very act of prayer, or shot them down with blasphemous predictions on their lips. Here was a further proof of the justice of the cause; for the hand of God had been stretched forth against the presbyterian clergy, as of old against the priests of Baal. It was the perversity and the judicial blindness of the Scotch, alone, which had hindered them from seeing that the Lord was fighting against them. Cromwell himself made use of this argument a few days after the battle, in his letter to the citizens of Edinburgh.

The victory no doubt was great, but greater still was the disaster. Puritanism received at

the battle of Dunbar a wound that never healed. After this its professions of religion were no longer believed. The cavaliers exulted as they saw the internal discord which rent the stronghold of their antagonists and shewed all their weakness. High churchmen of the school of Laud confirmed themselves with fresh arguments in the conclusion that puritan religion was grimace and folly, a plausible exterior covering a bad heart. The men who had overthrown the church and beheaded the king were equally ready, it appeared, to devour each other. Among sober men, who had hitherto adhered to the puritan cause, doubts arose, unfavourable not only to puritanism, but to all religion. The Scotch clergy were men of unblemished lives and of high renown for piety. Their learning was respectable, their scriptural knowledge was allowed to be great. Yet they had shewn themselves profoundly ignorant of the ways of God in a matter in which a kingdom was at stake and the lives of thousands of their flocks. They had prayed fervently; but so too had Cromwell and his officers. Each were certain that their prayers were heard, when it was now clear that one party, if not both, lay under a vile delusion—a delusion to which thousands of innocent men were sacrificed. How deep in many a simple mind the stirrings of heart!—how distressing the perplexity! Was there, then, no certainty and no benefit in prayer? Was there no overruling Providence? Was there perhaps, after all, no God? It is certain that unbelief, and even atheism, soon afterwards appeared

CHAPTER
VIII.COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1650.

CHAPTER
VIII.COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1650.

amongst the puritans; and it is impossible to avoid the reflection that these noxious weeds grew more rankly after the mad enthusiasm and the prodigal slaughter of Dunbar. As passion cooled, the enormity of the crime occurred to all men more forcibly. Cromwell himself seems to have relented of the bloodshed, and a few days afterwards he wrote to the parliament in bland accents: "Since we came into Scotland it hath been our desire and longing to have avoided blood in this business, by reason that God hath a people here fearing his name, though deceived."* It was against God's people, then, that he had drawn the sword. It was their blood that had been shed.

The next year an event occurred which increased the exasperation of the presbyterians and independents against each other. This was the trial and execution of Love, the presbyterian minister. He was the same person whose violent sermon at the treaty of Uxbridge gave so much offence. He appears to have been a zealous and an upright man, but of no discretion; in many respects a type of the presbyterians of his day. He was charged with a criminal correspondence with the young king, and condemned to death upon the scaffold as a traitor. Love had been a sufferer for conscience sake through his whole life. When a scholar at Oxford he was expelled as being the first who had publicly refused to subscribe the canons imposed by Laud. He came to London, and there

* Burnet, *Hist. Own Time*, vol. i., p. 74. Carlyle, *letters and papers*, vol. ii. p. 200.

for three years he was excluded from the ministry. He went to Newcastle and was imprisoned for preaching against the prayer-book; from thence he was removed to Westminster by habeas corpus and acquitted. In the beginning of the war he was accused for preaching treason and rebellion, "merely," he says, with some simplicity, "because I maintained in a sermon at Tenterden the lawfulness of defensive war." His sermon at Uxbridge brought him into fresh trouble; and though not punished, he fell into disgrace with his own party. Since the change of government he had been repeatedly imprisoned. "And now," he exclaims, in his defence upon the trial, "I am arraigned for my life, and am likely to suffer from the hands of those for whom I have done and suffered so much, and who have lift up their hands with me in the same covenant." He was attended upon the scaffold on Tower-hill by Manton, Calamy, and other eminent presbyterians; and he exulted in the cause for which his life was to be sacrificed. He declared in a calm and manly speech his dislike of the commonwealth and his detestation of the engagement. "I am for a regulated mixed monarchy, which I judge to be one of the best governments in the world. I opposed the late king and his forces, because I am against screwing up monarchy into tyranny, as much as against those who would pull it down into anarchy. I was never for putting the king to death, whose person I did promise in my covenant to preserve; and I judge it an ill way to cure the body politic

CHAPTER
VIII.

COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1651.

by cutting off the political head." With regard to himself, he added: "I bless God I have not the least trouble on my spirit; but I die with as much quietness of mind as if I was going to lie down on my bed to rest. I see men thirst after my blood, which will but hasten my happiness and their ruin; for though I am but of mean parentage, yet my blood is the blood of a christian, of a minister, of an innocent man, and, I speak it without vanity, of a martyr. I conclude with the speech of the apostle: I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand; but I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." He expressed his confidence of salvation through Jesus Christ, and gave his blessing to the multitude. He then kneeled down and prayed aloud, and rising up embraced the ministers and friends around him, and calmly laid his head upon the block. He died before he was forty years of age; and the example of his courage and his piety produced a deep impression. Dr. Manton announced his intention of preaching a funeral sermon: the soldiers threatened to be present and to shoot him through the head in his pulpit. Nothing daunted, perhaps even courting martyrdom, Manton persisted; and, not satisfied with preaching to an audience intensely moved, he printed the sermon, with the title of *The saint's triumph over death*. The soldiers were present; they clashed their arms, and scowled, and muttered, but did not proceed' to

further violence. Thus in the very heart of London was Love's memory avenged in the most solemn manner, and the commonwealth as openly defied.* The despised remonstrance of the presbyterian clergy, before the king's trial, must now at least have fallen with a heavy sound upon the recollections of the puritan statesmen. Their sin had found them out. One crime had produced another; and at every step they were more deeply entangled in the consequences of their great transgression. They were an isolated band of men with whom the nation had nothing in common; and their power was but a shadow, for they were still the creatures of the army. Hitherto the religious puritans had clung to them in spite of all their faults. Fickle as human nature is, the friendships of a life are not readily dissolved, nor long years of disinterested services forgotten. But the king's death, the war against the Scotch, and the execution of Love, were the three successive crimes which snapped the connection with a violent wrench, and turned reverence and admiration into scorn. The political leaders of the puritans found themselves all at once deserted. A universal hatred, mingled with a contempt still more fatal, smote them in their pride, and they no longer had either respect or confidence. In some respects the death of Love was even more injurious than the execution of the king. Belonging to the middle class, the people regarded

CHAPTER
VIII.COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1651.

* Brooke's Lives, art. Love. Baxter's Life, part i. p. 67. Neal, vol. vi. p. 406.

CHAPTER
VIII.

COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1651.

him as one of themselves, and the stroke which killed him reverberated through the hearts of myriads. In striking one of their own rank, the fatal blow appeared to have been aimed against a thousand others; and now none were safe. Nor could the common people understand the casuistry which justified the death of Love under the plea of state necessity. His only crime, in their judgment, was his stern integrity. He was a just man, and feared an oath; he was a martyr to the covenant, that solemn vow which his executioners themselves had both taken and imposed on others. And, to complete the wickedness, he was a minister of Christ, faithful, eloquent, and popular. He had been a puritan in evil days, and had borne its reproach with joy; and now he was cruelly beheaded with unknown forms of law, (for the tribunal by which he was condemned was, like that which tried the king, a special one, erected for the purpose,) and by the same men who had aroused the nation to arms on the pretext of resistance to arbitrary power and in defence of puritanism. The presbyterians regarded the ministerial office with profound respect. Amongst the points of difference between the independents and themselves this was one. The presbyterians viewed with concern the facility with which men, in their opinion, uncommissioned and unqualified were admitted by the independents to teach and to preach. They saw with alarm the sacred office invaded by the laity; and it must be confessed that the presumptuous levity, the impudence and

ignorance, displayed too often by the lay preachers of the commonwealth, were more than enough to excite their uneasiness. But now it seemed as if an audacious outrage was intended against the ministry itself. Since the days of Saul, the reprobate king of Israel, it was a crime unparalleled. He had imbrued his hands in the blood of Ahimelec the priest, and these men were defiled in the innocent blood of Love. The offence imputed to the sufferers was the same: the one had succoured David, the other had corresponded with the young king. They had both assisted the Lord's anointed in his distresses, and they had both died by the violent hands of cruel and bloodthirsty men. The blow sank deeper, we are told by those who lived at the time, than future ages will easily believe; and from this period, with the exception of the sectaries, the puritans abhorred the commonwealth.*

CHAPTER
VIII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1651.

As the public discontent increased, the personal reputation of the leaders of the commonwealth suffered in proportion. They were everywhere charged with selfishness and rapacity, and the murmurs of the nation were fomented by a tax of ninety thousand pounds a month, which had been imposed by a vote of the house of commons in April 1649, for the maintenance of the forces. Pryn declared the imposition illegal; and publicly assigned his reasons why he could neither in law, conscience, or prudence submit to it.† The vast estates of the royalists had been confiscated.

* Baxter i. 67.

† Pryn's legal vindication of the liberties of England, 1649.

CHAPTER
VIII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1651.

The patrimony of the church had been seized ; even tithes were threatened, but happily saved in deference to the selfishness of the lay-impropriators : yet the public debts were not paid, and no satisfactory accounts were published. The taxation was enormous. At no period of the war had the king's army cost more than half the sum now levied ; and that of the parliament had not exceeded two-thirds of it. Why, then, should the taxes be now increased to ninety thousand pounds a month? "This is a mystery of iniquity," exclaims a pungent writer of the time, "which fills the saints' pockets with money, and the world with wonder. Within eight years the parliament have raised by taxes more than all the kings of England since the conquest. These are they that, like Hananiah, break the wooden yoke from our necks, and put on one of iron ; they free us from a little ship-money, paid thrice in an age, and impose as much at once for a monthly tax ; they quit us of the monopoly of tobacco, and set up an excise upon bread and beer ; they ease the wanton and rich man, and grind the needy and the poor. Yet these are thy gods, O London" !* Estates and pensions were lavished on those who had no claim even upon their own party but an unscrupulous defence of all its measures. Scot, who had been, it is said, a brewer's clerk, was presented with the archbishop's house at Lambeth. Sir Arthur Haselrigge, besides a large present in money, and a lucrative appointment as governor at Newcastle, received

* Clem. Walker, hist. Independents, part i. p. 173, and part ii. p. 228.

the magnificent donation of the bishop's house, manor, and park of Auckland. Captain Westron, a man unknown and insignificant, had the bishop of Worcester's manor of Hartlebury; colonel Brereton, the archbishop's house and lands at Croydon, where he turned the chapel into a kitchen; "a goodly reformation," (writes his presbyterian censor) "and fits with his stomach as well as his religion." He had besides the beautiful retreat of Cashiobury and other lands of lord Capel, worth two thousand a year. Lenthall the speaker, the greatest renegade of his age, was loaded with preferment, and his son was placed in an office worth two thousand pounds a year. He was soon after charged by the parliament with embezzlement and other misdemeanors, and made his peace, it was alleged, with a fine to Cromwell's army of fifteen thousand pounds. But that which gave most offence of all was a weekly payment of four pounds by their own order to each of the five hundred and sixteen members of the house of commons; a sum which, if all of them received their wages, would exceed a hundred thousand pounds a year. A republic, if such it were, was certainly no cheap government in England.

The government was selfish and incapable, and it was evident that it could not last. Meantime the young king, having been first crowned in Scotland, made a rash attempt to invade England and recover his southern throne. Cromwell defeated him at Worcester on the 3rd of September,

CHAPTER
VIII.COMMON-
WEALTH.

A.D. 1652.

CHAPTER

VIII.

COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1652.

1652. The contest was severe, and the carnage dreadful. The king, after many romantic adventures, escaped to France in a fishing-boat. His fugitive army experienced a worse fate. A state of civil war had now accustomed the nation to ferocity and blood, and the retreating Scotch, defenceless and afraid, were used with a barbarity of which cannibals might have been ashamed. The country people in mere wantonness knocked them on the head like bullocks. A party of a thousand of them, pallid and trembling with fright and hunger, rushed into the small town of Sandbach in Cheshire. It happened to be the annual fair; the booths and stalls were instantly torn up, and great numbers of the fugitives were literally beaten to death with the sticks and truncheons the materials supplied.* Of two thousand cavalry that fled from Worcester few or none escaped. Cromwell returned in triumph to London. The speaker, the lord mayor, the sheriffs and aldermen, with thousands of citizens of every rank, went out to welcome him. He conducted himself with apparent humility; spoke little of himself; ascribed the victory to the gallantry of his soldiers, and the glory to God alone. An act was passed for making the 3rd of September a thanksgiving day for ever, and a fast was ordered in these terms: "to seek God for improvement of his great mercies, and for doing things most to his glory and the good of the commonwealth." Then the work of vengeance was immediately renewed,

* Whitelocke, p. 484.

and the very next day the most illustrious of the prisoners were ordered to be tried on the charge of high treason. The earl of Derby was beheaded within a month at Bolton, a town of his own, and the scene of his former triumph. He was a great man, but he had lived so little amongst his equals that he knew not how to treat his inferiors, and his haughty bearing gave a keener edge to the vengeance of some of his enemies.* The scaffold was erected in the market-place. "Let me die," he said, "lying so that I may look towards the church, for I hope to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." On the same day a captain Benbow was executed at Shrewsbury; several others were condemned whose lives were spared. Cromwell's fortune was now in the ascendant, and having no further employment in the field he directed all his attention to the affairs of the state. A residence in London soon convinced him that his time was come; he went down to the house of commons attended only by a file of musketeers, and turned the members out of doors with every expression of contempt. In the afternoon he dissolved the council of state with as little ceremony. "Gentlemen," said he, "if you have met here as private persons you shall not be disturbed; but if as a council of state this is no place for you." On the 20th of April, 1653, the skeleton of a parliament and the ghost of a commonwealth passed away together. The nation was delighted. The event was hailed with

* Clarendon, book xiii. p. 412.

CHAPTER VIII. COMMON-WEALTH, A.D. 1653. shouts and bonfires; for an incapable government is resented more than a bad one. To the people it seems an insult, and they can pardon an injury when they will not forgive an impertinence. The abortive republic died out of its own accord; it expired of inanition and popular contempt. Had there been no Cromwell its fate must have been the same. It would have fallen to pieces under the assault of the first rude hand that was raised against it, and that hand could not have been long wanting.

Upon the whole, and to view their conduct in the most favourable light, the leaders of the commonwealth were rather weak than bad. As senators they were feeble, but they had good intentions. As purifiers of religion their merits are more questionable, though even here they have some claim on our respect. They discussed, and, were it not that the act would have been a suicide, they would have effected, a reform in the representative system, which would have placed the house of commons on a sound and wholesome footing, and rendered needless, in after times, the agitation of a subject which has brought us more than once to the verge of revolution. They would have made population the basis of representation, and yet taken care that the interests of no special class or order of electors should prevail unfairly. They would have reformed the law, and they actually laid the foundations upon which the most important legal reforms were effected in happier times. They improved the general condition of English society and the tone of manners. They repressed

drunkenness and debauchery, to a degree unknown amongst the common people. If they did not always reward virtue they invariably punished vice. The morals of the nation were their incessant care. Once a week excluding political affairs, however pressing, from their deliberations, they took into consideration the state of religion and the best means of amending it. The zeal with which they demolished maypoles, denounced bull-baitings, and sought out bear-gardens, afforded no doubt infinite mirth to the readers of *Hudibras* twenty years afterwards; but an English village in the commonwealth was as much superior to an English village in the reign of Charles II. as savage life to civilized, or the habits of Great Britain now to those of South America.) The swearer, the petty thief, the habitual liar, was dragged to the stocks, or soundly whipped, or held up to detestation. Grosser sins met with a more terrible retribution: fornication was felony, and adultery was punishable with death. But the nation was not enervated. The licence and folly which pleads for exemption on the ground that the national spirit must at all costs be sustained, received its abundant, and if history had been but faithful to her trust, its final answer. England is the nation of brave men, but the renown of England was never carried to a higher pitch than by the heroes of the commonwealth—by Cromwell on the land and Blake upon the sea.

Bishop Burnet relates that he saw three of Cromwell's regiments at Aberdeen about the time

CHAPTER
VIII.

COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1653.

of the battle of Dunbar.* Their demeanour excited, even in that presbyterian land, respect and admiration. There was a dignity and composure in their looks, a self-restraint, a gravity and piety in their conduct such as had never hitherto been seen in soldiers. They prayed fervently in public, and they often preached; and these men were the bravest of the brave. The soldier, it is true, broke out sometimes and wrestled with the saint, and the consistency of the latter was in peril. On one occasion the presbyterian clergy attacked them from the pulpit, and denounced their invasion of the ministerial office by their irregular prayers and preachings as scarcely less than blasphemy. For armed listeners the offence was too great to be endured. They interrupted the preacher with expressions of contempt, and their swords leaped by an instinct from their scabbards. No injury was done; but Cromwell severely censured their misconduct, and cashiered the commander for having overlooked the outrage. The army was probably more religious and, apart from the fanaticism which infected some regiments, better and wiser than the nation; this indeed was the secret of its power; but the leaders of the commonwealth laboured everywhere to effect the same improvement, and to exalt in England the popular standard of virtue and pure religion.

Yet it cannot be said that their efforts were successful. The men were at this time boys who, in the reign of Charles II., flooded England with

* Own Times, vol. i. p. 79.

depravity. The shameless harlots of the most profligate court that any protestant state in Europe had ever witnessed were now receiving the lessons of their girlhood. The people, now demure and serious, and constant at the parish church, were to throw off the cloak of religion and of decency; and, upon the signal of the king's return, to assume the follies of a harlequin. The infatuation was to last for a quarter of a century; until at length, when Charles II. died, not only religion, but virtue, patriotism, and morals should be in general and profound contempt; and the most religious nation in the world should be the most degraded and debauched. The maxim is true of nations as of individuals, that no man becomes supremely wicked on a sudden. If the explosion is terrible, the train has been laid with care and forethought. Enormous guilt may break out unexpectedly, but its way has been silently prepared; and secret depravity has existed in the mind long before its taint is visible in the conduct. Appearances were hollow and deceitful. The shew of national piety which everywhere prevailed was not sincere. When temptation came it offered no resistance; it embraced the seducer and courted infamy. Into the causes of this great apostacy it behoves us to inquire.

CHAPTER

VIII.

COMMON-

WEALTH,

A.D. 1653.

1. When the leaders of the commonwealth undertook the management of the state, religion amongst the puritans, exposed to the evil influences of civil war and frequent change, had already declined. It could not have been other-

CHAPTER
VIII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A. D. 1653.

wise. It is impossible to conceive that men who had been for five years engaged in acts of deadly warfare with their own former friends and neighbours, should retain the same tenderness of conscience and that clear perception of right with which they entered on the war. Many an outrage had been committed, many a fellow-man destroyed, for which conscience, in her calmer moods, would have no milder term than revenge and wantonness. The uneasy victor would strive to forget the past and to silence the still voice within him. His mind would become hard and unrelenting; and he would probably take refuge in one of these two delusions, either that the end sanctifies the means, or that his whole conduct had been the subject of some absolute decree. Each of these subterfuges carries deadly poison to the soul. At the same time the political changes had obliterated something of his reverence for truth, and for the obligations of an oath. The covenant had scarcely been imposed before he was taught to evade it; and when the engagement followed, he had scarcely lifted his right hand to heaven and sworn to observe it, than its provisions were treated with the very same contempt. In man the want of reverence for truth resembles in its effects the loss of chastity in woman. In that one virtue all the others are included; and the mind having lost its tone, and now deeply conscious of its degradation, ceases to strive with sin; for what is left is not worth a struggle. Again, society had been to a great extent disorganized.

During the war many churches were closed, and if the inefficient ministry of the Laudian school was silenced it had been too often succeeded by rant and ignorance. The pulpit during the commonwealth began to fall into contempt. The parliament found it necessary to reiterate the injunctions which king James, and Charles, and Laud himself had vainly striven to enforce. They forbade all ministers to interfere with politics, and commanded them to adhere strictly to their texts and to the preaching of the gospel. But the admonition was in vain; politics were too exciting, and the preachers too vain-glorious. An ignorant visionary could always provide himself with a text, and often with a prophecy, which bore directly upon the last week's proceedings in the house of commons, or the result of the next campaign. With what desolation of heart many an humble christian returned home from such discourses, uncheered, untaught, we can never know. How infidelity grew apace, and an utter disdain of the ministrations of the pulpit, we can more readily imagine.

