

of matter. There was a petty war in almost every county. A town furnished troops to the Parliament while the manor-house of the neighbouring peer was garrisoned for the King. The combatants were rarely disposed to march far from their own homes. It was reserved for Fairfax and Cromwell to terminate this desultory warfare, by moving one overwhelming force successively against all the scattered fragments of the royal party.

It is a remarkable circumstance that the officers who had studied tactics in what were considered as the best schools, under Vere in the Netherlands, and under Gustavus Adolphus in Germany, displayed far less skill than those commanders who had been bred to peaceful employments, and who never saw even a skirmish till the civil war broke out. An unlearned person might hence be inclined to suspect that the military art is of no very profound mystery, that its principles are the principles of plain good sense, and that a quick eye, a cool head, and a stout heart, will do more to make a general than all the diagrams of Jomini. This, however, is certain, that Hampden showed himself a far better officer than Essex, and Cromwell than Lesley.

The military errors of Essex were probably in some degree produced by political timidity. He was honestly, but not warmly, attached to the cause of the Parliament; and next to a great defeat he dreaded a great victory. Hampden, on the other hand, was for vigorous and decisive measures. When he drew the sword, as Clarendon has well said, he threw away the scabbard. He had shown that he knew better than any public man of his time how to value and how to practise moderation. But he knew that the essence of war is violence, and that moderation in war is imbecility. On several occasions, particularly during the operations in the neighbourhood of Brentford, he remonstrated earnestly with Essex. Wherever he commanded separately, the boldness and rapidity of his movements presented a striking contrast to the sluggishness of his superior.

In the Parliament he possessed boundless influence. His employments towards the close of 1642 have been described by Denham in some lines which, though intended to be sarcastic, convey in

truth the highest eulogy. Hampden is described in this satire as perpetually passing and repassing between the military station at Windsor and the House of Commons at Westminster, overawing the general, and as giving law to that Parliament which knew no other law. It was at this time he organized that celebrated association of counties, to which his party was principally indebted for its victory over the King.

In the early part of 1643, the shires lying in the neighbourhood of London, which were devoted to the cause of the Parliament, were incessantly annoyed by Rupert and his calvary. Essex had extended his lines so far that almost every point was vulnerable. The young prince who, though not a great general, was an active and enterprising partisan, frequently surprised posts, burnt villages, swept away cattle, and was again at Oxford before a force sufficient to encounter him could be assembled.

The languid proceedings of Essex were loudly condemned by the troops. All the ardent and daring spirits in the parliamentary party were eager to have Hampden at their head. Had his life been prolonged, there is every reason to believe that the supreme command would have been entrusted to him. But it was decreed that, at this conjuncture, England should lose the only man who united perfect disinterestedness to eminent talents, the only man who, being capable of gaining the victory for her, was incapable of abusing that victory when gained.

In the evening of the seventeenth of June, Rupert darted out of Oxford with his calvary on a predatory expedition. At three in the morning of the following day, he attacked and dispersed a few parliamentary soldiers who lay at Postcombe. He then flew to Chinnor, burned the village, killed or took all the troops who were quartered there, and prepared to hurry back with his booty and his prisoners to Oxford.

Hampden had, on the preceding day, strongly represented to Essex the danger to which this part of the line was exposed. As soon as he received intelligence of Rupert's incursion, he sent off a horseman with a message to the General. The cavaliers, he said, could return only by

Lines by  
Denham.

Desire for  
Hampden as  
leader.

Rupert's  
incursion.

Chiselhampton Bridge. A force ought to be instantly despatched in that direction for the purpose of intercepting them. In the meantime, he resolved to set out with all the cavalry that he could muster, for the purpose of impeding the march of the enemy till Essex could take measures for cutting off their retreat. A considerable body of horse and dragoons volunteered to follow him. He was not their commander. He did not even belong to their branch of the service. But "he was," says Lord Clarendon, "second to none but the General himself in the observance and application of all men." On the field of Chalgrove he came up with Rupert. A fierce skirmish ensued.

**Hampden shot.**

In the first charge, Hampden was struck in the shoulder by two bullets, which broke the bone, and lodged in his body. The troops of the Parliament lost heart and gave way. Rupert, after pursuing them for a short time, hastened to cross the bridge, and made his retreat unmolested to Oxford.

Hampden, with his head drooping, and his hands leaning on his horse's neck, moved feebly out of the battle. The mansion which had been inhabited by his father-in-law, and from which in his youth he had carried home his bride Elizabeth, was in sight. There still remains an affecting tradition that he looked for a moment towards that beloved house, and made an effort to go thither to die.

**Effort to return home.**

But the enemy lay in that direction. He turned his horse towards Thame, where he arrived almost fainting with agony. The surgeons dressed his wounds. But there was no hope. The pain which he suffered was most excruciating. But he endured it with admirable firmness and resignation. His first care was for his country. He wrote from his bed several letters to London concerning public affairs, and sent a last pressing message to the head-quarters, recommending that the dispersed forces should be concentrated. When his public duties were performed, he calmly prepared himself to die. He was attended by a clergyman of the Church of England, with whom he had lived in habits of intimacy, and by the chaplain of the Buckinghamshire Green-coats, Dr. Spurton, whom Baxtor describes as a famous and excellent divine.

A short time before his death the sacrament was administered to him. He

declared that, though he disliked the government of the Church of England, he yet agreed with that Church as to all essential matters of doctrine. His intellect remained unclouded. When all was nearly over, he lay murmuring faint prayers for himself, and for the cause in which he died. "Lord Jesus," he exclaimed, in the moment of the last agony, "receive my soul. O Lord, save my country. O Lord, be merciful to —." In that broken ejaculation passed away his noble and fearless spirit.

**Death of Hampden.**

He was buried in the parish church of Hampden. His soldiers, bareheaded, with reversed arms and muffled drums and colours, escorted his body to the grave, singing, as they marched, that lofty and melancholy psalm in which the fragility of human life is contrasted with the immutability of Him to whom a thousand years are as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night.

The news of Hampden's death produced as great a consternation in his party, according to Clarendon, as if their whole army had been cut off.

The journals of the time amply prove that the Parliament and all its friends were filled with grief and dismay. Lord Nugent has quoted a remarkable passage from the next Weekly Intelligencer. "The loss of Colonel Hampden goeth near the heart of every man that loves the good of his king and country, and makes some conceive little content to be at the army now that he is gone. The memory of this deceased colonel is such, that in no age to come but it will more and more be had in honour and esteem; a man so religious, and of that prudence, judgment, temper, valour, and integrity, that he hath left few his like behind."

He had indeed left none his like behind him. There still remained, indeed, in his party, many acute intellects, many eloquent tongues, many brave and honest hearts. There still remained a rugged and clownish soldier, half frantic, half buffoon, whose talents, discerned as yet only by one penetrating eye, were equal to all the highest duties of the soldier and the prince. But in Hampden, and in Hampden alone, were united all the qualities which, at such a crisis, were necessary to save the State, the valour and energy of Cromwell, the discernment and eloquence of Vane, the humanity and moderation of Manchester, the stern

integrity of Hale, the ardent public spirit of Sydney. Others might possess the qualities which were necessary to save the popular party in the crisis of danger ;

Qualities to **save the state.** he alone had both made the power and the inclination to restrain its excesses in the hour of triumph. Others could conquer ; he alone could reconcile. A heart as bold as his brought up the cuirassiers who turned the tide of battle on Marston Moor. As skilful an eye as his watched the Scotch army descending from the heights over Dunbar. But it was

when to the sullen tyranny of Laud and Charles had succeeded the fierce conflicts of sects and factions, ambitious of ascendancy and burning for revenge, it was when the vices and ignorance which the old tyranny had generated threatened the new freedom with destruction, that England missed the sobriety, the self-command, the perfect soundness of judgment, the perfect rectitude of intention, to which the history of revolutions furnishes no parallel, or furnishes a parallel in Washington alone.

# LORD BURGHLEY'S LIFE AND TIMES.

(EDINBURGH REVIEW, APRIL, 1832.)

*Memoirs of the Life and Administration of the Right Honourable William Cecil Lord Burghley, Secretary of State in the Reign of King Edward the Sixth, and Lord High Treasurer of England in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth. Containing an Historical View of the Times in which he lived, and of the many eminent and illustrious Persons with whom he was connected; with extracts from his Private and Official Correspondence and other Papers, now first published from the Originals.* By the Reverend EDWARD NARES, D.D., Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford. 3 vols. 4to. London: 1828-1832.

THE work of Dr. Nares has filled us with astonishment similar to that which Captain Lemuel Gulliver felt when first he landed in Brobdignag, and saw corn as high as the oaks in the New Forest, thimbles as large as buckets, and wrens of the bulk of turkeys. The whole book, and every component part of it, is on a gigantic scale. The title is as long as an ordinary preface. The prefatory matter would furnish out an ordinary book; and the book contains as much reading as an ordinary library. We cannot sum up the merits of the stupendous mass of paper which lies before us, better than by saying, that it consists of about two thousand closely printed pages, that it occupies fifteen hundred inches cubic measure, and that it weighs sixty pounds avoirdupois. Such a book might, before the deluge, have been considered as light reading by Hilpa and Shalum. But unhappily the life of a man is now three-score years and ten; and we cannot but think it somewhat unfair in Doctor Nares to demand from us so large a portion of so short an existence.

A stupendous work.

Compared with the labour of reading through these volumes all other labours, —the labour of thieves on the treadmill, of children in factories, of negroes in sugar plantations,—is an agreeable re-

creation. There was, it is said, a criminal in Italy, who was suffered to make his choice between Guicciardini and the galleys. He chose the history. But Guicciardini's history. the war of Pisa was too much for him. He changed his mind, and went to the oar. Guicciardini, though certainly not the most amusing of writers, is a Herodotus or a Froissart, when compared with Doctor Nares. It is not merely in bulk, but in specific gravity also, that these memoirs exceed all other human compositions. On every subject which the Professor discusses, he produces three times as many pages as another man; and one of his pages is as tedious as another man's three. His book is swelled to its vast dimensions by endless repetitions, by episodes which have nothing to do with the main action, by quotations from books which are in every circulating library, and by reflections which, when they happen to be just, are so obvious that they must necessarily occur to the mind of every reader. He employs more words in expounding and defending a truism, than any other writer would employ in supporting a paradox. Of the rules of historical perspective, he has not the faintest notion. There is neither foreground nor background in his delineation. The wars of Charles the Fifth in

Germany are detailed at almost as much length as in Robertson's Life of that Prince. The troubles of Scotland are related as fully as in M'Crie's Life of John Knox. It would be most unjust to deny that Doctor Nares is a man of great industry and research; but he is so utterly incompetent to arrange the materials which he has collected, that he might as well have left them in their original repositories.

Neither the facts which Doctor Nares has discovered, nor the arguments which he urges, will, we apprehend, materially alter the opinion generally entertained by judicious readers of history concern-

General ing his hero. Lord  
opinion of Burghley\* can hardly be  
Burghley. called a great man. He

was not one of those whose genius and energy change the fate of empires. He was by nature and habit one of those who follow,—not one of those who lead. Nothing that is recorded, either of his words or of his actions, indicates intellectual or moral elevation. But his talents, though not brilliant, were of an eminently useful kind; and his principles, though not inflexible, were not more relaxed than those of his associates and competitors. He had a cool temper, a sound judgment, great powers of application, and a constant eye to the main chance. In his youth he was, it seems, fond of practical jokes. Yet even out of these he contrived to extract some pecuniary profit. When he was studying the law at Gray's Inn, he lost all his furniture and books to his companion at the gaming table. He accordingly bored a hole in the wall which separated his chambers from those of his associate, and at midnight bellowed through this passage threats of damnation, and calls to repentance in the ears of the victorious gambler, who lay sweating with fear all night, and refunded his winnings on his knees next day. "Many other the like merry jests," says his old biographer, "I have heard him tell, too long to be here noted." To the last, Burghley was somewhat jocose; and some of his sportive sayings have been recorded by Bacon. They show much more shrewdness than generosity; and are, indeed, neatly expressed reasons for exacting money rigorously, and for keeping it carefully. It must, however, be acknowledged that he was rigorous and careful for the public advantage, as well

\* Now commonly printed Burleigh.

as for his own. To extol his moral character, as Doctor Nares has extolled it, would be absurd. It would be equally absurd to represent him as a corrupt, rapacious, and bad-hearted man. He paid great attention to the interest of the state, and great attention also to the interest of his own family. He never deserted his friends till it was very inconvenient to stand by them; was an excellent Protestant when it was not very advantageous to be a Papist,—recommended a tolerant policy to his mistress as strongly as he could recommend it without hazarding her favour,—never put to the rack any person from whom it did not seem probable that very useful information might be derived,—and was so moderate in his desires, that he left only three hundred distinct landed estates, though he might, as his honest servant assures us, have left much more, "if he would have taken money out of the Exchequer for his own use, as many treasurers have done."

Burghley, like the old Marquess of Winchester, who preceded him in the custody of the White Staff, was of the willow, and not of the oak.

He first rose into notice by defending the supremacy of Henry the Eighth. He was subsequently favoured and promoted by the Duke of Somerset. He not only contrived to escape unhurt when his patron fell, but became an important member of the administration of Northumberland. Doctor Nares assures us over and over again, that there could have been nothing base in Cecil's conduct on this occasion; for, says he, Cecil continued to stand well with Cranmer. This, we confess, hardly satisfies us. We are much of the mind of Falstaff's tailor. We must have better assurance for Sir John than Bardolph's. We like not the security.

Through the whole course of that miserable intrigue which was carried on round the dying bed of Edward the Sixth, Cecil so demeaned himself as to avoid, first, the displeasure of Northumberland, and afterwards the displeasure of Mary. He was prudently unwilling to put his hand to the instrument which changed the course of the succession. But the furious Dudley was master of the palace. Cecil, therefore, according to his own account, excused himself from signing as a party; but consented to sign as a witness. It is not easy to describe his dexterous conduct at this

Willow not  
oak.

most perplexing crisis, in language more appropriate than that which is employed by old Fuller—"His hand wrote it as secretary of state," says that quaint writer; "but his heart consented not

Secret  
working.

thereto. Yea, he openly opposed it; though at last yielding to the greatness of Northumberland, in an age when it was present drowning not to swim with the stream. But as the philosopher tells us, that, though the planets be whirled about daily from east to west, by the motion of the *primum mobile*, yet have they also a contrary proper motion of their own from west to east, which they slowly, though surely, move at their leisure; so Cecil had secret counter-endeavours against the strain of the court herein, and privately advanced his rightful intentions against the aforesaid duke's ambition."

This was undoubtedly the most perilous conjuncture of Cecil's life. Wherever there was a safe course, he was safe. But here every course was full of danger. His situation rendered it impossible for

Neutrality  
impossible.

him to be neutral. If he acted on either side—if he refused to act at all—he ran a fearful risk. He saw all the difficulties of his position. He sent his money and plate out of London, made over his estates to his son, and carried arms about his person. His best arms, however, were his sagacity and his self-command. The plot in which he had been an unwilling accomplice ended, as it was natural that so odious and absurd a plot should end, in the ruin of its contrivers. In the meantime, Cecil quietly extricated himself, and, having been successively patronised by Henry, Somerset, and Northumberland, continued to flourish under the protection of Mary.

He had no aspirations after the crown of martyrdom. He confessed himself, therefore, with great decorum, heard mass in Wimbledon Church at Easter, and, for the better ordering of his spiritual concerns, took a priest into his house. Doctor Nares, whose simplicity passes that of any casuist with whom we are acquainted, vindicates his hero by assuring us, that this was not superstition,

Hypocrisy not  
superstition.

but pure unmixed hypocrisy. "That he did in some manner conform, we shall not be able, in the face of existing documents, to deny; while we feel in our own minds abundantly satisfied, that,

during this very trying reign, he never abandoned the prospect of another revolution in favour of Protestantism.' In another place, the Doctor tells us that Cecil went to mass "with no idolatrous intention." Nobody, we believe, ever accused him of idolatrous intentions. The very ground of the charge against him is, that he had no idolatrous intentions. Nobody would have blamed him if he had really gone to Wimbledon Church, with the feelings of a good Catholic, to worship the host. Doctor Nares speaks in several places, with just severity, of the sophistry of the Jesuits, and with just admiration of the incomparable letters of Pascal. It is somewhat strange, therefore, that he should adopt, to the full extent, the jesuitical doctrine of the direction of intentions.

We do not blame Cecil for not choosing to be burned. The deep stain upon his memory is, that, for differences of opinion for which he would risk nothing himself, he, in the day of his power, took away without scruple the lives of others. One of the excuses suggested in these Memoirs for his conforming, during the reign of Mary, to the Church of Rome, is, that

Excuse for  
conforming.

he may have been of the same mind with those German Protestants who were called Adiaphorists, and who considered the popish rites as matters indifferent. Melancthon was one of these moderate persons, and "appears," says Doctor Nares, "to have gone greater lengths than any imputed to Lord Burghley." We should have thought this not only an excuse, but a complete vindication, if Burghley had been an Adiaphorist for the benefit of others as well as for his own. If the popish rites were matters of so little moment, that a good Protestant might lawfully practise them for his safety, how could it be just or humane that a Papist should be hanged, drawn, and quartered, for practising them from a sense of duty. Unhappily these non-essentials soon became matters of life and death. Just at the very time at which Burghley attained the highest point of power and favour, an Act of Parliament was passed, by which the penalties of high treason were denounced against persons who should do in sincerity what he had done from cowardice.

Early in the reign of Mary, Cecil was employed in a mission scarcely consistent with the character of a zealous Protestant. He was sent to escort the Papal Legate,

Cardinal Pole, from Brussels to London. That great body of moderate persons, who cared more for the quiet of the realm than for the controverted points which were in issue between the Churches, seem to have placed their chief hope in the wisdom and humanity of the gentle Cardinal. Cecil, it is clear, cultivated the friendship of Pole with great assiduity, and received great advantage from his protection.

But the best protection of Cecil, during the gloomy and disastrous reign of Mary, was that which he derived from his own prudence, and from his own temper;—a prudence which could never be lulled into carelessness,—a temper which could never be irritated into rashness. The Papists could find no occasion against him. Yet

**Cecil's prudence.**

he did not lose the esteem even of those sterner Protestants who had preferred exile to recantation. He attached himself to the persecuted heiress of the throne, and entitled himself to her gratitude and confidence. Yet he continued to receive marks of favour from the Queen. In the House of Commons, he puts himself at the head of the party opposed to the Court. Yet, so guarded was his language, that even when some of those who acted with him were imprisoned by the Privy Council, he escaped with impunity.

At length Mary died. Elizabeth succeeded, and Cecil rose at once to greatness. He was sworn in Privy-counsellor and Secretary of State to the new sovereign before he left her prison of Hatfield; and he continued to serve her for forty years, without intermission, in the highest employments: His abilities were precisely those which keep men long in power. He belonged to the class of the Walpoles, the Pelhams, and the Liverpools,—not to that of the St. Johns, the Carterets, the Chathams, and the Cannings. If he had been a man of original genius, and of a commanding mind, it would have been scarcely possible for him to keep his power, or even his head. There was not room in one government for an Elizabeth and a Richelieu. What the haughty daughter of Henry needed, was a moderate, cautious, flexible minister, skilled in the details of business,—competent to advise, but not aspiring to command. And such a minister she found in Burghley. No arts could shake the confidence which she reposed in her old and trusty servant

The courtly graces of Leicester, the brilliant talents and accomplishments of Essex, touched the fancy, perhaps the heart, of the woman; but no rival could deprive the Treasurer of the place which he possessed in the favour of the Queen. She sometimes chid him sharply; but he was the man whom she delighted to honour. For Burghley, she forgot her usual parsimony both of wealth and of dignities. For Burghley, she relaxed that severe etiquette to which she was unreasonably attached. Every other person to whom she addressed her speech, or on whom the glance of her eagle eye fell, instantly sank on his knee. For Burghley alone, a chair was set in her presence; and there the old minister, by birth only

**Elizabeth and Burghley.**

a plain Lincolnshire esquire, took his ease, while the haughty heirs of the Fitzalans and the De Veres humbled themselves to the dust around him. At length, having survived all his early coadjutors and rivals, he died full of years and honours. His royal mistress visited him on his death-bed, and cheered him with assurances of her affection and esteem; and his power passed, with little diminution, to a son who inherited his abilities, and whose mind had been formed by his counsels.

The life of Burghley was commensurate with one of the most important periods in the history of the world. It exactly measures the time during which the House of Austria held unrivalled superiority, and aspired to universal dominion. In the year in which Burghley was born, Charles the Fifth obtained the imperial crown. In the year in which Burghley died, the vast designs which had for nearly a century kept Europe in constant agitation, were buried in the same grave with the proud and sullen Philip.

The life of Burghley was commensurate also with the period during which a great moral revolution was effected,—a revolution, the consequences of which were felt, not only in the cabinets of princes, but at half the firesides in Christendom. He was born when the great religious schism was just commencing. He lived to see that schism complete,—to see a line of demarcation, which, since his death, has been very little altered, strongly drawn between Protestant and Catholic Europe.

The only event of modern times which can be properly compared with the Re-

formation, is the French Revolution; or, to speak more accurately, that great

The Reformation and French Revolution.

revolution of political feeling which took place in almost every part of the civilized world during the eighteenth century, and which obtained in France its most terrible and signal triumph. Each of these memorable events may be described as a rising up of human reason against a Caste. The one was a struggle of the laity against the clergy for intellectual liberty; the other was a struggle of the people against the privileged orders for political liberty. In both cases, the spirit of innovation was at first encouraged by the class to which it was likely to be prejudicial. It was under the patronage of Frederic, of Catherine, of Joseph, and of the French nobles, that the philosophy which afterwards threatened all the thrones and aristocracies of Europe with destruction first became formidable. The ardour with which men betook themselves to liberal studies at the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, was zealously encouraged by the heads of that very church to which liberal studies were destined to be fatal. In both cases, when the explosion came, it came with a violence which appalled and disgusted many of those who had previously been distinguished by the freedom of their opinions. The violence of the democratic party in France made Burke a tory, and Alfieri a courtier; the violence of the chiefs of the German schism made Erasmus a defender of abuses, and turned the author of Utopia into a persecutor. In both cases, the convulsion which had overthrown deeply-seated errors, shook all the principles on which society rests to their very foundations. The minds of men were unsettled. It seemed for a time that all order and morality were about to perish with the prejudices with which they had been long and intimately associated. Frightful cruelties were committed. Immense masses of property were confiscated. Every part of Europe swarmed with exiles. In moody and turbulent spirits zeal soured into malignity, or foamed into madness. From the political agitation of the eighteenth century sprang the Jacobins. From the religious agitation of the sixteenth century sprang the Anabaptists. The partisans of Robespierre robbed and murdered in the name of fraternity and equality. The followers of Kniperdoling robbed

and murdered in the name of Christian liberty. The feeling of patriotism was, in many parts of Europe, almost wholly extinguished. All the old maxims of foreign policy were changed. Physical boundaries were superseded by moral boundaries. Nations made war on each other with new arms,—with arms which no fortifications, however strong by nature or by art, could resist,—with arms before which rivers parted like the Jordan, and ramparts fell down like the walls of Jericho. Those arms were opinions, reasons, prejudices. The great masters of fleets and armies were often reduced to confess, like Milton's warlike angels, how hard they found it

"To exclude  
Spiritual substance with corporeal bar."

Europe was divided, as Greece had been divided, during the period concerning which Thucydides wrote. The conflict was not, as it is in ordinary times, between state and state, but between two omnipresent factions, each of which was in some places dominant and in other places oppressed, but which, openly or covertly, carried on their strife in the bosom of every society. No man asked whether another belonged to the same country with himself, but whether he belonged to the same sect. Party spirit seemed to justify and consecrate acts which, in any other times, would have been considered as the foulest of treasons. The French emigrant saw nothing disgraceful in bringing Austrian and Prussian hussars to Paris. The Irish or Italian democrat saw no impropriety in serving the French Directory against his own native government. So, in the sixteenth century, the fury of theological factions often suspended all national animosities and jealousies. The Spaniards were invited into France by the League; the English were invited into France by the Huguenots.

