

The condition of the people was not very enviable in the era we have described, and it is a remarkable as well as a most instructive fact, that commonwealth is usually synonymous with common poverty. Wages were invariably low, for a man-servant who could thrash a cornfield and kill a hog, received only fifty shillings per annum. Poverty and knavery, begging and filching, were at their height under the reign of the Puritans; for “Like master, like man” was at all times a proverb that could be thoroughly relied upon.

**BOOK VII. THE PERIOD FROM
THE RESTORATION OF CHARLES THE
SECOND TO THE REVOLUTION**
CHAPTER THE FIRST.
CHARLES THE SECOND.



THOUGH we find Charles the Second at the commencement of this chapter seated comfortably enough upon the English throne, the question “How came he there?”—when we remember the straits and the crookeds through which he passed—very naturally suggests itself. There is an anecdote connected with his escape from Worcester, which we have not given before, because, as it

rests chiefly on the authority of the "Merry Monarch" himself, the story is very likely to be dubious. Whether fact or fiction, we may give it a place in the history of his reign, for if the tale is made up, the manufacture is entirely his own, and so far may be considered to belong to his annals. We shall therefore follow the thread of the king's own narrative, and if the yarn he has spun was of a fabricated fabric, it is to Charles and not to us that the imposture must be attributed.

On the battle of Worcester being utterly lost, Charles began to think of saving himself; but his adherents, who had been thoroughly beaten, insisted on sticking to him with rather inconvenient loyalty. Feeling that a small party could run away much faster than a large one, he resolved to give his too faithful friends the slip; and when night came on he succeeded in doing so, leaving his supporters, who would have stuck to him till death, to shift for themselves. Charles, with that scamp Wilmot, afterwards Rochester, and three or four others, got clean off in a very dirty manner. Some advised the king to take shelter among the Scotch; but his majesty, having no desire to be regularly sold, declined putting himself in the power of a people who at that time valued the virtues for exactly what they might bring, and would no doubt have received the king with open arms as an eligible investment to be speedily realised. He determined, therefore, to proceed towards London, and, by the aid of a leathern doublet, grey breeches, and green jerkin, he "made up" very effectually as a stage countryman.

Taking with him a real countryman, one Richard Penderell, as a companion, Charles went into a wood, from the edge of which he saw a troop of horse: but the rain poured down in such torrents that the troop retired, instead of taking shelter in the wood, which was certainly the wisest course they could have adopted. The anecdote is, however, so essentially dramatic, that the soldiers were perfectly in character when they went quite in the opposite direction to that they should have taken, like those pursuers on the stage who usually overlook the person they are in search of, and who, to every one else, is most conspicuously visible. Charles's position

on this occasion resembled, in a minor degree, the situation of the fugitive at the fair, who, pointing to a painted blind representing a tree with a hole cut down the centre of it, expressed his determination to conceal himself in "yonder thicket." Finding accommodation only for his body in the tree's imaginary trunk, his legs of course protruded from the "shady grove," when two assassins in hot pursuit tumbling over the out-hanging heels of the wretched runaway, exclaimed confidentially in the ears of the audience, "By 'ivins, he 'as eluded us!" Such must have been the good fortune of Charles, and the stupid blindness of the troop, when the former sat on the forest's edge, and the latter never noted him.

This incident being over, another soon afterwards ensued of an equally melodramatic character. Charles and Penderell, after travelling two nights on foot, had put up at the house of one of Penderell's brothers; but it was not thought safe to remain in it, and his majesty was recommended to an oak, whose parent stem would afford friendly shelter, while all the junior branches might be thoroughly relied upon. The king having supplied himself with bread, cheese, and beer, which could not have been table beer, for there was no table to put it on—though there were plenty of leaves—made the best of the imperfect accommodation that the tree afforded him. He had no sooner settled on his perch, and made himself a kind of nest in the boughs, than some soldiers entered on the o. p. side, and looked everywhere—except in the right place—for the fugitive monarch. His legs, as usual, were visible enough, but the troopers possibly mistook them for a pair of stockings hanging up to dry, and they were not even struck by the shoes at the end, that should have awakened them to the value of the booty. The most infantine participators in the game of hide-and-seek, would not have been at fault under circumstances of a similar kind; and there can scarcely be a doubt, that if any urchin had only raised a suggestive cry of "Hot beans and butter!" Charles would have been laid by the heels without a scruple on the part of those who were in search of him.

Leaving his majesty's legs to dangle in the air, and allowing credulity to score one for his heels on the cribbage-board of fancy,



we proceed to contemplate Charles in a more dignified position on the throne of England. He arrived at Dover on the 25th of May, with his two little brothers, who had grown to men, but were still called “the boys” by those who remembered them before their exile from the land of their forefathers. Monk received the royal trio, who rode to the hotel in the same hackney-coach with the general, forgetting that there had been a good deal of truly monkish cunning in the conduct of that individual, who being the latest with his service, obtained the favour due to much earlier and older royalists.

The principle of “first come, first served!” was in this instance laid aside, and the rule of “last come served best” was ungratefully adopted. A most unreasonable reaction towards royalty now ensued, and the anxiety to deal mercilessly with the regicides ran into a most sanguinary extreme, surpassing in fury the most bloodthirsty predilections of the fiercest republicans.

Both Houses of Parliament met, and an Act of Indemnity was passed for the benefit of the king's enemies; but, like the old story of Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark, most of the persons interested in the Act were excepted from its provisions. Nineteen of the regicides surrendered; and ten more being in custody, formed a batch

of twenty-nine to be brought to trial. A commission was issued for the purpose, and on the 9th of October, 1660, the proceedings began before a tribunal of thirty-four, many of whom had been Long Parliament men, masked Presbyterians, or miscellaneous scamps, of quite as revolutionary a turn as some of the prisoners submitted to their judgment. Sir Hardress Waller, who was number one on the list, had prepared a very fine speech in his defence; but looking over the document he made up his mind that it was rather strong, and could certainly do no good, upon which he pleaded guilty.

Harrison and Carew, who came next, made each a very eloquent and enthusiastic harangue, glorying in their respective acts, by which they laid down their lives as an investment for a reversionary interest in the good books of posterity.

Henry Marten, "the wit of the House of Commons," made a most dismal attempt to laugh the matter off, and to joke the prosecution out of court; but his humour, notwithstanding its extreme heaviness, had no weight with his judges. He began by demanding the benefit of the Act of Oblivion, and in a lame *bon mot* claimed to be allowed to forget himself. He was sharply told he must plead guilty or not guilty, but he insisted on the benefit of the Act of Indemnity, saying his name did not appear among the exceptions, and that in fact he had never been an exceptionable character. Irritated by these dismal jokes—so insulting to the understanding of the court—the Solicitor-General ordered the Act to be produced, with the name Henry Marten inserted legibly enough, when "the droll," with a miserable quibble not even amounting to a pun, exclaimed, "My name is not so—it is Harry Marten." This unmeaning objection being very properly overruled, the "mad wag" endeavoured to stand upon his reputation for mad waggery, and urged that being known as a wit, he had done nothing with a serious intention. He was, however, told that regicide in sport was high treason in earnest, when, after some few further attempts at facetiousness, the "witty Harry Marten" was found guilty, and retired cutting wretched jokes upon the disgusted turnkey.

The court, which, in order to get beforehand with its work, had prepared most of its verdicts before the trials commenced, had already determined on fixing the act of cutting off the king's head on the shoulders of William Hewlett. Everything went to prove that the common hangman had performed the sanguinary job for £30, but the commissioners had made up their minds, and were unwilling to open the very small parcels for the purpose of looking at the charge by the light of the evidence. Hewlett was condemned, but people beginning to talk of the glaring injustice of the verdict, he was eventually saved from capital punishment. Poor Garland was another of the intended victims, and it may well be said that Garland by his heroism has made himself a wreath of immortality. He would have pleaded guilty to the accusation of having signed the death warrant of Charles, but indignantly repudiated the charge of having insulted the fallen sovereign, "I was a regicide, it is true," exclaimed Garland, "but as for the assertion of my having been base enough to spit in the face of the king, I throw it back in the face of my enemies." Upon this the Solicitor-General called as a witness a low, needy fellow, named Clench, who swore not only to the spitting by Garland, but to the king having wiped his face immediately afterwards, and from the supplementary lie told by Clench to support the first falsehood, the term Clencher obviously took its origin. Poor Garland was found guilty, of course, but his life was not eventually forfeited. The executions of the regicides were very numerous, and conducted in a spirit of barbarous brutality, that excited a great deal of disgust at the time among all but those who were animated by the desire to retaliate the atrocities that the other side had committed. It is in fact, a very common fault among philanthropists, and others who rush about with a strong sense of great social wrongs, to commit some other wrongs equally great, or even greater, upon the persons by whom their virtuous indignation may have been excited. We feel naturally interested in the fate of poor Harry Marten, the "funny man" of the Long Parliament. While in prison under sentence of death, he was visited by some aristocratic friends, who

recommended the wit to petition in a jocose strain, but his humour had become exceedingly dreary in his dingy dungeon. He contrived, nevertheless, to serve up one small pun in a lengthy document begging for mercy; and though the Commons did not see the fun of the thing, the Lords good-naturedly took it for granted that, coming from a professed wag, there must be "something in it," and with a patronising "Ha, hal—very clever—amazingly droll!"—the Peers remitted his sentence.

Though Royalty had risen wonderfully in public respect, there was nothing in the conduct of the royal family to render it respectable. The queen-mother, Henrietta Maria, returned to England with an extensive French suite, and ran into debt even over her head and ears, which being very long, may enable us to measure the depths of her extravagance. The utmost dissoluteness prevailed at Court, and the king's brother, the Duke of York, had married—several months later than he should have done—Miss Anne Hyde, the daughter of the Lord Chancellor Clarendon. This consummate old humbug affected to be much pained at the degradation of his prince, through his marriage with Clarendon's own daughter, and the chancellor, affecting to doubt the fact, declared, if it were true, "The woman should go to the Tower and have her head chopped off!" in accordance with an Act of Parliament he would himself draw up for that purpose. All this unnatural abuse of his own child, instead of earning him the smallest respect, simply rendered him infamous in the minds of all but those who believed he was acting a part, and who regarded him, therefore, as simply contemptible. He is believed to have been secretly engaged in promoting the marriage against which he publicly protested; and the recognition of his daughter as Duchess of York, which soon afterwards took place, was purchased, it is said, by Clarendon's paying the debts of the queen-mother, by, of course, robbing the people.

It is impossible to say much for the magnanimity of the royalist party, whose triumph was signalled by continued acts of mingled ferocity and littleness. A law was passed attainting Oliver Crom-

well, Ireton, and Bradshaw, who were dragged from their graves in Westminster Abbey, and hanged at Tyburn, on the 30th of January, the day of the death of Charles the First—in celebration of his martyrdom. This was certainly one way of crying quits with the regicides in the game of butchery, and both sides were thus brought to the same degraded level. The royalist resurrectionists having commenced the desecration of the dead did not relinquish their loathsome pursuit until they had ex-humed, as we learn from Hume, the remains of Cromwell's highly-respectable mother and inoffensive daughter, as well as numerous others who had done nothing in life to render them in death the objects of enmity.