2. As the puritan leaders fell into contempt their characters were severely handled. For some time they had been freely charged with rapacity and pride, they were now accused of grosser vices. When Cromwell dissolved the parliament, he threw the foulest charges in the very face of his former associates. Henry Martyn and sir Peter Wentworth, he said, were known adulterers; pointing to another he exclaimed, there sits a drunkard.

CHAPTE
VIII.
COMMON-
WEALTH,
A. D. 1653.

Others he charged with fraud and perjury ; and one and all of them with a life and conduct scandalous to the gospel. Whether this outburst of abuse were premeditated is not worth consideration. The same accusations were openly preferred at the time by other men of the puritan party. The writings of their opponents abound with them ; and Cromwell, cunning even in the vortex of his passion, alleged no doubt the crimes which every one suspected. And it is to be noted further, that the friends of the accused shewed but little warmth in defending them. Ludlow, for instance, declaims against Cromwell for having acted a treacherous and impious part,* but says nothing of slander or of falsehood. Clement Walker, a member of the parliament, repeats some of the accusations with a grossness of language which decorum forbids us to transcribe.† Yet these men affected the greatest sanctity. They had recently enacted a law which declared adultery a felony and inflicted the punishment of death. Women of loose character and their abettors were to be whipped, branded in the face, pilloried, and imprisoned three years, for the first offence, and hanged for the second.‡ If the framers of such a law were men of impure lives their hypocrisy was indeed detestable. And while the morals of some were impeached, the claim of others to be con-

* Ludlow, p. 174.

† e.g. Henry Martyn's gains by the revolution are stated thus : " Col. of a regiment of horse, *et agmen scortorum.*" I veil his coarse English under decent Latin. Hist. Indep. i. 171.

‡ An act for suppressing detestable sins, May, 1650.

sidered in any sense religious men was utterly denied. Cromwell familiarly called them "the gentiles." Sir Henry Vane obscured what notions of religion he possessed beneath a cloud of mysticism. Sir James Harrington, the author of the *Oceana*, was an infidel and theorist in religion as in politics. Some were charged, perhaps unjustly, with atheism; but upon the whole few practised the ancient religion of the puritans. They had begun to make use of it, as statesmen have so often done, as a contrivance for amusing or governing the people. The nation discovered the imposition, and as the commonwealth fell into contempt religion shared in the disaster.

3. During the commonwealth it was that mannerism and a tedious formality arose to its height amongst the puritans. Their religious services were often of a wearisome length. Bishop Burnet mentions six sermons preached upon a fast day without intermission. "I was there myself," says the devout author of the *Pastoral Care*, "and not a little weary of so tedious a service."* The wisest men fell into these absurdities. Howe, Cromwell's domestic chaplain, is said to have conducted the service upon fast days, which were frequent in those times, in this manner: He began at nine o'clock with a prayer of a quarter of an hour, read and expounded scripture for about three quarters, prayed an hour, preached another, then prayed half an hour, the people then sung about a quarter of an hour, during which he retired and

CHAPTER
VIII.COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1653.* *Own Times*, p. 73.

CHAPTER
 VIII.
 COMMON-
 WEALTH,
 A.D. 1653.

took a little refreshment : he then came into the pulpit again, prayed an hour more, preached another hour, and then with a prayer of half an hour concluded the service.* The violent emotions of a civil war gave an unnatural interest, and with it an extraordinary power of attention, to the hearers ; but when the war and its alarms ceased their jaded spirits flagged, and instead of fervour, coldness and a monotonous formality prevailed. There are seasons of unusual depth and power, times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,† when it would seem almost an act of violence to interrupt the devotions of a congregation at the usual hour. And there is no reason why a sermon more than an oration upon law, or literature, or politics, should not sometimes be of extraordinary length. But in general, good sense and the comfort of the hearers must apply the rule. Religious services of intolerable length mark, in short, the decay of manly and healthy piety. When the mind is full, language is at controul and superfluous words are few. Long prayers and sermons, with rare exceptions, prove the want of preparation, that is, the want of earnestness and sincerity in the minister rather than the exuberance of his holy zeal. From the days of Chrysostom to those of Latimer, and, later still, of Wesley and Whitfield, the most effective have been short : the burning torrent rushed by, but its traces were indelible. The puritans however were not alone to blame. Nicholas Ferrar, of Little Gidding, a

* Calamy's Lives, &c., vol. i. p. 81.

† Acts iii. 19.

churchman of the Laudian school in the days of Charles, attached a chapel to his house in which the worship incessantly went on. The family was divided, like the priests in the temple, into courses, succeeding each other at intervals of three hours, day and night, without intermission. The song of praise was never silent ; at least the organ never ceased ; for he must know little of the gospel of Jesus Christ who can mistake these acts of superstition for the offering of a free heart which rises acceptable to God. The perfection of this system is indeed to be found in the church of Rome ; in monasteries where the service of the lips is incessant and the heart averse or profoundly unconcerned.

CHAPTER
VIII.

COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1653.

4. It was no advantage to religion that every state paper and ordinance of the parliament spoke in the language of the pulpit or of a religious tract. Religion suffered greatly in consequence, and puritanism, if possible, still more. A devout recognition of the hand of God, and a humble acknowledgment of his goodness, are the duty of a christian nation ; but the obtrusion of a religious phraseology is out of place in state papers, and the incessant recurrence of scripture language is profane. At the close of the Scotch campaign, and again after the battle of Worcester, national thanksgivings were commanded by the parliament through public "ordinances." The first of these recites in the following words "the grounds and reasons" for the act. "If any nation in the world hath at this day upon them mighty and strong

CHAPTER
VIII.

COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1653.

obligations unto the Lord for his peculiar manifestations of mercy and goodness unto them, it is the parliament and people of England; in the midst of whom the Lord hath walked most eminently for these ten years past. It is the duty of all people in this commonwealth, especially those who fear the Lord, to observe these his marvellous and gracious dispensations, and be taught by them not only to submit unto and close with the actings and appearances of the Lord who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will, but to be enlarged in rejoicings and thankful acknowledging, and to trust him in like straits for the time to come. It is to be considered," they say, "that this is given as a seal and confirmation from heaven of the justice of our cause and of the sincerity of his servants that are his unworthy instruments in the carrying of it on." The preamble concludes with calling upon the nation to observe "how suddenly the Lord turned himself against their enemies, and rose as a giant refreshed with wine."* The ordinance for a day of thanksgivings after the battle of Worcester† opens in these words: "The works of providence, by which the Lord hath pleaded the cause of this parliament and commonwealth, in the sight of the nations round about, are glorious, and will be sought out by all those that have pleasure in them; and therefore must not pass under the

* An act for setting apart a day of thanksgiving, &c., Sept. 17, 1650.

† An act for setting apart, &c., 26th Sept. 1651. The parliament had now returned to the antient usage, and style their ordinances *acts*.

common title of events and chances of war : the Lord having so done this marvellous work, for time and place, with a concurrence of all other remarkable circumstances, that it ought to be had in everlasting remembrance, both by ourselves and by the generations which shall be born ; as will eminently and convincingly appear by this brief ensuing narrative." After an official narrative of the battle, they add these words : " Thus was our gracious God pleased to appear as the Lord of hosts (which was our word in this and the battle of Dunbar) with and for his people in destroying this desperate and insolent enemy, and working a glorious salvation for us." The ministers of every parish in England were required to publish the act, and the narrative which prefaced it, in their churches. How many of them, though puritans, would much rather have read the book of sports itself ! The impressions upon the hearers would of course be various. The simple-minded, awed by the solemnity of the language, would acquiesce. A few political fanatics might exult. But what would be the feelings of the great body of the nation, of the cavaliers and presbyterians, and more especially of their children now rising into manhood ? Were the rulers of the day then, indeed, the chosen vessels of God ? Were the victories won so clearly just and righteous ? Was the Almighty the patron of a faction, not a Being whose tender mercies were over all his works ? Or were the ministers of religion, as one man, throughout

CHAPTER
VIII.COMMON-
WEALTH,
A.D. 1653.

CHAPTER

VIII.

COMMON-

WEALTH,

A.D. 1653.

England merely abetting this vast iniquity—this treason against the attributes of the Most High—and offering hypocritical thanksgivings for the slaughter of presbyterians at Dunbar, and of church of England royalists at Worcester? And if so, what was religion but a state machine, to be worked for the advantage of those in power? Wise and experienced men might grieve, but they, it is true, would feel no such embarrassments; they were in no danger of charging the follies of the government on the bible. But the young are not experienced, nor can they be, in this sense, wise. Can we be surprised if, thus trained, they lived to ridicule seriousness, to deny a providence, to regard religion as a fable, and to question the very being of a God?

An age of great religious profession was succeeded by an age of great impiety. The fact cannot be denied: it is never likely to be forgotten. For the men who detest religion as the barrier to their vices, or the exponent of their shame, ring it in our ears incessantly. Whether this shameful declension were, however, the consequence of pure and spiritual religion, or of the want of it, the reader is now in a condition to decide.

CHAPTER IX.

HISTORIANS have written the life of Cromwell rather than the history of his protectorate. His personal character has been more interesting than the record of his actions; although his actions were in a peculiar sense his own. Assistance embarrassed him; his counsellors lent him neither weight nor wisdom. The less he was incumbered the more steady was his course and the loftier his flight. The only assistance which he valued was that of his council of officers; and he valued them only so long as they submitted to his dictation. Resistance was always punished, under one pretext or another, with his high displeasure; and long before the protector's death most of his early friends had been disgraced. Harrison had been arrested; Ludlow was banished to his house in the country. Colonel Lilburn had been a prisoner in Newgate for several years. Desborough, who had married his sister, and Fleetwood, his son-in-law, were treated with suspicion, and compelled to stand aloof. Ireton, another son-in-law, was dead, but he too had outlived the protector's confidence. As the civilians fell beneath his dislike they were treated

CHAPTER
IX.PROTECTORATE.
A.D. 1653.

CHAPTER
IX.

PROTEC-
TORATE,
A.D. 1653.

with contemptuous neglect. The mind that conceived, executed. He would not submit to that intermediate process by means of which our own thoughts return to us amended and improved by the toil of other men. If he listened to advice, it was to shew his condescension ; if he seemed to solicit the opinions of his friends, it was that he might arrive at their secrets and know how far to calculate on their assistance. There is only one instance in his life in which he is known to have been diverted from his purpose in deference to the judgment of his advisers. He reluctantly declined the crown when his generals were displeased ; submitting however, even then, rather to force than argument ; for he clearly perceived that in this instance the whole army would have sided against their general, and drawn their swords again for liberty and a new republic.

His first act after the dissolution of the rump receives its explanation from this view of his character. In his own name and by his sole authority, on the 6th of June 1653, he convoked, or rather impressed, a parliament. It contained a few gentlemen of fortune and education ; but the majority were vulgar, ignorant, and utterly incompetent. Of these, one hundred and twenty obeyed the summons ; the famous Barebones, a prating fanatic whose celebrity is owing entirely to his impudence, amongst the rest. Cromwell addressed them in Whitehall ; he told them that they had a clear call to undertake the government ; “ he encouraged them with divers scriptures,” not perhaps so much from an affecta-

tion of piety as because the scriptures were in fact almost his only literature; and he delivered to them an instrument of government confiding the nation to their care, and limiting their existence to the month of November in the following year, when they were to nominate their successors and abdicate their functions. That such an assembly should succeed was impossible; that Cromwell wished it to succeed is most unlikely. It is more probable that he hoped by this manœuvre at once to indulge the fanatics, and, as a political party, to destroy them; a cunning device and perfectly successful, though unworthy of a statesman or a man of virtue. They met and fasted,* chose a speaker, and set apart a day for prayer;† and they passed a declaration “calling upon the godly to seek God for a blessing upon the nation.”‡ But they who expect that prayer and fasting will fit them to discharge the obligations which folly has imposed, are grievously deceived. When they proceeded to business they were a laughing-stock; and happily their incapacity was soon apparent even to themselves. In a few weeks they hurried back to Whitehall and resigned their powers to Cromwell without even naming their successors. The name of a parliament was now odious, and government itself contemptible. Disgusted alike with every change, the nation acquiesced in the power of one strong hand. Thus the disgrace of his convention was a substantial addition to Cromwell’s power. Their

CHAPTER
IX.PROTECTORATE,
A.D. 1653.

* On the 5th of July. † The 11th of July. ‡ The 13th of July.

CHAPTER
IX.

PROTEC-
TORATE,
A.D. 1653.

impotence contrasted with his vigour; their failure with his own wonderful success. While every subject to which they applied themselves seemed too great for them, the executive government beneath his vigorous management rose every day in public estimation. While the parliament could devise, for example, no other remedy for the evils and delays of the law than the ridiculous measure of suppressing the court of chancery itself, the lord general was diffusing everywhere the blessings of cheap justice by choosing able judges and upright magistrates. The return to order after a long period of distraction went on rapidly. The army was successful in Ireland; and against the Scotch, who still remained in arms; and, above all, the vanity of England was inflamed by a series of brilliant victories at sea over the Spaniards and the Dutch. No successes were ever more opportune. The fears of the people had been thoroughly aroused. The Dutch fleet had thrown their cannon balls into the streets of Dover; and the roaring of their guns, in an engagement at the Nore, had actually been heard in London. Within a few weeks their fleet was dispersed or taken, and their brave admiral Van Tromp was slain. The city was in a transport of delight; and the impression was deepened by the circumstance of the death of Dean, one of the English captains who fell in the action. His body was carried from Greenwich to Westminster upon the Thames with funeral honours not at all inferior to those which were paid to Nelson by our fathers; and he was buried in Westminster

abbey with the utmost splendour, Cromwell himself attending as chief mourner. War was still the passion of the age, and the nation began to admire Cromwell as a deliverer and almost as a patriot, now that he taught them once more that triumphs might be had abroad, and without the misery of civil war at home.

One act of this short parliament deserves notice; it is that which empowered the civil magistrate to perform the rites of marriage, and enacted further that no marriage otherwise performed should be legal. This latter clause, however, was soon afterwards repealed; but marriages continued to be celebrated before the civil powers till the restoration, when an act was passed legalizing all those which had been thus contracted, but prohibiting them for the future. Taken in connection with the terrible severity with which licentious crimes were punished, this piece of legislation, at any time unwise, seems utterly preposterous. It is the legislation of lunatics to remove the sanctions of a law, and yet to visit the violation of it with aggravated penalties! No sufficient reason for this strange act has been handed down to us. Paley suggests that it was meant to degrade the clergy; but this does not appear. Probably some dim suspicion that religious marriage rites were superstitions troubled the understandings of Cromwell's senators. Since marriage was a sacrament at Rome, in England it must be a civil contract. Thus imbecility reasons, childishly supposing that truth always lies exactly at the antipodes of error.

CHAPTER
IX.

PROTEC-
TORATE,
A.D. 1653.

Yet the notion that marriage is no more than a civil contract seems to have awakened some misgivings in the parliament; for though no religious services were required, or indeed permitted, the contracting parties were obliged to make a solemn vow "as in the name and presence of Almighty God;" and civil contracts require no such confirmation. Marriage is no doubt a civil contract so far that it may be contracted by heathens and by irreligious persons, whose impiety detracts nothing from its obligations. For the sake of such it may possibly be right to permit, though never to encourage, marriages purely secular. But the parliament of 1653 professed to legislate as christian statesmen for a christian community. They punished irreligion as an offence against the state. The respect they shewed for uneasy consciences they shewed only at the pillory and the whipping-post. Whatever were their motives, religious liberty, in connection with this subject, never crossed their minds. They knew that the relations of social life are sanctified by the word of God and by prayer. They knew that God had consecrated the state of matrimony to such an excellent mystery, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his church. They knew that the violation of its law incurred the divine displeasure, and deserved at the hands of man, as they maintained, an ignominious death. Yet they divorced marriage from religion; and they even forbade the contracting parties to connect it with the tribute of thanksgiving or the devout utterance of prayer.

In December the parliament resigned. In the same month the council of officers proclaimed their general lord-protector of a commonwealth of three kingdoms. A constitution was prepared and published—the first in modern history of a series of experiments magnificent and yet abortive, rich in promise futile in practice. It consisted of forty-two articles; and the protector being firmly seated, and having little to apprehend from any future parliament, one of its provisions was, that a house of commons should be chosen by free election of the ancient burgesses. It was an imperial parliament of four hundred members, including thirty Scotch and thirty Irish representatives. The franchise was now extended to some boroughs which the genius of trade had already touched with her magic wand. Manchester sent one member. Papists were excluded from the franchise, and of course from the parliament. Those who had taken part with the king during the late wars could neither sit nor vote at the next four elections, a period of twelve years; for it was decreed that parliaments should be triennial. On the whole, and taking into the account the dominant position of Cromwell and his military friends, their parchment constitution (for such it proved) breathed a generous spirit, and bore some traces of a sincere regard for real liberty.

But there are three articles which concern religion, and they are honourable to the party which framed them. The first of these (article xxxv.) provides for the maintenance of the national faith. In reference to tithes, which were then and long

CHAPTER
IX.
PROTECTORATE,
A.D. 1653.

CHAPTER IX.
 PROTECTORATE,
 A. D. 1653.

afterwards a source of irritation and uneasiness, it contemplates the substitution of a "provision less subject to scruple and contention, and more certain than the present;" still enacting "that, until such provision be made, the present maintenance shall not be taken away or impeached." Thus a national church was under all circumstances to be steadfastly maintained. Of the next article it is scarcely too much to affirm that it laid the first foundations of toleration and religious liberty in England, if not in christendom. It briefly declares, that "to the public profession held forth none shall be compelled by penalties or otherwise; but that endeavours be used to win them by sound doctrine and the example of a good conversation." Wise men, musing in their closets, had for some time questioned the wisdom, if not the justice, of compelling the dissatisfied to embrace the religion of the greater number, and making their dissent a crime. But Cromwell was the first who dared not merely to give expression to the doubt, but to enrol the principle itself with the fundamental laws of England. The precious seed was never lost. Received with hesitation at the time; denounced by presbyterians as little short of blasphemy; spurned by the parliaments of Charles II. with the same indiscriminate contempt with which all Cromwell's legislation was trampled under their feet, it still survived. The plant grew, for it was watered by the rains of heaven, and tens of thousands have reposed beneath its quiet shade. The next article more fully explains the extent of the proposed

toleration. All who professed faith in God through Jesus Christ, though differing in judgment from the doctrine, discipline, or worship publicly held forth, were assured of protection in the profession of their faith and the exercise of their religion; "provided, however, this liberty be not extended to popery or prelacy, nor to such as, under the profession of Christ, hold forth and practise licentiousness." Ever since the reformation popery had been prohibited as a treasonable offence. The subjects of the pope, it was held, must be disloyal to a protestant. If such severity were ever justifiable, it was so now, when the papists in Ireland were still in arms. But why should prelacy be placed beneath an interdict? Except that it was loyal to the king, the only pretext was, that prelatists were engaged in those frequent plots which every month produced for assassinating the protector. Some reckless men of the church party were drawn into them, it is true, from time to time. But assassination was as little to the taste of the cavaliers as long prayers and presbyterian sermons. Their character was that upon which too many of the English gentry have always prided themselves. They placed their religion in a few decent ceremonies, in high courage and a nice sense of honour, but chiefly in the last. Except in open battle, Cromwell had little to fear from their daggers. His alarms were reasonable, but his dangers lay in another quarter. He was in constant dread by night and day; for he knew that he might fall by the

CHAPTER
IX.
PROTECTORATE,
A.D. 1654.

hand of some religious fanatic ; one of those whom he himself perhaps, in former days, had trained ; and who now, cast aside, was maddened with disappointment and revenge.