We by no means intend to underrate or to palliate the crimes and excesses which, during the last generation, were produced by the spirit of democracy. But when we find that men zealous for the Protestant religion, constantly represent the French Revolution as radically and essentially evil on account of those crimes and excesses, we cannot but remember, that the deliverance of our ancestors from the house of their spiritual bondage was effected "by plagues and by



signs, by wonders and by war." We cannot but remember, that, as in the case of the French Revolution, so also in the case of the Reformation, those who rose up against tyranny were themselves deeply tainted with the vices which tyranny engenders. We cannot but remember, that libels scarcely less scandalous than those of Hebert, mummeries scarcely less absurd than those of Clootz, and crimes scarcely less atrocious than those of Marat, disgrace the early history of Protestantism. The Reformation is an event long past. That volcano has spent its rage. The wide waste produced by its outbreak is forgotten. The landmarks which were swept away have been replaced. The ruined edifices have been repaired. The lava has covered with a rich incrustation the fields which it once devastated; and, after having turned a garden into a desert, has again turned the desert into a still more beautiful and fruitful garden. The second great eruption is not yet over. The marks of its ravages are still all around us. The ashes are still hot beneath our feet. In some directions, the deluge of fire still continues to spread. Yet experience surely entitles us to believe that this explosion, like that which preceded it, will fertilize the soil which it has devastated. Already, in those parts which have suffered most severely, rich cultivation and secure dwellings have begun to appear amidst the waste. The more we read of the history of past ages,—the more we observe the signs of these times,—the more do we feel our hearts filled and swelled up with a good hope for the future destinies of the human race.

The history of the Reformation in England is full of strange problems. The most prominent and extraordinary phenomenon which it presents

**The Reformation in England.**

to us, is the gigantic strength of the government contrasted with the feebleness of the religious parties. During the twelve or thirteen years which followed the death of Henry the Eighth, the religion of the state was thrice changed. Protestantism was established by Edward; the Catholic Church was restored by Mary; Protestantism was again established by Elizabeth. The faith of the nation seemed to depend on the personal inclinations of the sovereign. Nor was this all. An established church was then,

as a matter of course, a persecuting church. Edward persecuted Catholics. Mary persecuted Protestants. Elizabeth persecuted Catholics again. The father of those three sovereigns had enjoyed the pleasure of persecuting both sects at once; and had sent to death, on the same hurdle, the heretic who denied the real presence, and the traitor who denied the royal supremacy. There was nothing in England like that fierce and bloody opposition which, in France, each of the religious factions in its turn offered to the government. We had neither a Coligni nor a Mayenne;—neither a Montcontour nor an Ivry. No English city braved sword and famine for the reformed doctrines with the spirit of Rochelle; nor for the Catholic doctrines with the spirit of Paris. Neither sect in England formed a league. Neither sect extorted a recantation from the sovereign. Neither sect could obtain from an adverse sovereign even a toleration. The English Protestants, after several years of domination, sank down with scarcely a struggle under the tyranny of Mary. The Catholics, after having regained and abused their old ascendancy, submitted patiently to the severe rule of Elizabeth. Neither Protestants nor Catholics engaged in any great and well-organized scheme of resistance. A few wild and tumultuous risings,—suppressed as soon as they appeared,—a few dark conspiracies, in which only a small number of desperate men engaged,—such were the utmost efforts made by these two parties to assert the most sacred of human rights, attacked by the most odious tyranny.

The explanation of these circumstances which has generally been given is very simple, but by no means satisfactory. The power of the crown, it is said, was then at its height, and was in fact despotic. This solution, we own, seems to us to be no solution at all.

It has long been the fashion—a fashion introduced by Mr. Hume—to describe the English monarchy in the sixteenth century as an absolute monarchy. And such undoubtedly it appears to a superficial observer. Elizabeth, it is true, often spoke to her parliaments in language as haughty and imperious as that which the Great Turk would use to his divan. She punished with great severity members of the House of Commons, who, in her

English monarchy in the sixteenth century.

opinion, carried the freedom of debate too far. She assumed the power of legislating by means of proclamations. She imprisoned her subjects without bringing them to a legal trial. Torture was often employed, in defiance of the laws of England, for the purpose of extorting confessions from those who were shut up in her dungeons. The authority of the Star-Chamber and the Ecclesiastical Commission was at its highest point. Severe restraints were imposed on political and religious discussion. The number of presses was at one time limited. No man could print without a license; and every work had to undergo the scrutiny of the Primate or the Bishop of London. Persons whose writings were displeasing to the court were cruelly mutilated, like Stubbs, or put to death, like Penry. Nonconformity was severely punished. The Queen prescribed the exact rule of religious faith and discipline; and whoever departed from that rule, either to the right or to the left, was in danger of severe penalties.

Such was this government. Yet we know that it was loved by the great body of those who lived under it. We know that, during the fierce contests of the sixteenth century, both the hostile parties spoke of the time of Elizabeth as of a golden age. That great Queen has now been lying two hundred and thirty years in Henry the Seventh's chapel. Yet her memory is still dear to the hearts of a free people.

The truth seems to be, that the government of the Tudors was, with a few occasional deviations, a popular government, under the forms of despotism. At first sight, it may seem that the prerogatives of Elizabeth were not less ample than those of Louis the Fourteenth,—that her parliaments were as obsequious as his parliaments,—that her warrant had as much authority as his *lettre-de-cachet*. The extravagance with which her courtiers eulogized her personal and mental charms, went beyond the adulation of Boileau and Molière. Louis would have blushed to receive from those who composed the gorgeous circles of Marli and Versailles, the outward marks of servitude which the haughty Britoness exacted of all who approached her. But the power of Louis rested on the support of his Army. The power of Elizabeth rested solely on the support of her People. Those who say that her power was absolute, do not sufficiently consider in what her power

consisted. Her power consisted in the willing obedience of her subjects, in their attachment to her person and to her office, in their respect for the old line from which she sprang, in their sense of the general security which they enjoyed under her government. These were the means, and the only means, which she had at her command for carrying her decrees into execution, for resisting foreign enemies, and for crushing domestic treason. There was not a ward in the city,—there was not a hundred in any shire in England, which could not have overpowered the handful of armed men who composed her household. If a hostile sovereign threatened invasion,—if an ambitious noble raised the standard of revolt,—she could have recourse only to the train-bands of her capital, and the array of her counties,—to the citizens and yeomen of England, commanded by the merchants and esquires of England.

Thus, when intelligence arrived of the vast preparations which Philip was making for the subjugation of the realm, the first person to whom the government thought of applying for assistance was the Lord Mayor of London. They sent to ask him what force the city would engage to furnish for the defence of the kingdom against the Spaniards. The Mayor and Common Council, in return, desired to know what force the Queen's Highness wished them to furnish. The answer was—fifteen ships and five thousand men. The Londoners deliberated on the matter, and two days after "humbly entreated the council, in sign of their perfect love and loyalty to prince and country, to accept ten thousand men, and thirty ships amply furnished."

People who could give such signs as these of their loyalty were by no means to be misgoverned with impunity. The English in the sixteenth century were, beyond all doubt, a free people. They had not, indeed, the outward show of freedom; but they had the reality. They had not a good constitution; but they had that without which the best constitution is as useless as the king's proclamation against vice and immorality,—that which, without any constitution, keeps rulers in awe,—force, and the spirit to use it. Parliaments, it is true, were rarely held; and were not very respectfully treated. The great charter was then violated. But

Support of  
army and  
people.

The city force.

A free people.

the people had a security against gross and systematic misgovernment, far stronger than all the parchment that was ever marked with the sign manual, and than all the wax that was ever pressed by the great seal.

It is a common error in politics to confound means with ends. Constitutions, charters, petitions of right, declarations of right, representative assemblies, electoral colleges, are not good government; nor do they, even when most elaborately constructed, necessarily produce good government. Laws exist in vain for those who have not the courage and the means to defend them. Electors meet in vain where want renders them the slaves of the landlord; or where superstition renders them the slaves of the priest. Representative assemblies sit in vain unless they have at their command, in the last resort, the physical power which is necessary to make their deliberations free, and their votes effectual.

The Irish are better represented in Parliament than the Scotch, who indeed are not represented at all. But are the Irish better governed than the Scotch? Surely not. This circumstance

**The Scotch.** has of late been used as an argument against reform. It proves nothing against reform. It proves only this,—that laws have no magical, no supernatural virtue; that laws do not act like Aladdin's lamp or Prince Ahmed's apple; that priestcraft, that ignorance, that the rage of contending factions, may make good institutions useless; that intelligence, sobriety, industry, moral freedom, firm union, may supply in a great measure the defects of the worst representative system. A people whose education and habits are such, that, in every quarter of the world they rise above the mass of those with whom they mix, as surely as oil rises to the top of the water,—a people of such temper and self-government, that the widest popular excesses recorded in their history partake of the gravity of judicial proceedings, and of the solemnity of religious rites,—a people whose national pride and mutual attachment have passed into a proverb,—a people whose high and fierce spirit, so forcibly described in the haughty motto which encircles their thistle, preserved their independence, during a struggle of centuries, from the encroachments of wealthier and more powerful neighbours,—such a people can-

not be long oppressed. Any government, however constituted, must respect their wishes, and tremble at their discontents. It is indeed most desirable that such a people should exercise a direct influence on the conduct of affairs, and should make their wishes known through constitutional organs. But some influence, direct or indirect, they will assuredly possess. Some organ, constitutional or unconstitutional, they will assuredly find. They will be better governed under a good constitution than under a bad constitution. But they will be better governed under the worst constitution than some other nations under the best. In any general classification of constitutions, the constitution of Scotland must be reckoned as one of the worst, perhaps as the worst, in Christian Europe. Yet the Scotch are not ill governed. And the reason is simply that they will not bear to be ill governed.

In some of the Oriental monarchies, in Afghanistan, for example, though there exists nothing which an European publicist would call a Constitution, the sovereign generally governs in conformity with certain rules established for the public benefit; and the sanction of those rules is, that every Afghan approves them, and that every Afghan is a soldier.

The monarchy of England in the sixteenth century was a monarchy of this kind. It is called an absolute monarchy, because little respect was paid by the Tudors to those institutions which we have been accustomed to consider as the sole checks on the power of the sovereign. A modern Englishman can hardly understand how the people can have had any real security for good government under kings who levied benevolences, and chid the House of Commons as they would have chid a pack of dogs. People do not sufficiently consider that, though the legal checks were feeble, the natural checks were strong. There was one great and effectual limitation on the royal authority,—the knowledge that if the patience of the nation were severely tried, the nation would put forth its strength, and that its strength would be found irresistible. If a large body of Englishmen became thoroughly discontented, instead of presenting requisitions, holding large meetings, passing resolutions, signing petitions, forming associations and unions, they rose up;

they took their halberds and their bows; and, if the sovereign was not sufficiently popular to find among his subjects other halberds and other bows to oppose to the rebels, nothing remained for him but a repetition of the horrible scenes of Berkeley and Pomfret. He had no regular army which could, by its superior arms and its superior skill, overawe or vanquish the sturdy Commons of his realm, abounding in the native hardihood of Englishmen, and trained in the simple discipline of the militia.

It has been said that the Tudors were as absolute as the Cæsars. Never was parallel so unfortunate. The government

**Tudors and  
Cæsars.**

of the Tudors was the direct opposite to the government of Augustus and his successors. The Cæsars ruled despotically, by means of a great standing army, under the decent forms of a republican constitution. They called themselves citizens. They mixed unceremoniously with other citizens. In theory, they were only the elective magistrates of a free commonwealth. Instead of arrogating to themselves despotic power, they acknowledged allegiance to the senate. They were merely the lieutenants of that venerable body. They mixed in debate. They even appeared as advocates before the courts of law. Yet they could safely indulge in the wildest freaks of cruelty and rapacity, while their legions remained faithful. Our Tudors, on the other hand, under the titles and forms of monarchical supremacy, were essentially popular magistrates. They had no means of protecting themselves against the public hatred; and they were therefore compelled to court the public favour. To enjoy all the state and all the personal indulgences of absolute power, —to be adored with Oriental prostrations, —to dispose at will of the liberty and even of the life of ministers and courtiers, —this the nation granted to the Tudors. But the condition on which they were suffered to be the tyrants of Whitehall was, that they should be mild and paternal sovereigns of England. They were under the same restraints with regard to their people, under which a military despot is placed with regard to his army. They would have found it as dangerous to grind their subjects with cruel taxation, as Nero would have found it to leave his prætorians unpaid. Those who immediately surrounded the royal person, and engaged in the hazardous game of ambi-

tion, were exposed to the most fearful dangers. Buckingham, Cromwell, Surrey, Sudley, Somerset, Suffolk, Norfolk, Percy, Essex, perished on the scaffold. But in general the country gentleman hunted, and the merchant traded in peace. Even Henry, as cruel as Domitian, but far more politic, contrived, while reeking with the blood of the Lamiaë, to be a favourite with the cobblers.

The Tudors committed very tyrannical acts. But in their ordinary dealings with the people, they were not, and could not safely be, tyrants. Some excesses were easily pardoned. For the nation was proud of the high and fiery blood of its magnificent princes; and saw, in many proceedings which a lawyer would even then have condemned, the outbreak of the same noble spirit which so manfully hurled foul scorn at Parma and at Spain. But to this endurance there was a limit. If the government ventured to adopt measures which the great body of the people really felt to be oppressive, it was soon compelled to change its course. When Henry the Eighth attempted to raise a forced loan of unusual amount, by proceedings of unusual rigour, the opposition which he encountered was such as appalled even his stubborn and impetuous spirit. The people, we are told, said, that if they were to be treated thus, "then were it worse than the taxes of France; and England should be bond, and not free." The county of Suffolk rose in arms. The king prudently yielded to an opposition which, if he had persisted, would, in all probability, have taken the form of a general rebellion. Towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth, the people felt themselves aggrieved by the monopolies. The Queen, proud and courageous as she was, shrank from a contest with the nation, and, with admirable sagacity, conceded all that her subjects had demanded, while it was yet in her power to concede with dignity and grace.

**Tudor  
prudence.**

It cannot be supposed that a people who had in their own hands the means of checking their princes, would suffer any prince to impose upon them a religion generally detested. It is equally absurd to suppose, that, if the nation had been decidedly attached to the Protestant faith, Mary could have re-established the Papal supremacy. It is equally absurd to suppose, that, if the nation had been zealous for the ancient religion, Elizabeth could have restored the Protestant Church.

The truth is, that the people were not disposed to engage in a struggle either for the new or for the old doctrines. Abundance of spirit was shown when it seemed likely that Mary would resume her father's grants of church property; or that she would sacrifice the interests of England to the husband whom she regarded with unmerited tenderness. That Queen found that it would be madness to attempt the restoration of the abbey lands. She found that her subjects would never suffer her to make her hereditary kingdom a fief of Castile. On these points she encountered a steady resistance, and was compelled to give way. If she was able to establish the Catholic worship, and to persecute those who would not conform to it, it was evidently because the people cared far less for the Protestant religion than for the rights of property, and for the independence of the English crown. In plain words, they did not think the difference between the hostile sects worth

a struggle. There was undoubtedly a zealous Protestant party, and a zealous Catholic party. But both these parties were, we believe, very small. We doubt whether both together made up, at the time of Mary's death, the twentieth part of the nation. The remaining nineteen-twentieths halted between the two opinions; and were not disposed to risk a revolution in the government, for the purpose of giving to either of the extreme factions an advantage over the other.

We possess no data which will enable us to compare with exactness the force of the two sects. Mr. Butler asserts that, even at the accession of James the First, a majority of the population of England were Catholics. This is pure assertion; and is not only unsupported by evidence, but, we think, completely disproved by the strongest evidence. Dr. Lingard is of opinion that the Catholics were one-half of the nation in the middle of the reign of Elizabeth. Richton says, that when Elizabeth came to the throne, the Catholics were two-thirds of the nation, and the Protestants only one-third. The most judicious and impartial of English historians, Mr. Hallam, is, on the contrary,

of opinion that two-thirds were Protestants, and only one-third Catholics. To us, we must confess, it seems altogether inconceivable, that if the Protestants were really two to one, they should have borne

the government of Mary; or that, if the Catholics were really two to one, they should have borne the government of Elizabeth. It is absolutely incredible that a sovereign who has no standing army, and whose power rests solely on the loyalty of his subjects, can continue for years to persecute a religion to which the majority of his subjects are sincerely attached. In fact, the Protestants did rise up against one sister, and the Catholics against the other. Those risings clearly showed how small and feeble both the parties were. Both in the one case and in the other, the nation ranged itself on the side of the government, and the insurgents were speedily put down and punished. The Kentish gentlemen who took up arms for the reformed doctrines against Mary, and the great Northern Earls who displayed the banner of the Five Wounds against Elizabeth, were alike considered by the great body of their countrymen as wicked disturbers of the public peace.

The account which Cardinal Bentivoglio gave of the state of religion in England, well deserves consideration. The zealous Catholics he reckoned at one-thirtieth part of the nation. The people who would without the least scruple become Catholics, if the Catholic religion were established, he estimated at four-fifths of the nation. We believe this account to have been very near the truth. We believe that the people, whose minds were made up on either side, who were inclined to make any sacrifice, or run any risk for either religion, were very few. Each side had a few enterprising champions, and a few stout-hearted martyrs; but the nation, undermined in its opinions and feelings, resigned itself implicitly to the guidance of the government, and lent to the sovereign for the time being, an equally ready aid against either of the extreme parties.

We are very far from saying that the English of that generation were irreligious. They held firmly those doctrines which are common to the Catholic and to the Protestant theology. But they had no fixed opinion as to the matters

Cardinal Bentivoglio's account.  
No fixed opinion.

in dispute between the churches. They were in a situation resembling that of those Borderers whom Sir Walter Scott has described with so much spirit,—

“Who sought the beeves that made their broth  
In England and in Scotland both;”

And who

"Nine times outlawed had been  
By England's king, and Scotland's queen."

They were sometimes Protestants, sometimes Catholics; sometimes half Protestants half Catholics.

The English had not, for ages, been bigoted Papists. In the fourteenth century, the first, and perhaps the greatest of the reformers, John Wickliffe, had stirred the public mind to its inmost depths. During the same century, a scandalous schism in the Catholic Church had diminished, in many parts of Europe, the reverence in which the Roman pontiffs were held. It is clear that a hundred years before the time of Luther, a great

**A party eager for change.** party in this kingdom was eager for a change, at least as extensive as that

which was subsequently effected by Henry the Eighth. The House of Commons, in the reign of Henry the Fourth, proposed a confiscation of ecclesiastical property, more sweeping and violent even than that which took place under the administration of Thomas Cromwell; and, though defeated in this attempt, they succeeded in depriving the clerical order of some of its most oppressive privileges. The splendid conquests of Henry the Fifth turned the attention of the nation from domestic reform. The Council of Constance removed some of the grossest of those scandals which had deprived the Church of the public respect. The authority of that venerable synod propped up the sinking authority of the Popedom. A considerable reaction took place. It cannot, however, be doubted, that there was still much concealed Lollardism in England; or that many who did not absolutely dissent from any doctrine held by the Church of Rome, were jealous of the wealth and power enjoyed by her ministers. At the very beginning of the reign of Henry the Eighth, a struggle took place between the clergy and the courts of law, in which the courts of law remained victorious. One of the bishops on that occasion declared, that the common people entertained the strongest prejudices against his order, and that a clergyman had no chance of fair play before a lay tribunal. The London juries, he said, entertained such a spite to the Church, that they would find Abel guilty of the murder of Cain. This was said a few months before the time when Martin

Luther began to preach at Wittenberg against indulgences.

As the Reformation did not find the English bigoted Papists, so neither was it conducted in such a manner as to make them zealous Protestants. It was not under the direction of men like that fiery Saxon, who swore that he would go to Worms, though he had to face as many devils as there were tiles on the houses, or like that brave Switzer, who was struck down while praying in front of the ranks of Zurich. No preacher of religion had the same power here which Calvin had at Geneva, and Knox in Scotland. The government put itself early at the head of the movement, and thus acquired power to regulate, and occasionally to arrest, the movement.

To many persons it appears extraordinary that Henry the Eighth should have been able to maintain himself so long in an intermediate position between the Catholic and Protestant parties. Most extraordinary, it would indeed be, if we were to suppose that the nation consisted of none but decided Catholics and decided Protestants. The fact is, that the great mass of the people was neither Catholic nor Protestant; but was, like its sovereign, midway between the two sects. Henry, in that very part of his conduct which has been represented as most capricious and inconsistent, was probably following a policy far more pleasing to the majority of his subjects, than a policy like that of Edward, or a policy like that of Mary would have been. Down even to the very close of the reign of Elizabeth, the people were in a state somewhat resembling that in which, as Machiavelli says, the inhabitants of the Roman empire were, during the transition from heathenism to Christianity;—"sendo la maggior parte di loro incerti a quale Dio dovessero ricorrere." They were generally, we think, favourable to the royal supremacy. They disliked the policy of the Court of Rome. Their spirit rose against the interference of a foreign priest with their national concerns. The bull which pronounced sentence of deposition against Elizabeth, the plots which were formed against her life, the usurpation of her titles by the Queen of Scotland, the hostility of Philip, excited their strongest indignation. The cruelties of Bonner were remembered with disgust. Some parts of the new

system—the use of the English language, for example—in public worship, and the communion in both kinds, were undoubtedly popular. On the other hand, the early lessons of the nurse and the priest were not forgotten. The ancient ceremonies were long remembered with affectionate reverence. A large portion of the ancient theology lingered to the last in the minds which had been imbued with it in childhood.

The best proof that the religion of the people was of this mixed kind, is furnished

**Drama of the age.**

by the Drama of that age. No man would bring unpopular opinions prominently forward in a play intended for representation.

And we may safely conclude, that feelings and opinions which pervade the whole Dramatic Literature of an age, are feelings and opinions of which the men of that age generally partook.

The greatest and most popular dramatists of the Elizabethan age treat religious

**Elizabethan dramatists.**

subjects in a very remarkable manner. They speak respectfully of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

But they speak neither like Catholics nor like Protestants, but like persons who are wavering between the two systems; or who have made a system for themselves out of parts selected from both. They seem to hold some of the Romish rites and doctrines in high respect. They treat the vow of celibacy, for example—so tempting, and, in after times, so common a subject for ribaldry—with mysterious reverence. The members of religious orders whom they introduce are almost always holy and venerable men. We remember in their plays nothing resembling the coarse ridicule with which the Catholic religion and its ministers were assailed, two generations later, by dramatists who wished to please the multitude. We remember no Friar Dominic—no Father Foigard—among the characters drawn by those great poets. The scene at the close of the Knight of Malta might have been written by a fervent Catholic. Massinger shows a great fondness for ecclesiastics of the Romish Church; and has even gone so far as to bring a virtuous and interesting Jesuit on the stage. Ford, in that fine play, which it is painful to read, and scarcely decent to name, assigns a highly creditable part to the Friar. The partiality of Shakspeare for Friars is well known. In

Hamlet, the Ghost complains that he died without extreme unction, and, in defiance of the article which condemns the doctrine of purgatory, declares that he is

“Confined to fast in fires,  
Till the foul crimes, done in his days of nature,  
Are burnt and purged away.”

These lines, we suspect, would have raised a tremendous storm in the theatre at any time during the reign of Charles the Second. They were clearly not written by a zealous Protestant, or for zealous Protestants. Yet the author of King John and Henry the Eighth was surely no friend to papal supremacy.