All parties now began to claim the merit of the Restoration in the hope of obtaining a reward, and bills for old arrears of alleged loyalty were sent in to the Government. The Scotch were of course not backward in looking after the profits due, or supposed to be due, on account of any assistance rendered to Charles in his misfortunes; but the king and his friends having been sold two or three times over by the crafty Caledonians, his majesty thought they had really made their full money out of him. When, therefore, the Marquis of Argyle asked permission to pay his respects, a friendly reply was despatched to bring him up to town; but on his arrival at Whitehall, he had scarcely knocked at the door when he found he was regularly let in, for a guard, tapping him on the shoulder, walked him off as a traitor. He was sent to be tried by his own countrymen; for as some of them would profit by his death, it was considered that making them his judges would be a sure method of getting rid of him. The result realised the estimate formed of the character of the Scotch, who condemned him and hanged him as a matter of business, because there was a small profit to be got out of the transaction. Poor Argyle had been the very party who had put the crown on the king's head a few years before at Scone; but, "Life," said he, on the scaffold, "is a toss up, and it's heads I lose on this melancholy occasion."

On the 8th of May, 1661, a new Parliament met, which lasted

even longer than the long one par excellence, and, indeed, the lengths to which it went might alone have entitled it to the epithet bestowed on its Republican predecessor. The Cavaliers had a very large majority in this assembly, and the off-hand manner in which it dealt with the country rendered the words cavalier treatment and bad treatment synonymous. The royal prerogative was the object of nearly all the acts of this assembly; and the rights of monarchy were being continually declared, in the same spirit as the artist who wrote "This is a lion," under his picture, because there would have been room for doubt in the absence of the epigraph. Thus the frequent assertions of the Parliament that the king was paramount, and indeed absolute, were tolerably good evidence of the fact that the position is not altogether incontrovertible.

After a brief session, in which the Cavaliers helped themselves to £60,000, by way of compensation-money, and voted a supply to the king, the Parliament adjourned from the 30th of July till the 28th of November, by which time Charles and his minister, Clarendon, had got up a little mare's nest of a pretended conspiracy, to give a new impetus to the prevailing spirit of inconsiderate loyalty. The servile Commons called at once for a few supplementary executions, and with this view it was resolved to look through the back numbers, or stock remaining on hand, of the regicides. Lord Monson, Sir Henry Mild-may, and Sir Robert Wallop, were "unearthed" from the obscurity into which they had crept, and were dragged on sledges, with ropes round their necks, to Tyburn and back again. Poor

Wallop's name was cruelly made suggestive of ruffianly attacks, which, by turning the first person present—Wallop—into the participant in ing, the reader will at once mentally realise.

The subserviency of the Parliament to Charles was absolutely sickening, and it is a fact worthy of remark, that the epithet "most religious," applied to the sovereign in portions of the Church service, was bestowed originally upon this profane and immoral reprobate. His necessities, or rather his extravagances, were supplied lavishly by Parliament, who voted him a hearth-tax for every

fire-place, or in other words, gave him a draft upon every chimney. Notwithstanding the odious domestic character of Charles, every match-making old mother of royalty abroad endeavoured to get off some daughter by offering her as a wife to the heartless libertine. "He put himself up to auction," says a brother historian, * and we may add that it is much to be regretted he was not knocked down according to his merits. Portugal having bid the Princess Catherine, with half a million sterling, and other contingent advantages, the bargain was struck, and a ship sent over for herself and her dowry.

* Mr. McFarlane's Pictorial History of England, vol. iii.

The royal marriage had recently taken place, when that unhappy weathercock, Sir Harry Vane, was brought to trial for having compassed the death of Charles the Second, merely by accepting employment under the Republican Government. Relying on the indemnity, Vane had gone to live at Hampstead, when he found there was something in the wind which gave him an unfavourable turn; but it was too late for him to escape, and he was accordingly sent to the Tower. After the fashion of the period, poor Vane was condemned in the opinion of his judges before he was tried, and he was not even allowed to make a last dying speech; for the sheriff snatched the document from which he was reading, drove away the reporters who were taking notes, and ordered the drums to strike up a rataplan, which overwhelmed the voice of the gallant soldier. The exuberant loyalty of the people towards Charles received a severe check, when, looking round for something to sell, in order to support his extravagant habits, he determined to throw Dunkirk into the market. Spain, Holland, and France were all in the field as customers for the lot, which was eventually made over to the last-named power for a few thousands, payable within three years by bills, which were discounted at an alarming sacrifice.

Numerous Acts of oppression were passed by Charles, assisted by his most servile Parliament; and among them, the Conventicle Act, which forbade the Nonconformists from assembling anywhere but in the established churches, under the penalty of

transportation or long imprisonment. Every loft, attic, or barn, where the Dissenters had got together for psalm-singing purposes, was searched, and the occupants were dragged away to the nearest prison. The year 1665 was dreadfully signalised by the plague of London, from which the king and Court fled to Oxford, as if they were aware that, by themselves at all events, the awful visitation was thoroughly merited. While, however, the profligate king and his dissolute companions escaped the physical consequences of a plague, the abandoned crew carried with them wherever they went the malaria of a moral pestilence. During the early part of 1666, the fever in the metropolis subsided, and Charles with his courtiers came sneaking back to town, where they resumed their old habits as the "fast men" of the period.

On the 2nd of September, in the same year, about the middle of the night, some smoke issued from a baker's house near London Bridge; but the watchman on duty, being asleep, as a matter of course, took no notice of the incident. The fire continued its progress unchecked, for the people instead of trying to put it out, which they might have done at first, pumps as they were, began to speculate on the subject of its origin. For some time it was reported that Harry Marten, "the wit of the House of Commons," as he was, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, called, had set the Thames on fire by some brilliant flashes, and the ignition of the river had, it was alleged, communicated itself to London Bridge, and thence to the shop of the baker. Others declared the French had done the mischief, and instead of arresting the flames, the mob began arresting all the foreigners.

The usual casualties contributed to heighten the destructive effect of the fire, for the parish engine had, in the hurry of the moment, come out in the middle of the night without its hose, and the New River had been smoking its pipe or soldering it for the purposes of repair on the previous day, and neither of these aids to anti-combustion was available. Poor Clarendon, the Chancellor, who had got the reputation of being a great moral engine, was disturbed in his sleep by some mischievous boys,

who, with a cry of "Fire! fire!" called upon the great moral engine to come and spout away upon the burning city.

The devouring element continued its tremendous supper without interruption, and there was, unfortunately, considerable difficulty in administering anything to drink to allay the burning heat which was rapidly consuming the whole metropolis. The most furious conflagration will wear itself out in time, and the fire of London, after giving the inhabitants several "Nichts wi' Burns," brought its own progress to a conclusion. It is gratifying to be enabled to state that, even in the seventeenth century, the English were remarkable for their charity, and the calamities that fell upon the metropolis—particularly the fire—stirred up the public benevolence to the fullest extent, and inspired all classes with a warmth of feeling that was quite appropriate.

Charles having got all he could out of the people, for the purposes of war, thought he might as well be paid on both sides, and began to think of selling peace to his enemies. He entered into negotiations with the Dutch, but before they had come to terms, he commenced cutting down the expenses by selling the furniture of his fleets to the dealers in marine stores, and dismissing his soldiers, in order to put their pay into his own pocket. He was properly served for his selfish parsimony by De Buyter, the Dutch admiral, who, hearing that Charles was doing everything upon a low and paltry scale, dashed at the Medway, surprised Sheerness, and sacked not only the place, but several cargoes of coal that were lying there. Upon the old English principle of guarding the stable door after the furtive removal of the horse, Charles prepared to collect a force to guard his country against the injury it had already experienced. Twelve thousand men were enrolled; but during the process of enrolment, the enemy had got safely off, and when the soldiers were assembled, it occurred suddenly to the king that he had no means of paying them. As the Parliament seemed quite unwilling to take this little responsibility off his hands, the twelve thousand men were disbanded, all of them grumbling furiously

at having been made fools of by the bankrupt monarch. Peace was concluded with De Ruyter just as if nothing had happened; and though the English did not obtain all they asked, they got the colony of New York, which was destined to give them so much trouble at a far distant period.

The people were by no means satisfied with the terms of the treaty, and as national ill-humour must always have a victim of some kind, poor old Clarendon, the Chancellor, was pounced upon. The Nonconformists hated him because he was a high churchman; the high church party hated him because he wasn't; while the papists hated him, they didn't exactly know why; and the courtiers hated him because they had got a large balance of general animosity on hand, which they were determined to expend upon somebody. Clarendon, in fact, was the grand centre in which all the detestation of the country appeared to meet, or he might be more appropriately called the bull's-eye of the target towards which the shafts of public malignity were directed. Clarendon had been a faithful servant to Charles, but the monarch's stock of gratitude had always been very small, and what little he once possessed he had paid away long ago, to less worthy objects. He accordingly sent to the Chancellor for the Great Seal, but Clarendon, pleading gout for not immediately leaving home, promised that when he could get out he would call and leave the official emblem at the palace. Charles replied, that as to Clarendon's postponing his resignation till he could get out, he must get out at once, if he wished to avoid an ejection of a not very agreeable character.

Urged by this formidable message, he took Whitehall in his way during a morning's walk, and having seen the king, made a desperate but useless struggle to retain the seal, which he was forced to surrender. His misfortunes did not end here, for the Commons impeached him; and Clarendon, as if owning the not very soft impeachment, absconded to France, where he ended his days in exile.

A change of ministry ensued on the downfall of Clarendon, and a Government was formed which gave rise to almost the only

constitutional pun which we find recorded in history. The cabinet received the name of the Cabal, from the five initial letters of the names of the quintette to whom public affairs were intrusted. This great national acrostic deserves better treatment than it has hitherto received at the hands of the historians; and taking down our rhyming dictionary from the cupboard in which it had been shelved, we proceed to invest the political jeu d'esprit with the dignity of poetry.

C was a Clifford, the Treasury's chief;
A was an Arlington, brilliant and brief;
B was a Buckingham—horrible scamp;
A was an Ashley, of similar stamp;
L was a Lauderdale, Buckingham's pal.
Now take their initials to form a Cabal.

These five individuals looked upon politics as a trade, and principles as the necessary capital, which must be tinned over and over again in order to realise extraordinary profits.

They were all of them out-pensioners on the bounty of France, and they soon persuaded Charles that it was better to receive a fixed salary from abroad, than trust for his supplies to the caprice of a Parliament. The king, therefore, intrigued with several States at the same moment, and was taking money from two or three different Governments, on the strength of treaties with each, some of which he all the while intended to violate. He nevertheless did not disdain the money of his own people, and extracted a sum of £310,000 from the public pocket, in the shape of a supply from Parliament.

The domestic proceedings of the king were always of the most disreputable kind, and he had lately taken up with one Mary or Molly Davies, a jig dancer, who pretended to come of a very ancient family in Moldavia. This wretched little ballet-girl was introduced at Court by the king, who was positively ambitious of being thought rather "fast," an epithet which is generally bestowed on loose characters. He had also formed an intimacy with Eleanor, or Nell Gwynne, originally a vendor of "orang-

es, apples, nuts, and pears,” but subsequently an actress; and it was said at the time—which is some excuse perhaps for our saying it again that Eleanor sounded the knell of older favourites. Lady Castlemaine, who went by the name of “the lady,” was cut by the king in favour of the fruit girl and the figurante. Notwithstanding the rivalry to which “the lady” was exposed, her influence over the mind of Charles—if we may be allowed the allegory—was still very considerable; and in the year 1670, which was very soon after Miss M. Davies had danced herself into the good graces of the king, he conferred the title of Duchess of Cleveland on Lady Castlemaine.