Upon the whole, Cromwell was tolerant—more tolerant than the age approved, or than a shortsighted view of his own interests might have allowed. But the prelatists, with a few exceptions, still felt the weight of his hard hand. Though Pearson, Brownrigge, and Ussher were suffered to preach in London, there was no general toleration of episcopacy, nor even a licence for the prayer-book. The protector, in a letter of instruction addressed to the judges of assize, gave directions, about this time, that the magistrates should be required to be particularly careful, amongst other nuisances, to suppress ale-houses and the book of common prayer.* On Cromwell's sole authority, and that of his military cabinet, an ordinance was issued in April, 1654, the effect of which was to expose the few episcopalian clergy to intolerable hardships. The committee for scandalous ministers, chiefly composed of presbyterians, had already thrust in the sickle with an unsparing hand ; a new commission was now issued to certain *triers*, who were sent in to glean the field. The triers were chiefly independents. Hugh Peters was one of them ; Rouse, the speaker of the convention just dissolved, another ; from which the reader will probably infer that lenient measures were not intended. The powers of this commission were absolute. They sat in London at Whitehall, and

* Walker, Sufferings, part i. p. 179.

sent out their subcommissioners through England and Wales to investigate the character, lives, and doctrine of the clergy, and “to examine, judge, and approve all such persons as should be called to preach the gospel.” Compared with this commission the star chamber itself was constitutional. The triers were despotic; their determination was final and absolute; yet they were amenable to no law, and they were bound by no precedents. Their own judgment was their sole guide. Their will was law. The good or evil which they did was regulated by the wisdom and integrity they possessed or wanted. One of their duties was the rejection of scandalous and unfit ministers; but of that scandal or unfitness they were the sole judges. They were a spiritual court martial, without a military code to guide them. They summoned witnesses from the parishioners of the accused, and upon their depositions, often prejudiced with malice or tinged with violent party spirit, the minister was forthwith suspended or deprived; and he had no redress. The clergy who were presented with vacant benefices (and their proceedings, it may be supposed, created not a few vacancies,) had to pass the fiery ordeal of the triers, whose commission ran in these general terms: They were to satisfy themselves that every person so nominated “was a person, for the grace of God in him, his holy and unblameable conversation, and also for his knowledge and utterance, able and fit to preach the gospel.” The requirements themselves are

CHAPTER
IX.

PROTEC-
TORATE,
A.D. 1654.

moderate we allow; the demands are reasonable and the standard scriptural; but it was justly objected to the ordinance, that it specified no one particular save that of a holy conversation, leaving all the rest couched in the general terms of grace, knowledge, and utterance. But what measure of grace, knowledge, and utterance was to form the standard? and how was the existence of these virtues to be proved? The first is essential, the second useful, the third important. But may not the abundance of the one compensate in some measure for the want of the other two? And if we grant that the triers were competent, as they probably were, to determinate in many instances that grace was wanting, yet how were they to ascertain its presence, unless the discerning of spirits had been imparted—a spiritual gift to fit them for their office? This latitude left the accused, in short, at the mercy of the triers. They might condemn without assigning any cause but general unfitness, or, in their own fatal words, “not approved.” Their arbitrary proceedings, their partiality and delay, are said to have exceeded the worst oppressions of the prelates. In their examinations no inquiries, it is said, were made with reference to useful learning. The great points of christian doctrine, the trinity, the incarnation and satisfaction of our blessed Lord, were wholly overlooked: no heresies or errors but what they called arminianism were considered; but a few jejune and useless questions were asked, relating chiefly to the then discriminating points of election and re-

probation. In short, the indictment against them is concluded thus by the formidable historian of their delinquencies : “ The best and most useful divine would, generally speaking, have been rejected, if, instead of believing in Jesus Christ, he did not testify faith towards John Calvin, and repentance or obedience to the lord-protector Oliver Cromwell.”*

CHAPTER
IX.

PROTEC-
TORATE,
A.D. 1654.

But the whole proceeding was conducted in revolutionary times, and when the spiritual affairs of the nation were yet unsettled. Perhaps this consideration affords some apology. The ecclesiastical courts had been destroyed; they had sunk in the fathomless deep of public hatred. This was an attempt to erect a new spiritual tribunal; and candour will investigate the intentions of its founders, rather than the success of their first experiment. Was Cromwell anxious to purify the ministry, or, under that pretext, to detect and punish the royalists? Probably the answer would be, that while he sincerely aimed at the former of these objects, he was by no means indifferent to the latter. His puritan education had not lost its influence. He knew that the scriptures were the only source of truth in religion; he knew that the religion which did not produce a holy life was an imposture; and though his moral sense was now perverted, and his conscience somewhat callous, he had not cast aside the restraints of religion: he acknowledged its importance if he did not feel its power; and he pro-

* Walker, part i. p. 178.

CHAPTER

IX.

PROTEC-
TORATE,
A.D. 1654.

bably quieted some of his own misgivings by these efforts to place the blessings of the gospel within the reach of other men. In his methods he was never scrupulous : the work was to be done, and the rudest instrument was the best. Hugh Peters—hard, desperate, fanatical, the mortal enemy of all Laudian superstitions—would naturally appear to him the fittest because the most expeditious agent. Cromwell, too, was deeply impressed with a very simple truth which other politicians have overlooked. Religion should interest the multitude. It should controul their passions and at the same time occupy their hearts. Without it government is always difficult, and freedom impossible ; for man is restless, impatient, and dissatisfied. Religion diverts him from his sorrows, and offers him repose. The shows and impostures of popery may for a time suffice, but England had outlived them. The Laudian compromise with popery was a heartless uninteresting affair. There remained the bible, fathomless in the interest it yields, as in the instruction it imparts. The exposition of the scriptures in every parish by men profoundly jealous for its authority, and in general fairly representing something at least of its spirit in their lives, would supply what Cromwell wanted—a constant occupation for restless and dissatisfied men, solace for the disappointed, and hope for all. Had Cromwell been an atheist he might have reasoned thus, and so far he would have reasoned well. Merely secular

policy would have made him sincere in his endeavours to purify the church.

The examinations were sometimes conducted in a disgraceful manner : the questions were difficult, captious, and even ridiculous. Several of the rejected clergy preserved minutes of their examinations. Mr. Sadler was examined by Nye, Tombes, and Peters, who were not ashamed, amongst a multitude of similar questions, to demand whether regeneration be a substance or an accident, and in what predicament ? Whether motions to sin before consent are sinful ? What is the breath of the soul ? The heat of the soul ? The action of the soul ? And whether God was willing or unwilling that Adam should fall ? to which Sadler makes answer thus : "It is a dark question. I conceive, with submission to your judgment, that there was a willing unwillingness." Nye himself was confounded with a distinction which had the merit of equalling the absurdity of his own queries, and of being just as unintelligible. Sadler was rejected, but rather because his patron was a peeress than he an unsound divine.*

Yet the testimony of Baxter is on the whole in favour of the triers. He was a competent judge, and certainly no friend to Cromwell. He did not admit their right or own the validity of their power, and he refused to sit on the commission. Their authority, he says, was null ; some of the independents among them were over busy and too severe ; too particular in inquiring after evidences of sanctification in those whom they examined,

CHAPTER
IX.

PROTEC-
TOBATE,
A.D. 1654.

* Walker, Sufferings, part i. p. 175.

CHAPTER
IX.PROTEC-
TORATE,
A.D. 1654.

and somewhat too lax in their admission of unlearned men, of antinomians and anabaptists; yet, he adds, to give them their due, they did abundance of good to the church. They saved many a congregation from ignorant, ungodly, drunken teachers; from that sort of ministers that either preached against a holy life or preached as men who never were acquainted with it; from those who used the ministry as a common trade, and were never likely to convert a soul. They were somewhat partial, he admits, to the independents, separatists, fifth monarchy men, and anabaptists, and against prelatists and arminians; yet they did more good than harm; so that many thousands of souls blessed God for the faithful ministers they brought in, and grieved when the prelatists ejected them.*—Such is the history of Cromwell's ecclesiastical commission. Its methods were uncertain; its principles on many points unfixed; its hatred of prelacy a morbid disease; its proceedings violent; but it had to contend against enormous evils—evils for which a remedy was wanted: but the judges were partial; their proceedings bore the appearance of injustice; and it will be seen hereafter that the voice of the nation refused to sanction their awards.

It is one of those amusing calumnies which, assuming gravity, seat themselves in the chair of history and impose upon the world, that the puritans of the commonwealth were ignorant men who hated learning. When it suited Cromwell's purpose to flatter the fanatics, no doubt he raised

a Barebones to importance or thrust Hugh Peters into an ecclesiastical commission. But the condition of the universities gives abundant proof both of his own respect for learning and of the number and attainments of his learned men. When the engagement was imposed, several of the presbyterians who were heads of houses resigned, and the more complying independents were appointed. Owen became vice-chancellor of Oxford, and Cromwell, with a graceful avowal of his unfitness for the place, accepted the office of chancellor. He was anxious to promote in others that learning of which he felt the want. Cambridge throughout the commonwealth was under the guidance of learned men, unless Cudworth, More, Whichcote, Mede, and Worthington should be thought unworthy of the name. In these puritan schools, and during the protectorate, were educated the divines, the jurists, and the philosophers of the next age. Poole, Stillingfleet, and Tillotson, now Cambridge undergraduates, always spoke with respect of their instructors. If Tillotson qualified his approbation of their learning, it was only to compliment their piety. If the royalists, he said, were the better scholars, the puritans were the better men. Oxford, under Cromwell, nourished the genius and directed the studies of not a few great men whose fame will never die. Locke and South were students at Christ-church;—Locke, the great founder of the English school of metaphysics; South, a divine of unbounded popularity; who, however, first contrived the unnatural union

CHAPTER
IX.PROTECTORATE,
A.D. 1654.

CHAPTER

IX.

PROTEC-
TORATE

A. D. 1654.

between consummate wisdom and the wit which stoops to coarse buffoonery ; a style that Swift brought to its perfection, and that expired in our own day with Sydney Smith. South was a pulpit Hudibras. His hatred of the puritans and his love of tormenting them was the passion of his life. Yet his invectives carried their antidote along with them ; for though his weapons were, it is true, the gift of nature, his skill in using them he had learned in a puritan university under Dr. John Owen the independent. Wilkins, the warden of Wadham, with Boyle and Oldenburg for his younger associates, was laying the foundation for a new philosophy—the philosophy of experiment, which resulted in the royal society and in a new epoch in the world of science. The love of deep learning was now for the first time widely diffused. In 1653 Walton issued proposals for publishing his noble polyglot bible in the oriental languages. It was published in 1657, at a great expense, and its value was well understood, for it is said to have been the first book in England that was published by subscription.*

About this time the fifth monarchy men appeared upon the stage. It is difficult to speak with any degree of confidence as to their real character. In their tenets, which were pronounced impious and abominable, we see little to object against. They held, in common we presume with every sincere christian, the future reign of Christ. The prophet Daniel has marked out four

* Life of Dr. Worthington, Chetham Soc. p. 50.

great monarchies, all of them the monarchies of antichrist. To these a fifth succeeds, the kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth; and the establishment of this kingdom is the hope and prayer and expectation of the church. So far the fifth monarchy men held no other opinions than those which, with certain modifications of time and manner, every student of prophecy entertains. The error into which they fell was of another kind. Not content to wait for the fulfilment of God's promises, they would force them onwards. They must throw down every obstacle, and so prepare the way by violence for the setting up of the Messiah's throne; of which, it may be, they entertained, as did the early christians under circumstances not very dissimilar, carnal and unworthy notions. They had seen that shaking of nations which they believed to be the prelude of the Lord's coming; but instead of girding up the loins of their mind they girded on the sword. They resolved to destroy every existing government in order to make room for this. It is probable, notwithstanding the unmeasured censure with which writers of every class have overwhelmed them, that there were good men amongst them; for there was nothing in their creed inconsistent with true piety. Every party had its fanatics, whose distempered minds were wrought into a state of frenzy. And the fifth monarchy men were certainly, in proportion to their numbers, amongst the greatest delinquents in this respect. But their party was extinguished soon after the resto-

CHAPTER

IX.

PROTECTORATE,
A.D. 1654.

ration, and succeeding writers have not ventured to defend their blemished reputation. Yet if we had been compelled to judge of the quakers, the anabaptists, or even the prelatists of the commonwealth by the descriptions of their opponents, we should probably have regarded them by this time with equal scorn. To defame any society it is only necessary to dwell exclusively upon its follies and its crimes.

To return to political affairs. The protector was in no haste to assemble his new parliament. At length it met in September, 1654. It was a free parliament, the first now seen in England for many years, and it immediately divulged its character and with it the feelings of the nation. The new constitution of the previous December had enacted that the supreme government should be placed in the hands of one man, and that Oliver himself should be the protector. The parliament was to assume this as a settled point, and to conduct itself submissively. But the free spirit of a body of English gentlemen who felt that they represented three nations was not so easily subdued. Cromwell wished them to enter upon the affairs of the country; they made it their first business to inquire by what authority they had been convened. Who was Cromwell—who his military council; and what submission was due to them? The protector foresaw the storm and endeavoured to avert it. He repeated the experiment of administering a declaration compelling the house to profess allegiance to his protectorate. A con-

siderable number refused and were excluded by his soldiers; but the rest were after all unmanageable. His constitution had provided that the parliament should sit at least five months before it could be dissolved. But Cromwell was impatient. He amended the constitution by the calendar, and at the expiration of five lunar months summoned them to meet him in the painted chamber; harangued them for several hours in a long and tedious speech; upbraided them with every political transgression; flung out accusations of parricide and high treason; and concluded thus: "I think it my duty to tell you that it is not for the profit of these nations nor for the common and public good for you to continue here any longer, and therefore I do declare unto you that I dissolve this parliament."* It is creditable to English historians that this audacious act waited two hundred years for its panegyrist.

The records of despotism afford neither interest nor variety. Cromwell and his officers were absolute, more absolute than any of the Tudors, and there followed four years of silence. Puritanism on the whole was buoyant, but it was not without its discontents. Cromwell, but for his consummate selfishness, would have been a friend to liberty, at least in religion. But the presbyterians were indignant because he took no pains to promote their interest; the independents

* Whitlocke, p. 599. This speech, which, from its rambling and desultory character, seems to have been taken down verbatim, occupies thirteen folio columns.

CHAPTER
IX.

PROTECTORATE,
A.D. 1654.

thought him almost an atheist because he befriended the jews and sanctioned the translation of the koran. The sectaries and levellers abhorred him as a tyrant. Of all persuasions the quakers seem to have liked him best. He loathed oppression except when he himself was the oppressor, and they found in him almost their only friend. Yet had Cromwell's life been prolonged ten years, England might have fallen into a state of spiritual anarchy not less disastrous to the interests of religion than the vile profligacy which succeeded at the restoration. For he extended as far as possible to men of all opinions, provided they were both earnest and sincere, not merely toleration but preferment. Hence the standard of truth became in popular estimation, even in essential points, uncertain. A national church would soon have been impossible, and a national endowment would not have long survived. The farmer who pays tithes in two neighbouring parishes where the clergy contradict each other soon arrives at the conclusion that in one or other his money is mispent; and, unless deeply imbued with religious principles, he conducts his argument through a second stage, and concludes that religion being so uncertain he may withhold the support of its ministers. Yet Baxter, insensible to these conclusions, being consulted by the protector, was anxious to establish a national church upon the simple basis of the Lord's prayer, the two ancient creeds, and the ten commandments. "Why," exclaimed his friends, "this will admit socinians

and papists !” “ So much the better,” he replied ; “ that is an argument in favour of the scheme. If they teach false doctrine it is the business of the executive government to punish them. But devise what tests you will, some heretics will always subscribe to them.” It is well for England that his associates in this affair had more good sense than Baxter. The line he would have drawn between the legislative and executive government was childish and impracticable. The office of the executive was, according to his theory, to interpret and expound the principles, few and meagre as they were, of the legislative department. This could only have been done either by confirming the titles of all those who subscribed, which was simply to do nothing, or by adding tests and explanations which immediately became a substantial addition to the articles imposed. So that in the course of time one of two alternatives must have occurred ; papists and socinians must have possessed the benefices of the church undisturbed, or an ecclesiastical chancery, with its complicated judgments and cumbrous precedents, all having the force of law, must have been called into existence. On this supposition Baxter’s ideal church would have become within twenty years more impregnable to a tender conscience than any church in christendom. It may be worth while to mention the names of the committee to whom Cromwell had committed the task of determining the fundamentals of the future church of England. Ussher was the first,

CHAPTER

IX.

PROTECTORATE,

A.D. 1654.

CHAPTER
IX.

PROTEC-
TORATE,
A.D. 1654—8.

but he declined, as Baxter somewhat peevishly remarks, because of his age and his unwillingness to wrangle with such men as were to join with him. The rest were, Marshall, Rayner, Cheynell, Goodwin, Owen, Nye, Simpson, Vines, Manton, Jacombe, and Baxter. Nothing further appears to have been done in this matter.*

The independents were now at the zenith of their power. They enjoyed Cromwell's favour and more of the national regard than their rivals the presbyterians. The triers had made room for many of them in the vacant benefices. Their conduct shews that the turbulence they had witnessed, and in no small degree assisted in producing, had at length chastised their spirit and taught them forbearance and the love of peace. They obtained from Cromwell permission to hold an independent synod in the Savoy, in October 1658. Their session was not long; for, as they took the Westminster assembly for their guide in all questions of doctrine, a few omissions and amendments, chiefly referring to the points at issue between the rival churches, was all that was required. To the Westminster confession a chapter was added "of the gospel and the grace thereof," and an appendix "on the constitution of a christian church," in which the independent scheme is of course maintained. But the reader who is anxious to know what profound learning with equal powers of reasoning can advance in behalf of this form of government will read Owen's

* Baxter, i. p. 198.

enquiry into the origin and order of evangelical churches ; a treatise which scarcely shrinks from a comparison with Hooker, and ought indeed to be read along with it.* The preface to the declaration of their faith and order issued by the Savoy divines breathes a noble spirit of charity and moderation ; though a churchman may feel himself aggrieved that the hierarchy and common prayer-book are still spoken of as “ grievous to God’s people.” Of the differences between the presbyterians and themselves they say that “ these are differences between fellow-servants, neither of them having authority from God or man to impose their opinions one more than another.”† There is some exaggeration in the statement of a great historian that the independents were always the steadfast friends of liberty, but certainly they were always in advance of other parties.

But Cromwell’s life was drawing to a close. In 1656 he called together another parliament and his former difficulties at once confronted him. Again he had recourse to his stale expedient. He excluded all whom he disliked, and the list included every member who had the least claim to be considered a man of honour or a patriot. The excluded members published an impassioned protest. This man, they said, hath assumed an absolute arbitrary sovereignty as if he came down from the throne of God : by force of arms he has

* An enquiry into the original nature, &c. of Evangelical churches. By John Owen, D.D., 1681.

† A declaration of the faith and order, &c. of the congregational churches in England, agreed upon, &c., 1658.

CHAPTER
IX.

PROTEC-
TORATE,
A.D. 1656.

invaded the fundamental right and liberty of England; his armed men have prevented the free meeting and sitting of the intended parliament, and he has forcibly shut out such members as he and his council could neither frighten or flatter to betray their country and their religion and become subservient to his lawless ambition. This act doth change the state of the people from freedom to mere slavery, and whosoever hath advised or assisted the lord protector is a capital enemy to the commonwealth and guilty of high treason; and they made their appeal in conclusion to God and all the good people of England for assistance and protection.* But the protector could not recede, nor would his position allow him to remain inactive. Not to take a further step was to lose all that he had gained. With the exception of his cabal of officers he had scarcely one political friend; but if he could create an aristocracy and place himself at its head, he might possibly revive some enthusiasm amongst the higher classes, and at the same time he might gratify the multitude, whose passionate love for the ancient monarchy was, he now discovered, at least equal to their hatred of its occasional excesses. A compliant parliament, such as he had now procured, was of course his facile instrument. In April they completed an instrument, "which they had been long about,"† for the settlement of the nation; in which they implored his highness to accept the title of king. The protector affected

* Whitlocke, p. 640.

† Whitlocke, p. 646.

to be coy, took a fortnight to consider, and on the twentieth of April reluctantly refused. He had reason: his officers were enraged; and on the ninth a plot had been discovered which was to have been headed by major general Harrison in person, with the most unrelenting of the fanatics; and Cromwell's life, or certainly his protectorship, was in the utmost jeopardy. He had summoned the house for the next day, designing, as all supposed, to declare his acceptance of the crown; but the evening before he met his brother-in-law colonel Desborough in the park, and told him of his intention. "Then," said Desborough, "I give up Cromwell's cause and family for lost." Desborough went to colonel Pride and related what had passed. "I tell you," said Desborough, "he will be a king." "And I," said the rough soldier, "tell you that he shan't." A petition or remonstrance was immediately prepared, and handed to the protector. It was signed by thirty-three of his chief officers then in London; it was expressed in few words; but it concluded with a significant intimation, that "for the preservation of the old cause they were most ready to lay down their lives."* Both Cromwell and his parliament were equally astonished, and with much ostentation of self-denial he now at once refused the title. He feared a general mutiny. In December, still evidently longing for a crown, he created a peerage and an upper house of parliament, and summoned sixty members to it. Amongst them, although several were invited,

* Ludlow, p. 225.

