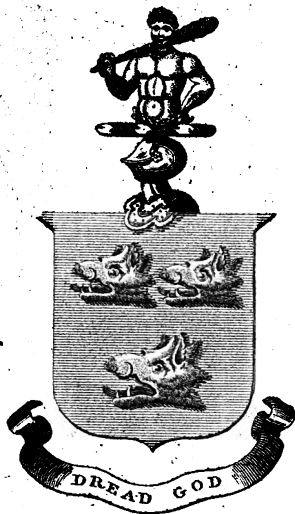

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CAPT^N. GORDON,
Royal Navy.

Geschenk des k. Forstrathes G. Dürig
an die k. Bibliothek.

H. angl. o.

17

1694
1836

- 142

To

Mr. Mose from
Capt. Gordon with
his best wishes

Balmachie House

1st March - Tuff-day

1834

1688

148

To

Mr. Mops from
Capt. Gordon with
his best wishes

Balmachie House

1st March - Tuff day

1834

1876
1688

148

A

HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

IN

A SERIES OF LETTERS

FROM A NOBLEMAN TO HIS SON.

A NEW EDITION,

CONTINUED TO THE END OF THE REIGN OF GEORGE THE THIRD.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

TWO LETTERS

ON THE STUDY AND BIOGRAPHY OF THE ANCIENT AND
MODERN BRITISH HISTORIANS.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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1821.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Editor cannot dismiss a new edition of this work without expressing the pleasure he feels in its reception. It was at first ushered into the world with none of the usual methods of awakening curiosity, or biassing the judgment. Its author, as well as its editor, was, and still continues, unknown. That praise was studiously avoided, which was only to be caught by pursuing. However, under all these disadvantages, the work has succeeded beyond the editor's most sanguine expectations, if he may judge from the numbers that have been sold, and the commendations which have been given. Nor can it be a circumstance of small pleasure to him, to think that a performance, calculated chiefly to dispel the prejudice of party, and soften the malevolence of faction, has had purchasers, at a time when almost every new publication, that respects our history or constitution, tends to fix the one and inflame the other.

The additions, which it has been necessary to make since our last publication, are of no small importance, not only as preserving the proper pause prescribed by the writers of history, the end

ADVERTISEMENT.

of a reign, but as the happy conclusion of that convulsed state of Europe, from which, at the appearance of our last edition, there seemed no prospect of deliverance. The revolutionary war forms the greatest feature in the history of the late reign; and if we have united, with our own, a more enlarged notice of the affairs of Europe than may be thought to belong to a history professedly English, our excuse may be found in the closer connexion which our nation formed with the suffering states of the continent, and particularly in the glorious share our armies had in delivering them from an apparently hopeless thralldom.

1821.

THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND,
IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

LETTER I.

DEAR CHARLES,

THE accounts I received from Mr. —, your tutor at Oxford, of your conduct and capacity, give me equal pleasure, both as a father and as a man. I own myself happy, in thinking that society will one day reap the advantage of your improved abilities; but I confess myself vain, when I reflect on the care I have taken, and the honour I shall perhaps obtain from assisting their cultivation. Yes, my Charles, self-interest thus mixes with almost every virtue; my paternal vanity is, perhaps, greater than my regard for society in the present instance; but you should consider that the bad pride themselves in their folly, but good minds are vain of their virtues.

I need scarcely repeat what I have so often observed, that your assiduity for a few years, in the early period of life, will give ease and happiness to the succeeding: a life spent in regularity and study, in college, will not only furnish the mind with proper materials, but fit it, by habit, for future felicity. Mathematics will teach you to think with closeness and precision, and the ancient poets will enlarge your imagination: from these two helps, and not from the subtilities of logic, or metaphysical speculations, the mind is at once strengthened and improved. Logic or metaphysics may give

the theory of reasoning; but it is poetry and mathematics, though seemingly opposite, that practically improve and fit us for every rational enquiry.

These were the studies I recommended as principally conducive to your improvement, and your letters alone are sufficient instances of your complying with my advice. I confess my fears in giving any future instructions on such topics to one who seems better conversant with them than his instructor: I therefore must leave a subject, where my superiority at least may be contested.

But, after all, my child, these studies are at best but ornaments of the mind, designed rather to polish or to fit it for higher improvements, than as materials to be employed in guiding our conduct as individuals, or members of society. There is a field that, in some measure, still lies untrodden before you, and from that alone true wisdom and real improvement can be expected: I mean history. From history, in a great measure, every advantage that improves the gentleman, or confirms the patriot, can be hoped for: it is that which must qualify you for becoming a proper member of the community; for filling that station in which you may hereafter be placed, with honour; and for giving, as well as deriving, new lustre to that illustrious assembly, to which, upon my decease, you have a right to be called.

Yet, still, nothing can be more useless than history, in the manner in which it is generally studied, where the memory is loaded with little more than dates, names, and events. Simply to repeat the transaction is by some thought sufficient for every purpose: and a youth, having been once applauded for his readiness in this way, fancies himself a perfect historian. But the true use of history does not consist in being able to settle a genealogy, in quoting the events of an obscure reign, or the true epoch of a contested birth: this knowledge of facts hardly deserves the name of science: true wisdom consists in tracing effects to their causes. To understand history is to understand man, who is the subject. To study history is to weigh the motives, the opinions, the passions of mankind, in order to avoid

a similitude of errors in ourselves, or profit by the wisdom of their example.

To study history in this manner may be begun at any age. Children can never be too soon treated as men. Those masters, who allege the incapacity of tender years, only tacitly reproach their own: those who are incapable of teaching young minds to reason, pretend that it is impossible. The truth is, they are fonder of making their pupils talk well than think well; and much the greater number are better qualified to give praise to a ready memory than to a sound judgment. The generality of mankind consider a multitude of facts as the real food of the mind, not as subjects proper to afford it exercise. Hence it proceeds, that history, instead of teaching us to know ourselves, often only serves to raise our vanity, by the applause of the ignorant; or, what is more dangerous, by the self-delusion of untried vanity.

Assuming ignorance is, of all dispositions, the most ridiculous; for, in the same proportion as the real man of wisdom is preferable to the unlettered rustic, so much is the rustic superior to him, who without learning imagines himself learned. It were better that such a man had never read, for then he might have been conscious of his weakness; but the half-learned man, relying upon his strength, seldom perceives his wants till he finds his deception past a cure.

Your labours in history have hitherto been rather confined to the words, than the facts, of your historical guides. You have read Xenophon or Livy, rather with a view of learning the dead languages, in which they are written, than of profiting by the instructions which they afford. The time is now come for discontinuing the study of words for things; for exercising your judgment, and giving more room to reason than to fancy.

Above all things, I would advise you to consult the original historians in every relation. Abridgers, compilers, commentators, and critics, are in general only fit to fill the mind with unnecessary anecdotes, or lead its researches astray. In the immensity of various relations, your care must be to select such as deserve to

be known, because they serve to instruct; the end of your labour should not be to know in what year fools or savages committed their extravagancies, but by what methods they emerged from barbarity. The same necessity there is for knowing the actions of the worthy part of princes, also compels us to endeavour to forget those of the ignorant and vulgar herd of kings, who seem only to slumber in a seat they were accidentally called to fill. In short, not the history of kings, but of men, should be your principal concern; and such a history is only to be acquired by consulting those originals who painted the times they lived in. Their successors, who pretended to methodise their histories, have almost universally deprived them of all their spirit, and given us rather a dry catalogue of names, than an improving detail of events. In reality, history is precious or insignificant, not from the brilliancy of the events, the singularity of the adventures, or the greatness of the personages concerned, but from the skill, penetration, and judgment of the observer. Tacitus frequently complains of his want of materials, of the littleness of his incidents, of the weakness and villany of his actors; yet, even from such indifferent subjects, he has wrought out the most pleasing and the most instructive history that ever was written: it will, therefore, be entirely the work of your own judgment to convert the generality of historians to your benefit: they are, at present, but rude materials, and require a fine discernment to separate the useful from the unnecessary, and analyze their different principles.

Yet, mistake me not: I would not have history to consist of dry speculations upon facts, told with phlegm, and pursued without interest and passion; nor would I have your reason fatigued continually in critical researches: all I require is, that the historian would give as much exercise to the judgment as the imagination. It is as much his duty to act the philosopher, or politician, in his narratives, as to collect materials for narration. Without a philosophical skill in discerning, his very narrative must be frequently false, fabulous, and contradictory; without political sagacity, his characters must be ill drawn, and vice and virtue be distributed without discernment or candour.

What historian can render virtue so amiable as Xenophon? Who can interest the reader so much as Livy? Sallust is an instance of the most delicate exactness, and Tacitus of the most solid reflection: from a perfect acquaintance with these, the youthful student can acquire more knowledge of mankind, a more perfect acquaintance with antiquity, and a more just manner of thinking and expressing, than, perhaps, from any others of any age or country. Other ancient historians may be read to advance the study of ancient learning, but these should be the groundwork of all your researches. Without a previous acquaintance with these, you enter upon other writers improperly prepared; until these have placed you in a proper train of moralizing the incidents, other historians may, perhaps, injure, but will not improve you. Let me therefore, at present, my dear Charles, entreat you to bestow the proper care upon those treasures of antiquity; and by your letters, every post, communicate to your father, and your friend, the result of your reflections upon them. I am at a loss, whether I shall find more satisfaction in hearing your remarks, or communicating my own? However, in whichever of them I shall be employed, it will make my highest amusement. Amusement is all that I can now expect in life, for ambition has long forsaken me; and perhaps, my child, after all, what your noble ancestor has observed is most true: *When all is done, human life is, at the greatest and the best, but like a froward child, that must be played with and humoured a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over.*

I am,
Dear Charles, &c.

LETTER II.

I ENTIRELY acquiesce in your sentiments, that universal history is a subject too extensive for human comprehension, and that he who would really reap the advantages of history must be contented to bound his

views. Satisfied with being superficially acquainted with the transactions of many countries, the learner should place his principal attention only on a few.

Your remarks on the Greek and Roman republics far surpass my expectations; you have justly characterized them as the finest instances of political society that could be founded on the basis of a false religion. Where religion is imperfect, political society, and all laws enacted for its improvement, must be imperfect also. Religion is but philosophy refined; and no man could ever boast an elegance in politics, whose mind had not been previously opened and enlarged by the institutions of theology, an error in religion ever producing defects in legislation.

Forgive me, dear Charles, if I once more congratulate myself upon the pleasure I expect from your future eminence. You are now tinctured with universal history, and are thoroughly conversant with that of Greece and Rome; but there is another department of history still remaining, and that much more important than any I have yet mentioned; I mean the **HISTORY OF ENGLAND**. The history of this country is the proper study of an Englishman; however, it peculiarly concerns those who may, like you, one day have such an important character to support in its administration, and whose own name, perhaps, may find a place in the historic page. All who are enamoured of the liberty and the happiness which they peculiarly enjoy in this happy region, must surely be desirous of knowing the methods by which such advantages were acquired; the progressive steps from barbarity to social refinement, from society to the highest pitch of well-constituted freedom. All Europe stands in astonishment at the wisdom of our constitution, and it would argue the highest degree of insensibility in a native of this country, and one too who from his birth enjoys peculiar privileges, to be ignorant of what others so much admire.

I shall not insist upon a principal use to which some apply the English history; I mean that of making it the topic of common conversation: yet, even from such a motive, though in itself trifling, no well-bred man can plead ignorance. Its greatest advantage, however,

is, that a knowledge of the past enables the attentive mind to understand the present: our laws and customs, our liberties and abuse of liberty, can scarcely be understood without tracing them to their source; and history is the only channel by which we can arrive at what we so eagerly pursue.

But, were I to compare the history of our own country, in point of amusement, with that of others, I know of none, either ancient or modern, that can vie with it in this respect. In other histories, remote and extensive connexions interrupt the reader's interest, and destroy the simplicity of the plan. The history of Greece may be easily divided into seven different histories, and into so many it has actually been divided: the history of Rome, from the time it begins to be authentic, is little else than an account of the then known world: but, in England, separated, by its situation, from the continent, the reader may consider the whole narrative, with all its vicissitudes, in one point of view: it unites the philosopher's (Hutcheson) definition of beauty, by being *variously uniform*.

The simplicity in a history of our own country is therefore excellent; but I can direct to few who have improved the materials it affords with a proper degree of assiduity or skill. The historians, who have treated of this subject, have in general written for a party; many, with an open avowal of their abuse. Some, who have had talents for this undertaking, were unable to afford themselves sufficient leisure to polish their work into the degree of requisite perfection; while others, who have laboured with sufficient assiduity, have been wofully deficient in point of sagacity, or proper skill in the choice of those facts they thought proper to relate. Whatever has been known, and not what was worth knowing, has been faithfully transcribed; so that the present accounts of the country resemble the ancient face of the soil; here an uncultivated forest; there a desolate wild; and, in a very few places, a spot of earth adorned by art, and smiling with all the luxuriance of nature. To make history, like the soil, truly useful, the obstacles to improvement must be torn away, new assistances must be acquired

from art ; nor can the work be deemed properly finished, till the whole puts on simplicity, uniformity, and elegance. As the case is at present, we must read a library to acquire a knowledge of English history, and, after all, be contented to forget more than we remember.

The history of England may be divided, properly enough, into three periods ; very different, indeed, with regard to their duration, but almost of equal importance. The first is, from the commencement of our knowledge of the country to its conquest by the Normans ; the second, from the time of William the conqueror to the alteration of the constitution, by the beheading of king Charles I ; the last contains the remaining period of our history. It will at once appear, that such a division is extremely unequal : the first department may be said to extend to a period of more than a thousand years ; the second contains not less than seven hundred ; while the remaining does not take up two. Chronologists, indeed, would divide it in a very different manner ; however, I am rather inclined to this division, more by the peculiar use which may be made of each period, than the mere regularity of time. To consider the first part with accuracy, belongs properly to the philosopher ; the second is the business of him who would understand our constitution, and is the proper study of a legislator ; and the last, of such as would be acquainted with the connexions and relations in which we stand with regard to our neighbours of the continent, and our foreign and domestic trade ; that is, in other words, of the merchant and politician.

There is scarce any other passion, but that of curiosity, excited by a knowledge of the early part of our history. We may go through the accounts of that distant era with the same impartiality with which we consider the original inhabitants of any other country, as the customs of our British ancestors have scarce any connexion with our own : but then, to some minds, it must be a pleasing disquisition to observe the human animal, by degrees, divesting himself of his native ferocity, and acquiring the arts of happiness and peace ; to trace the steps, by which he leaves his precarious

meal, acquired by the chase, for a more certain, but a more laborious repast, acquired first by pasturage, then by cultivation.

After the Conquest, the rude outlines of our present constitution began to be formed. Before the Norman invasion, there might be some customs resembling those at present in practice : but the only reason of their continuance was, because they had before been practised in common among the invaders. At this period, therefore, an Englishman becomes interested in the narrative : he perceives the rise and the reasons of several laws, which now serve to restrain his conduct, or preserve his property. The rights of our monarchs, the claims of foreign potentates, the ineffectual struggles for liberty, and the gradual encroachments of ambition, these highly interest him ; as he in some measure owes to these transactions the happiness he enjoys.

But the last period is what is chiefly incumbent upon almost every man to be particularly conversant in. Every person, residing here, has a share in the liberties of this kingdom ; as the generality of the people are ultimately invested with the legislation. It is, therefore, every man's duty to know that constitution, which, by his birthright, he is called to govern : a freeholder, in a free kingdom, should certainly be instructed in the original of that agreement by which he holds so precious a tenure.

These motives equally influence almost every rank of people ; but how much more forcibly should they operate upon you, whose honours, whose trusts and possessions are likely to be so considerable. Others may have their liberties to support ; you may sustain your liberty, your property, and the dignity of your station. I shall, therefore, without further preface, in some future correspondence, communicate the result of my inquiries on this subject ;—a subject which, I own, has employed all the leisure I had to spare from, I will not say more important, but more necessary, duties. I shall endeavour, at once, to supply the facts ; and the necessary consequences that may be deduced from them. I shall separate all that can contribute nothing either to amusement or use, and leave such to

dull compilers or systematic writers of history, whose only boast is, *to leave nothing out*. A more thorough knowledge of the subject cannot be communicated without pain, nor acquired without study; perhaps too minute a skill in this, or any one subject, might disqualify the mind for other branches of science, equally demanding our care. Of whatever use it may be, I hope you will consider it as an instance of my regard, though it should fail to add to your opinion of my sagacity.

LETTER III.

THERE seems to be a natural tendency in every nation to run its antiquity as far back as possible; and when once they have arrived at the regions of fiction, no bounds are set to the wonders of every narration. Were we to take our character of the ancient inhabitants of this island from the legends, monuments, or traditions, which have been left by those inhabitants themselves, we might be apt to imagine, that arts, even in that early period, were cultivated, and sciences known, to some degree of perfection. The Druids, if we believe some fragments of their own, understood astronomy and medicine, and gave lessons in morality and metaphysics. But what credit can be given to the accounts of a barbarous people, told by themselves? The knowledge and learning, indeed, of their priests might be great, if compared with the almost brutal simplicity and ignorance of the rest of the people; but it could not deserve the name of science, if put in competition with what was known and practised by their polite contemporaries of Greece and Rome.

From the accounts of those sensible writers, and not from the fictitious absurdities of the Druids themselves, we are to estimate this ancient people. All that we find related by credible witnesses and sufficient authority, before the Romans entered this island, is, that the country was well inhabited, and the fields stored with great plenty of animals, savage and domestic.

The houses were meanly built, and scattered, as if accidentally, over the country, without observing distance, or order. The only motives which directed the people in their choice were the peculiar fertility of some happy spot, or the convenience of wood and water. They lived upon milk, and flesh procured by the chase; for corn was scarcely known among them. What clothes they wore were skins of beasts: but a great part of their bodies were left always exposed to the injuries of the weather; all that was naked being painted with blue. This custom of painting was universal among them, either in order to strike terror in their enemies, or to defend the pores of the naked skin from the injuries of the weather.

Their towns, if a collection of huts could deserve that name, were mostly built upon the coasts, in places where strangers generally resorted for the sake of commerce. The commodities exported were chiefly hides and tin, and, probably, other spontaneous productions of the soil, which required no art in the preparation.

Their government, like that of the ancient Gauls, consisted of several petty principalities, which seem to be the original governments of mankind, and deduced from the natural right of paternal dominion; but whether these little principalities descended by succession, or whether the rulers were elected by the consent of the people, is not recorded. Upon great or uncommon dangers, indeed, the chief commander of all their forces was chosen by common consent in a general assembly, as Cesar relates of Cassibelaunus, upon his invasion. The same was done upon their revolts against the Roman colonies, under Caractacus and their queen Boadicea; for among them women were admitted to their principalities, and general commands, by the right of succession, merit, or nobility.

Such were the customs of ancient Britons; and the same may serve for a description of every other barbarous nation of which we have any knowledge. Savage man is an animal in almost every country the same; and all the difference between nations results from customs introduced by luxury, or cultivated by refinement.

What the inhabitant of Britain was at that time, the inhabitant of South-America, or Caffraria, may be at this day. But there was one custom among the ancient inhabitants of this island, which seems peculiar to themselves, and is not to be found in the accounts of any other ancient or modern nation. The custom I mean, was a community of wives, among certain numbers, and by common consent. Every man married, indeed, but one woman, who was always after, and alone, esteemed his wife; but it was usual for five or six, ten, twelve, or more, either brothers or friends, as they could agree, to have all their wives in common. But this, though calculated for their mutual happiness, in fact proved their greatest disturbance; and we have some instances, in which this community of wives produced dissensions, jealousies, and death. Every woman's children, however, were the property of him who married her; but all claimed a share in the care and defence of the whole society, since no man knew which was his own.

To estimate the wisdom of the people we must examine the manners of their teachers. If the laity were so very barbarous, the Druids, their instructors, must have but few pretences to superior refinement; yet, I know not how, we have different and almost contradictory accounts of this extraordinary fraternity. They have been represented, by some, as persons of learning, derived to them by long tradition. Their skill consisted in the observation of the heaven, and upon the influence of its appearance they gave their countrymen omens of failure or success. They taught a morality, which principally consisted in justice and fortitude. Their lives were simple and innocent, in woods, caverns, and hollow trees; their food, acorns or berries, and their drink, water. They were respected and admired, not only for knowing more than other men, but for despising what all others valued and pursued: by their virtue and temperance, they reproved and corrected those vices in others, from which they were themselves happily free; and made use of no other arms, than the reverence due to integrity, to enforce obedience to their own commands. From such a con-

duct as this they derived so much authority, that they were not only priests, but judges also, throughout the nation. No laws were instituted without their approbation; no person punished with bonds, or death, but by their condemnation.

But, on the other hand, we learn, that all their knowledge was imposture, and their simplicity only a savage passion for solitude; their language barbarous, and their manners still more rude: these were such as called aloud for some more enlightened instructors, to conquer and to direct them. The Druids, who seemed formed for the people whom they governed, sacrificed human victims, which they burned in large wicker idols, which were made so capacious, as to contain a multitude of persons, who were, in this manner, at once consumed with the flames. The female Druids plunged their knives in the breasts of the prisoners taken in war, and prophesied from the manner in which the blood happened to stream from the wound. Their altars consisted of four broad stones, three of which were set edgewise, and the fourth horizontally on the top, many of which are still to be seen.

In accounts so seemingly contradictory, we are entirely to give assent to neither. That they pretended to astrology is certain: this, and not their piety, probably gave them such influence among their countrymen. To judge of what the Britons then were, as I have already hinted, we must look to what savage nations are at present: we perceive what authority a pretence to astrology, in barbarous countries, confers; the astrologer being generally considered, in almost all the eastern kingdoms, as the second, if not the first man of the state. That the Druids deceived the people with a false religion cannot be denied; but, yet, I can never think that they were impostors: they first deceived themselves into a belief and veneration of what they taught, and then made use of every motive to persuade the people. The ignorant and erroneous, in the commerce of this life, are many; the villains and impostors are, comparatively speaking, but few. As for human sacrifices, few probably were destroyed upon this horrid occasion, but prisoners taken in war; and

such have ever been sacrificed, by savage nations, rather from a principle of revenge than religion. It is not peculiar to the religion of the Druids alone, but was primarily the barbarous practice of those very nations who then exclaimed against it most loudly.

In short, the religion of the Druids was no more than that of every barbarous or heathen nation with whose ceremonies we have any acquaintance. This was the religion which was not only practised in Britain, but which prevailed originally over the greatest part of the world. The original inhabitants of Europe, as a learned antiquary (Perron) has finely proved, were the same, all speaking one language, worshiping the same deities, and governed by similar laws. Successive invasions from different parts of Asia brought new changes; and, as the colonies went westward, the Greek, the Roman, and Teutonic languages and customs were superinduced over the ancient Celtic. All the countries, most accessible to strangers, or most subject to invasion, were first changed: those which lay surrounded by mountains, or were in some measure retired by their situation, such as Wales, Cornwall, the highlands of Scotland, Ireland, Biscay, and Crim Tartary, all preserved their primitive manners. It is even found, that these countries still adhere to many of the ancient Druidical customs, as far as the alteration of religion will admit.

LETTER IV.

IT is, in some measure, happy for a barbarous people to be conquered by a country more polite than themselves. Whatever evils the ambition of heroes generally produces, it is attended with one advantage, that of disseminating arts, and making humanity more extensive. The Britons, savage and rude as they were, in some measure, called for more polite instructors; and the Romans, of all the conquerors history can produce, were at once the most polite, the most generous, and humane.

A country, divided, like Britain, into a variety of small principalities, must necessarily have been separated into various, and often opposite, interests. Its princes must have been frequently at war, merely for the sake of plunder, to keep their troops in exercise, or to gratify vanity and ambition. We may easily, therefore, form an idea of the miseries of a rude people, who had nothing but fear to keep them from war with each other, and who could build no longer on a lasting peace, than while they avoided giving an opportunity of plunder to their enemies.

To complete the picture of the calamities of this people, all the trading and maritime towns, next the continent, were in possession of foreign invaders long before the Romans entered the island. These were a people who had been received from motives of hospitality, and who, under the character of exiles in distress, having got footing and shelter among the natives, afterwards made war upon them as enemies. This, added to their frequent tumults and massacres among each other, rendered them not only internally unhappy, but an easy prey to each invader. Besides, they were ill supplied with arms, and those they had were only such as were no longer in use among the refined nations of the continent. They fought in chariots armed with scythes, applied to the wheels. These were terrible without execution, and made rather to astonish the rude and ignorant, than to break such ranks as were not to be daunted by the mere appearance of danger. Their defensive armour only consisted of a wicker shield; and they approached the enemy shouting, clashing their arms, and sounding their trumpets, as if they designed rather to terrify than destroy. Their chariots generally attacked the enemy's cavalry, and from these they would frequently leap, and fight on foot, till, being fatigued or overpowered, they would resume their seats, and make the best retreat possible. Unpolished nations, though they have more fierceness in the onset, never act with that cool persevering resolution, which ensures victory. This can be acquired only where discipline and subordination have long prevailed: and a nation, however brave, levied in haste, will probably

never make a figure against veteran troops, hardened by contention, or elated by long success. This was the disposition of the inhabitants. But the face of the country rendered them still more a prey to every invader: it was plain and open, without towns, fortresses, or any place of retreat to secure from an enemy, except what the forests might happen to afford. In a word, the inhabitants were destitute of all means of defence, but what their native courage was able to supply, or a love of liberty might inspire.

Such were the people and customs of Britain, when
 ANNO ANTE the Romans first invaded their island under
 C. 55. the ensigns of Julius Cesar, the greatest
 commander that ever led an army. When

I consider this great man, who had already been the conqueror of Gaul; when I reflect on his courage, his conduct, and perseverance; when I take into my view the troops he headed, inured to discipline, and fighting in a manner with which barbarous nations were entirely unacquainted; when I consider these circumstances, and compare them with those of the Britons in the same period, I feel a more than usual share of surprise at the bravery and conduct with which these poor barbarians opposed him.

It was an established maxim, in the politics of Rome, to deem all auxiliaries as principals, and to allow none to assist the enemies of the state with impunity. This was the pretence Cesar laid hold of to justify his invasion of England, which was not only looked upon as an ally, but likewise as an asylum to the Gaulish nations, which were at that time enemies of Rome. This might, probably, be the ground of his invasion; but the pleasure of conquest was his real motive. To extend the Roman empire, though already too extensive to be governed, was at that time thought the most glorious achievement of humanity. The rest of Europe was, in some measure, subdued, and nothing left but countries desolate with forests and marshes, and neither tempting from their appearance, nor affording any hopes of plunder. Heroism was, at that time, the boast of ambition: nor have men, till very lately, been taught to consider conquerors with an eye of contempt

or detestation. Cesar was resolved on being a hero, and was more fond of triumph than of justice.

His forces were composed of Germans, Batavians, and Gauls, and veteran Roman legions. He set sail from Gaul about midnight, and arrived on the British coast the next afternoon. The Britons, with their naked troops, made a brave opposition against this veteran army: the conflicts between them were fierce and many, the losses were mutual, and the success various. Cassibelaunus was chosen general in chief of the British forces; but even a foreign invader was not sufficient to keep the petty princes, who commanded the barbarous army, united. Dissension soon entered among them; and some, jealous of the sincerity of their general, or envying his greatness, fled over to Cesar, submitted to the Romans, and claimed their protection; others followed this base example, till Cassibelaunus, weakened by so many desertions, resolved upon making what terms he was able, while he had yet an opportunity. He sends to Cesar, acknowledges the Roman power, agrees upon a certain tribute, and delivers hostages. Thus we see Britain, from the beginning, remarkable for internal dissension; and dissension ever strengthens or invites the invader.

The Romans were pleased with the name of a new conquest, and glad of ending an adventure with honour, which at first promised only difficulties and danger. But the extended forest, and the trackless wild, was not a quarry for men intent on spoil, and raised to greater expectations. Having, therefore, rather discovered than subdued the southern parts of the island, the Romans returned into Gaul, with their whole forces, and once more left the Britons to their customs, religion, and laws. By two expeditions which Cesar made into this island, he rather increased the glory, than the dominions of Rome, and gave Britain the honour of being the last triumph of that mighty republic, which had before reduced the most powerful kingdoms of the habitable globe.

Whatever the tribute was, which they had contracted annually to pay, we have many reasons, from history, to believe they paid it but very negligently. I

mention this, as an instance of the little faith which can be expected from an extorted submission, while there is no longer a power to enforce obedience. Upon the accession of Augustus, that emperor had formed a design of visiting Britain, but was diverted from it by an unexpected revolt of the Pannonians. Some years after, he again resumed his design; but, being met in his way by the British ambassadors, promising the accustomed tribute, and making the usual submissions, he a second time desisted. The year following, finding them unfaithful to their promise, he prepared, a third time, for the invasion of this island, but was prevented from putting his design into execution, by their ambassadors, who averted his fury by their adulations and humility. The most savage countries understand flattery almost as well as the most polite; since to be sufficiently servile, is, perhaps, the whole of the art; and the truest method of pleasing.

Tiberius followed the maxims of Augustus, and, wisely judging the Roman empire already too extensive, made no attempt upon this island. Some Roman soldiers being wrecked on the English coast, the inhabitants not only assisted them with the greatest humanity, but sent them, in safety, back to their general. In consequence of such friendly dispositions there was a constant intercourse between the two nations; the principal English nobility resorted to Rome, and some received their education there.

By these means the Britons began sensibly to improve. The first art, which a savage people is generally taught by their polite neighbours, is that of war. Though not wholly addicted to the Roman manner of fighting, the Britons, however, adopted several of their improvements, both in their arms and in their arrangement in the field. Their ferocity to strangers was now also lessened, and they first began to coin money, the oldest British coin being that of Comius, who learned a part of the Roman politeness by a residence in Cesar's camp. They still, however, continued to live as herdsmen and hunters, and adhered to their usual superstitions;—a manifest instance of the country being, as yet, but thinly inhabited. When we read,

in Cesar, of the numbers of this people, and the vast armies they brought into the field, I am apt to doubt his veracity. Such armies could scarcely be levied, even now; and yet nothing is more certain, than that Britain is at least ten times more populous now than it was at that time. A station of herdsmen and hunters can never be very populous; their subsistence takes up a large tract of country, while the husbandman converts every part of nature to human use, and produces the greatest quantity of subsistence from circumscribed possession. The Roman historian has increased their numbers, only to increase the lustre of his glory in subduing them.

LETTER V.

THE second expedition into Britain was made by Claudius, under the conduct of Plautius, and pursued by Ostorius, and other Roman commanders, with the usual success. It is true, there were many Britons who preferred their hardy simplicity to imported elegance, and, rather than offer their necks to the Roman yoke, presented their breasts to the sword. But, by degrees, their fierceness was subdued, or wholly destroyed; the southern coast, with all the adjacent inland country, was secured by the conquerors, who took possession by fortifying camps, building fortresses, and planting colonies. The rest of the country seemed to look on, patiently waiting till it became their turn to be expelled from their precarious habitations, or to receive their imperious masters. A. D. 50.

Prosperity, in general, breeds insolence: the corruption of the pretors, and officers, that were appointed to govern this harassed people, once more roused them into resentment. Caractacus, general and king of the northern Britons, with inferior numbers, not only made a brave defence, but often seemed to claim a doubtful victory. A drawn battle might be considered as a triumph, to a people only used to defeat. He continued nine years to hold out, and threatened fatal dangers to

the Roman colonies. At length, however, in a decisive battle, the Britons were totally defeated, and Caractacus taken prisoner. His exclamation, when led in triumph through Rome, is too remarkable to be passed over in silence. Observing the opulence, splendor, and luxury of that great city, *Alas!* cried he, *how is it possible, that people possessed of such magnificence at home, could envy me a humble cottage in Britain?*

One expiring effort more was made by the Britons, to recover their liberty in the time of Nero. Paulinus, A. D. 78. the general of the Romans, going with the greatest part of his forces to subdue the isle of Anglesey, where the superstitions of the Druids were still practised with all their horrid circumstances; the Britons, presuming upon his absence, made a general insurrection under Boadicea, queen of the Iceni, whom the Romans had treated with shocking indignities, condemning her, for some slight offence, to be whipped, and her daughters to be ravished by the soldiery: in revenge, therefore, at the head of a numerous army, she fell upon the Romans wherever they were defenceless, took their castles, destroyed the chief seats of their power at London and Verulam, and such was the slaughter, that seventy thousand fell by this revolt. Paulinus, however, soon returned with his army, encountered the British forces headed by their queen, overthrew their powers, and pursued his victory with a slaughter of eighty thousand men, while the conquered queen poisoned herself in despair. Here ended the liberties of Britain. All that now remained were satisfied to exchange freedom for life. This was their last struggle: they now lost, not only the hopes, but even the desire, of vindicating the privileges of nature.

From this time the Romans seemed more desirous of securing what they possessed, than of making new conquests: they separated the Roman province, by a wall, from the Picts, their barbarous and restless neighbours; and attempted to humanize the fierceness of those who acknowledged their power. The Roman laws and customs, habits and arms, language and manners, baths and feasts, studies and learning, were in-

roduced, and became general. A conduct so prudent which had been first begun by Agricola, was pursued by his successors with so much success, that the Romans had little trouble afterward in Britain, except in the defence of their northern frontier.

Had Rome continued peaceable mistress of the world, the Britons, now almost perfectly civilized, might have found means of being happy. But upon the divisions of the Roman empire, which was ruled by faction, and governed by an insolent soldiery, torn by sedition at home, and subject to invasion abroad, the British legions were, at several times, called over into Gaul, and with them great numbers of the bravest of the British youth. Thus we see every method pursued, to weaken and render this once-hardy people effeminate. The arts of luxury were introduced to soften their minds; they were denied the use of arms, which might still uphold their native bravery; the flower of their youth were, at intervals, drained away; and those that remained were bred up in servitude and subjection. All who had a passion for liberty were long since destroyed; and none were suffered to live but such as betrayed their country in the beginning, or had been too cowardly to resist an unjust invasion. It is no wonder, therefore, that, as the Roman forces decreased in Britain, the Picts became more bold in their incursions. These, probably, were the descendants of such Britons as once bravely exchanged their country for freedom, and crossing the narrow sea, which the Romans could not guard, in little boats of wicker covered with leather, they filled the country wherever they came with spoil, slaughter, and desolation: when repulsed by superior numbers, they usually retired loaded with spoils, and watched for the next opportunity of invasion, when the Romans were drawn away into the remoter parts of the island.

These enterprises were often repeated, and as often repressed, till, in the reign of Valentinian the younger, the empire of Rome began to tremble for its capital. Myriads of barbarous nations, under the names of Goths and Vandals, invaded the dominion of this mistress of the world, with terror, perseverance, and

rapidity. All the Roman legions were now, therefore, drawn from Britain; and all the Britons, who were fit for military service, were brought away to relieve the emperor, who was pursued by the Goths into Piedmont, and there besieged in Aquilea, a town he attempted to defend.

The Romans, now taking their last leave of this province, left the Britons to their own government, and the choice of their own kings. For the exercise of their arms, and for repairing their ramparts, they gave them the best instructions such terrible times would permit. Nothing can be more affecting than the picture of Britain at that period: though the Roman soldiery were drawn away, their families and descendants were still spread over the whole country, and left without a single person of conduct or courage to defend them. The Britons, who remained, began to enter into fresh dissensions for superiority: the enemy continued to pour in greater numbers than ever, from their native forests and mountains; famine, with all its horrid attendants of disease, robbery, and sedition, increased the miserable picture of the times: their vices, as Gildas, a contemporary writer, observes, kept pace with their calamities, the whole forming one detestable group of cowardice, cruelty, and distress.

In this terrible situation it was that they implored
 447. the assistance of the Romans for relief. Their letter upon this occasion still remains upon record: *To Ætius, thrice consul. The groans of the Britons. Driven by our barbarous enemy to the sea, and thence back upon the barbarians, we have only left us the choice of a grave: either to be killed by the one, or to be drowned by the other.* The Romans, however, were unable to help themselves, much less capable of giving succour to so remote, and, at present, such unserviceable, allies.

Yet, amid such calamities, this people seemed to have still a peculiar happiness in store; for they had, in general, embraced Christianity. At what time the Gospel was first preached in this island is not known, nor is it material to know: it is certain, that the natives of England were converted before the Romans

left the country, and that the Saxon invaders became acquainted with revelation after their establishment in Britain; and, therefore, though this country received laws from others, it adorned them with the religion of truth.

Arts, arms, and elegance, must take their rise, by slow degrees, in every country, and can never be, at once, introduced into it with success. All the pains bestowed in British education, only served to render this people more miserable; dressed them up as victims for every invader, and plunged them in all the misery of knowing happiness without being able to practise refinement. The people of a country just reclaimed from barbarity, in some measure, resemble the soil. The cultivation of a few years may be sufficient to clear away the obstacles to agriculture, but it requires several ages before the land acquires a proper degree of fertility. Thus all the blood and treasure which the Romans lost in the conquest of Britain, in the end only served to depopulate the country, and prepare it for new invaders. The Roman politics succeeded in quelling British courage; but the inhabitants, deprived of that, seemed destitute of every virtue.

LETTER VI.

I REMEMBER but few instances in history, where the conquerors did not excel the people conquered in every virtue. Savage barbarity, or effeminate luxury, have almost ever been imputed to those countries which were obliged to admit a foreign invader. There is a period between natural rudeness and excessive refinement, which seems peculiarly adapted for conquest and war, and fits mankind for every virtuous and great achievement. In this state of half-refinement, the Saxons were at the time in which the Britons were thus distressed. This virtuous and warlike people had conquered wherever they came, and to them the wretched remains of the forlorn Britons had recourse for protection.

As the conquest of this island is generally imputed to the Saxons as a piece of treachery, and an invasion of those rights they were only called in to protect, I shall give the invitation they received from the Britons, as it has been left us by Wittichindus, a contemporary historian of credit; and hence it may be judged what little right the Britons had afterward to complain:—"The poor and distressed Britons, almost worn out by hostile invasions, and harassed by continual incursions, are humble suppliants to you, most valiant Saxons, for succour. We are possessed of a wide, extended, and a fertile country; this we yield wholly to be at your devotion and command. Beneath the wing of your valour we seek for safety, and shall willingly undergo whatever services you may hereafter be pleased to impose."

The Saxons were one branch of those Gothic nations, which, swarming from the northern hive, came to give laws and liberty to the rest of Europe. A branch of these, under the name of Suevi, had, some time before Cesar's invasion of Gaul, subdued and possessed an extensive empire in Germany. These, for their strength and valour, were grown formidable to all the German nations. The Suevi were reckoned, by their neighbours, a people for whom the very immortal gods were not a match in war. They were afterward divided into several nations, and each became famous for subduing the country which it invaded. France, Germany, and England, were among the number of their conquests.

The Saxons were far more polished than the ancient inhabitants of Britain, though their acquirements were much inferior to the boasted refinements of Rome. They dressed with some degree of elegance,—a luxury which was unknown to the Britons: the women used linen garments, trimmed and striped with purple; their hair was bound in wreaths, or fell in curls upon their shoulders; their arms were bare, and their bosoms uncovered;—fashions which, in some measure, seem peculiar to the ladies of Britain to this day. Their governments were entirely elective, and nearly republican; their commanders were chosen by merit,

and dismissed from duty when their authority was no longer needful. The custom of trying by twelve men is of Saxon original; slavery and base submission was unknown among them, and they preferred death to a shameful existence. We are told by Marcellinus, that a body of them being taken prisoners by Symmachus the Roman, he designed to exhibit them in the amphitheatre, as gladiators, for the entertainment of the citizens of Rome. The morning, however, on which they were expected to perform, they were every one found dead in his prison, each choosing rather a voluntary death, than to be ignominious instruments of brutal satisfaction to their conquerors. The chastity of this people was equally remarkable, and to be without children was to be without praise: but in war they chiefly excelled: they had, in some measure, learned discipline from the Romans, whom they had often conquered: it was their maxim to esteem victory as a doubtful advantage, but courage as a certain good. A nation, however, entirely addicted to war, must, consequently, be addicted to cruelty; and those terrors, which a man is taught not to fear himself, he is seldom afraid of inflicting on society. The Saxons are represented as a cruel nation; but their enemies have drawn the picture.

Vortigern, who had been voted king of the distressed Britons, easily induced those conquerors to lend him assistance. They came over into Britain in great numbers, commanded by Hengist and Horsa, of the race of Odin. They marched against the Picts, and, in conjunction with the British arms, de-
440.
feated them in several encounters, obliging them to retreat into the most northern part of the province. The Saxons, thus finding themselves evidently the most powerful people upon the island, seemed resolved to reward themselves with those parts of it which were most to their liking. They first obtained consent from the Britons to send over for more forces, under a pretence of guarding their frontier. These seated themselves in the northern provinces, and repressed the incursions of the Picts and Scots with great bravery and success. These nations were, therefore, obliged to

bound their territories with the rough and mountainous countries that lie between the two seas; and such have, ever since, continued the boundaries of England and Scotland.

The province thus secured from the common enemy, dissensions began to arise between the Britons and their new allies. The Saxons valued too highly the assistance they had given, and the Britons, perhaps, underrated what they had received. In a contest of this nature, it is natural to imagine that the stronger nation always imposes laws on the weaker. The Saxons, allured by the fertile soil and the soft climate, continued to invite greater numbers from the continent, and now turned their arms upon the Britons, who vainly attempted to oppose them. This contention was still more inflamed by the difference of their opinion in matters of religion; the Saxons being all pagans, and the Britons professing Christianity. At such a time as this a Christian hero was wanted to

520. vindicate the rights of Christianity: and probably, merely for this reason, fiction has supplied us with a Christian hero. King Arthur, the British champion, is said to have worsted the Saxons in twelve different engagements; yet, notwithstanding all his victories, and whatever his prowess might have performed, it did not serve to rescue his country from its new possessors. The Saxons pursued their designs with courage and fierceness; new swarms of their countrymen came continually over, till, at length, in about a century and a half, they had subdued the whole body of the province, and established in it seven different kingdoms, which were, by the writers of those times, styled the Saxon Heptarchy.

The Britons, driven from their ancient possessions, to escape the fury of the conquerors, retired
548. to the mountainous part of Wales and Cornwall; countries barren and desolate, but, in some measure, surrounded by the sea, and toward the land difficult of access. Some great colonies of them, wholly abandoning their native country, sailed over to the neighbouring shores of France, where, possessing new seats, they gave a new denomination to that peninsula,

which preserved to the present century the name and memory of Britain there,—a name no longer continued at home.

All the possessions of the Britons now fell into the power of the conquerors, who began to lose their natural fierceness, and soften into the luxuries of those they had invaded. Though conquerors ever bring their own customs among the people they subdue, they, at the same time, assume some customs from those they had conquered. The Saxons now lost all that spirit of freedom their nation had been long famous for, and, in imitation of the Britons themselves, among whom slavery was permitted since the times of the Romans, they made the people of Britain slaves. These wretches were used in tilling the ground, feeding cattle, and other servile works; farming out lauds at a certain yearly stipend; but always held at the will and pleasure of the landlord. The children of this miserable people belonged to the soil, like the stock of cattle upon it; and thus began villanage in England, a horrid custom borrowed from the Romans originally, and derived now to the Saxons by vitious imitation.

The Saxons, now no longer fearing domestic foes, relaxed into luxury and vice, and, finding no other enemies to subdue, began to fight with each other. The princes of the seven kingdoms they had erected began mutually to emulate each other's power, and, for the space of above two hundred years, all the misery that ambition, treachery, or war, could bring upon a kingdom, was the consequence of their animosity. The dissensions of petty princes are ever more distressful to a people than the wars of extensive empires. The historians of this period are as barbarous as the transactions they describe: but it is sufficient to know that, after many various events and revolutions between the several races of the heptarchy, Egbert, descended from the West Saxon kings, partly by conquest, and partly by inheritance, became the first sole monarch of England. This was the name which the country now assumed, to distinguish it from the principality of Wales, possessed by the ancient Britons; and

from that part of the island north of the Tweed, possessed by the Picts and Scots, called Scotland.

No customs, truly British or Roman, were now to be seen : the language of the country, which had been either Latin or Celtic, was discontinued, and the Saxon or English only was spoken. The land, before divided into colonies or governments, was now cantoned into shires, with Saxon appellations to distinguish them. Their habits in peace, and arms in war, their titles of honour, laws, and methods of trials, were all continued, as originally practised by the Suevi ; but their commonwealths were now no more : these were changed into despotic and hereditary monarchies, and their exemplary chastity and their abhorrence of slavery were quite forgotten. The conquerors were corrupted by prosperity. They had embraced Christianity without forsaking heathenism. Their religion was corrupted by superstition and ignorance, and those who were desirous of living Christian lives, betook themselves to the rigid austerities of the convent rather than to the practical virtues of civilized society.

At this period, namely, the seventh century, the arts and sciences, which had been before only known in Greece and Rome, were disseminated over Europe, where they sufficed, indeed, to raise the people above natural and savage barbarity, but then they lost their own splendour by the transplantation. The English, at that time I am now speaking of, might be considered as polite, if compared to the naked Britons at the invasion of Cesar. The houses, furniture, clothes, meetings, and all the luxuries of sense, were almost as great then as they are at present : they were only incapable of sentimental pleasure : all the learning of the times was consigned to the clergy, and little could be expected from their efforts, since their principal tenet was to discard the lights of reason. An eclipse was, even by their historians, talked of as a dangerous omen of threatened distress ; and magic was not only believed possible, but, what is more strange, there were some who even fancied they understood magic. In short, this whole period was tissue over with ignorance,

cruelty, and superstition; and the kingdom seemed united under one monarch, only the more readily to admit a new invader.

LETTER VII.

IT might reasonably have been expected, that a fortunate prince, as Egbert had always been, at the head of so large a united kingdom, after the expulsion of the Picts, Scots, and Britons, should not only have enjoyed the fruits of peace, but even have left tranquillity and happiness to his most distant posterity: yet such is the instability of human affairs, and the weakness of man's best conjectures, that Egbert was scarcely settled in his throne, when the whole kingdom was alarmed by the approach of an unexpected enemy, fierce, barbarous, and brave. About 829. this time a mighty swarm of those nations which had possessed the countries bordering on the Baltic, began, under the names of Danes and Normans, to infest the western coast of Europe, filling the places wherever they came with slaughter and devastation. It is remarkable enough, that the people whom they spoiled were no other than colonies of their own countrymen, who had migrated some centuries before, and plundered those very countries which they were now themselves plundering in turn. The Normans fell upon the northern coasts of France: the Danes chiefly levelled their fury at England, and entering the Thames with an incredible number of ships, 832. carried away all that could neither be defended, nor withdrawn, from the suddenness of the invasion.

The weak opposition the Danes met with from the English, only served to invite them to renew their depredations, and make fresh attempts the succeeding season. The bravest blood of the English had been already exhausted in civil war, under the dissensions of the Saxon heptarchy; and when those wars were terminated, pilgrimages, penances, cloisters, and superstitions, served to enfeeble the remainder. Thus

the Saxons were become as unable to make opposition against the Danes, as the Britons were to oppose the Saxons heretofore : they therefore bought off their invaders with money ; a remarkable instance how much they had degenerated from their warlike ancestors. The money which was thus extorted, only increased the avarice and strength of the enemy. It was also raised by the kings from exactions on the people : this caused new discontent, and served to hasten the fall of their thrones, which already began to totter.

This century, however, did not pass without various success, and doubtful fortune, between the two contending nations. No less than twelve battles are said to have been fought in one year. The Danes divided their forces into several camps, removed them from one part of the country to another, as they were forced by necessity, invited by hopes of spoil, or induced by the weakness and divisions of the enemy. They fortified posts and passages, built castles for the defence of their borders, and the whole country was, in some measure, covered with their redoubts, the vestiges of which remain to this day. This manner of fortifying the country, and the difference of religion, seem to be the only customs in which the Danes differed from the Saxons they had invaded. They were both originally from the same country, and their manners consequently the same.

The similitude of language, laws, and manners, soon produced an intercourse between both nations ; and though they still were enemies, the Danes gradually began to mingle among the people of England, and submit to the laws and kings of the country they had partly subdued. But what concord could be expected between Christians, as the English then were, and pagans, for such the Danes still continued. Tyranny on one side, and impatience under sufferings on the other, produced frequent and bloody contests.

In this period of cruelty, jealousy, and desolation, a man seemed raised up to his bleeding country, to defend its rights, improve the age in which he lived, and even
872. to adorn humanity. Alfred the great was the fourth son of Ethelwolfe, king of England, and

had received the earlier part of his education under the inspection of Pope Leo in Rome, which was at that time the chief seat of arts and learning in Europe. Upon the death of his elder brother Etheldred, he was called to the English throne, of which he was only nominally put in possession, the country being overrun by the Danes, who governed with cruelty and pride.

His reign began with wars, and he was forced into the field immediately upon his coronation. His first battles were fought with success: but at length, being overpowered by a Danish combination, the unfortunate Alfred was obliged to seek safety by flight. In this manner, being abandoned by the world, without succour, and fearing an enemy in every face, the royal fugitive was resolved not to forsake his country, as was usual with his predecessors. He retired to the cottage of a cowherd, in a solitary part of the county of Somerset, at the confluence of the rivers Parret and Thone: here he lived six months as a servant, and, as we are told, was sometimes reproved for his indolence, by his mistress the cowherd's wife. The earl of Devonshire was alone privy to the place of his retreat; and, happening to overthrow a body of the Danes, acquainted Alfred with the news of his success.

Alfred now, therefore, began to consider how to turn the present consternation of the enemy to his own advantage. He apprized his friends of the place of his retreat, and instructed them to be ready, with what troops they could raise, upon a minute's warning: but still none was found who would undertake to give intelligence of the forces or posture of the enemy. Not knowing, therefore, whom to confide in, he undertook this dangerous task himself: in the simple dress of a shepherd, with a harp in his hand, he entered the Danish camp, had admission to the principal generals, and was allowed to excel upon that instrument. He soon perceived that the enemy were divided among themselves: he seizes the favourable moment, flies to the earl of Devonshire, heads his troops, forces their camp, and gains a complete victory.

Alfred knew the arts of negotiation as well as those of war: he had sufficient address to cause himself to be acknowledged king by the Danes, as well as his own natural subjects. London still remained to be subdued: he besieged it, took and fortified it in a manner which was then thought impregnable. He fitted out a fleet, kept the Danes in his dominions under proper subjection, and repressed the invasions of others from abroad. His next care was to polish that country by the arts of peace, which he had subdued by the arts of war. He is said to have drawn up a body of laws: but those which remain to this day, under his name, seem to be no more than laws already practised in the country by his Saxon ancestors, and to which, probably, he gave his sanction. The trials by juries, mulcts and fines for offences, by some ascribed to him, are of a much more ancient date than his reign. It is sufficient to observe, that the penal laws of our ancestors were mild and humane. As a nation becomes more polite, the penal laws become more numerous and severe, till, at length, growing intolerable to the poor, against whom they are principally levelled, they throw off the yoke of legal bondage, either by admitting a despotic prince, or by taking the government into their own hands by military invasion. I remember few great characters in history, that had not a regard for the sciences. Alfred is said to have founded the university of Oxford, and supplied it with books from Rome. The spirit of superstition had quite suppressed all the efforts of philosophy at this period. He is said to have lamented, that no priest, in all his dominions, understood Latin. As for him, he knew it, and was also well versed in the geometry of those barbarous ages. He was an excellent historian, made some translations from the Latin, which still subsist, and it is even said that he composed some excellent poems in the Saxon language. Those hours which he could take from business, he gave to study. He was a complete economist, and this gave him an opportunity of being liberal. His care even extended to the manner in which the people built their houses. Before his

time, the generality of the nation made use, mostly of timber, in building: Alfred having raised his palaces with brick, the nobility, by degrees, began to imitate his example.

From this time, though the reigns immediately succeeding are marked with ignorance, superstition, and cruelty, yet, in general, history puts on a form less severe: the whole nation seems to emerge into a greater degree of politeness than it had before enjoyed. The coins of this period are better struck than those of preceding princes. The marine, in his time, seems first to have given rise to our claim to the ocean. In short, from this period English history may properly be said to commence, and our constitution to take its rise. We are connected with the events previous to Alfred's reign only by motives of curiosity, but with those that follow him by the more prevailing inducements of interest.

This great man died in the year 900, in the 52d year of his age, after a reign of more than twenty-eight years; the first part spent in war and distress; the latter, in peace and prosperity.

LETTER VIII.

HISTORIANS and critics are fond of representing the period which succeeded Alfred as entirely barbarous; yet there are many traces of both erudition and politeness in those very ages which have been particularly called obscure. In the reign of his successor, Edward, the university of Cambridge was founded. The famous Scotus flourished at this time; a man whose learning appears amazing, even to an age which prides itself upon its erudition.

In the reign of Athelstan, who succeeded Edward, the Bible was translated into Saxon. Alliances also on the continent were formed by this monarch; who, it is said, was equally feared by his neighbours, and loved by the greatest princes of Europe.

We find little remarkable in the reign of Edmund I.

but that the first capital punishment was instituted by him. He had remarked, that fines and pecuniary punishments were too gentle methods of treating those who were convicted of robberies, who generally were men who had nothing to lose; he therefore ordered, that, in gangs of robbers, the oldest of them should be condemned to the gallows. This was reckoned a very severe law at the time it was instituted. What would our ancestors say, upon seeing the penal laws now used by their posterity?

The death of this monarch is too remarkable to be passed without notice. His virtues, abilities, wealth, and temperance, promised a long and happy reign; when, on a certain day, as he was solemnising a festival in Gloucestershire, he saw a malefactor, whose name was Leolf (who had been banished the kingdom for his crimes) sitting at one of the tables in the hall where the king was at dinner. Enraged at such insolence, he commanded him to be apprehended; but perceiving him drawing his dagger, in order to defend himself, the king started up in a rage, and catching him by the hair, dragged him out of the hall. In the mean time, Leolf, who had drawn the dagger, lifting his arm, with a furious blow stabbed the monarch to the heart, who fell down on the bosom of his murderer.

The Danes, during these three reigns, were kept within proper bounds: they frequently revolted, were subdued, and treated with lenity by the conquerors. The monks now began to have the direction of affairs, and, consequently, to enfeeble the state.

Edred succeeded Edmund, and began his reign with some victories over the Scotch and Danes, which
948. the monks were skilful enough to ascribe to the miraculous interposition of Heaven. Among the number, Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury, had peculiar influence over the mind of the credulous monarch, and, at length, became the director of the affairs of the kingdom. By this means the monks acquired such power, as served to retard the vigour of every future operation against the Danes. However, what they took from the real strength of the country, they returned in appellations of honour and respect. Edred was styled

Monarch of Albion, and King of Britain; and this at a period when his monarchy was upon the very verge of ruin.

The sons of Edred were set aside, and Edwy, his eldest brother's son, was placed on the throne. 955.

At this time the crown appears to have been elective, and those elections materially influenced by the clergy. The secular priesthood seems to have placed the crown upon this monarch's head in opposition to the monks, who were then rising into esteem among the people. Thus were the English divided by religious disputes, and involved in all the fury of civil war, while the Danes were every hour growing in strength, and sending over fresh forces. The seculars were possessed of the riches of the country; but the monks, who opposed them, pretended to the power of working miracles; and with this assistance the monks prevailed. Edwy was dethroned, and his brother 959.

Edgar placed in his room. Historians represented England under this reign as completely happy; and, it is certain, the kingdom still seemed to enjoy the fruits of Alfred's wisdom: for, of all the ages, from the entire decadence of taste, till its revival in the fifteenth century, this might be termed the Augustan. The English fleets are described as amounting to above four thousand ships: kings came to Edgar's court, and returned without molestation or fear. Music, painting, and poetry, were then held as necessary accomplishments to a refined education, as they are at present. But his gallantries are peculiarly the subject of the historians of that time, and are still the theme of romance. He is said, first, to have debauched a nun, then to have attempted the chastity of a nobleman's daughter: but the amour, which is famous to this day, is his adventure with the beautiful Elfrida.