As many of our aristocratic families are fond of tracing their origin to its very remotest source, we shall perhaps be thanked for assisting some of them in the search to find the root of their nobility. We, however, decline the, to us, wholly uninteresting task, for we are quite content to take our peerage as it comes, and estimate its members for their personal worth, without reference to their ancestors. We certainly should not value the vinegar in our cruet any the more if we knew it comprised within it a dissolved pearl, nor should we treasure a lump of charcoal on account of its supposed relationship to some late lamented diamond.

With our accustomed fairness, we on the other hand have no wish to throw a degraded and abandoned ancestry into the faces of those who do not presume upon birth, but are decently thankful for its worldly advantages. It is only when we find rank turning up its nose at all inferior stations that we feel delight in seizing the offending snout, and driving home the iron ring, to show a connection between the proboscis of pride and the humbler materials of humanity.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

CHARLES THE SECOND (CONTINUED).



CHARLES opened Parliament in person, on the 14th of February, 1670; and, in imitation of Louis the Fourteenth, introduced some soldiers into the procession, which had hitherto, in England, been limited to the boys, the beef-eaters, and the blackguards. The speech from the throne had one advantage over those of our own day, for it was perfectly intelligible, inasmuch as it told the Commons in very plain terms that Charles “must have cash”—a necessity he shared with the bankrupt linendrapers and the cheap crockery dealers of a much later era. Taxation was therefore the order of the day, and after putting a tax on everything in the shape of property or income, it was proposed to attempt the forcing of a sanguineous extract from stone, by putting a tax on actors’ salaries. This, however, was so preposterous an idea that it was not followed up; for unless the poor players had been allowed to pay the impost in gallery checks leaden damps, and the other rubbish that forms the currency of the stage, the taxes received from the dramatic fraternity would have given the collectors asinecure, Though enough money to pay off the National Debt is frequently distributed in a single scene by a stage philanthropist, or

left by an old uncle in the course of “a tag” to a farce, there would be little prospect of the business of the country being carried on if the supplies were contingent on such resources as those which the actors dispose of with the most lavish generosity.

The early part of the session was signalled by a frightful example that was made of Sir John Coventry, who had ventured upon a joke—an undertaking at all times perilous, and frequently entailing upon the manufacturer the most alarming consequences. Sir John endeavoured to be witty on the subject of a tax, but the joke, which is happily lost in the mist of ages, was of so wretched a description that a conspiracy was actually formed for the purpose of bringing the perpetrator to punishment. The joke had reference to a private matter into which it was thought Coventry had no right to poke his nose, and this being the offending feature, was severely handled by his assailants, who took hold of it as a prominent point, and savagely maltreated it. This was a specimen of the practical joking adopted by the “fast men” of the time of Charles the Second, but the king was obliged to affect disapprobation of such an act, and a law against cutting and maiming was immediately passed, to protect all future noses from the fate that had placed Coventry’s nose in the hands of those with whom he had fallen into bad odour.

In the same year the notorious Colonel Blood provided matter for the penny-a-liner of his own day, and the historian of ours, by two or three crimes of a very audacious character. One of these was to waylay the Duke of Ormond as he was returning from a dinner-party in the city, and was, from that very circumstance, most unlikely to be in a fit state to defend himself. His grace was placed upon a horse, and carried towards Tyburn, but his coachman having undertaken to overtake Blood, soon came up, to the consternation of the latter, who could not understand what the former was driving at. Blood, finding the coachman had the whip hand of him, oozed quietly away, but being incapable of keeping out of mischief, he was soon detected in an attempt to steal the Crown jewels from the Tower. This act of crowning audacity, as the mer-

ry monarch lugubriously termed it, induced Charles to wish to "regale himself," as he said, "with the sight of a fellow who could be bold enough to attempt to steal the regalia." The monarch, who had a sort of sympathy with blackguardism of every description, was mightily taken with Blood, whose bluntness made him pass for a very sharp blade, and the ruffian was not only allowed to go at large, but received grants of land without the smallest ground for such a mark of royal favour.

Charles and his people did not go on together in a spirit of mutual confidence, for from a sort of instinctive appreciation of his own demerits, he was afraid to trust his subjects, while they reciprocated that distrust, from a due sense of the king's worthlessness. He had therefore entered into some foreign alliances, of which he was fearful they would disapprove, and he had accordingly prorogued the Parliament, in the cowardly spirit of a man who, having some bills he cannot meet, declines meeting his creditors. Supplies were, however, necessary, and these he secured by going down to the Exchequer, which he robbed of every farthing deposited there by the merchants, who had been in the habit of leaving their loose cash in the hands of the Government, at a handsome rate of interest. When remonstrated with on the subject of this disgraceful robbery, he defended himself on the *aide-toi* principle, declaring we were always told to help ourselves, and that he had accordingly helped himself to all he could lay his hands upon.

Being now in league with France, England waged war upon Holland, but the Dutch metal of that country soon displayed itself. The nation found in William, Prince of Orange, a leader who did not give exactly the quarter implied in his name, but was merciful as far as circumstances would permit to all his enemies. He expected sympathy from the English Parliament, which Charles was afraid to call until he found himself without a penny in his pocket, just like the acknowledged scamp of domestic life, as represented in the British Drama. The impossibility of proceeding without supplies urged the king to take the dreaded step, and the writs for summon-

ing the Commons should have been couched in the old popular form, commencing, "Dilly, dilly, come and be killed," for the Commons were only called together to be victimised.

It is a beautiful fact in natural history, that even the donkey will kick when his patience is too sorely tried; and the Commons, who had been wretchedly subservient during Charles the Second's reign, began at last to show symptoms of opposition under the insults they experienced. They were angry at the war with Holland, and threatened to impeach Buckingham; but Charles, comforting his favourite with the exclamation, "Don't be alarmed, my Buck!" took the utmost pains to screen him. A negotiation was commenced for a peace with Holland, but this was after all nothing better than a Holland blind, for Charles's predilection for a French alliance was still perceptible. This occasioned much dissatisfaction, and the people, being in the habit of frequenting coffee-houses, talked about the matter over their cups, and were very saucy over their saucers, which induced Charles to order the closing of all those places where temperate refreshment was obtainable. Thousands to whom coffee and bread and butter formed a daily, and in many cases an only meal, were horrified at this arrangement; while many who, not having a steak in the country, got a chop in town, were disgusted beyond measure at the order, which extended to taverns as well as to tea and coffee shops. A mandate which would have dashed the muffin from the mouth of moderation, and turned all the tea into another channel, was certain not to be obeyed, and the doors of the marts for Mocha in your own mugs—a term synonymous with mouths—continued open as usual.

Urged by the remonstrances and clamour of the people, Charles entered into an alliance with William, Prince of Orange, who married the Princess Mary, the eldest daughter of James, the young lady being used, like so much of the cement distinguished as "Poo-Loo's," for the purpose of mending the breakages that had occurred on both sides. William was as deep as Charles, and soon began to pooh! pooh! the idea of having cemented, à la Poo-Loo, a

rupture of such long standing, and he positively refused to fall into Charles's projects.

The state of Scotland was not more satisfactory than that of England at this time, for the Covenanters were striving vigorously against the constituted authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical. Lauderdale, who represented the king, enrolled twenty thousand militiamen; but had he enrolled, or rolled up in old coats, as many scarecrows, they would have been quite as serviceable as the new soldiery.

Charles is informed of a plot against his precious life.

The recent regicide having caused a reaction in favour of royalty, it became a common trick with the king's party to get up a report of the intended assassination of Charles the Second, whenever the stock of popularity was running rather short, and the people seemed to be getting dissatisfied with the Government.



In the absence of real objects of suspicion, there is never any difficulty among Englishmen in drawing upon their inventive resources for materials to make a panic, whether monetary, political, or otherwise; and about the year 1670 rumour was very busy in manufacturing all sorts of plots against the life of the sovereign. On the morning of the 13th of August, which happened to be one of the dog days, Charles was walking with his dogs in the park, when Kirby, the chemist—a highly respectable man, but an egregious

blockhead—drew to the monarch's side, and whispered in the royal ear, "Keep within the company; your enemies have a design upon your life, and you may be shot in this very walk."

Charles, who was a little flurried, desired to know the meaning of this warning, when Kirby the chemist offered to produce one Doctor Tongue, a weak-minded and credulous old parson, who said he had heard that two fellows, named Grove and Pickering, were making arrangements for smashing Charles on the very first opportunity. This tongue was so exceedingly slippery that he could not be believed; but to keep himself out of a pickle, he brought a pile of papers, containing a copious account of the alleged conspiracy. He alleged that he had found them pushed under his door; but we cannot very easily believe that any conspirators would have been so foolish as to go about, dropping promiscuously into letter-boxes, or thrusting under street doors, the proofs of their designs on the sovereign.



Upon further inquiry being prosecuted, it turned out that a low fellow, named Titus Oates, was at the bottom of this plot, to raise the apprehensions of the public. Oates was a man of straw, the son of an anabaptist preacher; and our antiquarian recollections have reminded us, that from the extraordinary propensity of

Oates to deceive by false representations, the application of the term "chaff" to stories at variance with fact, most likely owes its origin. Happy had it been for many in those days, if Oates had been so dealt with, that the chaff had been all thrashed out of him. The fellow is described by a writer of the period, as "a low man of an ill cut and very short neck," with a mouth in the middle of his face; "whereas," says the old biographer, "the nose should always form the scenter."

"If you had put a compass between his lips," continues the quaint chronicler we quote, "you might have swept his nose, forehead, and chin within the same diameter." This places the nasal organ in a high, but certainly not a very proud position, bringing it nearly flush with the eyes, and making it a sort of inverted comma on the summit of that index which the face is said to afford to the human character.

The stories got up by Oates were of the most elaborately absurd description, betraying an equal ignorance of grammar, geography, and every other branch of information, polite or otherwise. He contradicted himself over and over again, but this only rendered his story the more marvellous, and as the lower orders of English were always fond of the most extravagant fictions, the terrific tales of Oates were not too absurd to be swallowed. He became the most successful political novelist ever known, and received a pension of £1,200 a year, besides lodgings in Whitehall, by way of recognition for his services in contributing to the amusement of the people, by frightening them out of their propriety.

The success of Oates induced a number of imitators, each of whom contrived to discover a plot to murder the king, with a complete set of written documents, to prove the existence of the foul conspiracy. One of these speculators on royal and public credulity was a man named William Bedloe, a fellow who, having failed as a thief, and been detected as a cheat, attempted to repair his fortunes by turning patriot. With the usual injudicious energy of mere imitation, he went much further than even Oates himself in the audacity of his statements. These two miscreants between

them sent many innocent people to the scaffold, for if Oates only hinted his suspicion of a plot, Bealoe was at hand to swear to the persons involved in it. As surely as Oates declared his knowledge of some intended assassination, Bedloe would come forward to indicate not only the assassins themselves, but to point to the very weapons they would have used, when, if it was replied they did not belong to the parties against whom the charge was made, he would not scruple to swear that the instruments would have been purchased on the next day for the deadly purpose.