CHAPTER
IX.
PROTECTORATE,
A.D. 1657.

only one of the ancient peerage condescended to take his seat. Sir Arthur Haselrigge, whose name heads the remonstrance of the rejected members, was flattered with the offer of a place among the new lords; but his republican spirit chafed, and he refused to sit with them, or sat only to protest against their right to legislate at all.* The commons would not recognise the existence of this new house and returned no answer to its messages. Everything was hastening to confusion, when once more the protector took his resolution suddenly and dissolved the parliament,—it was the last that he convoked.

The nation had begun to view these struggles between Cromwell and his parliament with great indifference. It is only now and then that Englishmen abandon themselves to politics. They expect the affairs of the state to proceed smoothly without constant interference. And if they had no respect for Cromwell, they had learned to put no trust in parliaments. There had been a political debauch, there was now a political prostration. Political enthusiasm had had its day

* Whitelocke, p. 673. Haselrigge it is certain sat in this parliament. "The second narrative of the late parliament, printed in the fifth year of England's slavery, 1658," speaks of him as "a knight of the old stamp—cut out by the protector for a lord of the other house: but he missed his way, and instead of going into the other house, he went into the parliament house among his fellow-Englishmen, and there spoke freely, bearing a good witness in behalf of the good old cause, the rights and liberties of the people of England; at which the court were vexed and sore displeased." Cromwell must have felt that his power was very precarious when he permitted Haselrigge thus to set him at defiance in his own packed house of commons, from which he had been excluded!

and it was succeeded by political apathy. The old landmarks were gone and few had any further interest in stemming the inundation of the rising waters. The most restless sometimes want repose, and the nation was exhausted, sleepy, and unconcerned. It saw Cromwell's insolent dismissal of the last parliament with far more indifference than sixteen years before it had seen Prynne in the pillory, or the sawing off of Dr. Bastwick's ears. Besides the protector's government, to overlook the flaw in his title, was not unpopular. Justice had never been so well administered; trade and commerce flourished anew; and industry was encouraged. The old nobility were ruined, and the royalists were sometimes oppressed; and from London there came the news at times of the execution of virtuous men,—of Powell and Dr. Hewet and sir Henry Slingsby, for treason against the commonwealth. But these occurrences did not affect public opinion at a distance, especially in the large towns and seaports whose influence now began to preponderate. Still he had many causes for anxiety. His dynasty was not taking root. No warm affections on the part of the nation entwined themselves around his person or gave promise to embrace his son. His death would probably be the signal for universal anarchy or the restoration of the king. For he had settled nothing; his constitution was obsolete already; it perished when he broke up his parliament and his house of lords; and he still governed by the sword. The hopes of the royalists

CHAPTER

IX.

PROTEC-
TORATE,

A. D. 1658.

were every day more sanguine, and he had spies in every company who informed him of their plans. Thus several conspiracies were detected. He was not cruel by nature and he spared some of the ringleaders, but they were no sooner set at liberty than with a desperate courage they plunged into fresh treasons. Those whom he executed died with exultation; and the crowds returned home from Tower-hill and Tyburn certainly with no deeper sense of the duty of allegiance to a usurper. The political fanatics thirsted for his life, and scarcely concealed their intentions; many of them would have suffered death with pleasure could they but have assassinated the man whom they regarded as a traitor and a tyrant. An accident occurred which plainly shewed that Cromwell was aware of danger. Driving one day in the park his horses became restive and threw him from the carriage: a loaded pistol exploded in his pocket, and betrayed the apprehensions he would gladly have concealed. The number of his guards at Whitehall, and the difficulty with which he had been approached of late, were probably owing to these misgivings, though at the time they were generally supposed to be mere indications of his taste for royalty. His court during the last few years of his life equalled, if it did not surpass, even the regal state of the magnificent Elizabeth. But his own conscience was probably his chief tormentor. He was a religious man; from childhood familiar with the bible, and with the strict and honest interpretation of it. In his youth he had

felt deep impressions of the most solemn kind ; he seemed to be converted ; and for a while his manner of life was worthy of his new principles. He had now stifled his conscience for many years, but his whole conduct shews that he had not silenced it. But he had no taste for those boisterous pleasures, or that elegant dissipation, in which thought is drowned and the mind weakened ; the elaborate frivolity of a court was nauseous to him. In business only could he find relief, and business reminded him of much that he would gladly have forgotten. His share in the war, in the king's death, in the execution of so many of the royalists and in the subversion of real liberty, must have been often in his thoughts. Necessity was the only plea, yet where was the necessity ? His own judgment forced him to correct the decisions of the council chamber by the word of God. How could he justify his subversion of the republic which he had sworn to guard ? Was he conscious of no guilty ambition in his attempt to wear the crown ? He had been the hero and the leader of a great cause ; he had drawn his sword for justice, for religion, and for God. Had he not betrayed his country ? Had he not disgraced the cause of religion ? Had he not forsaken God ? His health was already broken, his spirits had failed, when in August his beloved daughter Claypole died. He had lost a son in battle, and keenly felt all the anguish of a father. But death was more appalling now, in the silence of the sick chamber, to one who felt that its sen-

CHAPTER

IX.

 PROTECTORATE,
 A.D. 1658.

CHAPTER

IX.

 PROTEC-
 TORATE,
 A.D. 1658.

tence had gone forth against himself. He retired to Hampton court, worn down and stricken in heart. Sick and restless he returned to Whitehall, and in a few days it was evident that he had not long to live. He nominated his son Richard his successor, and, as a dying man, addressed himself to his spiritual concerns. It is said that he now sent for Goodwin, one of his chaplains, (not John Goodwin the arminian leader,) and inquired whether it were possible to fall from grace. Being answered in the negative, he spoke with assurance of his salvation; "for," said he, "I am sure that I was once in grace." But the truth of the story is questionable, nor can it be regarded as of much importance. The diseased curiosity which pries into the sick chamber and notes down the incoherent sayings of dying men, is of no importance when we would estimate a life. The new testament does not afford a single instance of that graphic death-bed scenery which forms so large a part of modern religious biography; nor does the old, if we except the last sweet notes of inspiration breathed by patriarchs and prophets when they stood upon the threshold of eternity; we owe in fact this morbid fancy to the puritans. Cromwell's last words were collected with even more than usual care, and published to the world by one of his attendants.* His sayings do not appear to contain anything remarkable. They are such as thousands have uttered under similar circum-

* A collection of several passages concerning Oliver Cromwell's sickness, by a groom of his bedchamber, 1659.

stances, and the value of the expressions is to be tried by the holiness of the previous life. "It is a fearful thing," he exclaimed repeatedly, "to fall into the hands of the living God." Then, after a while, meditating on the promises of God made to sinners through Christ, he said, "The Lord hath filled me with as much assurance of his pardon and his love as my soul can hold. I am a conqueror and more than conqueror through Christ who strengtheneth me." Deeper penitence and less rapture would have been more in season at the close of such a life as his. He offered up a fervent prayer for the nation; of which it has been said, and not without some justice, that it is the invocation of a mediator rather than the meek petition of a sinner. On the whole Cromwell's death-bed does not greatly exalt his reputation as a religious man. It is antinomianism under a thin disguise. The tone of his mind and the current of his thoughts led him to gather comfort, not so much from a humble assurance of the Saviour's love and of the Spirit's presence, as of the safety of those for whose salvation God had covenanted. Yet his prayer ends well; and the last words of Cromwell touch us with pity if they cannot warm us into respect. "Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are thy people too. And pardon the folly of this short prayer. And give me rest for Jesus Christ's sake; to whom with thee and thy Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen." On the third of September,

CHAPTER
IX.PROTECTORATE,
A.D. 1658.

CHAPTER
IX.

1658, the spirit of Cromwell passed away into the presence of his Judge.

PROTEC-
TORATE,
A.D. 1658.

The character of this extraordinary man, buried beneath the slanders of two centuries, is now once more disinterred. The eagerness with which it is discussed, and the extreme variety of the conclusions which our living writers draw from it, will probably afford hereafter a curious subject in the light of which posterity will study the condition of England, and of English feeling political and religious, in the middle of the nineteenth century. Yet the character of the protector was made up of few and simple materials, and the dissection of it is by no means difficult. To those indeed who regard puritanism with scorn, and who under that name include the spiritual religion which in its worst days puritanism always represented, it must be unintelligible, and their descriptions of it will often be absurd. They can neither appreciate his merits nor his faults, for they are ignorant of the sources from which they rose. On the whole, however, it is evident that Cromwell's reputation will gain by the discussion, though not by any means to the extent desired by his modern eulogists. Excessive censure has been less injurious to Cromwell than extravagant applause to his unhappy sovereign; this is but natural; for the one indeed rudely embalms the reputation; the other, with its superfluous care, corrodes and at length destroys it; and when the cerements perish we find nothing but dust and bones underneath. The injustice with which

Cromwell has been treated has at length recoiled, and the violence of hatred is followed and almost equalled by that of indiscriminating applause. He was scarcely laid in his grave when the sycophants who had composed his court began to fawn upon Charles II. and to offer to their new divinity the grateful incense of their calumny. The most preposterous and disgusting falsehoods were everywhere circulated and everywhere believed. Cromwell was not only an upstart and an usurper but every crime defaced his character; he was a profligate, a tyrant, unnatural, a liar, above all a hypocrite. The last was the favourite charge, which, by the popular method of computation, included all the rest. As the age became profane Cromwell was made the prototype of seriousness in religion; and for a hundred years it was enough to discountenance all that was real in piety to term it puritanical and to hint that Cromwell was a puritan. Even a well-informed reader, unless his studies have been accidentally directed to the pamphlet literature of the period of Charles II., has no conception of the audacious yet amusing calumnies then uttered without a blush. Cromwell, a monster of vice in all respects, was in actual league and compact with the devil. The bargain was concluded on the plain of Worcester the day before the battle; the prince of darkness had appeared in person on the field, and there and then the usurper entered into a solemn treaty with him, the tempter securing him the victory and he surrendering to the fiend his soul and

CHAPTER
IX.

PROTEC-
TORATE,
A.D. 1658.

body in return. It happened that an awful tempest raged when Cromwell died, (or, according to a more accurate statement, two days before,) and the coincidence was too important to be lost. The chroniclers of a lying age turned it to the best account. The great enemy of God and man, they said, had come rushing upon the hurricane, and it was he that howled in the tempest in frantic anticipations and fiendish joy, as he watched the agonies of his victim and waited for his last breath! The story is gravely related by several writers, and slyly alluded to by others who seem ashamed to repeat what they were anxious to circulate, and to impress on the credulity of England.

Of Cromwell's religious character the reader will by this time have formed a judgment of his own. As a statesman his abilities were not of the highest order. He entered the house of commons a plain English gentleman of the second class, somewhat deficient in bearing and more in education. He affected a slovenly demeanour, strangely at variance with that love of pomp which he afterwards displayed when lord-protector: it was probably assumed from vanity, and to shew an independent spirit. His eloquence was sometimes so obscure as to be almost unintelligible. Sentences are left unfinished, as if the thread of his thoughts had suddenly failed him; one parenthesis involves another, and the style becomes embarrassed and at length incoherent. Hume assigns the want of ideas as the

cause of this obscurity. The imaginative faculty he scarcely possessed ; and his mind, as an intellectual organ, moved slowly. Still when he clearly apprehended his subject, and was in earnest to impress his hearers with his own convictions, apt words came at his bidding. When he replied to the parliament's offer of the crown he seems confused and scarcely rational ; but he probably meant to be ambiguous, and this was an assumed disguise. When with real or well-affected anger he more than once dissolved his parliaments, he wished his power to be felt and his intentions to be understood ; and his meaning was then clearly expressed in language which, however unbecoming, certainly wanted neither perspicuity nor point. His only effective weapons in managing others were cajolery and force : and therefore it seems improbable that in quiet times he would have risen to distinction ; for these are implements which can be used with effect only in periods of disturbance, when men have much to hope or to fear. He had no rhetorical skill, nor the art of presenting his own views attractively. When he had a point to gain he did not persuade, he cajoled. Low mirth, buffoonery, even tears, were his constant resort, and these were supported with protestations, prayers, whining, and the whole artillery of grimace. He had nothing of that consummate genius which instinctively discovers greatness and attaches it to the service of its patron while it feels honoured by the servitude. Cromwell headed no great party ; he associated himself in

CHAPTER

IX.

PROTECTORATE,

A.D. 1658.

CHAPTER

IX.

PROTECTORATE,
A. D. 1658.

politics with no great names. Long before his death every man in England whose name posterity will respect, was alienated from him. Dr. Owen, it is true, and Milton, clung to his fortunes to the last; but they were not political associates, not even advisers; the one was his chaplain and vice-chancellor, and the other his Latin secretary: it would be difficult to mention another deserving of respect; except of course the ministers of the executive, who still continued to serve their country in church or state beneath a usurpation, because they felt that the claims of public duty overbalanced the demerits of the government. Cromwell could never rule his parliaments; his council of officers at length obeyed him from pure selfishness, and because his continuance in power was necessary to their own ambition, perhaps to their safety. When he died the reins of power were already slipping from his hands. The nation was slowly recovering from the wasting miseries of the war; it would not have long submitted to be governed without a parliament, and a parliament was incompatible with Cromwell's power. He wished no doubt that England should be free and happy, but he wished too to be its greatest man if not its sovereign. He had nothing of the magnanimity of Washington. To the last he was a slave to the vulgar lust of power; and to this he sacrificed both his integrity and his country, his conscience and his peace.

Still he had an upright disposition, and, till it

was debauched by his ambition, an honest mind. His fame rests upon his foreign policy, which was always successful, for it was always right. Yet it required, and this perhaps is its highest praise, neither deep sagacity nor diplomatic skill. It was founded upon one principle; namely, to defend the protestant cause, whenever and by whomsoever assailed. Cromwell knew (what no Stuart would ever comprehend) that protestantism was not only the religion but the pride of England. When he undertook the defence of the protestants abroad, he carried with him the enthusiasm of the whole nation. He volunteered his assistance to the Swiss and Savoyards against the reigning duke, the neighbouring princes of Italy, and the pope himself, who had combined to extirpate these heretics. Forgetting its internal discords the whole nation espoused the cause, and emptied its purse in one generous contribution. The universities shared in the enthusiasm and gave their alms to the Alpine sufferers for the faith, and Milton contributed still more in his immortal sonnet.* At home we see the protector embarrassed by his ambition and his crimes. Abroad he appears before us unshackled; and we perceive what Cromwell might have been had he refused to listen to the suggestions of a base ambition. "I will make an Englishman," he said, "as much respected as an ancient Roman over all Europe." "If the pope insults us I will send a frigate to Civita

CHAPTER
IX.PROTEC-
TORATE,
A.D. 1658.

* "Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold," &c.

CHAPTER
IX.PROTEC-
TORATE,
A.D. 1658.

Vecchia, and he shall hear the sound of my cannon at Rome." England exulted in his prowess and foreign courts confessed themselves outwitted by a potentate whose straightforward policy defeated all the stratagems of their diplomatists; who said what he meant, and seldom failed to accomplish the intentions he avowed. Such simplicity was new amongst the wily statesmen of continental Europe; they found themselves in the presence of an antagonist from whose sling and stone they had no protection. The powers which had insulted Charles were abject in soliciting his friendship. Clarendon* allows that his greatness at home was but a shadow of the glory which he had abroad; that it was hard to discover which feared him most, France, Spain, or the Low Countries; that they valued his friendship at his own price; that they would have complied with any demand he could have made; and that such was their terror of his name that cardinal Mazarine, the French minister, turned pale whenever it was mentioned. He remonstrated with the French king, and the protestants at Nismes were relieved from a horrible persecution; he threatened the duke of Savoy, and the tyrant disgorged his plunder, and even restored his afflicted protestant subjects to their political rights. "None can wonder," exclaims the noble writer, "that his memory still remains in those parts and with those people in great veneration." The veneration still continues; and amongst the mountains of Switzerland the

* Hist. Rebellion, book xv. p. 651.

name of Cromwell is pronounced as that of one of the benefactors of their race.

But in England it is otherwise. Cromwell destroyed the liberties of his country and aggrandized himself. Inestimable benefits no doubt resulted from his life, perhaps even from his crimes. In this we devoutly recognise the hand of Him who educes good from everything, even from the vices of mankind. But there is little merit in successful selfishness, however beneficent its course may seem. Cromwell was a patriot until his ambition interfered; he was virtuous as long as he had no strong temptation; and he sinned with reluctance to the last. Of all usurpers Cromwell was perhaps the best—the best of a race who merit the indignation of mankind.

CHAPTER
IX.

PROTECTORATE,
A.D. 1658.

CHAPTER X.

CHAPTER
X.PROTECTORATE
OF

R. CROMWELL,

A.D. 1659.

RICHARD Cromwell was a virtuous man of moderate ability. For government he had no capacity, and, happily for himself, for power he had no ambition. Historians have dealt hardly with his character. Infected with the vulgar prejudice which regards the love of power as the sign of true nobility of mind, even religious writers speak of him contemptuously as mean-spirited and weak. If it were so, his weakness appeared in his acceptance of the office of chief magistrate rather than in the facility with which he relinquished it. The most ordinary sagacity must have suggested to him the impossibility of retaining for any length of time the reins of government, and he resigned them gracefully without losing our respect. With the advice of the officers he called together a parliament in January, 1659. It was freely chosen, and his father's house of peers assembled with it. But once more the attempt failed; no representative body could be formed in England who would submit to an usurpation, or to the insolent dictation of the army. The officers spoke high and threatened; Haselrigge and his party resolved to

overthrow the government and insisted on a free commonwealth. Desborough and Fleetwood, his own relations, with sir Henry Vane, colonel Bury, and others who controlled the army, determined on his overthrow. They advised him to dissolve the parliament: this he did; and fell with it on the twenty-second of April, 1659. Everything was again in confusion: a proclamation was issued on the twenty-fourth, ordering all papists and cavaliers to remove twenty miles from London; and within a few days, Fleetwood, in the name of the council of officers, summoned the remains of that long parliament which Cromwell had so contemptuously dismissed in 1653. They met accordingly and resolved upon a commonwealth, "and that without a single person, kingship, or house of peers;" and the next day Dr. Owen, (it must be mentioned with regret,) preached before them. But this last effort to set up a republic was utterly abortive. The army in Scotland sent up an address, or more properly a letter of instructions, signed by Monk and twenty-four officers, dictating the line of conduct they should pursue; and from this time the parliament was contemptible; and the officers very soon determined upon a dissolution after Cromwell's manner. On the thirteenth of October, Lambert took down a troop of soldiers, placed them in King-street and near the abbey, and "when the speaker came by in his coach," says Whitelocke, "they stopped him and caused him to turn back, and so the house did not sit." Haselrigge and the republi-

CHAPTER

X.

PROTEC-
TORATE
OFR. CROM-
WELL,

A.D. 1659.

CHAPTER
X.

PROTECTORATE
OF

R. CROMWELL,

A.D. 1659.

cans, expecting violence, had filled Westminster hall with soldiers to protect the house of commons.

But the speaker not arriving, their plan was frustrated, and the parliament was at an end without a blow struck, or a speech made in its defence.

The officers invested themselves and a few civilians, their creatures, with sovereign authority under the revolutionary title of a committee of safety, and the government was now a military despotism under no disguise. Thus the summer was spent; the nation chafing the bit and every day more resolved to escape from its disgraceful bondage. The royalists were in constant communication with the king, and the day was fixed for a general rising. They were betrayed, or Charles would probably have been restored in the summer of 1659 at the point of the sword. Several of the old puritan leaders who had taken arms against the father were now fighting for the son. Sir George Booth of Cheshire and lord Willoughby of Parham, both presbyterians, were embarked in the design. Booth surprised Chester, and Willoughby had undertaken to secure Lynn. The discovery of such treasons filled the council with embarrassment. The officers themselves quarrelled; while Haselrigge seized Portsmouth and declared for the parliament and a republic. Monk, with the Scotch army, began his march into England, and declared for the parliament likewise; and the committee of safety began to tremble for themselves. Desborough was sent to oppose Monk's progress; but his troops revolted. Monk slowly continued his

advance; arrived in London on the third of February; and in a few days invited the parliament to resume its sittings. The secluded members (those whom colonel Pride had dismissed) now again took their seats. It was evident that a great change was at hand. Sir George Booth, who had been taken prisoner in a skirmish under the walls of Chester, was released, and he and his party were restored to their estates and liberty. A few votes were passed for the immediate payment of the army and other urgent matters; and the parliament dissolved itself on the sixteenth of March, having given orders for the immediate election of a new parliament. It met on the twenty-sixth of April. On the first of May a message from the king at Breda was announced and read amidst a tumult of the loudest acclamations. Without a division, without a debate, and without one dissentient voice, his proposals were accepted. The old peers hastened to their house; the ancient monarchy was restored; and on the eighth of May, Charles II. was proclaimed king in London with an enthusiasm that bordered upon madness. Men, it was said, dropped down dead with joy. All contemporary writers agree in describing the exultation of the nation as a delirium which no language can express. The revolution had run its course: the turmoil of twenty years was over; and after all, except experience, little or nothing had been gained.