Edgar had long heard of the beauty of a young lady, whose name was Elfrida, daughter to the earl of Devonshire; but, unwilling to credit fame in this particular, he sent Ethelwolfe, his favourite, to see if Elfrida were indeed that incomparable woman report had spoken her. Ethelwolfe had no sooner arrived at the earl of Devonshire's, and cast his eyes upon that no-

bleman's beautiful daughter, but he became desperately enamoured of her himself: such was the violence of his passion, that, forgetting his master, he demanded the beautiful Elfrida for his own wife. His request was granted; the favourite of a king was not likely to find a refusal, and they were married in private. Returning soon after to court, he assured the king, that Elfrida was much inferior to the representations that had been made of her, and he was amazed how the world could talk so much of her charms. The king was satisfied, and no longer felt any curiosity. Ethelwolfe, therefore, after some time, perceiving the king perfectly indifferent with regard to the lady, represented to his majesty, one day, that though the fortune of the earl of Devonshire's daughter would be a trifle to a monarch, yet it would be an immense sum to a needy subject; and therefore he humbly prayed leave to pay his addresses to her, as being the greatest heiress in the kingdom. A request so seemingly reasonable was readily complied with. Ethelwolfe returned to his wife, and their nuptials were solemnized in public. He had the precaution, however, of not permitting her to appear at court, before a king so susceptible of love, while she was so capable of inspiring passion. Notwithstanding all these precautions, it was impossible to keep his treachery long concealed. Favourites are never without private enemies, who desire an opportunity of rising upon their ruin. Edgar was informed of all, but, dissembling his resentment, he took an occasion to visit that part of the country where this miracle of beauty was detained. Accompanied by his favourite, when he was near the place, he told him he had a curiosity to see his wife, of whom he had formerly heard so much. Ethelwolfe, thunderstruck at the proposal, did all in his power, but in vain, to dissuade him: all he could obtain was leave to go before, on pretence of preparing her for the king's reception. On his arrival he fell at his wife's feet, confessing what he had done to be possessed of her charms; conjured her to conceal, as much as possible, her beauty from the king, who was but too susceptible of passion. Elfrida promised compliance: but, prompted either by

vanity or revenge, adorned her person with the most exquisite art, and called up all her beauty upon this occasion. The event answered her expectations: the king no sooner saw, but he loved, and was instantly resolved to obtain her. The better to effect his design, he concealed his sensations from the husband, and took his leave with a seeming indifference. Soon after, Ethelwolfe was sent to Northumberland, upon pretence of urgent affairs; but he never performed the journey: he was found murdered in a wood, by the king's command, who took Elfrida to court, where their nuptials were celebrated with the usual solemnity.

I have been the more explicit in this story, as, in the first place, it serves to show that ladies were admitted to court in this early period: it also demonstrates, that men and women were never kept separate in England, as in Spain and other countries: it still evinces, that however polite they might be at the time I am speaking of, there was still a savage air which mixed in every action, and sufficiently distinguished those ages of barbarism from the civilized ages of Greece and Rome. But, to stamp the age with still greater rudeness, Edgar, who was thus guilty of murder, sacrilege, and adultery, was placed among the number of saints, by the monks who have written his history.

The defects of Edgar's government fell upon his successors: the power of the monks increased, and that of the state was diminished in proportion. Every provision for the safety of the kingdom began to decline; and the remissness of the English made way for new incursions of the Danes, who exacted exorbitant tributes from the kings, and plundered the subjects at discretion. Edward the martyr, 975. who had not the least title to so glorious an appellation, was crowned king by the single authority of Dunstan, a celebrated monk, and consequently increased monkish power: he was murdered by order of Elfrida, who seems to have the highest contrast, in her own person, of the greatest external charms, and the most odious internal deformity.

Ethelred II, finding himself unable to oppose the

Danes, compounded with them for his safety: but soon after, being strengthened by an alliance with the duke of Normandy, he laid a detestable scheme for massacring all the Danes in the kingdom. This plot was carried on with such secrecy, that it was executed in one day, and all the Danes in England were destroyed 1002. without mercy. A massacre, so cruel and perfidious, instead of ending the long miseries of this wretched country, only made way for new and greater calamities than before.

Swayne, king of Denmark, exasperated by the slaughter of his countrymen, and, among the rest, of his own sister, who was beheaded in Ethelred's presence, soon after landed in England, and filled the whole kingdom with the marks of a horrid vengeance, obliging Ethelred to fly to Normandy for relief. The English, unable to oppose, yet unwilling to submit, for a short time groaned under the Danish yoke, and again, upon an opportunity given, called their banished monarch back to his throne. Ethelred returned; but, being a weak, as well as a cruel prince, he lost the hearts of his subjects, and, with their love, all his authority. He never, therefore, could recover strength enough to oppose the forces and numbers of the Danes, to whom many of the English nobles, as well as commonalty, had, in his absence, submitted.

Swayne was the first Danish monarch who swayed the English sceptre, but he died before he could be said to come to a peaceable enjoyment of what he had so hardly toiled for. His son Canute, however, achieved what the father had begun. Edmund Ironsides, elected 1017. by the English, who was his rival in government, and who succeeded Ethelred in this disputed sovereignty, continued, for a short time, to oppose the progress of the Danish conquests with success: but Canute gaining a bloody victory over the forces of this monarch, he was obliged to make a division of the kingdom; and his untimely death, soon after, gave Canute quiet and undisturbed possession of the whole.

This fierce monarch cut off some of the royal Saxon line, and forced others into exile. He was at once king of England, Denmark, and Norway; and from

the extent of his dominion, perhaps, rather than from the greatness of his mind, received from historians the title of *Canute the great*. The end of his life, however, was very different from the beginning; the first part of it was marked with invasion, rapine, and cruelty; the latter was equally remarkable for justice, humanity, and religion. Upon a certain occasion, being desirous of showing his flatterers how little he deserved the exaggerated praise with which they loaded him, he ordered a chair to be brought, and seating himself on the sea-shore, when the tide was about to flow, he addressed the sea in this manner: *O sea, thou art under my dominion, and the land which I sit upon is mine; I charge thee, approach no further, nor dare to wet the feet of thy sovereign*. The tide, however, advancing as usual, he turned to his courtiers, and observed, that the titles of Lord and Master only belonged to Him whom both earth and seas were ready to obey.

Harold Harefoot and Hardicanute, his Danish successors, were unworthy of him; the first is remarkable for no virtue, and the latter is distinguished, principally, for his cruelty and avarice. This last, dying suddenly at a feast, left the Danish race of kings so hated, by their exactions and impositions on the people, that Edward, surnamed the confessor, of the Saxon race, found both from Danes and Sax- 1042.
ons, an easy accession to the crown.

Thus expired, not only the dominion, but all attempts of invasion from the Danes for the future. Though their ravages had continued for above two hundred years, yet they left no change of laws, customs, language, or religion. The many castles they had built, and the many families they left behind them, served alone to discover the places of their establishment. After the accession of Edward the confessor to the crown, the English and Danes, as if wearied with mutual slaughter, united in support of each other, and formed ever after but one people.

The reign of Edward the confessor was long and happy. He had lived long in Normandy, and, in some measure, adopted the language and learning of

that country. His wars were successful, both in Scotland and Wales, though managed by his leaders, and without his personal attendance. The easiness of his disposition, however, together with his credulity and superstition, paved the way for another invasion of this country, as if the English were destined to be governed only by foreign masters.

Earl Godwin, by whose interest Edward had come to the crown, exerted all his influence to establish his own son Harold, as his successor. This too-powerful subject pretended to be much displeased with the favour shown by the king to the Norman nobility, who came over, in numbers, to the English court. These discontents at length produced an insurrection. Edward, now grown old, and indolent by nature, undertook to oppose these disorders, rather by negotiation than arms. Treating with rebels is a certain method of increasing their power: by this means Harold gained, by degrees, the authority he contended for, and had power sufficient to settle the succession upon himself.

As Edward had no children, he seemed desirous of leaving the crown to his nephew Edgar Atheling; but, distrusting his weakness to defend the title, and knowing the strength of Harold, his opponent, he left the succession undecided. It is probable, however, this weak monarch was nowise solicitous who succeeded in a government which he seemed himself to despise.

LETTER IX.

UPON the death of Edward, Harold now alleged that he was appointed successor by will. This was no more than what the people of England had expected long before: his pretensions were believed by some, and allowed by all. He had some right to a crown, hitherto elective, from his private virtues: and he confirmed his rights by the most irresistible argument, his power. Thus the monarch came to the throne by the most equitable of all titles; I mean the consent of the people.

His exaltation seemed to be only the commencement of his calamities. His first trouble was from his own brother, who, being the elder, obtained assistance from Norway, to set up a title to the English crown. Harold immediately levied a numerous army, and marched to meet the Norwegians, who with a vast force, had overrun all the northern parts of the kingdom, and had committed incredible devastation. Both armies soon joined battle. The Norwegians, for some time, bravely defended a bridge which lay between them and the English: but at length the valour of Harold surmounted every obstacle; he passed the bridge, renewed the assault, and, after an obstinate resistance, entirely routed the invaders. There had never before been seen in England an engagement between two such numerous armies, each having no less than three score thousand men. The news of this victory diffused the greatest joy over the whole kingdom; but their raptures were soon suppressed by an information that William of Normandy, surnamed the conqueror, had landed at Hastings, with a vast body of disciplined veterans, and laid claim to the English crown: Sept. 28.
1066.

This prince was the natural son of Robert duke of Normandy; his mother's name was Arlette, a beautiful maid of Falaize, with whom Robert fell in love, as she stood gazing at her door while he passed through the town. William, who was the offspring of this amour, owed his greatness to his birth, and his fortune to his personal merit. His body was vigorous, his mind capacious, and his courage not to be intimidated. His father Robert, growing old and, as was usual with princes of that age, superstitious, resolved upon a pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem. The nobility used every argument to dissuade him, but he persisted in his design. He showed them William, whom, though illegitimate, he tenderly loved, recommending him to their care and loyalty. He then exacted their homage and fealty to this prince, who was not yet above ten years old, and then put him under the tutelage of the French king, in whom he placed the highest confidence.

Robert soon after going into Asia, and dying, left his son rather inheritor of his wishes than his crown. Our young soldier found himself exposed to many dangers, from his youth and inexperience, from the reproach of his birth, from a suspected guardian, a disputed title, and a distracted state. However, he surmounted all with uncommon fortitude; nor till he had established peace, order, and tranquillity in his own kingdom, did he turn his ambitious views abroad.

It has been already said, that Edward the confessor resided for a long time at the court of Robert, duke of Normandy; and upon this William founded his claim. Whether gratitude might have engaged this exiled prince to make William, his benefactor's son, any promises of the kingdom of England, after his decease, is at this distance of time uncertain: William, however, upon the death of Edward, immediately made his pretensions, and upon this former promise of Edward founded all the justice of his demand. To this he added, that Harold had himself assured him of his interest in the succession, when forced upon the Norman coast: he therefore sent to remind him of fulfilling his engagements.

Harold admitted of neither of these claims, and resolved to defend, by his valour, what he had acquired by his intrigues. He was at the head of a large army, lately victorious, and now confident. He observed, that he had been elected by those who only had the power of placing kings on the throne, namely, by the people; and that he could not resign his crown without a breach of that trust reposed in him by his constituents. He added to these reasons one of still greater weight; he was possessed of power, and knew how to defend it.

William, who had landed his army at Hastings, in Sussex, at first made no appearance of invading any hostile country, but rather of encamping in his own. But he was soon roused from his inactivity by the approach of Harold, who returned from the defeat of the Norwegians, with all the forces he had employed in that expedition, and all he could invite or collect in the country through which he passed. These were, in general, brave, active, and valiant troops, in high spirits,

strongly attached to their king, and eager to engage. The army of William, on the other hand, consisted of the flower of all the continent: men of Bretagne, Brabant, Bologne, Flanders, Poictu, Maine, Orleans, France, and Normandy, were united under his command. He had long been familiar with conquest, and his troops were confident of his military capacity. England never before, nor ever since, saw two such armies drawn up to dispute a crown. The day before the battle, William sent an offer to Harold, to decide the quarrel between them by single combat, and thus to spare the blood of their people; but Harold refused, and said he would leave it to God to determine. Both armies, therefore, that night pitched in sight of each other, expecting the next terrible day with solicitude: the English passed the night with songs and feasting; the Normans in devotions and prayer.

The next morning, at seven, as soon as day appeared, both armies drew up in array against each other. Harold appeared leading on the centre of the English army on foot, that his men might be more encouraged by seeing their king exposed to equal danger with themselves. William fought on horseback, and commanded the body of reserve. The Normans began the fight with their crossbows: these at first galled and surprised the English, and, as their ranks were close, the arrows did great execution; but, when they came to close fight, the Normans were hewn down by the English bills, which, of all weapons, inflicted the most terrible and ghastly wounds. William, endeavouring to pierce their ranks, assaulted them so often, and with such bravery, that he had three horses killed in the attempt. Perceiving that they still continued impenetrable, he now pretended to fly: this drew the English from their ranks, and he was instantly ready to take advantage of their disorder. Upon a signal given, the Normans returned to the charge with greater fury than before, broke the English troops, and pursued them to a rising ground. Harold now flew from rank to rank: though he had toiled all day, from morning till now near evening, in the front of his Kentish men; yet still he continued, with unabated vigour, to renew the fight, and

exhort his men by his voice and example. The day now again seemed to turn against William, and the Normans fell in great numbers. The fierceness and obstinacy of this memorable battle was often renewed by the courage of the leaders, wherever that of the soldiers began to slacken. Fortune, at length, determined a victory that valour was unable to decide: Harold, making a furious onset at the head of his troops, was shot into the brains by an arrow. All the courage of the English expired with their brave but unfortunate leader. He fell with his sword *Oct. 14,* in his hand, fighting for his country, amid *1066.* the heaps of slain, so that the royal corpse could hardly after the battle be distinguished among the dead.

This was the end of the Saxon monarchy in England, which had continued for more than six hundred years. Before the times of Alfred, the kings seemed totally immersed in ignorance; and, after him, taken up with combating superstition, or blindly obeying its dictates. As for the crown, it was rather bequeathed by its possessor to whom he thought proper, than transmitted by hereditary and natural succession. As for the laws and customs of this race, they brought in many of their own, and adopted several belonging to the ancient Britons and Romans, which they found in the country upon their invasion. They assumed the name of kings; nay, some of them took the Greek appellation of Basileus; titles unknown in the country from which they came. Their earls were called Dukes, or Duces; a name borrowed from the Romans, and signifying captains. The lower classes of people were bought and sold with the farms they cultivated; a custom first introduced by the conquerors of the world, and which subsists in some countries, where the Roman laws continue, to this day. Their canon laws, also, at that time were often mixed with their civil laws, and were equally coercive: but these canon laws had their origin from Rome, and the priests and monks, who drew them up, generally had their education there. We must not, therefore, ascribe all the laws and customs, which at that time prevailed over England, to a Saxon

original; since they were, in some cases, derived from the Britons and Romans. But now all those customs and laws, of whatever original, were cast down into one common mass, and cemented by those of Norman institution. The whole face of obligation was changed, and new masters and new forms observed. The laws were improved; but the taste of the people for polite learning, arts, and philosophy, for more than four hundred years to come, were still to continue the same.

LETTER X.

WE now enter upon that part of the English history which gives birth to our present happy constitution. Those laws which are so much esteemed by the rest of Europe, those liberties which are so dear to us at home, began to dawn at this period. The English, hitherto almost unknown to the rest of the world, began, after this revolution, to make a considerable figure in Europe. The variety of dispositions of several foreign countries, being imported here, blended into one common national character, and produced sentiments of courage, freedom, irresolution, and pride.

Immediately after the victory of Hastings, in which, it is said, sixty thousand English were slain, the conqueror marched toward London. He carried before him a standard, which had been blessed by the pope, and to this all the clergy quickly resorted. The bishops and magistrates of the metropolis came out to meet him, and offered him a crown which they no longer had in their power to refuse. William was glad of thus peaceably being put in possession of a throne, which several of his predecessors had not gained but by repeated victories: he complied with the terms which were offered him, and, among these terms, it is to be presumed, the church's interests were not forgotten. Though William had it in his power to force the people into a compliance with his views, yet he chose to have their election of him confirmed as a voluntary

gift of their own. He knew himself to be their conqueror : he desired to be thought their lawful king.

Thus was William possessed of an idea of his power to enforce obedience, and the English of their generosity in having freely presented him with a crown. Impressed with such opposite sentiments, the one was inclined to oppress a people whom he, in fact, thought incapable of resistance ; and they, on the other hand, were inclined to revolt against him, whom they fancied to have received all authority from their own hands. Numberless, therefore, were the insurrections of the English against their new monarch ; and every suppressed rebellion only gave fresh instances of the conqueror's mildness and humanity. The English were unwilling to pay any taxes toward enriching those they now began to look upon as conquerors ; and William was under the most solemn engagements of providing for those adventurers who had left their native country to place him on the throne.

Hitherto William had acted like one who was rather the father than the invader of the country, when news was brought him, that a body of Northumbrian English, assisted by the Danes, had set upon the Norman garrison in York castle, and put every man to the sword. After repeated rebellions, which he had quelled before, and such frequent pardons, which were the consequence, he now found that nothing but rigour would do for the future. He marched therefore to meet the enemy, bought off the Danes for a sum of money, and took a signal revenge upon the Northumbrians, unable to oppose him.

From this time he seems to have regarded England rather as a conquest than a justly acquired dominion. His diffidence of the English became more conspicuous every day, and his partiality to the Normans more galling : all places of trust and confidence were taken from the one, and given to the other. From this time he thought only of establishing himself on the throne, without nicely examining whether the means were consonant to justice and humanity.

If historians, who seem partial in other respects, are

to be credited, England was then in a most deplorable situation. The Normans committed continual insults on the conquered people, and they seldom found any redress from their governors: in both cases, therefore, they generally revenged themselves by private murders; and a day seldom passed but the bodies of assassinated Normans were found in the woods and highways, without any possibility of bringing the perpetrators to justice. But what is represented as the peculiar grievance of the times, was, that the English were deprived of arms, and were forbid having any lights in their houses after eight in the evening. At this hour a bell was rung, to warn them to put out their fire and candle: and this, which was called the Curfew, is a custom very common upon the continent; but was very grating to the ears of this people.

Insurrections are ever the consequence of oppression in a brave nation: William was sensible of this, and generally attempted to moderate the cruel counsels of his countrymen by gentle treatment of the offenders. Edgar Atheling, who had the best successive right to the crown, was among the number of those who experienced his lenity and faith. This prince had gone over to the Scots, and had persuaded their king to join him with an army, in asserting his right to the English crown. William met their forces in the northern parts of England, and, instead of a battle, proposed a negotiation. Peace was established between the two nations, and Edgar was included in the treaty. He continued from that time to live as a private man, in opulence and security, and passed the rest of his life perhaps more happily than if he had continued in the career of ambition.

William, having nothing at present to fear from war, turned all his thoughts to the arts of peace. He was not yet sufficiently arbitrary to change all the laws now in being for those of his own country: he only made several innovations, and ordered all law-pleas, in the several courts, to be made in the Norman language. These precautions, instead of making the Norman language the study of all, confined the law to the peculiar study of a few. The English language still continued

to be spoken; and such was the esteem it was held in, even so early, that it began to be spoken at the court of Scotland, and in several adjacent countries; and, what is very remarkable, never was the French less engrafted upon our language, than at this very time, when they were our masters.

William now thought proper to deprive bishops of all judgment in civil causes, which they had enjoyed during the whole Saxon succession, from their conversion to Christianity. He restrained the clergy to the exercise of their ecclesiastical power alone. He endeavoured to abolish trials by *ordeal* and *camp-fight*. The ordeal trial, which had been a remainder of pagan superstition, and still was held in veneration by the Saxons, was either by fire or water. It was used in criminal cases, where the suspicions were strong, but the proofs not evident. In that of fire, the person accused was brought into an open plain, and several ploughshares, heated red-hot, were placed at equal intervals before him: over these he was to walk blind-fold, and, if he escaped unhurt, he was acquitted of the charge. In the other trial of water, the accused was thrown bound into the water: if he sunk, he was declared innocent; but, if he swam, guilty.

The trial by camp-fight was another instance of the deplorable barbarity of the times. This was performed by single combat, in lists, appointed for that purpose, between the accuser and the accused: he that, in such case, came off victorious, was deemed innocent; and he who was conquered, if he survived his antagonist's resentment in the field, was sure to suffer as a malefactor some time after. Both these trials the king abolished as unchristian and unjust, and reduced all causes to the judgment of twelve men, of a rank nearly equal to that of the prisoner. This number was called a jury, and this was a method of trial common to the Saxons and Normans long before, but confirmed by him with all the sanction of royalty.

Having continued thirteen years in England, he now thought of revisiting his native dominions: but, no sooner was his back turned, than a new conspiracy was set on foot. This was more terrible, as it was carried

on by the joint counsels of Normans as well as English. Several lords of both nations, already possessed of opulence, were desirous of independence also, and pretended many grievances, or imagined themselves aggrieved. The earl Waltheof, who had been formerly pardoned for a like offence, entered secretly into a correspondence with Swayne, king of Denmark. Their measures were conceived with caution, and pursued with secrecy; but some delays intervening, were fatal to counsels which were necessarily entrusted to many: the plot was discovered some days before the Danes arrived; the heads of the conspiracy were taken, and Fitz Auber, a noble Norman, and Waltheof, were beheaded on this occasion. Whether this act of rigour was executed by the king's command, sent over from Normandy, or by Odo, his brother, left behind, and naturally inclined to severity, is not apparent. However, these two were the only noblemen executed in England during the reign of William the conqueror, notwithstanding so many revolts on their side, and so much power in him to punish.

Though good fortune seemed to attend this monarch thus far on his reign, here the curtain may be drawn for the rest. His decline was marked with domestic quarrels, which could neither end in glory nor in gain; his endeavours were opposed by his own subjects, for whom he had laboured with such perseverance. He had four sons, Robert, Richard, William, and Henry, beside several daughters. The most poignant of his distress must, therefore, come from that quarter where he least expected an attack, and was least guarded to oppose. His eldest son Robert, encouraged by the king of France, pretended a right to possess Normandy, even during the life of his father. William could place confidence in none but the English, to bring his unnatural son to his duty; and drawing an army of Englishmen together, he passed over into Normandy, to put a stop to the progress of so unexpected an insurrection. It is remarkable enough, that the same commander, who formerly led over an army of Normans to conquer England, now returned with an army of English to subdue Normandy. To reduce

his son, however, was found a much more difficult task than William had at first expected. Robert seemed to inherit, though not his father's virtues, at least his conduct and intrepidity. He led on his troops with courage, and laid his ambuscades with secrecy: in one of these, after he had killed part of a troop of English, and put the rest to flight, he boldly advanced against the main body, where William commanded in person. By a strange fatality of circumstances, the father and son were opposed, without knowing each other. William was now grown old, and unable to perform those extraordinary feats, for which he was once so famous. The son charged with such fury, that his aged father fell to the ground with the blow: death would inevitably have been the consequence, and the son's arm was just lifted to strike his father, had William not called out, and Robert immediately recollected his father's voice. At once stung with a consciousness of his crime and his duty, he leaped from his horse, and raised the fallen monarch from the ground: then prostrating himself in his presence, he asked pardon for his offences, and promised, for the future, an adherence to his duty. The king, moved by the impulse of nature, took once more his long-lost son to his arms; and the armies, spectators of this moving scene, participated in their joy and reconciliation.

But this submission of Robert was of no long continuance; he once had tasted the sweets of power, and knew not how to submit to subordination; again, therefore, he revolted, and again was pardoned by his indulgent father. But the French, who inspired him to these acts of disobedience, and were at best insidious allies, particularly felt the vehemence of William's displeasure. After he had adjusted the government of England, to which he was returned some time before, he again led over a brave army of Englishmen into Normandy, with intent to make the storm fall upon those who were primarily the disturbers of his tranquillity. The king of France rightly considered, that this armament could only be designed against himself, and attempted to divert it by a truce, which

was agreed on; but a jest of the French king's served to renew hostilities. William had been confined to his bed by an indisposition, which, added to his natural corpulency, threatened the most dangerous consequences. This was a situation which it was cruelty to ridicule; however, the Frenchman, with a levity natural to his nation, observed, that the king of England was lying-in of a big belly. This raised William's indignation to such a pitch, that he immediately took the field, where, leaping a ditch, the pommel of the saddle bruised his belly, and gave him a rupture. This, added to his former bad habit of body, brought on a mortification, of which he died.

The characters of princes are best seen in their actions, nor is it necessary to give an outline at the end of what the historian has painted more strongly in his narration. There is scarce a great quality which this monarch does not seem eminently to have possessed; and, considering the morality of the times, scarce a good one in which he was entirely deficient. The only objections of any weight are his avarice, and his depopulating a part of his country, in order to make a forest to hunt in for his amusement: but, at that time, kings acquired money for the uses of the public; and the wars of the state were supplied by the treasures of the crown. His making so extensive a forest, can be vindicated only from the barbarity of the times;—a method rather of making his guilt general, than of wiping it away. Upon the whole, however, England seemed to improve by the conquest, and lost neither its name nor its language. It increased in strength and naval power; its laws became more numerous and rational; the manner of living, among the natives, more elegant and extensive; and the corruptions of Christianity less gross and absurd.

LETTER XI.

FEW nations have gone through more revolutions, few governments have appeared more unsteady, or

fluctuated more between prerogative and privilege, than this of Great Britain. The English have been surprised, betrayed, forced into situations little preferable to downright slavery: but those convulsions, though they have disordered the frame, yet could not destroy the principles of a free constitution.

We have seen the Norman alter the whole model of government, but he was unable to extinguish the Saxon spirit of freedom, which formed its groundwork: on the contrary, the Normans, and other strangers who settled here, were soon seized with a spirit of liberty themselves, instead of being able to communicate their native principles of slavery.

William left three sons; Robert, to whom he bequeathed his dukedom of Normandy; William Rufus, who had the newly acquired kingdom of England; and Henry, who was put in possession of the greatest part of his personal treasures.

William Rufus, upon coming to the crown, had two
1087. very powerful parties to oppose and to humble. The nobility, who still aspired to the same degree of freedom which they possessed under the Saxon kings; and the clergy, who desired to erect themselves into a distinct government, independent of secular power. One or the other of these claims gave rise to the insurrections and discontents of this reign. Nothing can be more easy than to imagine how ill a people, who thought themselves free, must brook a monarch who looked upon them as his property, by a succession originally founded in conquest.

Odo, his own uncle, was the first to dispute his title; but he was soon taken prisoner, and some time after contrived means of flying into Normandy, where he found protection and honour from duke Robert. This was a sufficient pretext for William to make war upon his brother: it was carried on with vigour and success. Henry, the third brother, was also involved in this war, separately and upon his own account, having taken up arms for not being paid the treasures bequeathed him by his father. Thus were there three different armies, each exasperated against the other, and each led on by one of those disunited brothers. Such

an unnatural contest, as may be easily conceived, served only to weaken themselves, and strengthen their enemies. The Scots and Welsh, therefore, took this opportunity of making several incursions upon the English, while William was thus pursuing conquests that could end neither in advantage nor fame. To increase the confusion, the clergy loudly complained of encroachments upon their privileges: the people murmured at every increase of their taxes: Robert de Mowbray was actually taken prisoner, while he commanded a fortress that had shaken off the royal authority. What effects these discontents, which were increased also by the king's avarice, intemperance, and prodigality, might have produced, is uncertain; the most melancholy were expected: but now the attention of all Europe was called off to one of the most remarkable events that history can produce; I mean the arming for the first crusade.

Peter, surnamed the hermit, who had beheld with indignation the cruel manner in which the infidels, who were in possession of the holy sepulchre, treated the Christians who went on pilgrimages thither, returned to Europe, resolved to inspire the princes of Christendom with a zeal for their recovery. Bare-headed and barefoot, he travelled from court to court, preaching as he went, and inflaming the zeal of every rank of people. Pope Urban II, preached the crusade himself at the council of Clermont; and numberless persons, of all degrees and nations, ardently embraced the cause, and put on the red cross, the badge of their profession. Among this number was Robert, duke of Normandy: he was brave, zealous, fond of glory, and still more fond of change. In order to supply money to defray the necessary charges of so expensive an undertaking, he offered to mortgage his dukedom with his brother for a stipulated sum. William eagerly embraced the proposal. He was nowise solicitous about raising the money agreed on, for he knew the riches of his clergy; heedless, therefore, of their murmurs, he rigorously levied the whole, making use of the most pious pretences to cover his extortion. Thus sending

his brother to the Holy Land, he took peaceable possession of his dukedom.

In this manner was Normandy again united to the English crown; and from this union afterward arose those wars with France, which, for whole centuries, continued to depopulate both nations, without conducting in the end to the enriching of either.

William was not a little pleased with this unexpected acquisition; and as one success only produces a desire for more, he began to conceive more extensive schemes of ambition. Poictou and Guienne were offered to be mortgaged for the same reasons as Normandy. William immediately raised the necessary sums, but death interrupted the payment. Happening to hunt in that forest, from which his father had banished the husbandman and legal possessor, he was accidentally shot through the heart with an arrow, 1100. by Walter Tyrrel, one of his attendants: he died in the forty-fourth year of his age, had reigned twelve, and left a dominion which he had contributed to extend, impoverish, and enslave.

There were now two competitors for the crown: Robert, who was engaged in the Holy War; and Henry the youngest brother, who remained at home. The right of succession was evidently in favour of the first, but the latter was upon the spot. Nothing can be a more evident instance how little hereditary succession was minded at that time, than that Henry's title prevailed, and that he was elected by the joint acclamations of the people. Whenever there is a disputed throne, the people generally regain their liberty. Henry, knowing the weakness of his pretensions to the crown, was resolved to strengthen his power, by gaining the affections of the people: he therefore once more confirmed the ancient Saxon laws, and indulged the clergy in all their former privileges.

Upon Robert's return from the Holy Land, where he refused to be crowned king of Jerusalem, he found himself deprived, in his absence, of a kingdom which he considered as his birthright. His attempts, however, to recover it, were without success. This prince

seemed only born to be the sport of fortune: his bravery, his generosity, and a thousand other good qualities, of which he was possessed, served to render him the dupe of every deceiver, and the instrument of opposing villany. At one time we behold him prosecuting his pretensions with spirit; at another, giving up the just claims with vitious generosity. Thus, after a life spent in toil, fatigue, and ambition, he found himself, at last, utterly deprived, not only of his patrimonial dukedom, but his fortune, his freedom, and friends. He saw Normandy fall to the conqueror. And, to add to his misfortune, he at last languished, for twenty-six years of his life, a prisoner in Cardiff-castle in Wales, where he died in captivity. To want prudence is, in some measure, to want virtue.

Henry, having acquired possession of Normandy, might now be said to be master of a theatre, where many a succeeding tragedy was to be performed; and soon his neighbour of France began to show his jealousy of so powerful a rival. Those wars now began which were to be so fatal to distant posterity. The ravages of the French were at first neglected, and Henry remained a quiet spectator in England, as if unprovoked at their insolence: but he soon showed, that his unwillingness to engage was by no means the effect of fear. He passed into Normandy with a powerful army, and offered the enemy battle: the challenge was soon accepted, and a furious combat ensued. During the fight, a French cavalier, named Crispin, personally attacked the king of England, and struck him twice on the head, with such force, that all his armour streamed with an effusion from the wound. The king, however, nowise intimidated, continued the single combat with resolution, and, summoning all his strength, discharged such a blow at his adversary, as threw him from his horse, so that he became the prisoner of the king's own hand. This decided the victory in favour of the English, who pursued the French with great slaughter, which hastened the peace that was concluded soon after.

Fortune now seemed to smile upon Henry, and promised a long succession of felicity: he was in peace-

able possession of two powerful states, and had a prince for undisputed heir, now arrived at his sixteenth year, a youth of great hopes: all his enemies were humbled, and many actually in his own power: Matilda, his daughter, was married to emperor Henry IV; and he had the hearts of the greatest number of his subjects, particularly the English. All his prospects, however, were at once clouded by an unforeseen misfortune;—an accident which tintured his remaining life with misery. Henry, returning victorious from abroad, brought with him a numerous retinue of the chief nobility. In one of the vessels of the fleet, his son and several young noblemen, his companions, went together to render the passage more agreeable. The young prince, desiring to be first ashore, promised the seamen a reward, if they came in foremost. This emulation was fatal to them all; the pilot ran the ship upon a rock, and immediately she was dashed to pieces. The prince, however, was put into the boat, and would have escaped, had he not been called back by the cries of Matilda, his sister. He was now out of danger himself, but could not leave her to perish: he prevailed upon the sailors to row back to take her in; the approach of the boat giving others an opportunity to attempt saving their lives, several leaped in also, so that the boat was overloaded, and all, except one, went to the bottom. When Henry was informed of the catastrophe of his only son, he covered his face, and never laughed after.

The rest of his life seems a mere blank; his restless ambition had nothing now to toil for. His daughter Matilda, however, becoming a widow, he married her a second time to Geoffry of Plantagenet, and when brought to bed of a son, named Henry, he caused the nobility to take an oath of succession in her favour. The great men of those times were ready to swear whatever the monarch commanded, but observed it no longer than while they were obliged to obey. He did not long survive this attempt to confirm this
1135. succession: he died, as it is said, of a surfeit, caused by eating lampreys, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, having reigned thirty-six.

It is strange, that historians impute it as a fault to

several English monarchs of those times, that they came to the crown without hereditary claims to support their title: this is one of the faults alleged against Henry; but it is none, if we consider the usual spirit of other successions.

During the reign of Henry, the barons and the clergy were growing into power: each was a petty tyrant over those who held under him. In order, therefore, to confirm privileges so lately acquired, they joined in electing a king, who might owe to them, and not to any previous claim, his prerogative and sceptre. With such intentions they pitched upon Stephen; nephew to the deceased king; and as for their oaths to Matilda, the bishops gave them absolution. They could not, indeed, have made a more proper choice than him whom they elected: but their conduct proceeded only from a concern for themselves, and not for the people. Stephen was ready enough to consent to all their exorbitant demands: he acknowledged the crown as their gift, and not his just inheritance; and confirmed all the immunities, privileges, and claims of the clergy.

The kingdom now began to wear the face of an aristocracy, in which the barons and clergy might be said to command. They built castles, fortified and garrisoned them with their own troops, from which, when offended, they would bid their monarch defiance. Of all miseries that ever affected kingdoms, an uncontrolled power among the great is certainly the most afflictive. The tyranny of a single monarch only falls upon the narrow circle round him; the arbitrary will of a number of delegates falls most heavily upon the lower ranks of people, who have no redress. In short, the barons clamoured for their own privileges, the clergy for their own liberty, but the people were slaves.

Stephen was sensible of this, and, in order to diminish their power, possessed himself, by force, of some of their castles, which were incompatible with the safety of the kingdom.

Thus we may discern three different contending powers at this time; the king and his followers, the barons and their adherents, and the clergy, assisted by the generality of the people: to these was soon added

a fourth, Matilda, who claimed the crown in pursuance of Henry's command. This haughty woman, who had been wife to the emperor, and still seemed to retain a consciousness of her dignity, landed from Normandy, accompanied only by a few followers, and openly laid claim to the crown. Mean time, Stephen, being informed of her arrival, flew to besiege Arundel, a castle belonging to the queen-dowager, where Matilda had taken up her residence. This fortress did not seem to promise a long defence, and would have been soon taken, had it not been represented to him, that, as this was a castle belonging to the queen-dowager, it would be an infringement of the respect due to her to attempt taking it by force. There was a spirit of generosity prevalent in the times I treat of, which was unknown to their degenerate posterity. Stephen permitted Matilda to come out, and to be conveyed in safety to Bristol, another fortress equally strong with that from which he permitted her to retire.

It is a deplorable consideration, that our virtues, often, instead of being attended with happy consequences, are found fatal to such as adhere to them without deviation. Matilda, owing her freedom merely to the generosity of the king, made no other use of it but to levy an army against him: and this army, at length, proved victorious. During the continuance of this civil war, the whole kingdom was divided: pillage and desolation were the consequence, whoever happened to be the conqueror.

It was at length, however, determined by a decisive victory obtained over the king. The troops he led were, in general, foreign mercenaries, and commanded by tumultuous barons, more accustomed to command than to conquer. His horse gave way, and his infantry, being destitute of their assistance, soon followed their example, and deserted their king. All the race of the Norman conquerors were brave: Stephen, unknowing how to fly, was left alone, and fought on foot in the midst of the field of battle, assaulted by multitudes, and resisting all their efforts with astonishing valour. Had his horse then rallied, he might have come off victorious. He was now hemmed in on every

side, but with his battle-ax made way for some time: that breaking, he then drew out his sword, and dealt his blows round the circle in which he was inclosed. At length, after performing more than could naturally be expected from a single arm, his sword flying in pieces, he was obliged to surrender himself prisoner. In this manner, he was conducted by the conqueror from the field, and ignominiously laid in irons.

Matilda was now proclaimed queen, and, for some time, her power was acknowledged by the generality of the nation. But, as she disdained to accept the shadow of royalty, which was all the barons and clergy intended to grant, she disgusted them by her pride, and soon made those repent who had raised her from their levity. The bishop of Winchester, Henry, brother to king Stephen, seems, at this time, to have been possessed of unbounded power. He had been chiefly instrumental in raising her to the throne; he now, therefore, levied an army, to convince her, that it was no less in his power to deprive her of her kingdom than to put her in possession of it. He was successful in his designs: Matilda was obliged to quit England once more, and Stephen was taken from chains, and once more placed upon the throne.

Again put in possession of this uneasy seat, he seemed to be exalted, to give new instances of his refusing the exorbitant demands of the barons and the clergy. He endeavoured to get the crown to devolve upon his son: but this was not complied with by the bishops. It is said, though it has scarcely the appearance of truth, that he confined them in one house, and there threatened to detain them, till they complied with his will. This was an extraordinary method of obtaining their consent, and seems inconsistent with his usual wisdom: his precautions, accordingly, proved unsuccessful, and the archbishop of Canterbury found means to escape his guards, and fly into Normandy.

Soon after this, Henry, son to empress Matilda, and who had been long acknowledged duke of Normandy, soon landed with a formidable army. The barons, ever restless and regardless of their obligations, were again divided upon this occasion, and a terrible civil war

threatened the kingdom afresh, when, happily for the people, a truce was proposed between the opposite powers: this paved the way to a more lasting peace. It was agreed that Stephen should enjoy the crown of England during his life, and that Henry should be acknowledged as his successor. In this manner a civil war was terminated, which had, for some years, laid England in blood. The nation once more began to respire from their calamities, and Stephen's death soon put his rival in possession of a crown, which to the former had afforded only disappointment, fatigue, and danger.

LETTER XII.

WE have hitherto seen the barons and clergy becoming powerful in proportion to the weakness of the monarch's title to the crown, and enriching themselves with the spoils of depressed majesty. Henry Plantagenet had now every right, both from the hereditary succession and universal assent, that could fix a monarch on his throne: conscious, therefore, of his strength, he began to resume those privileges which had been extorted from his predecessor's weakness.

He first commenced by demolishing those castles which the barons had built, and which only served as sanctuaries to guilt, treason, and debauchery; he dismissed the foreign troops which had been mercenaries to his predecessor; and, perceiving the poverty of the crown, resumed all those lands which properly belonged to it: he enacted some laws, by which the people, in some measure, became independent of their barons, by whom they were claimed as appurtenances to their estates and manors.

He gave charters to several towns, by which the citizens claimed their freedom and privileges, independent of any superior but himself. These charters may properly be called the groundwork of English liberty. The struggles heretofore were, whether a monarchy,

or an aristocracy, should prevail; whether the king, or the nobility, only: but, by this grant, the lowest order of the people began to have a just value for themselves, and to claim the prerogative of humanity. Thus was the feudal government first impaired; liberty began to be diffused more equally upon every rank of people, and the kings became capable of levying armies independent of their vassals. The king also determined to lessen the power of the clergy, who had for some time been exempt from the ordinary jurisdiction of the law, and considered themselves amenable to the Pope alone.

The king proposed, in council of the nobles, that the bishops should not be permitted to go to Rome; that no subject should appeal to the holy see; that no officer of the crown should be excommunicated, or suspended, without the sovereign's permission; and, lastly, (which was the great article he aimed at,) that the clergy should be subject to the temporal judges, as well as the rest of his subjects. Such just propositions were agreed to by all present; even Becket, who was legate, archbishop of Canterbury, and Chancellor, hesitated not to sign his name. They were referred next to the pope for approbation: the pope disapproved of them all. Upon this, therefore, Becket declared his repentance for having complied with the king in signing the constitutions of Clarendon, as they were called; and, in order to carry on the farce, suspended himself, as unworthy to perform his functions, till the pope should please to absolve him.

This pardon he quickly obtained, and now he set no bounds to his obstinacy and ambition. Some historians describe Becket as a saint, and some as a designing hypocrite; neither are, probably, just in their opinions. He pursued, with inflexibility, what was in fact wrong, but what education, and the manners of the times, had taught him to believe was right: his errors were rather of judgment than of will.

The king was resolved to humble a man, who had, by his authority, been lifted into power, and accused him of embezzling the public money, while chancellor. While the judges were consulting, Becket insolently

entered the council, with a crosier in his hand, to intimidate his judges; but, notwithstanding his boldness, he was condemned as a traitor, although he found means of avoiding punishment by escaping into Flanders.

The popes had long been growing formidable to the kings of England. Alexander III immediately espoused Becket's quarrel, and brought the king to consent to a conference, which came to nothing; another succeeded, but with as little success; a third was proposed, and accepted. The king, wearied out with the repeated threats of the pope, and the excommunications of his clergy, consented to almost every thing the haughty prelate demanded. But when all the articles were settled, and Becket was to give the king the kiss of peace, he took it into his head to say, that it was for God's honour: the king insisted that this expression should be retracted: Becket insisted upon using it: this renewed the debate, and the conference ended once more without effect.

At length, however, after an interval of some years, they were reconciled, and the archbishop made his entry into London, amid the acclamations of the populace. His pride was now increased by success, and he went from town to town in a sort of triumphal cavalcade. But he was scarcely reinstated in his power, when he began to exert it to its utmost extent; he solemnly excommunicated two lords who had opposed him, and published the pope's letters for the suspension of several bishops who had shown themselves his enemies. The king, who was in Normandy, soon received information of this prelate's pride and popularity, and soon after the suspended bishops came over to lay their complaints before him: throwing themselves at his feet, they implored his protection, and inveighed against their oppressor. Henry was now quite exasperated by their complaints; and, continually uneasy from the repeated instances of Becket's insolence, was heard to say, *Is there none to revenge their monarch's cause upon this audacious priest?* These words seemed to arm the most resolute of his attendants; and four knights, whose names were Hugh de Moreville,

William de Traci, Richard Brito, and Reginald Fitzurse, hastened to Canterbury, and, entering the cathedral, where Becket was officiating, with a few attendants, they beat out his brains, with clubs, at the foot of the altar.

His death confirmed those privileges to the clergy which his opposition could not do. His resolution during life, and his resignation when dying, gained the hearts of the people. He was looked upon as a martyr, and his shrine had the reputation of working miracles. It was reported, and believed; that he rose from his coffin before he was buried, to light the tapers designed for his funeral; and when the funeral ceremony was over, that he stretched forth his hand to bless the people. Thus Becket became a saint, and Henry was suspected of being the author of his assassination.

In order to divert the attention of the public from suspicions of this nature, Henry undertook the conquest of Ireland;—a project formed some years before, but deferred on account of his long-protracted quarrel. The more readily to gain the pope's approbation of his undertaking, (for nothing could then be achieved without the sanction of Rome,) he cleared himself, by oath, of being any way privy to the assassination, and made a solemn vow to go barefoot to Becket's tomb, there to receive the discipline of the church.

Thus furnished with pope Adrian's bull, which granted him a kingdom that was not his to give, he subdued Ireland with a rapidity equal to his most sanguine hopes: but it was no hard matter to conquer a country which was at that time barbarous, and divided under different chiefs, and each pursuing different views and interests.

But the happiness this monarch received from this accession of power, was soon allayed by a conspiracy in his own family. Among the few vices of this monarch, unlimited gallantry was one. His queen was disagreeable, and he was faithless: but, though an admirer of all the sex, he singled out, with particular affection, Rosamond Clifford, a lady of matchless beauty. Historians and poets talk of the fair Rosamond in the warmest strains of rapture: if what they

say be true, never did England produce so much beauty united with so much grace before. He kept her concealed in a labyrinth at Woodstock Park, and, in her company, passed his hours of vacancy and pleasure. But the queen at length came to a knowledge of this amour, and, pursuing her happy rival to her retreat, guided, say some, by a clue of silk, she obliged her to take poison.

As this was an offence which to the queen could not be forgiven, she was resolved not to forgive. Her sons were soon brought to share her resentments; and a conspiracy was formed, abetted by all the malecontents of the kingdom. To this unnatural combination, Henry opposed his usual prudence and resolution: he seemed on every side assaulted, but every where came off victorious. Ascribing, however, the opposition of his own children to the indignation of offended Heaven, he was resolved, by an exemplary penance, to conciliate its favour.

Now was the time in which the clergy were to come off victorious; this was the season in which they were to reap the labours of their martyred defender; and by one weak action the king was now to cancel that firmness, which a great part of his life had been employed in bringing to ripeness. Being come within sight of Canterbury, he walked barefoot to Becket's tomb, in extreme pain: there he was scourged by the monks, and spent the whole night upon the pavement. The monks were thus reinstated again in all their claims, and the people involved in greater superstition than before.

This penance, however, no way served to reconcile him to his family: he even cursed their ingratitude, and, wearied with domestic contention, resolved, at last, to undertake a crusade. His son Richard, however, still pursuing the dictates of ambition rather than of nature, deprived him of all power to put this design into execution. Passion and disappointment, therefore, began to make visible depredations on his constitution, and mark him for the grave: he fell sick at Chinon, in Normandy, and finding his end approach, he caused himself to be carried into the church, before

the altar, where he expired with scarce a single attendant to deplore his fall.

LETTER XIII.

WHEN I compare the English, at this period, with the neighbouring nations, I cannot avoid remarking in them a peculiar degree of courage, generosity, and politeness. They had, during the Saxon kings, sunk into bigotry and effeminacy: but a mixture of the Norman fierceness improved their character, and rendered them at once valiant and merciful.

You have seen Henry, as well as all his Norman predecessors, improve those good qualities in his subjects, not less by influence than example. You have seen him attempting to increase the freedom of the people by corporation charters, and to diminish the power of the barons by weakening the feudal government, by which the peasants and husbandmen were slaves. In these designs he succeeded; but he failed in his endeavours of lessening the power of the clergy. The kingdom, at his decease, therefore, assumed a different appearance from what it wore before his accession. The people now began to have some, though but a small, share of power; the barons had still vast authority, though less than formerly; while the clergy might be considered as a body entirely distinct from the rest of the community, governed by their own laws, and professing subjection only to the pope.

In this situation were affairs, when Richard, the son of Henry, came by succession to the government, in which his reign made no material alteration. Religion was then the pretext for every sinister action; obedience to the church the only rule of merit; and to oppose the enemies of Christianity, was preached up as an antidote for every former transgression. The kingdom of Palestine had been, for some time, the theatre of war, and had drained Europe of its most chosen troops, which fell like leaves in autumn, either by pestilence, famine, or the sword. A re- 1189.

matic desire of strange adventures, and an immoderate zeal for the external parts of Christianity, were the ruling passions of the times; and they easily became the ruling passions of Richard.

Impressed with a desire of rescuing the Holy Land from the infidels, he left England, and with a numerous army passed through France, took Cyprus from a Christian prince, landed in Palestine, overcame Saladin with a slaughter of forty thousand Saracens, took several cities from the infidels, and gained much reputation for conduct and personal bravery: yet, after all, he acquired no real advantages for himself, or the cause in which he was engaged. Having concluded a truce for three years with Saladin, he set sail for his return; but his ships being dispersed by a tempest, he was obliged to land upon the coast of Italy, where, pursuing his way homeward by land, he was arrested by the duke of Austria, and put into the power of the emperor, who cruelly and ungenerously detained him a prisoner, upon the slightest and most trivial pretences.

In the mean time England had been left under the government of two prelates, Hugh, bishop of Durham, and Longchamp, bishop of Ely. The clergy, sole possessors and rulers of the kingdom, might have given what laws they thought proper: but there is a fatality in the affairs of men, that when they are destitute of foreign enemies, they generally make foes of each other. The governors, now without rivals in the temporal interest, disagreed among themselves, and thus weakened the power of the clergy. John, brother to Richard, who had long aspired to the crown, fomented this jealousy among the clergy, and, putting himself at the head of the temporal lords, increased their authority by the addition of his own. He heard of the imprisonment of his brother with secret satisfaction, and used all his interest to continue his captivity.

The English, notwithstanding these ungenerous efforts, continued faithful to their king: his bravery and generosity had secured the hearts of the people, and the cause he fought for engaged the affection of the clergy. The monasteries, therefore, strained their

finances to raise a sum to procure his release, and the churches gave up their treasures, upon promise of having them restored upon his return. By these efforts Richard at length procured his liberty: the emperor, either ashamed of his own baseness, or fearing the resentment of the German princes, agreed upon his release for a large ransom, and England once more saw her brave monarch return, crowned with conquest, after numberless victories, distresses, and surmounted dangers.

The generosity of this prince was equal to his valour: he knew that his brother John had, in his absence, attempted to supplant him in the throne; he had an exact information of all his intrigues with the French, who had long endeavoured to blast his laurels, and interrupt his conquests: yet, upon John's submission, he generously forgave him all: *I wish*, cried he, taking his brother by the hand, *I wish I could as easily forget your offences, as you will my pardon.* This condescension was not lost upon a man whose heart, though naturally bad, was not dead to all the sentiments of humanity. From this time John served him with fidelity, and did him noble services in his battles with the French, which followed soon after.

While Richard was engaged upon the continent in a French war, an insurrection was suppressed at London, which, though but slightly mentioned by historians, should be particularly marked by such as would trace the constitution. William Fitzosborn, commonly called Longbeard, is represented at once as a man brave and enterprising. He had long been an advocate for the poor and meanest of the people, and had gained the hearts of the populace, who held him in extreme veneration. Upon inflicting a new tax, the burden of which was to fall entirely on the poor, he raised an insurrection of the people, which the archbishop was, at first, unable to appease. The principal citizens being called upon this occasion to arms, Longbeard was at length hard pressed, and obliged to take refuge in one of the churches: but no sanctuary could screen this self-delegated champion: he was seized, convicted, and, with nine of his accomplices, hanged in chains. This is

the first instance of the people struggling for privileges as a body distinct from the barons and clergy. Longbeard may be considered as the first victim to that untameable spirit, which ever since has actuated this people in support of their privileges, and prompted them to the rights of humanity.

Upon a review of the rest of his reign, we find the monarch almost always in the field, or intent upon schemes to supply his warlike expeditions. If, indeed, it were just to ascribe his misfortunes to his incensed father's malediction, we might be apt to suspect it, in some measure, as the cause. However, after a reign of ten years, thus passed in turbulence and fruitless victory, he died of a wound received from an arrow at the siege of Chaluz. While he was yet alive, the soldier, by whose hand he died, was brought before him: the king sternly demanded the reason why he sought his life? *My father and my brother*, replied the undaunted soldier, *died by your hand; Heaven has given me the opportunity of a just and glorious revenge.* The dying monarch, no way exasperated at this reply, observed, that the centinel had done his duty, ordered him a present, and forgave him. But the Flemish general, who commanded under Richard, was unacquainted with such generosity: instead of complying with the king, he seized the miserable wretch, and, after Richard's death, commanded him, in his presence, to be flead alive.

The principal actions of this prince were generous and brave. I know not what pleasure Rapin, that so frequently judicious historian, can take in lessening the virtues of the race of Norman monarchs. Among other faults ascribed to Richard, he accuses him of pride; yet it appears he bore the admonition of his inferiors with gentleness and good humour.

LETTER XIV.

THE wars that were now kindled up between England and France, continued to depopulate both coun-

tries, without making in the end any material alteration. John, the brother and successor of Richard, pursued them with unabating vigour. We may regard these, and such like commotions, among Christian princes, as pestilences, which lay whole provinces waste, without making any change in their limits, their manners, or government. 1199.

John, who was surnamed Lackland, was, in fact, possessed of the most extensive dominion of any prince in Europe. Beside the lands left him by succession, he had wrested Bretagne from Arthur, his nephew, whose right it was. However, John, by thus pretending to what was not justly his, in the end lost even what he had.

Having made himself master of Bretagne, the unfortunate Arthur also fell into his power. He caused him to be confined in a tower, and what became of him was never after explained to the public satisfaction. John was suspected, and not without reason, of the death of his nephew. He made some efforts to wipe off the odious stain, yet without effect. Happily for the instruction of future princes, this crime only opened a way to his future ruin; and having begun his reign by being the enemy of mankind in prosperity, the whole world, in the end, seemed to turn their back upon him in his distress. The power of the nobility of France was now exerted with justice against him: those assemblies of noblemen, each of which was, at that time, the petty lawless tyrant of his dependents, in this instance, at least, undertook to punish the guilty. Constance, the unfortunate mother of the murdered prince, flew for protection to the peers, and implored redress. The king of England was summoned to appear: he refused, and the peers of France confiscated all the lands and possessions which were held under that crown. This confiscation was soon attended with vigorous efforts to put it into execution. John, at once both weak and cowardly, a tyrant when unopposed, but timorous in danger, suffered himself to be stripped of them all. He successively lost Normandy, Touraine, and Poictou; and then fled back to England, to make himself hated and despised.

Hitherto, however, he was only contemptible to his neighbour princes: he had still some expectations from the esteem and affection of his natural subjects; but he soon shewed, that all his skill was only to make himself enemies, whom he wanted abilities to reconcile. The clergy had, for some time, acted as a separate body, and had their elections of each other generally confirmed by the pope. The election of archbishops had, for some time, been a continual subject of dispute between the suffragan bishops and the Augustine monks, and both had precedents to confirm their pretensions. Things being in this situation, the archbishop of Canterbury happened to die, and the Augustine monks, in a private manner, made choice of Reginald, their sub-prior. The bishops exclaimed at this as invading their privileges, and here was likely to begin a theological contest. A politic prince would have managed the quarrel in such a manner, as to let the body of the clergy thus grow weaker by division; but John was not a politic prince; he immediately sided with the suffragan bishops, and the bishop of Norwich was unanimously chosen. To decide the differences, an appeal was made to the pope. Innocent III, who then filled the chair, possessed an unbounded share of power, and his talents were equal to the veneration he was held in: he vacated both claims, and enjoined the monks to choose Stephen Langton, an Englishman, then at the court of Rome. John knew how to oppose, though not to negotiate: he received the pope's decree with a degree of ungoverned fury, and returned the pope a letter filled with abuse. Innocent, in return, put the whole kingdom of England under an interdict, and forbade the king's subjects longer to obey him. These ecclesiastical thunders were at that time truly formidable: and the more so, as the execution of them was committed to Philip Augustus, king of France, an ambitious and a politic prince. To him the pope gave the kingdom of England, as a perpetual inheritance, assuring him of a remission of all his sins, if he happened to succeed in conquering it. He granted all who embarked in this cause also the same indulgences as were usually given to such as went upon a crusade,

Philip immediately embraced the offer: not content with depriving John of his continental dominions, he devoured in imagination the kingdom of England also. By his preparations, it was evident how desirous he was to succeed in this undertaking: the ships, of which his fleet was to consist, came together to the mouth of the Seine, while the princes, his vassals, collected their forces to the shore from all parts of the country. His army was numerous, and the discontents of the English were equivalent to thousands more. Philip was ready, therefore, to set sail; and John, on his part, made an expiring effort to receive him. All-hated as he was, the natural enmity between the French and English, the name of a king, and some remaining share of power, put him at the head of an army of fifty thousand men, with which he advanced to Dover.