All the rules of evidence were outraged without the slightest remorse, and poor Starkie would have gone stark, staring mad, could he have witnessed the flagrant violations of those principles which he has expounded with so much ability.

Starkie and Phillips are, at this day, the two acknowledged authorities on the Law of Evidence.

The Parliament which sat during these proceedings, was in existence for seventeen years, and has gained, or rather has deserved, an undying reputation by the passing of the Habeas Corpus Act. This glorious statute prohibited the sending of anyone to prison beyond the sea, and allowed anyone in jail to insist on being carried before a judge to inquire the cause of his detention. A troublesome captive might therefore, by pretending never to be satisfied with the explanation of the court, keep running perpetually backwards and forwards to ascertain the reason of his captivity.

The Oates conspiracy had not yet undergone the winnowing which the breath of public opinion—universally right, in the long run—was sure at one time or another to bestow, when a new affair, called the Meal-Tub Plot, burst on the attention of the community. A fellow of the name of Dangerfield affected to have discovered a new field of danger in an alleged design to set up a new form of government. This reprobate had been in the pillory, where it is believed the quantity of eggs that met his eye gave him the notion of hatching a plot, and he obtained the assistance of one Cellier, a midwife, to bring the project into existence. There was something very melodramatic

in the mode of getting up accusations of treason in the days of Dangerfield, for it was only necessary to drop some seditious papers in a man's house, or stuff the prospectus of a revolution into his pocket, in order to make him responsible for all the consequences of a crime he had perhaps never dreamed about. Colonel Mansel was the intended victim in the Dangerfield affair; and some excise officers who had been sent to his lodgings under the pretence of being ordered to search for contraband goods, found the heads of a conspiracy cut and dried, crammed in among his bed-clothes.

The colonel succeeded in showing that he had nothing to do with the transaction, and declared that, "as he had made his bed, so was he content to lie upon it." His words carried conviction home to the minds of all, and Dangerfield was obliged to admit the imposture he had practised; but he confessed another conspiracy, the particulars of which were found regularly written out and deposited in a meal-tub in the house of Cellier, the midwife.



It is evident from numerous instances, that conspirators in those days were very apt to carry their designs no further than committing them to paper, and carefully depositing in some place or other the records of their crime, so that in case of detection the evidence against themselves would be complete and irresistible. Thus had the plotters with whom Dangerfield had been acting in concert,

put away in a meal-tub the evidence of their intended proceedings, for no other purpose which we can perceive than the ultimate finding of the documents, and the furtherance of the ends of justice in the true poetical fashion.

Lady Powis was implicated in this affair, and was sent to the Tower; but the Grand Jury ignored the bill against her, while Cellier, the midwife, who had aided in the miserable abortion, was tried and acquitted at the Old Bailey. The rumour, or the reality of conspiracies against the royal family, did not prevent Charles from throwing himself into the pleasures, or rather the dissipations for which his Court was remarkable.

Though political liberty was exceedingly scarce during this reign, he did not discourage the taking of liberties in private life, among those who formed the society by which he was surrounded.

The palace was one continued scene of that degrading excitement which passes sometimes by the name of gaiety, and nearly every evening was devoted to that sort of entertainment which is sought by the snobs and shop-boys of our own day in the casinos and masked balls.

The “fast” mania, which thrusts at this moment the penny cheroot between the lips of infancy, drags the clerk from the desk to the dancing rooms, and perhaps urges his felonious hand to his master’s till, had in the time of Charles the Second

corrupted the whole nation, from the highest to the lowest, so that even the best society and bad indeed was the best bore the impress of the example that was furnished by the king himself.

The palace balls were accordingly conducted in a manner that would disgrace the humblest of modern hops, and in these days deprive of its licence any place of public entertainment where such behaviour would be permitted by the conductors of the establishment.



CHAPTER THE THIRD. CHARLES THE SECOND (CONTINUED).

THE Duke of York, the king's brother, being an acknowledged Papist, the people began to look out for a Protestant successor, and turned their eyes upon young Monmouth, a natural son of Charles, who was almost a natural in more respects than one, for his mental capacity was more—or less—than dubious. He was, indeed, a good-looking idiot, and nothing more; but, coming after such a king as Charles, the nation might have been satisfied with him; and, to oblige York, the fellow was formally declared illegitimate. The prosecution of the Catholics was carried on with unabated animosity; and several, among whom was the aged Lord Stafford, were put to death, under the pretence of advancing the cause of "peace and goodness."

The particulars of the sacrifice of Stafford afford such a faithful sample of the mode in which justice was administered in the reign of Charles the Second, that, converting ourselves into "our own reporter," we give a brief sketch of the trial. The defendant in the

action, which was in the nature of an impeachment, was accused of high treason, and the three witnesses against him were Oates, Dugdale, and Turberville, three scamps who made a regular business—and a very profitable one—of giving false evidence. Oates swore he had seen somebody deliver a document signed by somebody else, appointing Stafford paymaster to some army, which at some time or other was going to be got together somehow, somewhere, for the purpose of doing something against the Government, and in favour of the Catholics. Dugdale swore that the accused had engaged him, Dugdale, to murder the king at so much a week, with the offer of a saintdom in the next year's almanack. Turberville swore ditto to Dugdale, and though Stafford was able to disprove their evidence in many very important points, the trio of perjurers had gone so boldly to work that there was a large balance of accusation remaining over that could not be upset, in consequence of the unfortunate impossibility of proving a negative.

Stafford succeeded in damaging the credit of the witnesses, but as they came forward professedly in the character of hard swearers, who, so as they got the prisoners executed, were indifferent about being believed, the attack on their reputations affected them very little. The unhappy prisoner was so taken aback by the effrontery of his accusers, that he hardly gave himself a fair chance in his defence, which consisted chiefly of ejaculations expressive of wonder at the excessive impudence and audacity of the witnesses.

Such exclamations as "Well, I'm sure! what next?" though natural enough under the circumstances, did not make up, when all put together, a very eloquent speech for the defence, and after a trial of six days' duration, the Peers, by a majority of twenty-four, found poor Stafford guilty.

Sentence of death was passed upon him, but the more ignominious portion of the punishment having been remitted by the king's order, the two sheriffs were seized with a most sanguinary fit of system, and objected to the omission of hanging and quartering, because, as they said, the leaving out of these barbarities would be

altogether irregular. In order to satisfy the scruples of these very punctilious gentlemen, the Peers pronounced them “over nice,” and the Commons passed a resolution of indemnity, by which the sheriffs were made aware that they would not be considered to have “scamped” their work, if they merely cut off Stafford’s head without proceeding to the more artistical details of butchery.

Stafford died nobly, and the fickle populace, who had howled for his condemnation, began sighing and grieving at his fate; but as all this sympathy was almost in the nature of a post obit, it was of little or no value to the nobleman on whose behalf it was contributed. The executioner himself turned tender-hearted at the last moment, and twice raised the fatal axe, but a coarse brute near him on the scaffold—perhaps one of the thwarted sheriffs—desired the headsman not to make two bites at a cherry, and the blow was forthwith administered.

These excesses of the Parliament caused even the dissolute Charles to try, the effect of dissolution; but there was no going on for any length of time without a House of Commons to vote the supplies; and the king, thinking to withdraw the legislature from the influence of London mobs, appointed the next to be held at Oxford. This arrangement gave great dissatisfaction to the opposition, and both parties came as if prepared for a battle, the speakers on each side being, no doubt, abundantly supplied with the leaden ammunition that is customarily used for debating purposes. It was during the party bickerings prevailing about this time, that the definitions, since so famous—and sometimes so infamous—of Whig and Tory, were first hit upon. The former was given to the popular party, merely because it had been given to some other popular party, in some other place, at some previous time, and the latter was given to the courtiers, because some Popish banditti in Ireland had been once called Tories; * but why they had been, or why, if they had been, the courtiers of Charles the Second’s time need have been, are points that the reader’s ingenuity must serve him to elucidate.

* Somebody, who was of course a nobody, says the word Tory

is derived from *Torreo*, to roast, because the Tories were always clever at roasting their antagonists.

The king had usually been civil enough to his Parliaments, but on the occasion of the assembly at Oxford he determined to speak his mind, and his speech, being a reflection of his mind, was of course very rambling and irregular. He complained of the last Parliament having been refractory, and expressed a hope that the "present company" would know how to behave themselves. He disavowed all idea of acting in an arbitrary manner himself, but he was thoroughly determined not to be "put upon" by any one else; and so now they knew what he meant, and he trusted that no misunderstanding would arise to mar their efforts for the public benefit. The Commons listened to all this with a few mental "Oh, indeed's!" "Dear me's!" "No! 'Pon your honour's!" and "You don't say so's!" but they were not in the least over-awed, and they set to work exactly in the old way to choose the same Speaker and adopt the same measures as the last Parliament, of which many of them had been members.

The new Parliament was of course found by Charles to be no better than any of its predecessors, and when it was a week old he jumped into a sedan chair, had the crown put under the seat, and the sceptre slung across the back, when, in reply to the chairman's inquiry, "Where to, your honour?" the sovereign with a dignified voice, directed that he might be run down to the place where Parliament was sitting. This was the morning of the 28th of March, and Charles, bursting into the hall where the Lords had met, dissolved the fifth and the last of his Parliaments.

This proceeding, which, in the days of a monarchy's decline, would have been exclaimed against as highly unconstitutional, was hailed as a piece of vigour at a time when royalty, having been recently maltreated, united in its favour the general sympathies. Charles, finding that courage was likely to tell, became very liberal of its exercise, and began to abuse the opponents of his policy with more than common energy. "There is nothing like taking the bull by the horns," Charles

would say to his intimate friends, "and John Bull especially should be taken by the horns, to prevent his making unpleasant use of them." Shortly after the dissolution, Charles brought out for general perusal a justification of the course he had thought proper to pursue; for, like many other people in the world, he first took a step, and then began to look for the reasons of his having taken it. The opposition brought out a reply, written by Messrs. Somers, Sydney, and Jones, but it did not sell, and as these gentlemen could not afford to give it away, it had very little influence. Charles managed to get a number of addresses presented to him, congratulating him on his deliverance from the republicans, but the Lord Mayor and Common Council having come down to Windsor with an address of a different kind, were told that the king was not at home, but they had better go to Hampton Court. On their arriving at the latter address there was a great deal of whispering among the royal servants, who would give no other information than the words "Yes, yes; it's all right!" At length, upon a signal from above, a domestic exclaimed, "Now, then, gentlemen, you may walk up;" and on going into a room on the first floor, they found the Lord Chancellor sitting there, looking as black as thunder. His lordship, putting on a voice to match his countenance, began asking them how they dared to come with anything like a remonstrance to their sovereign; and the Lord Mayor, with the Common Council, slinking timidly out of the room, made the best of their way back to the point they had started from.

