

**The Comic History
Of England
part (11)**

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The Comic History Of England

Gilbert Abbott A'Beckett



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CHAPTER THE SECOND. JAMES THE FIRST (CONTINUED).



THE Parliament that was to have been dissolved in thin air on the 5th of November, leaving nothing behind but a report in several volumes of smoke, met for the despatch of business on the 21st of January, 1606. Laws were passed against the Papists in a most vexatious spirit, and by one enactment they were positively prohibited from removing more than five miles from home without an order signed by four magistrates. If a Catholic had got into a cab, and the horse had run away, without the driver being able to pull up within the fifth mile, the fare would have been most unfairly sacrificed.

James, who saw the advantage Scotland would derive from an alliance with England, began to urge the Union, but the English naturally objected to such a very unprofitable match; for Scotland had nothing to lose, nothing to give, nothing to lend, and nothing to teach, except the art of making bread without flour, joke-books without wit, reputation without ability, and a living without anything. James felt that the sarcasms on the Scotch were personal to himself, and he told the Parliament they ought not to talk on matters

they did not understand; but it was thought that to restrict them to subjects which they did understand would be equivalent to depriving them of liberty of speech on nearly every occasion.

James had become somewhat popular on account of the attempt to blow him up sky-high with all his ministers, and a rumour of his having been assassinated, sent him up a shade or two higher in the affections of his people.

It is a feature in the character of the English that they always take into their favour any one who seems to be an object of persecution; and there is no doubt that if in a crowd there is any one desirous of rising in public esteem, he has only to ask a friend to give him a severe and apparently unmerited blow on the head, in order to render him the idol of the surrounding multitude. If there had been no Gunpowder Plot, it would have been worth the while of James to have got one up, for the express purpose of increasing his popularity. His qualities, as shown in his way of life at this time, do not warrant the esteem in which he was held; for he divided his time between the pleasures of the table, the excitements of the chase, and the blackguardism of the cock-pit.

When remonstrated with on the lowness of his pursuits, he declared that his health required relaxation; and he would declare that he would rather see one of his Dorking chickens win his spurs, than witness the grandest tournament, These pursuits, which were expensive, caused him to do many acts of meanness to obtain the necessary supplies: and among other things he went to dine with the Clothworkers as well as with the Merchant Tailors, among both of whom the royal hat was sent round at the close of the banquet , At the second of these entertainments his own beaver had just made the circuit of the table with considerable effect, when, encouraged by the liberality of the company, he shoved on to the social board a cap, in the name of his son, Prince Henry. The collection for the child was not very ample, for many of the guests objected to being called upon for a trifle towards lining the pockets of the young gentleman's new frock, more

especially when it was obvious that James fully intended to clutch the whole of the additional assets.



Among other disreputable methods he took of procuring money, was the institution of the order of Baronets, whose titles he sold at a thousand pounds each, without regard to the merit of the purchasers. The antiquity of a baronetcy is therefore not much in its favour, and those who can trace the possession of such a distinction in their family down to the first establishment of the rank, do nothing more than prove the possession, either honestly or dishonestly, of a thousand pounds by one of his ancestors. Seventy-five families took advantage of this traffic in dignities to obtain a sort of spurious nobility, founded on the necessities of the sovereign.

The only qualifications required of candidates wishing to be elected to the order were “cash down,” to pay the fees, and an ability to trace a descent from at least a grandfather on the father’s side; so that seemle, as the lawyers say, the maternal ancestors might have been utterly hypothetical and purely anonymous.

The arms of the baronets have always included those of Ulster, because the money they contributed was designed for the relief of that province—a proof that Ireland has been a drain upon England for a long series of centuries. The emblem of Ulster is a bloody

hand, which was only too appropriate to the place; and the symbol being called in the language of heraldry a hand gules—or gold—in a field argent—or silver—was also characteristic of the metallic source from which the baronets derived their titles.

Prince Henry, the heir to the throne, had long been looked upon as a pleasing contrast to his odious father, and the people were anticipating the former's reign with an assurance that the amiable and accomplished son would compensate for the infliction they had endured in the ignorance, pride, and selfishness of the parent. Death, however, that sometimes seizes first on the best, and leaves the worst till the last—on the principle of the boy who began by picking all the plums out of the pudding—took the youthful prince before appropriating his papa, and caused the latter sinfully to exult in being the survivor of his own offspring.

He forgot the maxim that “Whom the gods love, die young,” and the remarks he made upon his own comparative longevity proved that he at least was one of those whom the gods had not been anxious to adopt at the earliest opportunity.

The young prince died of a malignant fever, on the 5th of November, 1612, and his father, whose harsh conduct—especially to Sir Walter Raleigh and other great men had been criticised by his heir, allowed no mourning to take place, but made the unnatural and blasphemous boast that “he should outlive all who opposed him.”

Though having little or no affection for his own children, James delighted in having about him some low and sneaking favourite who would flatter his ridiculous vanity, and help to cheat him into the belief that he was a good and amiable character.

As no one of spirit and honesty would consent to become the despicable parasite that James required, some mean and unprincipled vagabond was of necessity selected as the depositary of that confidence which a son, with the feelings of a gentleman, could not of course participate. Henry had therefore been excluded from that free communication which should exist between child and

parent in every station, and an uneducated humbug named Robert Carr had wormed his way into the heart, or rather into the favour of James, who was drawn toward the other by a sympathy with congenial littleness. Carr was such a wretched ignoramus as to be unable to speak ten consecutive words of grammar, and it flattered the egregious vanity of James to be able to impart some of that education of which he had just about enough to enable him to show his superiority over his most unlettered pupil. Carr played his cards so successfully that he was soon not only knighted but created Viscount Rochester; and though his future career proved him worthier of the rope, he actually obtained the Garter.

It was to be presumed that this disreputable scapegrace would soon do something or other to prove how far James had been right or wrong in the selection of a friend, adviser, companion, and favourite. The necessities of Carr were so well supplied by sponging on his royal patron that it was not necessary for the former to commit any pecuniary swindle; but he very rapidly got into a most disgraceful connection with the Countess of Essex, a vile person who obtained a divorce from her own husband, to enable her to marry Rochester. The latter had a friend named Sir Thomas Overbury, who advised him to have nothing to do with the profligate woman in question. This so irritated the countess that she persuaded her paramour to join her in poisoning the party who had given the advice, and after trying the homoeopathic principle for some weeks without effect, they at length gave him one tremendous dose which did the atrocious business. Carr had received the title of Earl of Somerset on his infamous marriage, but the favourite was getting already a little out of favour when the affair of the murder happened. James being one of those who promptly turned his back on those who were "down in the world," and had smiles for those only who were prosperous, began to estrange himself from Somerset, and to transfer his worthless friendship to George Villiers, afterwards Duke of Buckingham. The king first saw this young scamp at the Theatre Royal,

Cambridge, where a five-act farce called Ignoramus was being represented by a party of distinguished amateurs, with the applause that usually attends these interesting performances. Villiers was appointed cupbearer—a grade immediately under that of bottle-holder to the king, and the influence of the new favourite was soon felt by the old, who found himself arrested one fine morning on the charge of having been concerned in Sir Thomas Overbury's murder. The steps taken for the punishment of this atrocity were perfectly characteristic of the period. By way of a preliminary offering to Justice, some half dozen of the minor and subordinate parties to the crime were executed off-hand, while the two principal delinquents, Somerset and his countess, having been tardily condemned, were immediately afterwards pardoned. The infamous couple subsequently received a pension of £4000 a year from the king, who no doubt felt that Somerset could show him up, and was just the sort of scoundrel to do so unless he could be well paid for his silence.

The annuity allowed to the ex-favourite must be looked upon as hush-money, rendered necessary by the mutual rascalities of the donor and the recipient, who, being in each other's power, were under the necessity of effecting a compromise.

The fall of Somerset was followed by the rise of Villiers, who rushed through the entire peerage with railroad rapidity, passing the intermediate stations of Viscount, Earl, and Marquis, till he reached the terminus as Duke of Buckingham.

Poor Raleigh, who had been thirteen years in the Tower, where he was writing the History of the World, began to feel a very natural anxiety to get out of his prison, and describe, from ocular demonstration, the subject of his gigantic labours. He accordingly spread a report that he knew of a gold mine in Guiana where the stuff for making guineas could be had only for the trouble of picking it up, and the king was persuaded to let him go and try his luck in America. Raleigh had no sooner got free than he published a prospectus and got up a company with

a preliminary deposit sufficient to start him off well on his new enterprise. He proved with all the clearness of figures—which the reader must not think of confounding with facts—that a hundred per cent, must be realised; and the shares in Raleigh's gold mine rose to such a height that he was enabled to rig a ship after having rigged the market.

Plans were published, with great streaks of gamboge painted all over, to represent the supposed veins of gold that were waiting only to be worked; and through the medium of these veins the British public bled very rapidly.

The extent of the mining mania got up by Sir Walter may be imagined when we state that he arrived with twelve vessels at Guiana, a portion of which had already been taken possession of by Spain; and the English speculators declared with disgust, that they had come for the gold, and had not expected to meet the Spanish.

The town of St. Thomas being already in the possession of the latter, was boldly attacked and ultimately taken, but instead of finding a mine there were only two ingots of gold in the whole place, which Raleigh clutched, exclaiming "These are mine," immediately on landing. It was evident to the whole party that Raleigh's story of the gold mine was a mere "dodge" to get himself released from the Tower; and when they came to look for the boasted vein, they found it was literally in vain that they searched for the precious metal. A mutiny at once broke out, and as Raleigh deceived them in his promise of introducing them to abundance of gold, they made him form a very close connection with a large quantity of iron.

They in fact threw him into fetters, a species of treatment that, had it been applied to every projector of a bubble company during the railway mania of 1846, would have hung half the aldermen of London in chains, and linked society together by a general concatenation of nearly every rank as well as every profession. Poor Raleigh arrived safe in Plymouth Sound, but he found a proclamation out against him, accusing him of a long catalogue of crimes, and inviting all the world to take him into custody.

The Spanish ambassador was at the bottom of this affair, for the Spaniards had a score of old scores against Sir Walter, who had no sooner landed at Plymouth than he was made a prisoner. With considerable ingenuity he pretended to be very ill, and even feigned insanity; but the latter was a plea that could not so easily be established in the time of Raleigh as it has been in our own days, when it has been found a convenient and effective excuse for those who, having committed murder, escape on the ground of their being given to eccentricity. Raleigh tried it on very hard, by talking incoherently, playing the fool, dancing fandangos in his prison, sending a potato to his tailor to be measured for a new jacket, and feigning other acts of madness, but to the writ de lunatico inquirendo, there was no other return than nullum iter, or no go, when the investigation into his state of mind was concluded. In order to save the trouble and expense of a fresh conviction, the old outstanding judgment was again brought up, and it was determined to kill him by a bill of revive—if such an anomaly could be permitted. He grew ponderously facetious as his end drew nigh, and made one or two jokes that might have saved him had they been heard in time, for they gave evidence of an amount of mental imbecility that should have released him from all responsibility on account of his actions. Among other lugubrious levities of Raleigh before his death, was the well-known but generally-execrated remark in reference to a cup of sack which was brought to him: “Ha!” said he, “I shall soon have the sack without the cup;” an observation that elicited, as soon as it was known, an immediate order for his execution. “That head of Raleigh’s must come off,” cried the king, “for it is evident the poor fellow has lost the use of it.” On the 29th of October, 1618, poor Raleigh joked his last, upon the scaffold, where he stood shivering with cold, when the sheriff asked him to step aside for a few minutes and warm himself. “No,” said Sir Walter, “my wish is to take it cool;” and then looking at the axe, he balanced it on the top of his little finger—some say his chin—and observed, “This is a great medicine, rather sharp, but it cures all diseases.” At this the headsman,

no doubt irritated by the maddening mediocrity of the intended witicism, let fall the fatal blade, and Raleigh, with his head cut off, never came to—or rather never came one—again.

We ought, perhaps to shed a tear over the fate of this great, though unprincipled man; but it is not so easy to turn on the main of

sentiment to the fountains of pity, after the water has been cut off during more than two centuries by Time, in the capacity of turncock. Besides, in going through the history of our native land there are so many victims, all more or less worthy of a gush of sympathy, that we should literally dissolve ourselves in tears before we had got half through our labours, if we began giving way to what old King Lear has ungallantly termed a woman's weakness.

On the 16th of June, 1621, James, being "hard up," and finding that the circulation of the begging-box produced no effect, was compelled to summon a Parliament. Some cash to go on with was voted to the king, but the Commons then proceeded to investigate some cases of gross corruption that had been discovered among the Ministers. The Testes, the Cubieres, and other official swindlers of modern France, who, in the midst of meanness, deception, and theft, were still blatant about their "honour," might have found, in the England of 1621, a precedent for their venal rascality. Sir John Bennet, Judge of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, and Field, Bishop of Llandaff, were convicted of bribery. Yelverton, the Attorney-General, was found guilty of having aided in an extensive swindle in the Patent Office, and Bacon, the great "moral philosopher," was found to have been fleecing the public in the Court of Chancery, to such a degree, that he might have stuffed the woolsack over and over again from the produce of the shearing to which he submitted the flocks of suitors who appealed to him.

He would take bribes in open court, and he would pretend to consider, that as all men should be equal in the eye of the law, the equality could only be achieved by emptying the pockets of every party that came into court, as a preliminary to giving him a hearing. It has been said by his apologists, that though

he took bribes, his decisions were just, for he would often give judgment against those who had paid him for a decree in their favour. The excuse merely proves that he was sufficiently unscrupulous to follow up one fraud by another, and to cheat his suitors out of the consideration upon which they had parted with their money. Bacon endeavoured to effect a compromise with his accusers by a confession of about one per cent, of his crimes, but the Peers insisted on making him answerable in full for all his delinquencies.

He then acknowledged twenty-eight articles, which seemed to satisfy the most ravenous of his enemies, who were hungering to see his reputation torn to pieces by the million mouths of rumour. The great seal was taken away from a man of such a degraded stamp, he was fined £40,000—a mere bagatelle out of what he had bagged—was declared incapable of holding office or sitting in Parliament, and was sent off to the Tower.



There were thoughts of beheading him, but happily for England, her Bacon was saved to devote the remainder of his life to literary compositions, which have greatly redeemed his name from obloquy. We must regard the character of our Bacon as streaky, for the dark is intermingled with the fair in the most wonderful manner. "Bacon was undoubtedly rash, but he might have been

rasher," says the incorrigible Strype, whose name is continually suggestive of the lashing he merited.

The Commons having been instrumental in bringing to light a considerable quantity of corruption, seemed determined to continue on the same scent, and every one who had a grievance was invited to lay it at once before Parliament. The waste-paper baskets of the House were of course soon overflowing with popular complaints, for there is scarcely a man, woman or child that cannot rake up a grievance of some kind, upon the invitation of persons professing to be able and willing to supply a remedy.

James, fearful that his prerogative would be entrenched upon, wrote a letter to the Speaker, advising the Commons not to form themselves into an assembly of gossips, to listen to all the tittle-tattle that an entire nation of scandal-mongers would be ready to collect; but the House would not be diverted from its honest purpose by the sneers or threats of the sovereign. A good deal of polite and other letter-writing ensued between the king and the Parliament, until the latter entered on its journals a protestation, claiming the freedom of speech and the right of giving advice as the undoubted "inheritance of the subjects of England."

James was furious at what had occurred, and ordering the Journals of the Commons to be brought to him, he contemptuously tore out the page; and then, sending back the book, advised the House to turn over a new leaf as soon as possible.

"Tell your master," said Coke, in a whisper that nobody heard, "tell him he will do well to take a leaf out of our book, but not in the style in which this leaf has been taken."

Parliament was first prorogued, and then dissolved by the king, who declared it would do no good as long as it lasted, and Coke, who was charged with adding fuel to the Parliamentary fire, was sent to the Tower with several others. On the day of the dissolution James nearly met with his own dissolution, for while taking a ride on a spirited horse, who had perhaps a certain instinctive sympathy with the popular cause, he was thrown into the New River.