Europe regarded such important preparations with impatience, and the decisive blow was soon expected. The pope was too refined a politician for both, and took upon himself what he pretended to have designed for Philip. This singular negotiation was executed by Pandulph, as the pope's legate to France and England. He passed through France, where he beheld Philip's great armament, and highly commended his zeal and diligence; he then went over to Dover, under a pretence of negotiating with the barons in favour of the French king, and had a conference with John upon his arrival. He there represented the number of the enemy, the hatred of many of his own subjects; he intimated, that there was but one way to secure himself from impending danger, which was, to put himself under the pope's protection, who, as a kind and merciful father, was still willing to receive him to his bosom.

John was too much intimidated by the apparent danger not to embrace every means of offered safety. He consented to the legate's remonstrances, and took an oath to perform what the pope should impose. Having thus sworn to perform he knew not what, the artful Italian so well managed the barons, and intimidated the king, that he took the following extraordinary oath,

before all the people, kneeling upon his knees, and putting his hands between those of the legate :

“ I, John, by the grace of God, king of England
“ and lord of Ireland, in order to expiate my sins,
“ from my own free-will, and the advice of my barons,
“ give to the church of Rome, to Pope Innocent and
“ his successors, the kingdom of England, and all
“ other prerogatives of my crown : I will hereafter
“ hold them as the pope’s vassal. I will be faithful
“ to God, to the church of Rome, and to the pope
“ my master, and his successors legitimately elected.
“ I promise to pay him a tribute of a thousand marks
“ yearly, to wit, seven hundred for the kingdom of
“ England, and three hundred for Ireland.”

By this mean concession John secured his crown from a foreign invasion, but became effectually contemptible in the eyes of his people : still, however, he was not hated by his subjects ; their hatred only was wanting to sink him into complete wretchedness. After being exposed to so many disgraceful humiliations, he now thought, at the expense of his honour, to spend the remaining years of his life in tranquillity ; but, in proportion as he lost the esteem of the English, he lost their affections also. The former monarchs supported their power by a nice opposition of the clergy and the barons : when they intended to humble the nobility, they granted new privileges to the church, when they desired to lessen the power of the clergy, they gave greater force to the temporal interests. John was ignorant of the manner of conducting this opposition : he had offended the clergy, and increased their power, without making them his friends : he had it only left now to offend his barons, to render himself obnoxious to every order of people. His former pusillanimity soon gave this powerful body hopes of expecting a renewal of those powers of which they had been deprived in the preceding reign : they demanded, therefore, the re-establishment of their ancient privileges, and John believed himself authorized to refuse them. This created new dissensions : the king, with a strange perverseness, in turn, demanded their assistance for the reco-

very of his lost dominions on the continent, and they refused to follow him. Their refusal was soon followed by more open acts of hostility: they formed a confederacy, and, at an appointed meeting, forced the king to grant all their demands, and sign that charter by which the English are said to hold their liberties at this day.

The barons and the clergy by this seemed the only governors of the kingdom: the commonalty had no share in the legislature; they were passed away, with the lands on which they were born, by their haughty possessors; they were reckoned only as the sheep, oxen, and other moveable possessions, which were upon the estate: the guardian of an heir was to preserve the lands entire, and, to use the words of the Magna Charta, *sine destructione et vasto hominum vel rerum*, without destruction or waste of the men or the things upon it. The king, the barons, and the clergy, were all, in reality, enemies to public liberty: their parties were so many factions in the nation, subversive of the rights of mankind. How they, in turn, helped to establish liberty, you shall see in my future correspondence.

This charter was, in fact, giving the barons a definite judgment upon whatsoever they thought proper to represent as a grievance; they were to prefer their complaints to the king, and he was, in forty days, to give them satisfaction, or they were legally empowered to command it. This was an infringement of the prerogative, which he complied with through fear, and, as soon as he was at liberty, he retracted all he had agreed to: he loudly complained of the force with which it had been exacted, and he demanded justice from the pope, his new master.

The pope, who had lately excommunicated the king, now excommunicated the barons. The barons, exasperated, did exactly what the pope had formerly done upon a like occasion: they offered the crown of England to France. Philip, ever ready to profit by these commotions, accepted their offer with joy; but, fearing the pope's displeasure, if he assumed a title to what was now considered as a patrimony of the holy

see, he prevailed upon the barons to elect his son Lewis. To this league of the barons with France, the city of London lent its assistance. We should be careful to observe every beginning of power among the commons of England, and this seems to be one of the most obvious instances. This noble city was the first that freed itself from feudal government, and ventured to follow the leaders of its own appointment; in short, it may, at this period, be looked upon as a little republic, fighting between the powers of aristocracy, represented in the barons, and of despotism assumed by the king.

In the mean time the army of Lewis, which was called over to the assistance of the barons, committed strange disorders: while, on the other hand, the army of John, which, like the former, was mostly composed of foreigners, was still more insolent and audacious. Never was England in a more deplorable condition: she had two armies of hungry foreigners in her bowels, ravaging the country in a merciless manner, and threatening ruin, whichever proved victorious. John was, at length, deposed by his barons, and Lewis solemnly crowned at London. The new monarch then first thought of having the pope's sanction to his claim. The pope debated in council the justice of a cause which scarcely deserved a moment's hesitation; while John led his harassed army from city to city, distrusting even his most faithful adherents. Pity then procured friends which prosperity could not procure; and now the barons were struck with some remorse to see their native country, by their procurement, thus laid desolate, and their king a wanderer: but what added to their afflictions was, that their services were hitherto slightly repaid by the new-crowned monarch, and, from a knowledge of his disposition, they could hope for no increase of future favours. It was even reported among them, that his intentions were to banish them for their disloyalty to their former sovereign, though exerted in his own favour. Whatever their motives might be, forty barons addressed letters of submissive suit to king John; the pope also held the justice of his claim in suspense; a gleam of distant

prosperity seemed to brighten his affairs; but, while the conjecture seemed big with new events, the death of both the pope and of John decided the contest. This monarch died in the fifty-first year of his age, after a reign of more than seventeen years, spent in wars without success, and exertions of power without increase of authority.

LETTER XV.

HAD Lewis, who was crowned king, dissembled till possessed of uncontrolled power, he might have retained the crown: but the barons wanted a monarch subservient to their power, and Lewis refused a kingdom upon such conditions.

They now, therefore, turned from the French intruder to the young monarch, from whom they expected greater condescension.

Henry III, appointed successor to the crown by John his father, was but ten years of age when made king, and the earl of Pembroke was, by mutual consent, constituted his guardian. The inconsistency of the English was now more than ever apparent: Lewis was, in some measure, forsaken by his new subjects, and, after a defeat, obliged to relinquish all pretensions to the kingdom. What the barons, however, had hoped from the king's tender age, did not answer their expectations. The earl of Pembroke, who governed his nonage, made a powerful interest with the clergy, and, by their means, served to balance the state.

While Henry acted under the direction of others, the power of the barons seemed to have been kept under: he had the clergy for him, and consequently the people, and these two were equivalent to all the nobility. But, as soon as Henry came to take the reins into his own hands, numberless insurrections and calamities were the result of his obstinacy, folly, and vice. Infinite were the struggles for power between the barons and the king. Henry's luxury and profuseness

continually rendered him a petitioner to the assemblies of barons for money, (for now the kings began to ask money instead of men,) and they as constantly demanded a confirmation of those privileges which had been granted them under the reign of his predecessor.

In order to render himself independent of them, he found a thousand ridiculous pretences for raising money without their assistance. He would invite himself to the houses of his subjects, and always expected a present at the door; he extorted from the Jews, wherever he found them, without any remorse; he even scrupled not to defraud minors of their lawful inheritances to which he had been left protector: while the people had the mortification to see those sums lavished upon undeserving favourites, foreigners without merit, strumpets, flatterers, and all the vermine of a vitious court.

But all his exactions were not sufficient to supply his prodigality; he still wanted money, he still was obliged to have recourse to his barons, and yet he still desired to be absolute. The barons, on the contrary, who had long aimed at independence, and who detested his cowardice and luxury, refused his request. Though no monarch was more timid in danger, none was more presumptuous in prosperity: he threatened them, for refusing, with his severe displeasure, and strengthened himself by the assistance of the pope, in order to plunder the kingdom.

While the English were complaining of the avarice of their king, and his profusion to foreign favourites, the pope's legate, Otho, made his triumphal entry to rob them of what the king had not laid hands on. The interest of the clergy and of the pope were formerly one, but they now began to flow in divided channels. The riches, which some years before settled in their monasteries at home, were drained off to enrich a distant kingdom, already too luxurious. The clergy, therefore, justly dreaded the arrival of an extraordinary legate, whose only aims were directed by avarice and extortion. They expostulated, but in vain, to the king, against this unnecessary ambassador from the head of the church: the king hoped to reap some pri-

vate advantage from his arrival, and he was but little concerned for public grievances. In every demand the king made for himself, the legate would take care to make one for the pope also: he even proposed that the monks should sign their names to notes, where a blank was left for the sum specified. The exactions, thus daily committed upon the churches, compelled the bishops to carry their complaints to the pope himself; but the king still vindicated the legate's conduct. At length, the prelates, quite tired with the repeated demands of the legate, who daily had some new pretext for getting money, resolved to meet and consider of some remedy to prevent his rapacity. They accordingly assembled, but had scarcely begun to complain to each other of the miseries they suffered, when the legate entered the assembly with a demand for more money: this they considered as an accumulation of impudence and extortion, and they gave him a blunt denial. The legate, being disappointed, for this time left the assembly, and went to pillage the Scotch clergy with better prospects of success.

An accident happened about this time, which serves as a strong instance of the submission the people yielded to the power of Rome. Some business induced the legate to take Oxford in his way: he was received with all the grandeur and magnificence, which, from his character, he had a right to expect. As the luxury in which these Italian dignitaries lived was great, several scholars of the university, while the legate's dinner was preparing, entered his kitchen, incited by motives of curiosity or hunger. While they here and there admired the opulence and luxury of all they saw, a poor Irish scholar ventured to beg relief from the cook: the cook, instead of giving an alms, threw a ladle full of boiling water in his face; an action which so provoked a Welsh student who was present, that, having a bow in his hand, he shot the cook dead with an arrow. The legate, hearing the tumult, retired in a fright to the tower of the church, where he remained till evening. As soon as he thought he might retire with safety, he hastened to the king, and complained of this outrage: the king, with his usual meanness,

flew into a violent passion, and offered to give immediate satisfaction, by putting the offenders to death. The legate, at first, seemed to insist upon vengeance, but, at length, was appeased by a proper submission from the university: all the scholars of that school, which had offended him, were ordered to be stripped of their gowns, and to walk barefoot, with halters about their necks, to the legate's house, and humbly crave pardon and absolution. It would be no easy matter to bring the students of Oxford to such a humiliation at present.

In this manner the brutal and capricious tyrant went on, leagued with the pope against his own dominions. He had now neither barons nor clergy in his interest, and owed all his support to the authority of the papal and royal names. The pope continued to make reiterated demands upon the clergy, and the king would beg from his subjects at their own houses, as if he had been asking charity. At one time he would get money, by pretending to take the crusade; at another he would prevail, by going to reconquer his dominions in France: again, he would extort aid, under pretext of portioning a relation; and he would frequently assure his parliament of barons, that, though he had hitherto behaved unworthily, yet, upon being supplied once more with proper assistance, he would reform, and give universal satisfaction. Thus he drew forth various sums, which, without shame, he bestowed upon flatterers, panders to his pleasures, or an army of foreigners, which he kept to intimidate his native dominions.

At length, however, the parliament, fatigued with his unperforming promises, resolved to refuse his demands for the future: they therefore entered into an association, and the city of London was invited to accede. At the head of this powerful combination was the earl of Leicester, the king's brother-in-law, who had risen into power merely by his master's profuseness. The king, by a strange absurdity of thinking, as he became more feeble and unpopular, increased his demands for fresh supplies. He was worsted in France, and obliged to purchase a shameful truce: he was con-

quered by the Welsh, and became contemptible to Scotland; yet still he continued to harass his own subjects with his usual extortion, as if he designed to create in them that awe with which he failed to impress his enemies. The barons, finding him incorrigible, after an experience of near forty years, at length shook off their allegiance, and sent the king notice that they renounced the fealty they owed him, and now considered him only as the common enemy of mankind.

Both sides were now up in arms, and the country again became the theatre of civil slaughter. The first advantages in this contest were in favour of the king. He was a coward in danger, and showed himself a tyrant in victory. Flushed with the success with which his arms had been just crowned, he resolved to march directly to London. He made no doubt but the city, intimidated by his late advantages, would declare in his favour; and, had he formerly behaved with paternal indulgence, perhaps his present hopes would not have been groundless: but a remembrance of his former ill usage repressed their loyalty. Instead of opening their gates to receive a conqueror, they sent forth an army to oppose his entry. Henry stopped his forces in a panic, and returned to meet the earl of Leicester, who advanced with his army near Lewes, in the county of Sussex.

All hopes of reconciliation being now laid aside, nothing was thought of but the decision of the sword. The earl, advancing with his army, drew up in order of battle near the king, who prepared, though with reluctance, to receive him. The battle was begun by prince Edward, the king's son, who attacked the Londoners with great fury, and drove them off the field of battle: on the other hand, the king's body of forces were defeated, after a short resistance, by the earl of Leicester. His majesty, who commanded them in person, gave no instances of valour, but tamely suffered himself to be taken prisoner; which soon paved the way for the defeat of the whole army, and prince Edward's surrendering at discretion.

The king and the prince being thus prisoners, the barons took all advantages that the most refined policy

could suggest. They knew how to operate upon the king's pusillanimity, and obliged him to send letters to all the governors of the kingdom, to renounce their obedience, and surrender his castles to the conquerors. They who draw their sword against their king, says the proverb, should fling the scabbard away. The barons, with this view, were resolved entirely to new-model the constitution, for they now knew that a composition with the royal captive was impossible; and at this period we must fix the date of English liberty. The privileges of the king, the barons, and the clergy, were but different modes of various usurpations: the commonalty had little or no share in the legislature, and only looked tamely on, or were led to slaughter, without hopes of sharing the rewards of victory.

The barons and clergy, however, now saw that the government could not readily be transferred, without some greater power than they were at present possessed of. The dethroning a king, the resisting a pope, were actions that they could not defend upon the principles of the times: they called in, therefore, an aid till now entirely unknown in the world; they called in the sanction of the people. The authority of the barons, clergy, and the people of England, were set to oppose the royal and papal authority. And here I cannot but admire the strange concurrence of circumstances which brought this first dawn of liberty into being. To effect this, it was first necessary that England should be possessed of a contested foreign dominion; that the king should have frequent necessities for money to preserve it; that this necessarily should produce a dependence upon the barons and clergy; and that this dependence should give, in return, a share of power: it was necessary, that the interests of the clergy should be separated from those of the crown, and should concur in the opposition: in short, it was necessary that the powers on both sides should be so exactly balanced, that so small a weight as that of the people, as it was then considered, should be thrown in to turn the scale.

A parliament was called, in which the king was obliged to give orders that four knights from each

county should sit, in order to represent their respective shires, and deliberate for the general benefit of the people. This is the first rude outline of an English house of commons. The people had been gaining some consideration since the diminution of the feudal laws, and the establishment of corporation charters, by which men were, in some measure, rescued from the power of their masters, and permitted to improve a spirit of freedom in towns. As arts increased, the number of these little republics (if I may so call them) increased; and we find them, at the present period, of consequence enough to be adopted into a partnership of the legislation. But these privileges were granted by the barons merely to confirm their own: and, could they have now agreed among themselves, they might have continued in possession of all the authority of the kingdom, and the constitution might thus settle into a confirmed aristocracy: but they grew jealous of each other's power; they began to fear the earl of Leicester, who had abrogated kingly authority, and was intent only upon establishing despotism. This produced new struggles, and these ended once more in the restoration of the king and his family: the earl of Leicester was defeated, and slain upon the field of battle. Henry, who had been led about as a captive, and always exposed in the front of that army which had dethroned him, was once more set at liberty by his victorious son Edward; and though, to the end of life, he persevered in his former follies, yet the people retained that share of liberty which they had acquired in the turbulent parts of his reign. A spirit of liberty had now diffused itself from the incorporated towns through the whole mass of people, and ever after blazed forth at convenient seasons: afterward, whoever lost, they were sure to be gainers; and if in the contest they laid down their lives, and suffered all the hardships of war, yet they considered those calamities as trivial, if liberty were left improved and better secured to their posterity.

LETTER XVI.

AT the death of Henry III, Edward, his son and successor, was employed in the holy wars, in which, though he gained nothing to the cause for which he fought, he acquired the character of an excellent general, and an intrepid soldier. As he came to an undisputed throne, the opposite interests were proportionably feeble: the barons were exhausted by mutual dissensions, the clergy hated the pope, and the people, as is evident from some insurrections at that time, were not much satisfied with the clergy. It was natural to suppose, that a politic and a conquering prince would take this opportunity of giving the royal prerogative its former splendour and authority. However, he was satisfied with moderate power, and only laboured to be terrible to his enemies.

The Welsh had long enjoyed their own laws and customs. They were the only remains of the ancient Britons, and had still preserved their freedom and their country uncontaminated by foreign invasions. Incapable, however, of resisting their enemies in the plain, their chief defence was in their inaccessible mountains, those natural bulwarks of their country. Whenever England was disturbed by factions at home, or its troops called off to wars abroad, the Welsh would continually pour in their irregular troops, and lay the open country waste. No situation can be worse, than that of several petty principalities bordering upon each other, under different commanders, and pursuing different interests. Sensible of this, Edward led a powerful army against Lewellyn, king of the Welsh; he had frequently before been chastised, and obliged to beg peace, but was ever ready to seize an opportunity of making an advantageous war. Upon the approach of Edward, he took refuge among the inaccessible mountains of Snowden, and there maintained his post without danger. The king of England, not discouraged by the difficulty of the situation, was resolved to invest his army, by securing all the avenues by which he might escape. Posted as Lewellyn was, he might certainly have ha-

rassed his enemies without ever himself being destroyed, had not a trifling victory over a body of his besiegers induced him to come down and face the enemy upon more equal terms. A small advantage gained was interpreted as the beginning of the completion of Merlin's prophecy, in which he was to possess the whole kingdom without a rival. Flattered with such expectations, he descends into the plain, without considering the inequality of his forces. The Welsh and the English now, for the last time, drew up against each other. Lewellyn, after having performed all that courage and desperation could inspire, found himself at last fatally deceived: he was killed upon the field of battle, and his forces utterly routed. With him expired the distinction of his nation: it was soon after united to the kingdom of England, made a principality, and given to the eldest son to the crown. Foreign conquests might add to the glory, but the present added to the felicity of the kingdom. The Welsh were now blended with their conquerors, and, in the revolution of a few ages, all national animosity was entirely forgotten.

His native dominions being thus freed from every invader, the king soon had an opportunity to increase his power, by the dissension of his neighbours. The crown of Scotland, after the death of Alexander the third, became destitute of an apparent heir. Robert Bruce and John Baliol divided all the suffrages of the kingdom. A civil war impended; and nothing but an umpire, appointed by mutual consent, could determine the conquest without blood. For this purpose, by a fatal mistake in the politics of the Scots, Edward was chosen, accepted the mediation with pleasure, came to Norham, and, from being chosen umpire, claimed a superiority over the country whose crown had been submitted to his decision, and asserted his right to the government. To wear the appearance of justice, however, after long deliberations, in which great care was taken to inculcate his right to the crown of Scotland, he fixed Baliol on the throne, less as king than as a vassal of England.

The first step taken by Edward, after placing Baliol on the throne, was sufficient to convince the Scots of

his intentions to stretch his superior prerogative to the utmost. A merchant of Gascoigne presented a petition to him, implying that Alexander, late king of Scotland, was indebted to him a certain sum, still unpaid, notwithstanding all his solicitations to the new king for payment. Edward eagerly embraced this opportunity of exercising his new right, and summoned the king of Scotland to appear at Westminster, to answer, in person, to the complaint which was brought against him by the merchant. Upon subjects equally trivial he sent six different summonses at different times, in one year; so that the Scots king soon perceived himself only possessed of the name without the authority. Willing, therefore, to shake off so troublesome a master, Baliol revolted, and procured the pope's absolution for the infraction of his former oaths of homage. Edward now offered the crown to Bruce, who accepted it with joy; and thus a strong party of the Scots were added in strengthening the English king to subdue their native country. Edward, at the head of a numerous army, marched into the country: numberless were the victories gained on one side and the other, in which the conquerors acquired much honour, but each country lost the bravest of its subjects. But wars like these, though minutely related by every historian, are scarce worth treasuring in any memory, but that of a herald or antiquarian. The whole may be comprised in the following short description: one barbarous nation meets another in some plain, generally by mutual appointment: little art, evolution, evasion, or subterfuge, was practised or known: they rushed upon each other, and numbers and tumult generally decided the victory. The revolutions of the government, and not the description of battles fought in these reigns, serve to adorn the page of history. At one season Scotland was brought to the lowest degree of humiliation, and Edward had laid a plan, which probably he ever had in view, of uniting it, as a conquest, to the crown of England. But his scheme proved abortive; the time of that kingdom's deliverance was at hand: they found safety in despair, and, upon the king's return to England, they once more sallied down from their moun-

tains upon the English army which he had left, and gained a complete victory.

This was terrible news to Edward, who had already built upon that kingdom as his own. He was now implacably exasperated against the Scots, and resolved to take a signal vengeance: to this purpose, he summoned all the vassals of the crown, without distinction, to be ready at a time and place particularly appointed. His intention was to march into the heart of that kingdom, and destroy it; to use his own expression, from sea to sea. He soon saw himself at the head of the finest army England had ever produced; the Scots trembled at his approach, but death stopped the course of his intended devastations.

As soon as he perceived that his disorder was to be fatal, he sent for the prince his son, whom he had appointed to succeed him, and, taking him by the hand, earnestly recommended, with his dying breath, three things: he first enjoined him not to recal Gavaston, a flatterer, who he knew would poison his principles: he next desired, that his heart might be sent to the holy sepulchre; and, thirdly, he recommended him to prosecute the war with the Scots, till he had entirely subdued them, desiring his bones might be carried about at the head of the army, the more effectually to strike terror into the enemy he had so often subdued.

England began to grow truly formidable under this reign: the opposition of the barons was but feeble and ill supported; the monarch was, in some measure, absolute, though he was prudent enough never to exert his power. He is accused of severity, and it is probable he might have exerted justice with too heavy a hand; yet it should be particularly remarked, that he was the first who began to dispense indiscriminate justice. Before him, the people who rose in insurrections were punished in the most severe manner, by the sword or the gibbet; while the nobility, who were almost always refractory, were treated with a degree of lenity which encouraged future disobedience: a small fine, which, in fact, only fell upon their poor dependants, generally wiped off their offences. Edward punished both with equal severity.

However, let us here remark the alterations in the spirit of the times. The English, now incorporated with their fierce Norman conquerors, were no longer the tame consenting people they formerly appeared, and always were prepared to reason with that authority which they could not resist. With this spirit of opposition a spirit of cruelty also seemed to enter: regardless of their own lives, the people did not seem very solicitous about the lives of others. The penal laws now began to assume more rigour: in the times of William the conqueror, it was a law, that no man should be punished with death: but that law was at present quite laid aside, and several crimes were rendered capital.

But what gave the reign of Edward a true value with posterity, was the degree of power the people began to assume during this period. The clergy and the barons he considered, in some measure, as rivals, and, to weaken their force, he gave authority to the commons: a law was enacted, by which no tax could be levied without their consent. His intentions were to render himself absolute by their assistance; and, it is but too probable, he might have become so, had he lived to put his designs in execution: but he died at the time he was beginning to throw off parliamentary restrictions, and left the people a share of authority, which had been given them for very different purposes than the promotion of liberty. The most healing medicines are often extracted from poisons. In short, whatever Edward's character was as a man, as a king he was of infinite service to his country.

LETTER XVII.

It was long an opinion of the English, and grounded on observations made from the days of king Arthur, that between two valiant and able princes in this nation, there always intervened a king of less sense and courage, *moins suffisans de sens et de prouesse*. That

there was something in the remark, you have hitherto seen in several successions.

No monarch could come to a crown with more advantageous omens than Edward II, an army prepared for victory, a people united, and an undisputed succession. But he soon gave reasons to fear his future conduct, by the commencement of his reign. Regardless of his father's dying admonitions, he discontinued the war with Scotland, and recalled Gavaston, his favourite, from exile. 1307.

Gavaston was a foreigner by birth, adorned with every accomplishment of person and mind that could create affection, but destitute of those qualities of heart and understanding that serve to procure esteem. He was beautiful, witty, brave, but at the same time vicious, effeminate, and debauched: he had assisted in all Edward's youthful extravagances and pleasures; had been, to use a Latin expression, his *arbiter elegantiarum*; and thus had secured this young voluptuous monarch's affections.

A prudent king may have private friends, but should never retain a public favourite: royal favour should shine with indiscriminate lustre, and the monarch should ever guard against raising those he most loves to the highest preferments. In being thus biassed by his affections, he will probably be induced to reward talents unequal to the burden of affairs, or impatient of the fatigues of application. Such was the case of Edward, with regard to his new favourite: he loaded him with favours, at a time when he was giving up his title to the sovereignty of Scotland, which had been so hardly earned by his predecessor.

The barons, at this time, were not so entirely humbled, but that they resented a conduct so injurious to the interests of the kingdom as well as their own. Gavaston's pride, his being a foreigner, his insolence, soon raised a strong party against him: an army was formed to oppose his administration: Gavaston was taken and beheaded without even the formality of a trial.

Thus you perceive a spirit of cruelty beginning to enter the nation. The death of Gavaston was, probably,

supported by precedents found in the former reign. The successors of Edward the first copied after him in his faults alone. The vices of conquering monarchs and great kings are ever most dangerous, because they most generally produce imitation.

From this time the scaffolds were drenched with English blood: each party, as it happened to prove victorious, brought their prisoners, as traitors, to the block or the gibbet: never was so much blood spilt in a juridical manner in England, as in this hideous reign. The Scots, during these storms, endeavoured to fortify their government: they conquered the English in more than one battle. Robert Bruce, being made king, became powerful from the divisions of the English, who pretended to be his masters.

Edward, in the mean time, seemed only intent on prosecuting his pleasures, or becoming formidable to his own subjects. The mutual hatred between him and the barons seemed daily to increase; or, in other words, as he still became more despicable in the eyes of the people, the barons, lately depressed, grew into power. His supineness gave him an opportunity of executing all their designs, so that at last he suffered himself to be taken a prisoner: but he was soon after released, upon a promise of future amendment. A certain number of the barons were admitted into his council, and he gave his word to perform nothing without their consent and approbation; but he was only born for misfortunes. This monarch, of an easy nature, and who, probably, if born in a private station, would have been considered as a worthy man, could not live without a favourite. Into the place which Gavaston held in his affections, Hugh Spencer, a youth of great address and many accomplishments, succeeded. This young gentleman, nowise intimidated by the misfortunes of Gavaston, in similar circumstances pursued his conduct in every particular; he even went beyond him in pride, avarice, and prodigality. A universal discontent soon became visible; all the vices of the king were imputed to young Spencer alone, and his own were enough to sink him into ruin. The barons, therefore, once more combined to destroy his favourite,

who was, in reality, without a protector: they therefore banished him and his father out of the kingdom, with threats if ever he attempted to return. This indignity to the king seemed to rouse him from his former lethargy; the queen, also, a bold haughty woman, endeavoured to stimulate him to revenge. She had received an affront on a pilgrimage to Canterbury, by being denied admittance, by the governor, into Leeds castle, on the way. She therefore persuaded her weak consort, that the present conjuncture was very favorable for freeing himself from the power of the barons, and that punishing the governor of Leeds castle would intimidate them so far as to prevent any future opposition. Her advice was embraced with avidity: the king raised an army without opposition; he besieged the castle: the governor was taken, and the queen now had an opportunity of satiating her revenge, by having him beheaded.

Success only seemed to push this weak prince on to new violence: he besieged the castles of several other barons, and became master of them with equal ease. To complete his contempt for all former compacts, he recalled his young favourite, Spencer, once more from banishment. We may easily, upon this occasion, perceive how much the barons were declined from that degree of power they possessed two or three reigns before. The monarch who, at present, oppressed them, was voluptuous, ignorant, and a coward, in the general opinion of the people; yet, feeble as he was, the barons were scarce able to resist him: the power of the people was now grown truly formidable, and Edward had address enough to procure a part of them to second his pretensions. The king now, therefore, in the meridian of power, prosecuted the most rigorous measures: the queen, cruel by nature, and Spencer, his favourite, actuated by revenge, stimulated him to numberless acts of severity. Among others who perished in the opposition, was Thomas, earl of Lancaster. This nobleman had always been signalized for his valour among the confederate lords, and was a peculiar opposer of the growing power of the family of the Spencers. He was taken fighting at the head of a

body of forces, which he had, in vain, endeavoured to rally. He had no great hopes to expect any favour from judges who were his enemies from personal motives: he was condemned to be quartered as a traitor; but, from a regard to his station, the king changed his punishment to beheading. In this manner nine other lords were executed at York, as a terror to the kingdom: but these terrors could not secure a monarch who was in himself contemptible. Whatever might have been the earl of Lancaster's real character, his death left it uncertain, whether he acted with views to get himself created king, or was only the champion of public liberty. However that be, the people in general had his memory in great veneration, and considered him as a martyr. We may by this see what side in this quarrel was espoused by the clergy: immediately after the earl's death, miracles were said to be wrought at his tomb, and every pretended miracle of this kind was productive of a thousand enemies to the king.

The favourite Spencer and his father still gave an unbounded scope to their revenge: not content with putting to death the heads of the opposite party, with depriving others of their estates, and with condemning great numbers to perpetual banishment, they were resolved to level their rage against Roger Mortimer, now actually in their custody, and confined within the Tower. There were few circumstances that could apparently screen him from their resentment: he had been openly in arms, and active in the opposition: he had no character to render his punishment unpopular, and none that he knew to intercede for him with the king; yet he found his punishment remitted, to his astonishment, notwithstanding all the solicitations of his enemies to the contrary. The queen was fallen in love with this youth, and used all her interest to procure his pardon: an intimacy had actually commenced between them; and this protection, with which he was publicly honoured by her, drew down the resentment of the two favourites. In this opposition of interests, Edward seemed entirely passive; he wished to oblige both parties, and one day gave orders to screen young Mortimer from pursuit, and the next, to secure him

wherever he could be detected : the feeble king knew not how to refuse any request, when he loved those who made the demand.

A dissension thus between two parties, who shared the affections of the king, must soon terminate in the dismissal of either. To get the queen removed, the Spencers contrived to persuade her to go upon a certain negotiation to the court of her brother, the king of France. With this proposal, though from her enemies, the queen readily complied ; she foresaw it would give her an uncontrolled liberty of enjoying the company of her gallant, and might give her power of being revenged upon his oppressors. Philip the fair, who was at this time upon the throne of France, pursued the politics of every wise king : he encouraged the queen, his sister, to oppose Edward, her husband ; and thus, by dividing his enemies, he hoped to weaken them. Thus heartened, she loudly inveighed against the favourites of the king, levied troops in France to oppose their power, and with this army landed in England, where her expectations were answered, in being joined by a powerful body of malecontents. Mortimer, her lover, was with her, at the head of these troops, at the same time that the favourite Spencer was the heart of the opposite party.

Edward was little able to withstand his enemies : all his endeavours to raise troops proved ineffectual : none would venture to expose themselves in the king's defence, for they saw that an ignominious death must be the consequence of defeat, and ingratitude of victory. The queen took Spencer, the father, at Bristol. This gentleman, fourscore and ten years old, had passed a youth of tranquillity and reputation : he had been esteemed and loved by all the kingdom ; but his fond compliance with his son's ambition involved his old age in the turbulence of faction : he was immediately hanged up in his armour, without even the formality of a trial. His unhappy son did not long survive him : he was taken, with a few more, attending the king, their master, into an obscure convent in Wales. Revenge, and not justice, prompted all the punishments of this reign. The queen had not patience to stay till the

meeting of a parliament to destroy her enemy; she ordered him to be produced before the insulting populace, enjoyed herself the pleasure of seeing him led to the place of execution, where he was hanged on a gibbet fifty feet high. Several other lords shared his fate, all deserving pity indeed, had they not formerly justified this inhumanity by setting a cruel example.

The unhappy king, now abandoned, saw himself in the power of his enemies, without a single friend to stand between him and universal reproach: he was conducted to the capital, amid the insults and reproaches of his subjects: confined in the Tower, judged by the parliament, and solemnly deposed. He was assigned a pension for his support; his son, a youth of fourteen, was crowned king, and the queen appointed regent during his minority.

The deposed monarch but a short time survived his misfortunes: he was sent from prison to prison a wretched outcast, and the sport of his mercenary keepers. In these journeys they made him suffer all the indignities that cruel or ingenious villany could devise: among others, it is said, they shaved him for sport in the open fields, using water from the neighbouring ditch. The genius of the people must surely have suffered a gradual deterioration, or they would never have permitted the venerable head of majesty, a monarch, whose greatest fault was the violence of his friendships, to be used with so much indignity. What firmness soever the deposed prince had hitherto shown in his misfortunes, it left him upon this occasion; he looked upon his merciless insulters with an air of fallen majesty, and shed a torrent of tears: the cruelty of his death alone was wanting to terminate a life of complete misery. The last place of his imprisonment was Berkeley-castle; here he was kept totally destitute of all the comforts, and almost all the necessaries, of life. But these miseries were not long to continue: the two keepers, entering his apartment one night as he lay in bed, to stifle his cries, covered his face with a pillow, and then with a cruelty not to be paralleled, thrust a horn-pipe up his body, through which they ran a red-hot iron, and burnt his bowels: his horrid shrieks, how-

ever, were heard at a distance from the castle, and, though all possible care was taken to conceal it, his murder was soon after discovered by one of the accomplices. Misfortunes like his must ever create pity, and his punishment, so disproportionate to his guilt, in some measure soften the severity of reproach.

LETTER XVIII.

WE now begin to have some faint idea of the origin of our present happy constitution; and, as I am going to lead to a reign which gave new strength to the people, permit me to entertain you a moment with the spirit of thinking in the nation, at the juncture I am speaking of. By the continual ad- 1327.
mission of foreigners, in several of the preceding reigns, the number of the commons was surprisingly increased; and the introduction of some new manufactures, the making of woollen cloths and glass, for instance, still decreased the retinue of the nobles, and threw greater numbers of the inhabitants into chartered towns. The barons, however, still continued to reside at their castles in the country, gave laws to the peasants around them, and exercised a despotic authority over all their dependants. The clergy had, for some time, been at variance with the pope, and this dissension contributed to strip the mask of sanctity from both: the division of the church was a most certain means of rendering it contemptible, since all its strength lay only in the influence it had over the minds of its votaries. But there was another principle, which had been for some time operating, and which, in time, promised to be a certain means of diminishing the power of the barons and the clergy: I mean a diminution of *personal service* in war. In former times, every vassal was to appear, at the command of his lord, with horse-attendants, and all the apparatus necessary for a campaign. If the nobility or vassals of the crown refused to march, the king was unable to compel them. In this manner, a combination of the nobility had it ever in their power

to give laws to the crown, because they were not only the deliberating power, but the acting power also: but, from the increase of the people, from the more extensive use of money instead of barter, and from the number of independent foreigners, ready to accept pay; from these causes, I say, the kings began to levy armies without the assistance of the nobility. Monarchs now only wanted money to be at the head of armies as numerous and powerful as they thought proper: wherever money was, there lay power; and the people by traffic and industry beginning to grow rich, they were necessarily admitted into some share in the legislature. Thus we see the nobility, the clergy, and the people, different from what they were two or three reigns before this; and the strength of the king did not suffer a less mutation. Former monarchs might be considered only as the first and most powerful barons of the land: a baron was in miniature, what the king was in the great. The monarch had scarce any real power but what he derived from his own crown-lands and vassals: when he was resolved to exert his strength, he could only command his own tenants, and those who held immediately under him: the barons were summoned, indeed; but, if they were displeased, they might refuse his assistance, and all their dependants were obliged to imitate their example: these acknowledged subjections, not to the king, but their own master; and nothing but a civil war with the refractory nobleman could bring him to justice. But the face of the old constitution was now beginning to be changed: every order in the state began to have a mutual dependence on each other; the power of the king to extend to the highest and the lowest of his subjects; and opposite interests to occur for the benefit of all.

This change of government seemed to influence the manners of the nation; a spirit of gallantry prevailed, which, probably, took its first rise in those eastern countries, which had long been famous for every luxurious refinement. Historians represent the kingdom as immersed in debauchery and licentiousness; that ladies, laying aside their modesty, seemed to glory in the loss of their virtue. Nothing, say they, was more

common, than to see them riding in troops to the tournament, dressed like cavaliers, with swords by their sides, their horses adorned with rich trappings, and behaving with more than masculine effrontery. Whatever monks may observe upon the subject, this awkwardly gallant behaviour, in some measure, expressed a degree of growing elegance in the times, and showed that the people were emerging from primitive barbarity.

Under Edward III, the constitution of our parliaments, and the whole frame of our government, became reduced into a better form. A spirit of liberty breathes in all his laws; yet no king knew how to make himself more absolute. As the father lost his crown and his life, in the most miserable manner, by suffering himself to be governed by his ministers, and protecting them from the resentments of the people; so the son very early exerted his own authority, and freed himself from the guardianship, or rather subjection, of his mother, the queen, and her paramour, who had long oppressed the nation, and dishonoured him, by their scandalous conduct. Mortimer was dragged from the queen's apartment, in the most ignominious manner, while she implored all the while that they would spare the gentle Mortimer. But the young king was deaf to her intreaties; the pity which she once refused her unhappy husband, was now denied her: the parliament condemned Mortimer to die, without being permitted to plead, as he had served Spencer some time before. He fell by the hands of the hangman; and Isabella was confined to the castle of Risings, with a pension of three thousand pounds a year. Her confinement was severe, though she survived her disgrace twenty-five years, and, abandoned to universal contempt, wept in solitude rather her misfortunes than her vices.

Edward III well knew, that a conquering monarch was fittest to please a warlike people. The Scots had long triumphed with impunity: he therefore began his reign by reducing them to the most distressful circumstances, and once more brought them to acknowledge his sovereignty over their crown. But he was soon drawn off from these conquests to objects of greater

victories: a new scene began to be opened in France; and Europe, in suspense, began to doubt whether Edward's claim to that kingdom were secured to him by right of inheritance, or by the rights of conquest. France, at that time, was by no means so extensive as at present: it then comprehended neither Dauphine, nor Provence, nor Franche Compté. It was rendered still more feeble from the nature of its government: several powerful neighbours, who pretended to be vassals of that crown, rather served to weaken than strengthen the monarch.

The people of that kingdom were unhappy, from their mutual divisions; and the king, at that time, was still more so. The three sons of Philip the fair, in full parliament, accused their wives of adultery; they were each condemned, and ordered to be imprisoned for life. Lewis Hutin, the eldest son, caused his wife to be strangled: her lovers died by a new kind of punishment; they were flayed alive.

After the death of Lewis Hutin, king of France, a question arose about the validity of the Salic law; a law made in the early period of the French monarchy, importing that no woman should rule. As this is a subject of some importance in the English history, it is necessary to expatiate here a little.

They had hitherto never inquired, in France, whether a female could succeed in the kingdom. Laws are only made to regulate what may happen by what has happened already; and, as an instance of this kind had never occurred, there were no laws to direct them. Precedents, in lesser instances, were the only guides in such a circumstance: but these precedents had varied with the occasion. The parliament of France had often adjudged the succession to women; as Artois was formerly given to a female, in prejudice of the male heir: the succession of Champagne had been, on some occasions, given to the daughters, and on others they were held unqualified to succeed. We thus see that right changed with power: and justice, in such a case, was either unknown or disregarded.

Lewis Hutin left an only daughter, and two brothers: the elder, Philip the tall, assumed the crown,

in prejudice of Hutin's daughter, and attempted to cover his usurpation by the Salic law. The younger brother, Charles the fair, jealous of his elder brother's fortune, opposed his pretensions, and asserted the daughter's right to succeed. This cause was carried before the French parliament, and decided in favour of Philip. This monarch enjoyed the crown but a short time, and, dying, left only daughters to succeed him. Charles the fair, however, was now of a different sentiment from what he had been formerly; he now maintained the law for the exclusion of females, because it made in his favour. He seized the crown without opposition, and enjoyed it for some time, but, dying, left his wife with child. As there was now no apparent heir, the next heir to the crown was to be regent, and two persons asserted their claim upon this occasion: Edward III. had laid his claim, as being, by his mother Isabella, who was daughter of Philip the fair, and sister to the three last kings of France, rightful heir to the crown. Philip Valois, on the other hand, had seized upon it, as being the next heir by the male succession. The claims of Philip were preferred; he was constituted regent of France, and, the queen being unfortunately brought to-bed of a daughter, he was unanimously elected king. He was crowned by his subjects with universal satisfaction, had the appellation of Philip the fortunate given him; and to this he added those which might merit good fortune, virtue, and justice. Among other instances of his felicity, he might reckon that of the homage paid him by Edward, his rival, which he came to offer at Amiens: however, this homage was soon followed by a war, and Edward disputed that crown, of which he had just before declared himself the vassal.

A brewer at Ghent was one of those who gave the greatest assistance to Edward in this war, and determined him to assume the title of king of France. The citizen's name was James d'Arteville, grown too powerful for a subject, and one of these, according to Machiavel, whom kings ought to flatter or destroy. Thus assisted, Edward made a powerful invasion. Upon landing, he was challenged by Philip to try their for-

tune upon equal terms, in some appointed plain. Edward accepted the challenge, for in every action this prince affected the hero; but some obstacles intervening, the war was prosecuted in the usual manner, by taking every advantage where it happened to offer.

In these battles there is little material for instruction, nor can they afford any thing more entertaining, than the history of a marauding party in one of our modern gazettes. It is sufficient to observe, that several skirmishes only drew on the great and decisive victory of Cressy, which every honest Englishman boasts of to this hour. In this memorable battle, Philip was at the head of a hundred thousand men, and Edward only of thirty thousand. The Black Prince, his son, as yet but a youth of fifteen, commanded the first line of the English army; the second was conducted by the earls of Northampton and Arundel; and the body of reserve was headed by the king in person. He and the prince of Wales had that morning received the sacrament with great devotion, and his behaviour denoted the calm intrepidity of a man resolved on conquest or death. The army being thus arranged, the king rode from rank to rank, with a cheerful countenance; bade his soldiers remember the honour of their country, while his eloquence animated the whole army to a degree of enthusiastic expectation. To oppose the English, Philip had drawn up his formidable army in three divisions also: the first commanded by John of Luxemburgh, the blind king of Bohemia; the second was led by the count of Alençon; and Philip, in person, commanded the body of reserve. This was the first battle that the Black Prince had seen; but he now appeared foremost in the very shock, and continued for some time to turn the fortune of the day; but his courage would have been soon oppressed by numbers, had not the earl of Northampton come to his relief. The very thickest of the battle was now gathered round him, and the valour of a boy filled even veterans with astonishment; but their surprise at his courage could not but give way to their fears for his person: apprehensive that some misfortune might happen to him in the end, they sent the king word to hasten to the prince's relief. Edward,

who had all this time viewed the engagement from a windmill, with great deliberation asked if his son was dead; and being answered, that he still lived, and was giving astonishing instances of valour, *Then tell my generals*, cried the king, *that he shall have no assistance from me: the honour of this day shall be his, and he shall be indebted to his own merit alone for victory.* Upon this occasion thirty thousand of the French were killed on the field of battle, and the day after they experienced another defeat. This victory is 1346. partly ascribed to four pieces of artillery, which the English first made use of here, and the use of which had been but lately discovered. Edward, after two victories gained in two days, took Calais, of which the English remained in possession two hundred and ten years.

This war, which was at once carried on in three different countries in France, thinned the inhabitants of the invaded country, and drained that of the invaders. But a destruction still more terrible than that of war, contributed, at this time, to desolate the wretched inhabitants of Europe. A pestilence more terrible than any mentioned in former history, which had already almost dispeopled Asia and Africa, came to settle upon the western world, with increased malignity. The fourth part of the people were cut off by it: in London it raged with such violence, that in one year's space there was buried, in Charter-house church-yard, above fifty thousand persons. It was in the midst of this terrible scourge of nature, that the ambition of Edward and Philip were contending for new conquests, and adding to the calamities of mankind. These ravages, however, were silently repaired by commerce and industry; those arts, which were then despised by princes, were laying the seeds of future opulence and increased population. These arts were travelling gradually from Italy, and had begun to find harbour in England: these refinements and the pleasures of sense every day began to improve, but intellectual refinement was yet unknown; sensual enjoyments must ever be carried to some height, before mankind can find leisure to taste entertainments of a more delicate nature.

During the English victories on the continent, the Scots, ever willing to embrace a favourable opportunity of rapine or revenge, invaded England with a numerous army. This unexpected invasion, at such a juncture, alarmed the English, but, however, was not capable of disheartening them. Lionel, Edward's son, who was left guardian of England during his father's absence, was yet but a boy, incapable of commanding an army; but the victories on the continent even seemed to inspire women with ardour. Philippa, Edward's queen, took upon her to repulse the enemy in person: to that end, heading the troops drawn together from all parts, with wonderful expedition she marched directly against the Scots, and offered them battle. The Scotch king was, no less impatient to engage; he imagined a victory would be easy against undisciplined troops, and headed by a woman: but he was miserably deceived; he had not only the mortification to lose the day, but to be made a prisoner by the hands of the English.

These conquests abroad were, however, nowise favourable to the cause of liberty at home. As the king became victorious, he necessarily increased in independence. The barons, clergy, and people, balanced each other's power; the royal power alone was growing beyond its bounds. Yet Edward was too sensible a monarch to give open disgust; he was only laying a foundation of despotism for his successor to build upon; and had he been of equal capacity with his father, he might have seized upon public liberty with impunity. But I have transgressed the bounds of a letter, without coming to the conclusion of this prince's reign: I must therefore refer you to my next.

LETTER XIX.

WE have already seen how unjustly the people distributed titles to kings, before they have deserved them: we have seen the second Edward called the father of his country, in the beginning of his reign; and yet fall,

in the end, a miserable sacrifice to its resentment: we have seen Philip of Valois, surnamed the fortunate, upon coming to the crown, suffering the most signal defeats, some time after.

John succeeded Philip in the throne of France, but had his pretensions contested by Edward the Black Prince, who commanded the army of his father. This young prince's gallantry, bravery, and modesty, had won the affections of his soldiers, and he almost became invincible at their head. John, in the mean time, was at the head of a divided and factious nobility; the government of France being under this John, was exactly as that of England had been under a prince of the same name some reigns before. They had their parliaments of barons, despotic over their own hereditary possessions; and they obliged John of France to sign a charter, very much resembling the Magna Charta, which had been signed by the English monarch. The warlike resources of France and England were, therefore, at this time very unequal. John was at the head of a nobility which acknowledged no subordination among each other: they led their dependant slaves to the fight, and obeyed superior command only as it suited their inclination: their king might more justly be said to command a number of small armies under distinct leaders, than one vast machine operating with uniformity and united force. The French barons paid their own soldiers, punished their transgressions, and rewarded their fidelity. But very different were the forces of England: the main body of the English army was composed of the people indiscriminately levied, paid by the king, and regarding him as the source of preferment or disgrace. Instead of personal attendance, the nobility contributed supplies in money; and there was only such a number of nobles in the army, as might keep the spirit of honour alive, without diminishing military subordination.

With an army thus composed, the Black Prince advanced to Poitiers, and ravaged a country that once belonged to his ancestors. King John, at the head of sixty thousand men, came up to give him battle. The English army was in such a situation, that he might

readily have starved it into any terms he thought proper; but he was impatient of such a delay. Both generals committed unpardonable faults; the one in being led thus into a defile, the other in not taking a proper advantage of the situation. But at this age, we must not expect Cæsars or Hannibals to conduct armies; ignorant generals were opposed by generals still more ignorant. The battle of Poitiers, which soon followed, very much resembled that of Cressy: the superior discipline of the English army came off victorious; the flower of the French were cut off, and their king, being wounded in the face, was taken prisoner. A particular worth noting is, that the king surrendered to one of his own subjects, whom he had formerly banished, and who now fought for his enemies. Of four sons the king of France had with him, the three eldest quickly fled, and, by their cowardice, contributed to the defeat of the army: his fourth and youngest son, as yet but thirteen years old, still fought by his father, stuck near him in all the vicissitudes of the field, and at length was taken prisoner by his side. This is a remarkable instance of the education princes then gave their children.

This victory was in a great measure owing to the valour of the Black Prince; but his modesty after conquest was still more remarkable. In the most humble manner he remonstrated with his royal captive, who was complaining of his misfortunes, that still he had the comfort left to reflect, that though he lost the victory, yet his courage deserved it, and that a submissive deference to his person should never be wanting to make him forget his captivity. In April following the prince arrived in England, bringing his prisoner with him, entering into London in a remarkable manner: the prince, upon the left, rode a little black horse, while the royal prisoner was mounted on a stately white charger, remarkable for its furniture and beauty.

Two kings, prisoners in the same court, at the same time, were considered as glorious conquests; but all that England gained by them was only glory. Whatever was acquired in France with all the splendors of triumph, was successively, and in a manner, silently

lost, without even the mortification of a defeat. The treaties that were made with the captive kings, as may be easily imagined, were highly to the advantage of the conquerors: but those treaties were no longer observed, than while the English had it in their power to enforce obedience. It is true, John held to his engagements as far as was in his power: but by being a prisoner he lost his authority, and his misfortunes rendered him contemptible. Upon his return from captivity, he not only found himself without finances, but at the head of an exhausted state, soldiers without discipline, and peasants without law. One of the chiefs of the banditti, upon this occasion, assumed the title of *The Friend of God, and the Enemy of Mankind*. A citizen of Sens, called John of Grouge, also got himself, by means of robberies, to be acknowledged king, and caused as many calamities by his devastations, as the real king had caused by his misfortunes. Such was the state of France upon the arrival of John from England; yet such was the absurdity of this monarch, that he immediately prepared for a crusade into the Holy Land, before he was scarce placed on his throne. Had his exhausted subjects been able to furnish him out for his chimerical project, it is probable he would have gone through with it; but their miseries were such, as to be even incapable of paying his ransom; upon which he again returned to England, where he died in less than a year. It is said his passion for the countess of Salisbury was the real cause of this journey; and, indeed, his age, he being near sixty, when men too often indulge this preposterous passion, and the gallantry of the times, seems to countenance this opinion.

If England, during these shining revolutions, gained any real advantage, it was only that of having a spirit of elegance and honour now diffused through every rank of people. The meanest soldier now began to follow his leader from love, and not compulsion; he was brave from sentiment alone, and had the honour of his country beating at his heart, even though in the humblest station. This was at the time when chivalry was at the highest, and all the successes of England, at this period, were owing to a concurrence of circum-

stances not much regarded by historians. *A romantic nation was led on by a romantic king.*

The spirit of chivalry, in some measure, served to soften the ferocity of the age; it was a mixture of love, generosity, and war. You have already seen that the sons of princes and the nobility, instead of being bred to arts, or polished by the sciences, were brought into the field at an early age, and instructed in no other arts but those of arms.

This instruction consisted in little more than merely how to sit on horseback, to wield the lance, to run at the ring, to flourish at a tournament, to fall at the feet of a mistress, and attain such accomplishments as inured their bodies to bear the fatigues of a campaign. The rules of tactics, of encampments, of stratagems, of fortifications, were but little minded by any

Charles the wise, of France, soon therefore, by a finely-conducted policy, regained whatever was lost by John, his predecessor. Edward the Black Prince, emaciated by a lingering consumption, died at the palace at Westminster, in the forty-sixth year of his age. England began to wear a face of discontent: the public treasure was lavished without any advantage to the kingdom; the subjects laboured under numberless grievances; in short, the kingdom seemed now to feel, that a nation might be at once very victorious and very unhappy. But to complete their miseries, Edward, their king, was now no longer what he was in the earlier part of his reign: he was sunk into unmanly indolence, and gave himself up to the enjoyment of loose desire, in the arms of a favourite concubine, called Alice Pierce. His parliament made frequent remonstrances against this base oblivion of himself. The parliaments, at this time, were not, as formerly, factions ready to oppress public liberty, but assemblies of wise and good men, sedulous for the common welfare, and of wisdom equal to the rectitude of their intentions: they frequently remonstrated against the king and his ministers' conduct: they, at one time, had influence sufficient to get his concubine removed, but he soon took her back, for the passions of age are incurable. In her company he forgot all the burdens, duties,

and fatigues of state, and left the kingdom to be plundered by a rapacious ministry. He did not live to feel the consequences of his bad conduct: he died at Sheen, in Surry, deserted by all, even by those who had formerly grown rich by his bounty. Richard II, son of the Black Prince, was appointed his successor, and came to govern a discontented people, a rapacious ministry, and an impoverished state. These were the calamities consequent upon the errors of the preceding reign. Edward III. escaped them, but they fell heavily upon Richard, his successor.

LETTER XX.

THE faults of conquerors, as I have already observed, generally fall upon their successors. Richard II. came to the throne of his grandfather, when yet but eleven, and found the people discontented and poor. The gentry were luxurious: a spirit of profusion had entered with the spirit of gallantry; this necessarily produced indolence and rapacity among the higher orders of the kingdom, and their wants must necessarily produce an oppression of the rest. 1377.

The regents, however, appointed during the king's minority, seemed nowise solicitous to appease these murmurings. The duke of Lancaster, better known by the name of John of Gaunt, in the very beginning disgusted the people, by robbing two knights of a prisoner, which they had taken in war; and, at the same time, several expeditions against the French and Scots happened to be carried on without success. But a new engagement entered into by the crown, of assisting Portugal, at a time when the government was insulted by nearer enemies, raised the people's indignation. To support this unnecessary alliance, a subsidy was to be levied by a poll-tax, payable by all above the age of fifteen: this, at last, raised the people's resentment into an insurrection.

Notwithstanding the numbers who, by war, by a re-

sidence in towns, and by other means, had become free, yet there were still multitudes in the country, who had lands in villanage, that, as yet, were only slaves to the lords from whom they held. These men had seen the charms of liberty, from its effects upon others; and they panted for freedom themselves. The luxury and opulence which they saw others enjoy, but for which they toiled, became an incentive to them to struggle for liberty also. Several of these had become opulent enough to purchase their freedom; but by an unjust act of parliament, these purchases were declared of no validity. This the peasants considered as an infraction of the laws of humanity; and such indeed it actually was. A parliament of lords and rich commoners, in this instance, seemed to have no regard for the rights of men whom they considered as slaves, as if some orders of mankind were held even too vile to find justice. The minds of the people were, therefore, thus prepared for sedition, and the manner of collecting the poll-tax provoked them to open revolt.

We have, in preceding reigns, perceived popular insurrections only in the towns; we now find the spirit of seditious liberty spreading into the country. Citizens at first began to perceive their own strength, and next the same manner of thinking is embraced by the peasant, whom the severity of the laws had annexed to the soil. We now begin to find a knowledge of the rights of humanity diffused even to the very lowest of the people, and exerting itself in rude and terrible efforts for freedom.