During the last year the puritan cause had been panic-struck. The records of popular fickle-

CHAPTER
X.
CHAS. II.
A.D. 1659.

CHAPTER
X.CHAS. II.
A.D. 1660.

ness relate very few such changes in the whole history of mankind ; perhaps not one so complete and sudden. All at once puritanism found itself deserted, and discovered with dismay that it had lost its hold upon the people. In the tumult of a new enthusiasm its very existence was for a time forgotten. The popular frenzy was not now for liberty and religion, but simply for a king. Whenever there is a great reaction the late favourites are in the greatest danger ; those who have led the movement are first forsaken ; when the tide begins to turn the crest of the highest wave leaves its foam to the sand and pebbles on the beach, and mingles with its native element no more. The sectaries fell at once into oblivion. The independents lost every shadow of the political influence which seemed on the point of becoming supreme. The presbyterians retained just enough of political vitality to form a small minority in the new house of commons. Indeed for some months before the restoration the puritans were intently seeking, not the triumph of their cause, but the safety of their persons. It was clear that the king would return, and their most sanguine hope now was to make terms with him ; to obtain conditions and to secure, if possible, a safe retreat. It would have been well for England had their voice been heard, piteous and timid as it was. But the infatuation of the nation knew no bounds. It was resolved to invite the king to take possession of his vacant throne, without demanding a single security

beyond that coronation oath which, in his father's case, had proved to be so feeble a restraint. To speak of securities, it was said, was an insult to the king. When he was once amongst his people every difficulty would be adjusted. Charles was believed to be magnanimous and wise; and the fondness of the nation invested him with every human virtue and with some that were divine. No Persian monarch ever wallowed in more disgusting adulation. Yet the infatuation of our ancestors has some excuse; for in England Charles was known only by his courage and his misfortunes; he had sworn to observe the covenant in Scotland, and there he had spared no pains to have it believed that he was devout. When his puritan chaplains were in hearing he prayed vociferously in his chamber; when they were in sight he looked demure and talked religiously. Men of fashion may have emulated his other vices; but for the honour of our nature we cling to the belief that few young men, and none of royal blood, have been such consummate hypocrites. Abroad he not only duped the protestants, but he even induced them to become his obsequious tools and decoy the English puritans into his power. The princess of Turenne, a protestant lady of note, was induced to write to her cousin, Madame Castelnau, in London, assuring her of the young king's conversion; and the letter of course soon found its way into print. "I heard him speak," says this noble protestant lady, "with such testimonies of piety that I was extremely

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1660.

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1660.

edified. There can nothing be desired in addition to the regularity which this prince observes in assisting daily in those exercises of piety which are practised morning and evening in his family. In a word, I bless God because the marks of election are seen in him." Monsieur Daillè, one of the leaders of the French protestant church, wrote to a friend in London in the same strain. "I well know," he says, "there are dispersed evil rumours concerning the religion of this prince. There are some who endeavour to persuade the world that he has forsaken our communion to embrace that of Rome. But it is more clear than the day to us, that this is a mere calumny to vilify him in the judgment of his subjects and to alienate their affections from him." Raimond Gaches writes "to the most famous man and upright pastor Richard Baxter" to win him to the royal cause. "Go on, reverend sir; prevent the calamities of imminent war; do you and the brethren like you (meaning the puritan clergy) embrace peaceable counsels and give the like to your countrymen. Divine providence will favour and bless your endeavours, and use you as sacred instruments for restoring happiness to your country." Drelincourt, who subscribes himself "minister of the church at Paris," writes to a friend in London to assure him that he had heard the young king's piety highly commended. Englishmen had unadvisedly done him great wrong. "If, without the intervention of any foreign power, your presbyterians recall

this prince and seat him on the throne, they acquire to themselves and to their posterity immortal glory.”* If the authenticity of these letters were not beyond a doubt, we should at once conclude that they were the weak impostures of some over-zealous royalist. The writers display too much anxiety, not only that Charles should be restored, but that he should be restored without conditions; and that the presbyterians should have all the credit to themselves—that is, should undertake the restoration. It is evident that Gaches and Drelincourt were in designing hands. Charles’s courtiers had no doubt flattered and cajoled them. The correspondence however may be useful if it should impress this lesson upon ministers of religion—that it is never wise, and seldom safe, for them to lend their influence to a political party for any project however plausible, the reasons and the full scope of which they are not permitted to understand. Baxter expresses his surprise at Gaches’ simplicity, and yet allows that he was swayed by his arguments. He clearly perceived that to admit the king without conditions was to restore prelacy and to crush the puritans. “When I read this reverend man’s excessive praises, and his concluding prayer for the success of my labours, I thought with myself, how little doth the good man understand how ill the beginning and end of his words accord! He prayeth for my con-

CHAPTER
X.
CHAS. II.
A.D. 1660.

* These letters are printed in the Phoenix, a collection of scarce pamphlets, &c. 1707.

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1660.

gregation and the blessing of my labours, when he has persuaded me to put an end to my labours, by setting up those prelates who will silence me and many a hundred more.”* Yet his loyalty prevailed; and Baxter, with melancholy forebodings, felt it his duty to promote the restoration of the king. At the same time, Charles’s “resplendent virtues” were set forth by more interested men, in pamphlets scattered through the kingdom. “He abhors vice,” says one of these despicable writers, “because God abhors it. His piety is not less than his justice. His nature inclines him to virtue: as he cannot admit its contrary in himself, so he cannot admit it in another. His constant service of God excites others to live by his example. His private devotion proves him void of hypocrisy. He would have others holy as well as himself: in short, he is the perfect pattern of piety, but more of patience.”† Beguiled by such artifices, the nation accepted Charles upon his own terms. The presbyterians went over to Breda rather to capitulate than to treat with their new sovereign. Reynolds, Spurstowe, Calamy, Manton, and one or two others, formed a deputation from the London clergy. Holles and a few of the puritan gentry crossed over too, but without authority from their party, and as it soon appeared only to

* Baxter, lib. i. p. 216.

† “The three royal cedars (to wit, Charles, the duke of York, and the duke of Gloucester); or Great Britain’s royal diamonds 1660.” In the Somers’ tracts.

save or to ingratiate themselves. On the 14th of April, 1660, the king issued his famous declaration, in which he promised a full pardon to all his subjects, those only excepted whom the parliament should hereafter name, and declaring liberty to tender consciences. "No man shall be disquieted or called in question for difference of opinion in matters of religion, which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom." The boon appeared to be great; and it was not seen at first that a sting lay in the proviso, which might at any time render it null and void. The presbyterians were not aware how entirely their power was gone: they still hoped to manage the parliament; and the declaration contained the following clause, which gave them satisfaction: "We shall be ready to consent to such an act of parliament as upon mature deliberation shall be offered to us for the full granting that indulgence." From this treacherous paper new troubles arose, which ended in the extinction of puritanism within the church of England, and the formation of the non-conformist party.

If sincerity be consistent with the most perfect unconcern, Charles was probably sincere. He had no aversion to the puritans as such, provided they could assist him to regain his throne. He cared nothing for the prelatists except as their services were wanted to assert his divine right. His temper was easy and forgiving; though a debauched life at length seared his conscience and he then became hard-hearted if not cruel. Notwithstanding

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1660.

CHAPTER
X.

CHAS. II.
A. D. 1660.

all his solemn disavowals, and those of his indignant courtiers, he was in heart a papist ; though too careless, too contemptuous of all religion, to submit at present even to its accommodating discipline, and too politic to avow its outward forms. He had two objects in life, pleasure and a crown ; and he seems to have valued the latter chiefly for the former's sake. It was a matter of utter indifference to him whether he cajoled the puritans by swearing to the covenant, the bishops by protesting his fervent attachment to the church of England and his hatred to dissent, or both at once by inveighing in dignified and kingly terms against the papists. He had seen much of all parties in politics and in religion, and unhappily he had seen the worst men of every party—the sordid, the intriguing, and the ambitious ; and by these he formed his judgment of the rest. But he was not soured ; for he was young and full of hope ; and with all his vices his nature seemed incapable of bitterness. On the day of his triumphal entry into London, the clergy, chiefly presbyterians, attended him ; they swelled the escort in the exuberance of their joy, and the acclamations too. By the hands of a venerable member of their body they presented him with a richly adorned bible, which he graciously received ; it should be, he said, the rule of his actions. He was greatly indebted to the presbyterian clergy, at the head of whom was Dr. Calamy. It was he who, with Bates, Manton, Reynolds, and Ashe, (an aged man of eminent holiness and simplicity, honoured and

beloved by all,*) had roused the city in the king's favour, corresponded with the earl of Manchester, and influenced, more perhaps than any other man, the wavering decisions of Monk. The presbyterians had never faltered; they had always detested popery and the Laudian system; they had justified the war against the king; but they had been loyal to the throne; they had tolerated Cromwell only as a usurper, and he well knew how thoroughly they hated and despised him. They were men of christian virtues and of pure simplicity. Conscious of no guile, they suspected no deceit; and now they forgot that Charles was a Stuart, and remembered only that he was their king.

For a few days all went well. Ten or twelve of the chief presbyterians were named chaplains in ordinary: Calamy and Reynolds first received the appointment; Ashe and Newcomen declined it; Spurstowe, Wallace, Bates, Manton, Case, and others were then admitted; and lastly, on the 25th of June, Baxter became one of the royal chaplains, at the desire of the king himself. A few days afterwards the chaplains asked permission to wait upon him. They spoke with the boldness which became their office and their years, and yet with dutiful respect. I presumed to tell him, says Baxter, that we spoke on behalf of a people who if they lost the faithful preaching of the gospel would be broken-hearted, whatever else they should enjoy. I told him that the late

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1660.

* Baxter, book i. p. 229.

CHAPTER X.
CHAS. II.
A.D. 1660.

usurpers so well understood their own interest, that to produce it they resorted to doing good as the most effectual means; and that, with this view, they had placed and encouraged many thousand faithful ministers in the church, even such as detested their usurpation. The chaplains then implored the king to remove those occasions of scruple which pressed hardly upon the conscience of multitudes of religious people, and which gave occasion to designing men to represent them, however loyal and peaceable their conduct, as factious and rebellious. Charles heard them with attention, and returned a gracious answer, professing his earnest wish to bring the prelatists and themselves to an agreement by concessions to be kindly made on both sides. "If this is not accomplished the fault shall be on your part," he said, "and not on mine." He was resolved to see it accomplished; he would attempt the healing work himself. His chaplains were delighted, "insomuch that old Mr. Ashe burst out into tears of joy."* The king shewed a candour above his friends of the church party, and always gratefully acknowledged the services of the presbyterians in his restoration. Several of those who had once led the puritans were now sworn of his privy council; these were the earl of Manchester, Denzil Hollis, now lord Hollis, Annesley lord Anglesea, and sir Ashley Cooper lord Shaftesbury; and the presbyterian chaplains were requested to prepare for the king's satisfac-

* Baxter.

tion a statement of their grievances; and of the terms on which a comprehensive union might be formed to embrace the episcopalians and themselves. In return, they represented to his majesty their own want of authority; they could decide nothing for the puritans at large; they could but express their own private sentiments, and those of their friends in London with whom they might confer. The king said he wished for nothing more. They then added a request that, when their own concessions had been offered, "the brethren on the other side" might bring in theirs; stating fairly how much for the sake of concord they would abate and yield up; and the king promised on behalf of the bishops that they should do so.* Calamy and his party consulted with the presbyterian clergy at Sion college in the city, and within a few weeks presented their proposals in writing. These proposals, though advanced without the authority of the great body of the English puritans, or indeed their cognizance, clearly expressed their sentiments. Except the anabaptists, the quakers, and a few sectaries, all would have been satisfied. The presbyterian chaplains understood the wants and the disposition of their brethren; for though all were termed presbyterians, they were in fact the representatives of various parties. The term puritan was passing out of date, and that of presbyterian now succeeded it, as a designation, comprehending all, whatever their notions of church-government,

CHAPTER
X.
CHAS. II.
A.D. 1660.

* Baxter, part i. p. 232.

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A. D. 1660.

who disliked prelacy ; thus Baxter was an independent, Manchester and Hollis were moderate episcopalians. They agreed upon archbishop Ussher's reduced episcopacy as their basis without the alteration of a word. They did so in order that the world might see that they did not reject episcopacy as in itself unlawful, and that the archbishop's reputation might shelter them from misrepresentations. On points of doctrine they still desired no change. The prayer-book, even as it stood, they charged with no false doctrines ; it contained some obscure expressions, and perhaps it insisted with a needless preciseness on some controverted points. But it ought to be well observed that puritanism had now exhausted itself ; it had arrived at the last crisis of its fate, and still it had no quarrel with the dogmatic teaching of the book of common prayer. "The king required us to draw up and offer him such proposals that we thought meet in order to agreement about church-government ; for that was the main difference. If that were agreed there would be little danger of differing in the rest. In all our treaty we had never meddled with the doctrine of the church, because though the most part of the bishops were taken to be arminians, as they are called, yet the articles of religion we took to be sound and moderate, however men do variously interpret them."* These are the words of Baxter. So moderate were the presbyterians that it was with difficulty that Baxter could induce them to

* Baxter, part iv. p. 65.

premise four particulars on subjects of practical religion; viz., those for countenancing godliness; for establishing in every parish an orthodox, learned, and godly pastor; for insisting on a credible faith and obedience in communicants; and lastly, for the sanctification of the Lord's-day; which was urged no longer on Jewish precedents, but on other grounds, viz.—“it being certain and on long experience found that the observation thereof is a special means of preserving and promoting the power of godliness, and obviating profaneness.”* “These, however,” said the associated chaplains, “are not the points in controversy.” They repeated the complaint of the ancient puritans, that the book of common prayer contained many things that are justly offensive and need amendment. They went further, and implored the king that a new form of prayer might be devised by some learned, godly, and moderate divines of both persuasions, indifferently chosen; that it might be expressed as much as possible in scripture words; or at least that the old book might be effectually revised and reformed. They expressed their entire satisfaction with a liturgy; provided always that the minister might also “make use of those gifts for prayer and edification which Christ has given him for the service and edification of the church.” It was with the ceremonies that puritanism struggled at its latest

* All the papers on both sides, in this and the subsequent conference of the Savoy in 1661, may be seen in “The history of non-conformity, as it was argued and stated by commissioners on both sides. 1704.”

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1660.

gasp as in its infancy ;—with the cross in baptism, kneeling at the Lord's table, wearing the surplice, and bowing not only at the name of Jesus, but now of late years towards the so-called altars.

“It is not enough,” they say, quoting the words of king James, “that public worship is free from blame—it ought to be free from suspicion.” With greater force they remind the king that these ceremonies are, in the judgment of the imposers themselves, indifferent and mutable ; in the judgment of others, a rock of offence ; in the judgment of all, not to be valued with the peace of the church. The paper is remarkable for its extreme moderation. It seemed as if the puritan sore would heal at last. After a hundred years of bitter conflict, all the aggravations with which Cartwright and his more intemperate followers had inflamed the quarrel were renounced, and Calamy and Baxter stood on the same ground which bishop Hooper and dean Sampson had once occupied. They “scrupled the habits,” and they “misliked the ceremonies.” The liberty which they sought for the officiating minister with respect to extempore prayer and irregular worship, was that liberty of prophesying for which archbishop Grindal had contended, at the cost of his mitre, with Elizabeth. Ussher's scheme of reduced episcopacy, however distasteful to an ambitious prelate, gave ample powers and sufficient honour to a good one. The ten surviving bishops had resumed their functions as soon as Charles returned ; but the vacant sees were not filled, nor had

the bishops resumed their places in the house of lords ; so that the archbishop's scheme was not introduced to deprive the bishops of their rights, or to limit their just power ; it was a proposal for a re-adjustment. Indeed episcopacy was in this dilemma : if it claimed to be restored upon its former footing, as in the reign of Charles I., it abandoned the peerage and the house of lords. For Charles I. had signed the bill which excluded the bishops and abolished prelacy, before the war began. The acts and ordinances of the successive parliaments of the commonwealth, none of which had received the royal signature, were declared null and void ; but this was not amongst the number. And it was by no means certain that the bishops' seats and dignities would be restored ; for that must depend upon the decision of a parliament not yet in being ; and so with regard to the size of their dioceses, the amount of their incomes, and the limits of their spiritual power ; all these points were yet unsettled. The presbyterian chaplains, humbled and subdued, offered reasonable terms ; nor were these even to be considered final ; the king had told them that he expected each party to make concessions ; they had stated the utmost of their demands. It was now to be seen what the bishops would concede on the part of the church of England.

Adversity teaches little to old men ; the discipline of youth and manhood fails in its office as life decays. The sorrows and vexations which schooled us once, irritate without improving us

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1661.

CHAPTER
X.
CHAS. II.
A.D. 1661.

at last. The bishops had shared the exile of the young king and his joyous courtiers, and they returned home, not as they did, to forget the past, but peevish and unyielding. Their paper in answer to the presbyterian chaplains shewed a disposition to concede but little, and to make their few concessions with an ill grace. The first sentence was ominous of all the rest. "We must first observe," they say, "that they take it for granted that there is a firm agreement between them and us in the doctrinal truths of the reformed religion, and in the substantial parts of divine worship; and that the differences are only in some various conceptions about the ancient forms of church-government, and some particulars about liturgy and ceremonies, which makes all that follows the less considerable, and less reasonable to be stood upon to the hazard of the disturbance and peace of the church." This provoked their opponents. "We looked," say the chaplains in return, "for their concessions; we desired to see how much they would abate of their former impositions for the attaining of unity and peace; we receive nothing but this contradiction." As if (they might have added) the less we ask the more we must be refused; as if a wound were never to be healed until it mortifies; as if the less men really differ, the more obstinately they should refuse to bend! Some few points the bishops would concede: "if the necessity could be shown they were not against revising of the liturgy; if anything therein

should be made to appear justly offensive to sober persons." Ussher's scheme they pass over with a slight notice; intimating that it was written long before his death, and that it did not express his maturer judgment. On the other hand they discourage the hope that any concession would avail; and their concluding sentences are evidently meant to impress the king with the impropriety of yielding anything to a party now dejected and subdued. "We are so far from believing that his majesty condescending to these demands will take away not only differences but the roots and causes of them, that we are confident that it will prove the seminary of new differences; both by giving dissatisfaction to them that are well pleased with what is already established, who are much the greater part of his majesty's subjects, and by encouraging unquiet spirits, when these shall be granted, to make further demands; there being no assurance by them given what will content all dissenters, than which nothing is more necessary for the settling of a firm peace in the church." The breach then was hopeless unless the king should prove more conciliating than his advisers. The presbyterians justly regarded these expressions as insulting and totally wanting in candour and in charity. On behalf of the presbyterians Baxter replied with some asperity. He vindicates the reputation of archbishop Ussher from the charge of inconsistency; "nor was he such a hypocrite," he adds, "as to play fast and loose in the things of God:" and as to any retractation, he was him-

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1661.

CHAPTER X. self ready to witness that the archbishop owned it not long before his death, telling him that he had proposed it to the king at the Isle of Wight.