This was on the 6th of January, 1622, when the water was frozen; and James had just been saying to himself, "I'm glad I have made the plunge, and broken the ice with these turbulent Commons," when he found himself plunging and breaking the ice after another fashion. Fortunately his boots were buoyant—perhaps they had cork soles—and Sir Richard Young, seizing a boat-hook, which he converted for the moment into a boot-hook, drew the sovereign



by the heels from what he afterwards declared was decidedly not his proper element, Buckingham, as we have already seen, was the sole successor to Somerset in the office of royal favourite; but Charles, the Prince of Wales, had taken rather an aversion than otherwise to the person whom his father patronised.

The friends of the latter were generally so disreputable, that his son could not go wrong in avoiding them; but Buckingham beginning to look upon Charles as the better speculation of the two, resolved on making himself as agreeable as possible to the more faithful and therefore more promising branch of royalty.

The duke being fond of scampish adventure, proposed a plan better suited to be made the incident of a farce, than to be ranked as an event in history, He suggested that Charles and himself should travel to Spain under the assumed names of Jack Smith and Tom Smith, in order that the prince might introduce himself

to the Infanta of Spain, whom it had been proposed he should marry. For such a wild-goose scheme to succeed, an Infanta of Spain must have been much more accessible in those days than in ours; for though Jack Smith and Tom Smith might find their way into a public-house parlour, and make love to the landlord's daughter, they would assuredly never be allowed to carry their gallantries into any European palace, or even to obtain admittance into any respectable private family. James, when the scheme was proposed to him, discouraged it at first, but being taken by the scapegrace couple in "a jovial humour," which means when the trio happened to be disgracefully drunk, the consent of the king was given to the farcical enterprise. Having arrived at Madrid, the two hopeful youths rode up on mules to the door of Sir Thomas Digby, the British ambassador, and sent in the names of John and Thomas Smith; but Digby, knowing no less than half a hundred Smiths, declined seeing the "party" unless a more special description was sent up to him. Without waiting for further formality, Buckingham—alias Tom Smith—walked with his portmanteau straight into the ambassador's presence, after a series of scuffles on the staircase and in the passages, accompanied by shouts of "Keep back, fellow!" "You can't come up!" and other exclamations that had prepared Digby to give Tom Smith a reception by no means encouraging. When the ambassador recognised his visitor, his manner completely changed, and his politeness knew no bounds, when in Jack Smith, who entered next, Digby saw no less a person than the heir to the throne of England. The incognito was of course at an end in an instant, and the next day Buckingham and the prince were presented to the royal family of Spain, though the farce of the disguise was still kept up to a certain extent; and the Infanta was sent out in her father's carriage, "sitting in the boot," says Howell, "that Charles might get a sight of her" The position of a young lady looking from the boot of a carriage could not have been very becoming, and she does not seem to have made a particularly favourable impression

on her intended suitor, He nevertheless expressed his readiness to have another look at her, and he played the part of lover at Buckingham's instigation, for the purpose of getting a variety of presents from the young lady's family.

Her brother Philip was anxious for the match, and did everything to encourage it, by giving some valuable article to Charles whenever he evinced anything like affection for the young Infanta. One day he pretended to be in a particularly tender mood, and at every piece of gallantry he displayed Philip gave him something costly to take away with him. By a series of smirks, leers, and pretty speeches, he secured some original pictures by Titian and Correggio, but when he rushed up to the Infanta with amorous playfulness, pinching her in the side with his cane, and giving the Spanish version of "Whew, you little baggage!" the queen of Spain was so delighted that she emptied her reticule, which was full of amber, into the pocket of the Prince, while the word "Halves" was whispered in a sepulchral tone into his ear by the crafty and avaricious Buckingham.

When they had got all they could out of the Spanish royal family, the English prince and his companion made up their minds that the Infanta was a failure, and that they had better get home with all possible celerity. Buckingham began treating Philip with the most disrespectful familiarity, slapping him boisterously on the back, alluding to him curtly, but not courteously, as Phil., and otherwise offending the royal dignity. At length Prince Charles and his companion called to take leave, when the former played his old part of a devoted lover, beating in the crown of his hat, stamping on the floor, and giving the numerous signs of devotion that a practice of several weeks under a popular actor had made him completely master of. He had no sooner turned his back upon Madrid, and commenced moving towards home, than he made up his mind to cut the matrimonial connection; and he announced his determination by a messenger, who was instructed to say to Philip, that, for the good of both parties, and decidedly for the happiness of one, the abandonment of the marriage was much to

be desired. Philip, upon whom the Infanta was a drag he would have been glad to get off his hands, became angry at the tampering that had taken place with the young lady's affections; but as these were no doubt pretty tough, the damage was not material. A proxy had been left in the hands of Digby, Earl of Bristol, the British Ambassador at Madrid, and the royal family sent nearly every day, with their compliments, begging to know when the proxy was to be acted upon; but finding at last, that, notwithstanding the proxy, there was no approximation to a satisfactory result, a most unpleasant feeling was created. Bristol, who was a man of honour, felt very uncomfortable at the evasive replies he was compelled to give, and was not sorry to return to England; though he had, as he naturally observed, "not bargained for the warrant which, in the most unwarrantable manner, awaited his arrival, and sent him straight to the Tower."

He was soon afterwards released, but was not allowed by Buckingham, the favourite, to approach the king, and a recommendation to Bristol to go to Bath, or to retire to his country seat, was the only reply the ex-ambassador could obtain to his solicitations to be allowed to offer explanations to his sovereign.

Charles had given the Infanta scarcely time to recover from the jilting she had just undergone, when, with a cruel disregard of that young person's feelings, he made up to Mademoiselle Henrietta of France, and a marriage with the latter was speedily concluded. The dowry, amounting to about £100,000, was paid partly down, but the nuptial ceremony was performed by proxy; and the English Government wrote over to say that there was no hurry about the bride, provided some of the cash was transmitted to England as speedily as possible.

With some of the cash thus obtained, and with money squeezed out of the people, an expensive engagement was formed with Count Mansfeldt, an adventurer from the Low Countries, who undertook to recover the Palatinate, if an English army of twelve thousand men were placed under him, The troops were

put at his disposal, and embarked at Dover; but on reaching Calais the governor had no orders to let them pass, and in consequence of the loss of the city in Mary's time, the free list, of which the English had been in the habit of taking advantage, was of course suspended. In vain did Mansfeldt inform the door-keeper that it was all right, and insist that the name of Mansfeldt and party should have been left with the authorities; for the man resolutely declared he had a duty to perform, which prevented him from admitting the earl and his followers.

While they were waiting outside the bar of Calais, several of the troops suffered severely from sea-sickness, and being obliged to go round by the back way, they had become so attenuated, that instead of being fit for marching into the Palatinate, they were much better adapted for marching into Guy's Hospital.

The failure of this expedition was the last event of importance in the reign of James, who was fast sinking under gout and tertian ague, produced by a long indulgence in rums, gins, brandies, and other compounds, He died, at the age of fifty-nine, on the 27th of March, 1625, having reigned upwards of two-and-twenty years, during which he showed himself fully deserving of the title bestowed on him by Sully, who said of James the First that he was the "wisest fool in Europe.

" He was learned, it is true, but his acquirements, such as they were, became a bore, from his disagreeable habit of thrusting them at most inappropriate times upon all who approached him. He was weak, mean, and pusillanimous, while his excessive vanity caused him to select for his companions those pitiful sycophants who would affect admiration for those miserable qualities, which, had he cultivated the friendship of honest and intelligent men, he might have been eventually broken of. He lost, and indeed he did not desire the society of his children, because they could not sympathise with those littlenesses of character which, the older they grew, their judgment caused them more and more to despise and deplore in their unfortunate parent.

Happily only two out of seven survived to endure that alienation which must have been painful while it would have been unavoidable; and they were thus spared the humiliation of seeing a father vain, selfish, and unrepentant to the last, while their deaths in rapid succession gave him happily no uneasiness.

For his eldest son he had, as we have already seen, prohibited the wearing of mourning, thus giving a proof of combined malice and stupidity, since his insults to the dead were of course as impotent as they were wicked and infamous. He was suspicious in the extreme, and always fancied he was going to be done or done for. To guard against the latter contingency he wore a quilted doublet that was proof against a stiletto, and under the apprehension of being taken advantage of, he obstinately excluded every one from his confidence. The result was that he never had a friend, through his constant dread of an imaginary enemy.

It has been said of him by one of his historians, that he was fond of laughing at his own conceits; but the wretch who can even smile at a joke of his own must be such a libel upon human nature that not even Hume-an(d) Smollett (ha! ha! mark the pun) shall make us believe that an individual so abject could ever have existed. Though the sovereign himself was not calculated to inspire respect, there were many events in his reign which rendered it useful if not glorious. Sir Hugh Middleton commenced at Amwell that now venerable New River, by dabbling in which he swamped himself and secured a stream of health and prosperity to those who came after him. The immortal Hicks finished his memorable Hall; Lord Napier invented logarithms, to the extreme disgust of the school-boys of every generation; and Dr. Harvey made the magnificent discovery that the blood is a periodical enjoying the most unlimited circulation. Two Dutch navigators contrived to double Cape Horn; which the reader must not imagine was twice its present size before that operation was performed, for Cape Horn, like any other cape, is not larger when doubled.

Bill Baffin, an Englishman (you all know Bill Baffin)

discovered Baffin's Bay in the year 1616, and a patent for the fire engine, granted two years afterwards, has been stated as a proof that steam power was first known in England in 1618, though upon inquiry we are inclined to think there was more of smoke than steam in the invention spoken of.

The wealth and extravagance of the nobles, among whom corruption and bribery were practised "wholesale, retail, and for exportation," may be imagined from the statement, that on the marriage of the French king, the horse of the English ambassador wore silver shoes so loosely fastened on, that they fell off, and were instantly replaced, for distribution among the populace.

We can scarcely believe that any English horse could have walked in these silver shoes or slippers in the time of James, however skilfully they could have substituted sliding for walking, since the Wood Demon, coming to London, caused the introduction of wooden pavements.

The luxury and display that stand prominently forward among the characteristics of the period, were discountenanced by James when seen in others, though he would have spared nothing for the selfish gratification of his own extravagance. Bacon, whose tendency to flattery justifies the popular analogy between butter and bacon, remarked of the king that he would recommend the country gentlemen to remain at their seats, by saying to them, "In London you are like ships in a sea, which show like nothing; but in your country villages you are like ships in a river, which look like great things." * This, after all, was a funny idea, but a bad argument; for a ship in a river, like a storm in a puddle, is somewhat out of its element. Many would prefer being wrecked in the ocean of a busy but tempestuous life, to remaining aground in the dismal swamp of rural obscurity. The thing to be desired, is the art of keeping a steady course, and steering in the right direction; but it is mere pusillanimity to accept a recommendation to shirk the voyage. Among the inventions of the reign of James, we must not omit to mention the sedan, a contrivance of the lazy and luxurious

Buckingham. On its first appearance in public, the mob hooted the machine as it passed, declaring that their fellow-creatures should not do the service of beasts; but the “fellow-creatures,” being paid for and liking the job, were the first to beat off their friends, the people. The friends of humanity were, however, not content till they had broken in the top and knocked out the bottom of the machine, leaving Buckingham to walk home in a most uncomfortable case, with his head peering out at the top, and his feet appearing at the bottom of his novel equipage.

The literary characters who flourished in the reign of James were very numerous; and we must, of course, place at the head of them our old acquaintance the “Swan of Avon,” as some goose has most irreverently christened him. Shakespeare adorned the time of James by dying in it, as, by living in it, he shed a lustre on that of Elizabeth. One of our predecessors * in the gigantic task we have undertaken—and, by the way, it is said that Mr. Macaulay, fired by our shining example, is preparing himself to follow it by a retirement from public life—one of our predecessors, we repeat, has thrown cold water upon the warm admiration which is felt for Shakespeare to this day, and which at this very moment is urging the whole nation to buy his house at Stratford, though the town was burnt, great at first for the possession of this relic, has, we confess, a little abated since our research put us in possession of the unpleasant fact, that the bard must have been burnt out, notwithstanding the assurance of the auctioneer, who acts, of course, on what he considers the best policy. Whatever we may think of the house the poet left or did not leave behind him, the houses he still draws by the magic of his genius are sufficient to refute the argument of the hypercritical Hume, that Shakespeare appeared greater than he really was, because he happened to be irregular. We are not aware that irregularity and grandeur must necessarily seem to be combined, and indeed, irregularity in payment, which considerably aggrandises an account, is the only instance we can call to mind in which we

see some ground for our fellow-historian's strange hypothesis, ** down at about the time when the poet lived in it. Our own enthusiasm, which was Fletcher, the dramatist, and his partner Beaumont, belonged to the reign of James; but when the latter died, in 1616, the firm was broken up; and as each had been nothing by himself, Fletcher fell into wretched insignificance. His name had only been known in connection with that of Beaumont, and if he attempted to play the lion afterwards at an evening party, a cool inquiry of "Fletcher! Fletcher! who's Fletcher?" was the only sensation the announcement of his name elicited. Some say he died of the plague in 1625, but it is more probable that the plaguy indifference shown towards him everywhere, after he lost poor Beaumont, was in reality the death of him. * Home.



Stratford-upon-Avon was all destroyed by fire in September, 1614, two years before Shakespeare's death, Honest Jack Stowe, the antiquarian, ought not to be overlooked, though time has long since stowed away his works among the lumber of our libraries. His Survey of London was his greatest literary labour, and he was preparing a new edition in 1605, when he was obliged to "Stow it" by an attack of illness that unhappily proved fatal.

Donne, the poet, can hardly be mentioned among the literary dons of the age; but Bacon is a luminary that must not be snuffed out in a single sentence. It has been said that his wit was far-fetched, but a thing is certainly not the less valuable for having been brought from a long way off; for if it were so, the diamond would lose much of its value in the London market. If Bacon's wit was far fetched, it was not only worth the carriage, but it has been found sufficiently valuable to warrant its being forwarded on from generation to generation: and it will, we suspect, find its way to a still remote posterity, before it arrives at the terminus of its journey.

James himself was but a contemptible writer, and would have been scarcely worth his five pounds a week in these days, as the London correspondent of a country newspaper. His imagination would not have been vigorous enough to supply him with the "latest intelligence," which must always be in type at least two days before the date on which the facts it professes to impart are stated to have happened. As an industrious chronicler of early gooseberries, new carrots, gigantic cabbages, irruptions of lady-birds, and showers of frogs, he would have been useful in his way, or he might have undertaken that branch of periodical literature which embraces the interesting recollections or non-recollections rather—of the oldest inhabitant.



Evelessum ium senturiore, corepernate explace atinvenis et vendae cab int, comnienit et experch illoratque volumquas remquae sus simus qui sum voluptat volende rsperum facerch iciisit quidit quatur serum, comnim quid modissiminis vendips andus, omnis eata netur, quam, oditaeceatia iunt, Hil et as sae nulpasandictium doluptasit la delloriori nia coris id quam, quodipit evenit quatibusam voluptatqui volori cullectur sit,Beaquae.

CHAPTER THE THIRD. CHARLES THE FIRST.

ON the afternoon of Monday, the 28th of March, 1625, Charles the First was proclaimed at Charing Cross, amid a tremendous shower of rain and hail, so that the commencement of his reign was hailed in a somewhat disagreeable manner. His first care was to turn out the fools and buffoons that his father had kept at Court, or rather, as Buckingham called it, to get rid of the comic and pantomimic company which had been established in the palace. He next determined to send over for his new bride, who appeared to have been forgotten in the hurry of business, and who was waiting at Paris, "to be left till called for." Buckingham was despatched to take charge of the precious cargo; but his behaviour at the French Court was so disreputable that he received some very broad hints as to the propriety of his speedy return to England. He made love to the young Queen Anne of Austria, and flirted with every female member of the royal family, to the extreme disgust of Cardinal Richelieu, who told him, plainly, that such conduct could not be permitted, at any price.