There is, we think, only one solution, of the phenomena which we find in the History and in the Drama of that age. The religion of England was a mixed religion, like that of the Samaritan settlers, described in the Second Book

**A mixed religion.**

of Kings, who “feared the Lord, and served their graven images;”—like that of the Judaizing Christians, who blended the ceremonies and doctrines of the synagogue with those of the church;—like that of the Mexican Indians, who, for many generations after the subjugation of their race, continued to unite with the rites learned from their conquerors the worship of the grotesque idols which had been adored by Motezuma and Guatemozin.

These feelings were not confined to the populace. Elizabeth herself was not exempt from them. A crucifix, with wax-lights burning around it, stood in her private chapel. She always spoke with disgust and anger of the marriage of priests. “I was in horror,” says Archbishop Parker, “to hear such words come from her mild nature and Christian learned conscience, as she spake concerning God’s holy ordinance and institution of matrimony.” Burghley prevailed on her to connive at the marriages of churchmen. But she would only connive; and the children sprung from such marriages were illegitimate till the accession of James the First.

**Marriage of priests.**

That which is, as we have said, the great stain on the character of Burghley, is also the great stain on the character of Elizabeth. Being herself an Adiphorist, —having no scruple about conforming to the Romish Church when conformity was necessary to her own safety,—retain-

ing to the last moment of her life a fondness for much of the doctrine and much of the ceremonial of that church,—she yet subjected that church to a persecution even more odious than the

**An odious persecution.** persecution with which her sister had harassed the Protestants. We say more odious. For Mary had at least the plea of fanaticism. She did nothing for her religion which she was not prepared to suffer for it. She had held it firmly under persecution. She fully believed it to be essential to salvation. If she burned the bodies of her subjects, it was in order to rescue their souls. Elizabeth had no such pretext. In opinion, she was little more than half a Protestant. She had professed, when it suited her, to be wholly a Catholic. There is an excuse,—a wretched excuse,—for the massacres of Piedmont and the *Autos-da-fe* of Spain. But what can be said in defence of a ruler who is at once indifferent and intolerant?

If the great Queen, whose memory is still held in just veneration by Englishmen, had possessed sufficient virtue and sufficient enlargement of mind to adopt those principles which More, wiser in speculation than in action, had avowed in the preceding generation, and by which the excellent l'Hospital regulated his conduct in her own time, how different would be the colour of the whole history of the last two hundred and fifty years! She had the happiest opportunity ever vouchsafed to any sovereign, of establishing perfect freedom of conscience throughout her dominions, without danger to her government, or scandal to any large party among her subjects. The nation, as it was clearly ready to profess either religion, would, beyond all doubt, have been ready to tolerate both. Unhappily for her own glory and for the public peace, she adopted a policy, from

**Policy of Elizabeth.** the effects of which the empire is still suffering. The yoke of the Established Church was pressed down on the people till they would bear it no longer. Then a reaction came. Another reaction followed. To the tyranny of the establishment succeeded the tumultuous conflict of sects, infuriated by manifold wrongs, and drunk with unwonted freedom. To the conflict of sects succeeded again the cruel domination of one persecuting church. At length oppression put off its most horrible form, and took a

milder aspect. The penal laws against dissenters were abolished. But exclusions and disabilities still remained. These exclusions and disabilities, after having generated the most fearful discontents,—after having rendered all government in one part of the kingdom impossible,—after having brought the state to the very brink of ruin, have, in our times, been removed; but, though removed, have left behind them a ranking which may last for many years. It is melancholy to think with what ease Elizabeth might have united all the conflicting sects under the shelter of the same impartial laws, and the same paternal throne; and thus have placed the nation in the same situation, as far as the rights of conscience are concerned, in which we at length stand, after all the heartburnings, the persecutions, the conspiracies, the seditions, the revolutions, the judicial murders, the civil wars, of ten generations.

This is the dark side of her character. Yet she surely was a great woman. Of all the sovereigns who exercised a power, which was seemingly absolute, but which in fact depended for support on the love and confidence of their subjects, she was by far the most illustrious. It has often been alleged as an excuse for the misgovernment of her successors that they only followed her example;—that precedents might be found in the transactions of her reign for persecuting the Puritans for levying money without the sanction of the House of Commons, for confining men without bringing them to trial, for interfering with the liberty of parliamentary debate. All this may be true. But it is no good plea for her successors, and for this plain reason, that they were her successors. She

**Elizabeth's successors.**

governed one generation, they governed another; and between the two generations there was almost as little in common as between the people of two different countries. It was not by looking at the particular measures which Elizabeth had adopted, but by looking at the great general principles of her government, that those who followed her were likely to learn the art of managing untractable subjects. If, instead of searching the records of her reign for precedents which might seem to vindicate the mutilation of Prynne, and the imprisonment of Eliot, the Stuarts had attempted to discover the fundamental rules which guided her con-



duct in all her dealings with her people, they would have perceived that their policy was then most unlike to hers, when to a superficial observer it would have seemed most to resemble hers. Firm, haughty,—sometimes unjust and cruel in her proceedings towards individuals or towards small parties,—she avoided with care, or retracted with speed, every measure which seemed likely to alienate the great mass of the people. She gained more honour and more love by the manner in which she repaired her errors, than she would have gained by never committing errors. If such a man as Charles the First had been in her place when the whole nation was crying out against the monopolies, he would have refused all redress; he would have dissolved the Parliament, and imprisoned the most popular members. He would have called another Parliament. He would have given some vague and delusive promises of relief in return for subsidies. When entreated to fulfil his promises he would have again dissolved the Parliament, and again imprisoned his leading opponents. The country would have become more agitated than before. The next House of Commons would have been more unmanageable than that which preceded it. The tyrant would have agreed to all that the nation demanded. He would have solemnly ratified an act

Policy of Charles I.

abolishing monopolies for ever. He would have received a large supply in

return for this concession; and within half a year new patents, more oppressive than those which had been cancelled, would have been issued by scores. Such was the policy which brought the heir of a long line of kings, in early youth the darling of his countrymen, to a prison and a scaffold.

Elizabeth, before the House of Commons could address her, took out of their mouths the words which they were about to utter in the name of the nation. Her

Promises and performance.

promises went beyond their desires. Her performance followed close

upon her promise. She did not treat the nation as an adverse party;—as a party which had an interest opposed to hers;—as a party to which she was to grant as few advantages as possible, and from which she was to extort as much money as possible. Her benefits were given, not sold; and when once given they were not withdrawn. She gave them

too with a frankness, an effusion of heart, a princely dignity, a motherly tenderness, which enhanced their value. They were received by the sturdy country gentleman, who had come up to Westminster full of resentment, with tears of joy and shouts of God save the Queen. Charles the First gave up half the prerogatives of his crown to the Commons; and the Commons sent him in return the Grand Remonstrance.

We had intended to say something concerning that illustrious group of which Elizabeth is the central figure,—that group which the last of the bards saw in vision from the top of Snowdon, encircling the Virgin Queen—

“Many a baron bold,  
And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old  
In bearded majesty.”

We had intended to say something concerning the dexterous Walsingham, the impetuous Oxford, the elegant Sackville, the all-accomplished Sydney;—concerning Essex, the ornament of the court and of the camp, the model of chivalry, the munificent patron of genius, whom great virtues, great courage, great talents, the favour of his sovereign, the love of his countrymen,—all that seemed to ensure a happy and glorious life, led to an early and an ignominious death;—concerning Raleigh, the soldier, the sailor, the scholar, the courtier, the orator, the poet, the historian, the philosopher,—sometimes reviewing the Queen's guards, sometimes giving chase to a Spanish galleon,—then answering the chiefs of the country party in the House of Commons,—then again murmuring one of his sweet love songs too near the ears of her Highness's maids of honour,—and soon after poring over the Talmud, or collating Polybius with Livy. We had intended also to say something concerning the literature of that splendid period, and especially concerning those two incomparable men, the Prince of Poets, and the Prince of Philosophers, who have made the Elizabethan age a more glorious and important era in the history of the human mind, than the age of Pericles, of Augustus, or of Leo. But subjects so vast require a space far larger than we can at present afford. We therefore stop here, fearing that, if we proceed, our article may swell to a bulk exceeding that of all other reviews, as much as Dr. Nares' book exceeds the bulk of all other histories.

# LORD MAHON'S WAR OF THE SUCCESSION.

(EDINBURGH REVIEW, JANUARY, 1833.)

*History of the War of the Succession in Spain.* By LORD MAHON.  
8vo. London: 1832.

THE day when Miscellanies in Prose and Verse by a Person of Honour, and Romances of M. Scuderi, done into English by a Person of Quality, were attractive to readers and profitable to booksellers, have long gone by. The literary privileges once enjoyed by lords are as obsolete as their right to kill the king's deer on their way to Parliament, or as their old remedy of *scandalum magnatum*. Yet we must acknowledge that, though our political opinions are by no means aristocratical, we always feel kindly disposed towards noble authors. Industry, and a taste for intellectual pleasures, are peculiarly respectable in those who can afford to be idle and who have every temptation to be dissipated. It is impossible not to wish success to a man who, finding himself placed, without any exertion or any merit on his part, above the mass of society, voluntarily descends from his eminence in search of distinctions which he may justly call his own.

This is, we think, the second appearance of Lord Mahon in the character of an author. His first book was creditable to him, but was in every respect inferior to the work which now lies before us. He has undoubtedly some of the most valuable qualities of a historian, great diligence in examining authorities, great judgment in weighing testimony, and great impartiality in estimating characters. We are not aware that he has in any instance forgotten the duties belonging to his literary functions in the feelings of a kinsman. He does no more than justice to his ancestor Stanhope; he does full justice to Stanhope's enemies and rivals. His narrative is very perspicuous, and is also entitled to the praise, seldom,

we grieve to say, deserved by modern writers, of being very concise. It must be admitted, however, that, with many of the best qualities of a literary veteran, he has some of the faults of a literary novice. He has no great command of words. His style is seldom easy, and is sometimes unpleasantly stiff. He is so bigoted a purist that he transforms the Abbé d'Estrees into an Abbot. We do not like to see French words introduced into English composition; but, after all, the first law of writing, that law to which all other laws are subordinate, is this, that the words employed shall be such as convey to the reader the meaning of the writer. Now an Abbot is the head of a religious house; an Abbé is quite a different sort of person. It is better undoubtedly to use an English word than a French word; but it is better to use a French word than to misuse an English word.

Lord Mahon is also a little too fond of uttering moral reflections in a style too sententious and oracular. We will give one instance: "Strange as it seems, experience shows that we usually feel far more animosity against those whom we have injured than against those who injure us: and this remark holds good with every degree of intellect, with every class of fortune, with a prince or a peasant, a stripling or an elder, a hero or a prince." This remark might have seemed strange at the court of Nimrod or Chedorlaomer; but it has now been for many generations considered as a truism rather than a paradox. Every boy has written on the thesis "*Odisse quem læseris.*" Scarcely any lines in

Bigoted  
purism.

Sententious  
and oracular  
style.

English poetry are better known than that vigorous couplet,

“Forgiveness to the injured does belong ;  
But they ne'er pardon who have done the  
wrong.”

The historians and philosophers have quite done with this maxim, and have abandoned it, like other maxims which have lost their gloss, to bad novelists, by whom it will very soon be worn to rags.

It is no more than justice to say that the faults of Lord Mahon's book are precisely the faults which time seldom fails to cure, and that the book, in spite of its faults, is a valuable addition to our historical literature.

Whoever wishes to be well acquainted with the morbid anatomy of governments, whoever wishes to know how great states may be made feeble and wretched, should study the history of Spain. The empire

Philip II.  
of Spain.

of Philip the Second was undoubtedly one of the most powerful and splendid that ever existed in the world. In Europe he ruled Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands on both sides of the Rhine, Franche Comté, Roussillon, the Milanese, and the two Sicilies. Tuscany, Parma, and the other small states of Italy, were as completely dependent on him as the Nizam and the Rajah of Berar now are on the East India Company. In Asia, the King of Spain was master of the Philippines and of all those rich settlements which the Portuguese had made on the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel, in the Peninsula of Malacca, and in the Spice-islands of the Eastern Archipelago. In America his dominions extended on each side of the equator into the temperate zone. There is reason to believe that his annual revenue amounted, in the season of his greatest power, to four millions sterling, a sum eight times as large as that which England yielded to Elizabeth. He had a standing army of fifty thousand excellent troops, at a time when England had not a single battalion in constant pay. His ordinary naval force consisted of a hundred and forty galleys. He held what no other prince in modern times has held, the dominion both of the land and of the sea. During the greater part of his reign, he was supreme on both elements. His soldiers marched up to the capital of France; his ships menaced the shores of England.

It is no exaggeration to say that, during several years, his power over Europe was greater than even that of Napoleon. The influence of the French conqueror never extended beyond low-water mark. The narrowest strait was to his power what it was of old believed that a running stream was to the sorceries of a witch. While his army entered every metropolis from Moscow to Lisbon, the English fleets blockaded every port from Dantzic to Trieste. Sicily, Sardinia, Majorca, Guernsey, enjoyed security through the whole course of a war which endangered every throne on the Continent. The victorious and imperial nation which had filled its museums with the spoils of Antwerp, of Florence, and of Rome, was suffering painfully from the want of luxuries which use had made necessaries. While pillars and arches were rising to commemorate the French conquests, the conquerors were trying to make coffee out of succory and sugar out of beet-root. The influence of Philip on the continent was as great as that of Napoleon. The Emperor of Germany was his kinsman.

France, torn by religious dissensions, was never a formidable opponent, and was sometimes a dependent ally. At the same time, Spain had what Napoleon desired in vain, ships, colonies, and commerce. She long monopolised the trade of America and of the Indian Ocean. All the gold of the West, and all the spices of the East, were received and distributed by her. During many years of war, her commerce was interrupted only by the predatory enterprises of a few roving privateers. Even after the defeat of the Armada, English statesmen continued to look with great dread on the maritime power of Philip. “The King of Spain,” said the Lord Keeper to the two Houses in 1593, “since he hath usurped upon the kingdom of Portugal, hath thereby grown mighty, by gaining the East Indies: so as, how great soever he was before, he is now thereby manifestly more great: . . . . He keepeth a navy armed to impeach all trade of merchandise from England to Gascoigne and Guienne, which he attempted to do this last vintage; so as he is now become as a frontier enemy to all the west of England, as well as all the south parts, as Sussex, Hampshire, and the Isle of Wight. Yea, by means of his interest in St. Maloes, a port full of shipping for the war, he is a dangerous neighbour to the Queen's Isles of Jersey and

Guernsey, ancient possessions of this crown, and never conquered in the greatest wars with France."

The ascendancy which Spain then had in Europe was, in one sense, well deserved. It was an ascendancy which had been gained by unquestioned superiority in all the arts of policy and of war. In the sixteenth century, Italy was not more decidedly the land of the fine arts, Germany was not more decidedly the land of

Spain's ascendancy. bold theological speculation, than Spain was the land of statesmen and of soldiers. The character which Virgil has ascribed to his countrymen might have been claimed by the grave and haughty chiefs, who surrounded the throne of Ferdinand the Catholic, and of his immediate successors. That majestic art, "premere imperio populos," was not better understood by the Romans in the proudest days of their republic, than by Gonsalvo and Ximenes, Cortes and Alva. The skill of the Spanish diplomatists was renowned throughout Europe. In England the name of Gondomar is still remembered. The sovereign nation was unrivalled both in regular and irregular warfare. The impetuous chivalry of France, the serried phalanx of Switzerland, were alike found wanting when brought face to face with the Spanish infantry. In the wars of the New World, where something different from ordinary strategy was required in the general and something different from ordinary discipline in the soldier, where it was every day necessary to meet by some new expedient the varying tactics of a barbarous enemy, the Spanish adventurers, sprung from the common people, displayed a fertility of resource, and a talent for negotiation and command, to which history scarcely affords a parallel.

The Castilian of those times was to the Italian what the Roman, in the days of the greatness of Rome, was to the Greek. The conqueror had less ingenuity, less taste, less delicacy of perception than the conquered; but far more pride, firmness, and courage, a more solemn demeanour, a stronger sense of honour. The subject had more subtlety in speculation, the ruler more energy in action. The vices of the former were those of a coward; the vices of the latter were those of a tyrant. It may be added, that the Spaniard, like the Roman, did not disdain to study the arts and the language of those whom he oppressed. A revolution took place in the literature of Spain, not

unlike that revolution which, as Horace tells us, took place in the poetry of Latium: "Capta ferum victorem cepit." The Revolution in literature.

slave took prisoner the enslaver. The old Castilian ballads gave place to sonnets in the style of Petrarch, and to heroic poems in the stanza of Ariosto, as the national songs of Rome were driven out by imitations of Theocritus, and translations from Menander.

In no modern society, not even in England during the reign of Elizabeth, has there been so great a number of men eminent at once in literature and in the pursuits of active life, as Spain produced during the sixteenth century. Almost every distinguished writer

was also distinguished as a soldier or a politician. Boscan bore arms with high reputation. Garcilaso de Vega, the author of the sweetest and most graceful pastoral poem of modern times, after a short, but splendid military career, fell sword in hand at the head of a storming party. Alonzo de Ercilla bore a conspicuous part in that war of Arauco, which he afterwards celebrated in one of the best heroic poems that Spain has produced. Hurtado de Mendoza, whose poems have been compared to those of Horace, and whose charming little novel is evidently the model of Gil Blas, has been handed down to us by history as one of the sternest of those iron proconsuls who were employed by the House of Austria to crush the lingering public spirit of Italy. Lope sailed in the Armada; Cervantes was wounded at Lepanto.

Writers,  
soldiers, and  
politicians.

It is curious to consider with how much awe our ancestors in those times regarded a Spaniard. He was, in their apprehension, a kind of dæmon, horribly malevolent, but withal most sagacious and powerful. "They be verye wyse and politicke," says an honest Englishman, in a memorial addressed to Mary, "and can, thorow ther wysdome, reform and brydell theyr owne natures for a tyme, and applye their conditions to the maners of those men with whom they meddell gladlye by friendship; whose mischievous maners a man shall never knowe untill he come under ther subjection: but then shall he perfectlye perceyve and fele them; which thynge I praye God England never do: for in dissimulations untill they have ther purposes, and afterwards in oppres-

Englishman's  
opinion of  
Spaniards.

sion and tyrannye, when they can obtayne them, they do exceed all other nations upon the earthe." This is just such language as Arminius would have used about the Romans, or as an Indian statesman of our times might use about the English. It is the language of a man burning with hatred, but cowered by those whom he hates; and painfully sensible of their superiority, not only in power, but in intelligence.

But how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst weaken the nations! If we over-leap a

Changes after one hundred years. hundred years, and look at Spain towards the close of the seventeenth century, what a change do we

find! The contrast is as great as that which the Rome of Gallienus and Honorius presents to the Rome of Marius and Cæsar. Foreign conquest had begun to eat into every part of that gigantic monarchy on which the sun never set. Holland was gone, and Portugal, and Artois, and Roussillon, and Franche Comté. In the East, the empire founded by the Dutch, far surpassed in wealth and splendour that which their old tyrants still retained. In the West, England had seized, and still held, settlements in the midst of the Mexican sea. The mere loss of territory was, however, of little moment. The reluctant obedience of distant provinces generally costs more than it is worth.

Empires which branch out widely are often more flourishing for a little timely pruning. Adrian acted judiciously when he abandoned the conquests of Trajan;

Timely pruning of Empires. and England was never so rich, so great, so formidable to foreign princes, so absolutely mistress of the

sea, as since the loss of her American colonies. The Spanish empire was still, in outward appearance, great and magnificent. The European dominions subject to the last feeble Prince of the House of Austria were far more extensive than those of Louis the Fourteenth. The American dependencies of the Castilian crown still extended far to the North of Cancer and far to the South of Capricorn. But within the immense body there was an incurable decay, an utter want of tone, an utter prostration of strength. An ingenious and diligent population, eminently skilled in arts and manufactures, had been driven into exile by stupid and re-

morseless bigots. The glory of the Spanish pencil had departed with Velasquez and Murillo. The splendid age of Spanish literature had closed with Solis and Calderon. During the seventeenth century many states had formed great military establishments. But the Spanish army, so formidable under the command of Alva and Farnese, had dwindled away to a few thousand men, ill paid and ill disciplined. England, Holland, and France had great navies. But the Spanish navy was scarcely equal to the tenth part of that mighty force which, in the time of Philip the Second, had been the terror of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The arsenals were deserted. The magazines were unprovided. The frontier fortresses were ungarrisoned. The police was utterly inefficient for the protection of the people. Murders were committed in the face of day with perfect impunity. Bravoos and discarded serving-men, with swords at their sides, swaggered every day through the most public streets and squares of the capital, disturbing the public peace, and setting at defiance the ministers of justice. The finances were in frightful disorder. The people paid much. The government received little. The American viceroys and the farmers of the revenue became rich, while the merchants broke, while the peasantry starved, while the body-servants of the sovereign remained unpaid, while the soldiers of the royal guard repaired daily to the doors of convents, and battled there with the crowd of beggars for a porringer of broth and a morsel of bread. Every remedy which was tried aggravated the disease. The currency was altered; and this frantic measure produced its never-failing effects. It destroyed all credit, and increased the misery which it was intended to relieve. The American gold, to use the words of Ortiz, was to the necessities of the state but as a drop of water to the lips of a man raging with thirst. Heaps of unopened despatches accumulated in the offices, while the Ministers were concerting with bed-chamber women and Jesuits the means of tripping up each other. Every foreign power could plunder and insult with impunity the heir of Charles the Fifth. Into such a state had the mighty kingdom of Spain fallen, while one of its smallest dependencies, a country not so large as the province of Estremadura or Andalusia, situated under an inclement

Spanish decadence.

sky, and preserved only by artificial means from the inroads of the ocean, had become a power of the first class, and treated on terms of equality with the courts of London and Versailles.

The manner in which Lord Mahon explains the financial situation of Spain by no means satisfies us. "It will be found,"

**Financial situation of Spain.**

says he, "that those individuals deriving their chief income from mines, whose yearly produce is uncertain and varying, and seems rather to spring from fortune than to follow industry, are usually careless, unthrifty, and irregular in their expenditure. The example of Spain might tempt us to apply the same remark to states." Lord Mahon would find it difficult, we suspect, to make out his analogy. Nothing could be more uncertain and varying than the gains and losses of those who were in the habit of putting into the state lotteries. But no part of the public income was more certain than that which was derived from the lotteries. We believe that this case is very similar to that of the American mines. Some veins of ore exceeded expectation; some fell below it. Some of the private speculators drew blanks and others gained prizes. But the revenue of the state depended, not on any particular vein, but on the whole annual produce of two great continents. This annual produce seems to have been almost constantly on the increase during the seventeenth century. The Mexican mines were, through the reigns of Philip the Fourth and Charles the Second, in a steady course of improvement; and in South America, though the district of Potosi was not so productive as formerly, other places more than made up for the deficiency. We very much doubt whether Lord Mahon can prove that the income which the Spanish government derived from the mines of America fluctuated more than the income derived from the internal taxes of Spain itself.

All the causes of the decay of Spain resolve themselves into one cause, bad government. The valour, the intelligence, the energy which, at the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, had made the Spaniards the first nation in the world, were the fruits of the old institutions of Castile and Aragon, institutions eminently favourable to public liberty. These institutions the first Princes of the House

of Austria attacked and almost wholly destroyed. Their successors expiated the crime. The effects of a change from good government to bad government is not fully felt for some time after the change has taken place. The talents and the virtues which a good constitution generates may for a time survive that constitution. Thus the reigns of princes who have established absolute monarchy on the ruins of popular forms of government often shine in history with a peculiar brilliancy. But when a generation or two has passed away, then comes signally to pass that which was written by Montesquieu, that despotic governments resemble those savages who cut down the tree in order to get at the fruit. During the first years of tyranny, is reaped the harvest sown during the last years of liberty. Thus the Augustan age was rich in great minds formed in the generation of Cicero and Cæsar. The fruits of the policy of Augustus were reserved for posterity. Philip the Second was the heir of the Cortes and of the Justiza Mayor; and they left him a nation which seemed able to conquer all the world. What Philip left to his successors is well known.