The present insurrection began in Essex, where a report was industriously spread, implying that the peasants were doomed to death; that their houses would be burned, and their farms plundered. The country people, alarmed at this intelligence, rose in their own defence, and their numbers continually increasing, they advanced near London, to the number of a hundred thousand, with banners displayed. At the head of this undisciplined concourse was one Walter, by trade a tiler. He was one of those hardy spirits so frequently found among the common English, ready to face any danger, and support every calamity. In ex-

acting the poll-tax, he had refused to pay for his daughter, alleging that she was under the age mentioned in the act of parliament. The brutal collector insisted upon her being a full-grown woman, and, in order to ascertain his assertions, proceeded to acts of indecency: this provoked the father to such a degree, that he struck him dead at one blow with his hammer. Wat Tiler was therefore considered as a champion in the cause, and appointed spokesman to the people. It is easy to imagine the disorders committed by such a tumultuous assembly; they burned and pillaged wherever they came, and revenged their former miseries upon their masters, the gentry, to whom they no longer acknowledged subjection. After having entered the Tower, and murdered such as they regarded as enemies, they divided themselves in bodies, and took up their quarters in different parts of the environs of the city. At length, Richard, riding toward Smithfield, invited them to a conference, in order to know and remove their grievances. Wat Tiler just entered Smithfield, when the king's knight delivered the royal message without alighting, not imagining he should stand upon ceremony: but this haughty demagogue, whose pride began to rise with his exaltation, was so offended at this want of respect, that he was going to kill him, if the king, who was himself advancing, had not ordered him to dismount. In Wat Tiler's conference with the king, being both on horseback, he made several proposals, which, though censured by historians as extravagant, in reality breathe nothing but common justice. He desired that all slaves should be set free, and that all commonages should be open to the poor as well as to the rich. While he made these demands, he now and then lifted up his sword in a menacing manner; which insolence so raised the indignation of William Walworth, mayor of London, who attended the king, that, without considering to what danger he exposed his master, he stunned Tiler with a blow of his mace, and sir John Philpot, riding up, thrust his sword through his body. His followers, seeing their leader on the ground, encouraged each other to revenge his death, and their bows were now bent for execution;

when Richard, though not quite sixteen years of age, instead of fleeing, rode up to the rebels, with admirable constancy and presence of mind, crying out, with a resolute voice, *What, my lieges, will you then kill your king? Be not concerned for the loss of your leader; I myself will now be your general: follow me into the field, and you shall have whatever you desire.*

The rebels immediately desisted; they followed the king as if mechanically; and the next day received a charter of freedom, and a general pardon. But these were only extorted grants; they were soon retracted; the ringleaders of the rebellion were tried, convicted of treason, and executed without mercy. This was the first wrong step in Richard's conduct. He granted the rebels a charter, by which he gave the sanction of justice to their claim; but soon revoked this charter, which was apparently denying that justice they demanded. By these means he dissipated, indeed, the combination for that time; but their hatred remained, and was propagated by the severity of punishment.

By this means Richard had effectually alienated the affections of the lower orders of people: it now only remained to make the parliament his enemies. Being come to his seventeenth year, he began more plainly to discover his inclinations, which had hitherto been restrained by the authority of his governors. He had been bred up amid flatterers, who never ventured to control his will: he had seen the liberties taken by Edward III over his subjects, and he fancied he might imitate him in them. But Richard was not the conqueror of France and Scotland: he was hated by the poor, and envied by three guardians of great power, who secretly desired his crown; every error, therefore, in the conduct of a king so situated, must be attended with dangerous and violent effects. His indolence in repressing the invasion of the Scots, and the machinations of France, were sufficient to give disgust to his conduct. All his faults were exaggerated, and his behaviour, even when right, publicly reprov'd. Unaccustomed to control, he laid a scheme of becoming absolute, and governing without his parliament's assistance or advice. Willing, however, to colour his ar-

bitrary proceedings with the appearance of justice, he asked the opinion of the judges; and they gave it as their opinion, that the king was above law. In this, perhaps, they might have been directed by ancient laws; but custom had introduced new modes of thinking; and they did not pay a just deference to her power. This sentence the lords opposed by declarations; and offering various reasons, were quickly at the head of forty thousand men to second their arguments: but, what had still greater weight, they threatened to choose a new king, which so operated upon the king's natural pusillanimity, that he consented to change his favourite ministers, who had advised him to extend the royal prerogative; he renewed his coronation-oath, and the same formalities were used as at the commencement of a new reign.

We have seen numberless of these insurrections without any apparent consequence; the king circumscribed in one reign, and permitted to range at liberty in another: the only secret, at that time, for a king to become despotic, was to be ever in the field; a warlike prince might command the nobility, as they were obliged to follow him in his campaigns; and he might command the people, from the fondness which the vulgar have for a conqueror. Richard however was no way warlike; but, being bred up in the luxury and pride of a court, still expected deference and obedience, which could, at that time, be obtained only by merit in war.

Having, by the removal of his favourites, rendered himself still more feeble than before, he now ran into profusion, and endeavoured to forget his real weakness in extravagance and luxury. Such expenses necessarily created new demands upon the people, and they were bold enough to refuse: this necessarily produced new insurrections, and reiterated punishments on the part of the king. Punishment and arbitrary proceedings generally produce but a temporary and fatal security. Richard, however, insensible of this, imagined that now was the time to render himself despotic, and had even influence sufficient to prevail upon a parliament, called in the year 1397, to justify his preten-

sions. By this merciless session several nobility lost their lives; the archbishop of Canterbury was banished, the earl of Arundel put to death, and the earl of Warwick sentenced to quit the kingdom.

Every thing seemed to contribute to support the king in the acquisition of his new-created power. The most forward to oppose his designs had suffered death or banishment; and they who still remained were bribed to acquiesce, by pensions, grants, and places. The great officers of the crown, the governors of the towns and counties, were all devoted to his interest: yet all this was but a deceitful security; this was a power founded upon interest or terror alone, and not upon affection; the people hated him, and the generality of the nobles only obeyed him through constraint.

In this manner did this giddy monarch suffer himself to be deluded by vain hopes, and every day gave some new instance of straining the royal prerogative beyond what it could bear; but soon an opportunity offered to induce the people to refuse a blind obedience to his unjust commands, and to convince him of his former errors. A charge happening to be exhibited by the duke of Hereford against the duke of Norfolk, for having spoken seditious words against his majesty, in a private conversation; for want of sufficient proof to support the accusation, it was decreed by the lords in parliament, that the dispute should be decided by single combat, according to the laws of chivalry, still in fashion. The time and the place were appointed for determining this affair, and the combatants met accordingly. It may not be amiss to describe the ceremonies upon that occasion.

Hereford, the challenger, first appeared, on a white courser, gayly caparisoned, armed at all points, with his drawn sword in his hand. When he approached the lists, the mareschal demanded, who he was? To which he answered, "I am Henry of Lancaster, duke of Hereford, come hither, according to my duty, against Thomas Mowbray, duke of Norfolk, a false traitor to God, the king, the realm, and me."—Then, taking the oath that his quarrel was just and

true, he desired to enter the lists; which being granted, he sheathed his sword, pulled down his beaver, crossed himself on the forehead, seized his lance, passed the barrier, alighted, and sat down in a chair of green velvet, placed at one end of the lists. He had scarce taken his seat when the king came into the field, with great pomp, attended by the peers, the count of St. Pol, who came from France on purpose to see this famous trial, and ten thousand men at arms to prevent tumults and disturbance. His majesty being seated in his chair of state, the king at arms proclaimed, that none, but such as were appointed to marshal the field, should presume to touch the lists, upon pain of death. Then another herald proclaimed aloud, "Behold here Henry of Lancaster, duke of Hereford, who has entered the lists, to perform his devoir against Thomas Mowbray, duke of Norfolk, on pain of being counted false and recreant." The duke of Norfolk immediately appeared in arms, mounted upon a barbed horse, with a coat of arms of crimson velvet, embroidered with lions of silver and mulberry-trees; and, having taken his oath before the constable and mareschal, entered the field, exclaiming aloud, "God defend the right!" Alighting from his horse, he placed himself in a chair of crimson velvet, opposite his antagonist, at the other end of the lists. Then the mareschal, having measured their lances, delivered one to the challenger, and sent a knight with the other to the duke of Norfolk, and proclamation was made that they should prepare for the combat. They immediately mounted their horses, then closed their beavers, fixed their lances on the rests, and the trumpets sounding a charge, the duke of Hereford began his career with great violence; but before he could join his antagonist, the king threw down his warder, and the heralds interposed. Richard ordered their lances to be taken away, and banished the duke of Hereford for ten years, and the duke of Norfolk for life. Nothing could be a stronger proof of that unaccountable error which ever attended the king's designs, than this behaviour: the one was condemned to exile without being charged with any offence, and the other without being con-

victed of any crime. The whole kingdom was displeased at the disappointment; and this determination, in these ferocious times, even seemed to argue cowardice in the king. The duke of Norfolk was overwhelmed with grief and despondence at the judgment awarded against him: he retired to Venice, where, in a little time, he died of sorrow and chagrin. Hereford, on the contrary, bore his fate with great resignation, and behaved with such respectful submission, when he went to take his leave, that the king remitted four years of his exile. From this he withdrew to Paris, where he met with a favourable reception from the French king, and, in all probability, would have married the only daughter of the duke of Berry, had not the match been interrupted by the interposition of Richard, who sent the earl of Salisbury, as his ambassador, to represent Hereford as a person who had been guilty of treasonable practices, and to assure the French court, that he would never be permitted to return to his own country. The princes of the blood, alarmed at this declaration, broke off the match abruptly; and when Hereford expostulated with them on the subject, made him acquainted with their reasons for retracting the assent they had already given to his proposal. Such complicated injuries could not fail to aggravate the resentment of the duke against Richard, which he had hitherto concealed; and these, probably, first turned his thoughts upon acquiring the crown of England. No man could be better qualified for a project of this nature than the duke of Hereford: he was cool, cautious, discerning, and resolute; he had distinguished himself by his courage, both at home and abroad: he was the idol of the soldiery, and the favourite of the people: he was immensely rich, and by blood or alliance connected with all the noblemen in England. The greatest part of the kingdom not only murmured, but loudly exclaimed against the sentence of banishment which had been denounced against him, and ardently wished for an opportunity of doing him justice.

It was not long before they were gratified in this particular. His father, the duke of Lancaster, dying in February, the banished duke of Hereford ought to have

succeeded to his titles and estate, by virtue of his hereditary right, as well as of the letters patent which he had obtained, even after his sentence at Coventry; but Richard, notwithstanding his former grants, allured by the greatness of the prize, by a sentence no less unjust than avaricious, seized the deceased duke's effects and estate, and decreed that the son's banishment should be perpetual. The laws and liberties of the people were now in a most deplorable state: there was scarce a man in the kingdom able, though all were willing, to oppose the arbitrary power usurped by the king. Finding himself above all restraint, he gave himself up to a soft and effeminate life, regardless of the good of the public. His ministers, not to be behind their monarch, gave little attention to business, but saw, without any concern, the English nation fall into the utmost contempt. In this situation, the people naturally turned their eyes upon the banished duke, as the only person from whom they could expect redress: he was stimulated by private injuries, and had alliance and interest to give weight to his measures. The malecontents only waited for the absence of the king, to put these measures into execution.

For this an occasion soon offered. The earl of March, presumptive heir of the crown, having been appointed the king's lieutenant in Ireland, was slain in a skirmish by the native Irish; and Richard was so incensed at this, that, with a numerous army, he went over to revenge his death in person. The duke of Lancaster (for this was the title which the duke of Hereford assumed after his father's death) being informed of Richard's departure from England, with three small vessels, landed at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire, at first only pretending that his sole aim was to obtain justice. The earl of Northumberland, who had long been a malecontent, and Henry Percy, his son, surnamed Hotspur, immediately joined him with some troops: after this junction, the concourse of people coming to list under his banner was so great, that in a few days his army was threescore thousand strong; so eager were the nobles and people to put themselves

under the protection of a prince who allured them with the prospect of freedom.

While these things were transacting in England, Richard was in Ireland in perfect security: the contrary winds, which continued to blow above three weeks, hindered his receiving any news of the rebellion in his native dominions: but when he heard of it, he immediately imprisoned the duke of Lancaster's brothers, whom he had taken over with him, and resolved to go immediately into England, to fight the enemy; yet, ever wavering in his resolutions, he was persuaded to stay some time longer, till he could prepare ships to transport all his forces at once. This delay completed his ruin: his friends in England had assembled an army of forty thousand men, who, upon finding the king did not return to head them at the time appointed, dispersed. Richard, however, landed in England, and soon perceived his unhappy situation: he saw himself in the midst of an enraged people, none of whom he could rely on; forsaken by those who, in the sunshine of power, contributed to fan his follies. Thus, not knowing whom to trust, or where to turn, he saw no other hopes of safety, but to throw himself on the generosity of his enemy: he, therefore, sent him word, that he was ready to submit to whatever terms he thought proper to prescribe, and that he earnestly desired a conference. For this purpose the duke of Lancaster appointed a castle within about ten miles of Chester, where he came next day, with his whole army. Richard, who the day before had been brought hither alone, decrying his rival's approach from the walls, went down to receive him; while the duke, after some ceremony, entered the castle in complete armour, only his head was bare in compliment to the fallen king. The king, approaching, received him with the salutation of *Cousin of Lancaster, you are welcome*: at which the duke, bowing three times to the ground, replied in these terms, *My lord the king, I am come sooner than you appointed, because your people say, you have for one-and-twenty years governed with rigour and indiscretion, so that they are very ill satisfied*

with your conduct ; but, if it please God, I will help you to govern them better for the time to come. To this declaration, the king made no other answer, but *Fair cousin, since it pleases you, it pleases us likewise.*

The king was soon taught to feel his wretched situation: he was led triumphantly through every town, amid an infinite concourse of people, who cursed him, and extolled the duke. Long live the good duke of Lancaster, our deliverer ! was the general cry : but for the king, to use the emphatic words of the poet, *None cried, God bless him.* After these repeated indignities, he was confined a close prisoner in the Tower, there, if possible, to undergo still a greater variety of studied insolence and flagrant contempt. Unhappy Richard, thus humbled, began to lose his spirits with his power ; nor was there any great share of policy required to induce him to resign his crown. Upon this resignation the duke of Lancaster founded his strongest claim ; but, willing to fortify his pretensions with every appearance of justice, the parliament was soon induced to confirm his claims. The king was solemnly deposed, and the duke of Lancaster elected in his stead, by the title of Henry IV. Thus began the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, which, for several years after, deluged the kingdom with blood ; yet which contributed, in the end, to give strength and consistency to the constitution. 1399.

LETTER XXI.

NUMEROUS formalities are often used by princes only to cover impotence or imposture. Henry the fourth, knowing the injustice of his title to the crown, was at last determined to give his coronation all possible solemnity. A peculiar oil was used upon this occasion ; he affected great devotion ; and every action showed with how much humility he could be an usurper.

Notwithstanding, the validity of his title, whatever pains he took to secure it, was controverted by some,

and a conspiracy was soon formed to replace Richard on the throne. This was projected by several noblemen, and the particulars of the scheme were committed to writing, each being provided with a copy, signed by his confederates. Among other conspirators, the duke of Aumerle was one; and he had been one of a consultation, when it was resolved, that the king should be assassinated at Oxford, at a tournament: but when that opportunity offered, he was missing among the number. It happened, at that time, he was visiting his father, the duke of York, and, sitting at dinner, let fall a paper from his bosom, which his father took up and examined. The duke, finding the contents to be a conjuration against the king's life, flew with the utmost expedition to Windsor, to inform his majesty of the plot: the son, guessing his father's intention, went by a shorter way, and obtained his pardon, before his father's arrival, who, soon after coming, produced the paper with the conspirators' names. Henry, alarmed at this intelligence, used the most vigorous efforts to dispel the rising storm.

The conspirators had, by this time, dressed up one of Richard's servants, named Maudlin, in royal robes, giving out that he was the deposed king, who, having escaped from prison, was come to implore the assistance of his subjects. Pity is a passion for which the English have ever been remarkable: majesty in distress was sufficient to excite all their loyalty and compassion, and they flocked in great numbers round the conspiring leaders. Their army soon became considerable, and encamped near Cirencester, while the leaders took up their head-quarters in that city: but they were so careless, or unexperienced in war, that they neglected to place proper guards at the gates and avenues of the place. This the mayor soon observed, and, assembling four hundred men in the night, he secured the gates so as to exclude the troops that were encamped without the walls, and then attacked the chiefs within. The duke of Surry and earl of Salisbury, two of the principal conspirators were taken, after an obstinate defence, and beheaded on the spot, by the mayor's order: while the duke of Exeter and earl of

Gloucester, two more of the party, escaped over the tops of the houses into the camp, with a view to storm the town at the head of their forces: but they found the tents and baggage abandoned by the soldiers, who, hearing the noise and tumult within, had concluded that a part of the king's army had privately entered, and, from this persuasion, fled with the utmost precipitation. The two lords, perceiving it out of their power to execute their designs, parted, the better to make their escape; but they had the misfortune to be taken, and shortly after lost their heads upon the scaffold.

If we compare the times, which I now attempt to give you an idea of, with those of king John, or those of some reigns before him, we shall find a great change with respect to the insurgent barons. In the former period they made frequent insurrections, were often taken in open rebellion, but as frequently pardoned; in the period now in view, they were seldom taken without suffering the utmost rigour of the law. This plainly shows how much the power of the barons was sunk in the course of a couple of centuries. This revolution of power is, notwithstanding, natural and obvious: as the people began to share the government with the nobles, the king was fixed upon as a third person, to secure the balance; and both were contented to make him great, from a jealousy of each other. Noblemen were therefore now executed, not as petty monarchs, but as offending subjects, and none but kings were considered as exempt from penal laws.

In all probability, the ill success of this enterprise hastened Richard's end. One of those assassins, that are found in every court, ready to commit the most horrid crimes for reward, came down to the place of this unfortunate monarch's confinement, and with eight other followers rushed into his apartment. The king, concluding their design was to take away his life, resolved to sell it as dearly as he could: he wrested a poll-axe from one of the murderers, and soon laid four of the number dead at his feet: but he was at length overpowered, and struck dead by the blow of a battle-axe. Thus died the unfortunate Richard, in the thirty-

third year of his age, while compassion for his sufferings and death made more converts to his family and cause than ever his most meritorious actions during his life had gained him.

The death of Richard was very seasonable to his successor. The king of France had actually raised a vast armament, in order to replace the deposed monarch; and so much was Henry terrified at his intentions, that he ordered the bishop of Arundel to arm even the ecclesiastics of his province. The preparations of France might have contributed to hasten the fall of Richard; his death was no sooner known at the French court, than all thoughts of the invasion were laid aside, a truce for twenty-eight years was concluded between the two crowns, and it was agreed that queen Isabel, who had been married to Richard, but whose marriage had never been consummated, should return to France, her native country.

A kingdom, like England, at that time divided in itself, and surrounded by enemies on every side, could not expect a peace of any continuance: accordingly the Scots began to give new disturbances; and when the armies of England were marched northward, in order to oppose their invasions, the Welsh rose to vindicate their ancient liberties. Owen Glendour, a name among the people of that country respected even to this day, led them on, and gained several victories; but his successes were only calculated to procure a temporary triumph, and no lasting advantage. Whatever honour the English lost on the side of Wales, they gained on that of Scotland. The histories of those times are filled with the petty victories and defeats on either side; but as they neither served to alter nor transfer power, they scarce deserve a place in the chronicles of a kingdom.

While Henry was employed in those unavailing campaigns, a more dangerous storm threatened him from his own subjects. He claimed the prisoners that were taken from the Scots, by the earl of Northumberland, for himself; while the earl, flushed with victory, and considering himself as the supporting column of Henry's throne, resented his demand. A scheme was

laid, in which the Scotch and Welsh were to combine their forces, and assist Northumberland in elevating Mortimer, as the true heir to the English throne. As soon, therefore, as the confederates were prepared, the Percys of Northumberland suddenly appeared in arms in the north; but the earl himself falling ill, his brother and son marched with his troops to join the Welsh, who were advanced as far as Shropshire. Upon the junction of these two armies, they published a manifesto, which complained of many real grievances, and aggravated others. Henry, who had received no intelligence of their designs, was extremely surprised at the news of this rebellion; but, fortunately, having an army in readiness, he marched towards Shrewsbury, to meet the rebels who were there encamped. Upon coming up to them, proposals for a mediation were offered, and such favourable terms promised, that it was thought it would end in a reconciliation; but distrust on both sides soon broke off the treaty, and the battle soon began. In this Henry obtained a complete victory; and Hotspur, the earl of Northumberland's son, so renowned for former successes, was slain. Mean time the earl of Northumberland, being recovered, was advancing with a body of troops to reinforce the army of the malecontents, and take upon him the command; but hearing by the way of his son's and brother's misfortune, he dismissed his troops, not daring to keep the field with so few forces before a victorious army. The king, to terminate this troublesome affair as soon as possible, promised the earl an absolute pardon, in case he obeyed without delay, menacing him with utter ruin should he refuse the proffered favour. The earl, finding himself without resource, chose rather to throw himself upon the king's mercy, than lead a precarious and indigent life in exile; he therefore repaired to York, and threw himself at the king's feet, who punctually performed his promise. Probably he thought the criminal was already sufficiently punished in the death of his son and brother.

The extinction of one rebellion only seemed to give rise to new. The archbishop of York, being dissatis-

fied, and eager to revenge the king's death, by whom he was promoted, entered into a confederacy with some other lords, to dethrone Henry. Northumberland, though pardoned, was again among the number: they were, however, once more prematurely discovered, and most of the conspirators died by the hands of the executioner; but Northumberland had the good fortune to escape into Scotland.

About this time the opinions of Wickliffe, which that reformer had began to spread about the end of the reign of Edward III, were now so prevalent, that the clergy were in continual apprehensions. Henry therefore earnestly recommended to his parliament the care of the church's conservation. How reluctant soever the house of commons might be to persecute a sect whose only crime was error, an act was passed for the burning of obstinate heretics. And William Sautré, a follower of Wickliffe, was burned alive, by virtue of the king's writ, delivered to the mayor of London. This was the first man in England who suffered death for the sake of religion.

By these means Henry surmounted all his troubles, and the kingdom enjoyed tranquillity. He had nothing to fear from France, distracted by its own intestine divisions: the Welsh sued for peace; the regent of Scotland dreaded a rupture with England, lest Henry should send home the king of Scotland, whom he had made his prisoner, and thus terminate the regent's delegated power: add to this, the malecontents in England were too inconsiderable to attempt any thing further against the government. During this calm, the king endeavoured to efface the impressions of severity, which his conduct had made upon the people, by affecting a popularity and regard for the welfare of the subject; a never-failing method to conciliate the affection of the English in favour of their sovereign. While he thus laboured, not without success, to retrieve the reputation he had lost, his son, the prince of Wales, seemed bent upon incurring public aversion: he gave a loose to all kinds of debauchery, and was surrounded by a crew of profligate wretches, who made a practice of committing the most illegal acts of violence. The fa-

ther was extremely mortified at the degeneracy in his eldest son, who had already exhibited proofs of his valour, conduct, and generosity; virtues which he now seemed to renounce; while the splenetic and gloomy trembled at the prospect of his succeeding to the throne. Nevertheless, in the midst of these excesses, the nobleness of his heart seemed, at intervals, to emerge from the gulf in which it was plunged. One of his dissolute companions, having been brought to trial for some misdemeanour, was condemned, notwithstanding all the interest he could make in his favour; and he was so exasperated at the issue of the trial, that he struck the judge upon the bench. This magistrate, whose name was sir William Gascoigne, behaved with the dignity that became his office; he forthwith ordered the prince to be committed to prison. When this transaction was reported to the king, who was an excellent judge of mankind, he could not help exclaiming, in a transport of joy, Happy is the king who has a magistrate endowed with courage to execute the laws upon such an offender; still more happy in having a son willing to submit to such chastisement.

This, in fact, is one of the first great instances we read in the English history, of a magistrate doing justice in opposition to power. The government was now much changed from what it was in the times even of Richard, when judges were but the ministers of royal caprice.

Henry did not long outlive this transaction. Perceiving his end approach, he disposed his mind to the duties of devotion, and took the cross, fully determined to consecrate the remaining part of his life in fighting the cause of the pilgrims to Jerusalem, which was at that time considered as the cause of Heaven. This is not the first instance we have seen of princes endeavouring to strike up a bargain with Providence, and promising to perform particular acts of devotion, upon being indulged with a longer period of existence. He imparted his design to a great council, assembled for that purpose; and began to make preparations for the expedition, when his disorder increased to such a degree, that he was obliged to lay aside his intention,

and think of a voyage of greater importance. As his constitution decayed, his fears of losing the crown redoubled, even to childish anxiety; he would not sleep without the royal diadem was laid upon his pillow. One day, being in a violent paroxysm of his disorder, the prince of Wales took up the crown, and carried it away: but, soon after, the king recovering his senses, and missing the crown, he asked what was become of it, and understanding the prince had carried it off, "What," said the king to the prince, with marks of indignation, "would you rob me of my dignity before my death?" "No," replied the prince: "Thinking your majesty was dead, I took the crown as my lawful inheritance; but now I see you alive, I restore it with much more pleasure, and may God grant you many happy days to enjoy it in peace." So saying, he replaced the crown upon the pillow; and, having received his father's blessing, dutifully retired. The king was seized with his last fit at his devotions before the shrine of St. Edward the confessor, in Westminster-abbey, and thence he was carried to the Jerusalem chamber. When recovered from his swoon, perceiving himself in a strange place, he desired to know if the apartment had any particular name; being told of its appellation, he now concluded a prophecy fulfilled, which said, that he should die in Jerusalem; and, after some good instructions to his successor, he recommended his soul to Heaven, and soon after expired, on the twentieth day of March, in the forty-sixth year of his age, and the fourteenth of his reign.

Henry, whatever he might have been as a man, was certainly an excellent king. The government assumed both a form and liberty under his administration; the distinction between the nobility and the people were rendered less considerable; and the magistrates were less arbitrary, and less venal.

LETTER XXII.

THE death of Henry IV gave his people but little affliction, among whom he never acquired any popularity; but the rejoicings made for the suc- 1413.
cession of his son, Henry V, were manifest and sincere. This prince was their favourite, notwithstanding the profligacy of his youth: in the very height of riot and extravagance, he would sometimes give instances of the sublimest virtues. But his courage seemed to be what peculiarly won their affection and esteem: at this barbarous period, courage seemed to be regarded as the only virtue: courage and superstition then made up the whole system of human duty, and stamped the character of heroism.

The people of Europe were, by this time, degenerated from what they were even two hundred years before: a continuance of war had blotted out the very traces of morality. The vices of the clergy had drawn upon them contempt and opposition, which they returned, not by reforming themselves, but by persecuting those who opposed them. This reign was begun in attempting to extirpate the heresy of Wickliffe. John Oldcastle, baron of Cobham, was the most considerable protector of this sect: he was the king's domestic, and stood highly in his favour. The archbishop of Canterbury, therefore, undertook to prejudice him in the royal opinion, and endeavoured to persuade the young monarch that fire and faggot were the only instruments capable of saving a heretic from future damnation; and that Oldcastle's opinions deserved the severest punishments of the law. The king was, at length, persuaded to talk with Oldcastle in private, and, finding him immoveable, gave him up to the fury of his enemies. Persecution ever produces those crimes which it endeavours to abolish. Oldcastle was condemned, but, escaping, was obliged to become, in fact, that guilty person which they had at first falsely represented him: he headed a body of malecontents, and refused to be amenable to the royal power. This unhappy man, after a variety of distresses, at length fell

into the power of his enemies: and never did the cruelty of man invent, or the crimes of the delinquent draw down, more torments than he was made to endure: he was hung up with a chain by the middle, and by a slow fire burned, or rather roasted alive.

Such spectacles as these must naturally produce a disgust in the people both to the government and to the clergy: but to turn their minds from these hideous spectacles, Henry was resolved to take advantage of the troubles in which France was, at that time, involved. Charles, who was then king of France, was subject to frequent fits of lunacy, which totally disqualified him from reigning: in these intervals the ambition of his vassals and courtiers had room for exertion, and they grew powerful from the weakness of their king. Isabella, of Bavaria, his queen, was at the head of one faction; the duke of Burgundy of another: the faction of the children of the duke of Orleans was considerable; that only which held to the king was feeble. Each of these, as they happened to prevail, branded their captives with the names of traitors, and the gibbets were at once hung with the bodies of the accused and the accusers.

This was thought a most favourable opportunity to rescue from France those grants that had formerly been given up by treaty: Henry, therefore, invaded that kingdom with an army of fifty thousand men. He took Harfleur, and advanced into a country already rendered desolate by factions, and which he now totally laid waste by a foreign invasion; but though the enemy made but a feeble resistance, yet the climate seemed to fight for them; a contagious dysentery carried off three parts of Henry's soldiers. In such a situation he had recourse to an expedient common enough in the barbarous times I am describing; he challenged the dauphin to single combat, offering to stake his pretensions on the event. This challenge, as might be naturally expected, was rejected; and the French, though disagreeing internally, now seemed united at the appearance of foreign danger.

Henry soon began to repent of his rash inroad into a country, where disease, and a powerful army, every

moment threatened destruction; and therefore thought of returning to Calais. In this retreat, which was at once both painful and dangerous, Henry took every method to inspire his troops with courage and perseverance, and shewed them, in himself, an example of patience and resignation. In the mean time the French army was drawn up to obstruct his passage, nor was there any possibility of his passing them without a battle; yet even that could promise but small hopes of victory: his army was wasted with disease, their spirits worn down with fatigue, destitute of provisions, and but nine thousand in number, to sustain the shock of an enemy amounting to a hundred and fifty thousand. This disparity, as it raised the courage of the French, so it impressed the English with terror. So confident were the French leaders of success, that they began to treat for the ransom of their prisoners. On the 25th of October 1415, the two armies drew up in battle array, early in the morning, near the castle of Agincourt. A narrow ground, flanked on one side by a wood, on the other by a rivulet, was to be the scene of action. The constable of France commanded the French, and Henry, with Edward duke of York, the English. Both armies for some time kept silently gazing at each other, as if afraid to begin; which Henry perceiving, with a cheerful countenance, cried out, My friends, since they will not begin, let us set them the example; come on, and the Blessed Trinity be our protection! And now the whole army set forward with a shout. The French still continued to wait their approach with intrepidity, when the English archers let fly a shower of arrows three feet long, which did great execution. The French cavalry advancing to repel these, two hundred bowmen, who lay till then concealed, rising on a sudden, let fly among them. The English, seeing their confusion, now threw by their arrows, and fell upon them sword in hand: though enfeebled by disease, yet they recompensed the defect by valour. The French at first repulsed the assailants; but they, resolving to conquer or die, again burst in upon the enemy with such impetuosity, that they gave way: in the mean time, a

body of English horse, which had been concealed in a neighbouring wood, rushing out, flanked the French infantry: and now a total disorder began to ensue.

The first line of the enemy being thus routed, the second line began to march up to interrupt the progress of the victory. Henry, therefore, alighting from his horse, presented himself to the enemy, with an undaunted countenance; and, at the head of his men, fought on foot, encouraging some and assisting others. Eighteen French cavaliers, who were resolved to kill him, or die in the attempt, rushing forth together, advanced, and one of them stunned him with a blow of his battle-axe; they then fell upon him in a body, and he was just going to sink under their blows, when David Gam, a valiant Welshman, and two more of the same country, came to his aid: they soon turned the attention of the French from the king: but, being overpowered themselves, they fell dead at his feet. The king had now recovered his senses, and more help coming in, the eighteen Frenchmen were all slain; upon which he knighted the brave Welshman who had bravely fallen in his defence. The heat of the battle still increasing, his courage seemed to increase: and now the thickest of the battle was gathered round his person: his brother being fallen down by his side, stunned with the blow of a club, he covered him for awhile: but receiving another blow himself, it threw him on his knees: he soon, however, recovered, and his valour seemed to inspire his troops with fury; they ran headlong upon the enemy, and, by an unexpected attack, put them into such disorder that their leaders could never after bring them to the charge. The duke of Alençon, who commanded the second line, seeing it fly, resolved by one desperate stroke to retrieve the day, or fall in the attempt: wherefore, running up to King Henry, and crying aloud, that he was the duke of Alençon, he discharged such a blow on his head, that it carried off a part of the king's helmet: Henry, not having been able to ward off the blow, soon returned it by striking the duke to the ground; and he was soon killed by the surrounding crowd, all the king's efforts to save him from their fury being ineffectual.

The first two lines being thus dispersed, the third refused to assist them, and marched off without fighting. The king, therefore, thinking himself thus sure of victory, was surprised with an account that his baggage was plundering by the enemy: just struck with an apprehension that the French had rallied, and being sensible that the number of his prisoners was greater than that of his army, he rashly ordered all the prisoners to be put to death; which order was accordingly executed. This severity tarnished the glory which his victory would have otherwise acquired; but all the heroism, and all the virtues, of that age are tinctured with barbarity.

This victory, however great it may appear, was rather ostentatious than useful: it acquired the English glory, but not dominion; and while it settled Henry's interests more firmly in the hearts of his subjects, it only served to inspire him with a love of new conquests. With this view, therefore, he returned to England, in order to procure new stores of men and money.

The war between the two kingdoms from this period seemed to be carried on rather by negotiations, treasons, plots, and fomented jealousies, than by the force of arms. France was but as one vast theatre of crimes, murders, punishments, and devastations: the duke of Orleans was assassinated by the duke of Burgundy, and he, in his turn, fell by the treachery of the dauphin; while the son, desiring to revenge his father's death, acknowledged Henry as lawful heir to the crown, and a treaty was concluded between Henry and the young duke of Burgundy at Troyes, by which he was acknowledged heir to the crown of France, after the death of Charles, who still reigned, though, by his diseases, rendered totally incapable of business. Catharine, the French king's daughter, was given to Henry in marriage; and it was resolved, that the dauphin should be brought to an account for the murder of the late duke of Burgundy. Things being adjusted in this manner, Henry entered the city of Paris without opposition, and there conducted the government at his plea-

sure; while the feeble Charles was attended as a king indeed, but with scarce even the liberty of a subject.

The dauphin, in the mean time, wandered about, a stranger in his own dominions, while Henry returned to London to raise new subsidies and new troops, to secure his late conquests. His presence, as might be expected, inspired his subjects with joy; but they, at the same time, could not be much pleased with a conquest, which seemed likely to transfer the seat of empire from among them. The parliament, upon various pretences, refused him a supply equal to his demands: however, he again set sail with a new-raised army, and the dauphin, upon his appearance, thought fit again to retire. Henry then entered Paris, and while Charles had but a small court, he was attended with a very magnificent one. On Whitsunday they dined together in public, the two kings and the two queens with their crowns on their heads; Charles, indeed, receiving apparent homage, but Henry commanding with absolute authority. After this, he prepared to stop the progress of the enemy, who had already taken some towns; but while he flattered himself with a speedy victory, he was attacked with a fistula, which the physicians were at that time too unskilful to treat with judgment. He died at the castle of Vincennes, with the same intrepidity with which he lived, and was buried in Westminster-abbey. His reign, during the short time he lived, which was but thirty-four years, was rather splendid than serviceable; the treasures of his native country were lavished upon conquests that to it were unprofitable. His military fame acquired him the reputation of every other good quality; he favoured the clergy, and they have returned the debt to his memory. In general, the good or the erroneous conduct of a prince appears rather after his death than during his life-time; and the successors of imprudent kings are often taxed with errors not their own, as we shall presently see. He died, however, fortunate, by falling in the midst of his triumphs, and leaving his subjects with reputation. Charles, who died two months after him, finished a wretched reign, long past in phrenzy, and with con-

tempt, branded by all France, and leaving the most miserable subjects upon earth.

LETTER XXIII.

OUR triumphs at this time in France produced scarce any good effects at home: as we grew warlike, we became brutal; and, panting after foreign possessions, we forgot the arts of cultivating those that lay nearer home. Our language, instead of improving, was daily become more barbarous: Langland and Chaucer, about a century before, seemed to have drawn it from obscurity, and enriched it with new terms and combinations; but it was now relapsed into its former grossness, and no poet or historian of note was born in this calamitous period.

Henry VI, successor of Henry V, was not quite a year old when he came to the throne; and his relations began, soon after, to dispute the go- 1442.
vernment during his minority. The duke of Bedford was appointed, by parliament, protector of England, defender of the church, and first counsellor of the king; his brother, the duke of Gloucester, was to govern in his absence, while he conducted the French war; but several others aspired to this post as well as he. The second rank in every kingdom, as being the most powerful, is generally the most envied situation. The first step his enemies took to render the duke of Gloucester odious, was to accuse his wife, the duchess, of witchcraft. She was charged with conversing with one sir Roger Bolingbroke, a priest, and reputed necromancer, and one Margery Jordan of Eye, who was said to be a witch: it was asserted, that, with their assistance, she made a figure of the king in wax; this the accusers said, was placed before a gentle fire, and as the wax dissolved, the king's strength was wasted; and upon its total dissolution, his life was to be at an end. This charge Bolingbroke utterly denied; but the duchess confessed that she had desired the woman to make a filtre, to secure the affections of the duke her

husband. Neither their innocence, nor her rank, could protect them; she was condemned to penance and perpetual imprisonment: Bolingbroke was hanged, and the woman burnt in Smithfield.

Henry, during these contests with his ministers, was, at first, from age, incapable of conducting the reins of government; and when he became adult, he was equally incapable from ignorance and imbecility. Whether it was that his governors had kept him in ignorance, in order to prolong their own power, or whether he was naturally weak, history does not clearly determine. The earl of Suffolk, one of those who shared the power at that time, thought the best way of managing the king would be to marry him to a woman who was herself capable of reigning alone. He had still another motive, which was to create a new power to oppose the duke of Gloucester, who was his enemy, and an obstacle in the road to his ambition: for this purpose, he fixed upon Margaret of Anjou, daughter of Rene, king of Sicily, and niece of the king of France. She was a princess of uncommon resolution and great penetration, but entirely without fortune; for which it was said her other good qualities were sufficient to atone. This match the duke of Gloucester vainly opposed; the match went forward, and the new queen showed her resentment, by proving a formidable enemy, willing and able to undo him.

She first began her reign by removing him from the council-board. To palliate this proceeding, persons were suborned to accuse him of cruelty and injustice: to these accusations he pleaded his innocence, with such force of evidence, that the council, though consisting of his enemies, were obliged to acquit him. Still, however, the queen, bent upon his ruin, ordered him to be apprehended, and accused before the parliament, summoned for this purpose. As the people thought him innocent, it was expected he would come off now as he had before: but on the day he was to make his defence, he was found dead in his bed, though without any signs of violence upon his body.

This death rendered the queen and the king equally

odious : the queen especially was charged with the murder, and the dignity of her station only served to render her a more conspicuous object of reproach. But what still contributed to render the people discontented with the administration, was the indifferent success of their arms in France. Triumphs and conquests were ever a means of repressing the discontents of the people; but the present government, to their quarrels at home, added the misfortune of being defeated abroad.

Upon the death of Henry V, the dauphin of France asserted his claim to the throne of that kingdom under the title of Charles VII. Nothing could be more deplorable than his situation upon coming to the crown, of which he was only the nominal possessor; the English were masters of almost all France. Henry VI was solemnly invested with regal power, by legates from Paris. The duke of Bedford, with a numerous army in the heart of the kingdom, confirmed his claim, and the duke of Burgundy was steady in the English alliance. Wherever Charles attempted to face the enemy, he was overthrown: he could scarcely rely on the friends next his person, and his authority was insulted, even by his own servants. In this situation nothing but miraculous assistance, or pretended miracles, could save him. To the last expedient he had recourse, and it fully answered his intentions. The French, from a vanquished nation, are suddenly going to be victorious; and the English, who had hitherto been deemed invincible, are going every where to be worsted, and, at length, totally driven out of the kingdom.

A gentleman, on the frontiers of Lorraine, whose name was Baudricourt, was the person who first resolved to put this happy imposture into practice. He fixed upon the servant-maid of an inn for this purpose, and she was instructed at once to perform the duties of a warrior and a prophetess: this was Joan of Arc, the renowned maid of Orleans; a woman of masculine strength and courage, pretending to be but eighteen, but, in reality, twenty-seven years old. She equipped herself in the arms and habit of a man, and it was given out that she was inspired: she was brought before the king, examined by the doctors of the university, and

they, either deceived, or willing to assist the imposture, affirmed that her commission was from Heaven. The vulgar, as ready to give credit to inspiration as to witchcraft, easily came into the imposture, and acquired new hopes and confidence of success.

The English were at that time besieging the city of Orleans, Charles's last resource, and were upon the point of becoming masters of it. Joan undertook to raise the siege; and, to render herself the more remarkable, ordered a sword to be brought her from the tomb of a knight buried in the church of Fierbois. She addressed the soldiers as a messenger from Heaven, and assured them that Providence would strengthen their arms. She marched at their head, and delivered Orleans; routed the English wherever they opposed; prophesied that the king should be crowned at Rheims, and she herself would assist at the solemnity she had foretold: she was present at the coronation, holding in her hand the standard under which she had been so often victorious.

This chain of successes, and the dignity which his late coronation gave the French king, now entirely turned the scale in his favour: the English lost the kingdom by the same methods the French had lost it before; while Charles united his forces and proceeded with dispatch, they were quarrelling among themselves, and losing the seasons of success. In the midst of the king's good fortune, however, Joan of Arc, his brave champion, was taken prisoner, as she was protecting the rear of her men in a retreat. The joy of the English, upon this occasion, is not to be expressed; and the duke of Bedford, their general, thought no method could be so proper to restore their lost courage, as to prosecute his prisoner for witchcraft; and she was found guilty by several bishops and doctors of the university of Paris. She was at first condemned as a sorceress and a heretic, and enjoined to live, by way of penance, upon bread and water, and to remain in prison for life: some time after, under colour of her relapsing, she was publicly burnt for a witch. Superstition adds virulence to the natural cruelty of mankind; and this cruel sentence served only to inflame the hatred.

between the contending powers, without mending the cause of the English. In vain the brave Talbot and his son strove to maintain the declining interest of the English in France: in the year 1437, the French king made his triumphant entry into Paris, and in a sequel of thirteen years more, the English were entirely banished from France; they were only left in possession of Calais and Guienne, and lost for ever all the fruits of the victories of Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. Such is the end of ambition! the only consequences of their conquests there, were to deluge that kingdom with the blood of its slaughtered inhabitants, and their own.

It may easily be supposed, that the losses of the English in France, and the divisions of their rulers at home, must raise factions. In this period of calamity a new interest was revived, which seemed to have lain dormant in the times of prosperity and triumph: the duke of York began to think of asserting his right to the crown of England. This nobleman was descended, by the mother's side, from Lionel, one of the sons of Edward III. The reigning king was descended from John of Gaunt, a son of the same Edward, but younger than Lionel: thus the duke of York's claim was prior to that of Henry. The ensign of the duke was a white rose, that of Henry a red: and this gave name to the two houses, whose contentions were about to drench the kingdom with slaughter.

The duke of Suffolk and the queen were now at the head of affairs, and managed all things with unlimited authority. As he had made his way to power by the blood of Gloucester, he was resolved to establish himself by the usual resources of tyranny, by cruelty to his inferiors, and flattery to the queen. This unjust and ill-managed power first drew against him the opposition of the duke of York; perhaps the cause of the public was the only motive for his first resistance. Almost every malecontent has some real and some fictitious causes of complaint: he therefore had recourse to parliament, and accused the duke of Suffolk as the source of all the nation's disgraces in France. This accusation might have been false; but the real motive,

which was Suffolk's power and the cruel use he made of it, was left unmentioned, although it was true. The court, to content the people, condemned him to banishment, and he embarked in a little vessel to take his passage to France; but he could not escape his destiny. He was met in his passage by an English man-of-war; the captain, having a mind to search the ship the duke was in, and finding him there, ordered his head to be struck off without further delay. There is little in the transactions of these times to interest us on the side of either party: we see crimes on both sides, and scarce a shining character or a virtue to animate the narrative.

By the death of the duke of Suffolk, his rival, of York, saw himself rid of a potent enemy, and found the discontents of the people against the administration daily increase. Among the insurrections of these unhappy times was that headed by Jack Cade, who led a tumultuous body of forces to London, to redress their grievances, and there beheaded the lord-treasurer. The government might readily perceive the disaffection of the populace, by his reception from the city of London, who opened their gates to him: however, upon the king's proclamation, his adherents, after a day or two, were dispersed, and he himself taken and slain. In the mean time the duke of York secretly fomented these disturbances, and pretending to espouse the cause of the people, wrote to the king from his retreat in Wales, advising a reformation in the ministry. His letters of expostulation were soon backed by an army; he marched up to London, but found an unexpected repulse from the city, which shut its gates upon him. In this dilemma he offered to disband his army, if the duke of Somerset, who was, at that time, the envied object in power, should be sent to the Tower: this request was seemingly complied with, contrary to his expectation; but on his coming to court to accuse him in person, he was surprised to see the duke of Somerset, who was hid behind the hangings, suddenly come forth, and retorting the accusation upon him. York now perceived his danger, and repressed the impetuosity of his accusation. As soon as he left the

presence, the king commanded him to be apprehended ; but such was the duke's authority, or such the timidity of the king's council, that they suffered him to retire, upon promising strict obedience for the future.

The reconciliation was only temporary : he still aspired at the crown, and, the king falling ill, by his intrigues, he had sufficient art to be taken into the number of the privy council. This was a fatal blow to Henry's interests : the duke of York, now let into a share of the authority, and secure of the affections of the people, carried all before him. The duke of Somerset was sent to the Tower, and the parliament declared his rival protector of the realm. This power the duke of York for some time enjoyed without control ; till the unhappy king, recovering from his dizziness, as if awaking from a dream, perceived, with surprise, that he was stripped of his authority. Margaret, his queen, did all in her power to rouse him to a sense of his situation : he therefore began by deposing the duke from his power, who instantly had recourse to arms. The impotent monarch, thus obliged to take the field, was dragged after his army to the battle of St. Alban, where he was routed by the duke of York, and Somerset, his general, was slain. The king being wounded, and hiding himself in a cottage near the field of battle, was taken prisoner, and treated with seeming respect : from thence he was brought along, in triumph, to London ; and the duke permitting him still to enjoy the title of king, reserved to himself that of protector, in which consisted all the power of the crown.

Henry was now but a prisoner, treated with the forms of royalty ; yet, indolent and sickly as he was, the title alone seemed sufficient for him. At last, his friends induced once more to re-assert his prerogative, the duke of York again retired, to resist the designs of the queen. Mutual distrust once more brought their arms to the field, and the fate of the kingdom was to be decided by the sword. On the king's side, the queen seemed to be the only acting general ; she ranged the army in battalia, gave the necessary orders, while the poor king was led about, from place to place, an

involuntary spectator of those martial preparations. The army on the opposite side was, in the absence of the duke of York, commanded by the earl of Warwick, the most celebrated general of his age: a man formed for times of trouble; exceedingly artful and extremely brave; equally skilful in council and the field; and born to take away kingdoms at pleasure. After many battles without effect, and designs without consequence, both armies, at last, met on a plain near Northampton: the queen's army consisted of twenty-five thousand men, the army of Warwick of forty thousand. Never was greater animosity between the chiefs of an army before: both pretending to fight for the king, whose authority they equally attempted to destroy. While the queen went about from rank to rank, the king staid in his tent, waiting the issue of the battle with female doubts and apprehensions. Both sides fought five hours with the utmost obstinacy; but the good fortune of the earl of Warwick was superior to that of the queen: she was conquered, and had the misfortune to see the king taken prisoner in his tent. Thus Henry was once more brought back in triumph to his capital.

A parliament was now called, to give a face to this successful rebellion. The duke of York, though formerly contented with the title of protector, now claimed the crown. Our prospects widen as we rise. The cause of Henry and the duke was solemnly debated in the house of peers: each side produced their reasons for or against the conqueror. This was the first time that a true spirit of liberty ever appeared to exert itself in England, and in which victory did not determine every inquiry. The duke of York, though a conqueror, could not entirely gain his cause: it was determined that Henry should possess the throne during life, and that the duke of York should be his successor, to the utter seclusion of the prince of Wales.

etc The queen, to all appearance, seemed now utterly destitute of every resource: but though she had lost all, she yet retained her native perseverance and intrepidity. She was a woman of a great mind, and some faults; but ambition seemed to be what called them into

action. Being now a fugitive, distant from the capital, opposed by a victorious army and a consummate general, she still tried every resource to repair her disastrous circumstances: she flew to Wales, animated her old friends, acquired new, and raised an army to defend her cause. She and her old enemy, the duke of York, once more met upon Wakefield green, near the castle of Sandal: fortune this day turned the victory on her side: the duke of York was slain; the duke of Rutland, his second son, fell in the flight; and the father's head, being cut off, was fixed upon the walls of York.

Margaret, being now victorious, marched towards London, in order to give the king liberty. The earl of Warwick, who was now at the head of the Yorkists, still commanded an army, in which he led about the captive king, to give a sanction to his attempt. Another battle was to drench the kingdom with the blood of its inhabitants: the queen and the earl met near St. Alban, where the queen was once again victorious: she had the pleasure to see the general, by whom she was once defeated, now fly in his turn; and what added to her glory, she had the fortune to release the king, her husband, from his captivity. Her triumph was great, though contaminated with cruelty; but it was of a short continuance. The city of London was to be gained, but Warwick had already secured it in his interests; the citizens also feared her tumultuous army, and refused to open their gates upon her summons. In the mean time, Warwick assembled the people in St. John's fields, and showing them the son of the late duke of York, demanded, whether they chose to have him or Henry for their king? Upon which the people crying out A York! an assembly was quickly called, and the young duke being present, they elected him king, by the name of Edward IV, and conducted him, with great ceremony, to the palace where Henry used to lodge when within the walls of the city.

In the mean time queen Margaret collected a great army in the north, amounting to sixty thousand men at arms. She was now to strike her strongest blow. The command of this army was given to a person who

acted under her directions. On the other side, Warwick conducted young Edward, at the head of forty thousand men, to oppose her. Both sides at length met near Santon, in the county of York. Never was England depopulated by so terrible a day. What a dreadful sight, to behold almost a hundred thousand men, of the same country, fighting to satisfy the empty ambition of one or two weak and empty wretches, murdering each other for an idiot and a boy; the contest only which should wear a crown with diamonds, or wield a gewgaw sceptre! Strange infatuation! yet, such as it was, not less than forty thousand men were left dead in the field, in asserting this dispute. Warwick gained a complete victory: Edward IV was established on the throne, and Margaret of Anjou was abandoned. She fled for protection to Scotland, with her son and husband, in order to attempt new designs for the recovery of her kingdom. Edward now took down the head of his father from the walls of York, and put up the heads of the conquered generals in its stead. Each party, as it happened to be victorious, thus called in the executioner to complete the tragedy begun in the field; and our cruelty to each other, in civil discords, is what has impressed foreigners with an idea of English cruelty.

Though wretched as this reign was, yet the art of printing, which was introduced into it at that time, seemed to make amends for a part of its calamities. William Caxton, a mercer, was the first who practised the art at London; he translated some books himself from the French, and printed the translations of others. Among the writers of that time were lord Rivers and earl Tiptoft, whose labours, however, never ventured higher than translation. To judge of the learning of those times by the works of the laity in the vulgar tongue, we shall entertain the most despicable opinion of it; yet, when I read the Latin productions of some of the priests of that period, I cannot avoid allowing the authors no small share of erudition. The truth is, learning was separated from the purposes of common life at that time, and by no means unknown or neglected by the clergy, as we are taught to believe

by men who seem very little acquainted with writers of that period.

LETTER XXIV.

WHICH ever side was victorious in these times of civil slaughter, it was always ready to confirm its injustice with the show of authority. The parliament usually followed the conqueror, and fixed him upon the throne, when he had an army to back his pretensions. Edward was, immediately upon his victory, confirmed by their unanimous approbation, while Henry and his queen were to seek for new resources in France and Scotland. No calamity 1461. was able to abate Margaret's perseverance: though so often overcome, yet she was once more resolved to enter England with five thousand men, granted her by the French king, bringing the unfortunate Henry with her to enforce her claims. Her usual ill fortune attended her; her little fleet was dispersed by a tempest, and she herself entered the Tweed with no small difficulty. Again, however, she offered her enemy battle, and was again defeated, near Hexham. The loss of this battle seemed to deprive her of every resource: she and her husband were now obliged to find safety in a separate flight, without attendants, and without even the necessaries of life. The weak unfortunate monarch, almost always imprudent, and consequently unsuccessful, thought he could lie concealed in England: his error was soon attended with the obvious consequences; he was taken prisoner, carried to London with ignominy, and confined in the Tower.

Margaret was rather more fortunate; for she escaped, with the dukes of Somerset and Exeter, out of the kingdom, and retired to her father, who, though very poor, strove, as well as he could, to supply her with the mere necessaries of life. You are not to suppose the miseries of the great, at those times, were fictitious, as we find them at present; they, in reality, endured every calamity that poverty now inflicts on

the obscurest of wretches. Philip de Comines says, that he saw the duke of Exeter following the duke of Burgundy's equipage, barefoot, and serving for his livelihood as his footman. This was a strange situation for a lord, who had conducted armies, and was allied to kings and princes: but the times were barbarous: the princes on the coast of Negroland experience such reverses of fortune at this very day.

Edward being now, by means of Warwick, fixed upon the throne, reigned in peace and security. A spirit of gallantry prevailed in his court, mixed with cruelty, which seemed the distinguishing feature of those times of discord. In the very same palace which one day smoked with blood, a pageant or a mask appeared the day following; and the king would at once gallant a mistress and inspect an execution.

As his amours, however, were likely to dissatisfy his subjects, the earl of Warwick advised him to marry; and, with his consent, went over to France to procure him Bona of Savoy, and the match was accordingly by his means concluded. But while the earl was hastening the negotiation in France, the king himself put an effectual stop to it at home, by marrying Elizabeth Woodville, with whom he had fallen in love, and whom he had vainly strove to debauch: having thus given Warwick real cause of offence, he was resolved to widen the breach by driving him from the council. We are apt to hate the man we have offended, as much as the man who has offended us: Edward was no sooner established in security by Warwick, than he began to be ungrateful. Warwick, whose prudence was equal to his bravery, soon made use of both to assist his revenge: he seduced Clarence, the king's brother, and to confirm him in his interests, made him his son-in-law, and now, finding his plot ready for execution, he flies into open rebellion. Vengeance seemed to be the only motive he had in view: plots, truces, stratagems, and negotiations, followed each other in a rapid succession. But Warwick, long acquainted with intrigue and dissimulation, was at last too subtle for the young king: inviting him, by a seeming promise of composition, to his house, he threw Edward off his

guard; and Warwick, seizing the opportunity, made him a prisoner.

Nothing now appeared that could oppose Warwick's designs: he therefore disbanded his troops as unnecessary, and Edward was consigned to the custody of the archbishop of York. But soon an accident happened that overthrew all Warwick's expectations: Edward's behaviour in confinement was so very obliging, that he got leave, upon some occasions, to hunt in a park adjoining to the place of his confinement; from which he one day made his escape, by the assistance of a couple of his friends, and, contrary to all expectation, instantly repaired to York.

Fortune seemed to declare for Edward; wherefore, marching some troops to London, the citizens immediately declared in his favour. It is surprising to think, how one party is seen this day at the head of numerous forces, while the next we behold it abandoned, and the adverse party triumphing without a rival;—a strong proof of the fluctuating disposition of the English. Edward now commanded a numerous army, while Warwick and his brother Clarence were attended by a few. The king, resolving to take the advantage of their weakness, after having defeated a party commanded by lord Wells, and cut off his head, the usual method of treating the prisoners of either party, he marched to give them battle. In this exigence they had no other course to take but to embark, in order to screen themselves from impending danger. Having arrived safely in France, they now were reconciled to queen Margaret, their former enemy; and, returning from France, Warwick once more saw himself at the head of no less than sixty thousand men.

It was now become Edward's turn to fly the kingdom; and, escaping the dangers of the enemy, of the sea, and of pirates, he landed safely in Holland. Warwick, in the mean time, advanced to London, and once more poor passive Henry was released from prison, and placed upon a useless throne. Warwick was received, among the people, by the name of *king-maker*; a parliament was called, and Henry's right confirmed.

Edward, though an exile in Holland, had many par-

tisans at home; and, after an absence of about nine months, once more landed at Ravenspur, where Henry IV had landed upon a similar occasion. Though at first he was coldly received by the English, yet his army increased upon its march, and his moderation and feigned humility still added to the number of his partisans. London, at this time, ever ready to admit the most powerful, opened her gates, and Henry was again taken from his throne to be sent back to his old mansion.

Warwick at last found his party begin to decline, and Clarence, the king's brother, on whom he had the greatest dependance, changed to the other side. In this state of uncertainty, he knew no other expedient than to hazard a battle: he knew his forces to be inferior, but he was conscious of the superiority of his own generalship. With this resolution he marched from St. Alban, and having advanced to Barnet, within eleven miles of London, he met Edward, who was marching down with a design to fight him. Warwick and Edward were the two most renowned generals of their age, and now was to be struck the decisive blow, that was either to fix Edward on the throne, or to overthrow his pretensions for ever. The unfortunate Henry was dragged along to be a spectator of the engagement; happy in his natural imbecility, which seemed to soothe all his afflictions.