Buckingham took his departure, with the young Henrietta, on the 23rd of May; but there must have been pretty goings on, or dreadful standing stills, during the journey, for it was the 27th of June before they arrived at Dover. Charles, who had naturally begun to wonder what had become of his minister and his bride,

set off to meet them, and having slept at Canterbury on the 27th of June, he reached Dover on the 28th, and found his intended, who had "put up" at the Castle.

The first interview was very dramatic, for Charles extended both his arms, and Henrietta, taking a hop, a skip, and a jump, tumbled gracefully into them. Finding her a little taller than he expected, he looked at her feet, when the young Princess coquettishly pulled off her shoe, to prove that there was no imposition practised, and that it was impossible there could be any deception through the medium of high heels, for she and, in reality, a sole above it. The newly married couple started for Canterbury at once, and making another day of it to Rochester, they came via Gravesend to London, where they arrived in the midst of one of those pelting showers which have been graphically compared to a *mêlée* of cats, dogs, and pitchforks.

Charles being in want of money had assembled a Parliament, which opened for business on the 18th of June, and he at once asked for some supplies; but as he stammered in his speech, there was a sort of hesitation in his demand, which some took for modesty. With real, or affected delicacy, he declined mentioning any specific sum, but requested his faithful Commons to give what they pleased, and they were thus placed in the embarrassing position of a gentleman, who, on asking "what's to pay?" finds it left to that dreadfully sliding scale, his "own generosity." This dishonest manouvre, for such it usually is, succeeds frequently in extracting twice the proper amount from the pockets of him whose liberality is thus artfully invoked; but the Commons, being apparently "up to the dodge," voted Charles £112,000, to meet liabilities to the tune of some £700,000 per annum, for the war, to say nothing of his father's debts and other contingencies.

Pocketing this miserably inadequate contribution, he adjourned the Parliament, on account of the Plague, and having met it again at Oxford, in August of the same year, he told the Commons, plainly, that he "must have cash," for he was being dunned by

the King of Denmark, who held his promissory note, and that his private creditors would allow him no peace in his own palace. He protested solemnly that he had not the means of paying his way for the subsistence of himself and his family, and, throwing a quantity of tradesmen's accounts, unsettled, before the Speaker's chair, asked, imploringly, if those were the sort of bills that could be got rid of by ordering them to be read that day six months, or by their being suffered to lie on the table? The Commons shook their heads, expressed their regret, buttoned up their pockets, and declared they could do nothing. The matter now became serious, for Charles had changed his butcher already three or four times, and was having his bread of nearly the last of a confiding batch of bakers. "Something must be done," he said, with much solemnity, to himself, and he wrote off a polite note to the Corporations of Salisbury and Southampton, requesting the loan of £3000, which was loyally granted him. Angry at being baffled and left insolvent by his Parliament, he declared that he would, at least, prove himself solvent in one respect, by dissolving the Parliament who had so rudely resisted his demands.

Finding that he had got nothing by begging, and very little by borrowing, he was thrown upon the expedient of stealing, as a last resort. With the money lent him by some of his subjects he resolved on fitting out a fleet, under Cecil, to attack some Spanish ships, which he understood were lying at Cadiz, with some valuable cargoes on board. He reached the bay, and being kept at bay by the enemy for a short time, he at last landed very silently, the leaders exclaiming, "Piano, Piano," and took a fort. The troops, finding a quantity of wine in the garrison, partook so freely of it that they lost all their ammunition, and spoiled several pounds of best canister, by making too free with the juice of the grape. Cecil, finding that the longer they remained the more intoxicated they got, resolved on re-shipping as many as could be got to stand upon their legs, and to return to England. The British sailors were, however, in those days, such delicate creatures that half of them

died of sea-sickness, and a very few of them returned home alive. Charles, having been foiled in his last hope of recruiting his exhausted resources by plunder, resolved to try another Parliament, and a new one was manufactured with a view to give every chance to the experiment. He endeavoured to weaken the opposition by putting several of its members into offices which would prevent them from sitting in the House of Commons; but, this artful manouvre having been seen through, only served to put the people more on their guard, The new Parliament was in its principles the fac simile of its predecessor, and on the 6th of February, 1626, voted to Charles just about one-tenth of what he really wanted, and one-twentieth of what he asked. Notwithstanding the smallness of the subsidy, he took it, and resolved to pay his creditors something on account, as far as the money would go, and trust to the future to enable him to make up the deficiency. Having shown a pretty resolute disposition in dealing with the king, it is not surprising that the Commons should at length have determined to take a turn at the minister. Buckingham had long been very obnoxious, and onem Dr. Turner remarkable for his straightforward conduct, and his determination not to turn moved a question, "Whether Common Report was a good ground of proceeding?" Though Common Report has generally been accounted a common story-teller, she had been tolerably right about the Duke of Buckingham, and the resolution to proceed against him on the faith of Common Report was at once approved. On the 8th of May a still more resolute step was taken with reference to the "favourite," as this generally detested person was absurdly called, by articles of impeachment being preferred against him. The duke and his master seemed to treat the matter rather as a joke, and Charles even went down to the House of Lords to speak in favour of Buckingham. These proceedings were so clearly unconstitutional and irregular, that if the British Lion had taken to roaring, and only roared out in time, he might have saved many of the disagreeable consequences that unhappily followed.

Considering how very intrusive this animal has sometimes been on occasions when he really was not wanted, it is lamentable to think that “the squeak in time,” which might have saved nine times nine hundred and ninety-nine, was not forthcoming at the exact moment when its value would have been extreme.

Notwithstanding the impeachment of Buckingham, he was still loaded with fresh honours, and he became Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, at which the Commons vainly expressed their disgust. They nevertheless continued boldly enough remonstrating against this, and that, and the other, until the king regularly shut them up by a dissolution, without their having passed a single act. Charles, sympathising with nature in an utter abhorrence of a vacuum, which he found in the royal treasury, devoted all his energies to filling it. “Must have cash,” was the motto adopted by his majesty; who was not particular whether he begged, borrowed, or stole, so that he succeeded in replenishing his pockets. He looked up every outstanding liability, and routed out a lot of recusants who had fallen into arrear with their penalties.



He borrowed money from the nobility—if it can be called borrowing to go up to a person, exclaiming, “Lend me your money,” and at the same time take it forcibly away from him. But the

most tremendous swindle of all was the demand of ship-money; a tax he laid upon all seaports, under the pretence of their contributing a certain number of ships to the defence of the country.

He, of course, pocketed the proceeds without supplying the ships, so that, if the country had been attacked, there would not have been a sail to resist the assailants, Charles and his favourite, Buckingham, declared, with disreputable frivolity, that the ship-money was appropriately applied; for it was, in fact, floating capital, and helped to keep them above water just as much as if it had been devoted to the purchase of a navy.

Something having been said during the sitting of Parliament about a subsidy, which had never been granted, Charles thought he might as well collect it at any rate, though the Commons had declined voting it. Promises were held out that it should all be paid back out of the next supplies, or, in fact, that though the king helped himself from the right-hand pockets of his subjects, he would return the money out of their left-hand pockets—some day or another. A great many of the people, who objected to this remote reversionary interest, were thrown into prison, or sent to serve in the navy, where they became British Tars in spite of themselves, and some of them having received a classical education, introduced, no doubt, the College Hornpipe into the fleet, as an elegant and scholarly pastime.

Even the church was made the medium of extortion, for the popular preachers recommended from their pulpits the propriety of cashing up to any extent that the sovereign might require. By way of economising at home, Charles went one afternoon to the queen's apartments and dismissed every one of her tribe of French servants, who were dancing and curvetting in the presence of their mistress. This ballet of private life was summarily brought to a close by a general *chassez* of the whole crew, who had been dancing attendance on her majesty since her marriage, and she was so enraged at their dismissal that she broke the windows with her fist, which shows the panes she was at to mark her

displeasure. The French women howled very piteously, so that, between their lamentations in broken English, and the queen's expostulations in broken glass, the hubbub was truly terrible. These disturbances fomented the ill-feeling between France and England, which Buckingham desired to increase, and he actually had the excessive vanity to put himself at the head of a fleet, which sailed to Rochelle, where he "carried himself nobly," to use the words of the king, but where, in fact, he carried himself off as speedily as his legs would allow, for he ran away after having made a desperate failure, Charles was now, once more, as completely cleaned out as a young scamp in a farce, who arrives "without sixpence in his pocket," just like "love among the roses;" and Buckingham was the roguish valet who is usually in attendance on the eccentric light comedian under the circumstances alluded to. The worthy couple discussed the best method of raising the wind, and it was agreed that there was nothing left but to try it on again with a Parliament. "We shall have writs out against ourselves," said Charles, "if we do not get the writs out for summoning the Commons." They met on the 17th of March, 1628, and several of the most determined opponents to ship-money were found in the new house, which included Bradshaw, the brewer, who was ready to brew the storm of revolution, as well as Maurice, a grocer, who suited the times to a T with his liberal sentiments. The king made a haughty speech, but the Parliament determined to proceed with address, and, upon the grand piscatorial principle of throwing a sprat to catch a herring, five subsidies were hinted at for the purpose of securing concessions of the utmost value to English liberty. The Petition of Right was accordingly drawn up, which declared the illegality of collecting money except by the authority of Parliament, It next referred to our old friend, your old friend, and everybody else's old friend, Magna Charta, or Carter, as some people call it perhaps because a broad-wheeled waggon has been frequently driven through it—and this document was recited to prove that people could not be im-

prisoned without cause; though, unfortunately for them, they had been imprisoned very frequently, in spite of the arrangement that made such a circumstance quite impossible. The Petition of Right next alluded to the billeting of soldiers on private houses, which had grown into such an abuse, that scarcely a family could sit down to tea without half a dozen troopers dropping in during the meal, and pocketing the spoons, cribbing the cups, or saucily appropriating the saucers, when the entertainment was concluded. The Bill of Rights, having been drawn by the Commons, and endorsed by the Lords, was offered to Charles for his acceptance. Without either rejecting it or adopting it, he wrote under the petition a few vague generalities, which meant nothing at all, and the Commons, retiring to their Chamber, vented their indignation in a very spirited manner. Sir Robert Phillips uttered several severe Philippics against the sovereign; Sir D. Digges followed, with some tremendous digs at the throne, declaring it was quite *infra dig.* for the Commons to sit still and do nothing; while Mr. Kurton, or, as that miscreant Strype calls him, Curtain, * threw off the veil; and even old Coke gave symptoms of having caught the revolutionary flame. Selden, whose table-talk is much more amusing than his talk at the table of the House of Commons, proposed a strong declaration under four heads, and was in the midst of a powerful harangue, when Finch, the Speaker, who had got the name of Chaff-Finch, from the badinage in which he indulged, ran breathless into the House with a message from the king, recommending, as well as his puffing and blowing would permit, an adjournment until the next morning. Notwithstanding the valour that had been displayed in words, the Commons had not yet learned how to act with courage, and they quietly adjourned at the suggestion of the sovereign. The next day, however, they met again, and having plucked up all their pluck, they continued to demand an explicit answer to the Petition of Right, to which the assent of Charles was, one fine afternoon in June, 1628, somewhat unexpectedly given. Buckingham, who could never keep

quiet, resolved to make another warlike venture at Rochelle, and had got as far as Portsmouth, where, on the 23rd of August, says Howell, "he got out of bed in good-humour, and cut a caper or two" in his nightcap and dressing-gown.

These capers were soon destined to be cut very short, for as the duke was passing to his carriage in the course of the day, he received a stab from somebody in a crowd of gesticulating Frenchmen, who were all suspected of being the assassins, and instead of being taken into custody **were**, oddly enough, kicked down stairs. Buckingham was as dead as the British and Foreign Institute, when a number of captains and gentlemen rushed into the kitchen of the house, exclaiming "Where is the villain?"

*We regret to say, that the motive of Strype in calling this person Curtain, instead of Kurton, is too obvious.

A jeu de mot is at the bottom of this baseness.

We forbear from

saying more, and, according to the accounts of the period, his majesty rolled himself about on his bed in an agony of tears, until nothing but a wet blanket seemed to hang over all his prospects, He nevertheless continued his attention to business, but he never had another favourite like Buckingham, whom his majesty used to apostrophise familiarly as "my Buck," and hence that term of amiability no doubt has its origin.

He admitted Laud to be in many respects laudable; and of Wentworth he acknowledged the worth, while Noy, whose maxims contain the maximum of wisdom, was so far appreciated as to get the place of Attorney-General.

"Ou est le boucher!" Upon this a gentleman of the name of

Felton, who had been screening himself in the meat-screen, stood forth, and struck an attitude, vociferating "Here I am."



He then handed over his hat, in the crown of which he had stitched the full and true particulars of his own crime, which he requested might be read out, while he did the appropriate pantomime **to the** confession in the centre of a group of listeners. Felton gloried in the act he had committed, and when put upon his trial there was a good deal of badinage between himself and Judge Jones, whom the prisoner politely thanked for the announcement that he was to be hanged until he was dead, at Tyburn.

The king was greatly affected on hearing of Buckingham's death. On the 30th of January, 1629, the Parliament met once more, and Charles turning out both his pockets, urged the necessity of supplies. He declared that as to his balance at his bankers, it had become like "linked sweetness," for it had been "long drawn out," and the public treasury had been swept up several times, in the hope of finding an odd coin or two; but there was not a shilling to be found, and Charles was running up bills in all directions with his tradespeople. The Commons, instead of giving him the money to pay his debts, brought against him all their own old scores, and there were several stormy discussions, the storminess of which may be accounted for by the long-windedness of many of the orators.

Among those who took part in these debates, was a clownish

looking person of about thirty years of age, with a slovenly coat, and a hat so bad that Strype hints it was perhaps without a crown, to mark the republican objection to crowns which was entertained by the owner.

This individual was Mr. Oliver Cromwell, the new member for Huntingdon, who brewed beer and political storms until the country itself became Cromwell's entire, the Crown his butt, and the Constitution his mash-tub.

Charles finding the Parliament in a very unaccommodating humour, desired Sir John Finch, the Speaker, to adjourn the House, but the House refused to be adjourned, and when he was about to leave the chair, he found himself suddenly knocked back into it, with his arms pinioned, which rendered him incapable of putting any motion whatever, for he was quite motionless.

A few privy councillors rushing in, endeavoured to release him, but the opposite party bound him again to the chair, and the trial of strength between the two factions ended in a tie—as far as poor Finch was concerned—for he remained fastened in the seat of dignity. At length the Speaker, who could not dissolve the House, began dissolving himself in tears, and the king who had been waiting for him to come and tell the news, was so impatient, that messengers were dispatched to know what had become of him. Hearing that Finch was caged, or in other words locked in, the king could only leave the poor bird to his fate; but he despatched a messenger to tell the sergeant to slip out of the House quietly with his mace, which would dissolve the sitting. The sergeant may perhaps have forgotten the right cue, but he had got the right mace, and had walked nearly to the door, when he was stopped and pushed back, the key of the House taken from him and placed in the hands of one of the members, who promised to keep tight hold of it.

Charles, hearing that the door was bolted, went down, determined to force it open; but happily, he found the Commons had bolted instead of the door, or at least, they were on the point of doing so.

The king, nevertheless, ordered several of the ringleaders to be arrested, and he intimated pretty plainly to the Commons that he would not trouble them again for a very considerable period.

He had, in fact, resolved to take all matters of Government entirely into his own hands; and though Magna Charta, with a few other trifles of the kind, stood in his way, he did not scruple to trample on rights and liberties, which he knew were being continually renewed, as occasion required.

On the 10th of March, 1629, the day to which the Commons had adjourned themselves, Charles came down to the House of Lords with the proclamation of dissolution in his pocket.

His majesty began by saying, that this was “really a very unpleasant business,” that “he had no fault to find with the Lords,” but “there were some vipers among the Commons”; whom, according to the unhappy Strype, he expressed his determination of “viping out” observe the paltry evasion of the W for the sake of the pun “with the utmost energy, Thus, by flattering the Lords and threatening the Commons, or, to continue the language of Strype, “soaping the Upper House, and lathering the Lower,” did Charles dissolve his Parliament. Several members had already been placed in custody, among whom were Eliot, Holies, and Selden, the last of whom was such an inveterate table-talker, that his tongue was always getting him into scrapes of the most serious character.