**Changes of government.**

The shock which the great religious schism of the sixteenth century gave to Europe, was scarcely felt in Spain. In England, Germany, Holland, France, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, that shock had produced, with some temporary evil, much durable good. The principles of the Reformation had triumphed in some of those countries. The Catholic Church had maintained its ascendancy in others. But though the event had not been the same in all, all had been agitated by the conflict. Even in France, in Southern Germany, and in the Catholic cantons of Switzerland, the public mind had been stirred to its inmost depths. The hold of ancient prejudice had been somewhat loosened. The Church of Rome, warned by the danger which she had narrowly escaped, had, in those parts of her dominion, assumed a milder and more liberal character. She sometimes condescended to submit her high pretensions to the scrutiny of reason, and availed herself more sparingly than in former times of the aid of the secular arm. Even when persecution was employed, it was not persecution in the worst and most frightful shape. The

**The Reformation.**

severities of Louis the Fourteenth, odious as they were, cannot be compared with those which, at the first dawn of the Reformation, had been inflicted on the heretics in many parts of Europe.

The only effect which the Reformation had produced in Spain had been to make the Inquisition more vigilant and the commonalty more bigoted. The times of refreshing came to all neighbouring countries. One people alone remained, like the fleece of the Hebrew warrior, dry in the midst of that benignant and fertilizing dew. While other nations were putting away childish things, the Spaniard still thought as a child and understood as a child. Among the men of the seventeenth century, he was the man of the fifteenth century or of a still darker period, delighted to behold an *Auto da fe* and ready to volunteer on a Crusade.

The evils produced by a bad government and a bad religion seemed to have attained their greatest height during the last years of the seventeenth century. While the kingdom was in this deplorable state, the King was hastening to an early grave. His days had been few and evil. He had been unfortunate in all his wars, in every part of his internal administration, and in all his domestic relations. His first wife, whom he tenderly loved, died very young. His second wife exercised great influence over him, but seems to have been regarded by him rather with fear than with love. He was childless; and his constitution was so completely shattered that, at little more

than thirty years of age, he had given up all hopes of posterity. His mind was even more distempered than his body. He was sometimes sunk in listless melancholy, and sometimes harassed by the wildest and most extravagant fancies. He was not, however, wholly destitute of the feelings which became his station. His sufferings were aggravated by the thought that his own dissolution might not improbably be followed by the dissolution of his empire.

Several princes laid claim to the succession. The King's eldest sister had married Louis the Fourteenth. The Dauphin would, therefore, in the common course of inheritance, have succeeded to the crown. But the Infanta had, at the time of her espousals, solemnly renounced, in her own name, and in that of

her posterity, all claim to the succession. This renunciation had been confirmed in due form by the Cortes. A younger sister of the King had been the first wife of Leopold, Emperor of Germany. She too had at her marriage renounced her claims to the Spanish crown; but the Cortes had not sanctioned the renunciation, and it was therefore considered as invalid by the Spanish jurists. The fruit of this marriage was a daughter, who had espoused the Elector of Bavaria. The Electoral Prince of Bavaria inherited her claim to the throne of Spain. The Emperor Leopold was son of a daughter of Philip the Third, and was therefore first cousin to Charles. No renunciation whatever had been exacted from his mother at the time of her marriage.

The question was certainly very complicated. That claim which, according to the ordinary rules of inheritance, was the strongest, had been barred by a contract executed in the most binding form. The claim of the Electoral Prince of Bavaria was weaker. But so also was the contract which bound him not to prosecute his claim. The only party against whom no instrument of renunciation could be produced was the party who, in respect of blood, had the weakest claim of all.

As it was clear that great alarm would be excited throughout Europe if either the Emperor or the Dauphin should become King of Spain, each of those Princes offered to waive his pretensions in favour of his second son; the Emperor, in favour of the Archduke Charles, the Dauphin, in favour of Philip Duke of Anjou.

Soon after the peace of Ryswick, William the Third and Louis the Fourteenth determined to settle the question of the succession without consulting either Charles or the Emperor. France, England, and Holland, became parties to a treaty by which it was stipulated that the Electoral Prince of Bavaria should succeed to Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands. The Imperial family were to be bought off with the Milanese: and the Dauphin was to have the Two Sicilies.

The great object of the King of Spain and of all his counsellors was to avert the dismemberment of the monarchy. In the hope of attaining this end, Charles

Claims to the succession.

A complicated question.

Treaty between William III. and Louis XIV.

determined to name a successor. A will was accordingly framed by which the crown was bequeathed to the Bavarian Prince. Unhappily, this will had scarcely been signed when the Prince died. The question was again unsettled, and presented greater difficulties than before.

A new Treaty of Partition was concluded between France, England, and Holland. It was agreed that Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands, should

Treaty of  
Partition.

descend to the Archduke Charles. In return for this great concession made by the Bourbons to a rival house, it was agreed that France should have the Milanese, or an equivalent in a more commodious situation—if possible the province of Lorraine.

Arbuthnot, some years later, ridiculed the Partition Treaty with exquisite humour and ingenuity. Every body must remember his description of the paroxysm of rage into which poor old Lord Strutt fell, on hearing that his runaway servant Nick Frog, his clothier John Bull, and his old enemy Louis Baboon, had come with quadrants, poles, and inkhorns, to survey his estate, and to draw his will for him. Lord Mahon speaks of the arrangement with grave severity. He calls it "an iniquitous compact, concluded without the slightest reference to the welfare of the states so readily parcelled and allotted; insulting to the pride of Spain, and tending to strip that country of its hard-won conquests."

The most serious part of this charge would apply to half the treaties which have been concluded in Europe quite as strongly as to the Partition Treaty.

European  
Treaties.

What regard was shown in the Treaty of the Pyrenees to the welfare of the people of Dunkirk and Roussillon, in the Treaty of Nimeguen to the welfare of the people of Franche Comté, in the Treaty of Utrecht to the welfare of the people of Flanders, in the treaty of 1735 to the welfare of the people of Tuscany? All Europe remembers, and our latest posterity will, we fear, have reason to remember how coolly, at the last great pacification of Christendom, the people of Poland, of Norway, of Belgium, and of Lombardy, were allotted to masters whom they abhorred. The statesmen who negotiated the Partition Treaty were not so far beyond their age and ours in wisdom and virtue as to trouble themselves much about the happiness of the people whom

they were apportioning among foreign masters. But it will be difficult to prove that the stipulations which Lord Mahon condemns were in any respect unfavourable to the happiness of those who were to be transferred to new rulers. The Neapolitans would certainly have lost nothing by being given to the Dauphin, or to the Great Turk. Addison, who visited Naples about the time at which the Partition Treaty was signed, has left us a frightful description of the misgovernment under which that part of the Spanish empire groaned. As to the people of Lorraine, an union with France would have been the happiest event which could have befallen them. Louis was already their sovereign for all purposes of cruelty and exaction. He had kept their country during many years in his own hands. At the peace of Ryswick, indeed, their Duke had been allowed to return. But the conditions which had been imposed on him made him a mere vassal of France.

We cannot admit that the Treaty of Partition was objectionable because it "tended to strip Spain of hard-won conquests." The inheritance was so vast, and the claimants so mighty, that without some dismemberment it was scarcely possible to make a peaceable arrangement.

If any dismemberment was to take place, the best way of effecting it surely was to separate from the mon-

Dismember-  
ment of Pro-  
vinces.

archy those provinces which were at a great distance from Spain, which were not Spanish in manners, in language, or in feelings, which were both worse governed and less valuable than the old kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, and which, having always been governed by foreigners, would not be likely to feel acutely the humiliation of being turned over from one master to another.

That England and Holland had a right to interfere is plain. The question of the Spanish succession was not an internal question, but an European one. And this

Right to  
interfere.

Lord Mahon admits. He thinks that when the evil had been done, and a French Prince was reigning at the Escorial, England and Holland were justified in attempting, not merely to strip Spain of its remote dependencies, but to conquer Spain itself; that they would be justified in attempting to put, not merely the passive Flemings and Italians, but the reluctant Castilians and Asturians, under



the dominion of a stranger. The danger against which the Partition Treaty was intended to guard was precisely the same danger which afterwards was made the ground of war. It will be difficult to prove that a danger which was sufficient to justify the war was insufficient to justify the provisions of the treaty. If, as Lord Mahon contends, it was better that Spain should be subjugated by main force than that she should be governed by a Bourbon, it was surely better that she should be deprived of Sicily and the Milanese than that she should be governed by a Bourbon.

Whether the treaty was judiciously framed is quite another question. We disapprove of the stipulations. But we disapprove of them, not because we think them bad, but because we think that there was no chance of their being executed. Louis was the most faithless

A faithless politician.

of politicians. He hated the Dutch. He hated the Government which the Revolution had established in England. He had every disposition to quarrel with his new allies. It was quite certain that he would not observe his engagements, if it should be for his interest to violate them. Even if it should be for his interest to observe them, it might well be doubted whether the strongest and clearest interest would induce a man so haughty and self-willed to co-operate heartily with two governments which had always been the objects of his scorn and aversion.

When intelligence of the second Partition Treaty arrived at Madrid, it roused to momentary energy the languishing ruler of a languishing state. The Spanish ambassador at the court of London was directed to remonstrate with the government of William; and his remonstrances were so insolent that he was commanded to leave England. Charles retaliated by

Dismissal of Ambassadors. dismissing the English and Dutch ambassadors. The

French King, though the chief author of the Partition Treaty, succeeded in turning the whole wrath of Charles and of the Spanish people from himself, and in directing it against the two maritime powers. Those powers had now no agent at Madrid. Their perfidious ally was at liberty to carry on his intrigues unchecked; and he fully availed himself of this advantage.

A long contest was maintained with varying success by the factions which

surrounded the miserable king. On the side of the Imperial family was the Queen, herself a Princess of that family. With her were allied the confessor of the King, and most of the ministers. On the other side were two of the most dexterous politicians of that age, Cardinal Porto Carrero, Archbishop of Toledo, and Harcourt, the ambassador of Louis.

Harcourt was a noble specimen of the French aristocracy in the days of its highest splendour, a finished gentleman, a brave soldier, and a skilful diplomatist. His courteous and insinuating manners, his Parisian vivacity tempered with Castilian gravity, made him the favourite of the whole court. He became intimate with the grandees. He caressed the clergy. He dazzled the multitude by his magnificent style of living. The prejudices which the people of Madrid had conceived against the French character, the vindictive feelings generated during centuries of national rivalry, gradually yielded to his arts; while the Austrian ambassador, a surly, pompous, niggardly German, made himself and his country more and more unpopular every day.

Harcourt won over the court and the city; Porto Carrero managed the King. Never were knave and dupe better suited to each other. Charles was sick, nervous, and extravagantly superstitious. Porto Carrero had learned in the exercise of his profession the art of exciting and soothing such minds; and he employed that art with the calm and demure cruelty which is the characteristic of wicked and ambitious priests.

He first supplanted the confessor. The state of the poor King, during the conflict between his two spiritual advisers, was horrible. At one time he was induced to believe that his malady was the same with that of the wretches described in the New Testament, who dwelt among the tombs, whom no chains could bind, and whom no man dared to approach. At another time a sorceress who lived in the mountains of the Asturias was consulted about his malady. Several persons were accused of having bewitched him. Porto Carrero recommended the rite of exorcism, which was actually performed. The ceremony made the poor King more nervous and miserable than ever. But it served the turn of the Cardinal, who, after much

Rival factions.

Harcourt.

Cardinal Porto Carrero.

secret trickery, succeeded in casting out, not the devil, but the confessor.

The next object was to get rid of the Ministers. Madrid was supplied with provisions by a monopoly. The government looked after this most delicate concern as it looked after everything else. The partisans of the House of Bourbon took advantage of the negligence of the administration. On a sudden the supply of food failed. Exorbitant prices were demanded. The people rose. The royal residence was surrounded by an immense multitude. The Queen harangued them. The priests exhibited the host. All was in vain. It was necessary to awaken the King from his uneasy sleep and to carry him to the balcony. There a solemn promise was given that the unpopular advisers of the crown should be forthwith dismissed. The

The palace  
mobbed.

mob left the palace and proceeded to pull down the houses of the ministers.

The adherents of the Austrian line were thus driven from power, and the government was entrusted to the creatures of Porto Carrero. The King left the city in which he had suffered so cruel an insult for the magnificent retreat of the Escorial. Here his hypochondriac fancy took a new turn. Like his ancestor Charles the Fifth, he was haunted by a strange curiosity to pry into the secrets of that

A morbid  
fancy.

grave to which he was hastening. In the cemetery which Philip the

Second had formed beneath the pavement of the church of St. Lawrence, reposed three generations of Castilian princes. Into these dark vaults the unhappy monarch descended by torchlight, and penetrated to that superb and gloomy chamber where, round the great black crucifix, were ranged the coffins of the kings and queens of Spain. There he commanded his attendants to open the massy chests of bronze in which the relics of his predecessors decayed. He looked on the ghastly spectacle with little emotion till the coffin of his first wife was unclosed, and she appeared before him—such was the skill of the embalmer—in all her well-remembered beauty. He cast one glance on those beloved features, unseen for eighteen years, those features over which corruption seemed to have no power, and rushed from the vault, exclaiming, "She is with God; and I shall soon be with her." The awful sight completed the ruin of

his body and mind. The Escorial became hateful to him; and he hastened to Aranjuez. But the shades and waters of that delicious island-garden, so fondly celebrated in the sparkling verse by Calderon, brought no solace to their unfortunate master. Having tried medicine, exercise, and amusement in vain, he returned to Madrid to die.

He was now beset on every side by the bold and skilful agents of the House of Bourbon. The leading politicians of his court assured him that Louis, and Louis alone, was sufficiently powerful to preserve the Spanish monarchy undivided, and that Austria would be utterly unable to prevent the Treaty of Partition from being carried into effect. Some celebrated lawyers gave it as their opinion that the act of renunciation executed by the late Queen of France ought to be construed according to the spirit, and not according to the letter. The letter undoubtedly excluded the French princes. The spirit was merely this, that ample security should be taken against the union of the French and Spanish Crowns on one head.

In all probability, neither political nor legal reasonings would have sufficed to overcome the partiality which Charles felt for the House of Austria. There had always been a close connection between the two great royal lines which sprang from the marriage of Philip and Juana. Both had always regarded the French as their natural enemies. It was necessary to have recourse to religious terrors; and Porto Carrero employed those terrors with true professional skill. The King's life was drawing to a close. Would the most Catholic prince commit a great sin on the brink of the grave? And what could be a greater sin than, from an unreasonable attachment to a family name, from an unchristian antipathy to a rival house, to set aside the rightful heir of an immense monarchy? The tender conscience and the feeble intellect of Charles were strongly wrought upon by these appeals. At length Porto Carrero ventured on a master-stroke. He advised Charles to apply for counsel to the Pope. The King, who, in the simplicity of his heart, considered the successor of St. Peter as an infallible guide in spiritual matters, adopted the suggestion; and Porto Carrero, who knew that his Holiness was a mere tool

of France, awaited with perfect confidence the result of the application. In the answer which arrived from Rome, the King was solemnly reminded of the great account which he was soon to render, and cautioned against the flagrant injustice which he was tempted to commit. He was assured that the right was with the House of Bourbon, and reminded that his own salvation ought to be dearer to him than the House of Austria. Yet he still continued irresolute. His attachment to his family, his aversion to France, were not to be overcome even by Papal authority. At length he thought himself actually dying. Then the Cardinal redoubled his efforts. Divine after divine, well-tutored for the occasion, was brought to the bed of the trembling penitent. He was dying in the commission of known sin. He was defrauding his relatives. He was bequeathing civil war to his people. He yielded, and signed that memorable Testament, the cause of many calamities to Europe. As he affixed his name to the instrument, he burst into tears. "God," he said, "gives kingdoms and takes them away. I am already as good as dead."

The will was kept secret during the short remainder of his life. On the third of November, 1700, he expired. All Madrid crowded to the palace.

The King's will.

The gates were thronged. The ante-chamber was filled with ambassadors and grandees, eager to learn what dispositions the deceased sovereign had made. At length the folding doors were flung open. The Duke of Abrantes came forth, and announced that the whole Spanish monarchy was bequeathed to Philip, Duke of Anjou. Charles had directed that, during the interval which might elapse between his death and the arrival of his successor, the government should be administered by a council, of which Porto Carrero was the chief member.

Louis acted, as the English ministers might have guessed that he would act. With scarcely the show of hesitation, he

Behaviour of Louis.

broke through all the obligations of the Partition Treaty, and accepted for his grandson the splendid legacy of Charles. The new sovereign hastened to take possession of his dominions. The whole court of France accompanied him to Sceaux. His brothers escorted him to that frontier which, as they weakly imagined, was to be a frontier no longer.

"The Pyrenees," said Louis, "have ceased to exist." Those very Pyrenees, a few years later, were the theatre of a war between the heir of Louis and the prince whom France was now sending to govern Spain.

If Charles had ransacked Europe to find a successor whose moral and intellectual character resembled his own, he could not have chosen better. Philip was not so sickly as his predecessor, but he was quite as weak, as indolent, and as superstitious; he very soon became quite as hypochondriacal and eccentric; and he was even more uxorious. He was, indeed, a husband of ten thousand. His first object, when he became King of Spain, was to procure a wife. From the day of his marriage to the day of her death, his first object was to have her near him, and to do what she wished. As soon as his wife died, his first object was to procure another. Another was found, as unlike the former as possible. But she was a wife; and Philip was content. Neither by day nor by night, neither in sickness nor in health, neither in time of business nor in time of relaxation, did he ever suffer her to be absent from him for half an hour. His mind was naturally feeble; and he had received an enfeebling education. He had been brought up amidst the dull magnificence of Versailles. His grandfather was as imperious and as ostentatious in his intercourse with the royal family as in public acts. All those who grew up immediately under the eye of Louis had the manners of persons who had never known what it was to be at ease. They were all taciturn, shy, and awkward. In all of them, except the Duke of Burgundy, the evil went further than the manners. The Dauphin, the Duke of Berri, Philip of Anjou, were men of insignificant characters. They had no energy, no force of will. They had been so little accustomed to judge or to act for themselves that implicit dependence had become necessary to their comfort. The new King of Spain, emancipated from control, resembled that wretched German captive who, when the irons which he had worn for years were knocked off, fell prostrate on the floor of his prison. The restraints which had enfeebled the mind of the young Prince were required to support it. Till he had a wife he could do nothing; and when he had a wife he did whatever she chose.

While this lounging, moping boy was

on his way to Madrid, his grandfather was all activity. Louis had no reason to fear a contest with the Empire single-handed. He made vigorous preparations to encounter Leopold. He overawed the States-General by means of a great army. He attempted to soothe the English government by fair professions. William was not deceived. He fully returned the hatred of Louis; and, if he had been free to act according to his own inclinations, he would have declared war as soon as the contents of the will were known. But he was bound by constitutional restraints. Both his person and his measures were unpopular in England. His secluded life and his cold manners disgusted a people accustomed to the graceful affability of Charles the Second. His foreign accent and his foreign attachments were offensive to the national prejudices. His reign had been a season of distress, following a season of rapidly increasing prosperity. The burdens of the war and the expense of restoring the currency had been severely felt. Nine clergymen out of ten were Jacobites at heart, and had sworn allegiance to the new dynasty, only in order to save their benefices. A large proportion of the country gentlemen belonged to the same party. The whole body of agricultural proprietors was hostile to that interest which the creation of the national debt had brought into notice, and which was believed to be peculiarly favoured by the Court, the monied interest. The middle classes were fully determined to keep out James and his family. But they regarded

Unpopularity  
of William III.

William only as the less of two evils; and, as long as there was no imminent danger of a counter-revolution, were disposed to thwart and mortify the sovereign by whom they were, nevertheless, ready to stand, in case of necessity, with their lives and fortunes. They were sullen and dissatisfied. "There was," as Somers expressed it in a remarkable letter to William, "a deadness and want of spirit in the nation universally."

Everything in England was going on as Louis could have wished. The leaders of the Whig party had retired from power, and were extremely unpopular on account of the unfortunate issue of the Partition Treaty. The Tories, some of whom still cast a lingering look towards St. Germain's, were in office, and had a decided majority in the

Political  
feeling in  
England.

House of Commons. William was so much embarrassed by the state of parties in England that he could not venture to make war on the House of Bourbon. He was suffering under a complication of severe and incurable diseases. There was every reason to believe that a few months would dissolve the fragile tie which bound up that feeble body with that ardent and unconquerable soul. If Louis could succeed in preserving peace for a short time, it was probable that all his vast designs would be securely accomplished. Just at this crisis, the most important crisis of his life, his pride and his passions hurried him into an error, which undid all that forty years of victory and intrigue had done, which produced the dismemberment of the kingdom of his grandson, and brought invasion, bankruptcy, and famine on his own.

James the Second died at St. Germain's. Louis paid him a farewell visit, and was so much moved by the solemn parting, and by the grief of the exiled queen, that, losing sight of all considerations of policy, and actuated, as it should seem, merely by compassion and by a not ungenerous vanity, he acknowledged the Prince of Wales as King of England.

Death of  
James II.

The indignation which the Castilians had felt when they heard that three foreign powers had undertaken to regulate the Spanish succession was nothing to the rage with which the English learned that their good neighbour had taken the trouble to provide them with a king. Whigs and Tories joined in condemning the proceedings of the French Court. The cry for war was raised by the city of London, and echoed and re-echoed from every corner of the realm. William saw that his time was come. Though his wasted and suffering body could hardly move without support, his spirit was as energetic and resolute as when, at twenty-three, he bade defiance to the combined forces of England and France. He left the Hague, where he had been engaged in negotiating with the States and the Emperor a defensive treaty against the ambitious designs of the Bourbons. He flew to London. He remodelled the ministry. He dissolved the Parliament. The majority of the new House of Commons was with the King; and the most vigorous preparations were made for war.

The cry for  
war.

Before the commencement of active hostilities William was no more. But the Grand Alliance of the European Princes against the Bourbons was already constructed. "The master workman died," says Mr. Burke; "but the work was formed on true mechanical principles, and it was as truly wrought." On the fifteenth of May, 1702, war was proclaimed by concert at Vienna, at London, and at the Hague.

Thus commenced that great struggle by which Europe, from the Vistula to the Atlantic Ocean, was agitated during twelve years. The two hostile coalitions were, in respect of territory, wealth, and population, not unequally matched. On the one side were France, Spain, and Bavaria; on the other, England, Holland, the Empire, and a crowd of inferior Powers.

That part of the war which Lord Mahon has undertaken to relate, though not the least important, is certainly the least attractive. In Italy, in Germany, and in the Netherlands, great means were at the disposal of great generals. Mighty battles were fought. Fortress after fortress was subdued. The iron chain of the Belgian strongholds was broken. By a regular and connected series of operations extending through several years, the French were driven back from the Danube and the Po into their own provinces. The war in Spain, on the contrary, is made up of events which seem to have no dependence on each other. The turns of fortune resemble those which take place in a dream. Victory and defeat are not followed by their usual consequences. Armies spring out of nothing, and melt into nothing. Yet, to judicious readers of History, the Spanish conflict is perhaps more interesting than the campaigns of Marlborough and Eugene. The fate of the Milanese and of the Low Countries was decided by military skill. The fate of Spain was decided by the peculiarities of the national character.

When the war commenced, the young King was in a most deplorable situation. On his arrival at Madrid, he found Porto Carrero at the head of affairs, and he did not think fit to displace the man to whom he owed his crown. The Cardinal was a mere intriguer, and in no sense a statesman. He had acquired, in the Court and in the confessional, a rare degree

of skill in all the tricks by which weak minds are managed. But of the noble science of government, of the sources of national prosperity, of the causes of national decay, he knew no more than his master. It is curious to observe the contrast between the dexterity with which he ruled the conscience of a foolish valetudinarian, and the imbecility which he showed when placed at the head of an empire. On what grounds Lord Mahon represents the Cardinal as a man "of splendid genius," "of vast abilities," we are unable to discover. Louis was of a very different opinion, and Louis was very seldom mistaken in his judgment of character. "Everybody," says he, in a letter to his ambassador, "knows how incapable the Cardinal is. He is an object of contempt to his countrymen."