The battle began early in the morning, and lasted till noon: never did two armies fight with greater obstinacy and bravery; not honour, but life, depended upon the issue of the contest. The example of Warwick inspired his troops with more than common resolution; and the victory, for a while, seemed to declare for him: but his army, by reason of a slight mist, happened to mistake a body of their own forces, for that of the enemy, fell furiously upon them, and this fatal error turned the fortune of the day. Warwick did all that experience, conduct, or valour could suggest, to retrieve the mistake, but in vain. Finding, therefore, all hopes gone, he was resolved to sell his life dearly to the conquerors; and rushing, on foot as he was, into the midst of his enemies, he fell covered all over with wounds. Thus died the ambitious Warwick,

who had made and unmade kings at pleasure, yet who never seemed to aspire at regal dignity himself. Ten thousand of his army shared the same fate with him, the king having ordered that no quarter should be given.

Margaret, who was ever fruitful in resources, was, at this time, returning from France, with her son the prince of Wales, where she had been negotiating a new supply. She had scarce time to refresh herself from the fatigues of her voyage, when she received the fatal news of the death of the brave Warwick, who was then her only defender. Though she had hitherto bravely withstood all the attacks of fortune, this was too violent a shock for nature to support: her grief now, for the first time, found way in a torrent of tears; and, yielding to her unhappy fate, she took sanctuary in an abbey in Hampshire.

She had not been here long when she found some few friends still willing to assist her fallen hopes. The duke of Somerset, the earl of Pembroke, and one or two lords more, came to offer her their lives and fortunes: a dawn of hope was sufficient to raise her courage, and her numerous misfortunes gave way to the flattering prospect of another trial. She had now fought battles in almost every province in England. Tewkesbury park was the last scene that terminated her attempts. The duke of Somerset headed her army; a man who had shared her dangers, and had ever been steady in her cause. He was valiant, generous, and polite; but rash and headstrong. When Edward first attacked him in his intrenchments, he repulsed him with such vigour, that the enemy retired with precipitation; Somerset, supposing them routed, immediately pursued, and ordered lord Wenlock to support him while he charged; but this lord disobeyed his injunctions, and the forces of Somerset were overpowered by numbers. Somerset, now finding all gone, was unable to govern his rage: he had depended upon Wenlock: but when he beheld him inactive, in the very place where he had first drawn up his men, giving way to his transport, with his heavy battle-axe in both hands, he ran upon the coward, and with one blow dashed out his brains. 1471.

After the battle, the queen, torpid with griefs, was

taken prisoner, and afterward had the misery of finding her son, the prince of Wales, in the same condition. But this noble youth was not long in bondage: being brought into the victor's presence, he appeared before him with undaunted majesty. Edward, surprised at the boy's behaviour, asked him how he durst enter his dominions without leave! *I have entered the dominions of my father*, replied the prince, *to revenge his injuries, and to redress my own.* The barbarous monarch, enraged at his intrepidity, struck him on the mouth with his gauntlet: this seemed to be the signal for his death; Gloucester, Clarence, and others, like wild beasts, rushing upon the unarmed youth at once, stabbed him to the heart with their daggers. When the governors of a kingdom behave thus, what must be the behaviour of the people! To complete the tragedy, Henry himself, who had long been the passive spectator of all these cruelties, was now thought unfit to live. The duke of Gloucester, afterward named Richard III, or the Crouch-back, entering his chamber alone, murdered him in cold blood. Of all those that were taken, none were suffered to survive but Margaret herself. It was, perhaps, expected that she would be ransomed by the king of France; and in this they were not deceived: Lewis XI paid the king of England fifty thousand crowns for her freedom. Thus Margaret of Anjou having sustained the cause of her husband in twelve battles, after having survived her fortune and her children, died a few years after in privacy in France, very miserable indeed, but with no other claim to our pity, except her courage and her distresses.

Of all people the English are the most compassionate; a throne raised upon cruelty never wanted enemies among them, and nothing could ever have been more ridiculous, than attempting to govern such subjects as the English by the hand of the executioner. The heads of either faction seemed to have been insensible of this truth, and it was their ill-judged punishments, which, by turns, plunged them into new distresses. A tyrant, however, when once drenched in blood, knows not when to give over. Edward being

now freed from great enemies, turned to the punishment of those of lesser note; the gibbets were hung with his adversaries, and their estates confiscated to his use.

Yet, while he was thus rendering himself terrible on the one hand, he was immersed in gallantry on the other. Nature, it seems, was not unfavorable to him in this respect, for he was universally allowed to be the most beautiful man of his time. The court seemed willing to countenance those debaucheries in which they had a share; and the clergy, many of whom practised every species of lewdness with impunity, were ever ready to lend absolution to all his failings. The truth is, enormous vices had been of late so common, that adultery was held but a very slight offence: among the number of his mistresses was the wife of one Shore, a woman of exquisite beauty and good sense, but who had not virtue enough to withstand the temptations of a beautiful man and a monarch.

England now enjoying a temporary calm, the king thought the best way to ingratiate himself with the people was to assert his right to his domains in France, which the insurrections of his father had contributed to alienate in the former reign: this proposal was sure of pleasing the English, who ever appeared more fond of splendid than useful acquisitions. To prosecute this scheme, therefore, he sent off to his ally, the duke of Burgundy, a reinforcement of three thousand men, and soon after passed over himself at the head of a numerous army. Lewis XI, then king of France, was, with reason, alarmed at this formidable invasion: he found himself unable to resist so powerful an antagonist, and therefore had recourse to treaty. This succeeded better than arms. The two kings had an interview at the bridge of Perpignan, and, upon the payment of a stipulated sum, Edward led his forces back to England. The English king wanted to return home to his mistresses, to spend upon them the money he had gotten; and the French monarch hoped to be able to refuse those sums which he had only given a promise to pay.

Edward returned to renew his cruelty and his excesses. His brother Clarence, who had assisted him

in gaining the crown, had been, for some time, treated with indifference and disrespect: this Clarence thought an ill recompense for his former services, and often gave himself the liberty of invective in the king's absence. In this posture of things, the king happened to kill a favourite deer belonging to Mr. Thomas Burdet, a friend of the duke's: poor Burdet, dropping some hasty expressions against the king, was sentenced to die, and executed in two days after. The duke of Clarence, upon the death of his friend, vented his grief in renewed reproaches against his brother: the king, unmindful of the ties of kindred, or the debt of gratitude by which he was bound, had him arraigned, condemned, and executed: he was smothered in a butt of Malmsey wine. When men arrive at a certain station of greatness, their regards are dissipated on too great a number of objects to feel parental affection: the ties of nature are only strong with those who have but few friends or few dependants.

The rest of Edward's life was spent in riot and debauchery; in gratifications that are pleasing only to the narrow mind; in useless treaties, in which he was ever deceived; and in empty threats against the monarch who had deceived him. His parliament, now merely the minister of his will, consented to a war with France, at a time when it was impossible it could succeed: all the lords unanimously declared, that they thought it both just and necessary. The people seemed equally pleased at the prospect of a war, which might, in some measure, alleviate their domestic calamities. Great preparations were made on every side; but Edward died in the midst of all his expectations. The character of this prince is easily summed up: his good qualities were courage and beauty; his bad qualities—every vice.

LETTER XXV.

HORRID as the last reign was, you must prepare for events in the next still more heinous. Edward left two sons, the eldest of whom, a boy between twelve

and thirteen, was proclaimed king, by the name of Edward V. The queen, his mother, being herself newly raised among the nobility, seemed willing to hide the meanness of her former condition among a number of new promotions: this, as might naturally be expected, was displeasing to the old nobility; and the duke of Gloucester, a monster both for the cruelty of his heart and the deformity of his body, fomented their discontents. Having gained over lord Hastings, the duke of Buckingham, and some other lords, to his interests, he made them a long speech, tending to shew the danger that hung over their heads, if the queen should have the government in her hands: he enlarged upon the usurpations of her family, and the lengths they would be apt to run upon being invested with the supreme power. In short, he spared neither dissimulation, nor artifice, nor oaths, to get the guardianship of the minority, and the custody of the king's person.

His first step, after being declared protector of the kingdom, was to get the king's brother also, a boy of about seven, who, with the queen his mother, had taken sanctuary in Westminster-abbey. The queen foresaw the dangers which threatened her family; and, parting with her child, clasped him, with the last embrace, to her breast, and took leave of him, with a shower of tears. The duke of Gloucester, on the other hand, took his nephew in his arms, and, clasping him with feigned affection, declared, that, while he himself was alive, the child should never want a parent. The young king, finding that he was to have the pleasure of his brother's company, was greatly rejoiced, without considering the fatal intention of these preparations. A few days after, the protector, upon a pretext of guarding them from danger, conveyed them both to the Tower.

Having thus secured their persons, the protector's next step was to spread a report of their illegitimacy; and, by pretended obstacles, to put off the day of the young king's coronation. Lord Stanley, a man of deep penetration, was the first to disclose his fears of the protector's having ill designs: he communicated his

suspicious to lord Hastings, who was firmly attached to the young king. Perhaps this lord's wishes, that such a project might not be true, influenced his judgment, and confirmed him in his security. Soon, however, Catesby, a vile creature of the protector's, was sent to sound him, and try whether he could not be brought over to side with the projected usurpation: Hastings appeared immoveable in his adherence to the king, and his death was therefore resolved on.

With this design, the protector next day called a council in the Tower, under pretence of expediting the coronation. He came thither himself at nine o'clock in the morning, with a cheerful countenance, saluting the members with the utmost affability, and with demonstrations of unusual good humour; then, on going out for a short time, he desired his absence might not interrupt the debates. In about an hour he returned again, quite altered, knitting his brows, biting his lips, and showing, by frequent alterations of his looks, some inward perturbation. A silence ensued for some time, and the lords looked upon each other, not without reason, expecting some horrid catastrophe. At length he broke the dreadful silence. *My lords*, he said, *what punishment do they deserve who have conspired against my life?* This redoubled the astonishment of the assembly; and the silence continuing, lord Hastings at length made answer, That whoever did so, deserved to be punished as a traitor: upon which the protector, with a stern countenance, baring his withered arm, cried out, *See what the sorceress, my queen-sister, and that wretch, Shore's wife, have done by their witchcrafts! Their spells have reduced my arm to this condition, and my whole body would have suffered the same calamity, but for a timely detection.* The amazement of the council seemed to increase at this terrible accusation, and lord Hastings again said, *If they have committed such a crime, they deserve punishment.* *IF!* cried the protector, with a loud voice; *Dost thou answer me with IFs? I tell thee, that they have conspired my death; and that thou, traitor, art an accomplice in their crime.* Thus having said, he struck the table twice with his hand, and the room was instantly filled with armed men. *I arrest thee, con-*

tinues he, turning to Hastings, *for high treason*; and, at the same time, delivered him to the custody of the soldiers.

The council-room was now filled with tumult; and, though no rescue was offered, yet the soldiers caused a bustle, as if they apprehended danger. One of them narrowly missed cleaving lord Stanley's head with a battle-axe, but he escaped by shrinking under the table. In all probability, the fellow had orders for this attempt; so that, when Stanley should be thus killed, his death might be ascribed to the tumult caused by an intended rescue. However, escaping the blow, he was arrested by the protector's order, who was well apprised of his attachment to the young king. As for lord Hastings, he was forced to make a short confession to the next priest that was at hand; the protector crying out, that, by St. Paul, he would not dine till he had seen his head taken off. He was accordingly hurried out to the little green before the Tower chapel, and there beheaded on a log of wood that accidentally lay there.

But not those alone of his council were thus barbarously treated; on the very same day a similar tragedy was acted at Pontefract castle, where earl Rivers, the most polite and gallant man of the age in which he lived, and lord Grey, were both beheaded, by a decree of that very same council, the members of which were now in such danger themselves. A plot against the king was the pretext for their execution; but in reality they died as being the only obstacles to prevent his destruction.

The protector, having thus got rid of those he most feared, he undertook to punish even the least dangerous. Jane Shore, the late king's mistress, was an enemy too humble for him to fear any thing from her attempts; yet, as she had been accused of witchcraft, of which all the world saw she was innocent, he thought proper to punish her for faults of which she was really guilty. This unhappy woman had been deluded formerly from her husband, one Shore, a goldsmith, in Lombard-street, and continued with Edward the most guiltless mistress in his luxurious and abandoned court: she

ever interceded for the distressed, and was ever applied to as a mediator for mercy. She was charitable, generous, and pleasing in conversation; her wit and her beauty were said to be irresistible. Being blameless in other respects, the protector ordered her to be sued for incontinency, for having left her husband to live in adultery with another. It is possible, that the people were not displeased at seeing again reduced to her former meanness, a person who had for a while been raised above them, and enjoyed all the favours of the king. Her guilt was too notorious to be denied; she acknowledged the charge, and was condemned to walk barefoot through the city, and to do penance, in St. Paul's church, in a white sheet, with a wax-taper in her hand, before thousands of spectators. She lived above forty years after this sentence, reduced to the most extreme wretchedness. A historian, in the reign of Henry VII, assures us, that he saw her gathering herbs in a field near the city, to supply her nightly meal;—a strange employment for one who had once been the favourite of a court, and the mistress of a king.

The protector now began to lay aside his pretended regard for the sons of the late king, and to aspire to the throne more openly. To effect this, the duke of Buckingham, who, by promises and bribes, was devoted to his interests, tried every art to infuse into the people an opinion of the bastardy of the late king, and that of his children. Dr. Shaw, a popular preacher, was hired to harangue the people from St. Paul's cross, to the same purpose. The preacher, after having displayed the incontinence of the queen, insisted upon the illegality of the young king's title, and the virtues of the protector. *It is he, continued the sycophant, who carries in his face, in his soul, the image of virtue, and the marks of a true descent.* Still, however, the people continued silent, each fearing to begin the cry of king Richard, or detesting the tendency of his sermon. The duke of Buckingham, therefore, next undertook to persuade the citizens, at a meeting called by the mayor. His speech turned upon the calamities of the last reign, and the bastardy of the present pretender. He seemed apprehensive, indeed, that the protector

could not be prevailed upon to accept the crown, but he hoped that the people would take every method to persuade him. He concluded, by desiring every man to speak his real sentiments, and to give a positive answer, whether they would have the young bastard or the virtuous protector? A silence for some time ensued; but, at length, some of the duke's own servants, who had slipped in among the press, cried out, Long live king Richard! This cry was seconded by some of the citizens, who were previously bribed; and the mob at the door, a despicable class of people, ever pleased with novelty, repeated the cry, and, throwing up their caps, cried out, A Richard! A Richard! The duke, now taking the advantage of this faint approbation, next day, at the head of the mayor and aldermen, went to wait upon the protector with offers of the crown. Richard, with his usual hypocrisy, appeared to the crowd in the gallery, between two bishops, and at first pretended to be surprised at the concourse. When he was informed that their business was to offer him the crown, he declined accepting it, alleging his love for the late king, his brother, and his affection for the children under his care. Buckingham, seemingly displeased with his answer, muttered some words to himself, and at length plainly told him, that all the people had determined upon making him king; that they had now proceeded too far to recede, and therefore were resolved, in case of his refusal, to offer it where it should meet with a more ready acceptance. This was a resolution which the protector's tenderness for his people could not permit him to see executed. *I see*, cried he, in a modest tone, *I see the kingdom is resolved to load me with preferments unequal to my abilities or my choice; yet, since it is my duty to obey the dictates of a free people, I will graciously accept their petition. I therefore, from this moment, enter upon the government of England and France, with a resolution to defend the one and subdue the other.* The crowd being thus dismissed, each returned home, pondering upon the proceedings of the day, and making such remarks as passion, interest, or prudence, might suggest.

One crime ever draws on others; for usurpation naturally requires security: as soon therefore as he was fixed upon the throne, Richard sent the governor of the Tower orders to put the two young princes to death. There was yet one man left in the kingdom who had virtue enough to refuse being made the instrument of a tyrant's cruelty: the governor of the Tower, whose name was Brackenbury, submissively answered, that he could not imbrue his hands in their blood. A fit instrument, however, was not long wanting: one James Tyrrel was employed, and sent to command the Tower for one night. Tyrrel, that very night, while all were asleep, went to the chamber where the two young princes lay: here the murderer for some time hesitated in his base design, struck, as it is said, with the innocence of their looks; but habit getting the better of remorse, he at last smothered them between two pillows, and caused them to be buried under a little staircase, near where they lay. Vengeance, though late, followed this execrable wretch: he was executed for this fact in the succeeding reign, confessing his crime, and the manner of its execution.

The warlike spirit first excited by the conquest of France, and then kept up by the long civil war, seemed to have banished every sentiment of virtue from the kingdom: cruelty and executions were grown so common, that the people now became familiar with blood and death; scarce a noble family in the kingdom which was not thinned by these terrible dissensions. The clergy seemed, at this time, quite separated from the laity; they seldom suffered for treason, and were but little conversant in the bloody politics of the times. As for arts, sciences, and commerce, they were totally neglected. In all this carnage and desolation, one power was imperceptibly gaining ground; as the lords were declining, the commons were coming into authority: not so much exposed as the former to the tempests of regal resentment, they continued to increase in wealth and favour, and found safety in their humble station.

LETTER XXVI.

THERE is somewhat that peculiarly strikes the imagination in the transactions of this and the preceding reign; I have therefore treated them with more than usual prolixity. Our tragic poets seem to have been sensible how much these strange instances of depravation were susceptible of a poetic dress. Every picture of the times is marked with strong lines, like an African prospect, where all is vast, wild, and terrible.

Richard had, at length, waded through every obstacle to the throne, and now began, after the usual manner of all usurpers, to strengthen, by his ill-got power, his foreign alliances. Sensible also of the influence of pageantry and show upon the minds of the people, he caused himself to be crowned first at London, and then at York. The clergy he endeavoured to secure in his interests, by great indulgences to them, and by his own hypocritical behaviour.

But while he endeavoured to establish his power, he found it undermining on a side from which he least expected it: the duke of Buckingham, who had been the principal instrument in placing him upon the throne, now began to expect the reward of his adherence. Richard, indeed, had given him several posts and governments, but denied him a moiety of the confiscated lands of Hereford, to which he had some family claims. Very great obligations between two friends, on either side, generally end in disgust: Buckingham supposed that his services could never be over-rewarded; while Richard, on the contrary, was willing to curb his desires, which seemed to increase by gratification. Soon, therefore, the duke was disgusted with the new monarch, and as soon conceived a scheme for depriving him of the crown; doubtful, for a while, whether he should put in for the crown himself, or set up another. The latter opinion prevailed, and he was resolved to declare for Henry, earl of Richmond, then an exile in Bretagne. Henry, of Richmond, was one of those who had the good fortune to survive the numerous massacres of the preceding reigns: he was the only

remaining branch of the house of Lancaster : he was descended from John of Gaunt, but by the female line : his right to the throne was very doubtful, but the crimes of the usurper strengthened his claims. He had long lived in exile, and was once delivered up to the ambassadors of Edward IV, and was just upon the point of being brought back to England, to suffer a cruel death ; when the prince, who had delivered him up, repented what he had done, and took him from the ambassadors just as he was brought on shipboard. This was the youth whom the duke of Buckingham pitched upon to dethrone the tyrant, and a negotiation was commenced between them for that purpose.

Richard, in the mean time, either informed by his creatures or made distrustful by conscious guilt, suspected a conspiracy, and could not avoid thinking Buckingham among the number of the conspirators. Impressed with these suspicions, he came to a resolution of sending for him to court, and the duke's refusing to come confirmed him in his belief : but he had soon a plain conviction of his treachery, for word was brought that the duke of Buckingham was up in arms. The duke, having found that he could dissemble with Richard no longer, had drawn together some Welsh forces, and began to march to the western shore, where he had appointed young Richmond to land : Richard, however, no way dismayed at the approaching danger, prepared to meet him with the few forces he then had in readiness. However, fortune seemed to favour the usurper, and render his preparations, for this time, needless. As Buckingham was advancing, by hasty marches, towards Gloucester, where he designed to pass the Severn, just then the river was swollen to such a degree, that the country, on both sides, was deluged, and even the tops of mountains covered with water. It held ten days, during which the Welsh army could neither pass the river, nor subsist on the other side, where they found nothing but desolation : at length, compelled by hunger, after having suffered a thousand hardships, they all dispersed, and returned home, notwithstanding the duke's intreaties to the contrary. In this helpless situation, the duke, after a moment's re-

fection, thought the properest place of safety he could fix upon was at the house of one Bannister, who had been his servant, and who had received repeated obligations from his family. No maxim was ever more just, than that there is no friendship among the wicked. Buckingham had himself been first false to his king, and after to Richard, the creature of his own power: how then could he expect fidelity from others? A large reward was set upon the duke's head: the villain Bannister, unable to resist so great a temptation, went and betrayed his master to the sheriff of Shropshire, who, surrounding the house with armed men, seized the duke in a peasant's dress, and conducted him to Shrewsbury, where he was beheaded, without the form of a trial or delay.

In the mean time, Richmond landed in England; but, finding his hopes frustrated by the catastrophe of Buckingham, he hastily set sail again, and returned for Bretagne. Richard, thus freed from the impending danger, gave a loose to cruelty, the favourite passion of his breast. In order to expedite his revenge, he gave one Ashton an unbounded commission to condemn and execute, upon the spot, such as were deemed by him guilty, or even suspected of guilt. A cruel king never wants a bloody minister: Ashton executed his commission with the utmost rigour, putting husbands to death in the presence of their own wives, and children before the eyes of their parents. It is said that this execrable wretch, being solicited by a beautiful woman to release her husband, who was a prisoner upon suspicion, he consented, upon her promising to grant him a favour of another nature: scarce had the poor creature indulged his brutal desire, when he brought her out, and pointed to her husband, when, in the mean time, he had given orders he should be hanged upon a neighbouring tree.

Still, however, the authority of a parliament was wanting to give sanction to the injustice of Richard's proceedings: but, in these times of vice and servility, that was soon procured. The parliament approved his proceedings; confirmed the illegitimacy of Edward's children; passed an act of attainder against the earl of

Richmond, and all his adherents ; and seemed, upon the whole, more disposed to slavery, than he to be a tyrant. One thing more was yet wanting to complete his security ; the death of his rival : to effect this, he sent ambassadors to the duke of Bretagne, with whom Richmond had taken shelter, seemingly upon business of a public nature, but in reality to treat with Landais, that prince's prime minister, and to induce him to deliver up Richmond. The minister was base enough to enter into the negotiation ; but Richmond, having had timely notice, fled away into France, and had just reached the limits of that kingdom, when his pursuers came up with him.

Richard, finding his design of seizing his enemy's person without success, as his power became more precarious, became every day more suspicious and more cruel. Lord Stanley, who was now married to the widow of Edward IV, fell strongly under his suspicion ; and, to secure his fidelity, he took the son as a hostage for his father's good behaviour. He now also resolved to get rid of his present queen, in order to marry his own niece ;—a match from which he expected to derive several advantages. The lady he was then married to was formerly the wife of the young prince of Wales, who was murdered by him at Tewkesbury. It is no slight indication of the barbarity of the times to find a woman thus taking the murderer of her husband for her second lord. She felt, however, the consequences of her ingratitude to the deceased prince, in the inhumanity of the present : Richard treated her with so much contempt and indifference, that she died of grief, according to his desire. But his wishes were not crowned with success in his applications to his niece : she treated his vile passion with retaliated contempt and just detestation.

In the perplexity caused by this unexpected refusal, it was that he received the news of Richmond being once more landed at Milford-haven, with an intent to deprive him of the crown ; but being informed that he brought with him only two thousand men, he seemed to despise the effort, and issued orders to oppose him with the greatest coolness and intrepidity. Richard

was possessed of courage and military conduct, and these were his only virtues. Having heard that Richmond was marching with his little army to London, he was resolved to meet him on the way, and end the pretensions of the one or the other by a battle. Richmond, though very much inferior in number, was not less desirous of engaging; so that the two armies soon met in Bosworth-field, to determine a dispute that had now, for more than thirty years, drained England of its bravest subjects.

Richard, perceiving his enemy advance, drew up his army, consisting of about thirteen thousand men, in order of battle: he gave the command of the vanguard to the duke of Norfolk, and led the main body himself, with the crown on his head, either designing by this to inspire the enemy with awe, or to render himself conspicuous to his own army. The earl of Richmond, who had not half the number of men, drew up his forces also in two lines, the earl of Oxford commanding the first, and he himself the second: lord Stanley, in the mean time, posted himself on one flank between the two armies, and his brother took his station in the other, which was opposite. Richard, seeing him thus in a situation equally convenient for joining either army, immediately sent him orders to join him, which the other refusing, he gave instant command for beheading Stanley's son, whom he had kept as a hostage: but being persuaded to postpone the execution till after the fight, he complied, and immediately ordered the trumpets to sound to battle. The two armies approaching each other, the battle began with a shower of arrows, and soon the two ranks began to close: this was what Stanley expected, who immediately profiting himself of the occasion, joined the line of Richmond, and turned the fortune of the day. In the mean while Richard spurred up his horse in the thickest of the fight, and Richmond quitted his station behind, to encourage his troops by his presence in the front. Richard, perceiving him, was willing to end all by one blow; and, with the fury of a lion, flew through thousands to attack him. He slew sir William Brandon, the earl's standard-bearer, who had at-

tempted to stop his career; sir John Cheyney, having taken Brandon's place, was thrown to the ground: Richmond, in the mean time, stood to oppose him, but, the crowd interposing, they were separated. Richard now, therefore, went to inspire his troops at another quarter; but at last, perceiving his army every where yielding or flying, and now finding that all was gone, he rushed, with a loud shout, into the midst of the enemy, and there met a better death than his actions had merited. After the battle, his body being found amid a heap of slaughter, stripped naked, covered over with wounds, and the eyes frightfully staring, it was thrown across a horse, the head hanging down on one side and the legs on the other, and so carried to Leicester. It lay there two days, exposed to public view, and then was buried without further ceremony.

Richard's crown being found, by one of the soldiers, in the field of battle, was immediately placed upon the head of the conqueror: the whole army, as 1485- if inspired, with one voice, cried out, 'Long live king Henry!' Thus ended the bloody reign of Richard: and by his death the race of the Plantagenet kings, that had been in possession of the crown during the space of three hundred and thirty years, became extinct. Thus ended also the contests between the houses of York and Lancaster, which had, for thirty years, been as a pestilence to the kingdom, and in which above a hundred thousand men lost their lives, either by the executioner, or on the field of battle.

These dissensions had reduced the kingdom to a state of almost savage barbarity: laws, arts, and commerce, were entirely neglected for the practice of arms; and to be a conqueror was sufficient, in the eyes of the people, to stand for every other virtue. They had, as yet, no idea of pacific government, nor could lend applause to those who cultivated it; and, except only in their gallantry to the fair sex, they little differed from the ancient painted inhabitants of the island. In these wars, the women, though ever so formidable, or ever so active, unless, accused of witchcraft, were exempted from capital punishments, which probably proceeded from a spirit of gallantry, the single virtue of the times.

As for the clergy, they were entirely distinct from the laity, both in customs, constitutions, and learning; they were governed by the civil law, drawn up by one of the Roman emperors; whereas the laity were governed by the common law, which was traditionally delivered to them from their ancestors. The clergy (however we may be told to the contrary) understood and wrote Latin tolerably well; the laity, on the other hand, understood no Latin, but applied themselves wholly to French, when they aspired to the character of politeness. The clergy, as a body, little interested themselves in the civil polity, and, perhaps, were not displeased to see the laity, whom they considered not as fellow-subjects, but rivals for power, weakening themselves by continual contests: the laity regarded the clergy with blind veneration, and this veneration lessened their regard for their king. In short, as there was no virtue among the individuals of the nation, the government was like a feverish constitution, ever subject to ferment and disorder. France served, for a while, as a drain to the peccant humours; but when that was no longer open, the disorder seemed to increase in the internal part of the constitution, and produced all the horrors of civil war.

LETTER XXVII.

IT was in this state of the nation that the earl of Richmond, who took the name of Henry VII, came to the throne. You are now to behold one of the greatest revolutions that ever was brought about in any kingdom, effected by the prudence, clemency, and perseverance of one great prince: a nation of tumult reduced to civil subordination; an insolent and factious aristocracy humbled; wise laws enacted; commerce restored; and the peaceful arts rendered amiable to a people, for whom before war only had charms. In a word, you are now to turn to a period, where the whole government seems to put on a new form; and to view the actions of a king, if not the greatest,

at least the most useful, that ever sat upon the British or any other throne. Hitherto you have only read the history of a barbarous nation, obeying with reluctance, and governed by caprice : you are henceforth to view more refined politics, and better concerted schemes ; to behold human wisdom, as if roused from her lethargy of thirteen hundred years, exerting every art to reduce the natural ferocity of the people, and to introduce happiness.

Henry's first care upon coming to the throne was to marry the princess Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV, and thus unite the interests of the houses of Lancaster and York : but, lest the people should suppose he claimed the crown upon the strength of this alliance, he deferred her coronation till two years after, by which he made evident the priority of his own claim. His reign happily commenced with an obedience to the laws that had been hitherto unknown in England. An act had been passed, in the preceding reign, for the attainder of his friends and followers : this act still continued in force, and many members of that house, by which it was to be repealed, were those who were mentioned in the attainder. To suffer such to join in repealing that statute, would be admitting them judges in their own cause, to which Henry bravely and justly objected ; they were, therefore, obliged to leave the house, till an act was passed to reverse their attainder.

Before his reign, it was usual, when any person was attainted, to take away his life, and give away his fortune to some court-favourite : Henry wisely perceived that this had two bad effects : it first excited resentment by its cruelty, and, in the next place, only made the favourite too powerful for subjection. This prudent monarch took a better method to repress tumult and rebellion : he deprived such as were caught in arms of their estates and fortunes, and these he reserved for the use of the crown. By this means he deprived them of the power to injure him, and he strengthened the sinews of government by enriching the crown. A great part of the miseries of his predecessors proceeded from their poverty, and the opulence of the nobility. Henry

saw that money alone could turn the scale of power into his own hands, and therefore hoarded up all the confiscations of his enemies with the utmost frugality. Avarice upon these motives is not only excusable, but praiseworthy; it is not meanness, but economy; and, whatever historians tell us of liberality in a king, it is, at best, a misplaced virtue. Such liberalities are, in general, extorted from the poor, the industrious, and the useful; and bestowed as rewards upon the rich, and powerful, and insinuating; upon the sycophants of a court, and flatterers of debauchery. Henry was different from his predecessors in this respect: he gave away few rewards to the courtiers about his person, and none but the poor shared his benefactions. He released all the prisoners for debt in his dominions, whose debts did not amount to forty shillings, and paid their creditors from the royal coffers. His economy rendered him not only useful to the poor, but enabled him to be just to his own creditors, either abroad or at home. Those sums which he borrowed from the city of London, or any of his subjects, he repaid at the appointed day, with the utmost punctuality; and thus, as he grew just in his own dominions, he became respectable abroad.

Immediately after his marriage with Elizabeth, he issued out a general pardon to all such as chose to accept it: but those lords who had been the favourites of the last reign, and long used to turbulence, refused his proffered tenderness, and flew to arms. Lord Lovel, and Humphry and Thomas Stafford, placed themselves at the head of this insurrection: Henry sent to the duke of Bedford to oppose the insurgents, with orders to try what might be the effects of a proffered pardon previous to his attempts to reduce them. The duke punctually obeyed his instructions, but the rebels seemed to listen to no accommodation: contrary however to all expectation, lord Lovel, apprehensive of being deserted by his followers, first showed them the example, and fled away to Flanders. The rebel army, now without a leader, submitted to the mercy of the king, which they received. The Staffords, who were in the mean time besieging Worcester, hearing of

the surrender of their confederates, attempted to take sanctuary in a church, which had no privileges to protect them : being taken thence, the eldest of the brothers was executed, the other received a pardon.

But the people were become so turbulent and factious, by a long course of civil war, that no governor could rule them, nor any king please. One rebellion seemed extinguished only to give rise to another : the king kept, at that time, a son of the duke of Clarence, who had been formerly drowned in a butt of wine, as has been mentioned, a prisoner in the Tower. This poor youth, who was stiled the earl of Warwick, had long been a stranger to liberty : he was unacquainted with men and things, and so little conversant with human life, from his long and early confinement, that he knew not the difference, to use the words of the historian, between a duck and a hen. This unhappy boy, harmless as he was, was made an instrument to deceive the people. A priest of Oxford had trained up one Lambert Simnel, a baker's son, to counterfeit the person of this earl ; and instructed him to talk upon some facts and occurrences relative to the court of king Edward. Thus having prepared him for his purpose, he set out for Ireland, judging that the most proper theatre to open the scene. The plot unfolded to his wish : Simnel was received and proclaimed king of Ireland ; and he was conducted by the people and judges, with great pomp, to the castle, where he was treated conformably to his pretended birth and distinction.

The king could not avoid being troubled at this imposture, because he saw his mother-in-law at the bottom of it : he was resolved, therefore, to take the advice of his council upon this occasion, who, after due deliberation, determined upon confining the old queen to a monastery ; but, to wipe off the aspersion of treason from one to whom he was so nearly allied, he gave out that she was thus punished, for having formerly delivered up the princess, her daughter, to king Richard. The people, as usual, murmured upon this occasion ; but the king, unmindful of their idle clamours, persisted in his resolution, and she remained in confinement till

she died, which did not happen till several years after. The next resolution of the king's council was to show the earl of Warwick, who was still confined in the Tower, publicly to the people: in consequence of this, he was led through the principal streets of London, and conducted, in a solemn procession, to St. Paul's, where great numbers were assembled to see him. Still, however, they proceeded in Dublin to honour their pretended monarch; and he was crowned, with great solemnity, in presence of the earl of Kildare, the chancellor, and other officers of state. Such impositions upon the people were very frequent, at that time, in several parts of Europe: Lorrain, Naples, and Portugal, had their impostors, who continued for a long time to deceive without detection. In fact, the inhabitants of every country were so much confined to the limits of their own peculiar place of abode, and knew so little of what was passing in the rest of the world around them, that nothing was more easy than to deceive. King Simnel, being now joined by lord Lovel, and one or two lords more of the discontented party, resolved to pass over into England, and accordingly landed in Lancashire: from thence he marched to York, expecting the country would rise and join him as he passed along. But in this he was deceived; and he soon had the mortification to find, that the king himself was coming up with a superior force to give him battle. The event of the contest was such as might have been expected; the earl of Lincoln, who commanded for Simnel, was overthrown and slain in battle, and the impostor himself taken prisoner. Henry had now an opportunity of shewing the humanity and the greatness of his mind: Simnel was pardoned, and given a mean employment in the king's kitchen, and afterward preferred to be one of his falconers, in which post he died. As for the priest, his instructor, he was made a prisoner for life.

Things being thus adjusted, we may turn to France, which had long been the grave of the English, who yet coveted nothing so much as to continue the war there. Henry had all along perceived the futility of conquests upon the continent, conquests that could produce no

other advantage than military glory; but, while he internally despised such pernicious triumphs, he was obliged, in order to gain popularity, to countenance them. He therefore often pretended, that he was going to ravish his kingdom once more from the usurper, and to lay all France in blood; but, in fact, he had nothing further from his heart. As far as negotiations and threats went, he did all that lay in his power to keep the jarring states of that kingdom nearly balanced, and consequently feeble; but as for succours of men and money, he too well knew the value of both to exhaust them, in the manner of his predecessors, upon such vain projects.

The parliament, however, was taught to believe, that he intended something considerable against France; and they, ever cheerful when France was to be opposed, furnished him with the necessary supplies. But money was, at that time, more easily granted than levied in England. A new insurrection arose when the supplies came to be collected, and the earl of Northumberland was killed by the mob of Yorkshire, while he attempted to enforce obedience to the laws. The mutineers did not stop there; by the advice of one John-a-Chamber, an incendiary, they set Sir John Egremont at their head, and marched toward London to give the king battle; the consequence of this rash step was the defeat of the rebels, and the death of John-a-Chamber, their ringleader. It was necessary to treat this man with rigour, to induce a more ready compliance to the future grants of parliament, and prevent all insurrections on the same occasion: for now people seemed continually more willing to revolt than to pay their taxes.

One would not have imagined, by the success of Simnel's imposture, that it could have produced imitations; but the old duchess of Burgundy, sister to Edward IV, finding the former fraud had deceived so many, was resolved to project a new scheme, with more art and greater plausibility. She first spread a report, that the young duke of York, said to have been murdered in the Tower, was still alive; and soon a youth made his appearance that took upon him the

title of the duke of York. The person pitched upon to play this part was called Perkin Warbeck, the son of a Flemish Jew, a youth of a beautiful person, good understanding, and possessing something in his carriage and manner far above his birth or circumstances. The king of France, ever attentive to sow the seeds of division in England, received him at his court, and gave him proper encouragement; but, at the intercession of Henry, dismissed him, upon the prospect of a peace. Having quitted France, Perkin went to seek protection from the duchess of Burgundy, taking the greatest care to conceal his former acquaintance. At their first meeting, the duchess pretended much displeasure at his assurance, in assuming the title of her nephew: but soon after, as if brought over by conviction, she owned him for the duke of York, and gave him a guard suitable to that dignity. The English, ever ready to revolt, gave credit to this new imposture, and the young man's prudence, conversation, and deportment, served to confirm what their credulity had begun. All such as were disgusted with the king, prepared to join him; but particularly those that were formerly Henry's favourites, and had contributed to place him on the throne, thinking their services could never be sufficiently repaid, were now the chief heads of the conspiracy. These were joined by numbers, some greedy of novelty, some blindly attached to their leaders, and some induced, by their desperate fortunes, to wish for a change.

While the king's enemies were thus combining to involve the kingdom in its former calamities, he himself was no less intent upon preventing the impending danger. He endeavoured to undeceive the people, first, by showing that the duke of York was really dead, and by punishing his murderers; and next, by tracing Perkin, the impostor, to his primitive meanness. The last of these projects was not easily executed; for Warbeck's parents and place of abode were so well concealed, that it was almost impossible to come to a knowledge of them. But Henry, at length, won over sir Robert Clifford, who was then accompanying the impostor in Flanders, and had been entrusted with his

and the duchess' secrets. From Clifford, the king learned, not only their designs, but the names of the conspirators, and had several of them arrested. His former lenity, however, did not exempt him from fresh ingratitude: he found that the lord-high-chamberlain, brother to the famous lord Stanley, who had been lately created earl of Derby, was among the number of those who now had conspired against him. Though this nobleman had been loaded with favours, and was even then possessed of an immense fortune, yet, still dissatisfied, he sought more from his country's calamities. He was therefore arrested by the king's order, and, confessing his crime, was sentenced to suffer that death he so justly merited. You have hitherto observed how difficult it was to rule the English at this time; each province seemed desirous of placing some particular family upon the throne, and more eagerly took up arms, than willingly disposed themselves to legal subordination. To mix lenity with justice, upon proper occasions, required a very nice discernment: Henry showed his judgment in this particular. Whenever a conspirator took up arms against him, from a conscientious adherence to principle, and from a love of the house of York, he generally found pardon; but if the only motive of his conspiring was a love of change, or an illicit desire to subvert those laws by which he was governed, he was then treated with more severity.

While Warbeck's adherents were thus disappointed in England, he himself attempted landing in Kent; but being beat off from that coast by the inhabitants, he went thence to Ireland: finding his hopes frustrated there also, he went next to try his success in Scotland. Here his fortune began to mend. James IV, who was then king of that country, received him very favorably, acknowledged his pretensions to be just, and soon after gave him, in marriage, a daughter of the earl of Huntley, one of the most beautiful and accomplished ladies of her time. But not content with these instances of favour, he was resolved to attempt setting him upon the throne of England. It was expected that, upon Perkin's first appearance in that kingdom, all the friends of the house of York would rise in his

favour: upon this ground, therefore, the king of Scotland entered the country with a strong army, and proclaimed the young adventurer wherever he went; but, contrary to expectation, he found none to second his claims; and, thus disappointed, Perkin again retreated back to Edinburgh, where he continued to reside, till, upon a conclusion of a treaty of peace between the two kingdoms, he was once more obliged to leave Scotland, and to seek for a new protector.

Perkin had now, for the space of five years, continued to alarm the king; he had been acknowledged in France, Flanders, Ireland, and Scotland, as lawful heir to the British crown, and had made some bold attempts to second his pretensions. The time, at length, came, that he was to act the same character in England, which he had performed elsewhere with so much success. Some months before this there had been an insurrection in Cornwall: the inhabitants of that distant county, upon levying the taxes granted by parliament, refused to contribute to expenses which were destined for the defence of an opposite part of the kingdom. Every insurrection now was followed with a project of dethroning the king; they therefore marched, with one Flammock, a lawyer, Michael Joseph, a carrier, and lord Audley, at their head, directly to London, and encamped upon Blackheath. There the king's forces surrounded and attacked them: the battle was bloody; two thousand of these poor deluded wretches were killed upon the spot, and the rest forced to surrender at discretion. Lord Audley, and one or two of their ring-leaders, were executed; but the rest, to the number of four thousand, were dismissed home again in safety. But this moderation had not the proper effect upon minds too ignorant for gratitude: they attributed the king's clemency to fear, and upon returning home induced their friends to believe, that the whole kingdom was ready to rise to vindicate their quarrel. It was now, therefore, determined to send for Perkin Warbeck, who was then in Ireland, to put himself at their head. Perkin did not hesitate to accept their invitation; and, taking upon him the command, chose for his privy council one Hern, a broken mercer, Skelton,

a tailor, and Astley, a scrivener. He published a proclamation also against Henry, in which he took the title of Richard IV, and having drawn together a body of three thousand men, attempted to storm the city of Exeter, but without success.

Henry, having received advice of his proceedings, said merrily, that he should now have the pleasure of visiting a person whom he had long wished to see, and then took the necessary measures to oppose him. Perkin, on the other hand, seeing that the king was marching to attack him, lost all courage, and in the night took sanctuary in the monastery of Bewley. Soon after, upon promise of a pardon, he surrendered himself to the king, and was confined in the Tower; but escaping thence, and finding it impracticable to get out of the kingdom, he again took sanctuary in the monastery of Bethlem. The prior of this house gave him up to the king, upon promise of a pardon; and Perkin was now a second time confined in the Tower:

1499. but plotting, even there, against the king, he and the earl of Warwick, being convicted of designs to kill the keeper of the Tower, and so escape, were both put to death.

There was as yet, in Henry's reign, nothing but plots, treasons, insurrections, ingratitude, imposture, and punishments. You have seen several of these fomenters of treason brought to justice, yet infinitely greater numbers pardoned; but there was a wide difference between the punishments of this, and the arbitrary sentences of the reigns preceding. The courts of judicature now sat upon every criminal, uninfluenced by the royal authority; and scarce one person was punished for treason but such as would, at present, have received the same rigorous treatment. A king, who can reign without ever punishing, is happy: but that monarch must certainly be undone, who, through fear or ill-timed lenity, suffers repeated guilt to escape without notice. When a country becomes quite illicit, punishments then, like the loppings in a garden, only serve to strengthen the stock, and prepare for a new harvest of virtues.

LETTER XXVIII.

LET us now exhibit that part of Henry's reign in which he most deserves our admiration; in which we shall see him as the friend of peace, and the refined politician. Indeed, no man loved peace more than he, and much of the ill-will of his subjects arose from his attempts to repress their inclination for war. The usual preface to his treaties was, That, when Christ came into the world, peace was sung; and when he went out of the world, peace was bequeathed. He had no ambition to extend his power, except only by treaties, and by wisdom: by these he rendered himself much more formidable to his neighbours, than his predecessors had done by their victories. They were formidable only to their own subjects; Henry was dreaded by rival kings.

He all along had two points principally in view; one to depress the nobility and clergy, and the other to humanize and raise up the populace. From the ambition of the former, and the blind dependence of the latter upon the pope, all the troubles in former reigns arose: every nobleman was possessed of a certain number of subjects, over whom he had an absolute power, and upon every occasion could influence numbers to join in revolt and disobedience.

He first, therefore, considered, that giving these petty monarchs a power of selling their estates, which before they had not a right to do, would greatly weaken their interest. With this view, he got an act passed, in which the nobility were granted a power of alienating their possessions;—a law infinitely pleasing to the commons, nor was it disagreeable even to the nobility, since they thus had an immediate resource for supplying the waste of prodigality, and the demands of their creditors. The blow reached their posterity alone; but they were too ignorant to be sensible of remote sufferings.

His next scheme was to prevent their giving liveries to many hundreds of dependants, who served like standing forces, to be ready at the summons of their lord,

By an act passed in his reign, none but menial servants were permitted to wear a livery, under severe penalties; and this law he took care to enforce with the utmost rigour. It is told us, by Bacon, that the king, one day paying a visit to the earl of Oxford, was entertained by him with all possible splendor and magnificence. When the king was ready to depart, he saw ranged, on both sides, a great number of men, dressed up in very rich liveries, apparently to do him honour. The king, surprised at such a number of domestics, as he thought them, cried out, *What, my lord of Oxford, are all these fine fellows your menial servants?* The earl, not perceiving the king's drift, answered, with a smile, that they were only men whom he kept in pay to do him honour upon such occasions. At this the king started a little, and said, *By my faith, my lord, I thank you for your good cheer; but I must not suffer to have the laws broken; my attorney-general must talk with you.* The historian adds, that the king exacted a severe fine for the transgression of the statute.

It has been already observed what a perverted use was made of monasteries, and other places appropriated to religious worship, by the number of criminals who took refuge in them. This privilege the clergy assumed as their undoubted right; and those places of pretended sanctity were become the abode of murderers, robbers, and conspirators. Witches and necromancers were the only persons who could not avail themselves of the advantages of the security these afforded: they whose crimes were only fictitious, were the only people who had not the benefit of such a retreat. Henry used all his interest with the pope to abolish these sanctuaries, but without effect; all that he could procure was, that if thieves, murderers, or robbers, registered as sanctuary men, should sally out and commit fresh offences, and retreat again, in such cases they might be taken out of the sanctuary, and delivered up to justice.

Henry politically pretended the utmost submission to all the pope's decrees, and showed the greatest respect to the clergy, but still was guided by them in no single instance of his conduct. The pope, at one time,

was so far imposed upon by his seeming attachment to the church, that he even invited him to renew the crusades for recovering the Holy Land. Henry's answer deserves to be remembered: he assured his holiness, that no prince in Christendom would be more forward than he to undertake so glorious and necessary an expedition; but as his dominions lay very distant from Constantinople, it would be better to apply to the kings of France and Spain for their assistance; and that, in the mean time, he would come to their aid himself *as soon as all the differences between the Christian princes were brought to an end.* This was, at once, a polite refusal, and an oblique reproach.

Henry had seen the fatal consequences of having favourites; and, therefore, resolved to have none: he even excluded, from his privy-council, all such as, by their titles or fortune, might attempt to govern him, instead of executing his intentions. His council was composed of private men, who had learning and wisdom to advise, but neither influence nor ambition to govern.

But while he was thus employed in lowering his nobility and clergy, he was using every art to extend the privileges of the people. In former reigns they were sure to suffer, on whatever side they fought, if they had the misfortune to lose the victory: this rendered each party desperate, in cases of civil war; and this was the cause of such terrible slaughters. He therefore procured the passing of an act, by which it was established, that no person should be impeached or attainted for assisting the king *for the time being*, or, in other words, him who should be then actually on the throne. This excellent statute served to repress the desire of civil war, as several would naturally take arms in defence of that side on which they were certain of losing nothing by a defeat, and their numbers would intimidate insurgents.

But his greatest efforts were directed to promote trade and commerce, because this naturally introduced a spirit of liberty among the people, and disengaged them from their dependence on the nobility. Before this happy era all our towns owed their original to some strong castle in the neighbourhood, where some

great lord generally resided; and these also were made use of as prisons for all sorts of criminals. In this also there was generally a garrison, or a number of armed men, who depended on the nobleman's bounty for support. The number of these, of course, drew all the artificers, victuallers, and shopkeepers, to settle in some place adjacent, in order to furnish the lord and his attendants with what necessaries they wanted. The farmers also, and husbandmen in the neighbourhood, built their houses there, to be protected against the numerous gangs of robbers that hid themselves in the woods by day, and infested the country by night, who were called Robertsmen. Henry, on the other hand, endeavoured to bring the towns from such a neighbourhood, by inviting the inhabitants to a more commercial situation. He attempted to teach them frugality and payments of debts, the life and soul of industry, by his own example; and never omitted the rights of commerce in all his treaties with foreign princes.

About this time the whole world seemed to improve: Sweden, France, and Spain, enjoyed excellent monarchs, who encouraged and protected the rising arts. The Portuguese had sailed round the Cape of Good Hope, and Columbus had made the discovery of America: Henry, in imitation of them, gave a patent to some Bristol and Portuguese merchants to go in quest of new countries. But an accident gave him a better opportunity of improving commerce, than his most sanguine hopes could have aspired to: the king of Spain, and his queen, being upon their return to their own dominions, after the conclusion of a successful war in Holland, were driven, by a storm, on the coast of England. As soon as Henry had notice of their arrival, he received them both with marks of the sincerest friendship and respect, meditating, in the mean time, how to make his subjects reap some advantage from the accident. He, therefore, treated them with a splendour which was by no means agreeable to his own nature; and while he kept them thus entertained with a round of pageantry and amusements, he concluded a treaty of commerce, which has, even to this day, continued to be beneficial to his posterity.

Having thus at length seen his country civilized, the people pay their taxes without insurrections, the nobility learning a just subordination, and the laws alone suffered to inflict punishment, towns began to separate from the castles of the nobility; commerce every day increased; foreigners either feared England, or sought its alliance; and the spirit of faction was happily extinguished at home. He was at peace with all Europe, and he had issued out a general pardon to his own subjects. It was in this situation of things that he died of the gout in his stomach, having lived fifty-two years, and reigned twenty-three. Since the time of Alfred, England had not seen such another king. He rendered his subjects powerful and happy, and wrought a greater change in this kingdom, than it was possible to expect could be effected in so short a time. If he had any fault, it was, that, having begun his reign with economy, as he grew old, his desires seemed to change their object, from the use of money, to the pleasure of hoarding it; but we can easily excuse him, as he only saved for the public, the royal coffers being then the only treasury of the state; and, in proportion to the king's finances, the public might be said to be either rich or indigent.

LETTER XXIX.

NEVER did a prince come to the throne with a conjuncture of so many fortunate circumstances in his favour as Henry VIII, who now took upon him 1509. the government of the kingdom. His prudent father left him a peaceable kingdom, prudent ministers, and a well-stored treasury. All factions were extinguished, and all divisions united in his person: he, by the father's side, claimed from the house of Lancaster, and by the mother's from the house of York. He was at peace with all Europe, and his subjects were every day growing more powerful and more wealthy: commerce and arts had been introduced in the former reign, and they seemed to find in England a favourable re-

ception. The young king himself was beautiful in person, expert in polite exercises, and loved by his subjects. The old king, who was himself a scholar, had him instructed in all the learning of the times; so that he was perfectly versed in school divinity at the age of eighteen.

Yet, from this beginning, you must not expect to read the history of a good prince. All these advantages were either the gift of nature, of fortune, or of his father: with all these happy talents, Henry VIII wanted the two great requisites in forming every good character, wisdom and virtue. The learning he had, if it might be called by that name, served only to inflame his pride, but not control his vitious affections. The love of his subjects was testified by their adulations, and served as another meteor to lead him astray. His wealth, instead of relieving his subjects, or increasing his power, only contributed to supply his debaucheries, or gratify the rapacity of the ministers of his pleasure. But happy for him, had his faults rested here: he was a tyrant; humanity takes the alarm at his cruelty, and, whatever fortunate events might have been the consequence of his designs, no good man but must revolt at the means he took for their accomplishment.

The first act of injustice which marked his reign was his prosecution of Empson and Dudley, the judges whom his father had constituted to inquire into cases of treason, and levy fines proportionable to the offence. Their conduct was examined, but, nothing being found against them that could amount to a capital conviction, a false accusation was produced, and they were convicted of having plotted against the new king, and received sentence to be beheaded, which was executed accordingly.

These two judges had been long hated by the people, though apparently without cause; they only put the laws in execution against criminals, and, instead of their lives, deprived the guilty of their fortunes. This action of an unjust compliance with popular clamour, was followed by another still more detrimental to the nation, yet more pleasing to the people: the spirit of chivalry and conquest was not yet quite ex-

tinguished in the nation : France was still an object of desire, and Henry was resolved once more to strike at the crown. It was in vain that one of his old prudent counsellors objected, that conquests on the continent would only be prejudicial to the kingdom, and that England, from its situation, was not destined for extensive empire; the young king, deaf to all remonstrances, and perhaps inspired by the voice of the people, resolved to lead an army into that kingdom. The consequence of the campaign was a useless victory and an empty triumph. The French fled without fighting; a truce was concluded between the two kings; and Henry returned home to dissipate, in more peaceable follies, the large sums that had been amassed for very different purposes by his father.

But while he thus changed from one pleasure to another, it was requisite to find out a minister and favourite, who would take care of the kingdom. Indifferent princes ever attempt to rule, and are ruled, by favourites, and soon a proper person was found to answer the king's intention in this particular: the man I mean was the famous cardinal Wolsey; and, as a great part of his reign was *ruled* by him, his history may, with propriety, make a part in that of his master.

Thomas Wolsey was the son of a private gentleman (and not of a butcher, as is commonly reported) in Ipswich: he was sent to Oxford so early, that he was a bachelor at fourteen, and from that time called the boy bachelor. He rose, by degrees, upon quitting college, from one preferment to another, till he was made rector of Lymington by the marquis of Dorset, whose children he had instructed. He had not long resided at this living, when one of the justices of the peace put him in the stocks, for being drunk and raising disturbances in a neighbouring fair. This disgrace, however, did not retard his promotion; he rose, by degrees, till he was, at last, intrusted with negotiating an intended marriage between Henry VII and Margaret of Savoy. His dispatch, upon that occasion, procured him the deanery of Lincoln; and in this situation it was that Henry VIII pitched upon him as a favourite, and intrusted him with the administration of affairs.

Presently after this, being introduced at court, he was made privy counsellor, and, as such, had an opportunity of ingratiating himself with the king, who found him at once submissive and enterprising. Qualities of this nature were highly pleasing, and Wolsey was made his prime minister, and managed the whole kingdom at his pleasure. The people saw, with indignation, the new favourite's mean condescensions to the king, and his arrogance to themselves. They had long regarded the vitious insolence and unbecoming splendour of the clergy with envy and detestation, and Wolsey's greatness served to bring a new odium upon that body, already too much the object of the people's dislike.

Wolsey had some talents as a minister, but his failings outbalanced them, being excessively revengeful, ambitious, and intolerably proud. Among other instances of his ambition, he aspired at the popedom. Ferdinand, who was then emperor of Germany, promised him his interest to procure it, and this consequently attached the English minister more closely to the emperor: this monarch was then at war with France, and each power solicited the alliance of England. It was the interest of the English calmly to look on as spectators of the quarrel, and suffer its rivals in power to grow weak by their mutual animosity: Wolsey, however, preferring his own interest to that of his country or his master, engaged in a league against France. Soon after, however, the pope dying, and the emperor failing in his promise, Wolsey, in revenge, induced his master to change sides, and assist France against Ferdinand.

A victory over the Scots, rather ostentatious than useful, served, in some measure, to repress the discontents of the people during this maladministration of the ecclesiastical favourite: this victory was obtained by the earl of Surrey over James IV of Scotland; it was fought at Flodden-field, and the Scots, upon this occasion, lost the flower of their nobility and gentry, and James, their king, was slain in battle.