An information was exhibited against them in the Star-Chamber, but they were subsequently offered their release, on promising to be of good behaviour, which they refused to do, for they felt they would have been good for nothing had they entered into such a disgraceful compact. Eliot died in prison, and the rest were adjudged to be detained during the pleasure of the king, and as he took great pleasure in persecuting his refractory Commons, there was every chance that their “durance vile” would be unpleasantly durable.

The 29th of May, 1630, was signalled by the birth of Prince Charles, and it is said that a bright star shone in the east at midday, which some have considered ominous. To us, the appearance of the

star by daylight, on the birth of this dissolute scapegrace, denotes nothing more than a propensity for not going home till morning, or till daylight did appear. About the same time that severities were being practised on the Commons, one Richard Chambers refused to pay more than legal duty on a bale of silk, and the Custom-house officers going at him rather fiercely, he declared that “merchants were more screwed in England than they were in Turkey.

“His audience hearing him use the word “screwed,” at once nailed him to the expression, and he was fined £2000 for the lapsus lingua he had fallen into. Unhappily, political martyrdom was not, in those days, so good a trade as it has subsequently become, and poor Chambers had neither a subscription opened to pay his fine, nor a testimonial to reimburse him for the expense of resistance.

A struggle for principle was then a struggle indeed, and not an eligible medium for advertisements. A Chambers of the present day would have made his principles pay him an enormous percentage, and would have made a handsome fortune for himself by what he would have termed his exertions for the happiness and liberty of the people. Poor Chambers, however—the real martyr of 1630—died in a prison at last, after waiting for redress from the Long Parliament, which was a little too long in making reparation to the victim of oppression, Charles had apparently made up his mind to get on as well as he could without any Parliament at all, and having bribed some of the cleverest fellows in the kingdom, he thought that as one fool proverbially makes many, one or two knaves would also be found to fructify. Among the shameless apostates of that day were of course many who had been mouthing most energetically on the popular side; and Wentworth, who had been originally one of the very noisiest of the people’s friends, became the meanest and most inveterate of the people’s enemies. Having brawled for some years against aristocracy, his purpose at length peeped out in his acceptance of a peerage for himself, and the man who had been continually bullying the Court, became its fawning favourite. Digges, who had been, as we have already

intimated, digging away most energetically at the constituted authorities, accepted the post of Master of the Bolls, for he had, as he said, made the discovery on which side his bread was buttered. It would be tedious to the reader, and difficult to ourselves, to give a catalogue of the exactions and impositions which were practised by Charles between the years 1629, when the Parliament was dissolved, and 1640, the year marked by the assembly of a new one. He revived, among other cruelties, the old practice of making knights of all persons possessing forty pounds a year, and either charging ruinous fees for imposing the so-called honour, or imposing a heavy fine for declining it. Knighthood became such a fearful drug in the market of dignities, that it is not surprising it should even up to this day have failed to recover its position.

The cry of "Dilly, dilly," was never more ferociously addressed to the ducks who were invited to "come and be killed," than was the command to "come and be knighted," enforced against the unwilling victims, who were selected either to pay the penalty for declining, or the fees on receiving this unenviable distinction.

While guilty of wholesale persecution, Charles did not, however, neglect the retail branch, and a Puritan preacher named Leighton—a blind fanatic, but, notwithstanding his blindness, no relation we believe to Leighton Buzzard—was exposed to the utmost cruelty for writing some *ad captandum* trash against the queen and the bishops; a bombastic little work, which neither repaid perusal, nor repaid the printer who brought it forward. Poor Leighton was fined for his coarseness, and flogged for his flagellation of the authorities, besides being compelled to undergo a variety of other barbarisms, the narration of which we would have attempted, but we found our very ink turning pale at the bare prospect of our doing so. The Puritans now began to emigrate in great numbers to America, and they no doubt laid the foundation of that drawl which has ever since distinguished the tone of the model republicans.

We now arrive at the tragical story of poor Mr. William Prynne, a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, who, in the utter absence of briefs, find-

ing himself at a dead stand-still for want of a motion, had started a trumpery little work with one Sparkes, a publisher. The volume had the unattractive title of "Histrio Mastric, the Players' Scourge, or Actors' Tragedie," in which he made an attempt to write down the stage in particular, and all amusements in general. He denounced all who went to the play as irredeemably lost, and he neither exempted the free list, the half-price, or those who went in with the orders of the Press, from the anathema, which he hurled indiscriminately against the "brilliant and crowded audiences" nightly honouring such-and-such an establishment with a succession of overflows. The queen not only patronised the drama, but sometimes appeared herself as a distinguished amateur, and the whole of Prynne's book was taken to apply to her, though she was not even mentioned in any part of it. Poor Prynne was declared to be a wolf in sheep's clothing, and, considering that he was a barrister who had turned author, the alleged mixture of wolfishness and sheepishness may be fairly attributed to his character. He was found guilty, of course, and upon sentence being passed, the Chief Justice expressed his regret that a gentleman, who had handed in on two or three occasions a compute, and was a promising junior of twenty years' standing—without ever being on his legs—should have brought himself into such an unpleasant predicament.

He was condemned to be degraded from the profession, or in fact to be dishonoured; to pay a fine of £5000, which was by no means feasible, when we consider his fees, and to be kept from the use of pen, ink, and paper, which was perhaps the most humane part of the sentence, for he was thus prevented from proceeding with his wretched trade of authorship. The poor fellow, however, contrived to write humorous articles on the soles of his boots; and "Prynne on the Understanding," though it was rubbed out as mere rubbish by the man who cleaned his boots, might have taken its place by the side of many more lofty productions of the period. His sentence was exceedingly cruel, and comprised "branding on the forehead," as if his enemies would have it believed "there was nothing inside

to hurt," while his nose was savagely maltreated, to prevent its being again poked into that which did not concern its owner. His ears were cropped under the pretext of their being a great deal too long, and indeed Prynne was so altered, as a punishment for rushing into print, that his own clerk would not have known him again in the abridged edition which the Government reduced him to. We have now to treat of the great civil war; but the magnitude of the subject requires us to take breath, which we cannot do unless we break off and begin a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH. CHARLES THE FIRST (CONTINUED).



THE great civil war was brought on by a series of incidents we will now briefly explain; but we must premise that the turncoat Noy had been long hunting for precedents to justify Charles in any course of despotism that he might resolve upon. It never was very difficult to find precedents in the legal records for anything, however cruel, tyrannical, or absurd, and Noy was not the man to be over nice in putting upon the case in "the books" whatever

construction would be most favourable to the views of his master. The ingenious Noy took care to discover that the supplying of ship-money by sea ports was a custom as old as the hills, and giving a large interpretation to the word hills, he assumed that land as well as water should supply ships, and that inland places as well as those on the coast were consequently liable to the impost. He argued that almost every town, however far from the shore, had marine interests, for there was always a dealer in marine stores, and in fact he urged that a town being unable to float a ship, might nevertheless be made to build or at least to pay for one.

In the midst of these ingenious theories and perplexing points of law, Noy died, which is no matter of astonishment to us, for the idea of looking up such a subject as ship-money, and having "case for opinion" continually on his desk, is sufficiently formidable to reconcile with it the decease of the barrister to whom the business had been confided. London was selected as the first place on which the demand for ship-money was made, and an attempt to excite the fears of the citizens, by getting up a cry very like that of "Old Bogie" was resorted to. A proclamation was issued declaring that a set of "thieves, pirates, robbers of the sea, and Turks," were expected by an early boat, though a sharp look-out along the offing at Gravesend and Richmond, through one of which the pirates must pass, would have convinced the greenest of the green that a corsair was not likely to be eating his white-bait at Blackwall, nor was England in danger of an invasion by a horde of ruffians coming up from the other side of the world at the Chelsea end of the metropolis. Several ships were ordered, but the citizens would have been quite at sea had they attempted to supply a ship, and a composition in money was demanded as an easier method of satisfying the wants of the Government. Considerable resistance was made to this gigantic swindle, and the celebrated John Hampden immortalised himself by the part he took in the struggle. This true patriot had consulted his legal advisers on the subject of ship-money, and

hearing from them that it could not be justly claimed, he determined that he would resist the impost at any sacrifice.

The matter came on for argument upon demurrer, in the Court of Exchequer, on the 6th of November, 1637, and lasted till the 18th of December, when their lordships were unable to agree in their judgment. The majority, however, ultimately decided against Hampden, but two of the judges continuing to differ from the rest, it was felt that the imposition was seen through, and that the public would have the sanction of at least some of the legal dignitaries for resisting it.

Wentworth would have whipped Hampden like poor Prynne, but not all the black rods, white rods, and rods in pickle the Court could muster, would have been sufficient for the flagellation of so great a character.

The dissatisfaction of the people, and the unconstitutional practices of the king, were not confined to England, for Scotland, after having been taken or rather having been merged in the English monarchy was destined to be well shaken by political convulsions. The proximate cause of the dissatisfaction of the Scotch, who are not a remarkably excitable race unless their pockets are threatened, was the introduction of the English service into their churches; and when the Dean of Edinburgh began to read it on Sunday, the 23rd of July, 1637, he was assailed with shouts of the most indecorous character.

The populace clapped with their hands, kicked with their heels, and bellowed with their lungs till the Bishop of Edinburgh, who had ascended the pulpit to entreat that order might be preserved, was compelled to bob down his head to avoid a three-legged stool that was thrown with savage force by one of the assembled multitude.



Something like argument.

The Scotch congregation continued to evince their zeal for their religion by throwing sticks, stones, and dirt (of which they had a good deal always on their hands) at the unprotected prelate, and cries of “stone him!” “at him again!” “give it him!” “throw him over!” “turn him out!” resounded through the sacred edifice, The religious ruffians kept up their ferocity without intermission wherever the new service was commenced, and thus, though they might easily have satisfied their consciences by abstaining from attendance at the churches where innovation had been introduced, they preferred to intimidate and brutally attack the inoffensive ministers.

This was another of the innumerable instances history has to record of the name of religion being desecrated by its being applied to acts utterly at variance with every religious principle.

Charles, who in this instance evinced a keen perception of Scotch character, resolved to punish the people of Edinburgh in a manner they would be sure to feel; and by threatening to remove the council of government from that city to Linlithgow, he touched them in what is the Scotchman’s tenderest point—his pocket. Whether it was from fear of a general stoppage to business, and the con-

sequent loss of its profits, or from some more exalted cause, the Scotch desisted from physical violence, and took a great moral resolution, which is in every way respectable. A document, called the Covenant, was drawn up, and its sentiments were put forth with the eloquence of enthusiasm from the home of John O'Groat—by-the-by, who was this Jack Fourpence, Esq., of whom we have heard so much?—to the hills of Cheviot. The Covenanters had exchanged the brickbat and bludgeon style of argument for the lighter but more pointed and effective weapon—the pen—though they still acted in the most unchristian spirit of intolerance and persecution towards those who would not adopt their sentiments.

The Marquis of Hamilton was sent to Scotland with instructions to do all he could, and a great deal that he couldn't. He was to apprehend all the rebels, if possible; but not being of a very lively apprehension, it was not likely he would succeed greatly in this portion of his enterprise. He was to overturn the Covenant in six weeks, if he found it convenient to do so, or in less if he found it otherwise. In fact, his instructions might be summed up into an order to go and make the best of a bad job—an attempt which frequently ends in leaving the matter much worse than one originally found it.

On his arrival at Holyrood his first effort to persuade the people to give up the Covenant was met by an attempt to cram it down his own throat, but he refused the proffered dose, and finding himself in a very awkward fix, he could only hope to temporise. Charles wrote to him to say, “he would rather die than give in,” but Hamilton, knowing his master would have to die by deputy, and that the deputy would be no other than himself, entreated his majesty not to be too open in his demonstrations of force against his Scotch subjects. The Covenanters on the other hand declared they meant nothing disrespectful to the throne, and that their pelting, shouting, bullying, stoning, and protesting, were all to be considered as acts performed in the most loyal spirit, and without the smallest idea of disobedience to the royal mandate.

Some negotiations ensued between the two parties, and it was resolved that a General Assembly should be held in Glasgow forthwith, while a proclamation was issued for a Parliament to meet at Edinburgh a few months afterwards. Hamilton knew the Assembly would do no good, and wrote to the king to say so; but Charles answered, that it would at all events gain time, and the Scotch might perhaps, if they met together in large numbers, come to the scratch among themselves—a result that was exceedingly probable. The Marquis of Hamilton reached Glasgow on the 17th of November, 1638; and the General Assembly commenced on the 21st with a sermon of such tremendous length, that the audience were pretty well exhausted by the time it was concluded. The Assembly would have then chosen a moderator; but Hamilton starting up with a polite “I beg your pardon,” told them there was a little Commission to read in order to explain by what authority he was sitting there. The Commission was exceedingly long, and all in Latin, which enabled the officer entrusted with the commission of reading the Commission, to extemporise rather extensively, by adding to the original Latin a considerable quantity of Dog, which spun out the time amazingly. The Assembly then again prepared to choose a moderator, when Hamilton starting up, exclaimed—”I’m very sorry to be so troublesome, but I must interrupt you again, for I wish you to hear this letter from his majesty.” Charles had purposely despatched a most unintelligible scrawl, and the functionary employed to read it prolonged the painful operation of deciphering it as long as he could, until at length the reading of the letter was concluded, The Assembly being again about to proceed to elect a moderator, Hamilton once more was upon his legs, with a “Dear me, you’ll think me very tiresome, but I have really something very particular to say;” and off he went into a speech which seemed almost interminable, from its excessive wordiness. As all things must come to a conclusion, if not to an end—Hamilton’s speech, for example, came to no end at all—the oration of the marquis was terminated at last, and for the fourth time the Assem-

bly had begun to choose a moderator, when Hamilton interfered with a “Stop! stop! stop! Before you go any further, remember that I protest against anything you may do that will be prejudicial to the king’s prerogative.”

At length he was formally asked if he had quite done with his interruptions, and having exhausted all his resources, he was constrained to admit that he had no further remark to make, when the election of a moderator was proceeded with. Alexander

Henderson, a minister of Fife,—which might well have been called, in the strong language of Shakespeare, the “ear-piercing Fife,” for it was determined to make itself heard,—was chosen to the office, and Hamilton was again on his legs to read a protest, but a general cry of “Down! down! Come! come! we’ve had enough of that,” prevented the marquis from proceeding further in his obstructive policy, The Assembly then chose one Archibald Johnston as clerk, and Hamilton, determined to give the Covenanters one more lesson on the Hamiltonian system, commenced protesting against the last appointment they had made, The marquis was, however, most unceremoniously pooh-poohed, and the Assembly adjourned.

On the next day Hamilton began the old game of entering more protests against the return of lay elders to the Assembly, but he was treated with no more respect than if he had been a lay figure, and was compelled to hold his tongue.

Being checked in every attempt to enter a protest on his own account, he insisted on patronising and adopting a protest of the bishops who denied the jurisdiction of the Assembly, but one of the clerks of session thundering out a declaration that they would go on with the proceedings, Hamilton started up once more, “begging pardon for being so very troublesome, but adding that he really must protest to that.” Finding his protestations utterly useless, he thought it better to protest to the whole thing en masse, and he accordingly dissolved the General Assembly on the ensuing day. Henderson, the moderator—so called, on the

lucus a non lucendo principle, from his being no moderator at all—declared he was sorry they were going to lose the pleasure of Hamilton's company, but the Assembly, being assembled, had no intention to disperse.