CHAS. II. A.D. 1661. The insinuation that no concessions would satisfy the puritans he treats with indignation. "You know our secret thoughts better than we do ourselves. We tell you that we shall be satisfied; you say that you will not believe us. This, he exclaims, is your way of conciliation." The bishops had asserted that "for security against arbitrary government and innovations, the laws are and will from time to time be sufficient provision." "Out of your own mouths, then," he answers, "is your government condemned. What act of parliament ratified your canons? What law imposed altars, rails, and the forcing of ministers to read the book for dancing on the Lord's-days? Or what law did ratify many articles of your visitation books? And did the laws sufficiently provide for all those poor ministers that were silenced or suspended for not reading the dancing-book or any such things? What the better were all those for the laws that were silenced or driven into foreign lands? But perhaps the laws," he adds, with a sarcasm, "*will provide for us indeed as you desire!*" The answer proceeds point by point with great force, refuting many of the statements, but with a severity which was at least impolitic. The king had not yet given his decision on the merits of the quarrel; and railing words might have been well spared, even had the puritans had less to advance in substantial argument.

The king indeed is throughout this business almost the only party whose conduct is free from blame. He is an instance of the method in which the great ruler of the universe compels vice itself to promote his purposes and do unconscious homage to his will. Charles was a profligate, and scoffed at piety of every kind: he was a papist, for even now he was reconciled to the church of Rome,* and he was not displeased that the puritans and the church of England should hold each other in check; and he poised the balance between them with an even hand. Besides, if not grateful, he was, as we have said, good-natured; and he did not forget the share which the presbyterians had had in his restoration. On the 4th of September he sent for the presbyterian divines, and placed in their hands the draught of "a declaration concerning ecclesiastical affairs," and he permitted them to suggest amendments. It was published on the 25th of October, and gave general satisfaction: had it been observed it would have been the Magna Charta of the puritans. The king refers to his protestation from Breda, and declares his intention of abiding by its principles. He mentions the presbyterians who visited him there in high terms: "to our great satisfaction and comfort we found them persons full of affection to us; of zeal for the peace of the church and state; and neither enemies, as they have been given out to be, of episcopacy or liturgy; but modestly to desire such

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1661.

* Burnet, Hist. Own Times, vol. i. p. 101.

CHAPTER
X.
CHAS. II.
A.D. 1661.

alterations in either as without shaking foundations might best allay present distempers." Resolved to adhere to episcopacy, he promised every reasonable reformation: the dioceses should be subdivided, the presbyters should be called in to assist the bishops in council, the prayer-book should be revised, and the bishops should impose nothing on the clergy or people but according to the known laws of the land. "Until these reformation could be legally effected, we do heartily wish and desire," he says, "that the ministers in their several churches, because they dislike some clauses and expressions, should not totally lay aside the book of common prayer, but read those parts against which there can be no exception." With regard to ceremonies, the king expresses his determination "that no man shall be compelled to use the cross in baptism, or suffer for not doing it; and that no man shall be compelled to bow at the name of Jesus:" as to the surplice, he was content that "men should be left to their liberty to do as they should think fit, without suffering in the least degree for wearing or not wearing it." And he suspended the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and the subscription required by the canon from the clergy at their admission into benefices, till it should be otherwise determined by a synod called and confirmed by his authority. The puritan clergy drew up a grateful acknowledgment to his majesty for his gracious concessions. It was presented on the 16th of November, and the ministers returned home from the royal

presence with light hearts and boundless gratitude. Baxter had some misgivings; but he was always querulous: and upon the whole the prospects of the puritans were bright, and there seemed at length to be a hope that the breaches of the church would be restored.

Just at the same time it was generally known that several of the vacant bishoprics, and other high preferments, had been offered to the presbyterian chaplains and their friends: the bishopric of Hereford to Baxter, Norwich to Reynolds, Lichfield and Coventry to Calamy; the deanery of Rochester to Manton, that of Coventry to Bates, and that of York to Edward Bowles, a name less known. Except Reynolds, all declined their honours. The king, we suspect, was really in earnest in pressing them to accept the benefices, whatever were the views of others. They gave various reasons for their behaviour; but their explanations are not sufficient. They acted with integrity, but they were not wise. Their motives were of different kinds: Calamy's wish was that they should all decline or all accept together; making a common cause, and stating their reasons to the world. But there seems to have been now, as there always was at every period of their history, a want of concert and of practical good sense amongst the puritan leaders. Reynolds accepted his bishopric at once; Baxter declined with equal precipitation; Calamy hesitated till it was supposed he would accept the mitre, but he too refused it, and then the others followed his example.

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1661.

CHAPTER X.
CHAS. II.
A.D. 1661.

The defection of Reynolds and the hesitation of Calamy were of serious consequence; the presbyterians were weakened by division, and the addition of one puritan to the bench of bishops had no sensible effect in their favour. The presbyterian clergy acted in this affair with pure intentions; but they were too much afraid of incurring censure from their friends. Some of them had taken the covenant; Calamy had held and expressed strong opinions against the hierarchy; Baxter waited to see the king's declaration acknowledged by the parliament and stamped with legal authority. But there are times when good men are imperiously called on to accept preferment at the expense of reputation. Vulgar minds will find it impossible to respect or even to understand their motives. The race of ambition is a passion so universal that the few who pursue it from disinterested motives are never appreciated. Yet christian heroism calls, though rarely it must be allowed, for this species of self-immolation; and men, for their heavenly Master's sake, must even be content sometimes to have greatness thrust upon them. To accept the preferments was at least to gain more influence with the court; to reject them was to abandon the little they possessed. They ought to have renounced the covenant; they ought to have unsaid the former extravagances of themselves or of their party: this indeed they did in private; and they should not have shrunk from doing it publicly and before the people. Nor had they in truth much cause

for shame. Which of their opponents had not something to retract? Which of them, for instance, now ventured to maintain (whatever they might secretly wish) the canons of 1640 and the practices of Laud? Besides there were amongst the surviving bishops several whose judgment upon all the weightier points in dispute scarcely differed from their own. How slight, for example, the line which separates the mature opinions of Baxter on church government from those of bishop Sanderson. Had they accepted preferment it seems impossible that the calamities should have occurred which now immediately ensued. Could the act of uniformity have passed with Richard Baxter in the house of lords? Would the most violent high churchman have ventured to recommend the king to put his hand to a bill which must instantly create a new secession and place at its head a band of non-conforming bishops? The presbyterian clergy admit that they had no scruples of conscience; they merely thought it inexpedient: but they were too sensitive to public opinion; and they did not perceive the importance of the crisis, and that this was their last opportunity. Their motives were pure but their decision was unfortunate.

But the king had promised that the liturgy should be reviewed and some effectual method taken for the relief of tender consciences. On the 25th of March, 1661, he issued a commission appointing an equal number of learned divines of both persuasions to review the prayer book,

CHAPTER
X.
CHAS. II.
A. D. 1661.

CHAPTER
X.
CHAS. II.
A.D. 1661.

Twelve presbyterian commissioners, with nine assistants, were summoned to meet as many bishops and their assistants. The meeting was appointed at the Savoy, the bishop of London's lodgings. It was long and tedious : the proceedings fill many pages which few cotemporaries ever read, and which in later times are scarcely known except to the idle reader of curious books. It was merely a sham fight, without hope on one side or heart on either. Of the episcopal commissioners several were never present, others only once or twice. Even of the presbyterians two never appeared, and two others, one of whom was Dr. Lightfoot, very seldom. And Baxter complains that after a time the attendance dwindled upon his own side to that of three or four besides himself. Gunning, bishop of Chichester, was his chief opponent: he was a divine of the Laudian school, who clamoured for a return to the usages of the primitive church ; particularly he insisted on praying for the dead, anointing the sick with oil, and various ceremonies of the same kind : others took part sometimes. Loungers crowded into the room for mere amusement ; and men of parts to witness an intellectual combat ; but no real importance was attached to their discussions.* A new parliament had now assembled, its members were intent only to aggrandize themselves, and for that purpose they offered the most obsequious homage to the king. The people were more violent and more abject than the par-

* Burnet, Hist. Own Times, vol. i. p. 254.

liament. Burnet expresses his firm belief that had Charles been so disposed he might have restored the star chamber, the court of high commission, and, in short, all the extravagances which brought his father to the scaffold amidst the applauses of a besotted kingdom. Under such circumstances the question of a revised liturgy and a comprehension of dissenters had no interest; and the presbyterians had no support from that public opinion which ten years before had invested them with sovereign power. The management of the controversy on the puritan side was again unfortunate. They do not seem to have understood each other; they wanted concert; their demands, if not unreasonable, were vague; and their objections extended over too wide a surface; and they fought with the carelessness of despair. The royal proclamation had invited them, as they understood it, to a friendly conference: they were "to advise and consult;" but when they met, the bishops refused to proceed until the puritans had stated all their objections. To this, with the sole exception of Baxter, they were exceedingly averse. Of a metaphysical turn of mind, and confident in his dialectic skill, Baxter was always too ready for the fray. The good sense of his associates, and perhaps their greater modesty, told them that in the present state of public feeling this categorical rehearsal of their discontents would be unwise; and so it proved; for the clamour was immediately raised that nothing would satisfy the presbyterians: and yet in truth they did no more

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1661.

CHAPTER X.
 CHAS. II.
 A.D. 1661.

than to repeat their old demands for a moderate episcopacy, a revised liturgy, a purer discipline, and more liberty in private worship and occasional extempore prayer. But that which in the general estimation was most injurious to them was an entirely new liturgy, drawn up by Baxter within a fortnight, on an emergency which was not, though it should have been, foreseen. In answer to their objections to the prayer book, their opponents not unreasonably called on them to propose another ; and Baxter undertook the task. He had, he tells us, but few books, no assistance, and little prospect of success ; his liturgy, therefore, must be regarded with forbearance. It amends some errors and supplies some deficiencies, a tone of exalted piety pervades it, and disputed points are kept as much as possible in the back ground ; but as a national liturgy it is utterly defective in depth, in dignity, in force, and in variety. Baxter admits its imperfection. He drew up and presented this, he says, only because it was necessary that something must be done. But the levity with which the ancient formularies were treated in this attempt to supersede them by a fortnight's work and by the labour of a single hand, was more injurious to the presbyterians than all the arguments of their opponents.

It was at the Savoy conference that doctrinal objections to the prayer book were for the first time advanced. The baptismal service was the field on which a battle was begun which still rages with unabated heat. The presbyterians thought it a doubtful question whether it was

lawful to baptize the children of ungodly parents ; and they desired that they might not be compelled to baptize the children until the parents had made “ due profession of their repentance ;” and they requested that it might be left to the parents to decide whether sponsors should appear or not. Upon the interrogatories addressed to the sponsors they make this comment : “ We know not by what right the sureties do promise and answer in the name of the infant : it seemeth to us also to countenance the anabaptistical opinion of the necessity of an actual profession of faith and repentance in order to baptism. That such a profession may be required of parents in their own name, and now solemnly renewed when they present their children to baptism, we willingly grant ; but the asking of one for another is a practice whose warrant we doubt of.” The petition in the collect, that the child may receive remission of sins by spiritual regeneration, “ seeming inconvenient ; we desire,” they say, “ it may be changed into this : may be regenerated and receive remission of sins.” And upon the thanksgiving, “ that it has pleased thee to regenerate this infant by thy Holy Spirit,” they comment thus : “ We cannot in faith say that every child that is baptized is regenerated by God’s holy Spirit ; at least it is a disputable point, and therefore we desire that it may be otherwise expressed.” Their comments upon the catechism explain more fully the nature of their objections to the baptismal service, and shew their whole extent. “ We conceive,” they say, “ that the answer, ‘ in

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A. D. 1661.

CHAPTER X.
 CHAS. II.
 A.D. 1661.

my baptism, I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,' might be more safely expressed thus: 'wherein I was visibly admitted into the number of the members of Christ, the children of God, and the heirs (rather than inheritors) of the kingdom of heaven.'" And more generally they express their wish "that the entering of infants into God's covenant may be more warily expressed, and that the words may not seem to found their baptism upon a real actual faith and repentance of their own; and that a promise may not be taken for a performance of such faith and repentance: and especially that it be not asserted that they perform these by the promise of their sureties, it being to the seed of believers that the covenant of God is made, and not (that we can find) to all that have such believing sureties who are neither parents or proparents of the child." They offer, in conclusion, two questions to be considered, for which every intelligent churchman and every pious parent owes them at least the gratitude which is due to those who attempted to confer advantages which have never been received. They suggest, "*first*, whether there should not be a more distinct and full explication of the creed, the commandments, and the Lord's prayer; *secondly*, whether it were not convenient to add (what seems to be wanting) somewhat particularly concerning the nature of faith, of repentance, the two covenants, of justification, sanctification, adoption, and regeneration."

The reader will ask in what light they viewed

the absolution in the office of the visitation for the sick. Their requests were thus expressed: first, "that the absolution may only be recommended to the minister to be used or omitted as he shall see occasion; second, that the form of absolution be declarative and conditional, as, 'I pronounce thee absolved,' (instead of, 'I absolve thee,') if thou dost truly repent and believe."* A great number of verbal amendments were proposed in the various offices; but these were the most important.

The time fixed for the expiration of the conference arrived and nothing had been done. The presbyterians presented to the king a list of their objections, but no answer was returned. The episcopal party did not even make a report of their proceedings. They managed this most important affair carelessly and with gross injustice. Let no man who reveres episcopacy burden his cause with a justification of their conduct! Their memory must lie for ever beneath the charge of aggravating a mighty schism, of poisoning the churches' wounds, and, instead of seeking the things which make for peace, of indulging personal animosities. The Savoy conference blights the church of England still. Since then scarcely an effort has been made on either side towards a reconciliation. Moderate men have deplored our differences and striven much to heal them, but the church of England has made no concessions, and the children of the presbyterians have long ceased to ask for reconciliation as an

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1661.

* Baxter, part ii. p. 331.

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1661.

act of grace. When they were abject once they were treated with disdain; and the Savoy conference rankles yet in the heart of nonconformity.

Men have arrived at the lowest pitch of baseness when they delight in insulting the oppressed, and England had now descended even to this depth of degradation. She saw the sufferings of the puritans with ecstasies of brutal joy. The most trivial occurrences were turned to their disadvantage; the most absurd rumours were credited and spread far and wide to expose them to contempt. Venner's noted conspiracy occurred most opportunely for this purpose: he was an insignificant fanatic, a wine-cooper in the city of London, the head of a small section of fifth-monarchy men, who met in a room in Coleman-street. His enthusiasm and that of his followers was allied to madness. With two or three and twenty followers he rushed into the street, proclaimed the Redeemer of mankind king of England, and killed several of the crowd. The whole party were secured, and received the punishment which, if they were not insane, was justly due to them. Except as an exhibition of human nature under a strange aspect, the affair deserves no more notice than any other street riot; but in the present temper of the times it was charged upon the puritans. The presbyterians, the independents, and the anabaptists of the city humbly approached the throne with protestations of their loyalty. Their abhorrence of the fifth-monarchy men was notorious when they were in power; and these addresses, which ought to have been unnecessary, prove only their

humiliation and their fears. But a cry was raised against the presbyterians; fresh plots were spoken of: there was a design upon the king's life; there was a project to overturn the government; and Baxter himself was a party to it. A fresh persecution broke out. The magistrates in the west of England indicted at one quarter sessions upwards of forty nonconformist clergy who did not use the prayer book. All those whom the triers had presented were of course dismissed from their livings. Preaching in private houses was again denounced, and those who neglected their parish churches and strayed after other preachers were threatened with such discipline as Laud had once enforced.* In October, the regicides were brought to trial, and the old leaders of the puritans, Denzil Hollis, Annesley, and the earl of Manchester, appeared as witnesses against their former associates with evident satisfaction; for these were the days of vengeance and all sense of shame was lost. That justice should overtake the murderers of a king was right; it was in accordance with the soundest dictates of reason and of the law of God. Yet our sympathies go entirely with the sufferers; for they were treated with gross injustice; interrupted by the court, browbeaten and reviled; while the degraded audience, after the custom of the age, hummed their applause. The trials were intended to humble the presbyterians and make them appear guilty of Charles's death; but they had a contrary effect. The judges themselves were obliged to assert the innocence of the parlia-

CHAPTER
X.CHAS. II.
A.D. 1661.

* Neal, vol. iv. chap. 6.

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1661.

ment and of the presbyterians, and to charge the crime upon the leaders of the army. The regicides died with heroic courage; and the puritans lost nothing by a stroke of policy which was designed to crush them and to complete the ruin of the party. The temper of the court was ominously shewn in the determination it now took to establish episcopacy once more in Scotland. The king himself is said to have been drawn reluctantly into the infatuated scheme: but violence and revenge presided at his counsels. It would fill a volume to relate the horrors that ensued. The Scotch received the bishops at the point of the sword, resisted their authority, and treated their office and their persons with indignity and scorn. A religious war followed, surpassed in its horrors and in its wickedness only by the Dragonades of Toulouse and Nismes, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew. But this is a separate history.

And now a frightful persecution harassed the quakers. The king himself was disposed to treat them with forbearance: he listened to the intercessions of Margaret Fell, one of those admirable women of whom so many have been reared in the lap of quakerism, and set at liberty no less than seven hundred of her sect whom he found in prison. An order was even drawn up for permitting the quakers the free exercise of their worship, and only the sign manual and the seal were wanting when Venner's insurrection occurred and all was changed. The quakers through the whole kingdom were assailed with frantic violence. Men and women were imprisoned at a moment's warn-

ing; the sick were torn from their beds, and some who were unable to walk were dragged with brutal violence along the pavement by their legs.* An act was passed forbidding their assemblies, under the penalty of five pounds for the first offence, ten pounds for the second, and transportation to the plantations for the third. The signal once given, the demon of persecution raged furiously: a well-attested statement was published in 1661, signed by twelve quakers, shewing that more than four thousand two hundred of their body were then in various prisons in England. Many of them had been whipped; some lay in stinking dungeons not fit for dogs; some prisons were so crowded with both sexes, that there was not even room for all of them to sit down at once. In Cheshire, sixty-eight were locked up in one small chamber. In London and the suburbs there were not less than five hundred prisoners, who were treated worse than felons. Vast numbers died in silence, and those who remonstrated were in several instances beaten to death.† The puritans themselves had first maddened the people against the quakers; but they shuddered at these atrocities, in which they now perceived the indications of their own destruction. The best were dismayed, and began to look to God alone for help. Philip Henry wrote in his journal thus: "A time of trouble in the nation: many good men imprisoned and restrained; some with, some without cause. I am yet in peace, blessed be God, but expect suffer-

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A. D. 1661.

* Sewell, Hist. Quakers, p. 261.

† Ib. p. 346.

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1662.

ing.”* And again : “ News from London of speedy severity intended against nonconformists. The Lord can yet, if he will, break the snare ; if not, welcome the will of God.”

At length the storm burst. An act to compel uniformity passed both houses of convocation, and was immediately carried up to parliament. It was read in the house of commons for the first time on the 14th of January, 1642. It met with considerable opposition, and was carried at last only by a majority of six ; the numbers being one hundred and eighty on one side, and one hundred and eighty-six on the other. In the house of lords it met with greater obstacles: they would have exempted schoolmasters, tutors, and those of the clergy who were engaged in literature and in the education of youth, and limited its operation to incumbents and to those intrusted with cure of souls. But the commons were resolute ; and Charles had now abandoned himself to pleasure, and to the dictation of his ministers ; and the whole power of the court backed the narrow majority of the house of commons. The house of lords, in conference with the commons, urged the king’s declaration from Breda in favour of tender consciences. The commons replied that a schismatical conscience was not a tender one ; and with despicable equivocation argued that the king would be guilty of no breach of promise were it otherwise ; since his gracious declaration contained these two limitations, that the differences should be referred to parliament, and that concessions

* Diary, Jan. 24, 1661.

should be made so far only as might be consistent with the peace of the kingdom. Thus, on the 8th of May, the lords passed the bill, bishop Burnet observes, with no great majority. It had been detained so long before the upper house, and opposed by so large a minority in the house of commons, that the puritans still fondly clung to the hope that the royal assent might be refused; for they yet regarded Charles as, upon the whole, their friend. In this interval of suspense Philip Henry again writes mournfully in his journal;—"Great expectation of a severe act about imposing the common prayer and ceremonies. It has passed both houses of parliament, but it is not yet signed by the king. Lord, his heart is in thy hands: if it be thy will turn it; if otherwise fit thy people to suffer and cut short the work in righteousness." So thousands wrote and prayed: but the suspense and the lingering hope were of short duration. The fate of the puritans was sealed. The contest of a hundred years was at an end. On the eighteenth of May the king signed the bill, and they were finally cast out of the church of England.