A few miserable savings were made, which ruined individuals without producing any perceptible benefit to the state. The police became more and more inefficient. The disorders of the capital were increased by the arrival of French adventurers, the refuse of Parisian brothels and gaming-houses. These wretches considered the Spaniards as a subjugated race whom the countrymen of the new sovereign might cheat and insult with impunity. The King sate eating and drinking all night, lay in bed all day, yawned at the council table, and suffered the most important papers to lie unopened for weeks. At length he was roused by the only excitement of which his sluggish nature was susceptible. His grandfather consented to let him have a wife. The choice was fortunate. Maria Louisa, Princess of Savoy, a beautiful and graceful girl of thirteen, already a woman in person and mind at an age when the females of colder climates are still children, was the person selected. The King resolved to give her the meeting in Catalonia. He left his capital, of which he was already thoroughly tired. At setting out he was mobbed by a gang of beggars. He, however, made his way through them, and repaired to Barcelona.

Louis was perfectly aware that the Queen would govern Philip. He, accordingly, looked out for somebody to govern the Queen. He selected the Princess Orsini to be first lady of the bed-chamber, no insignificant post in the

Intriguer,  
not statesman.

Marriage of  
Philip.

Princess  
Orsini.

household of a very young wife, and a very uxorious husband. This lady was the daughter of a French peer, and the widow of a Spanish grandee. She was, therefore, admirably fitted by her position to be the instrument of the Court of Versailles at the Court of Madrid. The Duke of Orleans called her, in words too coarse for translation, the Lieutenant of Captain Maintenon: and the appellation was well deserved. She aspired to play in Spain the part which Madame de Maintenon had played in France. But, though at least equal to her model in wit, information, and talents for intrigue, she had not that self-command, that patience, that imperturbable evenness of temper, which had raised the widow of a buffoon to be the consort of the proudest of kings. The Princess was more than fifty years old, but was still vain of her fine eyes, and her fine shape; she still dressed in the style of a girl; and she still carried her flirtations so far as to give occasion for scandal. She was, however, polite, eloquent, and not deficient in strength of mind. The bitter St. Simon owns that no person whom she wished to attach could long resist the graces of her manners and of her conversation.

We have not time to relate how she obtained, and how she preserved, her empire over the young couple in whose household she was placed, how she became so powerful, that neither minister of Spain nor ambassador from France could stand against her, how Louis himself was compelled to court her, how she received orders from Versailles to retire, how the Queen took part with her favourite attendant, how the King took part with the Queen, and how, after much squabbling, lying, shuffling, bullying, and coaxing, the dispute was adjusted. We turn to the events of the war.

When hostilities were proclaimed at London, Vienna, and the Hague, Philip was at Naples. He had been with great difficulty prevailed upon, by the most urgent representations from Versailles, to separate himself from his wife, and to repair without her to his Italian dominions, which were then menaced by the Emperor. The Queen

The Queen acted as Regent, and, child as she was, seems to have been quite as competent to govern the kingdom as her husband or any of his ministers.

In August, 1702, an armament, under the command of the Duke of Ormond, appeared off Cadiz. The Spanish authorities had no funds and no regular troops. The national spirit, however, supplied, in some degree, what was wanting. The nobles and farmers advanced money. The peasantry were formed into what the Spanish writers call bands of heroic patriots, and what General Stanhope calls "a rascally foot militia." If the invaders had acted with vigour and judgment, Cadiz would probably have fallen. But the chiefs of the expedition were divided by national and professional feelings, Dutch against English, and land against sea. Sparre, the Dutch general, was sulky and perverse. Bellasys, the English general, embezzled the stores—we suppose, because he was the subject of a monarchy.

The Duke of Ormond.

The Duke of Ormond, who had the command of the whole expedition, proved on this occasion, as on every other, destitute of the qualities which great emergencies require. No discipline was kept; the soldiers were suffered to rob and insult those whom it was most desirable to conciliate. Churches were robbed; images were pulled down; nuns were violated. The officers shared the spoil instead of punishing the spoilers; and at last the armament, loaded, to use the words of Stanhope, "with a great deal of plunder and infamy," quitted the scene of Essex's glory, leaving the only Spaniard of note who had declared for them to be hanged by his countrymen.

The fleet was off the coast of Portugal, on the way back to England, when the Duke of Ormond received intelligence that the treasure-ships from America had just arrived in Europe, and had, in order to avoid his armament, repaired to the harbour of Vigo. The cargo consisted, it was said, of more than three millions sterling in gold and silver, besides much valuable merchandise. The prospect of plunder reconciled all disputes. Dutch and English, admirals and generals, were equally eager for action. The Spaniards might with the greatest ease have secured the treasure by simply landing it; but it was a fundamental law of Spanish trade that the galleons should unload at Cadiz, and at Cadiz only. The Chamber of Commerce at Cadiz, in the true spirit of monopoly, refused, even at this conjuncture, to bate one jot of its

American treasure-ships.

privilege. The matter was referred to the Council of the Indies. That body deliberated and hesitated just a day too long. Some feeble preparations for defence were made. Two ruined towers at the mouth of the bay of Vigo were garrisoned by a few ill-armed and untrained rustics; a boom was thrown across the entrance of the basin; and a few French ships of war, which had convoyed the galleons from America, were moored within. But all was to no purpose. The English ships broke the boom; Ormond and his soldiers scaled the forts; the French burned their ships, and escaped to the shore. The conquerors shared some millions of dollars; some millions more were sunk. When all the galleons had been captured or destroyed came an order in due form allowing them to unload.

When Philip returned to Madrid in the beginning of 1703, he found the finances more embarrassed, the people more discontented, and the hostile coalition more formidable than ever. The loss of the galleons had occasioned a great deficiency in the revenue. The Admiral of Castile, one of the greatest subjects in Europe, had fled to Lisbon and sworn allegiance to the Archduke. The King of Portugal soon after acknowledged Charles as King of Spain, and prepared to support the title of the House of Austria by arms.

On the other side, Louis sent to the assistance of his grandson an army of 12,000 men, commanded by the Duke of Berwick. Berwick was the son of James the Second and Arabella Churchill. He had been brought up to expect the highest honours which an English subject could enjoy; but the whole course of his life was changed by the revolution which overthrew his infatuated father. Berwick became an exile, a man without a country; and from that time forward his camp was to him in the place of a country, and professional honour was his patriotism. He ennobled his wretched calling. There was a stern, cold, Brutus-like virtue in the manner in which he discharged the duties of a soldier of fortune. His military fidelity was tried by the strongest temptations, and was found invincible. At one time he fought against his uncle; at another time he fought against the cause of his brother; yet he was never

suspected of treachery, or even of slackness.

Early in 1704, an army composed of English, Dutch, and Portuguese, was assembled on the western frontier of Spain. The Archduke Charles had arrived at Lisbon, and appeared in person at the head of his troops. The military skill of Berwick held the Allies in check through the whole campaign. On the south, however, a great blow was struck. An English fleet, under Sir George Rooke, having on board several regiments commanded by the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, appeared before the rock of Gibraltar. That celebrated stronghold, which nature has made all but impregnable, and against which all the resources of the military art have been employed in vain, was taken as easily as if it had been an open village in a plain. The garrison went to say their prayers instead of standing on their guard. A few English sailors climbed the rock. The Spaniards capitulated; and the British flag was placed on those ramparts from which the combined armies and navies of France and Spain have never been able to pull it down. Rooke proceeded to Malaga, gave battle in the neighbourhood of that port to a French squadron, and after a doubtful action returned to England.

But greater events were at hand. The English government had determined to send an expedition to Spain, under the command of Charles Mor-daunt, Earl of Peterborough. This man was, if not the greatest, yet assuredly the most extraordinary character of that age, the King of Sweden himself not excepted. Indeed, Peterborough may be described as a polite, learned, and amorous Charles the Twelfth. His courage had all the French impetuosity, and all the English steadiness. His fertility and activity of mind were almost beyond belief. They appeared in everything that he did, in his campaigns, in his negotiations, in his familiar correspondence, in his lightest and most unstudied conversation. He was a kind friend, a generous enemy, and in deportment a thorough gentleman. But his splendid talents and virtues were rendered almost useless to his country by his levity, his restlessness, his irritability, his morbid craving for novelty and for excitement. He loved to fly round Europe faster than a travelling courier. He was at

The British flag planted at Gibraltar.

The Earl of Peterborough.

the Hague one week, at Vienna the next. Then he took a fancy to see Madrid; and he had scarcely reached Madrid, when he ordered horses and set off for Copenhagen. No attendants could keep up with his speed. No bodily infirmities could confine him. Old age, disease, imminent death, produced scarcely any effect on his intrepid spirit. Just before he underwent the most horrible of surgical operations, his conversation was as sprightly as that of a young man in the full vigour of health. On the day after the operation, in spite of the entreaties of his medical advisers, he would set out on a journey. His figure was that of a skeleton. But his elastic mind supported him under fatigues and sufferings which seemed sufficient to bring the most robust man to the grave. Change of employment was as necessary to him as change of place. He loved to dictate six or seven letters at once. Those who had to transact business with him complained that though he talked with great ability on every subject, he could never be kept to the point. "Lord Peterborough," said Pope, "would say very pretty and lively things in his letters, but they would be rather too gay and wandering; whereas, were Lord Bolingbroke to write to an emperor, or to a statesman, he would fix on that point which was the most material, would set it in the strongest and finest light, and manage it so as to make it the most serviceable to his purpose." What Peterborough was to Bolingbroke as a writer, he was to Marlborough as a general. He was, in truth, the last of the knights-errant, brave to temerity, liberal to profusion, courteous in his dealings with enemies, the protector of the oppressed, the adorer of women. His virtues and vices were those of the Round Table. Indeed, his character can hardly be better summed up, than in the lines in which the author of that clever little poem, *Monks and Giants*, has described Sir Tristram.

His birth, it seems, by Merlin's calculation,  
Was under Venus, Mercury, and Mars;  
His mind with all their attributes was mixed,  
And, like those planets, wandering and un-  
fixed.

From realm to realm he ran, and never  
staid:  
Kingdoms and crowns he won, and gave  
away:  
It seemed as if his labours were repaid  
By the mere noise and movement of the fray:

No conquests nor acquirements had he made  
His chief delight was, on some festive day  
To ride triumphant, prodigal, and proud,  
And shower his wealth amidst the shouting  
crowd.

"His schemes of war were sudden, unforeseen,  
Inexplicable both to friend and foe;  
It seemed as if some momentary spleen  
Inspired the project, and impelled the blow  
And most his fortune and success were seen  
With means the most inadequate and low;  
Most master of himself, and least encumbered,  
When overmatched, entangled, and out-  
numbered."

In June, 1705, this remarkable man arrived in Lisbon with five thousand Dutch and English soldiers. There the Arch-<sup>Arrival of the</sup> duke embarked with a <sup>Earl in Lisbon.</sup> large train of attendants, whom Peterborough entertained magnificently during the voyage at his own expense. From Lisbon the armament proceeded to Gibraltar, and having taken the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt on board, steered towards the north-east along the coast of Spain.

The first place at which the expedition touched, after leaving Gibraltar, was Altea in Valencia. The wretched misgovernment of Philip had excited great discontent throughout this province. The invaders were eagerly welcomed. The peasantry flocked to the shore, bearing provisions, and shouting, "Long live Charles the Third." The neighbouring fortress of Denia surrendered without a blow.

The imagination of Peterborough took fire. He conceived the hope of finishing the war at one blow. Madrid was but a hundred <sup>Peterborough's</sup> and fifty miles distant. <sup>hope.</sup> There was scarcely one fortified place on the road. The troops of Philip were either on the frontiers of Portugal, or on the coast of Catalonia. At the capital there was no military force, except a few horse who formed a guard of honour round the person of Philip. But the scheme of pushing into the heart of a great kingdom with an army of only seven thousand men, was too daring to please the Archduke. The Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, who, in the reign of the late King of Spain, had been Governor of Catalonia, and who overrated his own influence in that province, was of opinion that they ought instantly to proceed thither, and to attack Barcelona. Peterborough was hampered by his



instructions, and found it necessary to submit.

On the sixteenth of August the fleet arrived before Barcelona; and Peterborough found that the task assigned to

**A difficult task.**

him by the Archduke and the Prince was one of almost insuperable difficulty. One side of the city was protected by the sea; the other by the strong fortifications of Monjuich. The walls were so extensive, that thirty thousand men would scarcely have been sufficient to invest them. The garrison was as numerous as the besieging army. The best officers in the Spanish service were in the town. The hopes which the Prince of Darmstadt had formed of a general rising in Catalonia were grievously disappointed. The invaders were joined only by about fifteen hundred armed peasants, whose services cost more than they were worth.

No general was ever in a more deplorable situation than that in which Peterborough was now placed. He had always objected to the scheme of besieging Barcelona. His objections had been overruled. He had to execute a project which he had constantly represented as impracticable. His camp was divided into

**Unjust censure.**

hostile factions, and he was censured by all. The Archduke and the Prince blamed him for not proceeding instantly to take the town; but suggested no plan by which seven thousand men could be enabled to do the work of thirty thousand. Others blamed their general for giving up his own opinion to the childish whims of Charles, and for sacrificing his men in an attempt to perform what was impossible. The Dutch commander positively declared that his soldiers should not stir: Lord Peterborough might give what orders he chose; but to engage in such a siege was madness; and the men should not be sent to certain death when there was no chance of obtaining any advantage.

At length, after three weeks of inaction, Peterborough announced his fixed determination to raise the siege.

**The siege raised.**

The heavy cannon were sent on board. Preparations were made for re-embarking the troops. Charles and the Prince of Hesse were furious; but most of the officers blamed their general for having delayed so long the measure which he had at last found it necessary to take. On the welfth of September there were rejoic-

ings and public entertainments in Barcelona for this great deliverance. On the following morning the English flag was flying on the ramparts of Monjuich. The genius and energy of one man had supplied the place of forty battalions.

At midnight Peterborough called on the Prince of Hesse, with whom he had not for some time been on speaking terms. "I have resolved, sir," said the Earl, "to attempt an assault; you may accompany us, if you think fit, and see whether I and my men deserve what you have been pleased to say of us." The Prince was startled. The attempt, he said, was hopeless; but he was ready to take his share; and, without further discussion, he called for his horse.

Fifteen hundred English soldiers were assembled under the Earl. A thousand more had been posted as a body of reserve, at the neighbouring convent, under the command of Stanhope. After a winding march along the foot of the hills, Peterborough and his little army reached the walls of Monjuich. There they halted till daybreak. As

**The army reaches Monjuich.**

soon as they were descried, the enemy advanced into the outer ditch to meet them. This was the event on which Peterborough had reckoned, and for which his men were prepared. The English received the fire, rushed forward, leaped into the ditch, put the Spaniards to flight, and entered the works together with the fugitives. Before the garrison had recovered from their first surprise, the Earl was master of the outworks, had taken several pieces of cannon, and had thrown up a breastwork to defend his men. He then sent off for Stanhope's reserve. While he was waiting for this reinforcement, news arrived that three thousand men were marching from Barcelona towards Monjuich. He instantly rode out to take a view of them; but no sooner had he left his troops than they were seized with a panic. Their situation was indeed full of danger; they had been brought into Monjuich, they scarcely knew how; their numbers were small; their general was gone; their hearts failed them, and they were proceeding to evacuate the fort. Peterborough received information of these occurrences in time to stop the retreat. He galloped up to the fugitives, addressed a few words to them, and put himself at their head. The sound

of his voice and the sight of his face restored all their courage, and they marched back to their former position.

The Prince of Hesse had fallen in the confusion of the assault; but everything else went well. Stanhope arrived; the detachment which had marched out of Barcelona retreated; the heavy cannon were disembarked, and brought to bear

**Fall of  
Monjuich.**

on the inner fortifications of Monjuich, which speedily fell. Peterborough, with his usual generosity, rescued the Spanish soldiers from the ferocity of his victorious army, and paid the last honours with great pomp to his rival, the Prince of Hesse.

The reduction of Monjuich was the first of a series of brilliant exploits. Barcelona fell; and Peterborough had

**Glories of  
Peterborough.**

the glory of taking, with a handful of men, one of the largest and strongest towns of Europe. He had also the glory, not less dear to his chivalrous temper, of saving the life and honour of the beautiful Duchess of Popoli, whom he met flying with dishevelled hair from the fury of the soldiers. He availed himself dexterously of the jealousy with which the Catalonians regarded the inhabitants of Castile. He guaranteed to the province in the capital of which he was now quartered all its ancient rights and liberties, and thus succeeded in attaching the population to the Austrian cause.

The open country declared in favour of Charles. Tarragona, Tortosa, Gerona, Lerida, San Mateo, threw open their gates. The Spanish government sent the Count of Las Torres with seven thousand men to reduce San Mateo. The

**Siege of San  
Mateo.**

Earl of Peterborough, with only twelve hundred men raised the siege. His officers advised him to be content with this extraordinary success. Charles urged him to return to Barcelona; but no remonstrances could stop such a spirit in the midst of such a career. It was the depth of winter. The country was mountainous. The roads were almost impassable. The men were ill-clothed. The horses were knocked up. The retreating army was far more numerous than the pursuing army. But difficulties and dangers vanished before the energy of Peterborough. He pushed on, driving Las Torres before him. Nules surrendered to the mere terror of his name; and, on the 4th of February, 1706, he

arrived in triumph at Valencia. There he learned that a body of four thousand men was on the march to join Las Torres. He set out at dead of night from Valencia, passed the Xucar, came unexpectedly on the encampment of the enemy, and slaughtered, dispersed, or took the whole reinforcement. The Valencians could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw the prisoners brought in.

In the meantime the Courts of Madrid and Versailles, exasperated and alarmed by the fall of Barcelona and by the revolt of the surrounding country, determined to make a great

**Efforts at  
Madrid and  
Versailles.**

effort. A large army, nominally commanded by Philip, but really under the orders of Marshal Tessé, entered Catalonia. A fleet under the Count of Toulouse, one of the natural children of Louis the Fourteenth, appeared before the port of Barcelona. The city was attacked at once by sea and land. The person of the Archduke was in considerable danger. Peterborough, at the head of about three thousand men, marched with great rapidity from Valencia. To give battle with so small a force to a great regular army under the conduct of a Marshal of France, would have been madness. The Earl, therefore, took his post on the neighbouring mountains, harassed the enemy with incessant alarms, cut off their stragglers, intercepted their communications with the interior, and introduced supplies, both of men and provisions, into the town. He saw, however, that the only hope of the besieged was on the side of the sea. His commission from the British government gave him supreme power, not only over the army, but, whenever he should be actually on board, over the navy also. He put out to sea at night in an open boat, without communicating his design to any person. He was picked up, several leagues from the shore, by one of the ships from the English squadron. As soon as he was on board, he announced himself as first in command, and sent a pinnace with his orders to the Admiral. Had these orders been given a few hours earlier, it is probable that the whole French fleet would have been taken. As it was, the Count of Toulouse put out to sea. The port was open. The town was relieved. On the following night the enemy raised the siege and retreated to Roussillon. Peterborough returned to Valencia, a place which he

preferred to every other in Spain; and Philip, who had been some weeks absent from his wife, could endure the misery of separation no longer, and flew to rejoin her at Madrid.

At Madrid, however, it was impossible for him or for her to remain. The splendid success which Peterborough had obtained on the eastern coast of the Peninsula had inspired the sluggish Galway with emulation. He advanced into the heart of Spain. Berwick retreated. Alcantara, Ciudad Rodrigo, and Salamanca fell, and the conquerors marched towards the capital.

Philip was earnestly pressed by his advisers to remove the seat of government to Burgos. The advanced guard of the allied army was already seen on the heights above Madrid. It was known that the main body was at hand. The

**Flight of the King and Queen.**

unfortunate Prince fled with his Queen and his household. The royal wanderers, after travelling eight days on bad roads, under a burning sun, and sleeping eight nights in miserable hovels, one of which fell down and nearly crushed them both to death, reached the metropolis of Old Castile. In the meantime the invaders had entered Madrid in triumph, and had proclaimed the Archduke in the streets of the imperial city. Aragon, ever jealous of the Castilian ascendancy, followed the example of Catalonia. Saragossa revolted without seeing an enemy. The governor whom Philip had set over Carthagea betrayed his trust, and surrendered to the Allies the best arsenal and the last ships which Spain possessed.

Toledo had been for some time the retreat of two ambitious, turbulent and vindictive intriguers, the Queen Dowager

**The Queen Dowager and Porto Carrero.**

and Cardinal Porto Carrero. They had long been deadly enemies. They had led the adverse factions of Austria and France. Each had, in turn, domineered over the weak and disordered mind of the late King. At length the impostures of the priest had triumphed over the blandishments of the woman; Porto Carrero had remained victorious; and the Queen had fled in shame and mortification from the court where she had once been supreme. In her retirement she was soon joined by him whose arts had destroyed her influence. The Cardinal, having held power just long enough to convince all parties

of his incompetency, had been dismissed to his See, cursing his own folly and the ingratitude of the House which he had served too well. Common interests and common enmities reconciled the fallen rivals. The Austrian troops were admitted into Toledo without opposition. The Queen Dowager flung off that mournful garb which the widow of a King of Spain wears through her whole life, and blazed forth in jewels. The Cardinal blessed the standards of the invaders in his magnificent cathedral, and lighted up his palace in honour of the great deliverance. It seemed that the struggle had terminated in favour of the Archduke, and that nothing remained for Philip but a prompt flight into the dominions of his grandfather.

So judged those who were ignorant of the character and habits of the Spanish people. There is no country in Europe which it is so easy to overrun as Spain: there is no country in Europe which it is more difficult to conquer. Nothing can be more contemptible than the regular military resistance which Spain offers to an invader; nothing more formidable than the energy which she puts forth when her regular military resistance has been beaten down. Her armies have long borne too much resemblance to mobs; but her mobs have had, in an unusual degree, the spirit of armies. The soldier, as compared with other soldiers, is deficient in military qualities; but the peasant has as much of those qualities as the soldier. In no country have such strong fortresses been taken by surprise; in no country have unfortified towns made so furious and obstinate a resistance to great armies. War in Spain has, from the days of the Romans, had a character of its own; it is a fire which cannot be raked out; it burns fiercely under the embers; and long after it has, to all seeming, been extinguished, bursts forth more violently than ever. This was seen in the last war. Spain had no army which could have looked in the face an equal number of French or Prussian soldiers; but one day laid the Prussian monarchy in the dust; one day put the crown of France at the disposal of invaders. No Jena, no Waterloo, would have enabled Joseph to reign in quiet at Madrid.

The conduct of the Castilians throughout the War of the Succession was most characteristic. With all the odds of

number and situation on their side, they had been ignominiously beaten. All the

European dependencies of the Spanish crown were lost. Catalonia, Aragon, and Valencia had acknowledged the Austrian Prince. Gibraltar had been taken by a few sailors; Barcelona stormed by a few dismounted dragoons. The invaders had penetrated into the centre of the Peninsula, and were quartered at Madrid and Toledo. While these events had been in progress, the nation had scarcely given a sign of life. The rich could hardly be prevailed on to give or to lend for the support of war; the troops had shown neither discipline nor courage; and now at last, when it seemed that all was lost, when it seemed that the most sanguine must relinquish all hope, the national spirit awoke, fierce, proud, and unconquerable. The people had been sluggish when the circumstances might well have inspired hope; they reserved all their energy for what appeared to be a season of despair. Castile, Leon, Andalusia, Estremadura, rose at once; every peasant procured a firelock or a pike; the Allies were masters only of the ground on which they trod. No soldier could wander a hundred yards from the main body of the invading army without imminent risk of being poniarded. The country through which the conquerors had passed to Madrid, and which, as they thought, they had subdued, was all in arms behind them. Their communications with Portugal were cut off. In the meantime, money began, for the first time, to flow rapidly into the treasury of the fugitive King. "The day before yesterday," says the Princess Orsini, in a letter written at this time, "the priest of a village which contains only a hundred and twenty houses, brought a hundred and twenty pistoles to the Queen. 'My flock,' said he, 'are ashamed to send you so little; but they beg you to believe that in this purse there are a hundred and twenty hearts faithful even to the death.' The good man wept as he spoke; and indeed we wept too. Yesterday another small village, in which there are only twenty houses, sent us fifty pistoles."