Success ever serves to stop the murmurings of the English, and no nation can better endure to be splendidly miserable. Wolsey now became a cardinal, grew

every day more powerful, and more desirous of power; the pope was sensible of his influence over the king, and therefore created him his legate in England. The pontiff's design was to make him thus instrumental in draining the kingdom of money, upon a pretence of employing it in a war against the Turks, but in reality to fill his own coffers. In this he so well served the court of Rome, that he, some time after, made him legate for life: he was now, therefore, at once a legate, a cardinal, a bishop, a prime minister, and possessed of numberless church benefices; yet, still unsatisfied, he desired greater promotions. He therefore procured a bull from the pope, empowering him to make knights and counts, to legitimate bastards, to give degrees in arts, law, physic, and divinity, and grant all sorts of dispensations. So much pride and power could not avoid giving high offence to the nobility; yet none dared to vent their indignation, so greatly were they in terror of his vindictive temper. The duke of Buckingham, son of him who lost his life in the reign of Richard III, was the only person who had resolution enough to complain. His threats were soon conveyed to Wolsey by an informer, who was not slow to accuse the duke of high treason. The substance of his impeachment was, that he had consulted a fortune-teller concerning his succession to the crown, and had affected to make himself popular. This was but a weak pretext to take away the life of a nobleman, whose father had died in defence of the late king; however, he was condemned to die as a traitor. When the sentence was pronouncing against him, and the high steward began to mention the word traitor, the unhappy prisoner could no longer sustain: *My lords*, cried he to the judges, *I am no traitor; and for what you have now done against me, take my sincere forgiveness: as for my life, I think it not worth petitioning for; may God forgive you, and pity me!* He was soon after executed on Tower-hill.

Every just man must feel the highest indignation at so unmerited a punishment. In the former reign, the few that perished under the hand of the executioner were really culpable; but here we see a nobleman's

life taken away, only for his dislike of an aspiring and licentious upstart. It is this cruelty of punishing without guilt, and not the number of executions in a reign, that distinguishes it into a tyrannical or merciful one. Perhaps there were more executions under Henry VII, than his successor; and yet the first was a just and merciful prince, the latter an arbitrary and merciless tyrant.

By this time all the immense treasures of the late king were quite exhausted on empty pageants, guilty pleasures, or vain treaties and expeditions. Wolsey was a proper instrument to supply the king with money, which now began to be wanted; this he extorted by the name of a benevolence: Henry minded not by what methods it was raised, provided he had but the enjoyment of it. However, his minister met some opposition in his attempts to levy those involuntary contributions: having exacted a considerable subsidy from the clergy, he next addressed himself to the house of commons, but they only granted half the supplies he demanded. The cardinal was highly offended at their parsimony, and desired to be heard in the house: but as this would have destroyed the very form and constitution of that august body, they replied, that none could be admitted to reason there but such as were members. This was the first attempt made, in the present reign, to render the king master of the debates in parliament: Wolsey first paved the way, and, unfortunately for the kingdom, the king too well improved upon his design.

Wolsey was, soon after, raised to still greater dignities than before: he was, at once, archbishop of York, bishop of Durham, abbot of St. Alban, a cardinal, legate for life, lord-chancellor of England, prime minister, and favourite, and caressed or feared by all the powers of Europe: he now, therefore, undertook more openly to render the king independent of his parliament, and levied the subsidy granted by them for four years, and consequently to be paid at four different times, all at once. Against this the poor, who were the greatest sufferers, most loudly exclaimed; but he disregarded their clamours, secure in the king's approbation and the pope's protection.

These proceedings only paved the way to still greater extortions: Wolsey was too haughty to be refused in his demands by the house of commons, and determined to levy money upon the king's authority alone. This was deemed a breach of the Magna Charta, and the people absolutely refused to comply. Even a general rebellion threatened to ensue. The king, finding what was likely to be the consequences of the cardinal's precipitate measures, pretended they were carried on without his authority; but at the same time demanded from the people a benevolence, which was only an artifice to extort money under a different name. The people seemed sensible of the king's art, and the citizens of London refused to give the benevolence demanded: their example was followed by the country, and a universal defection seemed to prevail. The king, apprehensive of bad consequences by persisting in his demand, thought proper to retract for this time, and wait a more favourable opportunity of oppression.

You now find the people labouring under a very different form of oppression from that in the reigns preceding Henry VII. In those earlier times their miseries chiefly arose from the licentiousness of the nobility; in this reign they proceeded from the usurpations of the king. Before Henry VII had balanced the government, the people often discharged their taxes by an insurrection; but now, that the present Henry had destroyed that balance again, the people were obliged to pay taxes that were not due. In short, they now seemed as miserable as when their great restorer had brought them from anarchy; an arbitrary king, an avaricious pope, a revengeful favourite, a luxurious clergy, all conspired to harass them; yet, during this whole reign, there was no rebellion; not from the justice of the king's administration, nor from the love the people had to their sovereign; but happily for the reigning tyrant, he enjoyed the effects of his predecessor's prudence, not his own.

LETTER XXX.

As, in a family, the faults and the impertinence of servants are often to be ascribed to their masters; so, in a state, the vices and the insolence of favourites should be justly attributed to the king who employs them. The pride of Wolsey was great, but his riches were still greater; and, in order to have a pretext for amassing such sums, he undertook to found two new colleges at Oxford and at Ipswich, for which he received every day fresh grants from the pope and the king. To execute his scheme, he obtained a liberty of suppressing several monasteries, and converting their funds to the benefit of his intended scheme. Whatever might have been the pope's inducement to grant him these privileges, nothing could be more fatal to the pontiff's interest; for Henry was thus himself taught to imitate afterward, what he had seen a subject perform without crime or danger.

Hitherto the administration of affairs was carried on by Wolsey alone: but now a period approached, that was to put an end to this minister's exorbitant power; one of the most extraordinary and important revolutions that ever employed the attention of man, was now ripe for execution. But to have a clear idea of this grand reformation, it will be proper to take a cursory view of the state of the church at that time, and observe by what seemingly contradictory means Providence produces the happiest events.

The church of Rome had now, for more than a thousand years, been corrupting the sacred doctrines of Christianity, and converting into a temporality the kingdom of another world. The popes were frequently found at the head of their own armies, fighting for their dominions with the arm of flesh, and forgetting, in cruelty and immoral politics, all the pretended sanctity of their character. They had drained other kingdoms of their treasures upon the most infamous pretexts, and were proud of setting at Rome, in their own conduct, an example of refined pleasure and studied luxury. The cardinals, prelates, and dignitaries

of the church, lived and were served like voluptuous princes, and some of them were found to possess eight or nine bishoprics at a time.

As for the inferior clergy, both popish and protestant writers exclaim against their dissolute and abandoned morals. They publicly kept mistresses, and bequeathed to their bastards whatever they were able to save from their pleasures, or extort from the poor. There is still to be seen, says a fine writer, a will made by a bishop of Cambray, in which he sets aside a certain sum *for the bastards he has had already, and those which, by the blessing of God, he may yet happen to have.* In many parts of England and Germany, the people obliged the priests to have concubines, so that the laity might keep their wives in greater security; while the poor laborious peasant and artisan saw all the fruits of their toil go, not to clothe and maintain their own little families, but to pamper men who insulted and despised them.

But the vices of the clergy were not greater than their ignorance; few of them knew the meaning of their own Latin mass: they were chiefly employed in finding out witches, and exorcising the possessed. But what most increased the hatred of the people against them was, the selling pardons and absolutions for sin at certain stated prices. A deacon, or subdeacon, who should commit murder, was absolved from the crime, and allowed to possess three benefices, upon paying twenty crowns. A bishop or an abbot might commit murder for ten pounds. Every crime had its stated price, and absolutions were given, not only for sins already committed, but for such as should be committed hereafter. The wisest of the people looked with silent detestation on these impositions, and the ignorant, whom nature seemed to have formed for slavery, began to open their eyes to such glaring absurdities.

There arose, at last, a champion to rescue human nature from its degeneracy. This was the famous Martin Luther. Leo X being employed in building the church of St. Peter, at Rome, in the year 1519, in order to procure money for carrying on this project, gave a commission for selling indulgences, or, in

other words, a deliverance from the pains of purgatory, either for one's self or other friends. There were every where shops opened, where these were sold; but in general they were to be had at taverns and such like places. These indulgences were granted to the Dominican friars, to be distributed by them; whereas the Augustan friars had been in possession of the distribution of them time out of mind before. Martin Luther was an Augustan monk, and one of those who resented this transferring the sale of indulgences to another order. He began to show his indignation, by preaching against their efficacy: opposition soon drove him further than he first intended to go, and, now the veil was lifted, he proceeded to examine the authority of the pope himself. The people, who had long groaned under the papal tyranny, heard his discourses with pleasure, and defended him against the authority and machinations of the church of Rome. Frederic, elector of Saxony, surnamed the Wise, openly protected him. Luther as openly declaimed against the number of sacraments, reducing the seven held by the church of Rome, first to three, and afterwards to two; he thence proceeded to examine the doctrine of transubstantiation, to show the folly of supposing a purgatory, and the dangerous consequence of celibacy among the clergy.

The pope issued out his bull against Luther; and the Dominican friars procured his books to be burned. Luther abused the Dominicans, and boldly, in the streets of Wirtemberg, burned the bull of the pope. In the mean time the dispute was carried on by writings on either side: Luther was opposed by the pope, the cardinals, and the majority of the clergy, but he supported his cause singly and with success. In this dispute it was the fate of Henry VIII to be one of the champions. His father, who had given him the education of a scholar, permitted him to be instructed in school divinity, which then composed the learning of the times. He was, therefore, willing to give the world a demonstration of his abilities in this respect, and desired the pope's permission to read the works of Luther, which had been forbidden to be read, under pain of excommunication. Having readily obtained

this request, the king defended the seven sacraments, from Thomas Aquinas, and showed some skill in school divinity, though it is thought that Wolsey had the chief hand in directing him. A book being thus finished in haste, it was sent to Rome for the pope's approbation: the pope, ravished with its eloquence and depth, compared the work to that of St. Augustin or St. Jerome, and gave Henry the title of *Defender of the Faith*; little suspecting that Henry was soon going to be one of the most terrible enemies that ever the church of Rome had yet met with.

Beside these causes, which contributed to render the Romish church odious or contemptible, there were still others, proceeding from political motives. Clement VII had succeeded Leo, and the hereditary animosity between the emperor and the pope breaking out into a war, Clement was imprisoned in the castle of St. Angelo, and, with thirteen cardinals beside, kept in custody for his ransom. As the demands of the emperor were exorbitant, Henry undertook to negotiate for the pope, and procured a treaty in his favour; but his holiness, in the mean time, corrupting his guards, had the good fortune to escape from confinement, and left the treaty unfinished, but sent Henry a letter of thanks for his mediation. The conduct of the emperor showed Henry that the pope might be injured with impunity; and the behaviour of the pope manifested but little of that sanctity or infallibility to which the pontiffs pretended. Besides, as he had obliged the pope, he supposed that he might, upon any emergency, expect a return of favour.

It was in this situation of the church and of the pope, that a new drama was going to be performed, which was to change the whole system of Europe. Henry had now been married eighteen years to Catharine of Arragon, who had been brought over from Spain to marry his eldest brother, prince Arthur, who died some months after his cohabitation with her. Henry had three children by this lady, one of whom was still living, while she herself was esteemed for her virtue and the gentleness of her disposition. The king, though he felt no real passion, either for the qualifications of

her mind or person, yet for a long time broke out into no flagrant contempt : he ranged from beauty to beauty in the court, and his title and authority always procured him a ready compliance from female frailty. It happened at length that, among the maids of honour that then attended the queen, there was one Anna Bullen, the daughter of a gentleman of distinction, though not of the nobility. Her beauty surpassed what had hitherto appeared at his voluptuous court ; her features were regular, mild, and attractive : her stature elegant, though below the middle size ; while her wit and vivacity even exceeded the allurements of her person. The king, who never restrained one passion which he desired to gratify, saw, and loved her ; but after several efforts to induce her to comply with his criminal passion, he found that, without marriage, he could have no hopes of succeeding. This obstacle, therefore, he quickly undertook to remove : his own queen was now become hateful to him ; and, in order to procure a divorce, he pretended that his conscience rebuked him, for having so long lived in incest with his present queen, formerly his brother's wife. This every person of candour saw was only a pretext to cover his real motive : he himself had eagerly solicited the match with queen Catharine ; he had lived with her eighteen years without any scruple, and had the pope's licence for this cohabitation : but he asserted, that a wounded conscience was his motive, and none of his subjects offered to divulge the real one.

In this perplexity, therefore, he applied to Clement VII, who owed him obligations, and from whom he expected a ready compliance, to dissolve the bull of the former pope, who had given him permission to marry Catharine, and to declare that it was contrary to all laws both divine and human. Clement was now in the utmost perplexity. Queen Catharine was aunt to the emperor, who had lately made him a prisoner, and whose resentment he dreaded to rekindle, by thus injuring so near a relation : besides, he could not, in honour, declare the bull of a former pope illicit, for this would be entirely destroying the papal infallibility. On the other hand, Henry was his protector and friend ;

the dominions of England were the chief resources of his finances; and the king of France, some time before, had got a bill of divorce in somewhat similar circumstances. In this exigence, he thought the best method was to spin out the affair by negociation; and thus he argued, temporised, promised, recanted, and disputed, hoping that the king's passion would never hold out during the tedious course of an ecclesiastical controversy. In this he was mistaken; Henry had been taught to argue as well as he, and quickly found, or wrested, many texts of scripture, to favour his opinions and his passions. To his arguments he added threats, which probably had greater influence: the pope was assured, that the English were already but too much disposed to withdraw their obedience from the holy see, and that, if he continued to refuse, the whole country would readily follow their monarch's example, and exclude themselves from his protection. The king even proposed to his holiness, whether, if he were denied the putting away his present queen, he might not have a dispensation to marry two wives at a time? The pope, though his measures were already taken not to grant the bull, yet still seemed unresolved, as if waiting for more full and authentic information.

During these solicitations, on which Henry's happiness seemed to depend, he expected, in his favourite Wolsey, a warm defender, and a steady adherent: but in this he was mistaken. Wolsey seemed to be in pretty much such a dilemma as the pope himself. On the one hand, he was to please his master the king, from whom he had received a thousand marks of favour; on the other hand, he could not disoblige the pope, whose servant he more immediately was, and who had power to punish his disobedience. In this dilemma, he chose to stand neuter: though, of all mankind, he was the most haughty, he on this occasion gave way in all things to his colleague, cardinal Campeggio, sent by the pope from Italy. Wolsey's method of temporising highly disgusted the king, yet he endeavoured to conceal his resentment; he now only looked out for some man of equal abilities and less art, and it was not long before accident threw in his way Thomas Cranmer,

a man not inferior to the former in abilities, and far superior in virtue. Cranmer was a doctor of divinity, and a professor at Cambridge, and had travelled into Germany, where he read Luther's works, and embraced his doctrine. Upon his return, he became tutor to the sons of a gentleman, who one night happened to entertain two of the principal men of the court. Cranmer, being asked his opinion of the king's divorce, which was then the topic of the conversation, delivered himself in so learned a manner, that the king was soon informed of his abilities, and ordered him to follow the court.

The king's resentment now appeared more openly against the cardinal. The attorney-general was ordered to prepare a bill of indictment against him, and soon after he himself was ordered to resign the great seal. Crimes are readily found against a man, when he is hated, and the cardinal was sentenced to be excluded from the protection of the laws. As soon as he was outlawed, the king commanded him to retire to a country-house, and directed that an inventory of his goods should be taken, which contained immense riches, acquired by various methods of guilt and extortion: of fine holland alone, there was found in his houses a thousand pieces, which may serve to give an idea of the rest of his wealth. The parliament confirmed the sentence of the courts, and he was sent an exile to his country-seat, there to wait the king's disposal of his person, with all the fluctuations of hope and apprehension. Still, however, he was left the archbishopric of York; and, even shattered as his fortunes were, he was resolved to perform the ceremony of his instalment there with a magnificence little suitable to his present condition: but, while he was preparing to enjoy, in his retreat, those splendors, which he ever loved, by another unexpected revolution, he was, at the king's command, arrested by the earl of Northumberland for high treason. He at first refused to comply, as being a cardinal: but finding the earl bent upon performing his commission, he complied, and set out, by easy journeys, for London, to appear as a criminal, in a place formerly where he acted as a king. In his way, he

stayed a fortnight at the earl of Shrewsbury's, where one day, at dinner, he was taken ill, not without violent suspicion of having poisoned himself: being brought forward from thence, with much difficulty, he reached Leicester-abbey, where, the monks coming out to receive him, he said, 'Father abbot, I am come to lay my bones among you.' As his disorder increased, an officer being placed near his bed-side, at once to guard and attend him, he cried out to him: '*O, if I had served my God as I have served my king, he would not thus have forsaken me in adversity.*' He died soon after, 1530. ✓ in all the pangs of repentance and remorse, and left not life, which he had rendered turbid by ambition, till he found that all his ambition was but vanity at the last. He left two natural children behind him, one of whom, being a priest, was loaded with church preferments. Henry, being thus freed from a person whom he considered as an obstacle to his intentions, by the advice of Cranmer, had the legality of his present marriage canvassed in the different universities of Europe. It was very extraordinary to see the king on one side soliciting the universities to be favorable to his passion, and on the other the emperor pressing them to incline to his aunt: Henry liberally rewarded those doctors who declared in his favour, and the emperor granted benefices to such as voted on his side of the debate. Time has discovered these intrigues. In one of Henry's account-books, we find the disbursements he made upon these occasions: to a deacon he gave a crown, to a subdeacon two crowns, and so of the rest, to each in proportion to his consequence. The person who bribed upon these occasions, however, excused himself by declaring, that he never paid the money till after the vote was given. Henry at length prevailed: his liberalities were greater than those of his rival, as he was most interested in the success of the debate: all the colleges in Italy and France unanimously declared his present marriage against all law, divine and human, and that therefore it was not at first in the power of the pope to grant a dispensation. The only places where it was most warmly opposed, were at Cambridge and Oxford: these universities, it

seems, had, even then, more freedom and integrity than were to be found elsewhere; but at last they also concurred in the same opinion.

The agents of Henry were not content with the suffrages of the universities; the opinions of the Rabbis were also demanded, but they were easily bought up in his favour. Thus fortified, the king was resolved to oppose even the pope himself; for his passion could by no means brook the delays and subterfuges of the holy see: being therefore supported by his clergy, and authorised by the universities; having seen the pope formerly degraded by a lay monarch, and Luther's doctrine followed by thousands; and yet still further instigated by the king of France, he, without further dispensation, annulled his marriage ¹⁵³³ with queen Catharine; and Cranmer, now become an archbishop, pronounced the decree.

The queen, during this contest, always supported her rights with resolution, and yet with modesty: at length, however, having found the inutility of further resistance, she retired to the country, without once offering to complain: she saw the power of her rival, and yielded without murmuring. Anna Bullen had already consented to marry the king, and even shared his bed two months before his marriage with Catharine was dissolved. Though her prudence and her virtue demanded esteem in the former parts of her conduct, yet she now for a moment forgot the ties of each, and gave a loose to her triumph. She passed through London with a magnificence greater than ever had been known before: the streets were strewed, the walls were hung, the conduits ran with wine, while she and her corpulent lover rode through the city like the heroine and knight of a romance.

In the mean time, the pope now thought himself obliged to hold no measures with the king: and being so frightened by the menaces of the emperor, published a sentence, declaring queen Catharine alone to be Henry's lawful wife, and requiring him to take her again, with a denunciation of censures in case of refusal. When Henry received news of the sentence given against him at Rome, he was convinced that no

measures could be kept with the holy see, and therefore no longer delayed to execute his long-meditated scheme of separating entirely from the church of Rome. The parliament was at his devotion; a part of the clergy was for him, as they had already declared against the pope, when they had decreed in favour of the divorce; the people were flattered with the expectations of being rid of the burden of their taxes; and such as were displeased to see Italian bishops hold English church preferments, expected their downfall: in short, all things conspired to co-operate with his designs; he therefore at once ordered himself to be declared by his clergy Head of the Church. The parliament confirmed this title, and abolished all the au- 1534. ✓
thority of the pope in England, the tribute of Peter-pence, and the collation to ecclesiastical benefices. The people came into the king's proposal with joy, and took an oath, called the oath of supremacy: all the credit of the pope, that had subsisted for ages, was now at once overthrown, and few, except those who held to the religious houses, seemed dissatisfied. They, who believed that it would have been dangerous to break with the pope, were now convinced that it could be effected with impunity: and it was soon perceived, that all authority which is not supported by power, is nothing but an empty name.

LETTER XXXI.

IN this manner began the reformation of England, and by such surprising methods Providence brought about its designs, as if to mock human sagacity. Let us now peruse its progress, and follow this capricious monarch through his various projects, cruelties, and inconsistencies. The parliament were now entirely dependent upon the king: they had, from the beginning, sided with him in his separating from the church of Rome, and consequently were now obliged to comply with all his other measures, in order to strengthen the new reformation.

Henry was very sensible that the parliament was, even from motives of interest, entirely devoted to him, and resolved to make use of the opportunity, and render himself absolute. He therefore opposed the parliament against the monks, and availed himself of the hatred which that body incurred by their suppression: the parliament at first began by examining the abuses practised in monasteries, and, finding some, condemned all: but, while they were employed in suppressing them, Henry was busy in destroying the power of the suppressors. This was the origin of the unlimited power he now assumed: the parliament, at different times, passed every statute he thought proper to propose, how absurd soever; and many of them were, in fact, marked with the highest absurdities. They testified their satisfaction not only for what he had done, but also for whatever he had intended to do: they enacted, that the same obedience should be paid to the king's proclamation as to an act of parliament, which was destroying all their power at one blow: they declared their readiness to believe, not only what had been directed, but whatever the king should direct, in matters of religion, for the future: but, to crown all, they enacted that the king should not pay his debts, and that such as had been paid by him, should refund the money.

Being thus impowered to act as he thought proper, he went vigorously to work in the suppression of monasteries, colleges, and religious houses. Cambridge and Oxford, without any regard to their antiquity, shared the same fate with the rest; and the lectures were for a time discontinued, and the revenues confiscated. To reconcile the people to these proceedings, Henry took care to have the counterfeit reliques exposed, the scandalous lives of the friars and nuns made public, and all their debaucheries detected. Whatever had served to engage the people in superstition, was publicly burnt: but what grieved the people most to see, were the bones of Thomas Becket, the saint of Canterbury, burnt in public, and his rich shrine, in which there was a diamond of great value, confiscated among the common plunder. The people looked on

with silent horror, afraid to rebel, equally detesting the vices of the monks and the impiety of the king.

But though the king had entirely separated himself from Rome, yet he was by no means willing to be a follower of Luther. The invocation of saints was not yet abolished by him, but only restrained: he ordered the Bible to be translated into the vulgar tongue, but not put into the hands of the laity. It was a capital crime to believe in the pope's supremacy, and yet equally heinous to be of the reformed religion, as practised in Germany. His opinions in religion were delivered in a law, which, from its horrid consequences, was termed the *Bloody Statute*; by which it was ordained, that whoever, by word or writing, denied transubstantiation, that whoever maintained that the communion in both kinds was necessary, or that it was lawful for priests to marry, or that vows of chastity could innocently be broken, or that private masses were unprofitable, or that auricular confession was unnecessary, should be burnt or hanged, as the court should determine.

The kingdom, at that time, was, in some measure, divided between the followers of Luther and the adherents to the pope: this statute, with Henry's former decrees, in some measure excluded both, and therefore opened a wide field for persecution.

These persecutions, however, were preceded by one of a different nature, arising neither from religious nor political causes, but tyrannical caprice. Anna Bullen, his queen, was herself of the Lutheran persuasion, and had secretly favoured that party: these attachments soon created her enemies, who only waited some favourable occasion to destroy her credit with the king; and that occasion presented itself but too soon. The king's passion was by this time quite exhausted: the only desire he ever had for her was that brutal appetite which enjoyment soon destroys: he was fallen in love, if we may call it love, once more, with Jane Seymour, a maid of honour to the queen.

As soon as the queen's enemies perceived the king's disgust, they soon gave him an opportunity to gratify his inclinations, by accusing her of sundry intrigues

with her domestics; which accusation was eagerly caught up by the king. All his passions were in the extreme; he immediately flew to parliament, and had her accused of adultery and incest with her own brother. This parliament, who had long shewn themselves the timid ministers of all his passions, condemned the queen and her brother, without ever knowing on what foundation the sentence was grounded.

Her brother, lord Rochfort, was beheaded, though there was not the least proof of his guilt; one Norris and Brereton were hanged for only having paid her such compliments, as would now merely pass for gallantry and innocent amusement: Smeton, a musician, was compelled to acknowledge his having received favours from her, and he was then hanged without an opportunity of being confronted by the queen.

Upon such slight suspicions was this unhappy queen sent to the Tower, in order to wait the execution of her sentence. She who had been once the envied object of royal favour, was now going to give a new instance of the capriciousness of fortune: she was ever of a cheerful disposition, and her easy levities, perhaps, disgusted the gloomy tyrant. She had distributed, in the last year of her life, not less than fifteen thousand pounds among the poor, and was at once their protector and darling. Upon being conducted to her prison, she sat down to address the king, by letter, for mercy: in this she insisted upon her innocence in the strongest terms: *You have raised me, said she, from privacy to make me a lady; from a lady you made me a countess; from a countess to a queen; and from a queen I shall shortly become a saint.* On the morning of her execution, she sent for Mr. Kingston, the keeper of the Tower, to whom, upon entering the prison, she said, *Mr. Kingston, I hear I am not to die till noon, and I am sorry for it, for I thought to be dead before this time, and free from a life of pain.* The keeper attempting to comfort her, by assuring her the pain would be very little, she replied, *I have heard the executioner is very expert, and (clasping her neck with her hands, laughing) I have but a little neck.* Kingston, who gives this account, continues to observe, that he had seen

many men and women executed, but never one whose fortitude was equal to hers. She was beheaded soon after, May 19, behaving with the utmost decency and resolution. 1536.

Anna Bullen seemed to be guilty of no other crime than that of having survived the king's affections: many crowned heads had already been put to death in England, but this was the first royal execution upon a scaffold. Henry ordered his parliament to give him a divorce, between her sentence and execution, thus to bastardize Elizabeth, the only child he had by her, as he had already bastardized Mary, his only child by queen Catharine.

The very next day after her execution he married Jane Seymour, who died the year following, after having been delivered of a son.

In the mean time the fires in Smithfield began to blaze: those who adhered to the pope, or those who followed Luther, were equally the objects of royal vengeance and ecclesiastical persecution. Thomas Cromwell, and Cranmer, now become archbishop of Canterbury, with all their might assisted the reformation: bishop Gardiner, and the duke of Norfolk, on the other hand, were for leading the king back to his former superstitions, with every art, and Cromwell fell a sacrifice to their intrigues; but the duke and bishop did not succeed. Unhappily for his subjects, the king became an equal persecutor of the two religions proposed for his acceptance.

It was now that England saw a spectacle to strike the boldest with horror; a company of people condemned and executed all together, some for being steadfast to the pope, and others for adhering to Luther: among this number were Dr. Robert Barnes, Thomas Jerrard, and William Jerom, for being Lutherans; Buttolph, Daneplifs, Philpot, and Brinholm, for continuing to acknowledge the pope. These were all burnt together, without ever being permitted to plead their own cause, or even to know their crimes or their accusers. The people in the North, indeed, during these times of cruelty, ventured to rise in rebellion;

but, by the means of the duke of Norfolk, they were soon brought to submission.

During these transactions, Henry contracted a new marriage with Anne of Cleves, being induced
 1540. by her picture, in which it seems the painter had flattered her. He found her very different from what his passion had expected, but married her from political motives. He could not, however, long bear the uneasiness of being married for life to a woman with whom he was disgusted; he therefore resolved to have once more a divorce from his parliament, which he found it no difficult matter to obtain. Among other reasons to cancel his espousals, he declared that he had not given an inward consent to the marriage, without which it was affirmed that his promises could not be obligatory: he added, that as he was resolved not to consummate the marriage, and to have legitimate issue, so it was proper to give him a queen by whom he might accomplish these intentions. These reasons were thought good: virtue and justice had been long banished from the servile parliament.

He took, for a fifth wife, Catharine Howard, the duke of Norfolk's niece: in this match he seemed to be perfectly happy, and even ordered his confessor to draw up a particular form of thanksgiving for the blessings he enjoyed in a faithful wife. The queen, it seems, pretended to the same affection for him; but alas! his amiable days were long over; he was now almost choaked with fat, and contracted a morose air very improper for inspiring affection. The queen had actually committed those lewdnesses before marriage, of which Anna Bullen had formerly been falsely accused; but these crimes did by no means deserve death, nor even a divorce, since her fidelity to him after marriage was all that the most scrupulous delicacy could
 Feb. 13, 1542. require: Henry, however, considered her former inconstancy as a capital offence; and not yet satiated with blood, this queen was executed on Tower-hill.

All this was terrible; but still the king was resolved to be peculiarly cruel: though branded with three divorces, and stained with the blood of two wives, he

ordered a law to be enacted, equally remarkable for its absurdity and impossibility, namely, *That, whatever person knew of the intrigues of a queen, should reveal it on pain of high treason; or if any woman, not a virgin, should presume to marry the king of England, she should be guilty of high treason!* One would think that it were impossible to procure a body of men capable of giving sanction to such inscrutable absurdities, and yet lay claim to reason. It was pleasantly said (for even those times of slaughter could not suppress ridicule) that the king, according to that statute, could only marry a widow. His next and last wife actually was a widow, Catharine Par, widow of lord Latimer, 1543. and she was a favourer of the reformation.

She was, however, to proceed with great caution: the king prided himself much on his skill in theology, and it might be fatal to dispute with him upon religion, as she had seen in the case of one Lambert, some time before. It seems this man had denied transubstantiation, which Henry had ordered to be believed; the king, hearing that he was to be tried at Westminster for this offence, which was capital, undertook, himself, to dispute the point with him in public. Letters were written to many of the bishops and nobility to be present upon this extraordinary occasion; and, on the day prefixed, there was a great concourse in the hall: Lambert stood alone without a second; the king was surrounded with a crowd of flatterers, who applauded all he said, and averred that his arguments were invincible: they extolled him above all the divines of the age, and at once confirmed his pride and his prejudices. The result of the argument was, that Lambert had his choice, either to abjure his opinions, or to be burnt as an obstinate heretic. Lambert chose to die rather than forego what he had considered as the truth, and the sentence was soon after executed in Smithfield. When his legs and thighs were burnt off, there not being fire enough to consume the rest, two of the officers, raising the body up with their halberts, pushed it into the flames, where it was soon consumed to ashes.

It was not without reason, therefore, that the present queen concealed her sentiments, and behaved with

caution; upon this account she durst not intercede for three protestants, who were burnt at Windsor just after her marriage: she once, indeed, attempted to argue with the king, but it had like to have cost her her life; wherefore, afterward, she suffered the divines on each side to dispute, and the executioner to destroy. During these transactions, the king would frequently assemble the houses of parliament, and harangue them with florid orations, in which he would aver, that never prince had a greater affection for his people, or was more beloved by them. In every pause of his discourse, some of his creatures, near his person, would begin to applaud; and this was followed by loud acclamations from the rest of the audience.

It is, indeed, astonishing to what a pitch of cruelty he attained, and to what a state of servility his people: I can account for either in no other manner, than that religious disputes had now so divided the people, and set one against the other, that the king, availing himself of the universal weakness which was produced by universal dissensions, became the tyrant of all.

But nature, at last, seemed kindly willing to rid the world of a monster that man was unable to destroy. Henry had been troubled, for some time, with a disorder in his leg, which was now grown very painful: this, added to his monstrous corpulency, which rendered him unable to stir, made him more furious than a chained lion: he became froward and untractable; none dared to approach him without trembling. He had been ever stern and severe, he was now outrageous: flattery had corrupted all his senses: he deemed it an unpardonable crime to controvert those opinions which he himself was changing every hour. His courtiers, contending among themselves, and conspiring the death of each other, had no inclination to make an enemy of him. Thus he continued, for four years, the terror of all, and the tormentor of himself. At length his end approached; he perceived that he had not long to live, his fat increasing and his leg growing worse. He had already slaughtered several favourites, raised from obscure stations to share his dignities and his cruelty; the celebrated Sir Thomas More, Fisher,

bishop of Rochester, lord Cromwell, and others, died upon the scaffold; and Wolsey prevented it by his own death: he was resolved to make one victim more before he left the world, and that was the duke of Norfolk, who had formerly suppressed a rebellion excited against him, and who had, all along, been the vigilant minister of his commands. This nobleman had, outwardly, complied with the reformation, but in his heart favoured the pope: the king knew this, and only wanted a pretext to put him and his son, the accomplished earl of Surry, to death. It was no difficult matter to find one: the son had used the arms of Edward the confessor in his escutcheon, and the father had left a blank space in his own where they might be inserted.

This was all the crime alleged against them; but it was sufficient when the king gave his opinion that it was his will they should die. The earl of Surry was beheaded upon Tower-hill, and a warrant was sent to the lieutenant of the Tower to cut off the duke of Norfolk's head in two days: this sentence was just upon the point of being executed, when the king's own death gave him an unexpected reprieve. Henry had been suffered to languish without any of his domestics having the courage to warn him of his approaching end; they who had ever come near him with trembling, now dreaded to give him this friendly admonition. At length sir Anthony Denny had the charity to inform him of his situation: he thanked this courtier for his friendly admonition, and soon after expired, full of sorrow for his former guilt, and with all the horrors of approaching dissolution.

Some sovereigns have been tyrants from contradiction and revolt, some from being misled by favourites, and some from a spirit of party; but Henry was cruel from disposition alone, cruel in the government, cruel in religion, and cruel in his family; yet, tyrant as he was, he died peaceably a natural death, while Henry VI, the most harmless of all monarchs, was dethroned, imprisoned, and assassinated. It is a folly and a wickedness to say, that good or bad actions are always

their own recompense here: true is the doctrine of holy writ; The wicked have their good things in this life, the virtuous must look for them in another.

LETTER XXXII.

THE alterations, in the reign of Henry, were rather separations from the pope, than a reformation of religious abuses: in the reign of his successor Edward VI, his son by Jane Seymour, and heir to the crown, the errors of Rome, in reality, began to be reformed. This prince was but nine years old when he ascended the throne of his father; and the history of his government is rather a detail of the methods pursued by his governors to reform the abuses of religion, than a series of politics or war; and their characters, rather than his, should be the object of the historian's research.

The duke of Somerset was made protector of the minority, and thus engrossed the whole administration; the rest of the council, which were joined with him, either sided with his views, or ineffectually opposed them. To strengthen his power, he marched against the Scots, who had invaded England, which was their constant practice whenever they saw the country employed in faction and dispute: a slight victory, gained by him upon this occasion, acquired him popularity and power. I have more than once remarked, that, to have gained the hearts of the English, it was requisite to be a conqueror. But to this character Somerset added virtues of a much more amiable kind: he was humble, civil, affable, courteous to the meanest suitor, and all the actions of his life were directed by motives of religion and honour: he, at the same time, had learned to look with contempt and detestation on the errors and corruptions of the church of Rome, and was consequently the warm friend of archbishop Cranmer, who now undertook to make a real reformation, which Henry VIII only pretended to do.

You have seen, in Henry's reign, that the only

alterations he made in religion, were such as either favoured his passions, or increased his power. Thus all his subjects were under a peculiar restraint, which upon his death were no longer continued; each took the liberty of speaking his thoughts upon religion, though the laws of the last reign were still in force. In this division of opinions, as it may easily be supposed, the reformers prevailed, for they had the protector of their party: to that end, therefore, they procured a general visitation of the churches, and reformed numberless abuses that were almost held sacred by prescription. It was left to people's choice to go to confession, which had hitherto been deemed an indispensable duty, or to neglect that practice. It was ordered, that all images should be taken out of churches, priests were allowed to marry, the old mass was abolished, and a new liturgy drawn up, which retrenched several abuses in the service of the church, and which is the same with that now used, excepting a few alterations.

These reformations were evidently calculated for the benefit of the subject: but still the popish clergy, who either were expelled their monasteries, or had refused to conform, stirred up the people to rise in rebellion against them. We may judge from the number of places in which insurrections were made, that those reformations were by no means received with universal satisfaction. There were, at once, insurrections in Wiltshire, Sussex, Hampshire, Kent, Gloucestershire, Suffolk, Warwickshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire, Rutlandshire, and Worcestershire; and the flames of war were rekindling through the whole kingdom. The protector, who, both by principle and interest, was a friend to the populace, did every thing to redress their grievances, and by that means stopped their fury for a while. In fact, they had several complaints that were founded in justice: the nobility were become possessors of the forfeit lands which belonged to the clergy, and instead of leaving them to be cultivated by the poor, as formerly, inclosed them for the purposes of pleasure and magnificence. This necessarily drove numbers, beside the dejected friars, to the utmost straits: but, to add to their misfortunes, an

act was passed against them, the most severe that had hitherto been known in England: it was enacted, that, if any person should loiter, without offering himself to work, for three days together, he shall be adjudged a slave for two years to the first informer, and should be marked on the breast with the letter V, or *vagabond*, imprinted with a hot iron. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that there should be a general insurrection of the people, when suffering such severe oppressions.

But all the protector's promises and endeavours could not effectually redress their grievances; he therefore was obliged to have recourse to violence. These were not the compact bodies of men that we have seen in former rebellions, headed by some discontented or ambitious courtier, and led on with conduct and success; Henry VII had effectually suppressed all such: these were now only a tumultuous rabble, without arms and without discipline, led on by some obscure desperado; unreasonable in their demands, and divided among each other: the unhappy wretches were therefore easily overthrown: above a thousand of them were slain near Exeter by lord Russel, and two thousand more near Norwich by the earl of Warwick.

The kingdom was now again inclining to a aristocracy; the nobility, by the late increase of their possessions, were grown powerful, and oppressed the people at pleasure. They now began to find that they had a separate interest from that of the commons, and conspired to carry on their power by union among themselves, while the rest of the kingdom was divided. The duke of Somerset, however, opposed this project, as he was ever a favourer of the people; and it was incumbent therefore to destroy his power before they could establish their own. With this view they placed the earl of Warwick, afterward made duke of Northumberland, at their head, and began by spreading reports to destroy the protector's reputation; they next won over the common council of London to favour their projects, and, lastly, had him accused of high treason. The interest of the protector was
1550. overpowered by that of his rival: he was condemned, and lost his head upon Tower-hill.

In all this struggle for power, the young king, by reason of his age, was barely passive: he was only made the executor of the resentment and ambition of the contending ministers, as either happened to prevail; and at one time signed the order for execution on this side, at another time on that, but ever with tears in his eyes. A tenderness of disposition was one of this amiable youth's conspicuous qualities: to these were added a sagacity far surpassing his years, and learning that amazed all such as happened to converse with him. When the dignity of the throne was to be supported, he behaved like a man; and, at other times, was gentle and affable as became his age. In short, he had such great qualities, or was said to have such, that mankind had reason to lament his short continuance among them. It is very probable, however, that flattery would have contributed to destroy those talents, as it had those of his father; for few princes, except his father, had received more flattery than he. He died of a defluxion upon his lungs; his death being hastened by medicines given by a woman who confidently pretended she could cure him. His death made way for another scene of horrid barbarity, in which the kingdom was to be ruled by a weak and bigotted woman, who was herself ruled by merciless priests, who received their orders from the court of Rome. 1553.

LETTER XXXIII.

YOU have hitherto seen the succession to the throne of England partly obtained by lineal descent, and partly by the aptitude for government in the person chosen: neither wholly hereditary nor quite elective, it has ever made ancestry the pretext of right, but, in fact, the consent of the people served for the support of these pretensions. And this is the best species of succession that can be conceived: it prevents that aristocracy, which is ever the result of a government entirely elective; and that tyranny which is too often established

where there is never an infringement upon hereditary claims.

Whenever a monarch of England happened to be arbitrary, he generally considered the kingdom as his property, and not himself as a servant of the kingdom. In such cases it was natural for him, at his decease, to bequeath his dominions as he thought proper. Henry, in conformity to this practice, made a will, in which he settled the succession merely according to his usual caprice: Edward VI was first nominated to succeed him, whose reign you have just seen; then Mary, his eldest daughter by Catharine of Spain, but with a mark of special condescension, by which he would intimate her illegitimacy; the next that followed was Elizabeth, his daughter by Anna Bullen, with the same marks of her not being legitimate: after his own children, his sister's children were mentioned; his youngest sister the duchess of Suffolk's issue was preferred before his elder sister the queen of Scotland's, which preference was thought by all to be neither founded in justice nor supported by reason.

Edward VI, as has been seen, succeeded him. He also made a will, in which he gave the kingdom away from Mary and Elizabeth to the duchess of Suffolk's daughter, lady Jane Grey, a girl of sixteen. By these depositions there were, after the death of young Edward, no less than four princesses who could lay claim to the crown: Mary, who was first upon the will, had been declared illegitimate by parliament, and that act was never repealed: the same could be alleged against Elizabeth, but she had another foundation by being restored to her rights in her father's reign; the queen of Scotland, descended from Henry's eldest sister, could plead the illegitimacy of his two daughters; and Jane Grey might allege the will of the last king in her favour,

In the last reign, the earl of Warwick was remarkable for suppressing an insurrection of the people, and afterward for being a favourite of the king, then made duke of Northumberland; next for overturning the duke of Somerset, his rival; and at length for pursuing the measures of the man whom he had destroyed: he

now began to conceive hopes of securing the crown in his own family, and with this view matched lord Guilford Dudley, his son, with lady Jane Grey, whom by his interest he hoped to settle on the throne. He was hated by the people for his cruelties, as much as the young lady was loved for her virtues; and this was the greatest obstacle to his design. I have been more prolix than usual upon this topic of the succession, but you should attend to it with care, in order to have a clear idea of the present and the succeeding reigns.

Immediately upon the death of the young king, but two competitors put up for the crown: Mary, relying upon the justice of her pretensions; and Jane Grey, supported by the duke of Northumberland, her father-in-law. Mary was strongly bigotted to the popish superstitions: having been bred up in restraint, she was reserved and gloomy: she had, even during the life of her father, the resolution to maintain her sentiments and ceremonies, and refused to comply with his new institutions; her zeal had rendered her cruel, and she was not only blindly attached to her religious opinions, but even to the popish clergy, who maintained them. On the other hand, Jane Grey was attached to the reformers; though yet but sixteen, her judgment had attained such a degree of perfection as few enjoy in their more advanced age. All historians agree, that the solidity of her understanding, improved by continual application, rendered her the wonder of her age. Ascham, tutor to Elizabeth, informs us, that coming once to wait upon her at her father's house in Leicestershire, he found her reading Plato's works in Greek, when all the rest of the family were hunting in the park. He seemed surprised at her being the only person absent from the diversions abroad, but she assured him, *that Plato was a higher amusement to her than the most studied refinements of sensual pleasure.* It was philosophy, and not ambition, for which she seemed born: when her ambitious father-in-law came to inform her of her advancement to the throne, she heard the news with sorrow, and accepted the proffered honour with reluctance. However, the intreaties of her friends, and the authority of her husband, at length reconciled

her to her fortune: she was removed to the Tower, and soon after proclaimed at London, while the people showed few of those marks of satisfaction which usually accompany a ceremony of this kind.

Jane was proclaimed by the council, but the council were for Mary; the men of Suffolk rose in her favour, Norfolk soon joined her, and lord Hastings, with four thousand men, which were raised to oppose her, revolted to her side. It was in vain that the duke of Northumberland attempted to lead his army against them: his soldiers deserted on the march; he found himself abandoned; and soon after the council itself, which he once governed, now freed from restraint, declared against her. Jane, who had just been crowned, now saw herself stripped of her dignities, and, without any reluctance, laid down an honour which she was at first compelled to accept, and which she held but nine days. Her father, the duke of Suffolk, delivered up the Tower, of which he had the command; and her father-in-law, the duke of Northumberland, being prevented from flying out of the kingdom, pretended to be pleased at Mary's success, and was the first to fling up his cap when she was proclaimed in Cambridge.

Mary now entered London, and, without the least effusion of blood, saw herself joyfully proclaimed, and peaceably settled upon the throne. This was a juncture which seemed favourable to British happiness and liberty; a queen, whose rights were the most equitable, in some measure elected by the people; the aristocracy of the last reign almost wholly suppressed; the house of commons, by this means, reinstated in their former authority; the pride of the clergy humbled, and their vices detected; together with peace abroad, and almost unanimity at home. This was a flattering prospect upon Mary's accession; but soon this pleasing phantom was dissolved: Mary was cruel, and a bigot: she gave back their former power to the clergy, and the kingdom was, once more, involved in the horrors from which it had lately been extricated.

The queen had promised to the men of Suffolk, who first declared in her favour, that she would suffer re-

ligion to remain in the situation in which she found it. This promise, however, she by no means intended to perform. Political cruelty ever precedes religious : she had resolved on a change of religion : but before she persecuted heretics, who were as yet her friends, it was necessary to get rid of some of the late council, who were in reality her enemies. The duke of Northumberland was the first object of royal vengeance ; and not indeed without reason. It is instructive enough to observe the vicissitudes of fortune : the duke of Norfolk was now taken from his prison in the Tower, to sit as judge upon the duke of Northumberland, who had kept him there. The accused made a very skilful defence, but what could that avail in a court predetermined to condemn him ? He was capitally convicted, and soon after executed ; sir John Gates and sir Thomas Palmer, who had assisted in his projects, sharing in his punishment.

While these were falling as victims to their ambition, the queen's ministers were, in the mean time, carrying on a negociation of marriage between her and Philip king of Spain. The people thought they saw that this would be a fatal blow to their liberties, and therefore loudly murmured against it ; but when they found the treaty actually concluded, they could no longer contain. Sir Thomas Wyatt, a Roman catholic, at the head of four thousand insurgents, marched from Kent to Hyde-park, and entered the City, in hopes of securing the Tower ; but his rashness undid him ; as he passed through the narrow streets, care was taken by the earl of Pembroke to block up the way behind him, by fortifications thrown across the streets, and guards were placed at all the avenues to prevent his return. This unhappy man passed boldly forward, and was now ready to reap the fruits of his undertaking, when, to his astonishment, he found that he could neither proceed nor yet make a good retreat. He now, too late, perceived his own temerity, and losing all courage in the exigency, he surrendered at discretion. In the mean time, the duke of Suffolk had endeavoured to foment the insurrection, but without success : he was taken prisoner also, and destined for the common slaughter. Accordingly,

Wyat, the duke of Suffolk, sir John Throgmorton, and fifty-eight more, were executed; but what raised the compassion of the people most of all, was the execution of lady Jane Grey, and her husband Guilford Dudley, who were involved in this calamity.

Two days after Wyat was taken, lady Jane and her husband were ordered to prepare for death; lady Jane, who had long before seen the threatened blow, was nowise surprised at the message, but bore it with heroic resolution; and, being informed that she had three days to prepare for death, she seemed displeased at so long a delay. Guilford Dudley was the first that suffered. As the lady was conducted to execution, the officers of the Tower met her on the way, bearing the headless body of her husband, streaming with blood, in order to be interred in the chapel in the Tower: she looked on the corpse without trembling, and only, with a sigh, desired to proceed. She testified, to the last moment of her sufferings, great constancy, great piety, and an immovable adherence to the reformation. This was the third queen who died by the hands of the executioner in England.

The enemies of the state being thus suppressed, the theatre was now opened for the pretended enemies of religion. The queen was freed from all apprehensions of an insurrection, and therefore began by assembling a corrupt parliament, which was to countenance her future cruelties. The nobility, whose only religion seemed that of the prince who governed, were easily gained over, and the house of commons seemed passive in all her proceedings. She began by giving orders for the suppression of all married bishops and priests; the mass was directed to be restored; the pope's authority was re-established, with some restrictions; the laws against heretics were renewed; and the church and its privileges put on the same foundation in which they were before the alteration of Henry VIII.

This was kindling up the fires of persecution anew: at the head of these measures were Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, and Bonner, bishop of London, Pole, the pope's legate, a great part of whose life was spent in Italy, seemed too much civilized in that country.

then the most polite in Europe, to be accessory to the measures now pursued. Gardiner began this bloody scene with Hooper and Rogers: Hooper had been bishop of Gloucester; Rogers was a clergyman, who had shone among the most distinguished of the protestants. He was prebendary of St. Paul's, and refused all submission to the church of Rome, which he looked upon as antichristian. They were condemned by commissioners appointed by the queen, with the chancellor at the head of them. Rogers suffered in Smithfield. When he was brought to the stake, he had it in his power to save himself, by recanting his opinions: but neither hopes nor fears could prevail upon him to desert his religion. When the faggots were placed around him, he seemed no way daunted at the preparation, but cried out, *I resign my life with joy, in testimony of the doctrine of Jesus.* Hooper had his pardon offered him upon the same terms, but he refused it with equal indignation. This old martyr, who was executed at Gloucester, was three quarters of an hour in torment; the fire, either from malice or neglect, had not been sufficiently kindled, so that his legs and thighs were first burnt, and one of his hands dropped off before he expired.

Saunders and Taylor, two other clergymen, whose zeal had been distinguished in carrying on the reformation, were the next that suffered. Taylor was put into a pitch-barrel, and, before the fire was kindled, a faggot from an unknown hand was thrown at his head, which made it stream with blood; still, however, he continued undaunted, singing the 31st Psalm in English, which one of the spectators observing, hit him a blow on the side of the head, and commanded him to pray in Latin: he then continued a few minutes silent, only with his eyes stedfastly fixed upon heaven, when one of the guards, either through impatience or compassion, struck him down with his halbert, and thus delivered him from a world of pain to a life of immortal happiness.

The death of these only served to increase the savage appetite of the monks and popish bishops for fresh slaughter. Bonner, bloated at once with rage and

luxury, let loose his vengeance without restraint; while the queen, by letters, exhorted him to pursue the pious work without pity or interruption: and now Ridley, bishop of London, and the venerable Latimer, bishop of Worcester, were to receive the martyr's crown. Ridley was one of the ablest champions of the reformation: his piety, learning, and solidity of judgment, were admired by his friends and dreaded by his enemies. The night before his execution, he invited the mayor of Oxford and his wife to see him die: and when he saw them melted into tears, he himself appeared quite unmoved, Heaven being his secret supporter and comforter in this hour of agony. When he came to the stake where he was to be burnt, he found his old friend Latimer there before him, and began to comfort him in his sufferings, while Latimer was as ready to return the kind office. A furious bigot ascended to preach to them, before the execution of their sentence: Ridley gave a serious attention to the sermon, and offered to answer it, but this he was not allowed to do. At length the fire was set to the pile; Latimer was soon out of pain, but Ridley continued much longer, his legs being consumed before the fire reached his vitals.

Cranmer, whom you have seen already so zealous in the reformation, was the next personage of note that was burnt: he had this peculiar aggravation
 1556. of his calamity, that he was prevailed upon to abjure his principles, and sign his recantation, by the hopes of pardon. Being, notwithstanding this, brought to the stake, his confusion and shame were there inexpressible: there he retracted all that their false promises had made him abjure; and resolving that the hand which had signed should first suffer, he held it out, with an intrepid countenance, in the flames, till it dropped off, frequently crying out, in the midst of his agony, *that unworthy hand!*

Bonner now seemed not satisfied with single deaths, but sent men in whole companies to the flames: women themselves were not spared. But the cruelty went yet further: a woman, condemned for heresy, was delivered of a child in the midst of the flames; some of the spectators humanely snatched it out; the magistrate,

who was a papist, ordered it to be flung in again; and it was there consumed with the mother. The perpetrators of such actions were no longer human; they must have forfeited all pretensions to the name, for hell itself could be guilty of nothing more atrocious!

But they were not content with punishing the living alone: their vengeance extended even to the dead. Bucer and Fagius, two German divines, who had been dead some years before, were cited, very formally, to appear and give an account of their faith: in default of their appearance, their bodies were taken from their graves, and, being hung upon a gallows, were consumed to ashes. The wife of Peter Martyr, who himself had the prudence to escape, was dug up like the former, and buried in a dunghill. In short, the persecutions of the priests and friars went such lengths, that the very magistrates, who had at first been instruments of their cruelty, at last refused to assist at the punishing of heretics for the future, till a court, somewhat resembling the Inquisition, was established, which continued the slaughter, without remorse. In this reign five bishops, twenty-one ministers, and above two hundred others, went to the flames, in maintenance of the truth; numbers died in prison, and several, by whips and tortures, were forced to abjure.

Yet still in this dismal situation with respect to religion, the temporal concerns of the nation were conducted with very little better success. Calais, which had long been possessed by the English, and was a curb to the ambition of France, was taken in this reign, by the duke of Guise, and all the English driven out of it, as the great Edward had driven the French out two hundred years before. The queen was only bent on ruining protestants, and took no care to defend her dominions.

Philip, her husband, seemed no way pleased with his alliance. The queen, some time after their marriage, was delivered of a false conception. This created disgust in him; he therefore quitted England, to pursue his own schemes in Flanders, leaving the queen sufficiently mortified at his coldness, of which he gave repeated proofs. 1557.

The loss of Calais, and the disappointment with regard to her pregnancy, soon excited murmurs among the people. The protestants now exerted their influence in exposing the weakness of the government and the cruelty of the council; but no person had a greater share of reproach than the queen, and none felt it so severely. The house of commons, that had hitherto been all along so submissive, now also testified their displeasure, and refused to grant a subsidy, though she condescended to lay the bad state of her affairs before them. During these mortifications, her health sensibly declined; she was naturally melancholy and sullen, and her repeated disappointments increased her distemper. She had been ill attended during her pretended pregnancy, having committed herself to the care of a woman, and neglected the advice of her physicians. After having been for some time afflicted with the dropsy, this disorder carried her off in the forty-third year of her age, after a reign of about five years. Had she been born at any other period, she might have been a good princess, but her zeal for religion was louder than the calls of humanity. Henry VIII, her father, acted like a tyrant and a persecutor, from vicious motives, and he knew it: Mary was both a tyrant and a persecutor from motives of virtue, and she was never undeceived.

LETTER XXXIV.

WERE we to adopt the maxim of some, that evil may be done for the production of good, one might say, that the persecutions in Mary's reign were permitted only to bring the kingdom over to the protestant religion. Nothing could preach so effectually against the cruelty and the vices of the monks, as the actions of the monks themselves: wherever heretics were to be burnt, they were always present, rejoicing at the spectacle, insulting the fallen, and frequently the first to thrust the flaming brand against the faces of the condemned. The English were effectually con-

verted by such sights as these. To bring any people over to any opinion, it is only necessary to persecute instead of attempting to convince. The people had formerly embraced the reformed religion from fear; they were now internally protestants from inclination.

We have hitherto seen England, like the element that surrounds it, ever unsettled and stormy; ever sinking under foreign invasion or domestic disputes: it had felt a short interval of happiness, indeed, under Henry VII, but his successors soon disturbed that felicity, and laid the country once more in blood. At length the genius of the people prevailed over all opposition, and England was now about to make its own happiness, and to set mankind an example of industry, commerce, freedom, learning, opulence, and politeness.

To Mary, succeeded her sister Elizabeth, who was unanimously declared queen at the *Jan. 15, 1558.* accustomed places, and with the acclamations of the people. Elizabeth had her education in the best of schools—the school of adversity. As, during the life of her sister, who had no children, she was next heir to the throne, and at the same time was known to be of the protestant religion, she was obnoxious to the reigning tyrant for two reasons: it was feared she might aspire to the throne during her sister's life; but it was still more reasonably apprehended that she would, if ever she came to the crown, make an innovation in that religion which Mary took so much pains to establish. The bishops, who had shed such a deluge of blood, foresaw this, and often told Mary, that her destroying meaner heretics was of no advantage to the state, unless she attacked the principal heretic; that it was to no purpose to lop off the branches while the body of the tree was suffered to stand. Mary saw and acknowledged the justice of their observations, confined her sister, with proper guards, and only waited for some new insurrection, or some favorable pretext, to destroy her: her own death prevented the perpetration of her meditated cruelty, and Elizabeth was taken from prison to be fixed upon a throne.

Elizabeth had made the proper use of her confine-

ment: being debarred the enjoyment of pleasures abroad, she sought for knowledge at home; she cultivated her understanding, learned the languages and sciences; but in all the arts in which she excelled, her art of keeping fair with her sister, of not offending the papists, of being in esteem with the protestants, of dissembling and learning to reign, were the greatest.