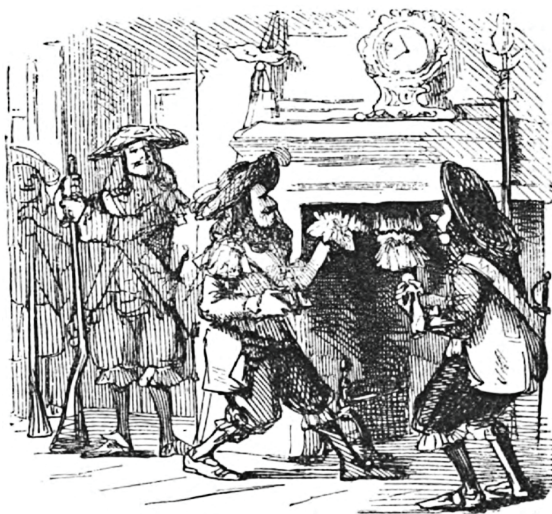
A few more plots of an insignificant character were got up against the Government, but met with no success; and the Bye-House conspiracy, so called perhaps from the wry faces the parties put on when they were found out, stands out from among the rest, which have been long ago buried under their own insignificance. Some have suggested that the Bye-House plot was a name invented as a kind of sequel to the notion of Oates, and the conspiracy of the Meal-Tub; but the hypothesis is far too trifling for us to dwell upon. As it has taken a position of some importance in history, we

must furnish a few particulars of this Bye-House plot, which in the old nursery song, * taking for its theme the domestic arrangements of royalty, seems to have had a slight foreshadowing.

* "Sing a song of sixpence, A pocket full of rye."

On the 12th of June, 1683, one Josiah Keyling, who had formerly been a red-hot Whig, and was by trade a salter, was seized with the infamous idea of applying his skill in business to the affairs of his country, which he resolved to put, if he could, into a precious pickle. He went to Lord Dartmouth, for the purpose of revealing a conspiracy that had been formed to take away the king's life; and he declared one Burton, a decayed cheesemonger, Thompson, a carver, who had been trying to carve his own fortunes in vain, and Barber, an instrument-maker, as his accomplices in the intended act of regicide. They were all to have gone down to the house of one Bumbold, a maltster, at a place called the Bye, where they were to have taken a chop, and cut off the king and his brother on their return from Newmarket. They were to have purchased blunderbusses, but, perhaps by some blunder, missing the 'bus, the London conspirators never left town, and did not arrive at the "little place" of Bumbold the maltster. The disclosures made by Keyling included, at first, a few names only; but, as a brother historian * has well and playfully suggested, "he subsequently went into a regular crescendo movement," and indulged in an ad libitum, introducing several new accompaniments to the strain he had originally adopted, besides adding new circumstances and dragging in new persons into his accusation, without the slightest regard to harmony of detail. He at length went off into a largo of such wide and unmeasured scope, that he included William Lord Russell in the charges made, and his lordship was committed to the Tower.* Macfarlane's Cabinet History of England, vol. xiii. Lord Grey, who was also accused, was rather more fortunate; for, having been taken in the first instance to the home of the jailor, he had the satisfaction of finding that official reeling about in a state of helpless drunkenness. Lord Grey, perceiving that the functionary who had charge of him was not in

a situation to appreciate any consideration that might be shown to him, quietly walked out at the door-way of the serjeant's house, and jumping into a boat on the Thames, hailed a ship for Holland. Lord Howard of Escrick, another of the alleged conspirators, was pulled neck and heels down a chimney, into which he had climbed for concealment, in his house at Knights-bridge. His character has been blackened almost as much as his dress, by this ignoble act, for it is recorded of him that when pulled out from the grate, he looked fearfully little. He trembled, sobbed, and wept, or in other words, had a regular good cry, and the tears forming channels through the soot, rendered his aspect exceedingly ludicrous. He at once confessed that he did not come out of the affair with clean hands, but he was guilty of the very dirty trick of implicating many of his own friends and kindred by his pusillanimous confession.



Besides other less illustrious victims, Lord Russell was sacrificed; and his kinsman Howard, whom we have just had the pleasure of dragging before the world from the chimney into which he had slunk, was one of the witnesses against the nobleman we have mentioned. Russell behaved with great dignity throughout his trial and during its fatal result; but the execution was scarcely over, when

the town rang with his last speech, of which some enterprising Catnach of the period had obtained the manuscript. It was actually in print before the fated event took place; but there is every reason to believe that it was genuine, for speculation had not in those days learned to anticipate reports, notwithstanding the occurrence of the events described in them having been by some accident prevented. Individuals of lesser note than Russell were condemned to share his fate, and among them was one Rouse, who was executed at Tyburn for having endeavoured to house the populace.

A declaration, containing a narrative of the Rye-House plot, was published by the king, who was exceedingly fond of performing the office of his own historian. It enabled him to "touch up" the events in which he himself was concerned, and give them a colouring favourable to himself; but happily for the cause of truth, notes were being taken on its behalf, and materials were thus collected for such truthful chronicles as those the reader's eye now rests upon.

The trial and death of Algernon Sidney, the last of the Commonwealth men, took place soon after Russell's execution. Though it is to be hoped that few people in these days can be ignorant of the character of this remarkable man, yet there may be a section of the British public from whom will have burst the cry of "Sidney! Who is Sidney?" directly we mentioned him. Sidney then—we state the fact for the benefit of the benighted classes—was son of the Earl of Leicester, and had always been a republican, and had been named one of the judges on the trial of the king; but he was either too lazy or too loyal to take his seat amongst-them. He opposed Cromwell's elevation, from which it might have been inferred that he would have had no objection to the Restoration; but he opposed that, and having nothing else to excite his resistance, he opposed himself by refusing to take advantage of a general bill of indemnity. He had been obliged to remain out of England, but finding that he was seriously opposing his own interest by his absence from home, he applied for the king's pardon, which was sent him by an early post, and he arrived in England with his

protection in his pocket. Party spirit was running very high when Sidney returned, and he was not the man to do anything with a view to moderation, so that he was soon at his old trick of opposing the Government. He began talking largely about liberty, and he was really going on in a very improper way, for he fell into the common error of patriots, namely, that of spouting commonplace claptraps instead of attempting every legal means to bring about a reform of the evils that may be in need of remedy.

Sidney now became a marked man, whom the royalists were determined to crush, and a pretext was speedily found for bringing him to trial. Several witnesses were brought forward to prove the existence of a plot; but what plot and what Sidney had to do with it, or whether he was concerned in it at all, did not form any part of the subject of the evidence. Having established a plot, the next thing to be done was to show that Sidney was at the head of it, and the abject Howard—no relation to the philanthropist—made his sixth or seventh appearance as a royalist witness for the purpose specified. According to law, it was necessary to have the testimony of a second person; but there were not two Howards in the world, and a supplementary scoundrel to swear away Sidney's life was nowhere to be met with.

Some papers found in the house of the accused were examined in lieu of a second witness; and though this was a flagrant evasion of the law, the proceeding was pronounced by the infamous Jeffreys to be perfectly regular. He asserted that written documents were better than living witnesses, for the former could not give an evasive reply; but the judicial villain forgot that the papers, unless the writing happened to be crossed, would not admit of the test of cross-examination like other witnesses. Sidney pleaded that his hand-writing had not been proved; and that even supposing him to be the author of the documents, he might have been "only in fun;" but this was a frivolous excuse, for it is dear that if "only in fun" were a good plea, there would be great difficulty in getting over it. A verdict of "Guilty" was returned by a jury so discredibly packed, that the

box in which they sat should have been called a packing-case. Judge Jeffreys “came out” exceedingly on the occasion of Sidney’s sentence being passed, and insisted on proceeding to the last extremity, notwithstanding a mass of irregularities having been pointed out to him. Jeffreys would listen to nothing in the prisoner’s favour; and upon one Mr. Bampffield, a barrister, venturing an opinion as *amicus curia*, that unhappy junior was smashed, snubbed, and silenced by the judge, who recommended the learned gentleman to confine himself to those points of practice upon which his opinion was required. The scene between Sidney and Judge Jeffreys degenerated into a mere personal squabble before the unhappy affair was concluded, and it ended in Jeffreys telling Sidney to keep cool, while the judge himself was boiling over with rage, and the prisoner tauntingly requested his “lordship” to feel his—the prisoner’s—pulse, which the latter declared was more than usually temperate. Sidney followed the practice, prevalent at the time, of placing a paper in the hands of the sheriff by way of legacy on the scaffold; but we have been unable to account for the strange partiality felt by persons at the point of death for the individual principally concerned in their execution.

Hampden was selected as the next victim to the political persecution so much in vogue during Charles’s reign, but it was thought more profitable to fine this gentleman than to execute him, and he was adjudged to pay a penalty of £40,000, which added a large sum to the royal treasury, besides saving the executioner’s fee and the cost of a scaffold. Judge Jeffreys though balked in this instance of an opportunity for gratifying his sanguinary propensities, took his revenge upon some inferior prisoners, for it was his practice when one eluded the gallows by any chance, to hang two, as a poor compensation for the disappointment he had suffered. Professor Holloway, who had been concerned in the Rye-House plot, was accordingly condemned to death, with Sir Thomas Armstrong, who had had a small and very unprofitable share in the plot.

Judge Jeffreys, who figured in these sanguinary transactions, was

one of the most extraordinary specimens of ruffianism that the world ever produced; and if history—like Madame Tussaud—were to get up a Chamber of Horrors, Judge Jeffreys would certainly take his place in it by the side of Danton, Sawney Bean, Marat, Mrs. Brownrigg, and Robespierre. Before he went on circuit he used to say he was going to give the provinces “a lick with the rough side of his tongue”—a vulgar threat which he carried out to its fullest extent, for he not only used his tongue, but his teeth, in the lickings he administered to the unfortunate prisoners brought before him for trial. He was not much interested in dry points of law, and indeed he endeavoured to moisten them as much as he could by drinking copiously before he went into court, and he sometimes reeled about so unsteadily as he took his place on the bench, that a facetious usher of the period declared Jeffreys should be called the Master of the Rolls, for he was always rolling about from side to side when he approached the seat of judgment. The king endeavoured, by courting personal popularity, to avert from himself some of the odium that attached to his creatures and his Government. Knowing that the suspicion of his entertaining Popish predilections was very much about, he married his niece, the Lady Anne, to Prince George of Denmark, a Protestant. No consideration would induce him, however, to call another Parliament, and though he was bothered for money on all sides, without the power of raising a supply, he preferred, as he said, “rubbing on,” to the chance of getting some much harder rubs from the legislative body, in the event of one having been summoned. He greatly preferred doing just as he pleased with other people’s money, to the annoyance of getting any of his own upon the conditions that a Parliament would certainly have attached to the grant of it. His credit being almost unlimited, he never wanted for anything that cash could procure; and he led a much more independent life by setting Parliament at defiance, and having nothing to thank it for, than he could have done had he called it together, and taken an annual supply, the amount of which would have been in some

measure contingent on his good behaviour.