The marquis, who had gone about muttering to himself "Oh, you know, this is quite absurd! I'm no use here," made the best of his way to England, He urged Charles to take military measures against the Scotch, but they were very active in making warlike preparations, and had already got up a magazine at Edinburgh—no relation to Blackwood or Tait—which was full of pikes, muskets, halberts, and other striking but very offensive articles. In the meantime the coffers of Charles were standing perfectly empty, nobody in the city would take his paper upon any terms, and indeed he could accept no bills, for there was no Parliament in existence to draw the documents, He called upon the judges, the clergy, and even the humbler servants of the crown, to contribute part of their salaries to his necessities—a process very like borrowing a portion of the wages of one's cook to pay one's butcher.



The Covenanters had got together a tolerably large number of troops, under General Leslie, and Hamilton was sent with five thousand men to take Leith, but by the time he got into the

waters of Leith(e) his soldiers seemed to be oblivious of their duties, for they all deserted him.

Charles now thought it high time to go and see about the Scotch business himself, and he started, per coach, for York, with the Duke of Lennox and the Earl of Holland as inside passengers. He was met at that city by the recorder, as the coach drew up to the inn door, and that functionary, in a fulsome speech, told him he had built his throne on two columns of diamond—the parasite forgetting that the old notion of “diamond cut diamond” might unpleasantly suggest itself. At York Charles enacted an oath of fidelity from the nobles, which was taken by all but Lord Saye and Brook, the former declaring he should be a mere do if he consented to say what he did not mean, and the latter intimating that he was far too deep a Brook to commit himself in the manner that the king required.

On the 29th of April Charles left York and repaired to Durham, where the bishop feasted him famously, giving him Durham mustard every day, as a condiment to the delicious dishes that were prepared for him. He next advanced to Newcastle, where the mayor entertained him sumptuously; but while the king went to dinner he heard that many of his troops were going to desert, and by the time he got to Berwick he was glad to listen to a proposition for a truce, which, after a good deal of trumpeting on both sides, was arranged without a blow—except those conveyed through the trumpet—on either.

A conference was next agreed upon, between the deputies of the Covenanters and the Commissioners of the king; but, just as they were commencing business, Charles walked in, saying, “I am told you complain that you can’t be heard! Now then, fire away, for I am here to hear you.” Lord Loudon, who was loud without being effective, began to make a speech, but the king cut him short, and Loudon, with all his loudness, remained inaudible during the rest of the sitting. The parties to the negotiation were pretty well matched, for royal roguery had to contend with Scotch cunning.

“We must give and take,” said Charles. “Yes, that’s all very well, but you want us to do nothing but give, that you may do nothing but take,” was the keen reply of the Caledonians.

The assemblies of the Kirk were to be legalised, and an act of oblivion was to be passed, which was very unnecessary on the king’s side, at least, for he was very apt to forget himself. Castles, forts, ammunition, and even money, were to be delivered up to the king, but part of the money having been spent, the cunning Scotchmen accounted for the deficiency by saying to his majesty, “You can’t eat your cake and have it—that is very well known; and as we have eaten your cake, that you can’t have it is a natural consequence.”

Charles was puzzled, though not quite convinced, by this reasoning; but he thought it best to acquiesce for the sake of peace and quietness in all the proposed arrangements. The two armies were disbanded on the 24th of June, and Charles having stopped at Berwick to buy a Tweedish wrapper, returned to England. The king was now seized very seriously with a fit of his old complaint—the want of money—and he called in Laud and Hamilton to consult with Wentworth about a cure for the distressing malady. It was agreed, after some hesitation, to try another Parliament, and Wentworth suggested that an Irish Parliament might be tried first, upon which he was named Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with the title of Earl of Strafford, to give him more weight in making the experiment. The Irish Parliament promised four subsidies off-hand, and two more if required; but an Irish promise to pay, is little better than a bill without a stamp, a promissory note without a date, or an I O U without a signature.

At length on the 13th of April, 1640, the English Parliament met, and it contained many eminent men, among whom Hampden, who sat for the town of Buckingham, was one of the most conspicuous. Finch, who had been formerly Speaker, was now Lord Keeper, a position he was most anxious to keep, and Mr. Serjeant Glanvil was chosen to fill the Speaker’s chair, upon which he made a long tedious speech that annoyed everyone by its premis-

es, as much as it gratified every one by its conclusion. The debates very soon assumed a most important air; and Pym—who, from his effeminate voice, had got the name of Niminy Pyminy from some parasites of the king—held forth with wondrous power, on the subject of national grievances. Charles, who hated the word grievance—it is a pity he did not abhor and avoid the act—ordered Parliament to attend him next day in the Banqueting Hall, not to give them an opportunity of filling their mouths, but for the purpose of stopping them. Charles said nothing himself, but set Finch at them, who told them that they must first vote the supplies, and that then they might luxuriate in their grievances to their hearts' content, and having given the king his cash, they would be at liberty to look out for their own consolation.

The Commons were not to be so cajoled, and on the 30th of April resolved themselves into a committee of the whole House on the question of ship-money.

The Lords, who were servile to the king, no sooner heard of this than they sent down to request a conference, but the Commons, who could get no satisfactory answer to the questions “why?” and “what about?” of course, on seeing the trap, declined tumbling into it. In vain did Charles send down to say he had a large amount to make up, and would be glad to know when it would be convenient to let him have “that subsidy,” and even Sir Henry Vane, his treasurer, came—it can't be helped, the wretched pun must out—Yes! even Vane presented himself in vain to know when the supplies would be ready. The usual mode of getting rid of a pertinacious dun was resorted to by saying that an answer should be sent; and on the 5th of May, 1640, Charles, having asked the Speaker to breakfast, and as some say, made him exceedingly drunk, ran down to the House of Lords and dissolved the Parliament.

The state of the money-market was now truly frightful, and the emissaries of Charles ran about in all directions crying out “Cash! Cash! We must have Cash!” Bullion was got from the Tower by bullying the people who had charge of it, and when no more good

money was to be got, a proposition for coining four hundred thousand pounds' worth of bad was coolly suggested. "By Jove!" said the king, "when we can't snow white, we must snow brown, and if we can't snow silver, we must snow copper." Such snow would, however, have been equivalent to the Latin appellation of nix, and the merchants foreseeing the danger of depreciating the coinage, prevented the uttering of base money, which would have been a source of unutterable confusion. The swindling resorted to for supplying the necessities of the king was something quite unsurpassed even in the annals of the most modern of fraudulent bankruptcies. Charles got goods on credit at a high price, and sold them for ready from the Tower by bullying money at a low one; horses were lugged out of carriages or carts, leaving the owners to draw their own vehicles and their own conclusions; and indeed the king's emissaries went about like a clown in a pantomime, appropriating and pocketing everything they could lay their hands upon. "See what I have found!" was a common cry at the snatching of a purse or anything else for the use of the king, and the example of robbery being set in high quarters, was sure to be followed in low with the utmost activity. The London apprentices were invited by a posting-bill stuck upon the Royal Exchange to a soiree at Lambeth, for the purpose of sacking the palace of the archbishop, but Laud was ready with cannon, loaded with grape, and the apprentices muttering that the grapes were sour, abandoned their formidable intention.

Hostilities with Scotland having again broken out, Charles had his hands quite full, and his pockets quite empty. The disputants on both sides were ultimately glad to come to another truce, for they found themselves after a great deal of fighting exactly where they were before they began, except some of the killed and wounded, who, unfortunately for them, were anything but just as they were at the commencement of the contest. The Scots were to receive, according to treaty, the sum of £850 per day for two months, and Charles, wondering where the money was to come from, recol-

lected that the Commons had the glorious privilege of voting the supplies, together with the glorious privilege of raising the money.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH CHARLES THE FIRST (CONCLUDED).

SUCH an unfortunate sovereign as Charles is a melancholy subject to dwell upon, but we must not cut him short though his contemporaries cruelly served him so With a melancholy forboding of what was to come, the king, on the 3rd of November, 1640, opened the Long Parliament.

One of its earliest acts was to release from prison our learned friend Mr. Prynne, and to give him £5000 damages for his detention. On hearing the decision he declared he would live no longer like a Prynne, but like a prince; and by way of a beginning he came down one flight of stairs, and had “2 pair, Mr. Prynne,” instead of “3 pair, Mr. Prynne,” marked on the door-post of his chambers, Strafford, who felt that his turn would very soon come, remained out of town as long as he could, under the idea that, in conformity with the proverb, “Out of sight out of mind,” the Commons, if they did not see him, would never think of him. Charles, however, wrote to him, telling him that “to keep so long out of sight he must, indeed, be out of his mind,” and insisted on his coming up to town to take his place in Parliament.

He had scarcely entered the House of Lords before Mr. Pym appeared at the bar to impeach Thomas Earl Strafford in the name of all the Commons of England.

The earl was taken to the Tower; and the chief secretary,

Windebank, had he not discovered something in the wind, which caused him to take to flight, would assuredly have been obliged to follow the favourite, or even to come in with him neck and neck, which means, in this instance, neck or nothing. Finch, the Lord Keeper, was next proceeded against, but, having

made one speech in his own defence, he availed himself of the natural qualities of the Finch family, by taking to flight, or to speak more characteristically, he “hopped the twig,” and fled to Holland. Several others were threatened with

Parliamentary vengeance, and Berkeley was actually arrested while sitting as a peer in his ermine, which he said had been done because the mob had resolved to undermine the Constitution.

On the 19th of January, 1641, Mr. Prideaux brought in a bill to regulate the holding of Parliaments. Its object was to provide for their being summoned by the Lords in case of the refusal of the king, or by the Sheriffs in default of the Lords, or on the failure of King, Lords, and Sheriffs, the thing was to be done by the people. There was, by this measure, to be a new Parliament once in three years, which was allowing rather amply for wear and tear; and though Charles was very reluctant, he ultimately gave his consent to the arrangement. Those very ill-used gentlemen, the bishops, who are always selected as a mark when the spirit of revolution is abroad taking random shots at everything venerable, were of course not allowed on this occasion to escape, and the Commons voted them most unceremoniously out of Parliament.

The great event of the session, however, was the trial of Lord Strafford, who on the morning of Monday, the 22nd of March, boated it, or rather barged it, up from the Tower to Westminster. Everything, even the tide was against him, and the Earl of Arundel, who was notoriously his enemy, acted as High Steward at the trial. The impeachment contained twenty-eight articles, every one of them being capital, so that if Strafford had possessed twenty heads, it is quite clear that the deep revenge of his accusers “had stomach for them all” Strafford’s reply was written out on two hundred sheets of paper, but a good bold text hand must have been employed, for the two hundred sheets, as well as the articles of impeachment, were all got through on the first day of the trial. It is rather a strange way of proceeding to take the reply before hearing evidence in support of the charge; but such was the prac-

tice on this momentous occasion, Arundel next called upon the managers of the Commons to bring forward their proofs, and Pym began a very roundabout address in the fashion of the period.

The speech of Pym was a reiteration of the charges in the impeachment, served up with a garniture of his own eloquence. Strafford declared it was a conspiracy, of course, for it is a curious fact that the most flagrant criminals have always been if they are to be believed, which we need scarcely say they are not—the victims of a cruel combination against injured innocence. Strafford asked for time to plead, but he had not taken out a summons in the regular way, and accordingly only half an hour was awarded him. He nevertheless made such good use of this short time, that he made a capital speech, and concluded with a puzzle almost as good as the old original inquiry, with reference to the red herring and the sack of coals. *

“For if,” said he, “the one thousand misdemeanors will not make a felony, how will twenty-eight misdemeanors make a treason?”

* Every one knows, or ought to know, the question of the arithmetical enthusiast: “If a red herring costs three-halfpence, what will a sack of coals come to?” Ans.—Ashes..

The trial was continued from day to day, and on the 10th of April Pym walked knowingly up to the bar with a variety of nods and winks, to intimate that he had a matter of vast importance to communicate. The assembly having ordered the door to be locked to prevent intrusion—as if the housemaid might have wandered in with her broom—there was a general cry of “Now then, what is it? Let’s have it out without all this mystery.” Pym hereupon produced a copy of notes taken at a meeting of the privy council, in which Strafford was reported to have told the king that he was “absolved and loosed from all rule and government.”

“The point was considered a strong one; but if Strafford had told Charles he was the Emperor of Morocco, and might turn all his subjects into morocco slippers by trampling them under his feet, the ministers having merely said so would not have made the fact,

and he could not have been liable for it unless it had really happened. *Verba non acta* seemed, however, to be the motto of his judges, who took the word for the deed in numerous instances. Strafford having made the best answer he could to this part of the charge, was told by Arundel, that if he had anything more to say, the sooner he said it the better, for his judges were very anxious to have the pleasure of condemning him.

The fact was, that the customary sympathy of Englishmen for a poor fellow in a mess, was beginning to show itself, and the Commons feared that the trial would not “keep” a great deal longer if they did not speedily make an end of it, The matter was accordingly hurried on, and on the 21st of April, the bill of attainder passed the Commons by a very large majority. The numbers were 204 against 59, which of course did not include the “tellers,” for if it had done so, Hume, Hallam, and the rest of us, must have been comprised, for we are all of us the “tellers” of this sad story.

When the bill went up to the peers, their lordships were not at all in a hurry to despatch it, and the Commons kept sending up messages to know “How about that little Bill?” and begging that the Upper House would immediately settle it. It was rumoured that Strafford intended to escape, but it was rather idle to speculate upon the intentions of a man who was utterly unable to accomplish them.

He offered a bribe of £22,000 to Balfour, the Lieutenant of the Tower; but that virtuous individual scorned the filthy dross, though some brute, who has no appreciation of the great and good, has hinted that Balfour either expected more, or was afraid that what was offered would not be forthcoming.

Charles, who was very anxious to make the favourite safe, though the odds were terribly against him, sent for the Lords and

Commons, whom he begged, when drawing up their sentence, to draw it as mild as possible. He said he had listened to the evidence, and he really did not see how they could commit the earl.

But Pym replied, sotto voce, that “none are so blind as those who won’t see;” and Charles could elicit nothing satisfactory. At the next

sitting of the Parliament a furious mob was collected outside, and the Lords naturally expressed their disinclination to being bullied into haste on the subject of the bill of attainder. Upon this, one Dr. Burgess, who had some weight with the people, went out to disperse them, and though he said some sharp things which caused that intolerable

nuisance—a wag—to cry out, “Come, Burgess, none of your sauce!” he succeeded in his object.

The state of nervous agitation in which the whole country was plunged at about this period may be conceived by a little anecdote which is told on the best authority—that is to say, the best that happens to be available. Sir Walter Earl was in the midst of a cock-and-bull story about some plot that had been hatching to make a sort of girandola of the Parliament, by blowing it up with a splendid display of fireworks, in the midst of which the Speaker was to have gone off like a Jack-in-the-box, when the members, who were shivering and shaking like a grove of aspens, were startled by the following incident:—Two very corpulent members happening to stand upon one plank, which was rather the worse for wear, caused the floor to crack, and the Commons thought it was all up, or rather all down, with them. The utmost confusion prevailed, and somebody at once started off to fetch the train-bands, who acted as the police of the period. It turned out to be a false alarm, or to speak more correctly, a real alarm resting on false premises, for the flaw in the floor had been the cause of this not altogether groundless terror.

On the 7th of May the Lords passed the bill of attainder against Strafford, as well as another bill, abrogating the power of the king to dissolve the Parliament. The House was thin, and it may have happened that the recent accident with the two fat members in the Commons operated as a warning to corpulent peers not to attend till their *locus standi* had been looked to by the carpenter.

It now remained to be seen whether Charles would give his consent to the execution of the favourite, and poor Strafford feeling that his life hung upon a thread, sent a long yarn, in the shape of a letter,

to his royal master. The king summoned his privy council to advise him what step to take, when honest Jack Juxon, the plain-sailing Bishop of London, exclaimed, bluntly, "I'll tell you what it is, your majesty; if you've any doubts about his guilt don't you go and sign his bill of attainder for all the Bills—no, nor the Bobs, nor the Dicks—in Christendom." Others, however, gave him opposite advice, and the scene ended by his resolving to give his assent, though he did so with his pocket-handkerchief before his eyes, but whether from emotion or a cold in his head is still an "open question" with all historians. On the 12th of May, 1641, poor Strafford met his doom with such heroic fortitude that, though he became shorter by a head in a physical sense, his moral stature was considerably heightened in the eyes of posterity.