Every man who feels an interest in the ecclesiastical affairs of England has probably read the act of uniformity. It has been usual to print it with the prayer book; and finding it there, the reader has learned to regard it as a part of the book itself; and thus the church of England is burdened with the disgraceful task of defending it. Some of its enactments are obsolete, and some have been repealed; but enough remains in force to disgrace the legislature and the church of

CHAPTER
X.CHAS. II.
A.D. 1662.

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1662.

England. To the church, indeed, whatever it may have been to others, it was a terrible disaster ; it was the cause of distractions which still fester in her vitals and threaten one day to accomplish her destruction. It was designed to effect the expulsion of the puritans ; and for this purpose at least it was exquisitely suited. Every doubtful point was decided against them, and no further connivance at any of their scruples was permitted. The act required them not only to relinquish but to recant their principles. The terms it imposed upon them were the following :—Every minister possessed of any ecclesiastical benefice or promotion within the realm of England must, before St. Bartholomew's day, the 24th of August, 1662, submit to the following conditions ; to which those also who might hereafter obtain preferment were in like manner commanded to subscribe—

First ; to subscribe and publicly read before the congregation a declaration of his unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled the book of common prayer, including the psalter, and the form of ordaining bishops, priests, and deacons.

Second ; to subscribe the following declaration : “That it is not lawful, on any pretence whatsoever, to take arms against the king ; and that I do abhor that traitorous position of taking arms by his authority against his person, or against those that are commissioned by him ; and that I will conform to the liturgy of the church of England as it is now by law established.” The remainder of this declaration contained a further hardship :—

Thirdly; "I do declare that there lies no obligation upon me or any other person from the oath commonly called the solemn league and covenant, to endeavour any change or alteration of government either in church or state; and that the same was in itself an unlawful oath." This clause, however, was to be enforced only for twenty years; but during that time it was to be subscribed both by the beneficed clergy, and by schoolmasters and private tutors, though laymen, under a penalty of three months imprisonment for the first offence, and fine and imprisonment for the second.

Fourthly; the act declares that no person whatsoever shall henceforth be capable of any ecclesiastical office until he shall have been made priest by episcopal ordination according to the form and manner prescribed in the book of common prayer.

Fifthly; it enacts that all preachers and lecturers shall conform in every point to these conditions.

And lastly; that all the acts from Elizabeth downwards, (here styled "good laws and statutes of this realm for enforcing uniformity") shall stand in full force and strength, and shall be applied, practised, and put in force. The penalty for refusing compliance with the terms prescribed by the act was, in the case of the clergy, that they were utterly disabled *ipso facto*, and deprived of their benefice, lectureship, et cetera, as though naturally dead.

The effect, then, of the act of uniformity was

CHAPTER

X.

CHA S. II.

A. D. 1662.

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1662.

in the first place to put an end to the controversy with respect to the surplice and the ceremonies. The puritan divines must henceforth abandon their scruples or their benefices; they must give up one and all of those points for which they and their fathers had contended so long and fruitlessly; they must accept the prayer book as it stood, and rigorously conform to it. They must wear the surplice, and use the cross in baptism, and kneel at the supper of the Lord; they must forego extempore prayer, and adhere to the prescribed ritual and to the directions of the rubric. To men in their circumstances the terms were hard; for even the episcopalians had now been long accustomed to use a certain discretion on all the points in question, and the king had promised from Breda that this liberty should remain. They complained with truth that they were more severely dealt with than their fathers in the days of Cartwright or at the conference of Hampton court. The bishops in their review of the prayer-book had not removed one of their difficulties, or made one important concession: they had introduced several changes, and some improvements, but they had abated nothing. In their preface, recently set forth, they professed indeed, with some ostentation, their desires for peace and unity, and they boasted of their own moderation. But it was difficult to reconcile their professions with their conduct. With no other purpose, it would seem, than to insult the presbyterians, they had even introduced fresh apocryphal lessons into the calendar. They

would now compel the puritans, on their vows of canonical obedience, to read in church the ridiculous story of Bell and the dragon.* The early puritans in former times had escaped some of the difficulties of subscription by holding lecture-ships and merely preaching to the people, neither wearing the surplice nor using the ceremonies. The privilege was now withdrawn; rigid conformity was enforced not only on lecturers, but as far as possible on schoolmasters and private tutors, though not in orders. All must rigidly conform or else ruin stared them in the face; for the austere acts of Elizabeth and James were again revived; those "good laws and statutes for enforcing uniformity" were no longer to be allowed to rust; and the puritan who hesitated to subscribe was forewarned that he should feel their keenest edge.

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A. D. 1662.

* Which was now added to the apocryphal lessons. The puritans of that day say that by the act of uniformity they would have been compelled to read the apocryphal lessons even on the Lord's day. We fear this is true. There are those who would still restore the apocryphal lessons on the Lord's day. In Cleaver's Companion for Churchmen for 1852, a calendar professing to contain "the lessons, as they are appointed to be read or observed by the church of England, &c.," the lessons for three Sundays, and for a fourth Sunday that in the afternoon, are taken from the apocryphal books. Wheatley however, who is generally consulted by the clergy as a good authority, says that "there is not any one Sunday in the whole year that has any of its lessons taken out of the apocrypha; for, as the greatest assemblies of christians are upon those days, it is wisely ordered that they should be instructed out of the undisputed word of God." We must add, if there be any doubt on this question, it is high time it were set at rest by authority.

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1662.

But the most severe of all the conditions now imposed was that by which presbyterian orders were renounced. No minister could henceforth hold office in the church of England unless episcopally ordained. On this point the reformers had felt no difficulty: they admitted, and as it seems without hesitation, the presbyterian ministers of foreign churches and those of Scotland, if they subscribed to the articles, promised canonical obedience, and took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy.* This forbearance was now at an end; and the presbyterian clergy who would retain their livings or their lectureships must submit to a second ordination. In Ireland this harsh clause was so far mitigated that the reordination was made hypothetical, and the form ran thus: "If thou art not already ordained receive the office of a priest." But in England the second ordination was absolute. Hall, the new bishop of Chester, son of the venerable bishop of Norwich, though not the heir of his catholic principles and of his love of peace, exacted from those who applied to him for second ordination a humiliating declaration that their presbyterian orders were a mere pretence.†

The elder puritan clergy had received episcopal orders and were not directly affected by this clause; but they now resolved to stand

* See Hist. of Early Puritans, p. 227.

† The bishop's form of abjuration ran thus:—"Ego A. B. pretensas meas ordinationis literas, a quibusdam presbyteris olim obtentas, jam penitus renuncio et dimitto pro vanis." (See in Williams's Life of Philip Henry, p. 58.)

or fall together, and to make the cause of their younger brethren their own. Of the latter, great numbers had received presbyterian orders, not as the best, nay as irregular, and as deficient in that kind of authority which immemorial usage confers, but still as valid, and, under the circumstances of the times, convenient. If it was reasonable to enact, in an episcopal church, that episcopal orders should for the future be insisted on, yet at the close of an intestine war, during which a generation had grown to manhood, it was surely decent that some forbearance should be exercised; to prefer episcopacy no doubt was right, but to cast mud upon presbyterian churches was a needless insult. It was an unhappy step; it has alienated the church of England from all the reformed churches on the continent and from the sister church of Scotland. The reformation had left the question of presbyterian orders open: and, with the exception of Sanderson, none of king Charles's prelates had the slightest pretensions to be named with the reformers, for theological learning, for piety, and for deep acquaintance with the scriptures. But rashness and presumption now sat in the seat of the reformers; and rashness and presumption see no difficulties. With coarse hands they were allowed to renovate the ancient structure, and to the utmost of their power they defaced its ancient character. It had stood hitherto on terms of perfect amity with foreign churches: they insisted in effect that the intercourse should cease; they consigned, as far as in them lay, the church of England, to a moody solitude, which they mistook for dignity.

CHAPTER
X.CHAS. II.
A.D. 1662.

CHAPTER X.
 CHAS. II.
 A.D. 1662.

The hardships which it inflicted on the puritans are the smallest part of the sins of the act of uniformity. It flung the imputation of schismatic worship like fire-brands over the whole of protestant christendom.

Nor can the renunciation of the solemn league and covenant, in the terms of the act, be justified. Of the presbyterians, now so called, some, of whom Baxter was one, had never taken it; others had taken it with reluctance; but all who had embraced it were undoubtedly placed by it under a new obligation. Sanderson himself had written his *Pax Ecclesiæ* to justify a lax interpretation, to call it nothing more, of the vows of canonical obedience. It was better, he argued, to conform to the times to some extent than to be silenced. Thousands of the puritan clergy thought so too: they had merely acted upon Sanderson's principles, only they had carried their compliance a little further. They submitted to the times. They took the covenant, the engagement, or both, successively, as they were imposed by what seemed to be the sovereign power then existing in the state. The restoration of the king as a national act annulled these obligations; and now it would have been right, and might have been expedient, to demand an explicit declaration of his loyalty from every clergyman; but for this the oath of allegiance was sufficient. It was, to say the least, a needless insult to force each minister to renounce the covenant. To virtuous minds it was a still greater hardship to be compelled to declare that the covenant was in itself an unlaw-

ful oath. When repealed it became no doubt unlawful; but in itself considered, it stood precisely on the same footing with all those other ordinances of the two houses which had become laws without the king's signature. Was every Englishman a rebel who had obeyed the revolutionary parliaments? And even if so, where was the act of oblivion, and the promises on the faith of which the king had been restored? Broken and dispirited as they now were, the presbyterians thought little of the insult, but they could not force their consciences to give solemn protestation to a falsehood. If the state rescinded the covenant they were well satisfied; they would continue in the church and submit to episcopal government; but they were too honest to confess a crime because they had obeyed the only legislative power which had in fact any real existence.

The defence of this calamitous measure rests upon the following grounds; either that, in the first place, the terms of conformity which it imposed were just; or that, in the second, they were demanded by an imperious necessity; or that, in the third, they were justified by a wise precaution. Upon the first point it is needless to linger. Two questions are involved in it: the right of a christian church to insist upon its own terms of communion, and the wisdom of making those terms severe. Admitting the right, the question then arises, whether these terms ought to consist in things which the imposers acknowledge to be indifferent, and the party upon whom they are enjoined look upon as sinful. The reader may not

CHAPTER
 X.
 CHAS. II.
 A. D. 1662.

be displeased if we assist him in the solution of this question with the opinion of bishop Warburton. "It would be hard," he affirms, "to say who are most to blame; those who oppose established authority for things indifferent, or that authority which rigidly insists upon them, and will abate nothing for the sake of tender misinformed consciences: I say it would be hard to solve this, had not the apostle done it for us, where he says; We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. I myself, says he, do so, and all for the gospel's sake. This is the man who tells us he had fought a good fight and overcome. And we may believe him; for in this contention he is always the conqueror who submits."

The plea of necessity is not so easily dismissed. It rests however chiefly on the justice of those charges of disloyalty and turbulence from which it then derived its main support. It will probably be admitted that the conduct of the puritans at the early periods of the war had not been blameless: they had been too much given to change, they had been restless under existing evils, and too indifferent to the calamities of others. Amongst their lists the men had often been found who fomented discord. As a party they had not always upheld the sovereign even in his just rights. When resistance surged over into rebellion they had not boldly condemned the madness of the people. They had not dealt equal justice to the king on the one hand, and to the parliament and army on the other. They construed the faults of the sovereign

severely, those of his opponents with the utmost indulgence. Several times a crisis had occurred in which the religious puritans, if united and resolved, might have saved their country, perhaps their king; but they had neglected them. If something of that jealousy with which they watched Charles and his court had been extended to the proceedings of Cromwell and the army, they might now have sustained a higher character. In addition to this, the bishops and the episcopal clergy had their own grounds of hostility. There were twenty years of insult to be avenged, of disgrace to be wiped out, of alarm to be retaliated. White's committees were not yet forgotten, and the triers had not ceased two years ago to sit in judgment on the clergy from town to town. Those who justify the conduct of these revolutionary tribunals have certainly no reason to complain of the act of uniformity. The gentry, the bishops, and the clergy had been plundered and cast out. They were now again in power, and they dealt the same hard measure to the puritans. Upon this ground indeed they justified their severities; and so far their defence had weight. They who resort to violence must expect insult and violence in return. The puritan historians have represented the act of uniformity as an unprovoked aggression; but it was rather the reaction of violence and faction upon itself. "Let Mr. Baxter," exclaims bishop Bramhall, "sum up into one catalogue all the nonconformists throughout the kingdom of England ever since the reformation who have been cast aside or driven away; I dare

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1662.

CHAPTER X.
 CHAS. II. A.D. 1662.

abate him all the rest of the kingdom, and only exhibit a list of those who in these late intestine wars have been haled away to prison or chased away into banishment by his party in three places alone, in London and the two universities, or left to the merciless world to beg their bread, for no other crime than loyalty, and because they stood affected to the ancient rites and ceremonies of the church of England, and they shall double them for number.”* It is upon such principles that the merits of the case have been too often discussed by historians on both sides. The writers of each party have taxed their ingenuity and research to prove that the oppressions of their adversaries surpassed their own. To this wretched squabble we shall not stoop. All that has been said amounts in short to this, that each party when in power forgot the precepts of the gospel and acted from selfishness or mere revenge. Each party had received deep and real injuries, and each retaliated after the fashion of this world,—“after the traditions of men, and not after Christ.”

It is still however to be considered whether the act is capable of justification as a precautionary measure. If the puritans were seditious, if their liberty was inconsistent with the well-being of the state, the stern rigour of the act of uniformity was no doubt required. The court party attempted to prove the existence of this necessity, and failed. They endeavoured in the first place to throw the odium of the war and all its consequences upon

Bramhall against Baxter, pp. 166, 167. This was written after the ejection of the 2000 nonconformists.

the puritans, and thence to infer that, once convicted of rebellion, they ought for the future to be deprived of the power of further mischief. By calumny and falsehood they so far disturbed the reason of the nation as to secure a momentary triumph. But it is evident they felt the insecurity of their ground; for they endeavoured to make it good by forging imaginary plots and secret insurrections; they accused the presbyterians even now of perfidy and treason. The plots and conspiracies, however, which they professed to have detected were heard of no more after the bill was passed; and the panic they created shews only the despicable methods to which they were compelled to have recourse. In the inflamed state of mind now prevailing amongst all classes, facts and suspicions were easily confounded, and prejudice and passion did the work of reason and reflection. But in fact the presbyterian leaders had all along been men of peace. When Laud was yet in prison, and Charles I. professed his willingness to treat, the lawful ends of the war were already, they maintained, fulfilled. And even the parliament, which had now restored the young king, avowed that the war in its origin was just. Lenthall, the son of the late speaker, having said, in the course of the present year, that every man who drew his sword against the king was guilty of putting him to death, he was called before the speaker and severely reprimanded on his knees. As to their intentions for the future, the character of the presbyterian leaders was enough to refute the aspersions now heaped upon

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1662.

CHAPTER
X.
CHAS. II.
A.D. 1662.

them. Who could believe that Ashe and Calamy and Manton, or even Baxter, ardent as he was, were fomenting a sedition; or that such men would encourage their parishioners in a mad crusade against the church and king? They might be admitted, it was evident, into the bosom of the national church with perfect safety, if not with great advantage. The only danger that could arise would result from their exclusion. To this, however, the government appeared insensible. The calm voice of history must not be suppressed: the motives which carried the act of uniformity were retaliation and revenge, rather than any alarms, however needless. A party long oppressed was suddenly restored to power, and these were its reprisals. "'Tis a pity," said Dr. Allen to Sheldon, archbishop of Canterbury, "the door is so strait." "'Tis no pity at all," he answered; "if we had thought so many of them would have conformed, we would have made it straiter."*

The act of uniformity passed in May: it was to come into force on St. Bartholomew's day, the 24th of August. Baxter thought it inexpedient to wait so long, and preached his farewell sermon the week after it received the royal assent. Even the appearance of conformity might, he feared, be construed to his disadvantage, and he was moreover anxious to shew his brethren an example of decision. Others waited for the revised prayer book before deciding on a step so full of hazard to themselves, and so important as it regarded others. The anx-

* Neal, vol. iv. p. 302. and Baxter, Life.

ious interval of three months was spent by the presbyterians in conference, in deliberations, and in prayer. Every earthly consideration was in favour of their compliance: the most visionary amongst them could not expect, in the present temper of the nation, that puritanism, once expelled, would ever be restored to the bosom of the church: if they left their homes and parish churches they were closed against them for ever: and voluntary aid was uncertain and utterly inadequate. Conformity was before them with ease and competence; and nonconformity with penury, disgrace, and, that which was more painful than either, a useless existence. But the revised prayer book was not forthcoming: no pains were taken to place it in the hands of the clergy. Burnet says that not one in forty of the clergy had read it, even of those who conformed. It was a shameful injustice to the clergy that their unfeigned assent and consent was required to a book which in fact they had never seen. And it was a grievous trial (as it was a cruel wrong) that their decision must be taken on or before St. Bartholomew's day, just a few weeks before the annual payment of their tithes could legally be enforced. If they resigned their livings, ruin stared them in the face, and they were turned penniless adrift, deprived of the last year's income. Those who persevered in their nonconformity must have been men of conscience and of pure integrity, or of an obstinacy unparalleled in the history of our race.

The fatal day arrived, and two thousand of her ministers forsook the church of England. They

CHAPTER
X.

CHAS. II.
A. D. 1662.

were not accused of heresy. They were not immoral or incompetent. They were not seditious. They were not averse to a liturgical service. They would have submitted gladly to an episcopal regimen. Their decision was not made in a moment of passion; it was deliberately taken. They proceeded resolutely, though after many misgivings; for they felt that the step could never be retraced. Their own private sorrows are at an end; death has long since closed their wounds, and stilled their lamentations. The consequences of her violence have been to the church herself more lasting and even more deplorable. "St. Bartholomew's day," says Mr. Locke, "was fatal to the church of England."—On the seventeenth of August, 1662, the Sunday before St. Bartholomew's day, they preached their farewell sermons. It was a day of the deepest sorrow, and it was known for several generations by a familiar term as the black Sunday. Those who are acquainted with the depth and tenderness of the union which binds the evangelical pastor and his flock, require no description of a scene which others will scarcely understand. Two thousand ministers of Christ took their last leave of two thousand congregations. The preacher's voice was often stifled beneath his own emotion, or drowned in the sobs and tears of his flock. In some churches there was an awful silence; the only expression of the sorrow that refuses to be comforted, and of the grief that entrenches itself in the inmost soul, while the voice is still and the countenance fixed as in death itself. In the great towns, and in London, the multitudes

that filled the churches, clung to the open windows, or listened at the doors, were but a small proportion of the vast crowd which overflowed the streets or lingered in the churchyards. Many of the sermons are in print: those of the clergy in London were taken down by shorthand-writers, and immediately published from their notes. They do honour to the preachers, and to the cause for which they suffered. The clergy, sublimed by affliction, and sustained by the presence of One in whose service they were that day to make the sacrifice of all that was dear on earth, spoke with dignity and feeling, but without weakness in their sorrow, or unbecoming warmth in their complaints. Their tone was solemn and affectionate: the very text, in most instances, anticipated the sermon, and thrilled every heart. Their exhortations were very practical; and their doctrines pure, simple, and evangelical. It is marvellous to notice how a deep earnestness now chased away the follies which had so often fluttered around the puritan pulpit. There were few Hebrew criticisms or scraps of Greek; little of Aristotle, and less of pagan history; no pedantry of jingling words; but a style for the most part chaste, manly, and devout. Above all, there was that which will always embalm the puritan cause, whatever were its faults, in the hearts of evangelical christians, a full and fervent exhibition of the gospel. Of themselves, and even of their motives, the preachers said but little. "Yes, my beloved," exclaims Mr. Lye, at Allhallows, Lom-

CHAPTER
X.
CHAS. II.
A.D. 1662.

CHAPTER

X.

CHAS. II.