This virgin monarch, whose memory England still reveres with gratitude and respect, was scarce proclaimed queen, when Philip of Spain, who had been married to Mary, but who ever testified an inclination for Elizabeth, sought her in marriage. What political motives Elizabeth might have against this match, is uncertain; but, certain it is, she neither liked the person nor the religion of her admirer: she was willing at once to enjoy the pleasure of independence and the vanity of numerous solicitations.

She had ever resolved upon reforming the church, even in the restraints of a prison; and, upon coming to the throne, she immediately set about that great design. The people were now almost wholly of the protestant religion; the ill use the papists had made of their power in the last reign, had totally undone their cause: a religion marked with cruelty, tyranny, and persecution, was not a religion for the people of England. She began, therefore, in imitation of the deceased queen, to forbid all meddling with controversy in the pulpit, and all innovations of the established rights, except that the service should be performed in the vulgar tongue, till the parliament should determine the proper modes of worship. The parliament soon met, and the reformation was finished, and religion established in the manner we enjoy it at present.

The opposition which was made to these religious establishments was but weak: a conference of nine doctors on each side was proposed and agreed to: they were to dispute publicly on either side of the question; and it was resolved that the people should hold with that which came off with victory. 1562. Disputations of this kind are never attended with conviction to either party; so much is to be said on either side, and so wide is the field that both sides

have to range in, that each generally loses its strength in vain preparations, and ineffectually prefacing, before he is properly said to begin the engagement. The conference, therefore, came to nothing: the papists declared that it was not in their power to dispute a second time upon topics in which they had gained a former victory, under queen Mary; and the protestants ascribed their caution to their fears. Of nine thousand four hundred beneficed clergymen, which were in the whole kingdom, only fourteen bishops, twelve archdeacons, fifteen heads of colleges, and about eighty of the parochial clergy, chose to quit their preferments rather than their religion. Thus England changed its belief in religion four times since Henry VIII. Strange, says a foreign writer, that a people who are so resolute, should be guilty of so much inconstancy! that the same people who this day publicly burnt heretics, should the next not only think them guiltless, but conform to their opinions!

Elizabeth was now fixed upon a protestant throne, while all the neighbouring nations were open or secret enemies; France, Scotland, Spain, the pope, were all combined against her; her subjects of Ireland were concealed enemies, and the catholic party in England, though not so numerous as formerly, was not yet entirely suppressed: these were the dangers she had to fear, nor had she one friend to assist her upon an emergency. In this situation, therefore, she could hope for no other resource but what proceeded from the affection of her own subjects, and the wisdom of her administration. To make herself beloved by the people, and, at the same time, feared by her courtiers, were the governing maxims of her conduct. She was frugal of the public treasure, and still more sparing in her rewards to her favourites: this at once kept the people in spirits, and kept the great too poor to shake off lawful subjection. She distributed both rewards and punishments with impartiality; knew when to flatter, and when to upbraid; could dissemble submission, but preserve her prerogatives: in short, she seemed to have studied the people she was to govern, and often to have flattered their follies in order to secure their hearts.

Her chief favourite was Robert Dudley, son to the late duke of Northumberland, whom the queen seemed to regard from capricious motives, as he had neither abilities nor virtue; but, to make amends, her ministers were selected with great skill; and the name of Cecil, her lord treasurer, is to be found in the list of those who have governed this country with the greatest wisdom. He regulated the finances, and directed the political measures that were followed with so much success.

Mary Stuart, queen of France and Scotland, gave the first alarm to this state of tranquillity, by taking the title of queen of England; and her cause was supported by the popish faction, which still wanted to make new disturbances. The throne of Elizabeth was not yet perfectly fixed, and the intrigues of the disaffected could still overturn it; she, therefore, was not remiss in sending an army into Scotland, and forcing the French troops out of that kingdom, by a treaty signed to that effect. Soon after, the king of France died; and Elizabeth forced her rival to renounce the title of queen of England, which she had assumed. She went yet still further; she encouraged the parliament of Scotland to introduce the reformation into that country: her intrigues succeeded, and she thus gained over a stedfast friend in the Scots, from whom the English had, till then, only received repeated acts of enmity and malevolence.

This tempest was scarce allayed, when Philip of Spain gave new alarms. As long as he had fears from the power of the queen of Scots, by her union with France, he was still attached to Elizabeth; but when, by the death of the king of France, her husband, she was again reduced to her primitive weakness, his jealousy then began to fall upon Elizabeth. With this view, he encouraged the insurrections and discontents in Ireland, and Elizabeth, with equal care, suppressed them. He supported, in France, a league made to exclude the royal family from the throne; Elizabeth protected the opposite side. He oppressed the people of Holland with cruelty and injustice; Elizabeth supported them from sinking under his power. Thus, on every side, she guarded off the dangers that threatened

her, and soon after, in her turn, prepared to act offensively against her enemies.

But the cares of war did not repress her assiduity in the administration of justice at home : she was resolved to show the Roman catholic party an example of moderation, which they might admire, but could not imitate. The monks, who were dispossessed of their monasteries, had been assigned pensions, which were to be paid by the possessors of the forfeited lands. These payments were entirely neglected, and those unhappy men, who had been educated in solitude and ignorance, were now starving in old age, too much disregarded by the protestants, and too numerous to find relief from those of their own persuasion. Elizabeth ordered that their pensions should be paid with punctuality and justice, and satisfaction made for all arrears unjustly detained.

In order the more to ingratiate herself with the people, she visited Cambridge and Oxford, and made each a Latin speech, and showed, by her discourse and conduct, a regard for those seminaries of learning, which had been suppressed by her father.

She not only affected this obliging carriage to her inferiors, but also behaved in something of a romantic strain to the courtiers next her person. The gallantries of the court were conducted according to the rules of chivalry : every damsel had her knight : Dudley, who was now become earl of Leicester, was generally the queen's : but all writers agree, that her passion for him never proceeded beyond the bounds of Platonic affection. When her commons, in a dutiful manner, represented to her how much the safety of the kingdom depended upon her marrying, she thanked them in an obliging manner, and assured them she was now become the wife of her people, and would be pleased at having it inscribed on her tomb, That having reigned with equity, she lived and died a virgin,

LETTER XXXV.

THE ancient ferocity of the English was not yet quite reclaimed: the barbarous method of fixing the monarch upon the throne, by executions performed upon the scaffold, was not quite done away: the only difference seemed to be, that, formerly, those who were obnoxious to the crown fell without any legal trial; but now they fell with all the forms, yet all the severity, of justice.

While Elizabeth was thus attempting to settle religion, to establish the power, and humble the enemies of her country, she at the same time was guilty of some instances of cruelty, which, though coloured with the pretext of law, could only be the effect of the uncivilised disposition of the times. The catholics held meetings to restore their religion by open force: the countess of Lenox, Arthur Poole, and others, began to form factions in the kingdom; their plottings, however, were discovered, and, upon their own confession, they were condemned: but the queen, in consideration of their illustrious descent, forgave their offence. A sister of the late Jane Grey however, though less guilty, met with less clemency: she had married the earl of Pembroke, without leave from the court: this was considered as a high offence, and the earl and she were committed to the Tower. After a long imprisonment, he was obliged to forsake her: and she, loaded with the misfortune, died in confinement.

But this only prepared the way for a cruelty of a more heinous nature, which gave the world a disagreeable remembrance of the transactions committed in the reign of her father. Mary, queen of Scots, had long renounced her title to the crown of England, but not her claim of succeeding to the throne: this renunciation, however, being extorted from her by Elizabeth, Mary took every method of disturbing her in the quiet possession of the crown, and yet gave every mark of reconciliation and sincere amity. There were, in fact, many circumstances to contribute to their mutual dislike: the jealousy of neighbouring crowns, the

opposition of religion, of wit, and of beauty; Mary, less powerful, less absolute, less politic, was, however, Elizabeth's superior in personal charms, and this alone served to inflame their animosity. The queen of Scotland encouraged the catholic faction in England, while Elizabeth, with still more success, fomented the protestant party among the Scots. Mary had now, for some time, thoughts of marrying a second husband, after the death of the French king; Elizabeth, on the other hand, who had no thoughts of marrying herself, strove by every art to prevent this marriage, as she considered that it would be strengthening the power of her rival. With this view she wrote Mary a letter, in which, after many insincere protestations of friendship, she begged that Mary would not offer to marry till her consent should first be obtained. This unreasonable request not a little disturbed the queen of Scotland; but, fearing to offend her potent rival, she pretended to comply: in secret, however, she was resolved to marry the earl of Darnley, her relation, who had the merit of being a catholic, like herself; but, perhaps, whose greatest recommendation was his personal beauty. The party gained by Elizabeth in Scotland tried every measure to prevent her design. It was agitated, whether the queen could marry without the consent of the states; several of the nobility rose in arms to prevent it: the ambassadors of England made daily remonstrances upon its impropriety, but all in vain: Mary, to cut short their proceedings, had the marriage solemnized in her own chapel, and banished the opposers by a solemn act of 1565. the states.

All hitherto appeared fortunate for Mary; her enemies banished, her rival defeated, and herself married to the man she loved: yet this was but a flattering calm; for soon, whether from the capriciousness of her temper, or from what other cause I will not pretend to determine, lord Darnley, notwithstanding the elegance of his person, became entirely disagreeable to her. She had conceived such an aversion to him, that it was soon obvious, even to the people; and she took every method to mortify him in the eyes of the

public. Her vices were the cause of all her misfortunes: there was at that time in her court one David Rizzio, the son of a musician at Turin, who had followed the ambassador from that court into Scotland. As he understood music to perfection, and sung a good bass, he was introduced into the queen's concert, who was so taken with him, that she desired the ambassador, upon his departure, to leave Rizzio behind. The excellence of his voice soon procured him great familiarities: the queen loved him, confided in him, and ever kept him next her person. The new king, who only had the name, could not, without jealousy, see this insinuating foreigner receive all the queen's favours, while he was treated only with contempt. Stung at once with envy, rage, and resentment, he at length resolved to murder the man he could not equal, and consulted with some lords about the method of accomplishing his cruel design. Men in power ever find accomplices in their guilt: two other lords and he settled it, that the murder should be committed before the face of the queen, as a punishment for her scandalous conduct. Thus prepared, they were informed that Rizzio was, at that very instant, in the queen's chamber: lord Darnley led the way, conducting the assassins up by a private staircase, and entered the queen's chamber, who was at table with her favourite Rizzio. Darnley stood for some time leaning upon the back of her chair. His fierce looks, and unexpected intrusion, in some measure, alarmed the queen, who, however, kept silence, not daring to call out: a little after, lord Ruthven, one of the murderers, and George Douglas, entered abruptly, all in arms, and attended with more of their accomplices. The queen could no longer refrain, but asked the reason of this bold intrusion: Ruthven made her no answer, but ordered Rizzio to quit a place of which he was unworthy. Rizzio now saw that he was the object of their vengeance, and, trembling with fear, took hold of the queen's robes to put himself under her protection, who, on her part, strove to interpose between the assassins and him: Douglas, in the mean time, had reached the unfortunate Rizzio, and taking a dagger from the king's side, drew it, and, while the

queen filled the room with her cries, he plunged it, in her presence, into Rizzio's bosom. She was five months gone with child, and this horrid scene had such an effect upon the fruit of her womb, that it is said her child, who was afterward king James I, could never venture to look on a drawn sword without shuddering. Thus ended Rizzio, a man who has been more spoken of, than perhaps any other who rose from so mean a station. What his other talents to please might have been, is unknown; but certain it is, that several indications of his skill in music remain even to the present time; and it is thought that those pleasing Scotch airs, which are set in such a peculiar taste, were of his composition.

This was but a temporary check upon Mary's power: she resumed her authority, by the influence of her charms upon the earl her husband, who gave up the murderers of Rizzio to her resentment; but they had previously escaped into England. One criminal engagement, however, was scarcely got over, when Mary fell into a second: the earl of Bothwell now began to hold the same place in her affections that Rizzio had formerly possessed. This new amour was attended with still more terrible consequences than the former: her husband fell a victim to it. His life was first attempted by poison, but the strength of his constitution saved him, for a short time, only to fall by a more violent death: he was strangled by night, the house in which the fact was committed being blown up with gunpowder, in order to persuade the people that his death was accidental; but his shirt not being singed, and his slippers found near him, together with blue marks round his neck, soon confirmed the suspicion of his real murder. His body was buried near that of Rizzio, among the Scottish kings.

All orders of the state, the whole body of the people, accused Bothwell of this assassination, and, at last, demanded justice upon him from the queen, for the late murder, openly arraigning him of the guilt. In this universal demand for justice, the queen, deaf to the murmurs of her people, deaf to the voice of decency, married the murderer of her husband, and prevailed

upon him to divorce his former wife, to make way for this fatal alliance.

These transactions excited the whole kingdom of Scotland to resistance, and Mary, abandoned by her followers, was obliged to give herself up as a prisoner to the confederacy. Bothwell fled to the Orkney Islands. The queen, being confined in Lochleven-castle, was compelled to resign the crown to her son, as yet a child: but she was permitted to nominate a regent. She turned her eyes upon the earl of Murray, who was then in France, and appointed him, expecting that he would defend her cause, and restore her. In this, however, she was entirely mistaken; Murray, upon his arrival, instead of comforting her, as he formerly used, loaded her with reproaches, which reduced her almost to despair. The calamities of the great, however justly deserved, excite pity, and create friends; an army of forty thousand men declared in her favour, and she escaped from prison to put herself at their head. But this was only to encounter new misfortunes: she was met by a body of four thousand men, commanded by the new regent, and was totally defeated. To avoid falling into the hands of her enemies, she fled toward the borders of England. Elizabeth, being informed of her misfortunes and her retreat, at first granted her an honourable reception, and ordered her to be lodged at a gentleman's house, where she was treated with proper dignity. Notwithstanding this kindness, she refused to see her until she had justified herself from the reproaches with which she was branded. By this means Elizabeth in a manner declared herself umpire of the differences between the two parties, and each accordingly pleaded their cause before her; Mary by her emissaries, and Murray the regent in person. It was the queen of England's duty to protect, and not to examine, her royal fugitive; however, she lengthened out the pleadings on both sides, and enjoyed the pleasure of seeing her rival humbled without passing any definitive sentence. Mary privately complained of her unworthy treatment and long delay: these complaints were carried to Elizabeth, which ended in the queen of Scots being sent a prisoner to Tutbury-castle.

The disasters of the crown of Scotland fell upon the people, divided as they were into factions, and animated with mutual animosity. The regent, attempting to quell them, was himself slain, and the assassins, pretending to act in the name of their imprisoned queen, made an incursion into England, and committed some ravages on the frontier-countries. Elizabeth, with an army, quickly repressed these invaders, and procured the earl of Lenox, father to the late king, to be elected in regent Murray's room. In the mean time, while she was employed in bringing Scotland to measures, she found herself attacked, in her own dominions, by a conspiracy. The pope, in order to assist the rebels, procured a bull to be fixed up in several places in London, whereby he excommunicated Elizabeth, and absolved her subjects from their oaths of allegiance. This bull was fixed up by John Felton, grand uncle to him whom we are shortly to see act another desperate part. John Felton, when he was told that the government was in pursuit of him, disdained to fly: he waited with intrepidity till he was taken, and then boldly confessed the fact of which he was charged, and gloried in the commission: he might have received pardon upon acknowledging his crime, but he refused it, and was hanged near the place, meeting death with a resolution that astonished even the brave. What noble actions might not such a mind have been capable of, had it at first received a right direction!

These efforts, in favour of the queen of Scots, only served to hasten her ruin. The two queens entered into various negotiations and frivolous treaties; the one attempting to humble her prisoner, the other with fruitless pride attempting to preserve the lustre of fallen majesty. Scotland, in the mean time, streamed with blood: the papists and the protestants carried on a civil war. The archbishop of St. Andrew, one of the warmest partizans of Mary, was taken in arms, and executed upon the deposition of his confessor, who swore that this prelate had privately confessed that he was an accomplice in the murder of Darnley.

The greatest misfortunes of Mary rather proceeded from her friends than enemies. The duke of Norfolk,

who professed a friendship for her, expected, by her means, to rise to the British throne : he therefore privately negotiated a marriage with her, and she, on the other hand, attempted to break off that which she had already contracted with Bothwell. He formed a party in London, feeble indeed ; but he expected assistance from the intrigues of the pope, and the arms of Spain. He was himself a weak man, and his plots were but shallow : the spies of Elizabeth discovered them all : he was arrested, accused, condemned, and executed. This nobleman's blood only contributed to fasten the chains of the unfortunate Mary ; yet still she conceived hopes from foreign alliances, which seldom are of any weight in domestic disputes. She had the league in France in her favour, the pope, the Spaniards, and the jesuits ; she not only hoped to be reinstated in her former power, but to have the crown of England, to which she laid claim as her birthright, added to her own. In pursuance of these designs, a new conspiracy was formed, fourteen of the conspirators executed : and, last of all, Mary was brought to trial, before a queen who had no other right to be her judge, but that of power. Forty-two members of parliament, and five judges, were sent to examine her in prison : she protested against their right, yet made a defence : they had originally no foundation in justice to try her, and they carried on her accusation with only a show of equity. In short, after an imprisonment of eighteen
1587. years, this unhappy princess was brought to the block, and beheaded in one of the rooms of her prison, which had been hung in black for the occasion. This action stained the reign of Elizabeth with such colours, that neither her dissimulation, nor the prosperity of her reign, could ever wash away : her subjects, while they found themselves happy, attempted to excuse her conduct ; but conscience internally condemned her cruelty, and time, that speaks plain, at last declares her guilt. In treating of the actions of mankind, we almost ever find both sides culpable ; and so it was here : Mary, who was a murderer and an adulteress, died by the orders of Elizabeth, who was at once cruel and unjust.

LETTER XXXVI.

THE foreign policy of Elizabeth has often been justly praised, and in no instance appears more conspicuous than in her conduct towards Philip of Spain, who had been aspiring to universal monarchy. In her advances to check his ambition, she proceeded with due caution, encouraging only, rather than openly assisting, or projecting, any attempt against him. As it was her wish, however, to protect the protestants when oppressed, she lent her aid gradually, and afterwards decidedly, to the revolted inhabitants of the Netherlands; while her brave sailors, Drake and Raleigh, commenced a series of operations, which alarmed and harassed the newly-acquired and opulent colonies of Philip in America.

Philip had long meditated the destruction of England, and had for some time recently been making preparations to attack this kingdom by a powerful invasion. Every part of his vast empire now began to resound with the noise of armaments, and every art was used to levy supplies. The marquis of Santa Cruz, a sea-officer of great reputation and experience, was destined to command the fleet, which consisted of one hundred and thirty vessels, of a greater size than any that had been hitherto seen in Europe. The duke of Parma was to conduct the soldiers, twenty-thousand of whom were on board the fleet, and thirty-four thousand more were assembled in the Netherlands, ready to be transported into England. The most renowned of the nobility and princes of Italy and Spain were ambitious to share in the honour of this great enterprise, and hastened to join the equipment, which was ostentatiously styled the *Invincible Armada*. It carried on board, beside the land-forces, eight thousand four hundred mariners, two thousand galley-slaves, and two thousand six hundred and thirty great pieces of brass ordnance: it was victualled for six months, and was attended with twenty smaller ships, called caravels, and ten salves.

Nothing could exceed the terror and consternation

which all ranks of people in England felt upon news of this terrible armada being under sail to invade them. A fleet of not above thirty ships of war, and those very small in comparison, was all that the English had to oppose it by sea: and as for resisting by land, that was supposed to be impossible, as the Spanish army was composed of men well disciplined, and long inured to danger. The queen alone seemed undismayed in this threatening calamity: she issued all her orders with tranquillity; animated her people to a steady resistance; and, the more to excite the martial spirit of the nation, she appeared on horseback in the camp at Tilbury, exhorting the soldiers to their duty, and promising to share the same dangers and the same fate with them. "I myself," cried she, "will be your general, your judge, and the rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field. Your alacrity has already deserved its rewards: and, on the word of a prince, they shall be duly paid you. Persevere then in your obedience to command; shew your valour in the field; and we shall soon have a glorious victory over those enemies of my God, my kingdom, and my people." The soldiers with shouts proclaimed their ardour, and only wished to be led on to conquest.

Nor were her preparations by sea carried on with less alacrity: although the English fleet was much inferior in number and size of shipping to that of the enemy; yet it was much more manageable, the dexterity and courage of the mariners being greatly superior. Lord Howard of Effingham, a man of great courage and capacity, as lord-admiral, took on him the command of the navy. Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher, the most renowned seamen in Europe, served under him: while a small squadron, consisting of forty vessels, English and Flemish, commanded by Lord Henry Seymour, lay off Dunkirk, in order to intercept the duke of Parma. Such was the preparation made by the English; while all the protestant powers of Europe regarded this enterprise as the critical event which was to decide for ever the fate of their religion.

While the Spanish armada was preparing to sail, the admiral, Santa Cruz, died, as likewise the vice-

admiral Paliano : and the command of the expedition was given to the duke de Medina Sidonia, a person utterly inexperienced in sea-affairs : and this, in some measure, served to frustrate the design. But the hand of Providence was also visible. Upon leaving the port of Lisbon, the armada next day met with a violent tempest, which sunk some of the smallest of the shipping, and obliged the fleet to put back into harbour. After some time spent in refitting, they again put to sea, where they took a fisherman, who gave them intelligence that the English fleet, hearing of the dispersion of the armada in a storm, had retired into Plymouth harbour, and that most of the mariners were discharged. From this false intelligence, the Spanish admiral, instead of going directly to the coast of Flanders to take in the troops stationed there, as he had been instructed, resolved to sail to Plymouth, and destroy the shipping laid up in that harbour. But Effingham, the English admiral, was very well prepared to receive them : he had just weighed anchor, when he saw the Spanish armada making full sail towards him, disposed in the form of a half-moon, and stretching seven miles from one extremity to the other.

Effingham gave orders not to come to close fight with the Spaniards, but to cannonade them at a distance, and to wait the opportunity, which winds, currents, or various accidents, must afford him, of intercepting some scattered vessels of the enemy. Nor was it long before the event answered expectation. A great ship of Biscay, on board of which was a considerable part of the Spanish money, took fire by accident, fell behind the rest of the armada, and was captured, along with the great galleon of Andalusia, by Sir Francis Drake. As the armada advanced up the channel, the English hung upon its rear, and still infested it with skirmishes. Each trial abated the confidence of the Spaniards, and added courage to the English ; and the latter soon found that, even in close fight, the size of the Spanish ships was no advantage to them. In the mean time, as the alarm reached the coast of England, the nobility and gentry hastened out with their vessels from every harbour ; and, by this

generous and disinterested service, the English fleet amounted to a hundred and forty sail.

The armada had now reached Calais, and cast anchor, in expectation that the duke of Parma would put to sea, and join them. The English admiral practised here a successful stratagem upon the Spaniards. He took eight of his smaller ships, and, filling them with combustibles, sent them, as fire-ships, into the midst of the enemy. The Spaniards immediately cut their cables, and took to flight with the greatest disorder and precipitation. The English fell upon them next morning, while in confusion; and, besides doing great damage to other ships, they took or destroyed about twelve of the enemy. The Spanish admiral found, in many rencounters, that, while he lost so considerable a part of his own navy, he had destroyed only one small vessel of the English; and he foresaw that, by continuing so unequal a combat, he must draw inevitable destruction on all the remainder. He prepared, therefore, to return homewards; but the English fleet followed them with such prospect of advantage, that, had not their ammunition failed, they had obliged the whole armada to surrender at discretion, which, it is said, the duke of Medina had, at one time, resolved to do. The event, however, proved almost equally fatal to the Spaniards, by the intervention of a dreadful storm. Seventeen of their ships, having five thousand men on board, were cast away upon the Western Isles and the coast of Ireland, and not a half of this formidable armada returned to Spain; and the seamen, as well as the soldiers, who remained, were so overcome with hardships and fatigue, and so dispirited by their discomfiture, that they filled all Spain with accounts of the desperate valour of the English, and of the tempestuous violence of that ocean which surrounds them.

The destruction of this armada, which had been preparing for three years, which had exhausted the revenue and force of Spain, and had filled all Europe with anxiety and expectation, served only to excite the spirit and courage of the English to cultivate the science of naval tactics, and, by frequent expeditions

and experiments, to increase that experience which has since made them irresistible in all parts of the ocean.

One of those who made the most signal figure in the depredations which the English now began to make on the coast of Spain, was the young earl of Essex, who now began to be the favourite of the queen, who, though she disliked a husband, yet passionately desired to have a lover. It is thought, indeed, her affections were confined to Platonic wishes only, and her age (for she now began to decline) seemed to favour the supposition; but the choice of her favourites countenanced the contrary report; and her sorrow for the earl of Leicester, her former favourite, who died about this time, confirmed it. Essex was young, active, ambitious, witty, and handsome: in the field and court he ever appeared with superior lustre. In all masks, which were then performed, the earl and Elizabeth were generally coupled as partners; and although she was almost sixty, and he not half so old, yet flattery had taught her to forget the disparity of age: the world told her she was still beautiful and young, and she was inclined to think so. This young earl's interest in the queen's heart, as may naturally be expected, promoted his interests in the state: he conducted all things without a rival, and, wherever he went, he acquired a degree of unbounded popularity. Young and unexperienced as he was, he at length began to fancy the applause of the people given to his merits, and not to his favour: thus possessed of a false opinion of his own security, to use the words of the poet, he kicked down the ladder by which he rose; he began to despise the queen, and was heard to drop some expressions, that he thought her, in spite of flattery, both old and ugly. Her remonstrances, on this occasion, were such as might have been expected from a disappointed girl, very angry, yet wishing for a vindication. She gave him, in a passion, a box on the ear, pardoned him, employed him; he again transgressed, and she again pardoned the offence. Secure in her affections, he at length proceeded to actual disobedience: his former favour had gained him enemies,

his present insolence lost him the friendship of the queen: he was condemned to retirement, when he might have been capitally convicted. He now came to a sense of his misconduct, and was resolved to try the unpractised arts that had at first brought him into favour. Immediately after sentence, when he was preparing for retirement into the country, he first assured the queen that he could never be happy till he again saw those eyes which were used to shine upon him with such lustre; that in expectance of that happy moment, like another Nebuchadnezzar, he would dwell with the beasts of the field, and be wet with the dew of heaven, till she again propitiously took pity on his sufferings. This romantic message seemed peculiarly pleasing to the queen; she thought him sincere, from the consciousness of her own sincerity: she replied, that, after some time, when convinced of his humility, something perhaps might be expected from her lenity. This hope of pardon made him think slightly of his guilt: his pride once more increasing with his success, he had designs of destroying his rivals in power, and securing the person of the queen. With this resolution, he imprisoned the queen's messengers, headed a few malcontents, and marched through the city, exhorting the citizens to arms, and crying out, For the queen! for the queen! During a long march, not one citizen thought proper to join him, though numbers, led by curiosity, ran to see him pass by. In this disappointment, word was brought that he was proclaimed a traitor; upon which, he made one effort more to excite an insurrection, but without success; he therefore now resolved to return to his own house, but found the street secured by a great chain, and a guard of soldiers. As he saw no other way to force his passage but by an attack upon the guards, he immediately fell on, attended by his followers, but was beat back, and wounded in the thigh. He then went down to the water-side, and putting himself and his retinue on board small boats, he escaped to his house, which he fortified in the best manner he could. The house was soon invested by the lord admiral, and the earl and his followers were obliged to deliver them-

selves up; the earl of Southampton was a companion to his guilt and his misfortunes; they were soon after brought to their trials, and condemned to die: When the day of his death came, the queen appeared irresolute: she sent an order to stop the execution, and soon after ordered it to proceed. However romantic it may seem, she felt in her bosom all the fluctuations of love and resentment, and was irresolute which passion to obey: her resentment at last prevailed. He was executed six days after his sentence, and died 1600. with penitence and resolution.

Thus died a favourite, who had merits, but did not owe his rise to them. He was gallant, romantic, and ostentatious; his genius for shows, and those pleasures that carry an image of war, was as remarkable as his spirit in the profession itself; and had he been possessed of humility equal to his abilities, he at last might have mounted a throne instead of a scaffold. The queen, at first, carried her resentment so far as to have a sermon preached at St. Paul's Cross, to blacken his memory: his haughty behaviour, and unguarded expressions, had entirely alienated her affections, and imprinted an asperity, which, it seems, even his death could not soften.

With the death of this favourite, Elizabeth's pleasures seemed to expire; she afterwards went through the business of the state merely from habit, but her happiness was no more. Historians are fond of representing all their characters without passion, and to give to every action of the great, either political or rational motives; they therefore treat the queen's affection as a fable: but many of the actions of her life appear dictated by resentment or regard, nor ever had a woman a greater variety of caprice. The great feel as the rest of mankind; and her passions were particularly violent and lasting. She lived but a short time after the death of Essex, and had the mortification of being forsaken by most of her courtiers before she died, who now strove to court the favour of king James, whom she had appointed her successor. She died in the seventieth year of her age, and the forty-fifth of her reign. Her character differed with her cir- 1603.

cumstances : in the beginning of her reign she was moderate and humble ; toward the end, haughty and severe. She was indebted to her good fortune that her ministers were excellent ; but it was owing to her want of wisdom that her favourites, who were chosen more immediately by herself, were unworthy. Though she was possessed of excellent sense, yet she never had the discernment to discover that she wanted beauty : to flatter her charms, even at the age of sixty-five, was the surest way of gaining her interest and esteem. She was greater in her public than her private character, and they most disliked and feared her who were placed next her person. But, whatever might have been the queen's character, the character of her people, at that period, demands our praise and imitation. Permit me to reserve that glorious picture of genius, struggling to get free from barbarity, to the succeeding letter.

LETTER XXXVII.

WHATEVER punishments or cruelties were exerted in this reign, they mostly fell upon the great ; but never was the people of England more happy internally, or more formidable abroad, than during this period. The vices and virtues of a nation are often wholly ascribed to the monarch who rules them ; but such influence extends only to a narrow sphere : no single reign, however good, nor indeed any succession of virtuous reigns, can give happiness, morals, and arts, a general spread, unless the people be predisposed for the reception. From Narva to Antoninus, what a noble succession of Roman emperors ! and yet, even under them, Rome was declining fast into barbarity. It was not owing to Elizabeth alone that England enjoyed all its present happiness : the people, as if spontaneously, began to exert their native vigour, and every art and every genius put forth all their powers.

The English were put in possession of neither new nor splendid acquisitions, nor had they such great influence in foreign courts ; but commerce grew up

among them, and, almost without a protector, flourished with vigour. The people now began to know their real element; and this rendered them more happy than the foreign conquests, or the former victories of the celebrated kings: a nation which was once subject to every invasion, and the prey of every plunderer, now became powerful, polite, laborious, and enterprising. The newly successful voyages of the Spaniards and Portuguese excited their emulation: they fitted out several expeditions for discovering a northern passage to China; and, though disappointed in their aim, their voyages were not wholly fruitless. Drake and Cavendish surrounded the globe, and discovered skill and courage superior to those very nations which had first showed them the way. The famous sir Walter Raleigh, without any assistance from the government, colonized New England. These expeditions at length formed one of the most powerful marines of Europe, and they were able, as we have seen, to oppose the fleet of Spain, called by the boasting title of the Invincible Armada, with a hundred ships; and this fleet of Spain being destroyed, the English remained masters at sea. This superiority was constantly increasing, till another victory, gained over the fleet of Philip III, gained them a naval sovereignty, which they have ever since inviolably preserved, and which has been scarce ever molested by a competitor.

But external commerce was not more cultivated than internal manufactures. Several of the Flemings, who were persecuted from their own country, by the bad conduct of Spain, found an asylum in England. These more than repaid the protection they found, by the arts which they introduced, and the industry which was thus propagated by their example.

Thus far in the useful arts: but in the polite arts, England excelled all the world; so that many writers fix the Augustan age of literature to that period. The disputes caused by the reformation of religion, had retarded the progress of our language among the powerful, yet spread a love of literature among the lower order of the state. The people now began to learn to read; and the Bible, translated into the vulgar tongue,

was not only serviceable in improving their morals, but their taste. The persecution of Mary was, however, of great detriment to the language: the reformers, being driven into foreign countries, on their return introduced into their sermons a language compounded of those dialects which they had acquired abroad; and the language of England was actually in a state of barbarity when Elizabeth came to the throne. Latin sermons were in fashion; and few of the nobility had either the courage or the taste to declare themselves the patrons of learning.

Either the fortune or the discernment of Elizabeth made Parker archbishop of Canterbury; and he set himself assiduously to reform the corruptions of style, both by precept and example. For this purpose he reviewed and corrected the English translation of the Bible, and printed it with royal magnificence. His own style had all the eloquence of the times: it was manly and concise, but wanted smoothness.

The earl of Essex, a sketch of whose history you have seen, was himself one of the greatest improvers of our language; his education had freed him from the technical barbarities of the school, and his style ran on unembarrassed by the stiffness of pedantry. His letters (particularly that which he wrote from Ireland to the queen) are regarded as models of fine writing to this day. Sir Walter Raleigh has the reputation of being one of the improvers of our language, and none can contest with him the honour of being foremost in the improvement of our history. Hooker, the author of the Ecclesiastical Polity, was the first Englishman whose style, upon theological subjects, does honour to his memory as a scholar and a gentleman: but what particularly deserves notice is, that a man like him, bred up in poverty, and seclusion from the polite, should express himself in a more modern and elegant manner than his contemporary authors, Sidney or Raleigh, who were bred at court.

I shall mention only one prose writer more, the greatest and wisest of all our English philosophers, and, perhaps, the greatest philosopher among men: I need hardly mention the name of Francis Bacon,

lord Verulam: his style is copious and correct, and his learning only surpassed by his genius.

Among the poets, two of particular note attract our attention, Spencer and Shakspeare: to attempt an encomium of either is needless: all praise must be too low for their merits, or unnecessary to make them more known.

In short, the English now began to rival the Spaniards, who, at that time, aimed at universal monarchy, both in arts and arms. The city of London became more large, and more beautiful; the people of the country began to consider agriculture as one of the most useful and honourable employments; the English were, in power, the second nation in Europe, and they were shortly to become the greatest, by becoming the most free.

During this reign, a few suffered death for their religious opinions; but we may venture to assert that they raised the disturbances by which they suffered; for those who lived in quiet were permitted to enjoy their opinions, under the necessary restraints.

If we look through history, and consider the rise of kingdoms, we shall not find, in all its volumes, such an instance of a nation becoming wise, powerful, and happy, in so short a time. The source of our felicity began in Henry VII; and, though repressed by the intervening tyrannies, yet, before the end of Elizabeth's reign, who was only his granddaughter, the English became the most polished and the most happy people upon earth. Liberty, it is true, as yet continued to fluctuate: Elizabeth knew her own power, and often stretched it to the very limits of despotism: but when commerce was introduced, liberty necessarily entered in its train; for there never was a nation perfectly commercial and perfectly despotic.

LETTER XXXVIII.

YOU are now to turn to a reign, which, though not splendid, was useful. The English only wanted a season of peace to bring those arts to perfection which

were planted in the preceding reign. No monarch was fonder of peace than James I, who succeeded Elizabeth; and none ever enjoyed a reign of more lasting tranquillity. He came to the throne with the universal approbation of all orders of the state: for in his person was united every claim to the crown that either descent, bequest, or parliamentary sanction, could confer. But on his first arrival, it was readily seen that he by no means approved of the treatment of his mother, Mary queen of Scots; and not only refused to wear mourning himself for the late queen, by whom she had been beheaded, but also denied admission to any who appeared in mourning upon her account.

He began his reign by a laudable attempt to unite both the kingdoms into one; but this the jealousy of the English prevented: they were apprehensive that the posts and employments, which were in the gift of the court, might be conferred on the Scots, whom they were, as yet, taught to regard as foreigners. By the repulse in this instance, he found the people he came to govern very different from those he had left, and perceived that the liberty and the spirit of the English could not be restrained by the shadows of divine right and passive obedience.

He now, therefore, attempted to correct his first mistake, and to peruse the English laws, as he had formerly done those of his own country; and by these he was resolved to govern. He was, in the second attempt, disappointed in his aim. In a government so fluctuating as that of England, custom was ever deviating from law, and what was enacted in one reign, was contradicted by precedent in another: the laws and the manners of England were, at this particular juncture, very different from each other. The laws had, all along, declared in favour of an unlimited prerogative: the present manners, on the contrary, were formed by instruments, and upon principles of liberty. All the kings and queens before him, except such as were weakened by intestine divisions, or the dread of approaching invasion, issued rather commands than received advice from their parliament. James was early sensible of their conduct in this respect, and strove to establish the prerogative upon the laws, un-

mindful of the alteration of manners among the people, who had, in the reign of queen Mary, got an idea of their own power; of which, when the majority are once sensible, they never desist from defending.

Numberless, therefore, were the disputes between the king and his parliament, during this whole reign; one attempting to keep the royal splendour unsullied, the other aiming at lessening the dangerous part of prerogative: the one labouring to preserve the laws and institutions of former reigns, the other stedfast in asserting the inherent privileges of mankind. Thus we see virtue was the cause of the dissension on either side; and the principles of both, though seemingly opposite, were, in fact, founded either in law or in reason. When the parliament would not grant a subsidy, James had examples enough, among his predecessors, to extort a benevolence. Edward IV, Henry VIII, and others, had often done this; and he was entitled, undoubtedly, by precedent, to the same privilege. The house of commons, on the other hand, who began to find themselves the protectors of the people, and not the passive instruments of the crown, justly considered that this extorted benevolence might, at length, make the sovereign entirely independent of the parliament, and therefore complained against it, as an infringement of their privileges. These attempts of the crown, and those murmurings of the people, continued through this whole reign, and first gave rise to that spirit of party which has ever since subsisted in England; the one side declaring for the king's prerogative, the other for the people's liberty.

Whenever the people, as I have already observed, get sight of liberty, they never quit the view: the commons, as may naturally be expected in the present juncture, gained ground, even though defeated; and the monarch, notwithstanding his professions and resolutions to keep his prerogative untouched, was every day losing some small part of his authority. Historians are apt to charge this to his imbecillity; but it, in reality, arose from the spirit of the times: the clergy, who had returned from banishment during the last reign, had disseminated republican principles among

their hearers, and no art nor authority could check its growth; so that, had the most active or the most diligent monarch upon earth been then seated on the throne, yet he could not have preserved the ancient privileges of English monarchy unimpaired.

The clemency and the justice of this monarch's reign early appeared from that spirit of moderation which he showed to the professors of each religion; the minds of the people had been long irritated against each other, and each party persecuted the rest, as it happened to prevail; James wisely observed, that men should be punished only for actions, and not for opinions; each party murmured against him, and the universal complaint of every sect was the best argument of his moderation toward all.

Yet, mild as he was, there was a project contrived, in the very beginning of his reign, for the re-establishment of popery, which seemed to be even of infernal extraction: a more horrid or a more terrible scheme never entered into the human mind; the massacre of St. Bartholomew, in France, in which sixty thousand protestants were murdered in cold blood, was, in reality, not so dreadful. The catholics of England had expected some condescensions from the king, which he was unwilling to grant: this refusal determined them to take different measures for the establishment of their religion and their party: they were resolved to cut off the king and both houses of parliament at one blow. The house where the parliament of England sits, is built on arched vaults, and in these the papists were determined to lay gunpowder, in order to blow up the king and all the members of both houses at their next sitting. For this deed of desperation a number of persons united, among which were Robert Catesby, Thomas Piercy (kinsman to the earl of Northumberland), John Grant, Ambrose Rookwood, Christopher Wright, Francis Tresham, Guy Fawkes, and Edward Digby. How horrid soever the contrivance, yet every member seemed faithful and secret in the league, and, about two months before the sitting of parliament, they hired the cellar under the parliament-house, and bought a quantity of coal, with which it was then

filled, as if for their own use : the next thing done was to convey, privately, thirty-six barrels of gunpowder, which had been purchased in Holland, and which were covered under the coal and faggots. The day for the sitting of the parliament approached ; never was treason more secret, or ruin more apparently inevitable : the conspirators expected the day with impatience, and gloried in their meditated guilt. A remorse of private friendship saved the kingdom, when all the ties divine and human were too weak to save it. Thomas Piercy conceived a design of saving the life of lord Monteagle, his intimate friend and companion. About ten days before the sittings, this nobleman, upon his return home, received a letter from a person unknown, the messenger making off as soon as he had delivered it ; the letter was to this effect : *Stay away from this parliament, for God and man have concurred to punish the wickedness of the times. Think not slightly of this warning ; though the danger does not appear, yet they shall receive a terrible blow, without knowing from whence it comes. The danger will be past as soon as you have burnt this letter, and this council may do you good, but cannot do you harm.* The contents of this mysterious letter surprised and puzzled the nobleman to whom it was addressed : he communicated it instantly to the secretary of state, and the secretary showed it to the council : none of them were capable of comprehending the meaning of it, and they resolved to communicate it to the king. In this universal agitation between doubt and apprehension, the king was the first who penetrated the meaning of its fatal contents : he concluded that some sudden danger was preparing by means of gunpowder. The lord-chamberlain sent proper persons, the
 Nov. 5, 1605.
 very night before the sitting of parliament, to examine the vaults above mentioned : there the whole train of powder was discovered, and a man in a cloak and boots, with a dark lantern in his hand, preparing for the dreadful attempt : this was Guy Fawkes, who passed for Piercy's servant. The atrociousness of his guilt inspired him with resolution, and, with an undaunted air, he told them, that, had he blown them and himself up together, he had been happy.

He obstinately refused to name his accomplices; the sight of the rack, however, at length brought him to a confession. No nation fears death less than the English, but none dread torments more.

The conspirators, who had prepared all things to second the mine at Westminster, finding their plot discovered, fled different ways, to assemble their catholic friends, whom they expected to rise in their defence; but the country being every where alarmed against them, they were at last forced, to the number of about a hundred, to stop at a house in Warwickshire, where they were resolved to sell their lives dearly. A spark of fire happening to fall among some gunpowder that was laid to dry, it blew up, and so maimed the principal conspirators, that the survivors resolved to open the gate, and sally through the multitude that surrounded the house. Some instantly were slain with a thousand wounds; Catesby, Piercy, and Winter, standing back to back, fought long and desperately, till, in the end, the first two fell covered with blood, and the other was taken alive. Such as survived the slaughter were tried and convicted; several fell just victims to justice, and others experienced the king's mercy. Two jesuits, Garnet and Oldcorn, who were privy to the plot, suffered with the rest: the king maintained, that they were punished justly: but, by their own party, they were regarded as martyrs to religion, though without ground, for James was too humane to condemn any one upon such slight motives as those of opinion.

The discovery and extinction of this conspiracy, which was entirely owing to the wisdom of the king, gained him the love of his subjects, though it had but little influence over his parliament, in extorting supplies. His desire of peace with foreign states diminished his authority at home; for though he talked boldly of his prerogative in parliament, yet, unlike some of his predecessors, he had no standing army to back his pretensions. His speeches, which were rather arguments in favour of royal authority than directions or advice, only put both houses upon arguing with him in his own way, but not upon complying with his re-

quests. They refused him supplies, when they knew it could be done with impunity. His liberality and his indigence soon forced him to condescensions, which, when once granted, could never be again recalled. Thus, while he thought himself enlarging the royal prerogative, he was, in reality, abridging it on every side.

Perhaps the opposition this king met with from his parliament, was the motive of his encouraging favourites, who might help him to reduce them to his measures. His first choice was fixed upon Robert Carr, who, from a private gentleman, was brought up, through all the gradations of preferment, till created earl of Somerset. An amour between this nobleman and the countess of Essex, one of the lewdest, yet finest, women of her time, at last terminated in his disgrace: his friend, sir Thomas Overbury, had declared against his marrying this lady, who was espoused to another: this advice procured the resentment of Somerset, and the hatred of the countess. The king, by false pretences, was instigated to confine sir Thomas in the Tower, and here the earl and the countess caused him to be poisoned. When this transaction came to the king's knowledge, he delivered him to public justice, by which he was condemned; but he received the royal pardon, though he ever after continued in disgrace.

His next and greatest favourite was George Villiers, afterward duke of Buckingham, whose person and beauty first drew the king's attention and regard. This nobleman was the first who was ever created a duke in England without being allied to the royal family: it may be reckoned among the most conspicuous circumstances of this reign, that a king, who was bred a scholar, should choose, for his favourites, the most illiterate of his courtiers; that he, who trembled at a drawn sword, should lavish favours on one who promised to be the hero of a romance. Buckingham first inspired young prince Charles, who was afterwards famous for his misfortunes and death, with a desire of going disguised into Spain, to court the infanta: their adventures in this romantic expedition could fill novels, and have actually been made the subject of many. Charles was

Reading the history of James I. 1618.

the knight-errant, and Buckingham served under him as 'squire: they set out post, and travelled through France under the names of Jack and Tom Smith. They appeared at Paris in large bushy periwigs, which shadowed their faces. They were received in Spain with all possible respect; but Buckingham filled the whole court with intrigues, adventures, serenades, and jealousy. To make the folly complete, he fell in love with the duchess of Olivarez, the prime minister's wife, and insulted the prime minister. These levities were not to be endured at such a court as that of Spain, where jealousy is so prevalent, and decorum so necessary; the match was broke off, and the prince was permitted to return in safety.

A match for this prince was soon after negotiated with Henrietta, the daughter of Henry IV, of France, and this met with better success than the former: Charles had seen this princess, when he passed through that kingdom in disguise; he admired her beauty, and from every quarter was informed of her sense and discretion. A dispensation was got from the pope for her marrying a protestant prince; but king James died before the consummation of the nuptials.

With regard to foreign negotiations, James neither understood nor cultivated them: and perhaps, in the government of such a kingdom as England, domestic politics alone are requisite. His reign was marked with none of the splendours of triumph, nor any new conquests of acquisitions: but the arts were nevertheless silently and happily going on to improvement; reason was extending its influence, and showing mankind a thousand errors in religion and government that had been rivetted by long prescription. People now no longer joined to some popular leader, but each began to think for himself: the reformation had introduced a spirit of liberty, even while the constitution and the laws were built upon arbitrary power. James taught them, by his own example, to argue upon these topics; he set up the divine authority of kings against the natural privileges of the people: the subject began in controversy, and it was soon found that the monarch's was the weakest side.

LETTER XXXIX.

NEVER did monarch come to the throne of England with a greater variety of favorable occurrences than Charles I. He found himself possessed of a peaceful and flourishing kingdom; his right undisputed by rival claimants; strengthened by an alliance with one of the most powerful monarchs that ever reigned in France, whose sister he had married; and, to add to all this, loved by his subjects, whom he had won by his virtues and address.

However, this was but a flattering prospect: the spirit of liberty was roused, and it was resolved to oppose the ancient claims of monarchs, who usurped their power in times of ignorance or danger, although they had confirmed it by laws, and continued it by long prescription. Charles had been, from his infancy, taught to consider the royal privileges as sacred pledges, which it was his duty to defend: his father had implanted the doctrines of hereditary and indefeasible right early upon his mind. James only defended these doctrines by words; and it was soon the fate of Charles to assert them by action. It is the duty of every sovereign to consider the genius and disposition of his people, as a father does that of his children, and to adopt his government to each conjuncture. Charles mistook that genius; he wanted to govern a people, who had for some time learned to be free, by maxims and precedents that had their origin in times of ignorance and slavery.

He, therefore, began his reign with two of the most difficult projects that could be conceived: the one to succour the protestants in Germany, against the emperor and duke of Bavaria; the other, to keep the royal prerogative entire, without a national standing army. In order to effect these purposes, the house of commons was to be managed; who, as I have already described, from being the oppressed party, were now willing, in turn, to become oppressors; who, from a detestation of popery, had now overshot the mark, and were become puritans. His first demand for the ne-

cessary supplies to carry on the war of the palatinate, in Germany, though undertaken at their own request; was answered with a petition for punishing papists, and for an examination into the grievances of the nation. Buckingham, who had been the late king's favourite, and who was still more caressed by the present monarch, did not escape their censures; so that, instead of granting the sums requisite, they employed the time in vain disputations and complaints, till the season for prosecuting the intended campaign was elapsed. The king, at length, wearied with their delays, and offended at the contempt of his demands, thought proper to dissolve a parliament which he could not bring to reason. In fact, the commons, at this time, complained of imaginary grievances; but the time was approaching when their complaints were to be real.

The ministers of the king had not yet forgot that kind of tax which was called a benevolence, and which had been often exacted from the subject in former reigns. Charles thought to avail himself of this method of procuring money; but, at the same time, coloured it over with a greater appearance of justice than any of his predecessors. He, therefore, determined to borrow money of such persons as were best able to lend; to whom, for this purpose, he directed letters, mentioning the sum. With this the people reluctantly complied: it was, in fact, a grievance, though authorised by a thousand precedents: but no precedent can give sanction to injustice. With this money, a fleet was equipped, and sent against Spain; but it returned without procuring either glory or advantage.

This ineffectual expedition demanded to be repaired by a new supply, greater than what extorted loans could produce; and another parliament was called for this purpose. The new parliament, upon this occasion, seemed even more refractory than the former, and appeared more willing to make or to complain of grievances than to grant money; but chiefly their resentment was directed against Buckingham, the royal favourite. Whenever the subjects attack the royal prerogative, they begin with the favourites of the crown;

and wise princes, sensible of this, seldom have any. Charles was not possessed of the art of making a distinction between friends and ministers: whoever was his favourite, was always entrusted with the administration of affairs. He loved Buckingham, and undertook to protect him; although to defend this nobleman was to share his reproach. Two members of the house of commons, Diggs and Elliot, undertook to accuse him. The purport of the charge amounted to little more than that he had engrossed too much power for himself and his relations, and that he had applied a plaster to the late king's side which was supposed to be poisonous. They inveighed against the duke upon this frivolous accusation, and the king, in a passion, ordered them both to the Tower. This was an open act of violence, and should have been supported, or never performed. The commons exclaimed that their privileges were infringed; they protested that neither of the members had spoken any thing disrespectful of his majesty, and began to publish their vindication. The king, who was ever ready to enter upon harsh measures, but not to support them, released the two members; and this compliance confirmed that obstinacy which his former injury had contributed to raise. The earl of Arundel, for being guilty of the same offence in the house of lords, was imprisoned and dismissed, in the same manner, by the king. The two houses having in this manner answered the royal demands for money, the king, rather than give up the duke, chose to be without the supply, and, therefore, once more dissolved the parliament.

He had now a war to maintain, which he was engaged in by the advice of those very members who refused to contribute to its support; beside this, he was to put the kingdom in a proper posture of defence, and he wanted money to execute these purposes. To furnish the proper supplies, he again had recourse to loans, and to granting protections to the papists, for stipulated sums of money: such as refused had soldiers billeted upon them, contrary to the customs of England; and even some were enrolled for soldiers themselves. Persons of birth and rank were summoned to

appear before the council, and, upon their persisting in a refusal, were put into confinement. We now once more perceive the seeds of discord beginning to shoot forth: we now see, as in every other civil war, both parties guilty of injustice, yet on either side that injustice arising from principles of virtue; the one actuated by the inherent liberties of mankind, the other by the prescriptive privileges of the crown. Such is the general lot of humanity, to have their actions degenerate from the producing motives.

The king, now finding that nothing but the prospect of immediate danger could induce some future parliament to provide necessary supplies, was resolved to
1626. make a rupture with France, a war against which had ever been an expedient of producing unanimity at home. With this view he sent out Buckingham with a fleet to relieve Rochelle, a maritime town in that kingdom, which had long enjoyed its privileges independent of the French king, and which he was now actually preparing to deprive them of. This expedition was equally fruitless with that to the coasts of Spain: the duke knew nothing of the art of war, and consumed his time in besieging a little fort in the isle of Ree, from which he was driven with the loss of half his army. The bad success of this served to render the unfortunate duke still more obnoxious, and the king more needy; another parliament was therefore called, and a supply demanded in the usual form. The commons, in the first parliament, had begun with fictitious grievances; but their refusing then to contribute the supplies, soon introduced an actual abuse of power, and rendered the king unjust, who, probably, only desired to be easy. He extorted supplies, and imprisoned the refractory. The complaints of the commons were now real: their members had been imprisoned; loans had been extorted; a tax upon merchandise, called tonnage and poundage, had been exacted without parliamentary authority; and, last of all, the duke of Buckingham was still suffered to rule the councils of the king, and inflame every proceeding. In this situation they seemed, as usual, resolved to grant no money till their grievances were redressed, and till

the king had given a positive assurance to maintain the liberty of the subject. The king promised both, and they voted him a liberal supply, upon which they were prorogued, as was customary. This fresh supply enabled his majesty to make another attempt to relieve Rochelle, and the duke of Buckingham was again appointed to the command. Buckingham had ever behaved with some haughtiness, as being sure of the king's protection: but his greatest fault seemed to be too large a share of power, which gave offence to every order. It is the aim of all malecontents in a state rather to bring the great down to their own level, than to exalt the inferior orders to theirs; and this might be a motive to the lords and commons for attempting to retrench Buckingham's power. The clamour raised against him in the house was not lost among the people; they re-echoed it from one to the other, and the duke had a million of foes only from his seeming prosperity. Among this number was one John Felton, an Irishman, a lieutenant in the army. This man was naturally melancholy, courageous, and enthusiastic: he felt for his country, as if labouring under a calamity which he thought it in the power of his single arm to remove; he resolved to kill the duke, and thus to do service both to God and man. Animated with mistaken patriotism and gloomy zeal, he reached Portsmouth, where the duke was then surrounded with his levee, giving the necessary orders to embark. Felton came up among the crowd, and stabbed him with a long knife to the heart: the duke instantly fell dead, and Felton walked composedly away; 1628. but his hat had fallen off while he was striking the blow, and this produced the discovery. He disdained denying a murder in which he gloried, and averred that he looked upon the duke as an enemy to his country, and, as such, deserved to suffer. We shall see through the course of this reign several instances of great virtues and enormous vices; for the genius of England was at this time arrived at its highest pitch.

The expedition to Rochelle again returned without success, as if it had been ordered by fate that nothing was to put the people in good humour. The contest,

therefore, between privilege and prerogative was now carried on with the same acrimony as before. Tonnage and poundage was exacted by the king as a right belonging to the crown, and refused by the merchants as a tax that could only be granted by the people. The parliament was called to determine the dispute; but, instead of discussing that argument, they entered upon disputes about religion. The house was mostly composed of puritans, and such were for abolishing episcopacy, and persecuting papists. They were freed from Buckingham; but there was another favourite whom they dreaded still more, Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, a great favourer of the opinion of *divine right*, and firmly attached to the rites of the church as then established. They seemed willing to allow the king no favourite, and therefore loudly murmured against this prelate. Their indignation, however, was for a while, called off to another object, which was considered as a new act of violence in the king. His customhouse officers had seized upon the goods of one or two merchants who refused to pay tonnage and poundage. The judges, in the former reign of James I, had adjudged this tax to belong to the crown without consent of parliament; the former reign, therefore, had been the proper time for disputing the king's right; but the commons had then not so much power, or such a spirit of resistance as now: they were now perfectly sensible of their own strength, and were resolved to fix the limits between the king and the people. They therefore boldly and warmly remonstrated against the king's proceeding; and he, in return, imprisoned four of the members, and dissolved the parliament. These were the causes which soon after overturned the state, and laid the throne in blood.

LETTER XL.

A MONARCHICAL government has ever been looked upon as best, when wisely administered. We are so constituted by nature, that some are born to command,

and others to obey. In a republic, how free soever, the people cannot govern themselves, and the leaders must be tyrants over their own narrow circle of subjects. In a monarchy, the governor is placed at a distance from the many, as he is but one; in a republic, the tyrants are near, because they are many: in the former, the people are subject to oppression from errors of will; in the latter, they are harassed by the rigours of the law. In a monarchy, the redress of grievances is speedy; in a republic, dilatory and uncertain: in the one, punishments are few; in the other, severe and numerous, from the debility of the constitution.

The present parliament seemed not so intent upon abridging the king's power, as upon entirely abolishing it: they were Calvinists, and it is the spirit of Calvinism to throw off the restraints of royalty. The English had lately seen this happily effected in Switzerland and Holland, and, influenced by such examples, seemed desirous of imitation.