Charles had become as absolute as the last case of a Latin noun, but he was not happy, and his gaiety beginning to forsake him, the picture of the sad dog was gloomily realised. He fell into a succession of fits of the blues, and on Monday, the 2nd of February, 1685, he put his hand to his head, turned very pale, and seemed to be in a very shaky condition. Dr. King, an eminent physician, with a taste for experimental philosophy, was sent for; but his experiments either failed, or were put off too long, for Charles fell on the floor as if dead when the doctor arrived to prescribe for him. Dr. King resolved on bleeding the royal patient, who came to as fast as he had gone off, and in a fit of generosity the Council ordered the surgeon £1000, which, in a fit of oblivion, was forgotten, and he was never paid anything. Perhaps payment may have been disputed, on the ground that the doctor's treatment had not been permanently effective, for a bulletin had scarcely been issued declaring the king out of danger, when it was found necessary to issue another bulletin declaring him in again. The physicians handed him over to the ministers of the church, but Charles would not have about him any Protestant divine, and the Duchess of Portsmouth then told it as a great secret to the French ambassador, that the king, at the bottom of his heart, was a Catholic. This information revealed two facts about which there might have been considerable doubt, namely, that the king possessed some religion, though it was the one which he had been during the whole of his reign persecuting and executing others for following; and secondly, that he had a heart sufficiently capacious for any moral or virtuous principle to lie at the bottom of. The moment the true character of Charles's faith was known to the French ambassador, he used his utmost ingenuity to smuggle a confessor to the death-bed of the sovereign. The English bishops, however, stuck to the expiring monarch so pertinaciously that no Romish priest could approach, until one Huddleston was hunted up, who had formerly been a Popish clergyman, but had so terribly neglected his business, that the office of confessor was quite

strange to him. A wig and gown were put upon him to disguise him, and he was taken to a Portuguese monk to be “crammed” for the task he had to perform; and having been brought up the back staircase to the royal chamber, he got through the duty very respectably. Such was the disreputable imposture that was resorted to for supplying Charles the Second with the only religious assistance or consolation that he received before his dissolution. The Protestant bishops, who had been all hurried into the next room, did not know exactly what to make of it; but there were various whispers and shrewd suspicions current among the churchmen and the courtiers. Soon after his interview with Huddleston, who was huddled up in a cloak to get him out of the palace without being discovered, Charles got a little better, and sent for his illegitimate children to give them his blessing. A catalogue of these young ladies and gentlemen would occupy more space perhaps than they are worth, but it is sufficient perhaps to say, that Master Peg and Miss Peg, the king’s son and daughter by Mrs. Catherine Peg, were absent from the family circle in consequence of their having died in their infancy. Master James Walters, the eldest of the group of naturals, who had been created Duke of Monmouth, was not mentioned by his father in his last illness; but little Charlie Lennox, the young Duke of Richmond, and his mother, the Duchess of Portsmouth—Mademoiselle Querouaille—were especially recommended to the Duke of York’s attention. The dying reprobate had the good feeling to put in a word for Mrs. Eleanor Gwynne, the actress, ancestress of the noble house of St. Alban’s; but as he only said, “Do not let poor Nelly starve,” it does not seem that his views with regard to her were very munificent. The bishops, however, were scandalised *selon les règles* at even this brief allusion to the “poor player,” who had invariably refused all titles of honour; but it is said that their holinesses were not nearly so much shocked at the mention of the Duchesses of Portland and Cleveland, who were morally not a bit better than Nell Gwynne, though they had electrotyped their infamy with rank, which formed in those days, as we are happy to say

it does not in these, the only real substitute for virtue.

At six in the morning of the 6th of February, 1685, Charles asked what o'clock it was, and requested those about him to open the curtains, that he might once more see daylight. Where he was to see it at that time of the morning in the darkest period of the year is, like the daylight itself, under such circumstances, not very visible. His senses, which must have been already wandering, were by ten o'clock quite gone, and at half-past eleven he expired without a struggle. He was in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and the twenty-fifth of his actual reign, though, according to legal documents, he was king for thirty-six years, inasmuch as while he was flying about from place to place, and perching upon trees to elude discovery, he was supposed, by a loyal fiction, to be still sitting on the throne of England.

A report got abroad that Charles had been poisoned, but although this deadly operation had been performed on his mind by the evil and corrupt councillors into whose hands he fell after the death of Clarendon, there is no reason for believing that physical poisoning was the fate of this disreputable sovereign.

The characters of the kings and queens it is our duty to pass in review give many a pang to our loyal bosom, and we regret to say that our heart has been perforated, nay, riddled to an alarming extent, by the melancholy riddle which the character of Charles presents to us. We will begin with him as a companion—not that we should be very anxious for his company; but because it was in the capacity of a companion that he presented the most amiable aspect. His manners were engaging; but as his engagements were scarcely ever kept, the quality in question was only calculated to lead to disappointment among those who had anything to do with him. His wit, raillery, and satire are said to have been first-rate, but we find none of his bon-mots recorded which would have been worth more than two pence a dozen to any regular dealer in jokes, though for private distribution they might have been a little more-valuable, on account of their royal authorship. For his private life he has found apologists in preceding historians * one

of whom appears to imagine that the disgusting selfishness familiarly termed “jolly-dogism” is the highest social virtue of which human nature is capable. Charles was, we are told, a good father, but it was to those of whom he ought never to have been the father at all; a generous lover to those whom he could not make the objects of generosity without the grossest injustice to others; and a pleasing companion to those with whom he ought to have avoided all companionship. We do not concur in that sort of laxity which looks at the domestic ties as so many slip-knots that may hang about the wearer as loosely as he may find convenient.

* Hume calls him “an obliging husband.”

For his public character, even those who admire him in his private relations have not ventured to offer any apology; and his utter disregard of the honour, the religion, the liberty, and the material interests of the nation over which he ruled cannot be made the subject of laudation. It is suggested that a certain reckless gaiety formed some excuse for his defects as a sovereign; but monarchy in sport becomes tyranny in earnest, when its affairs are conducted by a negligent and heartless libertine. His reign was one long hoax as far as religion was concerned, for he was a Catholic at heart while pursuing the Papists with the most cruel persecution; and though his behaviour towards that class would, under any circumstances, have been hateful, it seems doubly detestable when we remember that he was himself guilty of holding the opinions for which he sent so many to the scaffold.

There can be no doubt that the fate of his father, and the disgust occasioned by the tyranny arising out of the ascendancy of the rabid friends of freedom during the Commonwealth, were mainly instrumental in obtaining toleration for the vices and oppressive cruelties of Charles the Second. The dissatisfaction caused by the abuse of the royal power in the preceding reign must have burst out with more earnestness had it been kept bottled up until the accession of the libertine monarch, whose supposed sufferings during exile had attracted towards him a

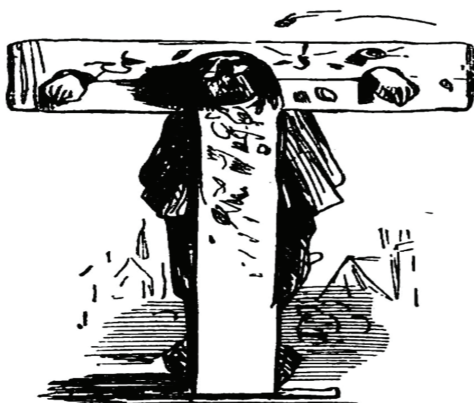
large share of sympathy. Had he come to the throne in due course, without the intervention of a republic, he would have been swept off by a storm of general indignation; but the rebound of public feeling in favour of monarchy carried him in triumph to the same position that his father had occupied.



It was remarked of Charles the Second, that he never said a foolish thing or ever did a wise one; an observation which either he—or some one for him—happily turned to account, by observing that his words were his own, while his acts were those of his ministry.

He has left nothing very valuable to posterity, notwithstanding the alleged wit or wisdom of his words, for the only persons who have been able to turn him to profitable account are the dramatists, who have founded a few farces on the career of that sad scamp—the Merry Monarch.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH. JAMES THE SECOND.



HOUGH James had not been popular as heir-presumptive to the crown, he had no sooner got it on his head than loyal addresses poured in upon him from all sides, for the attachment manifested towards the throne on these occasions refers rather to the upholstery than to the individual. In his capacity of Duke of York, few would have exclaimed, "York, you're wanted!" to fill the regal office, but when he had once succeeded to it, every one was ready to declare that the diadem became him as if it had been expressly made for him. James and his wife were greatly puzzled about their coronation, for they had an objection to the ceremony being performed by a Protestant prelate, and unfortunately for them "No other was genuine, own conscience—a party, by the way, that is sometimes not very obstinate in coming to terms—James and his queen not only-accepted the crown from Protestant hands, but got over an awkward oath or two by means of some mental quibbles. As the crown was being put upon his head, it tottered and almost fell, which caused a bystander to paraphrase the old saying about the slip 'twixt cup and lip, exclaiming:

“There’s many a mull’Twixt the crown and the skull,” an observation that, happily for him who made it, was uttered in a tone that was scarcely audible.

A few days after the coronation, Titus Oates was brought to the bar of the Queen’s Bench to be tried over again, though he was already under sentence of perpetual imprisonment. James, however, was desirous of feeding his revenge on Oates, who had done his worst against the Catholics; and Jeffreys, that judicial flail, was set to work to administer to Oates a sound thrashing.

The prisoner assumed a very bold front, and there was a sort of desperate restlessness in his manner, which got him the name of Wild Oates at the time he was undergoing his trial.

He was convicted on two indictments, and ordered to pay a thousand marks in respect of each. “But,” said the inhuman Jeffreys, “we will supply him with marks in return, for he shall be whipped from Aldgate to Newgate, and from Newgate to Tyburn.

He was also granted a life interest, by way of annuity, in the pillory, where he was adjudged to stand five days every year, as long as he lived, and where voluntary contributions of eggs were shelled out in most unwelcome profusion by the populace.

Parliament met on the 22nd of May, 1685, and James delivered a speech from the throne, with notes introduced *ad libitum*, and a running accompaniment of threats, remarkable for their extreme impudence. This effrontery had its effect, for the Commons, having retired to their chamber, voted him an income of a million and a quarter for his life, with other contingencies which only required asking for. The Court party supported him with zeal, and chiefly recommended him as a king that had never broken his word, which appears to have placed him in the light of a royal phenomenon. In the midst of all this comfortable and complimentary confidence between the Parliament and James, news arrived that Monmouth had landed in the west, with a tremendous standard, round which the mob, who will rush anywhere to see a flag fly, were rapidly rallying. Monmouth had only got a force

of one hundred men by way of nucleus to a larger assemblage, or, in other words, as the tag to which the string of rag and bobtail would be most likely to attach itself. The rebellion raised by Monmouth was very soon put down, and Monmouth himself was found cowering at the bottom of a ditch, in the mud of which he must have expired, had it not been for an opponent of his dy-nasty, who would not leave him to die in such a very disagreeable manner. Poor Monmouth was taken, tried, and condemned; and, not to be out of fashion, he gave money to the headsman—thus paying the costs of his own execution even upon the scaffold.

James proceeded to punish all whom he believed to be the enemies of his Government, with a sanguinary fury worthy of the revolutionary tribunals of France during the ascendancy of Robespierre.