The death of Strafford was the signal for the abandonment of office by several of his friends, who thought it better to live with resignation than die with resignation at this very trying juncture. Bills were passed for abolishing the Star-Chamber, and the Court of High Commission, as well as for preventing the Parliament from being dissolved, except by its own consent; so that Charles became like a king in a game of skittles, whose downfall was only a question of time and circumstance.

Being dreadfully in want of a little loyalty to comfort him, and finding very little in England—and that of the weakest kind—the sovereign paid a visit to Scotland, where he knew he could have as much as he wanted, if he chose to pay for it. His visit to that country was fast coming to a close when news reached him of a rebellion in Ireland, where the descendants of the early settlers, who were for settling everybody, and had taken the name of the "Loras of the Pale," were causing numbers to "kick the bucket."

The republican spirit had now broken out in full force; and the more the king went on doing what he was asked, the more the Commons went on being dissatisfied. At length he determined to try a bit of firmness, and walked into the House of Commons one morning to demand the impeachment of five members, two of whom were

Pym and Hampden. Charles entered the assembly quite alone, and walking up to the chair of the Speaker, who had risen on the king's arrival, his majesty glided into it. He stated that he had come to take the five members into custody; but there was something so derogatory in the idea of "every monarch his own policeman," that the Commons Were rather disgusted, and greeted him with shouts of "Privilege! Privilege!" Having made up his mind that "this sort of thing would not do," he determined to go out of town, and repaired to York, where he was soon joined by a party of volunteers more select than numerous. Charles was in that state of cashlessness so often ascribed by history to kings, who, nominally possessed of a crown, are positively not worth a shilling.

He had sold his wife's jewels, and laid out the produce in arms and ammunition, which he gave out as far as they would go to his few friends; but the distribution was a mournful business.

There were scarcely swords enough to go round, and the gunpowder was served out in little packets like so many doses of salts to the small band of royalists.

They mustered the money for a manifesto, in which Essex, one of his apostate generals, was denounced in very large type; and the king having corrected the proof of the poster, ordered one hundred to be worked off and stuck up at the earliest opportunity.

His majesty and suite—which Strype tells us was short and suite—repaired to Nottingham, where the cause of the sovereign got a sort of lift by the hoisting of the royal standard.

When Charles found it necessary to draw the sword, he felt that he had nothing else to draw, for his funds were quite exhausted. Everything seemed to go against him, and even the elements themselves were unfavourable, for the standard which his friends had found it so difficult to hoist, was blown down, and came rattling through a skylight on to the heads of the royalists.

The civil war had now regularly commenced, and the first battle was fought at Edge Hill, in Warwickshire, where Prince Rupert—the inventor of mezzotinto engraving—left the print

of his sword, and several proofs of his valour, on the ranks of the king's enemies. After fighting all day the two armies put up for the night, and facing each other the next morning, they evidently did not like each other's looks, for both parties retired. Had the king's troops gone to London, they might have done some good; but they loitered about Reading, and by the time they got to Turn-ham Green, it was occupied by twenty-four thousand men, though where they managed to turn 'em in at Turnham Green is somewhat mysterious.*

It seems more probable that the twenty-four thousand Parliamentary troops were stationed in London than that so many were crammed into the little suburb specified. On the 15th of April, the Parliamentarians invested Reading, but the king having nothing to invest, could not compete for this eligible investment. Essex, who had managed the transaction, did not continue long a holder, but fell back to Thame, where a skirmish took place that would have been literally a tame affair if the illustrious Hampden had not perished in the *mêlée*.

Essex was one of the worst men possible to be chosen as a leader, for he had an unconquerable propensity to gib—which was the only invincibility he possessed—and he was consequently falling back whenever he should have been going forward. He had gibbed from Reading to Thame, and he now gibbed again from Thame to London, where it became a saying among the common people, "Oh, that's Essex: I know him by the cut of his jib."

The civil war continued to rage with varying success until the battle of Marston Moor, where the royalists, under Prince Rupert, sustained a defeat they never recovered from, and the only use they could make of their right and left wing was to fly for safety. After this reverse, Charles attempted to get up a treaty called the Treaty of Uxbridge, which, after twenty days of wrangling between the Commissioners of the Parliament and those sent by the king—the former wanting everything and the latter conceding nothing—fell completely to the ground. Cromwell

had contrived that Sir Thomas, now Lord Fairfax, should be appointed General of the Parliamentary Army, so that the responsibility of failure should rest upon that individual; while the wily brewer, who knew how to take his measures, would have artfully secured the merit of any success for himself.



The battle of Naseby was the last decisive blow, which, in the graphic words of one of our early writers, “put the nasal organ of royalty completely out of joint.”

Charles behaved very gallantly, and so did Rupert; but when the former cried out to his cavalry, “One charge more and we win the day!” he might just as well have exclaimed, “Twopence more, and up goes the donkey!” for his words produced no effect. “Thank you, we’ve had enough of it,” seemed to be imprinted on every countenance; and after a few more reverses, Charles formed the rash deliberation of throwing himself upon the generosity of the Scotch.

He might just as well have thrown himself on the pavement beneath the Monument, as the sequel proved; for the Scotch at once set to work to see what profit was to be made by the sale of the royal fugitive. After a good deal of haggling, they sold the sovereign, who had thrown himself upon their generosity, for £400,000; and

they no doubt silenced their consciences—if they ever had any—by saying, “It’s just a matter of beesness, ye ken,” to any one who remonstrated with them upon their mercenary baseness.

The royal prisoner was shut up for some weeks at Holmby Castle, in Northamptonshire, but after a few weeks, Cromwell sent one Joyce, formerly his tailor, and afterwards a cornet in Fairfax’s troop of horse, to “smug” the unhappy king and carry him to the army.

The House of Commons became exceedingly jealous of the military influence that prevailed, but the people rather sided with the soldiers; for the Parliament had, of course, in its great love of liberty, taken the liberty to lay on taxes to an extent unprecedented in the annals of royal rapacity. It is a fact worth remembering, that the people frequently find their friends more costly than their enemies. In the autumn of 1647, the king was sent to Hampton Court, where he was allowed some indulgences, such as going out to spend the day at Sion House, where two of his children were remaining as parlour boarders with the Duke of Northumberland. Some Puritans having given indications of their imagining that they had a spiritual call to do some mischief to the king, his majesty resolved not to be at home to such a call if he could possibly help it, and leaving Hampton Court with three attendants he reached the coast of Hampshire. It was noticed at the time that Charles had probably heard of the celebrated Hampshire hogs, and fancied therefore that Hampshire must be the best place for him to go to in the hope of saving his bacon. He resigned himself to Colonel Hammond, the Governor of the Isle of Wight, who placed the royal fugitive in Carisbrook Castle; where a bowling-green was arranged and a summerhouse built, so that Charles could fancy himself, if he liked, in a suburban tea-garden. The king was a capital bowler, and when sorrow came across his mind he would try and “drown it in the bowls” which Colonel Hammond was so good as to provide him with.

In the September of 1648, another conference was attempted, and Charles took a furnished lodging at a private house in Newport, where the commissioners came to consult with him. They found him

much altered, and with his hair so grey as to bespeak the fact that care had been busy in peppering his head, which he declared had got into that state during his anxious sojourn at Oxford; and this peculiar combination of tints retains to this day the title of the Oxford Mixture. The Parliament would have been glad to diminish the influence of the army by a successful negotiation with the king; but while terms were being discussed, Cromwell, who never brewed half-and-half, struck a blow at both parties. He sent one of his draymen named Pride, who had risen from a seat on the shafts of his dray to a colonelcy in the army, to blockade the Parliament-house with a body of troops, and let in only those members who were favourable to the views of his late employer. We, who cannot imagine Barclay or Perkins going the entire in the style of their predecessor in trade, nor conceive Meux and Co. meddling with the Crown, except to supply it with beer, are of course astonished at the insolence of Cromwell. He nevertheless gained his point, for he set the Parliament at defiance, and had the king removed to Hurst Castle, in Hampshire, which was so dull that Charles could not help remarking that coming to Hurst was like going to be buried. He was again removed to Windsor, and subsequently to St. James's Palace, where the guards were ordered to call him Charles Stuart, in order to show the magnanimity of the revenge of such a man as Cromwell. The king was exposed to every petty insult that littlemindedness could suggest or coarse brutality execute. In this respect the "liberals" of England in 1649 set an example which the "liberals" of France followed in the treatment of their own fallen and powerless sovereign upwards of a century afterwards. The only comfort he enjoyed was the society of poor old Jack Juxon, the bishop who had been faithful to him in all his adversity. It was now determined to bring the king to trial, and on the 20th of January the proceedings commenced in Westminster Hall, when upon its being declared that Charles was accused in the name of the people, a shrill voice exclaimed "Pooh, pooh! not a tenth part of them." The ushers looked in vain to see who was disturbing the audience, and the soldiers were ordered to

fire into the corner whence the voice proceeded, until it turned out that Lady Fairfax was the individual by whom the proceedings had been interrupted. She was a warm politician, and with her husband had espoused the parliamentary cause, but was disgusted like him with the brutal use that the “liberals” were making of their triumph. Charles demurred to the jurisdiction of his judges for three days, but, on the 27th, they found him guilty, and sentenced him to be beheaded three days afterwards. The “people,” imitating the conduct of some of their “friends,” insulted the fallen monarch in his misfortune, and many a malicious, low-bred ass, tried to get a kick at the chained lion. Happily the people in our own days are very superior to the people of the time of Charles, and there is no sympathy among the masses with ungenerous persecution, whatever may be the rank of the victim.

As Charles quitted the hall after his conviction, a wretched miscreant displayed a toad-like venom by spitting in the king’s face, which drew from the sovereign the true remark, “Poor souls! they would treat their generals in the same manner for sixpence.” While chronicling an act disgraceful to human nature, we must not forget to put down what is on the credit side—namely, a blessing instead of an insult from one of the guard, who was struck to the ground for giving way to this creditable impulse.

We draw a veil over the closing scene, for our history is not a register of murders; but whoever reads attentively the details of the sacrifice of Charles the First will see the original of one of the darkest scenes in the French Revolution.

The death-warrant for the execution of Charles the First was signed by fifty-nine of his judges, the list beginning with the name of James Bradshaw, and ending with that of Miles Corbet. Few of them rose to much distinction, and still fewer have left descendants capable of acquiring fame, for there is scarcely a renowned patronymic in the entire catalogue. A man in a visor performed the murderous ceremony of striking off the king’s head; and we can-

not be surprised that the executioner was ashamed to show his face on such an occasion.

Though the nation had stood by, in the most apathetic manner, while the mischief was doing, it was no sooner done than everybody became very indignant and very sorrowful. Women went into fits, men took to drinking, and some went so far as to commit suicide rather than survive their murdered sovereign. This sympathy was all peculiarly English, and, in fact, a little too much so; for it is the fault of our countrymen to make a great deal too much of the dead and too little of the living.

Frequently the fate of one who, after his decease, has his merits recognised by subscription and a monument. Genius not unfrequently asks in vain for bread when living, but when dead gets a stone awarded him. Charles was in the forty-ninth year of his age, and the twenty-fourth of his reign, when he was brought to the scaffold. We regret that we cannot give a favourable character of this unfortunate person out of place—for he certainly was completely out of place on the throne of England. His disposition was mixed, like human nature in general; and indeed, what is mankind, as the philosopher would ask, but the “mixture as before” incessantly repeated? He was dignified, it is true, but so is the representative of the “fifth noble” Neglect, or even starvation, is freor “tenth senator,” in an opera or play, and he was temperate also to an extent that might have fitted him for the chair of a teetotal lodge, but not for the throne of a vast empire. He was not avaricious, but if he spent money freely it was because he freely helped himself to the money of other people. He was humane to such an extent, that “he would not have hurt a fly;” but it may be said that a fly never did him any harm, and hostility therefore, to that imbecile insect, would have been at once brutal and undignified. The man who would hurt a fly must indeed be very hard up for a victim to his malevolence, and Charles cannot, therefore, have much credit given him for his amiability towards that humble member of the class of diptera. The manners of Charles were not much in his favour; “but it would not have mattered much,” says the incorrigible Strype, “that he

was a bit of a bear, had he been otherwise bearable.”

In a commercial country, like ours, his swindling propensities will always tell against him, and his insatiable desire to obtain money, under false pretences, was quite unworthy of his exalted station, or, indeed, of any station but that where the police are paramount. It is true that his subjects would have kept him rather hard up for cash; and he often declared that the Long Parliament reduced him repeatedly to very short commons. Hume has endeavoured to give Charles the reputation of being a man of “probity and honour;” but it must have been the sort of honour said to prevail among thieves, for when he could not get money by honest means—which he seldom could—he never scrupled to rob for it.

In person, Charles had a sweet but melancholy expression, a sort of *agro dolce*, which made his portrait not quite a *Carlo Dolce* to look upon. His features were regular, but he was not vain; and he would often say or think “that he should not care about a regular nose or chin, so that he could make both ends meet by having a regular salary.” He was an excellent horseman; but it is one thing to be skilful in the management of the bridle, and another to be adroit in holding the reins of power. His equestrian accomplishments would have been useful to him had fate thrown him into another circle, where his favourite, Buckingham as clown to the ring, would also have been in his proper position.

The men of letters of Charles’ reign were numerous and illustrious. Ford, the dramatist, whose depth it is difficult to fathom; Ben Jonson, surnamed the Rare, and as it has been prettily said by somebody, “the rarer the better;” with Philip Massinger, belonged to the period. Speed, the topographer, commonly called the “slow coach;” Burton, the famous anatomist of melancholy, and familiarly known as the sad dog; Spelman, whose writings possess no particular spell; Cotton, who has furnished a lot of printed stuffs; and a few others, constituted the literary illuminators of the age, by their moral and intellectual moulds, dips, or rushlights.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH. THE COMMONWEALTH.

THE king being now dead, the republican beggars were on horse-back, and began at a rapid pace the ride whose terminus we need not mention. On the 5th of February, 1649, a week after the execution of Charles, the Commons had the impudence to vote the House of Peers “both useless and dangerous.” One of the next steps of the lower House was to vent a sort of brutal malignity upon unfeeling objects, and having no longer a king to butcher, it was resolved to break up all his statues. The Commons thought, no doubt, to pave the way to a republic by macadamising the road with the emblems of royalty. Considerable discussion has been raised upon the question of the right of a nation to decapitate its king; and, of course, if the people may do as they please with their own, they may do anything. The judgment of posterity has very properly pronounced a verdict of “Wilful Murder” against the regicides, and we have no wish to disturb this very fair decision. It is very unlikely that a similar state of things will ever arise again in England; but, if such were to be unhappily the case, there are, in these enlightened times, numerous pacific and humane modes of meeting the emergency. “Between dethroning a prince and punishing him, there is,” as Hume well observes, “a wide difference;” and unless the professed humanity-mongers should get fearfully ahead—unless the universal philanthropists should gain an ascendancy over public opinion—there is no fear that kings or aristocrats will ever be butchered again, for the promotion of “universal love” and “brotherhood.”

When Charles was no more, the republicans continued to show their paltry malevolence by making insulting propositions as to the disposal of his family. It was suggested that the Princess Elizabeth should be bound apprentice to a button-maker; but the honest artificer to whom the proposal was made generously hoped that his buttons might be dashed before he became a party to so pet-

ty an arrangement. Happily for the princess, death, by making a loophole for her escape, saved her from being reduced to the necessity of making buttons.

A Committee of Government had been hitherto sitting at Derby House, which was now changed into the Executive Council, with Bradshaw as president, and Milton, the poet, as his secretary:

the latter having being employed no doubt on account of his powerful imagination to conceive some possible justification for the conduct of the regicides. Duke Hamilton, the Earl of Holland and Capel, the last of whom had bounded away like a stag, but was seized at the corner of Capel Court, were all tried and beheaded. The usual consequences of the triumph of the "great cause of liberty," as advocated by noisy demagogues, and of the ascendancy of the soi-disant friends of the people, very soon became evident.