A.D. 1662.

bard street, “we are so to love our people as to venture anything for them but our own damnation. I come not here to throw firebrands. I bless God that I have a most tender affection for all my brethren in the ministry; and, though I am not satisfied myself, I condemn no man. I believe there be many do as conscientiously subscribe as deny to subscribe. I protest, in the fear of God, I cannot subscribe: perhaps it is because I have not that light that others have. Brethren, I could do much for the love I bear you; but I dare not sin. I know they will tell you this is pride and peevishness: the Lord be witness between them and us! I prefer my wife and children before a blast of air of people’s talk; and I am very sensible what it is to be reduced to a morsel of bread. I would do anything to keep myself in the work of God but sin against my God. I dare not do it.” This was not the first time that Lye had preached a farewell sermon in Lombard street. He reminds his congregation that just eleven years before he had been under sentence of banishment, and had taken his leave of them, because he had refused the engagement, or as he says, “because I would not swear against my king. Then,” he adds, “I could not forswear myself: the God of heaven keep me that I never may!”* That church ought to have been rich in men of integrity which could afford to part with such an one as Lye. “I censure

* “An exact collection of farewell sermons preached by the late London ministers. Printed in the year 1662.”

none that differ from me," said Dr. Jacomb, at the church on Ludgate Hill, "as though they displease God: but as to myself, I should violate the peace of my own conscience, which I cannot do; no, not to secure my ministry; though that is, or ought to be, dearer to me than my very life: and how dear it is God only knoweth." But in general the preachers, to spare the feelings of the people, and their own, or unwilling to provoke offence, passed over their nonconformity with few remarks. They thought it sufficient to allude to the various sources from which danger was to be apprehended; and these they said were chiefly these three: lowering persecution, the growth of popery, and the decay of spiritual love. But most of all they seem anxious to guide their broken-hearted folds to the still waters which flow from beneath the throne of God. "Your ministers may be banished," says Cradecot, at St. Stephen's, Southwark, in the close of his last sermon, "your ministers may be imprisoned, but there is a Comforter that abides for ever. If Christ can comfort his people in the absence of himself, he can surely comfort them in the absence of all other comforts. When He denies the means He can comfort us without: where He dries up the stream He can make us drink out at the fountain. They may keep your ministers out of the pulpit; they shall not take the Comforter out of your hearts. So that when I shall not preach any more to you, I shall pray the Father that he shall send another Comforter, even

CHAPTER
X.CHAS. II.
A.D. 1662.

CHAPTER
X.CHAS. II.
A.D. 1662.

the Spirit of Truth, that he may abide with you for ever." The ministers throughout the kingdom spoke in the same strain. With such doctrines on their lips the ministry of the presbyterians closed.

The puritan cause was at an end. Within the church of England it has never since existed as a party; the seceders took henceforth the name of nonconformists. The history of their sufferings, their patience, their decreasing influence, and their spiritual decline, we leave untold. The nation saw them cast out with great indifference. No provision was made for the support of the ejected ministers, who were left to their own resources and the kindness of their friends. Their sufferings were often dreadful. One of them relates how Providence assisted him when he had but threepence left; another tells of the joy with which he found two silver pieces in a ditch by the road side, where he had sat down faint with hunger and distress; a third records the unchanging goodness of the God of Elijah, who, when his children wept for bread, and his wife to witness their agonies and her husband's shameful lot, sent an unknown messenger to his door with a sack of flour; a fourth offers up his praises for the gift of seven golden coins from a stranger, when all his wealth amounted to three halfpence: but in short the reader who chooses to turn over the leaves of Baxter's life, or Calamy's

history of the ejected ministers, may read the pathetic story, and yet too true, of want endured by many an outcast vicar and his delicate family, far more touching than Goldsmith's imaginary tale, gilded with the lustre of an unfailing faith, and a serene dependence upon God. There was now no toleration whatever for dissent; and those who still ventured to preach assembled, like the primitive Christians, by stealth, in some upper room. If they ventured to sing psalms, it was in the shelter of a solitary barn, or in the fields at night, or on the mountain side. If they met sometimes in private houses to kneel in prayer with some once honoured minister travelling that way, and to listen again to his thrilling exhortations, scouts were placed around to announce the dreaded spy, or magistrate, or parish constable. The preacher, if detected, was insulted and carried off to prison, and his congregation fined, and perhaps imprisoned. All this the nation bore without the least resentment. Profoundly torpid, it made no attempt to vindicate its own liberties in the persons of the nonconformists. Indeed from time to time fresh oppressions were heaped upon them.

In June, 1663, the conventicle act made it penal for more than five persons besides the family to assemble in private houses "for any exercises of religion in any other manner than is the practice of the church of England;" and the penalty might be inflicted by the justice of the peace, without a jury. For the first offence the punish-

ment was three months' imprisonment in the common jail and a fine of five pounds; for the second, six months' imprisonment and a fine of ten pounds; and for the third (now, however, after conviction by a jury), banishment for life to some of the American plantations, excepting always, as too congenial an abode, the puritan colonies of New England. The five-mile act followed in 1665: it enacted that all those non-conformist ministers who refused to swear "that it was not lawful on any pretence whatever to take up arms against the king," and "not to endeavour any alteration of government whatever, at any time, either in church or state," were incapable of teaching schools or receiving pupils; and they were forbidden to come within five miles of any corporate town, or of any parish in which they had been accustomed to officiate. There have been times when the spiritual church has multiplied and thriven beneath even hotter fires: but non-conformity dwindled; and when at length happier days arrived, its force was spent. After the revolution of 1688, when these infamous acts were repealed, and liberty of conscience became a fundamental law, though no considerable number of the ejected ministers had yet conformed, the zeal of their followers was not sufficient to reinstate them in the ministry. Three, or possibly four, hundred meeting-houses were built, and some of the great divines of former days might again be heard in the pulpit, and this was all. Many of these chapels still remain in country towns and parishes,

modest and retired, surrounded by the green chapel-yard in which the ashes of the elder presbyterians have long slept; and we may gather from them some information as to the state of nonconformity after its long affliction of eight-and-twenty years. The meeting-house is invariably small: it can seldom accommodate more than two hundred persons; the spacious chapels of our large towns are of a much later date. It seems as if puritanism, after a stormy life, had been satisfied at last to retire into obscurity and die in peace. The return of liberty did not revive its strength. With free indulgence to plant itself in every parish and convert England to its principles, presbyterianism then accomplished nothing. It dwindled away, and became, first cold and formal, then arian, and at length socinian. It now exists in England chiefly by virtue of a few endowments to which it clings, and which still impart to it some signs of life. The vigorous dissent of modern times is a new creation: it sprung up from the times of Doddridge and Whitfield, in the middle of the last century; it has incorporated the old presbyterian churches in many instances, and accepted their faith and discipline in many more. But as an historical fact, the dissent of the present century does not trace its origin to the puritan nonconformists: it is a new secession.

To the church of England the exclusion of the nonconformists proved a melancholy triumph. If it be presumptuous to fix upon particular oc-

currences as proofs of God's displeasure; yet none will deny that a long, unbroken course of disasters indicates but too surely, whether to a nation or a church, that his favour is withdrawn. Within five years of the ejection of the two thousand nonconformists, London was twice laid waste, first by pestilence and then by fire. The puritans saw the hand of God in these appalling visitations, and adored his righteous vengeance. But other calamities ensued, more lasting and far more terrible. Religion in the church of England was almost extinguished, and in many of her parishes the lamp of God went out. The places of the ejected clergy were supplied with little regard even to the decencies of the sacred office: the voluptuous, the indolent, the ignorant, and even the profane, received episcopal orders, and like a swarm of locusts overspread the church. A few good men amongst the bishops and the conforming clergy deplored in vain this fearful devastation. Charles himself expressed his indignation: he was disgusted with the misconduct of the clergy; * for profligate men are not unfrequently amongst the first to perceive the shame of others. It was the opinion of those who lived in these evil days, that had it not been for a small body of respectable clergymen, who had been educated among the puritans, and of whom Wilkins, Patrick, and Tillotson were the leaders, every trace of godliness would have been clean put out, and the land reduced to universal and avowed

* Burnet Hist. Own Times, vol. i. book ii.

atheism.* Indeed the writings and sermons of the church of England divines of this period confirm these statements. They are evidently addressed to hearers before whom it was necessary to prove not merely the providence, but the very being of a God; not only the soul's immortality, but the soul's existence. Their pains are chiefly spent, not in defending any particular creed or system of doctrine; for they appear to have thought all points of doctrine beyond the attainment of the age. They take up the people of England where heathenism might have left them a thousand years before; they teach the first elements of natural religion; and descant upon the nature of virtue, its present recompence, and the arguments in favour of a state of retribution, after the manner of Socrates and Plato. It is seldom that they rise beyond moral and didactic instructions. Theology languished and spiritual religion became nearly unknown; and a few great and good men handed down to one another the practice and the traditions of a piety which was almost extinct.

The restoration of civil liberty brought with it no return of spiritual life within the church of England. The nation became less immoral without becoming more religious. Politics and party ate out the very vitals of what little piety remained:† at length one of the most cautious of English writers, as well as the most profound of English divines, seventy years after the ejection of the nonconformists, portrays the cha-

* Burnet Hist. Own Times, vol. i. book ii.

† Burnet, Pastoral Care, written about 1691.

racter of the age in those memorable words, in which he tells us, that it had come he knew not how to be taken for granted, by too many, that christianity was not so much as a subject of enquiry; that it was now at length discovered to be fictitious!* How widely these opinions had infected the nation and its educated classes, we may infer from the circumstance, that he devoted his life to that wonderful book, in which he proves, by the argument from analogy, that religion deserves at least a candid hearing. Bishop Newton a few years afterwards wrote his treatise on the fulfilment of prophecy with the same intentions; while Doddridge, amongst dissenters, deplored the prevalence of a fatal apathy, and the decay of real piety. In the course of ninety years the nation had descended to a state of irreligion, which we now contemplate with feelings of wonder and dismay. When the gospel was once more proclaimed, by Doddridge and Venn, by Whitfield and the Wesleys, the depth of spiritual degradation cannot be more forcibly expressed than by the fact, that everywhere the tidings were received with all the surprise of novelty. Venerable forms remained, but they conveyed no adequate meaning; scriptural doctrines were retained, but, with rare exceptions, they were neither explained nor understood. A powerful machinery had been long in being, but the very knowledge of its uses had become to a great extent a mere tradition. There had all along

* Bishop Butler, in pref. to the Analogy, 1736.

been bright exceptions, both among the laity and the clergy; but England, taken as a whole, had forgotten God. When the puritans were expelled, they carried with them the spiritual light of the church of England; and yet even amongst themselves the light had become dim and the glory had departed.

On the whole, it is a painful history. It shews the folly of petulance and a morbid preciseness, however sincere, on the one side, and of unyielding severity and an equally absurd tenacity of forms upon the other. Our approbation seldom at any period goes entirely with either party; and we judge most favourably of each by turns, as we see it in distress, and when our judgment is silenced by our sympathies. But one lesson recurs at every period, and gathers strength from the incidents of every page. A national church must stand upon a generous basis: it must admit good men of every shade of orthodox piety; its terms of communion must be few; it must hold the essentials of salvation (without which it were indeed no church); and it must endeavour to comprehend those, whatever their weaknesses, who subscribe to the apostolic canon in their lives, and give sufficient evidence that "they love the Lord Jesus in sincerity." Other methods have been tried in vain. We know the price at which a rigid adherence to rubrical observances must be purchased. We have seen the consequences of a rigid uniformity; and we have seen the emptiness of a ritual zeal.—Shall we for ever tread

CHAPTER
X.

in the erring footsteps of our forefathers? or does there remain a hope that the christianity of England may yet collect its disjointed and too often conflicting forces into one, and present to the nations of the earth the benign spectacle of the greatest of all people, on the most important of all subjects, at unity within itself;—like that city in which, of old, the tabernacle of the Most High was pitched, and in the midst of which God himself vouchsafed to dwell?

472

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

I.

The HISTORY of the EARLY PURITANS: from the Reformation to the Opening of the Civil War in 1642. 8vo, 10s. 6d. cloth.

II.

The CHURCHMANSHIP of the NEW TESTAMENT: an Inquiry, Historical and Theological, into the Origin and Progress of certain Opinions which now agitate the Church of Christ. Post 8vo, 6s. cloth lettered.

III.

DISCOURSES for the FESTIVALS of the CHURCH of ENGLAND. With Notes. 1 vol. 8vo, 12s. cloth lettered.—This volume contains a Discourse for every Festival for which a Collect and Epistle are appointed in the Prayer-book.

IV.

The RULE of FASTING, as set forth in Holy Scripture, and taught by the Church of England. A Manual for Lent. Second Edition. 1s. cloth.

V.

SERMONS. Second Edition. 12mo. 6s. cloth lettered.

VI.

The COMINGS of CHRIST: Five Advent Sermons on Haggai ii. 6—9. 12mo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

VII.

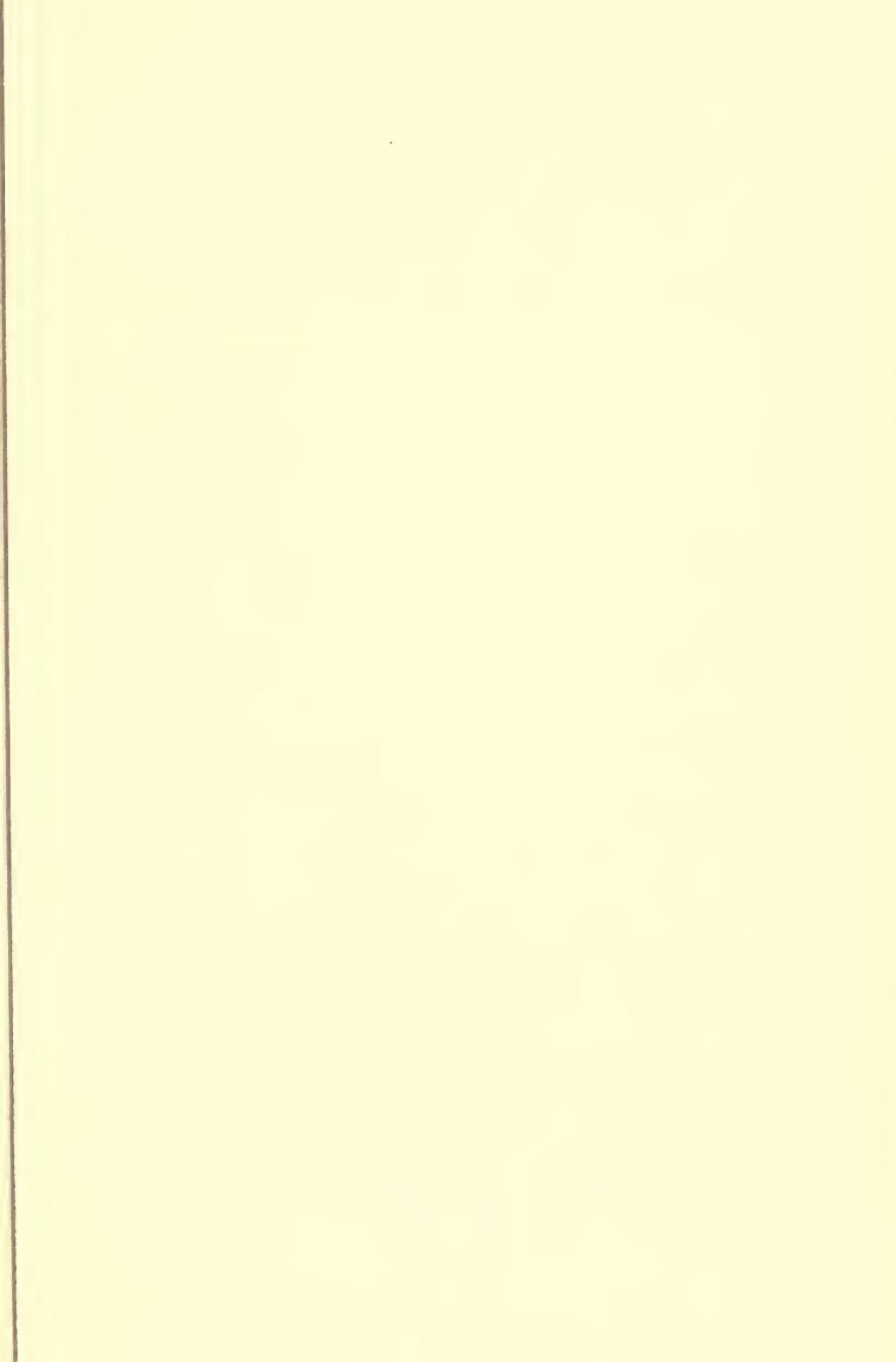
TWO SERMONS on the LIFE, MINISTRY, and DEATH of the late Rev. RICHARD MARKS; Author of the Retrospect, &c. 1s. 6d.

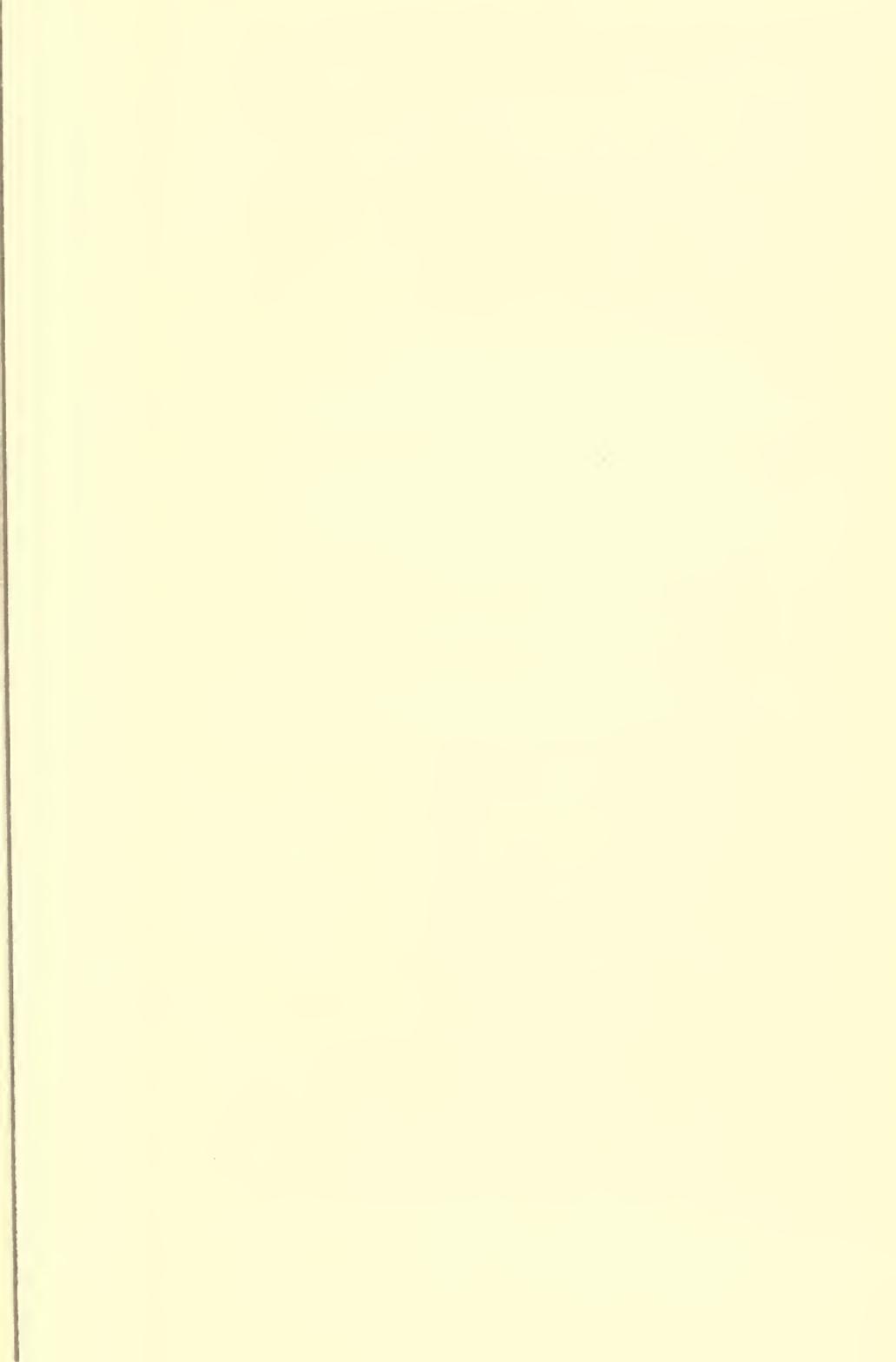
VIII.

SERMONS from the OLD TESTAMENT. 12mo. 6s. cloth lettered.

IX.

A TREATISE on the SPECIAL PROVIDENCE of GOD: Also Two Dissertations—1. On Prophecy. 2. On Inspiration. By the late Edmund Dewdney, M.A. With a Biographical Preface by the Rev. J. B. MARSDEN. With Portrait. Price 5s. 6d.





**PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET**

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

BX
9334
M35
1852
C.1
ROBA