While the Castilians were everywhere arming in the cause of Philip, the Allies were serving the cause as effectually by their mismanagement. Galway stayed at Madrid, where his soldiers indulged in such boundless licentiousness that one half of them were in the hospitals.

Charles remained dawdling in Catalonia. Peterborough had taken Requena, and wished to march from Valencia towards Madrid, and to effect a junction with Galway; but the Archduke refused his consent to the plan. The indignant general remained accordingly in his beloved city, on the beautiful shores of the Mediterranean, reading Don Quixote, giving balls and suppers, trying in vain to get some good sport out of the Valencian bulls, and making love, not in vain, to the Valencian women.

At length the Archduke advanced into Castile, and ordered Peterborough to join him. But it was too late. Berwick had already compelled Galway to evacuate Madrid; and, when the whole force of the Allies was collected at Guadalaxara, it was found to be decidedly inferior in numbers to that of the enemy.

Peterborough formed a plan for regaining possession of the capital. His plan was rejected by Charles. The patience of the sensitive and vainglorious hero was worn out. He had none of that serenity of temper which enabled Marlborough to act in perfect harmony with Eugene, and to endure the vexatious interference of the Dutch deputies. He demanded permission to leave the army. Permission was readily granted; and he set out for Italy. That there might be some pretext for his departure, he was commissioned by the Archduke to raise a loan in Genoa, on the credit of the revenues of Spain.

From that moment to the end of the campaign the tide of fortune ran strong against the Austrian cause. Berwick had placed his army between the Allies and the frontiers of Portugal. They retreated on Valencia, and arrived in that province, leaving about ten thousand prisoners in the hands of the enemy.

In January, 1707, Peterborough arrived at Valencia from Italy, no longer bearing a public character, but merely as a volunteer. His advice was asked, and it seems to have been most judicious. He gave it as his decided opinion that no offensive operations against Castile ought to be undertaken. It would be easy, he said, to defend Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia against Philip. The inhabitants of those parts of Spain were attached to the cause of the Archduke; and the armies

Mismanagement of the Allies.

Peterborough sets out for Italy.

Advice of Peterborough.

of the House of Bourbon would be resisted by the whole population. In a short time the enthusiasm of the Castilians might abate. The government of Philip might commit unpopular acts. Defeats in the Netherlands might compel Louis to withdraw the succours which he had furnished to his grandson. Then would be the time to strike a decisive blow. This excellent advice was rejected. Peterborough, who had now received formal letters of recall from England, departed before the opening of the campaign; and with him departed the good fortune of the Allies. Scarcely any general had ever done so much with means so small. Scarcely any general had ever displayed equal originality and boldness. He possessed, in the highest degree, the art of conciliating those whom he had subdued. But he was not equally successful in winning the attachment of those with whom he acted. He was adored by the Catalonians and Valencians; but he was hated by the prince whom he had all but made a great king, and by the generals whose fortune and reputation were staked on the same venture with his own. The English government could not understand him. He was so eccentric that they gave him no credit for the judgment which he really possessed. One day he took towns with horse-soldiers; then again he turned some hundreds of infantry into cavalry at a minute's notice. He obtained his political intelligence chiefly by means of love affairs, and filled his despatches with epigrams. The ministers thought that it would be highly impolitic to intrust the conduct of the Spanish war to so volatile and romantic a person. They therefore gave the command to Lord Galway, an experienced veteran, a man who was in war what Molière's doctors were in medicine, who thought it much more honourable to fail according to rule, than to succeed by innovation, and who would have been very much ashamed of himself if he had taken Monjuich by means so strange as those which Peterborough employed. This great commander conducted the campaign of 1707 in the most scientific manner. On the plain of Almanza he encountered the army of the Bourbons. He drew up his troops according to the methods prescribed by the best writers, and in a few hours lost eighteen thousand men, a hundred and twenty standards, all his baggage and all his artillery. Valencia

and Aragon were instantly conquered by the French, and, at the close of the year, the mountainous province of Catalonia was the only part of Spain which still adhered to Charles.

"Do you remember, child," says the foolish woman in the *Spectator* to her husband, "that the pigeon-house fell the very afternoon that our careless wench spilt the salt upon the table?" "Yes, my dear," replies the gentleman, "and the next post brought us an account of the battle of Almanza." The approach of disaster in Spain had been for some time indicated by omens much clearer than the mishap of the salt-cellar; an ungrateful prince, an undisciplined army, a divided council, envy triumphant over merit, a man of genius recalled, a pedant and a sluggard intrusted with supreme command. The battle of Almanza decided the fate of Spain. The loss was such as Marlborough or Eugene could scarcely have retrieved, and was certainly not to be retrieved by Stanhope and Staremberg.

Omens of disaster.

Stanhope, who took the command of the English army in Catalonia, was a man of respectable abilities, both in military and civil affairs, but fitter, we conceive, for a second than for a first place. Lord Mahon, with his usual candour, tells us, what we believe was not known before, that his ancestor's most distinguished exploit, the conquest of Minorca, was suggested by Marlborough. Staremberg, a methodical tactician of the German school, was sent by the emperor to command in Spain. Two languid campaigns followed, during which neither of the hostile armies did anything memorable, but during which both were nearly starved.

Bolder measures.

At length, in 1710, the chiefs of the Allied forces resolved to venture on bolder measures. They began the campaign with a daring move, pushed into Aragon, defeated the troops of Philip at Almenara, defeated them again at Saragossa, and advanced to Madrid. The King was again a fugitive. The Castilians sprang to arms with the same enthusiasm which they had displayed in 1706. The conquerors found the capital a desert. The people shut themselves up in their houses, and refused to pay any mark of respect to the Austrian prince. It was necessary to him a few

children to shout before him in the streets. Meanwhile, the court of Philip at Valladolid was thronged by nobles and prelates. Thirty thousand people followed their King from Madrid to his new residence. Women of rank, rather than remain behind, performed the journey on foot. The peasants enlisted by thousands. Money, arms, and provisions, were supplied in abundance by the zeal of the people. The country round Madrid was infested by small parties of irregular horse. The Allies could not send off a despatch to Aragon, or introduce a supply of provisions into the capital. It was unsafe for the Archduke to hunt in the immediate vicinity of the palace which he occupied.

The wish of Stanhope was to winter in Castile. But he stood alone in the council of war; and, indeed, it is not easy to understand how the Allies could have maintained themselves, through so unpropitious a season, in the midst of so hostile a population. Charles, whose personal safety was the first object of the generals, was sent with an escort of cavalry to Catalonia in November; and in December the army commenced its retreat towards Aragon.

But the Allies had to do with a master-spirit. The King of France had lately sent the Duke of Vendome to command in Spain. This man was distinguished by the filthiness of his person, by the brutality of his demeanour, by the gross buffoonery of his conversation, and by the impudence with which he abandoned himself to the most nauseous of all vices. His sluggishness was almost incredible. Even when engaged in a campaign, he often passed whole days in his bed. His strange torpidity had been the cause of some of the most severe defeats which the armies of the House of Bourbon had sustained in Italy and Flanders. But when he was roused by any great emergency, his resources, his energy, and his presence of mind, were such as had been found in no French general since the death of Luxembourg.

At this crisis, Vendome was all himself. He set out from Talavera with his troops, and pursued the retreating army of the Allies with a speed perhaps never equalled, in such a season, and in such a country. He marched night and day. He was, at the head of his cavalry, the flood-stream of Henares, and, in a few days, overtook Stanhope, who was at

Brihuega with the left wing of the Allied army. "Nobody with me," says the English general, "imagined that they had any foot within some days' march of us; and our misfortune is owing to the incredible diligence which their army made." Stanhope had but just time to send off a messenger to the centre of the army, which was some leagues from Brihuega, before Vendome was upon him. The town was invested on every side. The walls were battered with cannon. A mine was sprung under one of the gates. The English kept up a terrible fire till their powder was spent. They then fought desperately with the bayonet against overwhelming odds. They burned the houses which the assailants had taken. But all was to no purpose. The British general saw that resistance could produce only a useless carnage. He concluded a capitulation; and his gallant little army became prisoners of war on honourable terms.

Honourable  
capitulation.

Scarcely had Vendome signed the capitulation, when he learned that Staremberg was marching to the relief of Stanhope. Preparations were instantly made for a general action. On the day following that on which the English had delivered up their arms, was fought the obstinate and bloody fight of Villaviciosa. Staremberg remained master of the field. Vendome reaped all the fruits of the battle. The Allies spiked their cannon, and retired towards Aragon. But even in Aragon they found no place to rest. Vendome was behind them. The guerilla parties were around them. They fled to Catalonia; but Catalonia was invaded by a French army from Roussillon. At length the Austrian general, with six thousand harassed and dispirited men, the remains of a great and victorious army, took refuge in Barcelona, almost the only place in Spain which still recognized the authority of Charles.

Arrival of  
Staremberg.

Philip was now much safer at Madrid than his grandfather at Paris. All hope of conquering Spain in Spain was at an end. But in other quarters the House of Bourbon was reduced to the last extremity. The French armies had undergone a series of defeats in Germany, in Italy, and in the Netherlands. An immense force, flushed with victory, and commanded by the greatest generals of

Defeats of the  
French armies.

the age, was on the borders of France. Louis had been forced to humble himself before the conquerors. He had even offered to abandon the cause of his grandson; and his offer had been rejected. But a great turn in affairs was approaching.

The English administration which had commenced the war against the House of Bourbon was an administration composed of Tories. But the war was a

**A Whig war.** Whig war. It was the favourite scheme of William, the Whig King. Louis had provoked it by recognizing, as sovereign of England, a prince peculiarly hateful to the Whigs. It had placed England in a position of marked hostility to that power from which alone the Pretender could expect sufficient succour. It had joined England in the closest union to a Protestant and Republican state, to a state which had assisted in bringing about the Revolution, and which was willing to guarantee the execution of the Act of Settlement. Marlborough and Godolphin found that they were more zealously supported by their old opponents than by their old associates. Those ministers who were zealous for the war were gradually converted to Whiggism. The rest dropped off, and were succeeded by Whigs. Cowper became Chancellor. Sunderland, in spite of the very just antipathy of Anne, was made Secretary of State. On the death of the Prince of Denmark a more extensive change took place. Wharton became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Somers President of the Council. At length the administration was wholly in the hands of the Low Church party.

In the year 1710 a violent change took place. The Queen had always been a Tory at heart. Her religious feelings were all on the side of the Established Church. Her family feelings pleaded in favour of her exiled brother. Her selfish feelings disposed her to favour the zealots of prerogative. The affection which she felt for the Duchess of Marlborough was the great security of the Whigs. That affection had at length turned to deadly aversion. While the great party which had long swayed the destinies of Europe was undermined by bedchamber women at St. James's, a violent storm gathered in the country. A foolish parson had preached a foolish sermon against the principles of the Revolution. The wisest

members of the government were for letting the man alone. But Godolphin, inflamed with all the zeal of a new-made Whig, and exasperated by a nickname which was applied to him in this unfortunate discourse, insisted that the preacher should be impeached. The exhortations of the mild and sagacious Somers were disregarded. The impeachment was brought; the doctor was convicted; and the accusers were ruined. The clergy came to the rescue of the persecuted clergyman. The country gentlemen came to the rescue of the clergy. A display of Tory feelings, such as England had not witnessed since the closing years of Charles the Second's reign, appalled the Ministers, and gave boldness to the Queen. She turned out the Whigs, called Harley and St. John to power, and dissolved the Parliament. The elections went strongly against the late government. Stanhope, who had been, in his absence, put in nomination for Westminster, was defeated by a Tory candidate. The new Ministers, finding themselves masters of the new Parliament, were induced by the strongest motives to conclude a peace with France. The whole system of alliance in which the country was engaged was a Whig system. The general by whom the English armies had constantly been led to victory, and for whom it was impossible to find a substitute, was now, whatever he might formerly have been, a Whig general. If Marlborough were discarded it was probable that some great disaster would follow. Yet if he were to retain his command, every great action which he might perform would raise the credit of the party in opposition.

A peace was therefore concluded between England and the Princes of the House of Bourbon. Of that peace Lord Mahon speaks in terms of the severest reprehension. He is, indeed, an excellent Whig of the time of the first Lord Stanhope. "I cannot but pause for a moment," says he, "to observe how much the course of a century has inverted the meaning of our party nicknames, how much a modern Tory resembles a Whig of Queen Anne's reign, and a Tory of Queen Anne's reign a modern Whig."

We grant one half of Lord Mahon's proposition: from the other half we altogether dissent. We allow that a modern Tory resembles, in many things, a Whig

Inverted meanings.

of Queen Anne's reign. It is natural that such should be the case. The worst things of one age often resemble the best things of another. A modern shopkeeper's house is as well furnished as the house of a considerable merchant in Anne's reign. Very plain people now wear finer cloth than Beau Fielding or Beau Edgeworth could have procured in Queen Anne's reign. We would rather trust to the apothecary of a modern village than to the physician of a large town in Anne's reign. A modern boarding school miss could tell the most learned professor of Anne's reign some things in geography, astronomy, and chemistry, which would surprise him.

The science of government is an experimental science; and therefore it is, like all other experimental sciences, a progressive science. Lord Mahon would have been a very good Whig in the days of Harley. But Harley, whom Lord Mahon censures so severely, was very Whiggish when compared even with Clarendon; and Clarendon was quite a democrat when compared with Lord Burleigh. If Lord Mahon lives, as we hope he will, fifty years longer, we have no doubt that, as he now boasts of the resemblance which the Tories of our time bear to the Whigs of the Revolution, he will then boast of the resemblance borne by the Tories of 1832 to those immortal patriots, the Whigs of the Reform Bill.

Society, we believe, is constantly advancing in knowledge. The tail is now where the head was some generations ago. But the head and the tail still keep their distance. A nurse of this century is as wise as a justice of the quorum and cust-alorum in Shallow's time. The wooden spoon of this year would puzzle a senior wrangler of the reign of George the Second. A boy from the National School reads and spells better than half the knights of the shire in the October Club. But there is still as wide a difference as ever between justices and nurses, senior wranglers and wooden spoons, members of Parliament and children at charity schools. In the same way, though a Tory may now be very like what a Whig was a hundred and twenty years ago, the Whig is as much in advance of the Tory as ever. The stag, in the Treatise on the Bathos, who "feared his hind feet would o'ertake the fore," was

not more mistaken than Lord Mahon, if he thinks that he has really come up with the Whigs. The absolute position of the parties has been altered; the relative position remains unchanged. Through the whole of that great movement, which began before these party names existed, and which will continue after they have become obsolete, through the whole of that great movement of which the Charter of John, the institution of the House of Commons, the extinction of Villanage, the separation from the see of Rome, the expulsion of the Stuarts, the reform of the Representative System, are successive stages, there have been, under some name or other, two sets of men, those who were before their age, and those who were behind it, those who were the wisest among their contemporaries, and those who gloried in being no wiser than their great grandfathers. It is delightful to think, that, in due time, the last of those who straggle in the rear of the great march will occupy the place now occupied by the advanced guard. The Tory Parliament of 1710 would have passed for a most Liberal Parliament in the days of Elizabeth; and there are at present few members of the Conservative Club who would not have been fully qualified to sit with Halifax and Somers at the Kit-cat.

Though, therefore, we admit that a modern Tory bears some resemblance to a Whig of Queen Anne's reign, we can by no means admit that a Tory of Anne's reign resembled a modern Whig. Have the modern Whigs passed laws for the purpose of closing the entrance of the House of Commons against the new interests created by trade? Do the modern Whigs hold the doctrine of divine right? Have the modern Whigs laboured to exclude all Dissenters from office and power? The modern Whigs are, indeed, at the present moment, like the Tories of 1712, desirous of peace, and of close union with France. But is there no difference between the France of 1712 and the France of 1832? Is France now the stronghold of the "Popish tyranny" and the "arbitrary power" against which our ancestors fought and prayed? Lord Mahon will find, we think, that his parallel is, in all essential circumstances, as incorrect as that which Fluellen drew between Macedon and Monmouth, or as that which an ingenious Tory lately discovered between

Absolute and relative positions.

Modern Whigs.



Archbishop Williams and Archbishop Vernon.

We agree with Lord Mahon in thinking highly of the Whigs of Queen Anne's reign. But that part of their conduct which he selects for especial praise is precisely the part which we think most objectionable. We revere them as the great champions of political and of intellectual liberty. It is true that, when raised to power, they were not exempt from the faults which power naturally engenders. It is true that they were men born in the seventeenth century, and that they were therefore ignorant of many truths which are familiar to the men of the nineteenth century. But they were, what the reformers of the Church were before them, and what the reformers of the House of Commons have been since, the leaders of their species in a right direction. It is true that they did not allow to political discussion that latitude which to us appears reasonable and safe; but to them we owe the removal of the Censorship. It is true that they did not carry the principle of religious liberty to its full extent; but to them we owe the Toleration Act.

Though, however, we think that the Whigs of Anne's reign were, as a body, far superior in wisdom and public virtue to their contemporaries the Tories, we by no means hold ourselves bound to defend all the measures of our favourite party. A life of action, if it is to be useful, must be a life of compromise. But speculation admits of no compromise. A public man is often under the necessity of consenting to measures which he dislikes, lest he should endanger the success of measures which he thinks of vital importance. But the historian lies under no such necessity. On the contrary, it is one of his most sacred duties to point out clearly the errors of those whose general conduct he admires.

It seems to us, then, that on the great question which divided England during the last four years of Anne's reign, the Tories were in the right, and the Whigs in the wrong. That question was, whether England ought to conclude peace without exacting from Philip a resignation of the Spanish crown?

No Parliamentary struggle, from the time of the Exclusion Bill to the time of

the Reform Bill, has been so violent as that which took place between the authors of the Treaty of Utrecht and the War Party. The Commons were for peace; the Lords were for vigorous hostilities. The Queen was compelled to choose which of her two highest prerogatives she would exercise, whether she would create Peers, or dissolve the Parliament. The ties of party superseded the ties of neighbourhood and of blood. The members of the hostile factions would scarcely speak to each other, or bow to each other. The women appeared at the theatres bearing the badges of their political sect. The schism extended to the most remote counties of England. Talents, such as had seldom before been displayed in political controversy, were enlisted in the service of the hostile parties. On one side was Steele, gay, lively, drunk with animal spirits and with factious animosity, and Addison, with his polished satire, his inexhaustible fertility of fancy, and his graceful simplicity of style. In the front of the opposite ranks appeared a darker and fiercer spirit, the apostate politician, the ribald priest, the perjured, lover, a heart burning with hatred against the whole human race, a mind richly stored with images from the dunghill and the lazar-house. The ministers triumphed, and the peace was concluded. Then came the reaction. A new sovereign ascended the throne. The Whigs enjoyed the confidence of the King and of the Parliament. The unjust severity with which the Tories had treated Marlborough and Walpole was more than retaliated. Harley and Prior were thrown into prison; Bolingbroke and Ormond were compelled to take refuge in a foreign land. The wounds inflicted in this desperate conflict continued to rankle for many years. It was long before the members of either party could discuss the question of the peace of Utrecht with calmness and impartiality. That the Whig Ministers had sold us to the Dutch; that the Tory Ministers had sold us to the French; that the war had been carried on only to fill the pockets of Marlborough; that the peace had been concluded only to facilitate the return of the Pretender; these imputations and many others, utterly unfounded, or grossly exaggerated, were hurled backward and forward by the political disputants of the last century. In our time the question may be discussed without irritation. We will state, as concisely as possible, the

Violence of political feeling.

reasons which have led us to the conclusion at which we have arrived.

The dangers which were to be apprehended from the peace were two: first,

Dangers the danger that Philip might be induced, by apprehended. feelings of private affection, to act in strict concert with the elder branch of his house to favour the French trade at the expense of England, and to side with the French government in future wars; secondly, the danger that the posterity of the Duke of Burgundy might become extinct, that Philip might become heir by blood to the French crown, and that thus two great monarchies might be united under one sovereign.

The first danger appears to us altogether chimerical. Family affection has seldom produced much effect on the policy of princes. The state of Europe at the time of the peace of Utrecht proved that in politics the ties of interest are much stronger than those of consanguinity or affinity. The Elector of Bavaria had been driven from his dominions by his father-in-law; Victor Amadeus was in arms against his sons-in-law; Anne was seated on a throne from which she had assisted to push a most indulgent father. It is true that Philip had been accustomed from childhood to regard his grandfather with profound veneration. It was probable, therefore, that the influence of Louis at Madrid would be very great. But Louis was more than seventy years old; he could not live long; his heir was an infant in the cradle. There was surely no reason to think that the policy of the King of Spain would be swayed by his regard for a nephew whom he had never seen.

In fact, soon after the peace, the two branches of the House of Bourbon began to quarrel. A close alliance was formed between Philip and Charles, lately competitors for the Castilian crown. A Spanish princess, betrothed to the King of France, was sent back in the most insulting manner to her native country; and a decree was put forth by the Court of Madrid commanding every Frenchman to leave Spain. It is true that, fifty years after the peace of Utrecht, an alliance of peculiar strictness was formed between the French and Spanish governments.

The Family Compact. But it is certain that both governments were actuated on that occasion, not by domestic affection, but by common interests and common enmities. Their

compact, though called the Family Compact, was as purely a political compact as the league of Cambria or the league of Pilnitz.

The second danger was that Philip might have succeeded to the crown of his native country. This did not happen, but it might have happened; and at one time it seemed very likely to happen. A sickly child alone stood between the King of Spain and the heritage of Louis the Fourteenth. Philip, it is true, solemnly renounced his claim to the French crown. But the manner in which he had obtained possession of the Spanish crown had proved the inefficacy of such renunciations. The French lawyers declared Philip's renunciation null, as being inconsistent with the fundamental law of the realm. The French people would probably have sided with him whom they would have considered as the rightful heir. Saint Simon, though much less zealous for hereditary monarchy than most of his countrymen, and though strongly attached to the Regent, declared, in the presence of that prince, that he never would support the claims of the House of Orleans against those of the King of Spain. "If such," he said, "be my feelings, what must be the feelings of others?" Bolingbroke, it is certain, was fully convinced that the renunciation was worth no more than the paper on which it was written, and demanded it only for the purpose of blinding the English Parliament and people.

Yet, though it was at one time probable that the posterity of the Duke of Burgundy would become extinct, and though it is almost certain that, if the posterity of the Duke of Burgundy had become extinct, Philip would have successfully preferred his claim to the crown of France, we still defend the principle of the Treaty of Utrecht.

Principle of the Treaty of Utrecht. In the first place, Charles had, soon after the battle of Villa-Viciosa, inherited, by the death of his elder brother, all the dominions of the House of Austria. Surely, if to these dominions he had added the whole monarchy of Spain, the balance of power would have been seriously endangered. The union of the Austrian dominions and Spain would not, it is true, have been so alarming an event as the union of France and Spain. But Charles was actually Emperor. Philip was not, and never might be, King of

France. The certainty of the less evil might well be set against the chance of the greater evil.