It was declared treason to deny the supremacy of Parliament, which might indeed lay claim to supremacy in oppression, pride, and intolerance. The "freedom of the press" was completely stopped; and, in fact, there was the customary direct antagonism between principle and practice which too frequently marks the conduct of the hater of all tyranny except his own, and the ardent friend of his kind, which is a kind that we do not greatly admire.

The king's eldest son was proclaimed as Charles the Second, in Scotland and Ireland, which caused Cromwell to say, "I must go and see about that," and to start at once for Dublin., Having done considerable damage, notwithstanding the resistance of some of the Irish youth, who went by the name of the Dublin Stout, he left his son-in-law, Ireton, to look after Ireland, thinking, perhaps, he would be acceptable from the semi-nationality of his name, while he himself returned to England. He took up his abode in London, at a place called the Cockpit, where he was visited by several persons of consequence; and the new lord of the Cockpit enjoyed the Gallic privilege of having a good crow upon his own dunghill.

Montrose now made an attempt in Scotland in favour of Charles the Second, but being defeated, he fled and sought refuge with a

Scotch friend, who, of course, sold him for what he would fetch, and made £2000 by the business transaction. Poor Montrose was hanged at Edinburgh, on a gallows thirty feet high, which justifies us in saying that cruelty was carried to an immense height, on this deplorable occasion. Charles himself now took the field, having landed at the Frith of Cromarty, and had collected a tolerably large army under Lesley. Cromwell instantly started for Scotland, with a considerable force, and attacked the royalists at Dunbar, where he encouraged his own troops by a quantity of religious cant, which contrasted strangely with the sanguinary nature of his object. After cutting to pieces all that fell in their way, the Puritan humbugs set to at psalm-singing with tremendous vehemence.

This mixture of butchery and bigotry was one of the most disgusting characteristics of Cromwell and his ferocious followers. Charles, having fled towards the Highlands, intended leaving Scotland: but some people there asked him to stop and take a bit of dinner, with the promise of a coronation in the evening.

The réunion took place, but it was rather dull, and Charles determined to make his way towards England. Cromwell resolved to pursue him, and this active friend of religion and humanity, having met a few royalists on the road, deliberately "cut them to pieces." On the 3rd of September, 1651, the Battle of Worcester was fought, with success to the republican force; and poor Charles was obliged to escape as well as he could by assuming a variety of disguises, though how he got the extensive wardrobe his dramatic assumptions entailed a necessity for, is not quite obvious.

He arrived at Shoreham, near Brighton, in a footman's livery, and "the lad with the white cockade," as the old song called him, obtained a situation in a coal barge, in which he was carried to France. The captain of the collier must have been an odd sort of person, to take a footman with him on the voyage, but perhaps the coal-heavers of that day were more refined than they are at present.

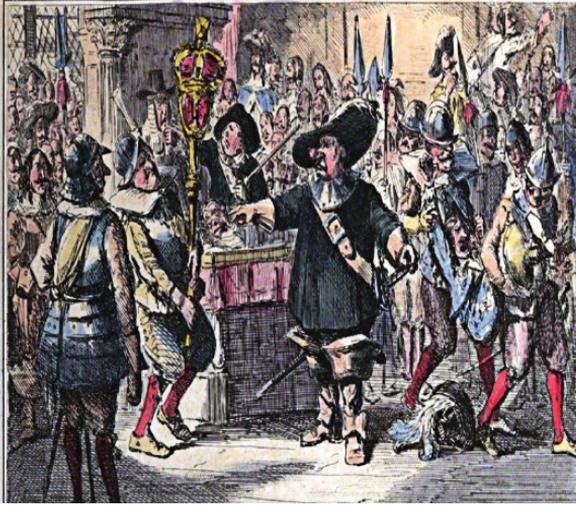
Cromwell was triumphantly received in London, and the cloven foot soon began to peep out from the high-low of the crafty repub-

lican. He accepted Hampton Court Palace as his residence, and an estate of £4000 a year was voted to him, without the purity of his intentions offering any obstacle to his receiving it.

The Parliament was now getting into disrepute, and Cromwell thought he would take advantage of its loss of popularity, to increase his own stock, whereupon the game of “diamond cut diamond” was commenced between them. The Parliament had now been sitting for some years, and people began to think there might be too much of a good thing, even in an assembly of red-hot patriots, that had hanged a king, and sent the country into a fit of melancholy, by prohibiting, by law, everything in the shape of cheerfulness.

In those days, a joke would lead the perpetrator to the gibbet, and a pun was so highly penal—as, perhaps, it ought to be—that a dull dog who had dropped one by mistake, was called upon to find heavy securities for his good behaviour. The nation was thrown into the dismal by Act of Parliament, and England became—to use a simile that would, at the time, have sent our heads smack to the block—the very centre of gravity. Cromwell, seeing that the Parliament was going down in favour every day, resolved to raise himself by giving the finishing blow to it. He sounded Whitelock, to whom he put the question, “What if a man should take upon himself to be king?” and thus Whitelock got a key to Cromwell’s intentions. The old man—Silverplate, as some call him,—did not take to the notion, and Cromwell was exceedingly cool to him ever afterwards. There was a meeting at Oliver’s lodgings, on the 20th of April, to discuss the best method of getting rid of the Parliament; and Cromwell, hearing the Commons were in the act of passing a very obnoxious bill, got up from his chair, in a very excited state, and told some soldiers to follow him. He swelled his little band with the sentinels on duty, whom he called out of their sentry boxes, as he passed, and entered the House, attended by Lambert, a file of musketeers, and a few officers. He took his seat, and listened to the debate, but when the Speaker was going to put the motion, he started up, saying to Harrison—”Now’s the time; I must—indeed

I must!" when Harrison pulled him back by the skirts of his coat, saying to him, "Can't you be quiet? Just think what you're doing." He then proceeded to address the assembly, but soon got dreadfully unparliamentary in his language, and rushing from his seat to the floor of the House, got very personal. He next stamped on the floor, when his musketeers entered, and, pointing to the Speaker, who was, of course, raised above the rest, he cried, "Fetch him down!" when the Speaker was seized by the robe and pulled into the midst of the assembly. Pointing to Algernon Sydney, Cromwell next cried, "Put him out!" and out he went like a farthing rushlight. Algernon was very young, and exhibited at first a degree of boyish obstinacy, mixed with infantine insolence, which caused him to be refractory, or—to use a simile in conformity with the image of the rushlight—to flare up in the socket. He, for a moment, refused to go; which caused Harrison to tap him gently on the shoulder, and say to him, in a mild, but resolute tone, "Come, come, young gentleman; if you don't go out quietly, we must put you out." The child seemed doubtful whether to turn refractory or not, when it suddenly appeared to occur to him that it would be useless to resist; and, just as Harrison had his hands on the lad's shoulders, to impart to him sufficient momentum to have sent him flying through the door, young Algernon made up his mind that he would go quietly. Cromwell stood, in fact, like a dog in the midst of so many rats; a position he had perhaps learned to assume, from his residence at the Cockpit; and he next flew at the mace, exclaiming, "Take away that bauble!" The mace was most unceremoniously hurried off, when, after a little more abuse against several of his old friends, the House was completely cleared, and there was an end to the Long Parliament. Nothing could exceed the well-bred dogism or utter curishness of the Commons on this occasion, for not one of them offered the smallest resistance to the violence of Cromwell. When they had all sneaked out, he locked and double locked the door, put the keys in his pocket, and carried them to his lodgings. He admitted that he had not intended to have gone so far



when he first entered the House, but the mean-spiritedness of the members had urged him on to the course he had adopted. Thinking that he might as well make a day of it, he proposed to Harrison and Lambert to walk with him to Derby House, and the three stalked into the room where the Council of State was sitting. Cromwell at first pretended to listen with attention to what was going on, and gave an occasional loud ejaculation of "Hear!" but Bradshaw, who was presiding, soon felt that the cheer was ironical. Business was permitted to proceed in this way for a few minutes, when the Council felt it was being "quizzed," and Bradshaw, giving an incredulous look at Cromwell, the latter made no longer a secret of his intention. "Come, come," he cried, "there's been enough of this; go home, and get to bed, and don't come here again until you've a message from me that you're wanted." The hint was immediately taken by Bradshaw, who started up and ran for it—for he was afraid of rough treatment—and he presently had close at his heels the whole of his colleagues. Thus, within the space of a few hours, Cromwell had broken up the Council of State, and dissolved the Long Parliament. Cromwell, having made short work of the Long Parliament, proceeded to supply its place by a legislature of his own composition, and the enemy of absolute monarchy proved himself an absolute

humbug by acts of the most arbitrary and designing character. His pretended patriotism had in fact been a struggle on his part to decide whether the business of despotism should remain in the hands that were “native and to the manner born” to it, or whether he should start on his own account as a monopolist of tyranny to be practised for his own aggrandisement. The new Parliament was a miscellaneous collection of impostors and scamps, with a slight mixture of honest men, but these were too few to make the thing respectable. Cromwell now began to put on the external semblance of religion, with an extravagance of display that gives us every reason to doubt his sincerity. As the man of straw frequently covers himself with jewellery, a good deal of which may be sham; so Cromwell enveloped himself in all the externals of sanctity, which we firmly believe penetrated no further than the surface.



One of the principal members of the new Parliament was a fellow named Barbone or Barebone, a leather-seller and currier, who attempted to curry favour by an affectation of extreme holiness. The legislative assembly subsequently got the name of the Barebones Parliament from the person we have named, and the whole pack of humbugs usurped the powers of the State by pretending they “had a call” to take upon them the duties of government. It may generally be observed that they who make piety a profession look very sharply out for professional profits, and if they are

desirous of taking what is not justly their own, they soon get up an imaginary “call” to urge them to the robbery. Cromwell formally handed over to them the supreme authority—which, by-the-by, was not his to give—and the first day of their meeting was devoted to praying and preaching, with a view to giving the public an idea of their excessive sanctity.

They soon set to work in their career of mischief, and began by abolishing the Court of Chancery, on account of its delays, which was like killing a horse because it did not happen to go at full gallop. They certainly expedited the suits, and brought them to a conclusion about as effectually as one would accelerate a steam-engine by shutting up the safety valve, and allowing it to go to smash with the utmost possible rapidity.

They nominated as judges a new set of lawyers, whose qualification was that they were not in the law; and there is no doubt the Parliament would have dissolved every institution in the kingdom if the members had not dissolved themselves on the 12th of December, 1654, at the suggestion of Cromwell.

The old constitutional principle, that “too many cooks spoil the broth,” having been rapidly exemplified, it was declared expedient to have “a commonwealth in a single person,” or, in other words, to have a king with a democratic name, which is the invariable result of the policy of red-hot republicans.

Cromwell was, of course, the unit who had put himself down as A1 for the new office, and he succeeded in choosing himself or getting himself chosen by the title of Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland. Thus, though the people had cut off the head of a real king, another head grew in its place, for Government is like the hydra, which must have a head, however often the process of decapitation may be carried into execution. The brewer had, in fact, mashed up the constitution as completely as if he had used one of his own mash-tubs for the purpose, and his upstart insolence reached such a point, that the now well-known expression, “He doesn’t think small beer of himself,” was first applied in reference

to this dealer in ale and stout, who, it was clumsily observed, had “gone the entire” in his great audacity.

While these things were going on at home, the English fleet had been engaged with Von Tromp, or Trump, abroad, and the Dutch sailor behaved like the article which his name delicately indicates. The Dutch for some time, though they only had this Von Trump, carried off all the honours, and sometimes succeeded even by tricks; but at length the distinguished Trump was obliged to “shuffle off the mortal coil,” and though he would gladly have revoked his determination to “cut in” to such a desperate game as an engagement with the English, he played it out to the last with all his wonted courage. The only remaining Trump, looking whistfully round him, fell by a blow from a knave who was in the suit and service of the English. When the last breath was blown out of the highly respectable Trump, the war between the Dutch and the English was at an end, and the Protector had time to follow out his principles by protecting himself with the utmost vigilance.

One of his chief difficulties arose from the eagerness of the various liberal sects in religion to oppress each other in the name of brotherly love and universal harmony. This difficulty in quieting the demands of each to exterminate the others taught him lessons of diplomacy, and Cromwell soon became the most accomplished “do” that ever had a place in the pages of history. Though he

recommended great tolerance in their quarrels with each other, they no sooner began to abuse him than he threw some of them into prison, reminding us of the celebrated apostle of temperance who, in a fit of intoxication, broke the windows of a public-house for the purpose of assisting the triumph of the “grand principle.” Cromwell, who was a clever man, and, though a brewer, was averse to doing things by half-and-half, made some legal appointments that gave general satisfaction. He promoted Hale—with whom he was hale fellow well met—to the Bench of the Common Pleas, and he was fortunate enough to obtain a recognition of his protectorate from the Governments of France, Spain and Portugal.

On the 3rd of September, 1654, which was Sunday, Cromwell, as Protector, first met his new Parliament, and played the part of a king in all its most essential points, even down to the delivery of a speech from the throne, remarkable for the badness of its grammar, the antiquity of its language, and the utter emptiness of most of its sentences.

He abused the levellers, for, with the skill of political engineering, he desired to level down no lower than the “dumpy level” at which he had arrived; and while eulogising liberty of conscience, he admitted it to be a capital thing so long as it did not extend to the formation of opinions unfavourable to the Protector’s own position. He spoke glowingly of the beauty of free thoughts, but hinted that, lest these thoughts should be more free than welcome, the people had better keep their thoughts to themselves as much as possible.

At the close of Cromwell’s speech, the Commons sneaked back to their House, where they elected Lenthall their Speaker, and appointed the 13th of September a day of humiliation, as if there had not been humiliation enough for the country in the conduct it had been recently pursuing. The Protector soon began to put his despotic principles in force, for his position having been debated rather freely, he sent for the members of Parliament to the Painted Chamber, and told them very plainly that he had made up his mind to stand no impertinence. “You wanted a republic,” said he, “and you have got it; so you had better be satisfied.” In vain did they venture to urge that liberty, equality, and all the rest of it had been the purpose they had in view, for he replied that “they were all equally bound to show subservience to him, and that as to liberty, they were at perfect liberty to do, say, or think anything that would not be offensive to him, their master.” He followed up this announcement by placing a guard at the door of the Parliament, whose duty it was to exclaim to each member “You can’t go in, sir, until you have signed this paper,” and on its being produced, it turned out to be an agreement not to question in any manner Cromwell’s authority. Though this was a piece of tyranny and impertinence more disgusting than anything

that had been attempted by Charles, one hundred and thirty of the members yielded to it at once; for it is a curious fact that, though the people will often show the susceptibility of the blood-horse at the slightest check of the rein when it is held by a royal hand, they will manifest the stolid patience of the ass under the most violent treatment from one of themselves, who has risen to the position of their master.

On the 14th of September Cromwell's door-keepers played their part so well, and barred the entrance so effectually against all but those who would sign the paper, that a great many more agreed to do so, and when the number of consenting parties was sufficiently respectable to make up a fair average House, Cromwell's creatures proceeded to vote that subscribing the recognition of the Protector should be a necessary preliminary to taking a seat in Parliament.

The Protector having done everything he could for himself, proceeded to show his protecting influence—of course—over several of his relatives. Fleetwood, who had married his daughter—the widow of Ireton—was sent as governor to Ireland, and the Protector's own son afterwards succeeded to this high and lucrative office. Not only did he provide snugly for his living kindred, but he gave them most inappropriate honours when dead, and his mother happening to go off about this time, he actually insisted on the “old woman's” being entombed in the Abbey of Westminster. What the dowager Mrs. Cromwell had done to deserve this distinction, we have yet to learn, and as we have learnt everything connected with the subject on which we write, our instruction on this point will, we fear, be postponed to a very distant period.