Colonel Kirk, a soldier who had become savage by service at Tangier, and who, having once tasted blood, never knew when he had had enough of it, was sent to use the sword of war upon real or suspected rebels, while Jeffreys hacked about him right and left with the sword of justice. The king himself, with brutal appreciation of the judge's ferocious career, gave it the name of "Jeffreys' campaign," and this disgrace to the ermine inflamed by drink the natural fierceness of his character. He hiccuped out sentences of death with an idiotic stare of counterfeit solemnity, and he rolled about the Bench in such a disgraceful manner, that a junior, who had nothing to do in court but make bad jokes, observed that Jeffreys could never have acted as a standing counsel, and it was, therefore, lucky for him that he had been raised to a post of dignity which he could conveniently lean against. This monster in judicial form was elevated to the office of Lord Chancellor, with the title of Baron Wem, on the death of Lord Keeper North; when, by way of earning his promotion, Jeffreys went hanging away at a much more rapid rate than before, and the only misfortune was, that there was not sufficient rope for him to hang himself, notwithstanding the abundance of that material which was supplied to him. Jeffreys added to the trade of a butcher the less sanguinary pursuits of brib-

ery and corruption, which enabled him to make a certain sum per head of the prisoners, while their heads remained upon their shoulders. He and Father Petre, the king's confessor, divided £6000 paid by Hampden, who was in gaol, to put aside a capital charge of high treason with which he had been threatened; and poor Prideaux, a barrister who had talked himself into the Tower by an unfortunate "gift of the gab," purchased his impunity for £1500, the probable amount of his entire life's professional earnings.

The Marquess of Halifax had sat at the council board for some time with Rochester, who, though swearing from morning till night, and drunk from night till morning, was the recognised head of the high church party, and the great hope of the religious section of the community. Halifax, not exactly liking the projects of his royal master, and the character of his colleague, turned a little refractory; and being dismissed from office, became in the natural order of things the leader of the opposition. His hostility told even upon the haughty Jeffreys, who was made to perform the unpleasant operation of biting the dust—a fate to which those who are always opening their mouths and showing their teeth are necessarily reduced when they are brought to a prostrate condition. James was so much disgusted and disappointed that he dissolved the Parliament, to avoid further discussion, thus as it were turning off the gas by which a light was being thrown upon his own real views and character.

The undisguised object of James was to Catholicise the whole country by dismissing from office all who had the slightest shade of Protestantism in their principles; and even Rochester, the head of the high church party, having got argumentative and disputatious over his drink, was turned out of the council. This ejectment was judicious in the main, though the immediate cause for it scarcely warranted the act; but the council room had been little better than a public-house parlour during the whole time that Rochester had been suffered to sit in it. James next drew up a declaration of liberty of conscience, to be read in all the churches, but the bishops, with very great spirit, resisted the introduction of the

obnoxious document. They were consequently summoned on a charge of high misdemeanor before the King's Bench, when Jeffreys tried to cajole them with such amiable observations as "Now then, what's this little affair? There's some mistake, is there not? but we shall soon put it all to rights, I dare say;"—a style of conciliation to which the bishops did not take as kindly as the king and his creatures desired. The people were greatly in favour of the prelates, who were cheered on their way to their trial by an enthusiastic mob of juveniles; for it is worthy of remark, that the boys are ever in advance of their age, as the pioneers of popular opinion.

The jury, having in their own hearts an echo to the general voice, acquitted the defendants, after an adjournment and a locking up for a night, which had been rendered necessary by the obstinacy of a Mr. Arnold, the king's brewer, who supplied the palace with beer, and insisted upon putting what he called "nice pints," for the purpose of raising difficulties in the minds of his colleagues. A verdict of "Not guilty" was however eventually returned, and a round of applause having started in the court itself, passed from group to group till it got to Temple Bar, where the porters taking it up with terrific force, gave it a lift down Fleet Street, and it was thence forwarded by easy stages as far as the Tower. London was illuminated in honour of the occasion, and the Pope having been hanged in effigy, some wag put "a light in his laughing eye," which caused it to twinkle for a few moments, until, like the fire of genius, it consumed the frame in which it was deposited.

On the 10th of June, 1688, the queen, Mary d'Este, the second wife of James, was declared to have been delivered of a "fine bouncing boy," but the people, who would have no Papist heir to the throne, declared the alleged "bouncing boy" to be a bounce altogether. There was not over nicety in the mode chosen to account for the presence of the child, by those who would not believe that it was the son of the king and queen; but the most popular story was, that the little fellow had been brought in a warming-pan into the royal bedchamber. This was hauling the young Pretender

rather prematurely over the coals, but as the contents of the warming-pan were never regularly sifted, we cannot vouch for the truth or falsehood of the account that has been handed down to us.

The event, whether real or fictitious, was celebrated by a brilliant display of fireworks, which proved a sad failure; for the lightning, which was exceedingly vivid, completely took the shine out of the feu d'artifice, and thoroughly "paled," as if with a pail of cold water, "their ineffectual fires."

All eyes were now turned upon William, Prince of Orange, who, naturally enough, became as proud as a peacock at having so many eyes upon him. Having received a very pressing invitation from England, he determined to come over and question the legitimacy of the alleged Prince of Wales—our young friend of the warming-pan. On Friday, the 16th of October, 1688, William of Orange set sail, and stood over for the English coast; but old Boreas, who stands as sentinel over the British Isles, began railing and blustering in such a boisterous manner, that the invading fleet was driven out of its course, and the order on board every ship was to "Ease her," "Back her," or "Turn her astarn," to prevent a collision that might have proved disagreeable. The fleet, however, sailed definitively on the 1st of November, and arriving at Torbay on the 4th, he landed there amid the usual kissing of hands, grasping of legs, hanging on at the coat tails, and tugging affectionately at the cloak skirts, which form the ordinary demonstrations of affectionate loyalty towards any new object, who can bid tolerably high for it. Nevertheless, the people did not come out half so strongly as he could have desired; and, indeed, he complained that the warmth of his first reception had soon cooled down to mere politeness with the chill off. It is said that he even threatened to return, but recollecting that such quick returns would be productive of no profit, he abandoned the notion of going home, and said to himself, very sensibly, "Well, well! now I am here, I suppose I must make the best of it."

James was completely taken aback at the news of what had

occurred, and tried to get up a little bit of popularity by turning quack doctor and running about in all directions to touch people for the king's evil. It was, however, a mere piece of claptrap, or, as some term it, touch and go; for directly the people had been touched they were found to go without evincing the smallest symptoms of attachment to their doctor and master. James had certainly got a considerable number of soldiers; but he could not rely upon them for three reasons—first, because they were not to be trusted; secondly, because they were not to be depended upon; and thirdly, because there was no reliance to be placed upon them. Any one of these causes would of itself have been sufficient; but James was almost as difficult of conviction as the celebrated angler, who only abandoned his fishing expedition upon finding that there were, in the first place, no fish; secondly, that he had no fishing-rod; and thirdly, that if there were any fish, he did not think they would allow him to catch them. The soldiers soon began to justify James's doubt of their fidelity, by rapidly deserting him. Lord Colchester went first, and the example was so catching that it ran through all the forces, and when James made up his mind to join the army, he made the mortifying discovery that there was nothing to join, for all the officers were unattached to the cause of the sovereign. The bishops advised him to call a Parliament, and the little Prince of Wales was packed off in a parcel, with "This side upwards" legibly inscribed on the crown of his hat, to Portsmouth. In the midst of his other distresses, the king's nose began to bleed, in consequence, it was said, of the repeated blows he had endured from the soldiery, who had flown in his face with the utmost disloyalty. He consequently made up his mind and his portmanteau to retreat, when, in stopping at Andover, he asked his son-in-law, Prince George of Denmark, and the young Duke of Ormond, to sup with him. They accepted the invitation; but in the morning they were both missing, having run off—without paying their bills—to join the Prince of Orange, whom they found in quarters. On arriving at Whitehall, James found that even his daughter Anne had followed

her husband's example and joined the enemy.

As every one else was flying, James began to think that it was high time for himself to run for it. The little Prince of Wales, who had been forwarded to Portsmouth, was actually declined as a parcel on which the carriage had not been paid, and was sent back like a returned letter to London. The queen, putting the little fellow under her arm, walked over Westminster Bridge, popped into the Gravesend coach, and hailed a yacht, which took her and her infant to Calais. James, only waiting to pocket the great seal, ran after his wife; but finding the bauble heavy, and that the great seal, by making him look conspicuous, would perhaps seal his doom, he pitched it into the river. On reaching Lambeth they exclaimed, "Hoy, a hoy!" and a hoy was provided in which he took his passage; but the vessel putting in at the Isle of Sheppy for ballast, the people attacked him with great rudeness, and called him, without knowing who he was, a "hatchet-faced Jesuit.

"This proves he must have had a very sharp expression, for with a face like a hatchet, he would no doubt have had teeth like a saw, and presented altogether a rather formidable aspect. To save himself from outrage he announced himself as the king, but this disclosure had only the effect of making them rob as well as insult him, for knowing he had money of his own, they were determined to get it out of him. He was seized by a mob of fish-women, sailors, and smugglers, who turned his pockets inside out, and bullied him so severely that he howled out piteously for mercy, and adopted a favourite oath of his brother Charles's, when a salmon lighting rather heavily on his eye, he exclaimed, "Odds fish!" with considerable earnestness. He at length "put up" at the nearest public-house, where he wrote a note to Lord Winchilsea. Upon the arrival of this nobleman, the king sat down and had a good cry, but Winchilsea sagaciously observed to him, "Come, come; it's no use taking on so; you had much better take yourself off as speedily as possible."

The moment the flight of James from his palace was known, the

city was thrown into the utmost excitement, and by way of making each other more nervous than need be, the inhabitants set all the bells ringing with incessant vehemence. The people might have knocked each other down with feathers, so agitated had they become; and in their frenzy they not only began burning all the Popish chapels, but looked everywhere for Father Petre to make the same use of him that his namesake saltpetre might have been turned to on such a very explosive occasion. Father Petre had taken himself off to France, but the pope's nuncio, who was in general denounced by the mob, disguised himself as a footman, and kept jumping up behind a carriage, to look as if he was in service, whenever he observed any one apparently watching him with suspicion. Judge Jeffreys having been stupidly intoxicated over some sittings in banco at a public-house, followed by a trial at bar of some cream gin that had been strongly recommended to his lordship for mixing, was unable of course to fly—or even to stand—but, disguised as a sailor, he was perambulating the streets of Wapping. Having been discovered, he was seized by the mob, who, instead of exercising a summary jurisdiction, and hanging him at once, as they might have done had they determined to pay him in his own coin, turned him over to the Lord Mayor as a preliminary to a regular trial.