But, in fact, we do not believe that Spain would long have remained under the government either of an Emperor or of a King of France. The character of

the Spanish people was a better security to the nations of Europe than any will, any instrument

of renunciation, or any treaty. The same energy which the people of Castile had put forth when Madrid was occupied by the Allied armies, they would have again put forth as soon as it appeared that their country was about to become a French province. Though they were no longer masters abroad, they were by no means disposed to see foreigners set over them at home. If Philip had attempted to govern Spain by mandates from Versailles, a second Grand Alliance would easily have effected what the first had failed to accomplish. The Spanish nation would have rallied against him as zealously as it had before rallied round him. And of this he seems to have been fully aware. For many years the favourite hope of his heart was that he might ascend the throne of his grandfather; but he seems never to have thought it possible that he could reign at once in the country of his adoption and in the country of his birth.

These were the dangers of the peace; and they seem to us to be of no very formidable kind. Against these dangers are to be set off the evils of war and the risk of failure. The evils of the war, the waste of life, the suspension of trade, the expenditure of wealth, the accumulation of debt, require no illustration. The chances of failure it is difficult at this distance of time to calculate with accuracy. But we think that an estimate approximat-

ing to the truth may, without much difficulty, be formed. The Allies

had been victorious in Germany, Italy, and Flanders. It was by no means improbable that they might fight their way into the very heart of France. But at no time since the commencement of the war had their prospects been so dark in that country which was the very object of the struggle. In Spain they held only a few square leagues. The temper of the

great majority of the nation was decidedly hostile to them. If they had persisted, if they had obtained success equal to their highest expectations, if they had gained a series of victories as splendid as those of Blenheim and Ramilies, if Paris had fallen, if Louis had been a prisoner, we still doubt whether they would have accomplished their object. They would still have had to carry on interminable hostilities against the whole population of a country which affords peculiar facilities to irregular warfare, and in which invading armies suffer more from famine than from the sword.

We are, therefore, for the peace of Utrecht. It is true that we by no means admire the statesmen who concluded that peace. Harley, we believe, was a solemn trifler, St. John a brilliant knave.

The great body of their followers consisted of the

Opinion about Harley and St. John.

country clergy and the country gentry: two classes of men who were then inferior in intelligence to decent shopkeepers or farmers of our time. Parson Barnabas, Parson Truliber, Sir Wilful Witwould, Sir Francis Wronghead, Squire Western, Squire Sullen, such were the people who composed the main strength of the Tory party for sixty years after the Revolution. It is true that the means by which the Tories came into power in 1710 were most disreputable. It is true that the manner in which they used their power was often unjust and cruel. It is true that, in order to bring about their favourite project of peace, they resorted to slander and deception without the slightest scruple. It is true that they passed off on the British nation a renunciation which they knew to be invalid. It is true that they gave up the Catalans to the vengeance of Philip, in a manner inconsistent with humanity and national honour. But on the great question of Peace or War, we cannot but think that, though their motives may have been selfish and malevolent, their decision was beneficial to the state.

But we have already exceeded our limits. It remains only for us to bid Lord Mahon heartily farewell, and to assure him that, whatever dislike we may feel for his political opinions, we shall always meet him with pleasure on the neutral ground of literature.

# WALPOLE'S LETTERS TO SIR HORACE MANN.

(EDINBURGH REVIEW, OCT., 1833.)

*Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Oxford, to Sir Horace Mann, British Envoy at the Court of Tuscany.* Now first published from the Originals in the possession of the Earl of WALDGRAVE. Edited by LORD DOVER. 3 vols. 8vo. London: 1833.

WE cannot transcribe this title-page without strong feelings of regret. The editing of these volumes was the last of the useful and modest services rendered to literature by a nobleman of amiable manners, of untarnished public and private character, and of cultivated mind. On this, as on other occasions, Lord Dover performed his part diligently, judiciously, and without the slightest ostentation. He had two merits which are rarely found together in a commentator. He was content to be merely a commentator, to keep in the background, and to leave the foreground to the author whom he had undertaken to illustrate. Yet, though willing to be an attendant, he was by no means a slave; nor did he consider it as part of his editorial duty to see no faults in the writer to whom he faithfully and assiduously rendered the humblest literary offices.

Merits of Lord Dover's writing.

Faults of head and heart.

The faults of Horace Walpole's head and heart are indeed sufficiently glaring. His writings, it is true, rank as high among the delicacies of intellectual epicures as the Strasburg pies among the dishes described in the *Almanche des Gourmands*. But as the *pate-de-foie-gras* owes its excellence to the diseases of the wretched animal which furnishes it, and would be good for nothing if it were not made of livers preternaturally swollen, so none but an unhealthy and disorganized mind could have produced such literary luxuries as the works of Walpole.

He was, unless we have formed a very

erroneous judgment of his character, the most eccentric, the most artificial, the most fastidious, the most capricious of men. His mind was a bundle of inconsistent whims and affectations. His features were covered by mask within mask. When the outer disguise of obvious affectation was removed, you were still as far as ever from seeing the real man. He played innumerable parts, and over-acted them all. When he talked misanthropy, he out-Timoned Timon. When he talked philanthropy, he left Howard at an immeasurable distance. He scoffed at courts, and kept a chronicle of their most trifling scandal; at society, and was blown about by its slightest veerings of opinion; at literary fame, and left fair copies of his private letters, with copious notes, to be published after his disease; at rank, and never for a moment forgot that he was an Honourable; at the practice of entail, and tasked the ingenuity of conveyancers to tie up his villa in the strictest settlement.

Horace Walpole's character.

The conformation of his mind was such that whatever was little seemed to him great, and whatever was great seemed to him little. Serious business was a trifle to him, and trifles were his serious business. To chat with blue stockings, to write little copies of complimentary verses on little occasions, to superintend a private press, to preserve from natural decay the perishable topics of Ranelagh and White's, to record divorces and bets, Miss Chudleigh's absurdities, and George

Business and trifles.

Selwyn's good sayings, to decorate a grotesque house with pie-crust battlements, to procure rare engravings and antique chimney-boards, to match odd gauntlets, to lay out a maze of walks within five acres of ground, these were the grave employments of his long life. From these he turned to politics as to an amusement. After the labours of the print-shop and the auction-room, he unbent his mind in the House of Commons. And, having indulged in the recreation of making laws and voting millions, he returned to more important pursuits, to researches after Queen Mary's comb, Wolsey's red hat, the pipe which Van Tromp smoked during his last sea-fight, and the spur which King William struck into the flank of Sorrel.

In everything in which he busied himself, in the fine arts, in literature, in public affairs, he was drawn by some strange attraction from the great to the little, and from the useful to the odd. The

**Interest in trifles.**

politics in which he took the keenest interests, were politics scarcely deserving of the name. The growlings of George the Second, the flirtations of Princess Emily with the Duke of Grafton, the amours of Prince Frederic and Lady Middlesex, the squabbles between Gold Stick in Waiting and the Master of the Buckhounds, the disagreements between the tutors of Prince George, these matters engaged almost all the attention which Walpole could spare from matters more important still, from bidding for Zinckes and Petitots, from cheapening fragments of tapestry and handles of old lances, from joining bits of painted glass, and from setting up memorials of departed cats and dogs. While he was fetching and carrying the gossip of Kensington Palace and Carlton House, he fancied that he was engaged in politics, and when he recorded that gossip, he fancied that he was writing history.

He was, as he has himself told us, fond of faction as an amusement. He loved mischief: but he loved quiet; and he

**Love of mischief.**

was constantly on the watch for opportunities of gratifying both his tastes at once. He sometimes contrived, without showing himself, to disturb the course of ministerial negotiations, and to spread confusion through the political circles. He does not himself pretend that, on these occasions, he was actuated by public spirit; nor does he appear to

have had any private advantage in view. He thought it a good practical joke to set public men together by the ears; and he enjoyed their perplexities, their accusations, and their recriminations, as a malicious boy enjoys the embarrassment of a misdirected traveller.

About politics, in the high sense of the word, he knew nothing, and cared nothing. He called himself a Whig. His father's son could scarcely assume any other name. It pleased him also to affect a foolish aversion to kings as kings, and a foolish love and admiration of

**Foolish affectations.**

rebels as rebels; and perhaps, while kings were not in danger, and while rebels were not in being, he really believed that he held the doctrines which he professed. To go no further than the letters now before us, he is perpetually boasting to his friend Mann of his aversion to royalty and to royal persons. He calls the crime of Damien "that least bad of murders, the murder of a king." He hung up in his villa an engraving of the death-warrant of Charles, with the inscription "*Major Charta.*" Yet the most superficial knowledge of history might have taught him that the Restoration, and the crimes and follies of the twenty-eight years which followed the Restoration, were the effects of this Greater Charter. Nor was there much in the means by which that instrument was obtained that could gratify a judicious lover of liberty. A man must hate kings very bitterly, before he can think it desirable that the representatives of the people should be turned out of doors by dragoons, in order to get at a king's head. Walpole's Whiggism,

however, was of a very harmless kind. He kept it, as he kept the old spears and helmets at Strawberry Hill, merely for show. He would just as soon have thought of taking down the arms of the ancient Templars and Hospitallers from the walls of his hall, and setting off on a crusade to the Holy Land, as of acting in the spirit of those daring warriors and statesmen, great even in their errors, whose names and seals were affixed to the warrant which he prized so highly. He liked revolution and regicide only when they were a hundred years old. His republicanism, like the courage of a bully, or the love of a fribble, was strong and ardent when there was no occasion for it, and subsided

when he had an opportunity of bringing it to the proof. As soon as the revolutionary spirit really began to stir in Europe, as soon as the hatred of kings became something more than a sonorous phrase, he was frightened into a fanatical royalist, and became one of the most extravagant alarmists of those wretched times. In truth, his talk about liberty, whether he knew it or not, was from the beginning a mere cant, the remains of a phraseology which had meant something in the mouths of those from whom he had learned it, but which, in his mouth, meant about as much as the oath by which the Knights of some modern orders bind themselves to redress the wrongs of all injured ladies. He had been fed in his boyhood with Whig speculations on government. He must often have seen, at Houghton or in Downing Street, men who had been Whigs when it was as dangerous to be a Whig as to be a high-wayman, men who had voted for the Exclusion Bill, who had been concealed in garrets and cellars after the battle of Sedgemoor, and who had set their names to the declaration that they would live and die with the Prince of Orange. He had acquired the language of these men, and he repeated it by rote, though it was at variance with all his tastes and feelings; just as some old Jacobite families persisted in praying for the Pretender, and in passing their glasses over the water decanter when they drank the King's health, long after they had become loyal supporters of the government of George the Third. He was a Whig by the accident of hereditary connection; but he was essentially a courtier; and not the less a courtier because he pretended to sneer at the objects which excited his admiration and

Walpole's  
real tastes.

envy. His real tastes perpetually show themselves through the thin disguise. While professing all the contempt of Bradshaw or Ludlow for crowned heads, he took the trouble to write a book concerning royal authors. He pryed with the utmost anxiety into the most minute particulars relating to the Royal family. When he was a child he was haunted with a longing to see George the First, and gave his mother no peace until she had found a way of gratifying his curiosity. The same feeling, covered with a thousand disguises, attended him to the grave. No observa-

tion that dropped from the lips of Majesty seemed to him too trifling to be recorded. The French songs of Prince Frederic, compositions certainly not deserving of preservation on account of their intrinsic merit, have been carefully preserved for us by this contemner of royalty. In truth, every page of Walpole's works betrays him. This Diogenes, who would be thought to prefer his tub to a palace, and who has nothing to ask of the masters of Windsor and Versailles but that they will stand out of his light, is a gentleman-usher at heart.

He had, it is plain, an uneasy consciousness of the frivolity of his favourite pursuits; and this consciousness produced one of the most diverting of his ten thousand affectations. His busy idleness, his indifference to matters which the world generally regards as important, his passion for trifles, he thought fit to dignify with the name of philosophy. He spoke of himself as of a man whose equanimity was

Philosophy  
of Walpole.

proof to ambitious hopes and fears, who had learned to rate power, wealth, and fame at their true value, and whom the conflict of parties, the rise and fall of statesmen, the ebb and flow of public opinion, moved only to a smile of mingled compassion and disdain. It was owing to the peculiar elevation of his character that he cared about a pinnacle of lath and plaster more than about the Middlesex election, and about a miniature of Grammont more than about the American Revolution. Pitt and Murray might talk themselves hoarse about trifles. But questions of government and war were too insignificant to detain a mind which was occupied in recording the scandal of clubrooms and the whispers of the backstairs, and which was even capable of selecting and disposing chairs of ebony and shields of rhinoceros-skin.

One of his innumerable whims was an extreme dislike to be considered a man of letters. Not that he was indifferent to literary fame. Far from it, Contradictory whims.

Scarcely any writer has ever troubled himself so much about the appearance which his works were to make before posterity. But he had set his heart on incompatible objects. He wished to be a celebrated author, and yet to be a mere idle gentleman, one of those Epicurean gods of the earth who do nothing at all, and who pass their existence in the contem-

plation of their own perfections. He did not like to have anything in common with the wretches who lodged in the little courts behind St. Martin's Church, and stole out on Sundays to dine with their bookseller. He avoided the society of authors. He spoke with lordly contempt of the most distinguished among them. He tried to find out some way of writing books, as M. Jourdain's father sold cloth, without derogating from his character of *Gentilhomme*. "Lui, marchand? C'est pure médisance; il ne l'a jamais été. Tout ce qu'il faisait, c'est qu'il était fort obligeant, fort officieux; et comme il se connaissait fort bien en étoffes, il en allait choisir de tous les côtés, les faisait apporter chez lui, et en donnait à ses amis pour de l'argent." There are several amusing instances of his feeling on this subject in the letters now before us. Mann had complimented him on the learning which appeared in the "Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors;" and it is curious to see how impatiently Walpole bore the imputation of having attended to anything so unfashionable as the improvement of his mind. "I know nothing. How should I? I who have always lived in the big busy world; who lie a-bed all the morning, calling it morning as long as you please; who sup in company; who have played at faro half my life, and now at loo till two and three in the morning; who have always loved pleasure; haunted auctions. . . . How I have laughed when some of the Magazines have called me the learned gentleman. Pray don't be like the Magazines." This folly might be pardoned in a boy. But a man of forty-three, as Walpole then was, ought to be quite as much ashamed of playing at loo till three every morning, as of being that vulgar thing, a learned gentleman.

The literary character has undoubtedly its full share of faults, and of very serious and offensive faults. If Walpole had avoided those faults, we could have pardoned the fastidiousness with which he declined all fellowship with men of learning. But from those faults Walpole was not one jot more free than the garreteers from whose contact he shrank. Of literary meannesses and literary vices, his life and his works contain as many instances as the life and the works of any member of Johnson's club. The fact is, that Walpole had the

faults of Grub Street, with a large addition from St. James's Street, the vanity, the jealousy, the irritability of a man of letters, the affected superciliousness and apathy of a man of *ton*.

His judgment of literature, of contemporary literature especially, was altogether perverted by his aristocratical feelings. No writer surely was ever guilty of so much false and absurd criticism. He almost invariably speaks with contempt of those books which are now universally allowed to be the best that appeared in his time; and, on the other hand, he speaks of writers of rank and fashion as if they were entitled to the same precedence in literature which would have been allowed to them in a drawing-room. In these letters, for example, he says that he would rather have written the most absurd lines in Lee than Thomson's Seasons. The periodical paper called the *World*, on the other hand, was by "our first writers." Who, then, were the first writers of England in the year 1753? Walpole has told us in a note. Our readers will probably guess that Hume, Fielding, Smollett, Richardson, Johnson, Warburton, Collins, Akenside, Gray, Dyer, Young, Warton, Mason, or some of those distinguished men, were in the lists. Not one of them. Our first writers, it seems, were Lord Chesterfield, Lord Bath, Mr. W. Whithed, Sir Charles Williams, Mr. Soame Jenyns, Mr. Cambridge, Mr. Coventry. Of these seven personages, Whithed was the lowest in station, but was the most accomplished tuft-hunter of his time. Coventry was of a noble family. The other five had among them two seats in the House of Lords, two seats in the House of Commons, three seats in the Privy Council, a baronetcy, a blue riband, a red riband, about a hundred thousand pounds a year, and not ten pages that are worth reading. The writings of Whithed, Cambridge, Coventry, and Lord Bath are forgotten. Soame Jenyns is remembered chiefly by Johnson's review of the foolish Essay on the Origin of Evil. Lord Chesterfield stands much lower in the estimation of posterity than he would have done if his letters had never been published. The lampoons of Sir Charles Williams are now read only by the curious, and, though not without occasional flashes of wit, have always seemed to us, we must own, very poor performances.

Absurd  
criticism.

Walpole judged of French literature after the same fashion. He understood and loved the French language. Indeed, he loved it too well. His style is more

**Galicisms.** deeply tainted with Gallicism than that of any other English writer with whom we are acquainted. His composition often reads, for a page together, like a rude translation from the French; we meet every minute with such sentences as these, "One knows what temperaments Annibal Caracci painted." "The impertinent personage!" "She is dead rich." "Lord Dalkeith is dead of the small-pox in three days." "What was ridiculous, the man who seconded the motion happened to be shut up." "It will now be seen whether he or they are most patriot."

His love of the French language was of a peculiar kind. He loved it as having been for a century the vehicle of all the

**Love of the French language.** polite nothings of Europe, as the sign by which the Freemasons of fashion recognized each other in every capital from Petersburg to Naples, as the language of raillery, as the language of anecdote, as the language of memoirs, as the language of correspondence. Its higher uses he altogether disregarded. The literature of France has been to ours what Aaron was to Moses, the expositor of great truths which would else have perished for want of a voice to utter them with distinctness. The relation which existed between Mr. Bentham and M. Dumont is an exact illustration of the intellectual relation in which the two countries stand to each other. The great discoveries in physics, in metaphysics, in political science, are ours. But scarcely any foreign nation except France has received them from us by direct communication. Isolated by our situation, isolated by our manners, we found truth, but we did not impart it. France has been the interpreter between England and mankind.

In the time of Walpole, this process of interpretation was in full activity. The great French writers were busy in proclaiming through Europe the names of

**Progress of English principles.** Bacon, of Newton, and of Locke. The English principles of toleration, the English respect for personal liberty, the English doctrine that all power is a trust for the public good, were making rapid progress. There is

scarcely anything in history so interesting as that great stirring up of the mind of France, that shaking of the foundations of all established opinions, that uprooting of old truth and old error. It was plain that mighty principles were at work whether for evil or for good. It was plain that a great change in the whole social system was at hand. Fanatics of one kind might anticipate a golden age, in which men should live under the simple dominion of reason, in perfect equality and perfect amity, without property, or marriage, or king, or God. A fanatic of another kind might see nothing in the doctrines of the philosophers but anarchy and atheism, might cling more closely to every old abuse, and might regret the good old days when St. Dominic and Simon de Montfort put down the growing heresies of Provence. A wise man would have seen with regret the excesses into which the reformers were running; but he would have done justice to their genius and to their philanthropy. He would have censured their errors; but he would have remembered that, as Milton had said, error is but opinion in the making. While he condemned their hostility to religion, he would have acknowledged that it was the natural effect of a system under which religion had been constantly exhibited to them in forms which common sense rejected and at which humanity shuddered. While he condemned some of their political doctrines as incompatible with all law, all property, and all civilization, he would have acknowledged that the subjects of Louis the Fifteenth had every excuse which men could have for being eager to pull down, and for being ignorant of the far higher art of setting up. While anticipating a fierce conflict, a great and wide-wasting destruction, he would yet have looked forward to the final close with a good hope for France and for mankind.

Walpole had neither hopes nor fears. Though the most Frenchified English writer of the eighteenth century, he troubled himself little about the portents which were daily to be discerned in the French literature of his time. While the most eminent Frenchmen were studying with enthusiastic delight English politics and English philosophy, he was studying as intently the gossip of the old court of France. The fashions and scandal of Versailles and Marli, fashions and

**Frivolous interests.**



scandal a hundred years old, occupied him infinitely more than a great moral revolution which was taking place in his sight. He took a prodigious interest in every noble sharper whose vast volume of wig and infinite length of riband had figured at the dressing or at the tucking up of Louis the Fourteenth, and of every profligate woman of quality who had carried her train of lovers backward and forward from king to parliament, and from parliament to king, during the wars of the *Fronde*. These were the people of whom he treasured up the smallest memorial, of whom he loved to hear the most trifling anecdote, and for whose likenesses he would have given any price. Of the great French writers of his own time, Montesquieu is the only one of whom he speaks with enthusiasm. And even of Montesquieu he speaks with less enthusiasm than of that abject thing, Crébillon the younger, a scribbler as licentious as Louvet and as dull as Rapin. A man must be strangely constituted who can take interest in pedantic journals of the blockades laid by the Duke of A. to the hearts of the Marquise de B. and the Comtesse de C. This trash Walpole extols in language sufficiently high for the merits of Don Quixote. He wished to possess a likeness of Crébillon; and Liotard, the first painter of miniatures then living, was employed to preserve the features of the profligate dunce. The admirer of the *Sopha* and of the *Lettres Athéniennes* had little respect to spare for the men who were then at the head of French literature. He kept carefully out of their way. He tried to keep other people from paying them any attention. He could not deny that Voltaire and Rousseau were clever men; but he took every opportunity of depreciating them. Of D'Alembert he spoke with a contempt which, when the intellectual powers of the two men are compared, seems exquisitely ridiculous. D'Alembert complained that he was accused of having written Walpole's squib against Rousseau. "I hope," says Walpole, "that nobody will attribute D'Alembert's works to me." He was in little danger.

It is impossible to deny, however, that Walpole's writings have real merit, and

merit of a very rare, though not of a very high kind. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say that,

though nobody would for a moment compare Claude to Raphael, there would

be another Raphael before there was another Claude. And we own that we expect to see fresh Humes and fresh Burkes before we again fall in with that peculiar combination of moral and intellectual qualities to which the writings of Walpole owe their extraordinary popularity.

It is easy to describe him by negatives. He had not a creative imagination. He had not a pure taste. He was not a great reasoner. Described by negatives. There is indeed scarcely any writer in whose works it would be possible to find so many contradictory judgments, so many sentences of extravagant nonsense. Nor was it only in his familiar correspondence that he wrote in this flighty and inconsistent manner, but in long and elaborate books, in books repeatedly transcribed and intended for the public eye. We will give an instance or two; for without instances readers not very familiar with his works will scarcely understand our meaning. In the *Anecdotes of Painting*, he states, very truly, that the art declined after the commencement of the civil wars. He proceeds to enquire why this happened. The explanation, we should have thought, would have been easily found. He might have mentioned the loss of a king who was the most munificent and judicious patron that the fine arts have ever had in England, the troubled state of the country, the distressed condition of many of the aristocracy, perhaps also the austerity of the victorious party. These circumstances, we conceive, fully account for the phenomenon. But this solution was not odd enough to satisfy Walpole. He discovers another cause for the decline of the art, the want of models. Nothing worth painting, it seems, was left to paint. "How picturesque," he exclaims, "was the figure of Anabaptist!"—as if puritanism had put out the sun and withered the trees; as if the civil wars had blotted out the expression of character and passion from the human lip and brow; as if many of the men whom Vandyke painted had not been living in the time of the Commonwealth, with faces little the worse for wear; as if many of the beauties afterwards portrayed by Lely were not in their prime before the Restoration; as if the garb or the features of Cromwell and Milton were less picturesque than those of the round-faced peers, as like each other as eggs to eggs, who look out from the middle of the

periwigs of Kneller. In the Memoirs, again, Walpole sneers at the Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Third, for presenting a collection of books to one of the American colleges during the Seven Years' War, and says that, instead of books, his Royal Highness ought to have sent arms and ammunition; as if a war ought to suspend all study and all education; or as if it were the business of the Prince of Wales to supply the colonies with military stores out of his own pocket. We have perhaps dwelt too long on these passages; but we have done so because they are specimens of Walpole's manner. Everybody who reads his works with attention will find that they swarm with loose and foolish observations like those which we have cited; observations which might pass in conversation or in a hasty letter, but which are unpardonable in books deliberately written and repeatedly corrected.