Among the incidents of the Protector's domestic life, there is one which we will insert on account of its amusing and perhaps instructive character, Cromwell's vanity had so increased with his success, that he one day said to himself, “I can drive a whole people; I can drive a bargain as well as any man; and, odds, bobs, and buttercups! why should I not be able to drive my own carriage?” The cattle having been put to, he mounted the box with a jaunty air to enjoy

a jaunt, and was tooling the cattle down Tooley Street, when, in consequence of the friskiness of one of the nags, Cromwell began nagging at his mouth with much violence.

The horses not being so easily guided and controlled as the Parliament, soon turned restive, and ran away; which threw the Protector from his seat, and his own poll came into collision with the pole of his carriage. To add to the unpleasantness of the situation, a loaded pistol, which Cromwell always carried about him, went off, in sympathy, no doubt, with the steeds; or, perhaps, the charge could no longer contain itself, and exploded with a burst of indignation at the pride of its owner, who, however, was not wounded by the accident. The Protector continued to feather his nest with unabated zeal, and he got the Parliament to vote him half a dozen different abodes, including three or four in London itself; so that, unless he took breakfast at one, at a second, and took "his tea" at a third, he could not have occupied the metropolitan residences set apart for him. Multiplicity of lodgings appears to have been a faiblesse of the Protector: for, notwithstanding these six places of sojourn, there is scarcely a suburb that has not a house or apartments to let that, according to a landlord's myth, once served for the palace or residence of Cromwell. If we may trust to tradition, he once lived at a surgeon's in the Broadway, Hammersmith; once in a lane at Brompton; once in Little Upper James Street, North; and once in or near Piebald Row on the confines of Pimlico. Having got an allotment of plenty of houses, to an extent reminding us of the extravagant order of "some more gigs" which an anonymous spendthrift once commanded of his coachmaker, Cromwell began to think about getting a grant to pay the expenses of his numerous establishments.

An allowance of £200,000 a year was settled on himself and his successors, which, we find from a document of the period, was exactly one entire sixth of the whole aggregate revenue of the three kingdoms put together.

* Statement of a sub-committee of the Commons.

Thus, though poor Charles had experienced the utmost difficulty in

getting money granted for the payment of his debts, or even for the costs of his living like a king and a gentleman, the usurper Cromwell obtained at once the concession of a most liberal salary.

Notwithstanding the subservience the Parliament had in the first instance shown, symptoms of refractoriness in that quarter soon became visible. The Protector had made up his mind to go on changing it, as he would have done a set of domestic servants, until he could thoroughly suit himself; and accordingly, on the 22nd of January, 1656, he rang the bell, desired the legislature to appear before him, and announced that he had no further use for it. The members were desired to find themselves situations elsewhere; and though some of them had courage enough to hint that they “would be sure to better themselves, for they were tired of the quantity of dirty work they had had to do,” the Parliament evinced, on the whole, a spirit, or rather a want of spirit, that was quite contemptible. Some of the malcontents ventured on a little revolutionary rising; but the levelers were speedily reduced to their old level. Major Wildman, a man rendered wild at the success of Cromwell’s ambition, and hating the protectorate, had been heard to declare that he would “take the linch-pin out of the common-weal,” and notwithstanding the flaw in the orthography, he was imprisoned on this evidence of hostility to the ruling power. At the moment when Wildman was arrested, he was sitting alone in his own back-parlour, evincing the same sort of enthusiasm that has immortalised the three tailors of Tooley Street, and drawing up “a declaration of the free and well-affected people of England now in arms against the tyrant Oliver Cromwell, Esquire.” The major thought he had accomplished something very stinging, in adding “Esquire” to Cromwell’s name; and he was in the act of roaring out, “Hear, hear! Bravo, bravo!” after he had written out the title of his tremendous manifesto, when a sudden bursting open of the door, and a cry of “You must come along with us,” threw the major into a state of surprise from which he had not recovered when he found himself put for safe keeping in the keep of Chepstowe Castle.



A few other insurrectionary movements were made, but all of them were of a very trifling character. Penruddock, Grove, and Lucas got up a little royalist trio, but their movement was soon turned into a dis-concerted piece, by a regiment of Cromwell's horse, who rode rough-shod over the three conspirators, and they were executed instead of their project, The Protector was no less imperious towards foreign nations than towards his own, and having made some demands upon Spain, to which that country refused to accede, he sent Admiral Penn, familiarly termed his Nibs, to write his name upon some of the Spanish possessions. Assisted by General Venables, Penn, who may be distinguished as a steel-pen, for he carried a pointed sword, and never showed a white feather, took the island of Jamaica after a contest, in which he found among the inhabitants of Jamaica some rum customers. Blake worried the Spaniards in another quarter, and the Protector spread so much consternation among some of the European governments, that the celebrated Cardinal Mazarin, who greatly feared him, began to look so very blue, that a Mazarine blue retains to this very day a character for intensity. Emboldened by his good fortune, Cromwell thought he might venture on another Parliament, which met on the 17th of September, 1656, the members having undergone at the door an examination as to their servility to the Protector's purposes. The first sitting was like the first night of any novelty at the pit of

Her Majesty's Theatre, and two of Cromwell's creatures officiated as check-takers. Every member who presented himself at the doors was obliged to produce his credentials, and upon this being satisfactorily done, a cry of "Pass one," was raised to the officer in charge of the inner barrier. Nearly one hundred new members were sent back, after more or less altercation; and the words "I can't help it, sir; those are my orders; you must go back, sir," were being continually heard above the din of "Pass one," or "It's all right," which confirmed the privilege of admission claimed by many of the applicants.

A legislature with only one House soon began to be considered as a sort of sow with one ear, and even the ear that remained was closed by Cromwell's art against what he used to call in private "the swinish multitude." A suggestion was made by several that the House of Lords should be restored, and many began to sigh for a return to the old constitution, which had been broken up before there had been time to try the effect of a new one.

At length an alderman of London, one Sir Christopher Pack, started up, without any preliminary notice, and moved that the title of king should be offered to the Protector. Pack's proposition set off the entire pack of republicans in full cry against him, and they all continued to give tongue from the 23rd of February to the 26th of March, 1657, when Pack's motion was carried by a large majority. A deputation was appointed to request that "his Highness would be pleased to magnify himself with the title of king,"—a proposition almost as absurd as an offer to place Barclay and Perkins on the throne, or entreat Meux and Co. to write Henry IX. over the door of their brewery.

Cromwell gave an evasive reply to the requisition, approving most fully of the proposition to restore the House of Lords, but was hanging back about the "other little matter," when a declaration from some of his former friends and tools, that they had fought against monarchy and would do so again if required, completely settled him in his wavering refusal of the royal title. He was therefore inaugurated with much pomp as Lord Protector—and, indeed, he might

well have been satisfied, for he had secured everything except the name of royalty. His manner of life and his Court were marked by no extravagant show, but he had everything very comfortable: and he was accustomed to say to his intimate friends, "What do I want with the gilt, for haven't I got the gingerbread?" He did not give very large parties at Hampton Court, but used to have a "few friends" to tea, and "a little music" in the evening.



He occasionally attempted a joke, "But this," says Whitelock, "was always a very ponderous business." One of his frolics—we start instinctively at the idea of Cromwell being frolicsome—was to order a drum to beat in the middle of dinner, falling unpleasantly on the drums of his guests' ears, and at the signal the Protector's guards were allowed to rush into the room, clear the table, pocket the poultry, and, on a certain signal from the drum, make off with the drumsticks. Cromwell had the good taste to delight in the society of clever men, and there was always a knife and fork at Hampton Court for Milton, or for that marvel of his age, the celebrated Andrew Marvel. Waller, the poet, was welcome always; Dryden now and then; John Biddle sometimes; and Archbishop Usher, whom Cromwell use to call the only real gentleman usher of his day, was constantly kicking his heels under the Protector's mahogany. We have now to record the death of poor Blake, who, having

fluttered the Canaries in the isles of that name, was returning safe into Plymouth Sound, when he died of the scurvy, which, according to a wag of that day—happily the wretch is not a wag of this—showed that fortune had in store for him but scurvy treatment. Poor Blake had been in early life a candidate for an Oxford fellowship, but lost it from the lowness of his stature, * for in Blake's time very little fellows were not academically recognised. There is no doubt that with his general ability he would have taken a very high degree if he had been only big enough. He was buried at the Protector's expense, in Henry the Seventh's chapel, for Cromwell was a great undertaker, and was very fond of providing his friends with splendid funerals.

* Brodic, Brit. Emp., While these things were happening at home, the Protector was fortifying his position abroad, and had persuaded the French to abandon Charles the Second, known to the world in general, and to playgoers in particular, as the "merry monarch." This fugitive scamp—of whom more hereafter—was mean enough to offer to marry one of the Misses Cromwell, a daughter of the usurper, who had the good sense and spirit to turn up his puritanical nose at the idea of such a son-in-law. Orrery, whom Charles consulted with the vague idea that consulting an orrery was in fact consulting the stars, took the message to Cromwell, who replied, haughtily, "I am more than a match for Charles, but Charles is less than a match for my daughter.

"The Protector had what he called something better in view for his "gal," who, on the 17th of November, was wedded to Lord Falconbridge. The ceremony was described in the Morning Post of the period, which was then called the Court Gazette, and a column was devoted to an account of the festivities. We see from facts like these how ready are the declaimers against aristocracy to adopt the ways and even the weaknesses of a class that is ridiculed and abused chiefly by those who would, if they could, belong to it.

The ascendancy of the puritan Protector was marked by the grossest corruption that ever prevailed under the most licentious of regal governments. Unlimited bribery of one portion of the people was

effected by the unlimited robbery of the other, and thus the dupes were made to pay the knaves who sold themselves and betrayed their fellow-subjects for the sake of Cromwell's aggrandisement.

On the 20th of January, 1658, the Parliament met again, and fraternised with a little batch of peers, amounting to sixty in all, whom Cromwell had created, and who might, indeed—upon our honour, we don't say so for the sake of the pun—be justly called his creatures. Two of the Protector's sons, namely, Richard and Henry, were among the batch of anything but thoroughbreds, that formed the roll of Oliver's peerage. The number, however, included some highly respectable names, among whom we may particularly notice Lord Mulgrave, who took the family name of Phipps, because in the civil wars he would not at one time have given Phippence for his life; Lord John Claypole, whose head was as thick and whose brains were as muddy as his title implies; and a few old military friends of Cromwell. Colonel Pride, who had been a drayman, was also among the new peers; and the drayman of course offered a fair butt to the royalists, who threw his dray in his face and assailed him with the shafts of ridicule. Scarcely any of the genuine nobles who had been called to Parliament condescended to come, and the Protector made his appearance before a house almost as poor as some of those in which the farce of legislation is enacted in these days at nearly the close of a very long session. Cromwell was really indisposed, or shammed indisposition on account of the scantiness of the audience, for, after having said a few words, he turned to his Lord Speaker Fiennes, exclaiming, "Fiennes! you know my mind pretty well; so just give it them as strongly as you like, for I'm too tired to talk to them." Fiennes, taking the hint, proceeded to rattle on at very rapid rate, mixing up a quantity of religious quotations and a vast deal of vulgar abuse, in the prevailing style of the period.

The Commons retired to their chamber in a huff; and four days afterwards, receiving a message mentioning the Upper House, refused to recognise the peers except as the "other house,"—for the little Shakspearean fable of the rose, the odour, and the name, was

not at that time popular. The Protector, who always sent for the Parliament as he would have sent for his tailor, desired that the legislature should be shown into the banqueting or dining-room, where he advised them not to quarrel, and, producing the public accounts, he impressed upon them that things were very bad in the city. He exhorted them not to increase the panic by any dissensions among themselves, but he could not persuade them to change their note; and he accordingly got out of bed—some say, wrong leg first—very early on the 4th of February, when, calling for his hot water and his Parliament, he dissolved the latter without a moment's warning. The legislative body had enjoyed a short but not very merry life of fourteen days, when an end was thus put to its too weak existence. The Protector was now in need of all his protective powers in consequence of the dangers that on all sides threatened him.

The republicans were ready, as they generally are, to draw anything, from a sword to a bill; and the army, with its pay in arrear, did nothing but grumble. The royalists were being inspired by the Marquis of Ormond, who was "up in town," quite incog.; and the levellers were, of course, ready to sink to any level, however degraded, in the cause of the first leader who was willing and able to purchase them.

Notwithstanding the gathering storm, Cromwell boldly stuck up the sword of vengeance by his side, as a sort of lightning conductor to turn aside the destruction that threatened him. A pamphlet, called "Killing no Murder," put him to the expense of a steel shirt, the collar of which, by the way, could have required no starch; and he kept himself continually "armed in proof," but we do not know whether he selected an author's proof, which might have been truly impregnable armour, for getting through an author's proof is frequently quite impossible. He carried pistols in his pockets, to be let off when occasion required—a provision of which he never gave his enemies the benefit. Poor Dr. Hunt was cruelly cut off—or, at least, his head was—which amounted to much the same thing; and others were treated with similar severity.

On the Continent the Protector was very successful, and the English serving under Turenne, or, as some have called him, Turen, poured down upon Dunkirk, which was overwhelmed and taken. Cromwell, however, lived a miserable life at home, being suspicious of every one about him, and he never dared sleep more than two consecutive nights in the same place—a circumstance that may account for the multiplicity of lodgings we have already alluded to. This continual changing of apartments must have rendered him very liable to get put into damp sheets, and, as hydropathy had not yet been reduced to a system, he caught the ague, instead of profiting by the moisture of the bed-clothes. On the 2nd of September he grew very bad indeed, and, in the presence of four or five of the Council, he named his son Richard to succeed him; but this youth was so complete a failure, that to talk of his succeeding was utterly ridiculous. Oliver Cromwell died between three and four o'clock in the afternoon of the 3rd of September, the day on which he always expected good luck, for it was the anniversary of some of his greatest victories. Death, however, is an enemy not to be overcome, and, in spite of the prestige of success which belonged to the day, the Protector was compelled to yield to the universal conqueror. He died in the fifty-ninth year of his age; and it is a singular coincidence that Nature brewed a tremendous storm—as if in compliment to the brewer—at the very moment of his dissolution.



The character of Cromwell was, as we have already intimated, a species of half-and-half, in which the smaller description One, Two, Three, and finder of beer appeared to preponderate.

He had, like a pot of porter, a good head; but to draw a simile from the same refreshing fount, he was rather frothy than substantial in his political qualities. His speeches had the wonderful peculiarity of meaning nothing, and instead of saying a great deal in a few words, he managed to say very little in a great many, Cromwell wrote almost as obscurely as he spoke, and could do little more than sign his name, for which he used to make the old excuse of the illiterate, that his education had been somewhat neglected; and indeed it seemed to have gone very little beyond those primitive pothooks intended for the hanging up of future more important acquisitions.

The Protector's wit was exceedingly coarse, or rather particularly fine, for it was scarcely perceptible. It savoured much of the Scotch humourist, whose fun might be exceedingly good sometimes, if it were not always invisible. His practical jokes wore not particularly happy, and his smearing the chairs with sweetmeats at Whitehall, to dirty the dresses of the ladies, was a piece of facetiousness worthy of an eccentric scavenger, but highly unbecoming to the chief magistrate, for the time being, of such a country as England.

The following is an extract from one of the Protector's speeches, which even Captain Bunsby, the naval oracle in "Dombey and Son," might be proud of: "I confess. I would say, I hope, I may be understood in this, for indeed I must be tender in what I say to such an audience as this;—I say, I would be understood that in this argument I do not make a parallel between men of a different mind." —Original Speech of Oliver Cromwell.

Though Cromwell could scarcely read the characters of caligraphy, he could peruse the characters of men with great acuteness. He was well acquainted with all the variations of human types, and could easily distinguish the capitals from the lower-case. In private life he was playful, though in his public capacity he was severe even to cruelty; and it has hence been prettily remarked, that, though he

was a kitten in the bosom of his family, the puss became a tiger in the arena of politics. He never turned his back upon any of his children, except at leap-frog, in which he would often indulge with his sons, who had little of that vaulting ambition for which their parent was conspicuous.



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