A provisional Government of the bishops and peers was formed in London, and a note despatched to the Prince of Orange, saying, "that the first time he came that way, if he would drop in they should be very happy to see him." James showed considerable obstinacy before he could be got rid of; and he continued exercising, as long as he could, some of the smaller functions of royalty. He came back to London, and to the surprise of everybody, sat down to dinner as usual at Whitehall, forgetting, perhaps, that his father had taken a chop there on a previous occasion for having given offence to his people. Four battalions of the Dutch Guards were marched into Westminster by way of hint, which James for some time refused to take, and he had actually gone to bed, when Halifax roused him up by the information that he must start off to

Ham, as the Prince of Orange was expected at Whitehall the first thing in the morning. James observed that the place suggested to him was very chilly, and as he could not bear cold Ham, he had much rather go to Rochester if it was all the same to Halifax. This was agreed to on behalf of the Prince of Orange; and James, taking the Gravesend boat, quitted London with a very few followers. There was an explosion of cockney sentimentality on this occasion; for the citizens, who had been the first to demand his expulsion, began shedding tears in teacupfuls when they witnessed the departure of the sovereign. Having remained for the night at Gravesend, he started the next morning for Rochester, and after a very brief stay, he went in a fishing-smack smack across the channel to Ambleteuse, a small town in Picardy. From thence he hastened to the Court of Louis the Fourteenth, where James still enjoyed the empty title of king, which was not the only empty thing he possessed, for his pockets were in the same condition until Louis replenished them. He sometimes compared them to a couple of exhausted non-receivers, for these were utterly exhausted, and were not in the receipt of anything but what he obtained from his brother sovereign's munificence. Some historians tell us that James had made a purse, but if he had, it is doubtful whether he had any money remaining to stock it with after the fishermen, who made all fish that came to their net, had encountered him at Torbay, and deprived him of all the loose cash he had about him. William of Orange could not exactly make up his mind what to do upon the flight of James; but he very wisely declined to follow the advice of some injudicious friends, who recommended him to appear in the character of William the Conqueror. He sagaciously observed that imitations were always bad, evincing an utter absence of any original merit in the imitator, and certain in the end to have their hollowness detected. He admitted that the idea of entering England as William the Conqueror might have been a very good one at first; but that he should very justly be denounced as an impudent humbug if he endeavoured to obtain popularity by

trading on the reputation of another. Scorning, therefore, to be a servile copyist, he determined on striking out a path for himself, and tried the "moderately constitutional dodge," which succeeded so well, that he is to this day recognised as the hero of what is termed the "glorious Revolution." He called together some members of Charles the Second's Parliaments, and recommended them, with the assistance of the Lord Mayor and forty Common Councilmen, to consider what had better be done under the peculiar circumstances of the nation. There is something richly ludicrous, according to modern notions, in the idea of consulting a Lord Mayor and forty Common Councilmen on a great political question; for though we would cheerfully be guided by such authorities in the choice of a sirloin of beef or the framing of a bill of fare, their views on the cooking up of a constitution would not in these days be gravely listened to. The peers and bishops had already recommended the summoning of a convention, and the Lord Mayor having proposed that the Commons should say "ditto to that," the suggestion was forthwith adopted.

The Convention having met, the first question it proceeded to discuss was whether James had not, in leaving the kingdom, run away, in fact, from his creditors, for every king owes a debt to his people; and whether the throne, crown and sceptre might not be seized for the benefit of those to whom he was under liabilities. The Commons soon came to the resolution that the throne was vacant, a conclusion which we must not examine too strictly; for if the principle involved in it were to be generally admitted, we should find that a freeholder running away from his freehold house to avoid meeting his Christmas bills, would, by that act, not only oust himself from his property, but cut off all his successors from their right of inheritance. Upon the broad and vulgar principle that the Stuarts were a bad lot, the Convention was justified perhaps in changing the succession to the throne; but, for our own parts, we must confess our disinclination to let in such a plea for the wholesale setting aside of a reigning family. As the

last of the Pretenders is happily defunct, we may venture upon taking the line of argument we have adopted, without running the risk of a public meeting being called on the appearance of this number, to consider the immediate restoration of the Stuarts, a measure which our loyalty to the reigning sovereign, who fortunately unites in her own person all claims to the crown, would never tolerate. Had it been otherwise, we should not have been surprised by the announcement of a league, with the usual staff of a chairman, a boy, a brass plate, and a bell, to restore to the house of Stuart the crown of England.

To return, however, to William of Orange, whom we left waiting to be asked to walk up the steps of the throne; and we have great pleasure in taking him by the hand, for the purpose of giving him a lift to that exalted station he was now called to occupy. Some were for engaging him as regent during the minority of the Prince of Wales; but William flatly refused to become a warming-pan for one whose alleged introduction into the royal bed-chamber through the medium of a warming-pan, rendered the simile at once striking and appropriate. "All or none" was the motto adopted by William in his negotiations with the Convention, and it was at length resolved to settle the crown on the joint heads of himself and the Princess of Orange, with a stipulation that the prince should hold the reins of government.

A declaration of rights was drawn up, so that everything was reduced to writing, and put down in black and white, for the purpose of avoiding disputes between the king and the people. James's reign was now hopelessly at an end, and entirely by his own act; for, after he had absconded, it would have been idle for the nation to have been satisfied with writing, "Gone away; not known where," over the throne of England. A sketch of the character of this king is scarcely required from the English historian, who may fairly say, "My former man, James, quitted my service, and you had better make inquiries in his last place, for I have ceased to have anything to do with him. I can venture to say he

was sober; but I am not quite sure about his honesty; for though in looking over the plate basket where I kept the regalia, I found the crown, sceptre, and other articles of that description perfectly right, I had missed from time to time a great deal of money, which I verily believe that man James had pocketed. I should say that the fellow was very weak, and not being strong enough for his place, he left his work a great deal to inferior servants, who behaved very shamefully. I think the fellow was willing, and it might be said of him, that he would if he could, but he couldn't—a state in which the servant of a nation is not likely to give much satisfaction to those who require his services." Such is the character that may be fairly written of James the Second, who, we may as well add, was promoted to a saintdom in France, by way of compensation for his forfeiture of the "right divine to govern wrong" in England.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, FINE ARTS, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

IT is now necessary to sink the historian for a time in the reviewer, and to take a retrospect of the literature of the period through which our narrative has passed. The republic of politics was not favourable to the republic of letters, and the Elizabethan dramatists were followed by a few playwrights of a very inferior class. The mantle of Shakespeare, or even of Beaumont and Fletcher, who had flourished under the monarchy, was caught by no worthy object, and it fell upon Shirley, for whom it was evidently a great deal too large. Denham and Waller, those two commonplace songsters, set up a faint warbling, and Hobbes had sufficient fire to burn with philosophic ardour, though his thoughts were fettered by his royalist principles. Hobbes, however, was a fireside

companion to many, though they dared scarcely hang over Hobbes in the broad light of day.

Milton had written little till he gave to the world—which is true enough, for the world can hardly be said to have bought it—his “Paradise Lost,” which he brought out in 1667, and though the sale was limited, it was sufficiently encouraging to induce him to baffle the crowd of imitators by advertising a new poem, to be called “Paradise Regained.” He feared the sort of impertinent opposition which echoes every new work, and which, when an original writer takes it into his head to bid anyone “Go where the aspens quiver,” “Meet him in the willow-glen,” or commit some other foolery, will reply by expressing a desire to come where the aspens are actually quivering, and to be punctual at the willow-glen, for which the invitation is forwarded. “Paradise Regained” had the fate of all merely imitative literature, for it never acquired, and will never attain, the reputation its prototype or predecessor has enjoyed.

The Restoration seemed to act as a restorative to Milton’s powers, for he published many of his finest things after Charles the Second returned to the throne. Cowley was one of the earliest writers who took to diluting the works of other people in some stuff of his own; and, taking the materials of Donne, he set an example of the modern practice of seizing upon another man’s original ideas, for the purpose of beating or spinning them out into a shape that may, if possible, prevent the real authorship from being recognised. There was, however, a great deal of true genius among the literary men of the age, through which our narrative has just carried us. Spenser, whose tales were only too short, would have been sufficient to redeem the period from the imputation of mediocrity. The stage was, during the reign of Charles the Second, in a very degraded state; but the cry for the restoration of the drama has been kept up so long, that we really do not know what there is to restore, if everything has been always bad, except the works of two or three writers, whose productions are being so constantly performed that the public cannot reasonably complain of not get-

ting enough of them. The “palmy days of dramatic literature” are, according to the ordinary acceptation of those who use the term, any days but the present, and it is not improbable that our own will be looked back upon and lamented as the genuine “palmy days” by the generation of grumblers who may come after us. If everything is objected to in its turn—and such has been the fate of every successive crop of writings for the stage—we of course cannot tell with accuracy what it would be considered worth while to restore in the judgment of those who are clamorous for the restoration of the drama. There is also considerable difference of opinion as to how the restoration is to be effected; and we may perhaps be excused, therefore, for suggesting that some good strong salts—attic salts, of course—are likely to prove the most effectual restoratives to a drama in a languishing condition.

There was an immense increase in the family of science at or about the period we have been speaking of, and indeed science had so many sons, that it would not have been very surprising if the fate of the domestic circle of the old lady who lived in a shoe—namely, an abundance of broth and a scarcity of bread—had been their inheritance.

The illustrious Boyle might frequently have been left without a roast by the number of competitors who were seeking a living round him through the exercise of their talents; and amidst his curious experiments on air, that of trying to live upon it might, if successful, have been of the greatest use to him. He was an enthusiast in the splendid career he had long and perseveringly pursued; nor is it going beyond the truth to say of him, that he combined ecstasies with hydrostatics, by the eagerness and animation with which he threw himself into water, whose properties were almost the only property he ever realised. There were several other scientific luminaries in this age, and we must not forget Hooke, who always had an eye to the capabilities of the microscope, and took an enlarged view of everything that fell under his observation. For Sydenham,

the restorer of true physio, we have not so much veneration; but Newton is a name that we cannot pass over so slightly. This great man, to whom science was the apple of his eye, and to whose eye the apple had revealed one of the greatest truths ever discovered, lived for some time a most retired life, which he passed in tranquil obscurity. Such was his position when the fruits of his contemplation came home to him in the shape of a golden pippin, which he revolved in his mind as it revolved in the air, and the result was the great fact by the perception of which his name has been immortalised. Though Newton was a pattern of modesty in his intercourse with the external world, he was bold enough in his approaches to Dame Nature, and would not allow her to hide her face from him, if by any amount of perseverance he could get a peep at it. He even had the audacity to go the length of tearing off her veil, for the purpose of revealing her beauties; and Nature, instead of becoming indignant at this rough treatment, was evidently flattered by his attentions, to which she offered every encouragement. It is a curious fact, that the institution of the Royal Society commenced under the auspices of a brother-in-law of Cromwell, one Wilkins, a clergyman, who, although so nearly allied to the republican leader, had no objection to accept facilities from a regal hand for promoting the objects of science, in which he felt a zealous interest.

This brother-in-law of Cromwell was Bishop of Chester under the Restoration, which he liked just as well as the Commonwealth, and perhaps better, for his mitre was rather safer under a royal rule than it could have been during a republican government, Charles the Second was without doubt a lover of the sciences to a certain extent; but his disgusting depravities left him neither money nor time for the advancement of genius and literary merit. His contemporary, Louis the

Fourteenth, was more liberal of his bounty to those whose intellect formed their chief claim to consideration; but even this magnificent monarch scarcely devoted to literature, science, and art, as much as he often lavished on one worthless courtier. It is, however, a matter for humiliation and regret that we have not advanced upon the munificence of Charles the Second and Louis the Fourteenth; for, notwithstanding all the acknowledgment that talent in these days receives by way of personal consideration and respect, a few paltry thousands a year form the whole amount that the nation will afford to pension its instructors or entertainers, when their powers of instruction and entertainment have failed to afford them the means of comfortable livelihood.

Of the condition of the people during the period described in the few last chapters, we had rather say very little, as we can say nothing complimentary. Hypocrisy, during the Commonwealth, and unbridled licentiousness at the Restoration, were the characteristic features of the two divisions of a period which cast upon the respectability of the nation a blot that time has only turned to iron-mould. The fame of a nation, like a damask table-cloth, when once stained is never thoroughly restored; for, send them both to the wash—immersing the former in tears of regret, and the latter in the soapsuds—the stain is still indelibly there, beyond the power of pearl-ash or penitence.