He appears to have thought that he saw very far into men; but we are under the necessity of altogether dissenting from his opinion. We do not conceive that he had any power of discerning the finer shades of character. He practised an art, however, which, though easy and even vulgar, obtains for those who practise it the reputation of discernment with ninety-nine people out of a hundred. He sneered at everybody, put on every action the worst construction which it would bear, "spelt every man backward," to borrow the Lady Hero's phrase,—

The art of sneering.

shades of character. He practised an art, however, which, though easy and even vulgar, obtains for those who practise it the reputation of discernment with ninety-nine people out of a hundred. He sneered at everybody, put on every action the worst construction which it would bear, "spelt every man backward," to borrow the Lady Hero's phrase,—

"Turned every man the wrong side out,  
And never gave to truth and virtue that  
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth."

In this way any man may, with little sagacity and little trouble, be considered by those whose good opinion is not worth having as a great judge of character.

It is said that the hasty and rapacious Kneller used to send away the ladies who

Incomplete sketching.

sate to him as soon as he had sketched their faces, and to paint the figure and hands from his housemaid. In was in much the same way that Walpole portrayed the minds of others. He copied from the life only those glaring and obvious peculiarities which could not escape the most superficial observation. The rest of the canvas he filled up, in a careless dashing way, with knave and fool, mixed in such proportions as pleased Heaven. What a difference between these

daubs and the masterly portraits of Clarendon!

There are contradictions without end in the sketches of character which abound in Walpole's works. But if we were to form our opinion of his eminent contemporaries from a general survey of what he has written concerning them, we should say that Pitt was a strutting, ranting, mouthing actor, Charles Townshend an impudent and voluble jack-pudding, Murray a demure, cold-blooded, cowardly hypocrite, Hardwicke an insolent upstart, with the understanding of a pettifogger and the heart of a hangman, Temple an impertinent poltroon, Egmont a solemn coxcomb, Lyttelton a poor creature whose only wish was to go to heaven in a coronet, Onslow a pompous proser, Washington a braggart, Lord Camden sullen, Lord Townshend malevolent, Secker an atheist who had shammed Christian for a mitre, Whitefield an impostor who swindled his converts out of their watches. The Walpoles fare little better than their neighbours. Old Horace is constantly represented as a course, brutal, niggardly buffoon, and his son as worthy of such a father. In short, if we are to trust this discerning judge of human nature, England in his time contained little sense and no virtue, except what was distributed between himself, Lord Waldegrave, and Marshal Conway.

Of such a writer it is scarcely necessary to say, that his works are destitute of every charm which is derived from elevation, or from tenderness of sentiment. When he chose to be humane and magnanimous,—for he sometimes, by way of variety, tried this affectation,—he overdid his part most ludicrously. None

Unsuccessful affectation.

of his many disguises sat so awkwardly upon him. For example, he tells us that he did not choose to be intimate with Mr. Pitt. And why? Because Mr. Pitt had been among the persecutors of his father? Or because, as he repeatedly assures us, Mr. Pitt was a disagreeable man in private life? Not at all; but because Mr. Pitt was too fond of war, and was great with too little reluctance. Strange that a habitual scoffer like Walpole should imagine that this cant could impose on the dullest reader! If Molière had put such a speech into the mouth of Tartuffe, we should have said that the fiction was unskilful, and that Orgon

could not have been such a fool as to be taken in by it. Of the twenty-six years during which Walpole sat in Parliament, thirteen were years of war. Yet he did not, during all those thirteen years, utter a single word or give a single vote tending to peace. His most intimate friend, the only friend, indeed, to whom he appears to have been sincerely attached, Conway, was a soldier, was fond of his profession, and was perpetually entreating Mr. Pitt to give him employment. In this Walpole saw nothing but what was admirable. Conway was a hero for soliciting the command of expeditions which Mr. Pitt was a monster for sending out.

What then is the charm, the irresistible charm, of Walpole's writings? It consists, we think, in the art

An irresistible charm.

of amusing without exciting. He never convinces the reason, or fills the imagination, or touches the heart; but he keeps the mind of the reader constantly attentive and constantly entertained. He had a strange ingenuity peculiarly his own, an ingenuity which appeared in all that he did, in his building, in his gardening, in his upholstery, in the matter and in the manner of his writings. If we were to adopt the classification, not a very accurate classification, which Akenside has given of the pleasures of the imagination, we should say that with the Sublime and the Beautiful Walpole had nothing to do, but that the third province, the Odd, was his peculiar domain. The motto which he prefixed to his Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors might have been inscribed with perfect propriety over the door of every room in his house, and on the title-page of every one of his books; "Dove diavolo, Messer Ludovico, avete pigliate tante coglionerie?" In his villa, every apartment is a museum; every piece of furniture is a curiosity; there is something strange in the form of the shovel; there is a long story belonging to the bell-rope. We wander among a profusion of rarities, of trifling intrinsic value, but so quaint in fashion, or connected with such remarkable names and events, that they may well detain our attention for a moment. A moment is enough. Some new relic, some new unique, some new carved work, some new enamel, is forthcoming in an instant. One cabinet of trinkets is no sooner closed than another is opened. It is the same with Walpole's writings. It is not in their utility, it is not in their beauty, that their attraction

lies. They are to the works of great historians and poets, what Strawberry Hill is to the Museum of Sir Hans Sloane or to the Gallery of Florence. Walpole is constantly showing us things, not of very great value indeed, yet things which we are pleased to see, and which we can see nowhere else. They are baubles; but they are made curiosities either by his grotesque workmanship or by some association belonging to them. His style is one of those peculiar styles by which everybody is attracted, and which nobody can safely venture to imitate. He is a mannerist whose manner has become perfectly easy to him. His affectation is so habitual and so universal that it can hardly be called affectation. The affectation is the essence of the man. It pervades all his thoughts and all his expressions. If it were taken away, nothing would be left. He coins new words, distorts the sense of old words, and twists sentences into forms which make grammarians stare. But all this he does, not only with an air of ease, but as if he could not help doing it. His wit was, in its essential properties, of the some kind with that of Cowley and Donne. Like theirs, it consisted in an exquisite perception of points of analogy and points of contrast too subtle for common observation. Like them, Walpole perpetually startles us by the ease with which he yokes together ideas between which there would seem, at first sight, to be no connection. But he did not, like them, affect the gravity of a lecture, and draw his illustrations from the laboratory and from the schools. His tone was light and fltering; his topics were the topics of the club and the ball-room; and therefore his strange combinations and far-fetched allusions, though very closely resembling those which tire us to death in the poems of the time of Charles the First, are read with pleasure constantly new.

No man who has written so much is so seldom tiresome. In his books there are scarcely any of those passages which, in our school-days, we used to call *skip*. Yet he often wrote on subjects which are generally considered as dull, on subjects which men of great talents have in vain endeavoured to render popular. When we compare the Historic Doubts about Richard the Third with Whitaker's and Chalmers's books on a far more interesting question, the character of Mary Queen of Scots; when we compare the

Anecdotes of Painting with the works of Anthony Wood, of Nichols, of Granger,

Walpole's writings.

we at once see Walpole's superiority, not in industry, not in learning, not in accuracy, not in logical power, but in the art of writing what people will like to read. He rejects all but the attractive parts of his subject. He keeps only what is in itself amusing or what can be made so by the artifice of his diction. The coarser morsels of antiquarian learning he abandons to others, and sets out an entertainment worthy of a Roman epicure, an entertainment consisting of nothing but delicacies, the brains of singing birds, the roe of mullets, the sunny halves of peaches. This, we think, is the great merit of his romance. There is little skill in the delineation of the characters. Manfred is as commonplace a tyrant, Jerome as commonplace a confessor, Theodore as commonplace a young gentleman, Isabella and Matilda as commonplace a pair of young ladies, as are to be found in any of the thousand Italian castles in which *condottieri* have revelled or in which imprisoned duchesses have pined. We cannot say that we much admire the big man whose sword is dug up in one quarter of the globe, whose helmet drops from the clouds in another, and who, after clattering and rustling for some days, ends by kicking the house down. But the story, whatever its value may be, never flags for a single moment. There are no digressions, or unseasonable descriptions, or long speeches. Every sentence carries the action forward. The excitement is constantly renewed. Absurd as is the machinery, insipid as are the human actors, no reader probably ever thought the book dull.

Walpole's Letters are generally considered as his best performances, and, we think, with reason. His faults are far

Letters.

less offensive to us in his correspondence than in his books. His wild, absurd, and ever-changing opinions about men and things are easily pardoned in familiar letters. His bitter, scoffing, depreciating disposition does not show itself in so unmitigated a manner as in his Memoirs. A writer of letters must in general be civil and friendly to his correspondent at least, if to no other person.

He loved letter-writing, and had evidently studied it as an art. It was, in truth, the very kind of writing for such

a man, for a man very ambitious to rank among wits, yet nervously afraid that, while obtaining the reputation of a wit, he might lose caste as a gentleman. There was nothing vulgar in writing

A gentlemanly art.

a letter. Not even Ensign Northerton, not even the Captain described in Hamilton's Bawn,—and Walpole, though the author of many quartos, had some feelings in common with those gallant officers,—would have denied that a gentleman might sometimes correspond with a friend. Whether Walpole bestowed much labour on the composition of his letters, it is impossible to judge from internal evidence. There are passages which seem perfectly unstudied. But the appearance of ease may be the effect of labour. There are passages which have a very artificial air. But they may have been produced without effort by a mind of which the natural ingenuity had been improved into morbid quickness by constant exercise. We are never sure that we see him as he was. We are never sure that what appears to be nature is not disguised art. We are never sure that what appears to be art is not merely habit which has become second nature.

In wit and animation the present collection is not superior to those which have preceded it. But it has one great advantage over them all. It forms a connected whole, a regular journal of what appeared to Walpole the most important transactions of the last twenty years of George the Second's reign. It furnishes much new information concerning the history of that time, the portion of English history of which common readers know the least.

A connected whole.

The earlier letters contain the most lively and interesting account which we possess of that "great Walpolean battle," to use the words of Junius, which terminated in the retirement of Sir Robert. Horace entered the House of Commons just in time to witness the last desperate struggle which his father, surrounded by enemies and traitors, maintained, with a spirit as brave as that of the column of Fontenoy, first for victory, and then for honourable retreat. Horace was, of course, on the side of his family. Lord Dover seems to have been enthusiastic on the same side, and goes so far as to call Sir Robert "the glory of the Whigs."

"Great Walpolean battle."

Sir Robert deserved this high eulogium, we think, as little as he deserved the abusive epithets which have often been coupled with his name. A fair character of him still remains to be drawn; and, whenever it shall be drawn, it will be equally unlike the portrait by Coxe and the portrait by Smollett.

He had, undoubtedly, great talents and great virtues. He was not, indeed, like

Sir Robert  
Walpole.

the leaders of the party which opposed his government, a brilliant orator. He was not a profound scholar, like Carteret, or a wit and a fine gentleman, like Chesterfield. In all these respects his deficiencies were remarkable. His literature consisted of a scrap or two of Horace and an anecdote or two from the end of the Dictionary. His knowledge of History was so limited that, in the great debate on the Excise Bill, he was forced to ask Attorney-General Yorke who Empson and Dudley were. His manners were a little too coarse and boisterous even for that age of Westerns and Topehalls. When he ceased to talk of politics, he could talk of nothing but women; and he dilated on his favourite theme with a freedom which shocked even that plain-spoken generation, and which was quite unsuited to his age and station. The noisy revelry of his summer festivities at Houghton gave much scandal to grave people, and annually drove his kinsman and colleague, Lord Townshend, from the neighbouring mansion of Rainham.

But, however ignorant Walpole might be of general history and of general literature, he was better acquainted than any man of his day with what it concerned him most to know, mankind, the English nation, the Court, the House of Commons, and the Treasury. Of foreign

Knowledge and judgment. affairs he knew little; but his judgment was so good that his little knowledge

went very far. He was an excellent parliamentary debater, an excellent parliamentary tactician, an excellent man of business. No man ever brought more industry or more method to the transacting of affairs. No minister in his time did so much; yet no minister had so much leisure.

He was a good-natured man who had during thirty years seen nothing but the worst parts of human nature in other men. He was familiar with the malice of kind people, and the perfidy of honourable people. Proud men had licked the

dust before him. Patriots had begged him to come up to the price of their puffed and advertised integrity. He said after his fall that it was a dangerous thing to be a minister, that there were few minds which would

Character of  
Sir Robert  
Walpole.

not be injured by the constant spectacle of meanness and depravity. To his honour it must be confessed that few minds have come out of such a trial so little damaged in the most important parts. He retired, after more than twenty years of supreme power, with a temper not soured, with a heart not hardened, with simple tastes, with frank manners, and with a capacity for friendship. No stain of treachery, of ingratitude, or of cruelty rests on his memory. Factious hatred, while flinging on his name every other foul aspersion, was compelled to own that he was not a man of blood. This would scarcely seem a high eulogium on a statesman of our times. It was then a rare and honourable distinction. The contests of parties in England had long been carried on with a ferocity unworthy of a civilized people. Sir Robert Walpole was the minister who gave to our Government that character of lenity which it has since generally preserved. It was perfectly known to him that many of his opponents had dealings with the Pretender. The lives of some were at his mercy. He wanted neither Whig nor Tory precedents for using his advantage unsparingly. But with a clemency to which posterity has never done justice, he suffered himself to be thwarted, vilified, and at last overthrown, by a party which included many men whose necks were in his power.

That he practised corruption on a large scale is, we think, indisputable. But whether he deserves all the invectives which have been uttered against him on that

Practice of  
corruption.

account may be questioned. No man ought to be severely censured for not being beyond his age in virtue. To buy the votes of constituents is as immoral as to buy the votes of representatives. The candidate who gives five guineas to the freeman is as culpable as the man who gives three hundred guineas to the member. Yet we know that, in our own time, no man is thought wicked or dishonourable, no man is cut, no man is blackballed, because, under the old system of election, he was returned in the only way in which he could be returned, for East

Retford, for Liverpool, or for Stafford. Walpole governed by corruption, because, in his time, it was impossible to govern otherwise. Corruption was unnecessary to the Tudors, for their Parliaments were feeble. The publicity which has of late years been given to parliamentary proceedings has raised the standard of morality among public men. The power of public opinion is so great that, even before the reform of the representation, a faint suspicion that a minister had given pecuniary gratifications to Members of Parliament in return for their votes would have been enough to ruin him. But, during the century which followed the Restoration, the House of Commons was in that

House of Commons after the Restoration.

situation in which assemblies must be managed by corruption, or cannot be managed at all. It was not held in awe, as in the sixteenth century, by the throne. It was not held in awe, as in the nineteenth century, by the opinion of the people. Its constitution was oligarchical. Its deliberations were secret. Its power in the State was immense. The Government had every conceivable motive to offer bribes. Many of the members, if they were not men of strict honour and probity, had no conceivable motive to refuse what the Government offered. In the reign of Charles the Second, accordingly, the practice of buying votes in the House of Commons was commenced by the daring Clifford, and carried to a great extent by the crafty and shameless Danby. The Revolution, great and manifold as were the blessings of which it was directly or remotely the cause, at first aggravated this evil. The importance of the House of Commons was now greater than ever. The prerogatives of the Crown were more strictly limited than ever; and those associations in which, more than in its legal prerogatives, its power had consisted, were completely broken. No prince was ever in so helpless and distressing a situation as William the Third. The party which defended his title was, on general grounds, disposed to curtail his prerogative. The party which was, on general grounds, friendly to prerogative, was adverse to his title. There was no quarter in which both his office and his person could find favour. But while the influence of the House of Commons in the Government was becoming paramount, the influence of the people over the House of Commons was declining.

It mattered little in the time of Charles the First whether that House were or were not chosen by the people; it was certain to act for the people, because it would have been at the mercy of the Court but for the support of the people. Now that the Court was at the mercy of the House of Commons, those members who were not returned by popular election had nobody to please but themselves. Even those who were returned by popular election did not live, as now, under a constant sense of responsibility. The constituents were not, as now, daily apprised of the votes and speeches of their representatives. The privileges which had in old times been indispensably necessary to the security and efficiency of Parliaments were now superfluous. But they were still carefully maintained, by honest legislators from superstitious veneration, by dishonest legislators for their own selfish ends. They had been an useful defence to the Commons during a long and doubtful conflict with powerful sovereigns. They were now no longer necessary for that purpose; and they became a defence to the members against their constituents. That secrecy which had been absolutely necessary in times when the Privy Council was in the habit of sending the leaders of Opposition to the Tower was preserved in times when a vote of the House of Commons was sufficient to hurl the most powerful minister from his post.

The Government could not go on unless the Parliament could be kept in order. And how was the Parliament to be kept in order? Three hundred years ago it would have been enough for a statesman to have the support of the Crown. It would now, we hope and believe, be enough for him to enjoy the confidence and approbation of the great body of the middle class. A hundred years ago it would not have been enough to have both Crown and people on his side. The Parliament had shaken off the control of the royal prerogative. It had not yet fallen under the control of public opinion. A large proportion of the members had absolutely no motive to support any administration except their own interest, in the lowest sense of the word. Under these circumstances, the country could be governed only by corruption. Bolingbroke, who was the ablest and the most vehement of those who raised the clamour against corruption,

Government  
and Parlia-  
ment.

had no better remedy to propose than that the Royal prerogative should be strengthened. The remedy would no doubt have been efficient. The only question is whether it would not have been worse than the disease. The fault was in the constitution of the Legislature: and to blame those ministers who managed the Legislature in the only way in which it could be managed is gross injustice. They submitted to extortion because they could not help themselves. We might as well accuse the poor Lowland farmers who paid black mail to Rob Roy of corrupting the virtue of the Highlanders, as accuse Sir Robert Walpole of corrupting the virtue of Parliament. His crime was merely this, that he employed his money more dexterously, and got more support in return for it, than any of those who preceded or followed him.

He was himself incorruptible by money. His dominant passion was the love of power: and the heaviest charge which can be brought against him is that to this passion he never scrupled to sacrifice the interests of his country.

One of the maxims which, as his son tells us, he was most in the habit of repeating, was *quieta non movere*. It was indeed the maxim by which he generally regulated his public conduct.

Sir Robert's maxim.

It is the maxim of a man more solicitous to hold power long than to use it well. It is remarkable that, though he was at the head of affairs during more than twenty years, not one great measure, not one important change for the better or for the worse in any part of our institutions, marks the period of his supremacy. Nor was this because he did not clearly see that many changes were very desirable. He had been brought up in the school of toleration, at the feet of Somers and of Burnet. He disliked the shameful laws against Dissenters. But he never could be induced to bring forward a proposition for repealing them. The sufferers represented to him the injustice with which they were treated, boasted of their firm attachment to the House of Brunswick and to the Whig party, and reminded him of his own repeated declarations of good will to their cause. He listened, assented, promised, and did nothing. At length the question was brought forward by others, and the minister, after a hesitating and evasive speech, voted against

it. The truth was that he remembered to the latest day of his life that terrible explosion of high-church feeling which the foolish prosecution of a foolish parson had occasioned in the days of Queen Anne. If the Dissenters had been turbulent he would probably have relieved them; but while he apprehended no danger from them, he would not run the slightest risk for their sake. He acted in the same manner with respect to other questions. He knew the state of the Scotch Highlands. He was constantly predicting another insurrection in that part of the empire. Yet, during his long tenure of power, he never attempted to perform what was then the most obvious and pressing duty of a British statesman, to break the power of the Chiefs, and to establish the authority of law through the furthest corners of the Island. Nobody knew better than he that, if this were not done, great mischiefs would follow. But the Highlands were tolerably quiet in his time. He was content to meet daily emergencies by daily expedients; and he left the rest to his successors. They had to conquer the Highlands in the midst of a war with France and Spain, because he had not regulated the Highlands in a time of profound peace.

Sometimes, in spite of all his caution, he found that measures which he had hoped to carry through quietly had caused great agitation. When this was the case he generally modified or withdrew them. It was thus that he cancelled Wood's patent in compliance with the absurd outcry of the Irish. It was thus that he frittered away the Porteous Bill to nothing, for fear of exasperating the Scotch. It was thus that he abandoned the Excise Bill, as soon as he found that it was offensive to all the great towns of England. The language which he held about that measure in a subsequent session is strikingly characteristic. Pulteney had insinuated that the scheme would be again brought forward. "As to the wicked scheme," said Walpole, "as the gentleman is pleased to call it, which he would persuade gentlemen is not yet laid aside, I for my part assure this House I am not so mad as ever again to engage in anything that looks like an Excise; though, in my private opinion, I still think it was a scheme that would have tended very much to the interest of the nation."

Modification and withdrawal.

The conduct of Walpole with regard

to the Spanish war is the great blemish of his public life. Archdeacon Coxe imagined that he had discovered one grand principle of action to which the whole public conduct of his hero ought to be referred. "Did the administration of Walpole," says the biographer, "present any uniform principle which may be traced in every part, and which gave combination and consistency to the whole? Yes, and that principle was, THE LOVE OF PEACE." It would be difficult, we think, to bestow a higher eulogium on any statesman. But the eulogium is far too high for the merits of Walpole. The great ruling principle of his public conduct was indeed a love of peace, but not

The Love of Peace. in the sense in which Archdeacon Coxe uses the phrase. The peace which

Walpole sought was not the peace of the country, but the peace of his own administration. During the greater part of his public life, indeed, the two objects were inseparably connected. At length he was reduced to the necessity of choosing between them, of plunging the State into hostilities for which there was no just ground, and by which nothing was to be got, or of facing a violent opposition in the country, in Parliament, and even in the royal closet. No person was more thoroughly convinced than he of the absurdity of the cry against Spain. But his darling power was at stake, and his choice was soon made. He preferred an unjust war to a stormy session. It is impossible to say of a minister who acted thus that the love of peace was the one grand principle to which all his conduct is to be referred. The governing principle of his conduct was neither love of peace nor love of war, but love of power.

The praise to which he is fairly entitled is this, that he understood the true interest of his country better than any of his contemporaries, and that he pursued that interest whenever it was not incompatible with the interest of his own intense and grasping ambition. It was only in matters of public moment that he shrank from agitation and had recourse to compromise.

Ambition and public interest.

In his contests for personal influence there was no timidity, no flinching. He would have all or none. Every member of the Government who would not submit to his ascendancy was turned out or forced to resign. Liberal of everything

else, he was avaricious of power. Cautious everywhere else, when power was at stake he had all the boldness of Wolsey or Chatham. He might easily have secured his authority if he could have been induced to divide it with others. But he would not part with one fragment of it to purchase defenders for all the rest. The effect of this policy was that he had able enemies and feeble allies. His most distinguished coadjutors left him one by one, and joined the ranks of the Opposition. He faced the increasing array of his enemies with unbroken spirit, and thought it far better that they should attack his power than that they should share it.

The Opposition was in every sense formidable. At its head were two royal personages, the exiled head of the House of Stuart, the disgraced heir of the House of Brunswick. One set of

A formidable Opposition.

members received directions from Avignon. Another set held their consultations and banquets at Norfolk House. The majority of the landed gentry, the majority of the parochial clergy, one of the universities, and a strong party in the City of London and in the other great towns, were decidedly adverse to the Government. Of the men of letters, some were exasperated by the neglect with which the minister treated them, a neglect which was the more remarkable, because his predecessors, both Whig and Tory, had paid court with emulous munificence to the wits and the poets; others were honestly inflamed by party zeal; almost all lent their aid to the Opposition. In truth, all that was alluring to ardent and imaginative minds was on that side; old associations, new visions of political improvement, high-flown theories of loyalty, high-flown theories of liberty, the enthusiasm of the Cavalier, the enthusiasm of the Roundhead. The Tory gentleman, fed in the common-rooms of Oxford with the doctrines of Filmer and Sacheverell, and proud of the exploits of his great-grandfather, who had charged with Rupert at Marston, who had held out the old manor-house against Fairfax, and who, after the King's return, had been set down for a Knight of the Royal Oak, flew to that section of the Opposition which, under pretence of assailing the existing administration, was in truth assailing the reigning dynasty. The young republican, fresh from his Livy and his Lucan, and glowing with admira-