You have seen the king and the English parliament now almost prepared for an open rupture: still, however, the commons kept within the bounds of humble remonstrance; and, while they refused his majesty's demands, asked pardon for their delay. They had still a respect for their monarch, which even their republican principles could not entirely efface; and though they were willing to wound, yet they feared to strike an open blow. The Scotch soon set them an example of resistance: they had, in that kingdom, long embraced the Calvinistical doctrines; and, though they still had bishops, these were reduced to poverty, and treated with contempt. James I. attempted to exalt the bishops, and to introduce the rites and the liturgy of the church of England among them, but died in the midst of his endeavours. Charles, therefore, was resolved to complete what his father had begun. This unnecessary and ill-judged attempt alienated the affections of the Scotch subjects. The sedition passed from city to city; the Calvinists formed a league, as if all the laws, divine and human, were infringed; while the desire, in the court party, of supporting their commands, and in the people, of defending their religion, soon excited, ac-

tually in Scotland, those dangers, which, in England, were as yet only apprehended.

In such a situation the king could only repress the presumption of his Scotch subjects by the assistance of those of England: but he had lately dissolved his parliament, and seemed no way disposed to call another; he had cut off the sources of every supply in cases of emergency, and fondly hoped he could govern merely by the terror of royalty. His favourites helped to confirm his errors; they were fond of arbitrary power, because they shared its indulgencies: the privy council considered itself as absolute; the starchamber, as it was called, severely punished all who denied the prerogative royal; the high commissioned court now turned from defending the papists against the puritans, whom they justly feared as tinctured with the spirit of resistance: the very judges also, being chosen by the court, were entirely devoted to the king: so that all conspired to lift him above justice, and induced him to call those parliaments no more, whose maxims of government he found diametrically opposite to his own. He was therefore resolved to fix upon other methods of raising money; methods, indeed, which were practised by his predecessors, but at times when they had power to control even justice, and forced to compel their subjects to obey. Charles, in the midst of a civil war in Scotland, and the discontents of his people at home, at a time when one half of his subjects were preaching sedition, and the other half were learning to despise kings, without army and without treasures, resolved to reign with arbitrary power.

With the taxes which he levied without parliaments in England, he undertook to bring about the reformation in Scotland; and therefore began, as his parliament was now no more, to collect a tax upon the subject, called *Ship-money*. This is that famous tax which first roused a whole nation, after an unsettled constitution of more than a thousand years, at length to fix and determine the bounds of their own freedom and the king's prerogative.

To give a sanction to the royal orders, this tax was

backed by the opinion of all the judges, who voted it to be customary and legal. Their opinion will, at once, serve to explain the nature of this tax, and what they judged concerning it. It runs thus: *We every man by himself, and all of us together, have taken into serious consideration the case and question concerning Ship-money; and it is our opinion, that when the good and safety of the kingdom in general is concerned, and the kingdom in danger, that your majesty may, by writ under the great seal of England, command all your subjects of this your kingdom, at their charge, to provide and furnish such number of ships, with men, victuals, and ammunition, and for such time, as your majesty shall think fit, for the defence and safety of this kingdom from such danger and peril; and that, by law, your majesty may compel the doing thereof, in case of refusal or refractoriness: and we are also of opinion, that in such case your majesty is the sole judge both of the danger, and when and how the same is to be prevented and avoided, &c.*

An order from the throne thus backed by the opinion of all the judges, it was thought, would be at once complied with; but the king was deceived. A private man of courage and integrity, one John Hampden, stood forth as a champion for the people, and refused to pay a tax not authorised by parliament. The sum at which he was rated amounted to but twenty shillings, yet he refused to contribute even this, and brought his cause before the court of exchequer. Never was a greater cause argued in any court before. The judges, by their sentence, were to determine whether the nation, and their posterity, were to be subject to arbitrary power, or to enjoy freedom. The judges determined in favour of servitude; Hampden was cast; and this only served to increase the discontents of the people.

The discontent and opposition the king found among his English subjects, one would have thought, might serve to repress his ardour for reformation in the religion of Scotland. Having published an order for reading the liturgy in the principal church in Edinburgh, the people received it with clamours and imprecations: the court party blamed their obstinacy, as the innova-

tions were trifling : but this was retorted against themselves with still greater force for labouring so earnestly at the establishment of trifles. The sedition in that kingdom, which had hitherto been secret, was now kept concealed no longer ; rebellion had, as it were, set up its standard among them. Yet still the king could not resolve to desist from his design ; and so prepossessed was he in favour of royal right, that he thought the very name of a king would influence them to return to duty. He was soon undeceived ; the Scotch Calvinists, whose principles were republican, entered into a covenant to suppress the bishops, and resist the king's authority. This was judged an open declaration of war, and Charles 1638. summoned the nobility of England, who held lands of the crown, to furnish a proper number of forces to suppress them. To add to his supplies, he demanded a voluntary contribution from the clergy ; and, by means of his queen, the catholics also were pressed for their assistance. By these methods he found himself at the head of an undisciplined and reluctant army, amounting to about twenty thousand men, commanded by generals more willing to negociate than to fight. However, his superiority of numbers gave him a manifest advantage over the malecontents, who were not slow in marching to oppose him. Charles had inherited the peaceful disposition of his father : he was unwilling to come to extremities, although a blow then struck with vigour might have prevented many of his succeeding misfortunes. Instead of fighting, he entered upon a treaty : a suspension was concluded upon, and terms agreed to, that neither side intended to observe. This suspension and disbanding the armies was a fatal step to the king : the Scotch forces could be again mustered at pleasure ; the English troops, not without time, difficulty, and expense. Of this the malecontents were sensible, and the negotiations met with obstructions, in proportion as they were confident of their power. In short, after much altercation, and many treaties signed and broken, both parties once more resolved upon a war.

War being resolved on, the king now took every method to raise money for maintaining it. Ship-money

was levied as before, and some other arbitrary taxes were exacted with great severity: but one method of increasing supplies reflects immortal honour upon those who granted them. His counsellors and servants lent the king whatever sums they could spare, and distressed their private fortunes to serve the state. Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, and the marquis of Hamilton, contributed very large sums; but particularly Thomas Wentworth, earl of Strafford, gave his majesty twenty thousand pounds. Wentworth was one of the great characters that marked those celebrated times. Upon his first appearance in the state, he was foremost in opposition to the crown; but finding his confederates had mixed a spirit of enthusiasm with their regard for liberty, he left their side to take that of the king's, which he fancied in greatest danger. He was brave, wise, and loyal; and followed the king from principle, yet without entirely approving his conduct.

These were the resources of the crown to prepare for a Scotch war; but they were still insufficient, and there was but one method more to furnish larger supplies, namely, by calling a parliament. It was now eleven years since Charles had called any. The 1640. ungovernable spirit of the last had taught him to hate and to fear such an assembly. His wants, however, at length induced him to constrain his indignation, and by the advice of his council he called another, the members of which were still more turbulent than the former, as they now had still stronger reasons for their discontent. The house of commons could not be induced to treat the Scotch, who were of the same principles, and contended for the same cause, as their enemies. They looked upon them as friends and brothers, who only rose to teach them to defend their privileges. The king could reap no other fruits, therefore, from this assembly, but murmurings and complaints; every method he had taken to supply himself with money was declared an abuse: tonnage and poundage, ship-money, the sale of monopolies, the billeting of soldiers upon the citizens, were all voted stretches to arbitrary power. The starchamber gave particular offence, and, instead of subsidies, the house

presented the king with nothing but grievances. Charles once more dissolved this parliament, and thus aggravated the discontents of the people.

He had now made enemies of the Scotch nation, and of the commons of England; it remained to offend the city of London. Upon their refusing to lend him a sum of money to carry on the war, he sued them in the starchamber for some lands in Ireland, and made them pay a considerable fine. He continued to exact all the taxes against which the parliament had so frequently remonstrated. Even had he been despotic, such a conduct would have shook him on the throne; but, limited as he was, it served to complete his overthrow. He could expect little assistance from England; and the Scotch, sensible of their own power in that part of his dominions, led an army of twenty thousand men as far as Newcastle, in order to seize upon or to dethrone him. Having thus prepared his misfortunes, he found himself again obliged to call
Nov. 3. that parliament which completed his ruin.

Instead of granting money, this new parliament, as all the rest had done, began by demanding to have their grievances redressed: they desired an abolition of the starchamber, exclaimed against arbitrary taxes, and particularly ship-money; and, in fine, demanded that a new parliament should be called every three years. Charles was now obliged to grant those demands from necessity, which in the beginning of his reign he might have bestowed as a favour. He expected to regain his authority by complying, but he was deceived; nothing could satisfy the commons but the total abolition of his power. He expected that his English subjects would repress the insolence of those of Scotland, but had the mortification to find the house of commons approve their conduct, and repay their eruption with a reward of three hundred thousand pounds. He hoped to repress the puritanical party of England, but found, to his surprise, almost the whole house of commons of that persuasion. He loved the earl of Strafford with tenderness, and esteemed his wisdom; and the house of commons, conscious of his regards, accused the earl of high treason. When we attempt

innovation, we seldom know how far our schemes will extend at last. This parliament began with redressing grievances; they proceeded to reform the state, and ended in totally destroying the constitution.

LETTER XLI.

IN treating of a subject in which almost every Englishman is partial, it is no easy matter to avoid falling into their errors: but I have laboured to view this part of our history without receiving any bias from party; and our constitution is now sufficiently established, whatever we may think of this monarch's equity, or his subjects' resolution. Our laws, at present, differ both from what Charles endeavoured to maintain, and what his parliaments pretended to enact: we now are all agreed, that unlimited power arrogated on one side, and tumultuous freedom introduced on the other, are both intolerable; yet, of the two, perhaps despotism is superior. In a republic, the number of tyrants are uncontrollable, for they can support each other in oppression; in a monarchy, there is one object, who, if he offends, is easily punishable, because he is but one. The oppressions of a monarch are generally exerted only in the narrow sphere round him; the oppressions of the governors of a republic, though not so flagrant, are more universal: the monarch is apt to commit great enormities, but they seldom reach the multitude at humble distance from the throne: the republican despot oppresses the multitude that lies within the circle of his influence, for he knows them. The monarch terrifies me with great evils, which I may never feel; the despot actually loads me with submissions, which I am constantly obliged to sustain: and, in my opinion, it is much better to be in danger of having my head chopped off with an axe once in my life, than to have my leg galled with a continual fetter.

Whatever were the reasonings of the king upon this subject, it is certain his actions were intended for the benefit of his subjects: but he continued to rule them

upon the maxims of former princes, at a time when the principles of the subjects were totally changed. The house of commons seemed now to have thrown off all subordination : they not only arraigned and attainted almost all the king's ministers, particularly Laud, Strafford, Finch, and Windebank, but passed an act to make that parliament continual, until all grievances should be redressed. The king complied with every measure ; yet all his compliance only served to increase their demands. The earl of Strafford first fell a victim to their popular fury : the commons exhibited an accusation of twenty-eight articles against him ; the substance of which was, that he had attempted to extend the king's authority at home, and had been guilty of several exactions in Ireland. These received the name of high treason, and the people without demanded justice. The managers for the house of commons pleaded with vehemence against him at the bar of the house of lords, who were his judges : they insisted, that, though each article separately did not amount to a proof, yet the whole taken together carried conviction. This is a method of arguing frequently used in the English courts of justice even to this day ; and, perhaps, none can be more erroneous ; for almost every falsehood may thus be defended by a multiplicity of weak reasons. In this tumult of aggravation and clamour, the earl himself, whose parts and wisdom had long been respected and acknowledged, stood unmoved. He defended his innocence with all the presence of mind, judgment, and temper, that could be expected from innocence and ability. His little children were placed near him, as he was thus defending his own cause, and that of his master : after he had, in a long and eloquent speech, delivered extempore, confuted the accusation of his enemies, he thus drew to a conclusion : *But, my lords, I have troubled you too long ; longer than I should have done, but for the sake of those dear pledges a saint in heaven has left me.*—Upon this he paused, dropped a tear, looked upon his children, and then proceeded : *What I forfeit for myself is a trifle ; that my indiscretions should reach my posterity, wounds me to the heart. Pardon my infirmity.*—Some-

thing I should have added, but am not able; therefore, let it pass.—And now, my lords, for myself, I have long been taught, that the afflictions of this life are overpaid by that eternal weight of glory which awaits the innocent; and so, my lords, even so, with the utmost tranquillity, I submit myself to your judgment. Whether that judgment be life or death, TE DEUM LAUDAMUS. His eloquence and innocence seemed to influence his judges: the king himself went to the house of lords, and spoke in his defence; but the spirit of the people was excited, and nothing but his blood would give them satisfaction. He was condemned by both houses, and nothing now remained but for the king to give his consent to the bill of attainder. But his consent seemed of little consequence; the limits of royalty were long since broken down, and imminent dangers might attend his refusal. While he continued in this agitation of mind, not knowing how to behave, he received a letter from the unfortunate nobleman himself, desiring that his life might be made the sacrifice of a mutual agreement between the king and the people; adding, that to a willing mind there could be no injury. This noble instance of generosity was but ill repaid: the king was persuaded to give his consent; he signed the fatal bill; **Stratford** was beheaded, and this taught his subjects **1641.** soon after to spill blood that was still more precious.

The whole kingdom now seemed to be in a ferment: all the petitions of parliament, which were in reality calculated to abase the king, were, notwithstanding, drawn up with the most seeming affection and obedience; they were constantly complaining, in each of these, of their fears for the church, at the very time when they were themselves labouring its overthrow. Faction ran high. In the king's party, there was an ill-projected and worse-conducted design of keeping the prerogative as much untouched as ever it had been in the reigns of the most fortunate and formidable monarchs; in the opposite party, a fixed resolution of turning the state into a republic, and changing the government of the church into that of presbytery.

In the midst of these troubles, the papists of Ireland fancied they found a convenient opportunity of throw-

ing off the English yoke. Religion and liberty often inspire the most atrocious actions: and they did so now. The papists took a resolution, of which we find many horrid examples in history. They attempted to cut off all the protestants in that kingdom at one blow. Not less than forty thousand persons fell a sacrifice upon this occasion. In such a number of murders, cruelty put on a thousand different shapes; rapes, burnings, and tortures, were practised in every part of that miserable island; and all the protestants perished who had not the good fortune to make early provision for their safety. Such was the state of Ireland then, and such was England shortly to be. The parliament took this opportunity to blacken the king, as if he had given sanction to the papists, and encouraged their barbarous design: he vindicated himself with a zeal that nothing but innocence could inspire; and tried every method of assisting his protestant subjects of Ireland. He even demanded succours from the parliament of Scotland to relieve the Irish protestants; but they remitted him to the parliament of England, as Ireland lay more immediately under their protection. The English house of commons sent but feeble succours to a people they pretended to deplore, and gave it as a pretext that the government at home was in danger.

The parliament now proceeded to what they long laboured at, to establish a republic, and destroy the rites of the church of England. They signified to the king, that it was fit to have a privy council only of their appointing. Three members of the house of commons presented this request on their knees. The king was pleased to grant all. Oliver Cromwell, who was then in the house of commons, was heard to declare, that, if this request was rejected, he would sell his estate, which was then but small, and retire out of the kingdom.

Hitherto, it is probable, both sides were actuated rather by principle than ambition. The bishops had hitherto adhered closely to the king; they were not only expelled the house of lords, but, upon remonstrating against this unconstitutional measure, were accused by the house of commons of high treason, and

ten of them sent to the Tower. This spirit of epidemic rage was not confined to both houses of parliament alone; the populace daily surrounded the place of sitting, and, with tumultuous cries, demanded justice. The apprentices, the common council, and the citizens of London, were foremost in this struggle for liberty, as they thought it. However, their principles were sincere; for the motives of a mob, though often wrong, are always honest. In this contest, the presbyterians and cardinal Richelieu of France were ever intriguing: both desired a civil war, the one willing to depress the great, the other to humble the kingdom.

In this decline of the royal authority, the king was persuaded to take another step that was fatal to his interests. By the advice of lord Digby, one of his ministers, he went himself to the house of commons, and accused five of its members of high treason. These were the leading members of the house, whom he thus ventured to call in question; namely, lord Kimbolton, Mr. Hollis, Sir Arthur Haslerig, Mr. Pym, Mr. Hampden, and Mr. Strode. He sat, for some time, in the speaker's chair, to see if the accused were present; but they had escaped a few minutes before his entry, and the house of commons were resolved to support the cause. Disappointed, perplexed, not knowing whom to rely on, the king went next to the common council of the City, and made his complaint to them: the common council only answered by aggravating his former misconduct. From them he went to Windsor, where, reflecting upon the rashness of his former proceeding, he wrote to the parliament, informing them, *that he desisted from his proceedings against the accused members, and assured the parliament that, upon all occasions, he would be as careful of their privileges as of his life, or of his crown.* His violence (as a fine writer remarks) had first rendered him hateful to his commons, and his submission now contemptible.

The commons had already stripped the king of almost all his privileges; the power of appointing governors, generals, and levying armies, still remained: they therefore proceeded to petition, that the Tower

might be put into their hands; that Hull, Portsmouth, and the fleet, should be commanded by persons of their choosing. These requests were at first contested, and then complied with. At last the commons desired to have a militia raised, and governed by such officers and commanders as they should nominate, under pretext of securing them from the Irish papists, whom they affected to be in dread of. This was depriving the king of even the shadow of his former power: but they had gone too far now to recede, and feared leaving him any power, as knowing themselves the first objects on which its vengeance might be exercised. He was willing to grant the raising the militia, but insisted upon appointing his commanders. The parliament desired to command it for an appointed time; but the king, at last provoked to resentment, cried, that they should not command it, *no not for an hour*. This peremptory refusal broke off all further treaty, and now both sides were resolved to have recourse to arms.

Charles retired to York, and the queen went over to Holland, to raise money upon the crown-jewels, and provide ammunition and forces. The parliament, in the mean time, were not idle; they knew their strength and popularity, and published proposals for bringing in money and plate for the defence of the kingdom. But though each side was prepared for war, yet they took every precaution to lay the blame of the first infraction of peace on each other. The king offered proposals to the commons, which he knew they would not accept; and they, in return, offered him nineteen propositions, which, if complied with, would have rendered him entirely subservient to their commands. Their import was, that the privy council, the principal officers of state, the governors of the king's children, forts, castles, fleet, armies, should be all appointed or governed by parliament; that papists should be punished by their authority; that the church and liturgy should be reformed at their discretion; and that such members as had been displaced for former offences should be restored. These proposals, which, if they had been accepted, would have moulded the government into

an aristocratical form, were, happily for posterity, rejected; and the king and his parliament continued to reproach each other for a civil war, of which both were actually guilty.

LETTER XLII.

IN this detail of public calamities, you are not to expect any great strokes either in politics or war; each party was too sincere to give much attention to any thing but the dictates of passion, enthusiasm, or zeal. The parliament was convinced that it drew the sword in defence of liberty; and the king was equally steadfast in believing that he had the authority of Heaven for opposing their pretensions: they therefore took the field with little conduct, and courage alone in the troops generally decided the fortune of the day.

The parliament, from its own authority, constituted sir John Hotham, a sitting member of the house of commons, governor of Hull. In this town there was a large magazine of arms, ammunition, and provisions. The king, sensible of the importance of the place, was desirous of securing it to himself; he therefore approached the gates with three hundred horse, and demanded entrance. Hotham still pre- 1642.
served some appearance of respect to his sovereignty, and on his knees refused to admit him. Disloyalty is ever timid in the beginning.

Manifestoes, on one side and the other, were now dispersed through the whole kingdom, and the people were universally divided into two factions, that went by the name of Royalists and Roundheads. The king ordered the nobility to attend his person; he procured the great seal from London, and erected his standard at Nottingham. The people in general seemed to have lost all respect to his person and government: the laws promulgated by parliament without the sanction of the great seal were observed with due obedience; and the royal standard was scarce followed by any, except a few militia. At length, however, with the succours

furnished by the queen, and the presents of the university of Oxford and his clergy, he raised an army of about fourteen thousand men, commanded by prince Rupert, a man of courage and some experience. The parliament, which disposed of the money of the nation, had one still more numerous, commanded by the earl of Essex, who fought from principle, and who only wished to bring the king to reason.

When the king advanced from Nottingham, and approached near Shrewsbury, he drew up his little army, and made them a speech: *I promise, said he to his soldiers, in the presence of Almighty God, and as I hope for his blessing and protection, that I will ever defend the protestant religion, and in that religion am resolved to live and die. The laws of the land, and the rights of my subjects, shall ever be the measure of my government; and, if Heaven prosper this little army, raised for their king's defence, I promise to rule by parliaments alone, and by every equitable administration. When I fail in these particulars, then let me be abandoned by men; and in this resolution I hope for the assistance of all good men, and am confident of the protection of Providence.*

Essex, on the other hand, was resolved to set up his headquarters at Worcester, and await the king, where, in a few days, a skirmish ensued in favour of the royalists: and the battle of Edge-hill, fought some time after, seemed to confirm the king's superiority. The queen had brought him soldiers from Holland, with ammunition and arms, and immediately departed, in order to furnish more. Yet the parliament was not discouraged; their demands seemed to increase in proportion to their losses; and, as they were defeated in the field, they grew more haughty in the cabinet. They condemned for high treason such governors of towns as gave up their fortresses to the king; while he, on the contrary, offered new terms of peace upon every advantage. But though his desire to spare his subjects was laudable, as a man, yet his long negotiations were faulty, as a warrior, and he wasted that time in altercation and proposal, which should have been employed in vigorous exertions in the field. Upon the whole, his first campaign seemed to promise him success; his

generals were mostly victorious, and his army far superior to the enemy in point of discipline. On the side of the parliament, the great Hampden was slain in the battle of Chaldgrave-field; and on the other hand, on the king's part, the gallant lord Faulkland was killed at the battle of Newbury. These were the two greatest, bravest, and wisest men of their time, who thus fell, as if, by the kindness of Providence, to prevent their seeing the miseries and the slaughter in which their country was shortly to be involved.

Hampden was the person who had refused paying ship-money, and withstood the power of the crown: his inflexible integrity gained him the esteem even of his enemies; and his humanity and benevolence, the affection of all who knew him more intimately.

But Faulkland was still a greater character than he. He added to Hampden's severe principles all the politeness and elegance then known in Europe. He had withstood the king, while he saw him making an ill use of his power: but when he perceived the design of the parliament to change religion, he changed his side, and stedfastly attached himself to the crown. From the beginning of the civil war, his natural cheerfulness and vivacity grew clouded, and he became sad, pale, and negligent of his person. The morning of the battle, it was seen he desired to die, and he professed that the miseries of his country had already almost broken his heart. He added, that he was weary of the times, and should leave them before night. He was shot with a musket, in the belly, and his body was the next morning found among a heap of slain. His writings, his justice, and his courage, deserved such a death of glory; and they found it. If there be happiness in death, it must be in such an end, falling in battle for our king and principles.

Each battle served only to weaken the royal party, and to unite the parliament more strongly together; the king and his followers were held together only by secular motives; the parliament had long been actuated by one still stronger, that of religion: this had hitherto been the secret spring of all their commotions, and now they fairly threw by the mask, united themselves

to the church of Scotland, and signed the solemn league and covenant which established puritanism, and laid the foundation of a new republic. The king, to oppose the designs of the Westminster parliament, called 1644. one at Oxford, where it assembled; and England now saw, what it had never before seen, two parliaments sitting at one and the same time. From this partial parliament he received some supplies; after which it was prorogued, and never after convened. The war went on with its usual fury, and skirmishes on both sides were frequent, which served to desolate the kingdom without deciding victory. Each county joined that side to which it was addicted from motives of conviction, interest, or fear; while some observed a perfect neutrality. Several frequently petitioned for peace; the wise and the good were most earnest in this cry: but what particularly deserved remark was, the attempt of the women of London, who, to the number of two or three thousand, went in a body to the house of commons, earnestly demanding a peace: *Give us those traitors, said they, that are against peace: give them, that we may tear them in pieces.* The guards found some difficulty in quelling this insurrection, and one or two women lost their lives in the fray.

It is both tedious and unimproving to describe all the combats, the battles, the skirmishes, that every day passed on either side; what towns were besieged and taken, how many killed in fight, or what numbers died by the hands of the executioner: every civil war presents the same picture to the imagination; and this was aggravated with all the miseries of rage, resentment, and despair. All were from principle earnestly employed in destroying the constitution. There were few of those refined understandings, who, disengaged from the prejudices of party, improved the universal prejudice of the time to acquire dominion for themselves; all were seriously, earnestly, and blindly engaged in the favourite pursuit. The genius of the times was great, but irregular.

Among the number who most severely felt the indignation of the commons, was the famous William

Laud, archbishop of Canterbury. He had been imprisoned in the Tower at the time when nine more of the bishops were sent there for remonstrating to the lords against the severity of the lower house. When he was brought to the bar, in order to make his defence, he spoke several hours with that courage which is the result of innocence and integrity. The lords, his judges, were willing to acquit him; but the commons were determined upon his death, and overruled all remonstrances made in his favour. When brought to the scaffold, this noble divine, without any apparent terror, made the people a long speech. He told them, "That he had examined his heart, and thanked God " that he found no sins there which deserved the death " he was going to suffer. The king had been tra- " duced by some, as labouring to introduce popery; " but he believed him as sound a protestant as any " man in the kingdom: and as for parliaments, though " he disliked the conduct of one or two, yet he never " designed to change the laws of the country, or the " protestant religion." After he had prayed for a short space, the executioner did his office at one blow. This man seemed born to a better fate and better times; but all distinctions of right and wrong were now lost in mutual animosity; and in general the best characters on both sides were those who fell victims to civil fury. He was learned, upright, and sincere; humble in his private deportment, but attached to trifling ceremonies, and ready to lose his life rather than give them up.

The liturgy was, by a public act, abolished the day he died, as if he had been the only obstacle to its former removal. The church of England was rendered completely presbyterian, to the great satisfaction of the Scots, and numbers of the citizens of London. An ordinance was established, by which there should be one day in every week appointed as a fast, and the money which was thus spared to the family, was to be paid in support of the common cause. Thus strengthened, the parliament seemed capable of carrying on their designs in an arbitrary manner; they had the Scots to assist them; they professed only one religion, and were united by the bonds of mutual danger. How-

ever, from the moment they came all to be ranked under the denomination of presbyterians, they again began to separate into new parties, as if divisions were necessary to the existence of this parliament: one part of the house were presbyterians, strictly so called; the other independents, a new sect that had lately been introduced, and gained ground surprisingly. The difference between these two sects would hardly be worth mentioning, did not their religious opinions influence their political conduct. The church of England, which was now totally abolished, had appointed bishops and a book of common prayer; the presbyterians exclaimed against both; they were for having the church governed by clergymen elected by the people. The independents went still further, and excluded all clergy: they maintained that every man might pray in public, exhorting his audience, and explain the scriptures: but their chief difference lay in acknowledging no subordination in secular employments, and attempting to maintain an ideal equality, in which they justly observed that every man was born. Were such a plan of government practicable, it would no doubt be the most happy: but the wise and powerful must ever govern over ignorance and debility; and the bad success of their schemes, soon after carried into execution, showed how ill adapted they were to human infirmity. Possessed, however, with a high opinion of their speculative schemes, they behaved with that morose and sullen carriage, which is ever the result of narrow manners and solitary thinking. They secretly laboured the abasement of the presbyterians, yet joined them in their efforts to depress the king.

Charles, now perceiving the parliament of England and Scotland united against him, and fearing to fall under their united efforts, thought proper to make a truce with the papists of Ireland, in order to bring over the English troops who served in that kingdom. By this means he not only had many of the English troops that served there, but also several of the native Irish, who came to increase his army. It was then the parliament complained with truth of his employing papists in his service, and still further extended their reproach, by

saying that he encouraged them to rebel. These troops, however, only served to procure the hatred of his subjects without strengthening his army. They were totally routed by Fairfax, one of the generals of 1645. the parliament army, and slaughtered without mercy after submission. It was said that several Irish women were found among the slain, who with long knives did considerable execution; but the animosity of the English against those wretches, at that time, might have given rise to the calumny.

One misfortune now seemed to follow close upon another; Prince Rupert, who had long sustained the honour of the royal arms, was defeated at York, and his army dispersed by Fairfax. Charles had retired to Oxford: his present danger excited his friends to new efforts: he levied new forces, and had some slight success. But this appearance of good fortune did not continue. His army was turbulent and seditious; that of the parliament every day improved in discipline, and obeyed from principle. Among other instances of this nature was that act called the *self-denying ordinance*, by which it was resolved, that no member in the house of commons should have a command in the army. The reasons assigned for this were specious, and perhaps sincere. It was done to prevent the parliament wishing for the continuance of the war, in order to enjoy a continuing share of authority. The former generals were therefore changed; the earls of Essex, Denbigh, and Manchester, gave up their commissions; and Fairfax, with the assistance of Cromwell, new-modelled the army without any opposition.

It was the general opinion, that this new alteration would enfeeble the parliament army: but the event proved otherwise; they were, after this, every where victorious. Both armies met near Naseby. The king, who commanded the main body of his own troops, showed himself upon this occasion a courageous general, encouraging his soldiers where giving way, and rallying them in person when broken. The enemy, however, was victorious: wherever Cromwell fought, he brought conquest and terror, and the defeat of the royal army was principally owing to him. This fatal

blow the king could never after recover. All his infantry were so scattered, that the enemy took as many prisoners as they pleased; his baggage, and the cabinet in which his most secret papers were contained, fell into the hands of his pursuers; and yet, after all, there were not above six hundred men slain upon the field of battle.

It was about this time that Cromwell's courage and genius began to appear. He had hitherto been only a turbulent speaker in the house of commons, and the leader of a regiment in the army; but he now discovered talents greater than his employments, and his present success opened to him the prospects of ambition which he never after lost sight of. Historians seldom distinguish properly in the changes to be found in the same character. It is probable Cromwell began to act in the state with principles of conviction and sincerity; but, new occurrences arising, his soul was not proof to the allurements of fortune; he gave way to her seducing call. Had he been on the oppressed side, he might have displayed surprising instances of constancy and integrity; but, happening to be victorious, he became a tyrant and usurper, and bathed his country with royal blood.

Cromwell was possessed of apparent humility and internal pride. This is just the character which Machiavel describes for a successful usurper. He was originally the son of a private gentleman of a moderate fortune, who had some years before attempted leaving the kingdom upon a principle of religion, but was prevented by the king. This religious deportment Cromwell ever inviolably preserved: it secured him an ascendancy in the house of commons, where the majority were enthusiasts; it gained him the affections of Fairfax the general, who was courageous, ignorant, and sincere; it acquired him the love of the army, where his presence was coveted; and he alone was permitted to unite the military and civil employments in his person; for he had a seat in the house while he was a colonel in the field. But he was still resolved further to strengthen his interests by attaching the independents privately to his side; they increased in numbers and

power by his means, and he, in return, found them resolute and persevering friends.

The battle of Naseby seemed fatal to the interests of the king; and Fairfax and Cromwell availed themselves of the circumstances that offered. Every city that they appeared before capitulated. The young prince of Wales, afterwards Charles II, participated in the misfortunes of his father, and fled to the island of Scilly. The king drew the shattered remains of his army into Oxford, and once more demanded peace; but, if he could not obtain it in the prosperous state of his affairs, it was not likely that he could now succeed in his desires after a defeat. The house of commons insulted his misfortunes. His letters to the queen were published, with those ill-natured remarks and railleries which none but the vitious are capable of making. To be at once merry and malicious is the sign of a corrupt heart and understanding.

The king, after having taken every measure that he thought could procure peace, without effect, now saw himself shut up in Oxford; a place almost without any fortifications, and every day in danger of falling into the power of a fierce and exasperated party. In such a situation he therefore was obliged to choose the least of two evils, and to deliver himself up to the Scots army, rather than the English, as he expected to find less animosity in the former. The Scots officers had made him some general promises, grounded probably upon the hopes of his compliance with every request they should make. He sent them word of his intention to come to their army; and they promised to receive him, and provide for his safety. Upon this precarious assurance the king left Oxford, and, travelling through by-ways and obscure places, arrived at the Scots army in nine days. From that moment he ceased to be free. The Scots began *Jan. 30, 1646.* to negotiate with the English army, carried their royal prisoner about from one place to another, and, at length, upon consideration of being paid the arrears due for their service in England, which amounted to two hundred thousand pounds, they delivered up their king, and returned home laden with the reproaches of

all good men, and the internal conviction of their own baseness. From this period to the usurpation of Cromwell, the constitution was convulsed with all the distractions of guilt and party. When the kingly power was abolished, the parliament then took up the authority; but they were soon to lay it down in turn, and submit to a military democracy; a new form of government, which, like all other democracies, was turbulent, feeble, and bloody.

LETTER XLIII.

THE civil war was now over, and the army of Scotland, being paid the reward of perfidy, returned to its country. The parliament had now no enemy to fear, except those very troops which had fought their battles with success. You have already been informed, that this army, by a political stroke of Cromwell, was rendered independent of the parliament, and all its generals disabled from sitting there. The commons therefore were now willing to get rid of it as soon as possible, well knowing, that if the army continued, instead of receiving laws, it would presume to dictate; they therefore passed a vote, by which it was ordained, that a part of it should be disbanded, and another part of it sent over to Ireland. It may easily be imagined that Cromwell would not suffer this. Now was the crisis of his greatness, and he seized the opportunity: he formed a council of officers, and another of common soldiers, called agitators, who were appointed to inquire into the grievances of the army, and lay them before the parliament. The very same conduct which had formerly passed between the parliament and king, was now put in practice between the army and parliament. As the commons granted every request, the army rose in their demands; those accused the army of mutiny and sedition, and these retorted the accusation, by alleging a manifest design in the parliament to rule alone.

The king had been confined, since he came into the

power of the English, at Holmby-castle: the army were resolved to be possessed of his person, and sent one Joyce, a cornet, who from a tailor was become an officer, to take the king by force, and bring him a prisoner to Newmarket. This commission he executed with intrepidity and dispatch. It was in vain that the commons, now without power, complained of this insolence: the army, instead of being awed by their menaces, marched toward London, and now, in turn, prescribed laws to their employers. Cromwell, willing to give all his injustice the appearance of rectitude, caused eleven members of the house of commons to be accused. These were the most powerful and leading speakers; which so astonished the members, that, willing to appease the army at any rate, they wrote to the general, that they were ready to receive any particular charge against such as fell under his displeasure.

This was an overture for peace; but pre-eminence was what the army aimed at. Instead therefore of being pleased at this condescension, the commander turned their accusation into a general complaint, and tried every method to provoke a quarrel, which the other endeavoured to evade. The citizens of London at length opened their eyes: they now saw the constitution effectually destroyed; they saw an oppressive parliament now subjected to a more oppressive army; they perceived their religion abolished, their king a captive, and the people exposed to the worst of slavery.

In this exigence the common council assembled the militia of the city, the works were manned, and a manifesto published, aggravating the hostile intentions of the army. The house of commons was not less divided than the state: one part was for encouraging the citizens to proceed, while the rest, with the two speakers at their head, was for the army. The slightest divisions, in such a situation, are soon attended with violent consequences. The commons separated. The speakers, with sixty-two members, quitted the house to seek protection from the army, while those who remained behind gave orders, and established laws, as if they had power to enforce obedience.

Their assumed power, however, continued but a short time; for the army, with the speakers at their head, soon approached the City. Fear, therefore, compelled the common council to concur in measures which they tacitly disapproved. They opened their gates to their general, who, attended by the two speakers, and the rest of the members, repaired to their respective habitations. The parliament, thus overawed, gave up the command of the Tower to general Fairfax, and ordered him the thanks of both houses, for having disobeyed their commands.

It still remained to dispose of the king, who had been sent prisoner to Hampton-court. The independents, at the head of whom was Cromwell, and the presbyterians, in the name of either house, treated separately with him in private: he even had hopes that, in these struggles for power, he might be chosen mediator in the dispute, and expected that the state, at last, sensible of the miseries of anarchy, like a froward child, hushed by its own importunities, would settle under its former tranquil constitution. But he was soon undeceived, when he found the army and the generals masters in the dispute; and when, as he had hitherto been used with some degree of respect, upon their prevailing, he saw himself treated with very little deference or consideration. He therefore resolved to seek safety by flight, and, attended by two of his courtiers, fled from his confinement, and travelled on horseback all night to the sea-side, in order to embark for France, leaving behind him a letter to both houses of parliament. His usual fortunes, however, still attended him here; no ship was in readiness at the place appointed, and he had no other method left, but to trust to the generosity of the governor of the isle of Wight for protection. Colonel Hammond was then in that command; a creature of Cromwell, who had been placed there by the interest of John Hampden, whom we have seen such an opposer of the king. His majesty's attendants, whose names were Ashburnham and Berkely, went to talk with the governor upon this important occasion, who, instead of promising the protection required, only returned an evasive answer, and desired

to be conducted to the king. Upon this, all three went together to the house, where the unfortunate monarch expected their arrival; but Hammond stayed below. When Ashburnham informed his majesty that Hammond was come to wait upon him, but that he had given no promise for protection, the king, who had now found almost all the world unfaithful, could not help crying out, *O Jack, thou hast undone me!* Ashburnham burst into a shower of tears, and offered to kill Hammond that moment with his own hand. The humane monarch would not permit this. Hammond was brought up, and the king, being compelled to follow him to Carisbrook-castle, was once more made a prisoner, and treated by Hammond with only the outward appearance of respect.

In the mean time, the parliament continued every day to grow more feeble and more factious; the army more powerful, and better united. Cromwell had taken every precaution to establish such a subordination among his troops, as was necessary to conduct them with ease, and invigorate his proceedings. But his views were in some danger of being controverted, at this juncture, by a new and unheard-of confederacy. The independents were for having no subordination in government. A set of men called Levellers now arose, who declared against any other governor than Christ. They declared that all degrees should be levelled, and an equality universally established in titles and estates. They presented several petitions, and carried their insolence to an immeasurable pitch. Cromwell at once saw that he was now upon the point of losing all the fruits of his former schemes and dangers, and dreaded this new faction still the more, as they turned his own pretended principles against himself: thus finding all at stake, he was resolved, by one resolute blow, to disperse the faction, or perish in the attempt. Having intimation that the levellers were to meet at a certain place, he unexpectedly appeared before the terrified assembly, at the head of his red regiment, which had been hitherto invincible. He demanded, in the name of God, what their assembly and murmurings would be at; and, receiving an insolent answer, he laid two

of the most remarkable dead upon the ground with his own hands. The guards dispersing the rest, he caused several of them to be hanged upon the spot, sent others prisoners to London, and thus dispersed a faction, no otherwise criminal than in having followed his own example.

This action served still more to increase his power in the camp, in the parliament, and in the city. Fairfax, now become a lord, was nominal general; but Cromwell was invested with all the power of the army. The king, a prisoner in the isle of Wight, still continued to negotiate a peace; while the parliament saw no other method of destroying the military power, which themselves had raised, but by opposing to it that of the king. Frequent propositions, therefore, passed between the captive monarch and the commons; but the great obstacle, which was their insisting upon destroying episcopacy, still defeated every measure.

In the mean time, the Scots, ashamed of having been thought to have sold their king, raised an army in his favour: many of the young nobility of England seconded their intentions. The king's desperate affairs once more began to wear a favourable aspect, which Cromwell perceiving, led his veteran army to certain victory. Success still seemed to back his crimes: he defeated their forces entirely at Preston, and took the duke of Hamilton, their general, prisoner. Fairfax, on the other hand, was equally successful in Kent and Essex: the insurgents having retired into the city of Colchester, which declared for the king, he blocked them up, and having compelled them to surrender at discretion, he treated them with that inhumanity for which the republican army was at that time remarkable.

The parliament still continued to treat with the king, and, apprehending more from the designs of their generals than the attempts of their monarch, seemed in earnest, for the first time, in their negotiations: but it was now too late; the army soon returned crowned with their accustomed success, and, with furious remonstrances, demanded justice upon the king. They accused him as the cause of all the misfortunes of the

kingdom, and insisted that his partizans and favourites should share with him in his public punishment. This remonstrance was soon after backed by petitions from the garrisons dispersed over different parts of the kingdom, and the counties of Somerset and Norfolk concurred in the same demand. Fairfax, being influenced by Cromwell, and not perceiving that he was the tool of his crafty colleague, transferred his royal prisoner from the isle of Wight to Hurst-castle. The parliament complained of this arbitrary proceeding, but their remonstrances were now but empty sound. They began to issue ordinances for a more effectual opposition; but they received a message from Cromwell, that he intended paying them a visit next day with his army, and, in the mean time, ordered them to raise him, upon the city of London, forty thousand pounds. Affrighted at the approaching danger, they complied with his demand; and, in the mean time, the general, with his army, came and took up his quarters in the skirts of the City. The commons still proceeded in the treaty with the king; but this Cromwell was resolved to oppose. They voted, that the carrying the king prisoner to Hurst-castle was without the advice or consent of the house: to punish them for this, Cromwell placed guards round their house, and made those members prisoners whom he judged most opposite to his designs. One of his colonels, whose name was Pride, having a paper of names in his hand, seized upon forty-one, and sent them to the court of Wards, where they were kept under guard. These were presbyterians, the original authors of all the troubles, and who now fell victims to the side they had espoused. The next day, a hundred more of the members were denied entrance; and that part of the house which now remained was entirely composed of a small body of independents, ludicrously called the Rump. These soon voted, that the transactions of the house, a few days before, were illegal; and that the general's conduct was just and necessary.

This parliament, if it now deserves that name, was nothing but a medley of the most obscure citizens, the slave of the army, the officers of which, being themselves members, ruled all their proceedings. It was

now, therefore, unanimously resolved in this seditious assembly to erect a high court of justice, with power to try the king for treason against the kingdom. For form sake, they desired the concurrence of the few remaining lords in the other house; but, even here, there still was virtue enough left unanimously to reject so horrid a proposal. This no way abated the ardour of the commons: they voted that the concurrence of the house of lords was unnecessary; they declared that all power was originally derived from the people; a declaration true in itself, but which they wrested to the most detestable purposes. Colonel Harrison, the son of a butcher, was commanded to conduct the king from Hurst-castle to Windsor. When he arrived there, the council of war ordained that he should be no longer treated with the deference due to royalty. All ceremony was laid aside, and he now saw himself deprived of his servants, and exposed to the contempt of low-bred insolence. From the sixth to the twentieth of January, the time was employed in making preparations for the astonishing scene of guilt. One hundred and forty-five persons were appointed judges upon this occasion; and one Bradshaw, a practitioner of the law, was elected the president of this detestable synod.

The king was now conducted from Windsor to St. James's, and was next day produced before the high court at Westminster-hall, to take his trial. He still remembered the dignity he owed to himself before such an inferior court; and, taking his place, with his hat on, with a stern air surveyed his judges, who were also covered. When his charge was read, importing that he had been the cause of all the blood that was shed since the commencement of the rebellion, he could not repress a smile at once of contempt and indignation. He then demanded by what authority he was brought to such a trial? to which Bradshaw replied, that he was tried in the name of the commons of England. The king then objected to the legality of the tribunal, since the sanction of the lords, and his own, were wanting to complete it; and refused to plead to the articles of the impeachment. Being desired to answer

several times, and persisting in his refusal, he was remanded to his confinement, and the court adjourned. At their second sitting, the president again summoned the king to answer to his charge; and the king again demurred to the legality of his judges, and began to open his objections, when he was interrupted by Bradshaw, and sent back to prison, as before. At his third appearance, he continued firm to his purpose, and refused to comply, until he should be convinced that their proceedings were not contrary to the fundamental laws of the kingdom. The fourth and last time he appeared before this self-created court of justice, as he was going hither, he was insulted by the soldiers and the mob, who exclaimed, *Justice, justice! Execution, execution!* He appeared before the court with the same firm composure as usual, with his hat on; and, while his sentence was reading, in which he was branded with all the odious appellations that malice could suggest, he discovered no other emotions than those of pity. In walking back from this horrid tribunal, the rabble renewed the cry of *Justice! Execution!* and, among other insults, one miscreant presumed to spit in the face of his king. He patiently wiped his face: *Poor souls,* said he, *they would treat their generals in the same manner for six-pence.* A soldier, more compassionate than the rest, could not help imploring a blessing upon his royal head; an officer, overhearing it, struck the pious sentinel to the ground, in the presence of the monarch, who could not help saying, *that the punishment exceeded the offence.* The day of execution was fixed to be the third after his sentence; and, when it arrived, he was conducted, on foot, through St. James's Park to Whitehall, accompanied by bishop Juxon, and guarded by a regiment of foot, under the command of colonel Tomlinson. The scaffold was covered with black, in the middle of which were seen the block and axe, with two executioners in masks. The soldiers were placed round it, and an infinite number of spectators waited, with silent horror, at a greater distance. The king surveyed all their solemn preparations with calm composure: he assured the persons who stood with him upon the scaffold, that he thought

himself guiltless of any crime, but that of having given up the earl of Strafford to the fury of his enemies; and that he had confidence in the mercy of Heaven. While he thus avowed his innocence, the bishop, who attended him, warned him that he had but one stage more to heaven; at which the king cried out, *I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown, where no disturbance can arrive.* "You are exchanged," replied the bishop, "from a temporal to an eternal crown; a good exchange!" Having now taken off his cloak, he delivered his George to the prelate, emphatically pronouncing the word *Remember.* He then laid his head on the block, and stretched forth his hands as a signal. One of the men in a mask severed his head from his body at a blow; and the other holding it up, streaming with gore, cried out, *This is the head of a traitor!* Such was the death of Charles, who lived long enough to see the laws and constitution of his country expire before him. He had the misfortune to be bred up in high notions of the prerogative, which he thought it his duty to sustain. He lived at a time when the spirit of the law was in opposition to the genius of the people; and, governing by old rules, instead of endeavouring to accommodate himself to the changes of the times, he fell in the universal convulsion. Many kings before him expired by treasons, plots, or assassinations; but never, since the times of Agis, the Lacedemonian, was any but he sacrificed by their subjects, with all the formalities of justice. Upon the whole, it must be confessed, that, though the nation was branded by foreigners with reproach upon this occasion, yet these struggles at length ended in domestic happiness and security: the laws became more precise, and the subjects more ready to obey, as if a previous fermentation in the constitution was necessary to its subsequent refinement.

LETTER XLIV.

CROMWELL, who had secretly solicited the king's death, now began to feel wishes to which he had been hitherto a stranger. He perceived himself not far removed from the object of his most unbounded ambition. His views expanded with success, and his first principles of liberty shrunk, when opposed to the unbounded prospect of power. The parliament, which was still permitted to enjoy the shadow of authority, voted it high treason to acknowledge Charles Stewart, son of the murdered king, as successor to the throne. They likewise voted the house of lords useless and dangerous, and passed an act for the abolition of all kingly power. A great seal was made, on one side of which were engraved the arms of England and Ireland, with this inscription, *The Great Seal of England*; on the reverse was represented the house of commons sitting; with this motto, *The first year of freedom, by God's blessing restored, 1648.*

They next proceeded to try those gallant men, whose attachment to their late sovereign had been most remarkable. The duke of Hamilton and lord Capel were accused, condemned, and beheaded; several others shared the same fate. The earl of Norwich and sir John Owen were condemned, but reprieved. The Scots were not a little displeased at the death of the duke, who was executed not only contrary to the laws of war, but the laws of nations: they were, therefore, determined to acknowledge the young prince for their king. But their love of liberty, in some measure, seemed to combat their resentment: they called him to the throne indeed, but, at the same time, abridged his power with every limitation which they had formerly attempted to impose on their late sovereign. The second Charles had neither the virtue, the constancy, nor the principles of his father. Attached to no religion, he agreed to all their proposals, and was contented to accept the formalities without the power of a king. He was received at Edinburgh with demonstrations of profound respect, and entered the city by that very

gate on which the limbs of the brave Montrose, one of his most faithful adherents, were still exposed: but he soon found that the life he was likely to lead would be an insupportable bondage to one of his volatile disposition. He was surrounded and incessantly importuned by the Scotch presbyterian clergy, who came to instruct him in religion, and obliged him to listen to long sermons, in which they seldom failed to stigmatize the late king as a tyrant, to accuse his mother of idolatry, and himself of an untoward disposition. Upon appointed days, he was obliged to hear six sermons without intermission. They insisted upon his observing Sunday with a Jewish strictness. They even watched his looks; and, if he happened to smile at any part of their discourses, he was reprimanded for his profaneness. Charles, for a while, bore this insolence with hypocritical tranquillity, and even pretended to be greatly edified by their instructions: but, notwithstanding this, he only wished for an opportunity of escaping from such a variety of disgusting impertinence.

In the mean time, the English parliament, alarmed at the king's restitution in Scotland, sent to call 1649. Cromwell from Ireland, where he had carried on the war with his usual success. He had reduced Kilkenny and many other places, and prosecuted his conquests with surprising rapidity. However, he now left the war in that kingdom to be carried on by Ireton, his deputy-lieutenant, and returned to England, in obedience to the mandate of the parliament. When he took his seat in the house, the speaker thanked him for the services he had done the commonwealth. They then proceeded to deliberate upon the war with Scotland. They desired to know if Fairfax would conduct the enterprise. Fairfax, a rigid presbyterian, who had all along fought from principle, declined opposing a nation which he considered as co-operating in the same good work for which he had first drawn the sword; he, therefore, declined the command, sent his commission to the commons, and retired to spend the remainder of his life in privacy and peace.

This was an inlet to Cromwell's subsequent power; he was appointed general of the forces of the common-

wealth, and soon marched into Scotland at the head of an army of eighteen thousand men, long accustomed to conquer. He found general Lesley at the head of an army far more numerous than his own, but undisciplined and mutinous. After some previous skirmishing, Cromwell saw himself in a very disadvantageous post near Dunbar, and his antagonist ready to take advantage of his incommodious situation. However, perceiving the Scots preparing to give him battle, he assured the soldiers that the Lord had delivered the enemy into his hands, and ordered his army to sing psalms, as already assured of the victory. The ministers of the Scotch army were not less sanguine of their assurances of victory than he: they boldly promised success in the name of the Lord, and excited a spirit of impatience among the soldiers. Victory, as always before, again declared for Cromwell, who routed the enemy with great slaughter, while he did not lose, on his side, above forty men in all.

Charles, who hated the Scotch army, and only dreaded Cromwell, was well enough pleased at this defeat. It served to introduce him to a greater share in the command than he was before permitted to enjoy. He therefore put himself at the head of that remnant which survived the defeat, and strengthened it with the royalists, who had been before excluded from his service. And now, instead of following Cromwell, who led his victorious troops to Perth, he resolved to seize this opportunity of penetrating into England, where he expected to be joined by numbers, still attached to his interests. His hopes in this were frustrated; his army, on their march, was lessened by continual desertion and disease. Few volunteers repaired to the royal standard; and he at length saw his vigilant enemy overtake him at Worcester. Both armies fought with equal intrepidity; but Cromwell was again victorious. Never was so complete a victory obtained by him before. Two thousand perished by the sword, and four times that number, being taken, were sold as slaves to the American planters. The conqueror became master of all Scotland, and set a price of a thousand pounds upon the head of the king.

Imagination can scarce conceive dangers more romantic, or distresses more severe, than those which attended the young king's escape from Worcester. After his hair was cut off, the better to effect his escape, he worked for some days, disguised as a peasant, at wood-cutting. He next made an attempt to retire into Wales, under the conduct of one Pendrell, a poor but faithful companion in his distress; but in this attempt he was disappointed, every pass being guarded to prevent his escape. Being obliged to return, he met colonel Careless, who, like himself, had escaped the carnage at Worcester; and it was in his company that he was obliged to climb a spreading oak, among the thick branches of which they passed the day together, while the soldiers of the enemy passed underneath in pursuit of him. Hence he proceeded with imminent danger, feeling all the vicissitudes of famine, fatigue, and pain, to the house of Mr. Lane, a worthy subject of his, in Staffordshire. Here he deliberated about the means of escaping to France. They agreed that he should ride before this gentleman's daughter on a visit to Mrs. Norton, who lived in the neighbourhood of Bristol. During this journey, he every day met people whose persons he knew, and once passed through a whole regiment of the parliament army.

When they arrived at the house of Mrs. Norton, the first person they saw was one of his own chaplains, sitting at the door amusing himself with seeing people play at bowls. The king, after having taken proper care of his horse in the stable, was shown to an apartment, which Mrs. Lane had provided for him, upon pretence of indisposition. The butler, being sent to him with some refreshment, no sooner beheld his countenance, which was now very pale with anxiety and fatigue, than he recollected the visage of his king and master, and, falling upon his knees, while the tears streamed down his cheeks, he cried out, "I am rejoiced to see your majesty!" The king enjoined him secrecy, and the honest servant punctually kept his word. Having stayed some days in this place, he repaired to the house of colonel Wyndham, where he was cordially received, that gentleman's family having

ever been noted for loyalty. Pursuing his route to the sea-side, he once more had a providential escape from the little inn at which he lodged. It happened to be a solemn fast, and a fanatical weaver, who had fought in the parliament army, was preaching against the king, in a chapel fronting the house. Charles was actually one of the audience. A farrier of the same principles, who had been examining the horses belonging to the passengers, came to assure the preacher that he knew, by the fashion of the shoes, that one of the strangers' horses came from the north. The preacher instantly affirmed, that this horse could belong to no other than Charles Stewart, and went immediately with a constable to the house; but the king, in the mean time, found means to escape. Thus, at length, after inexpressible hardships, and having experienced the fidelity of forty different persons of all ranks, who had power to betray him, he embarked at Shoreham, and landed safely in Normandy.

Cromwell, in the mean time, returned to London in triumph, where he was met by the speaker of the house, accompanied by the mayor and *Sept. 12.* magistrates in their formalities. His first care, upon his return, was to take the advantage of his successes by depressing the Scots. An act was passed for abolishing royalty in Scotland, and annexing it as a conquered province to the English commonwealth, impowering it, however, to send a certain number of representatives to the British parliament. It was now seen with astonishment, that a parliament composed of obscure and weak members could govern at once with unanimity and success. Without any acknowledged subordination, they levied armies, maintained fleets, and gave laws to their neighbours. Never was England more powerful than at this period. The finances were managed with economy and exactness. No private person became rich by public extortions. The revenues of the crown, the lands of the bishops, and a tax of a hundred and twenty thousand pounds each month, supplied the wants of government, and invigorated all their proceedings.

Having reduced the British dominions to perfect

obedience, the parliament next resolved to chastise the Dutch, who had given but very slight causes of complaint. Dorislaus, one of the late king's judges, being sent thither by the commons as envoy, was assassinated by the royal party that had taken refuge there; St. John, appointed English ambassador, was also insulted by the friends of the prince of Orange. These were grounds sufficient to incense the republic of England to a war. Its success, however, was doubtful: Blake commanded the English, and Van Tromp was admiral for Holland; both equally experienced, courageous, and active. Several engagements served only to show the excellence of the admirals, without determining the balance of naval power. The parliament, however, was willing to continue the war, rightly judging that, when the force of the nation was exerted by sea, it would diminish Cromwell the general's power by land.

Cromwell was not behind them in penetration; he saw they dreaded his growing power, and wished to diminish it. All his measures were conducted with a bold intrepidity that marked his character; and he was now resolved to make another daring effort. He persuaded his officers to present a petition for payment of arrears and redress of grievances, which he knew would be rejected with disdain. The house, upon receiving it, appointed a committee to prepare an act, that all persons who presented such petitions for the future should be deemed guilty of high treason. This was what Cromwell wished for. He was sitting in council with his officers, when informed of the subject on which the house was deliberating. Turning to major-general Vernon, *I am compelled*, cried he, *to do a thing that makes the very hair of my head stand an end*; and starting up with marks of violent indignation in his countenance, he hastened to the parliament, with a body of three hundred soldiers. Upon entering the house, he took his place, and sat some time to hear the debates. When the speaker was about to put the question, he suddenly rose up, and reviling them for their ambition and cruelty, he stamped with his foot, and instantly the house was filled with armed men:

then addressing himself to the members, *Get you gone, said he; give place to honest men; you are no longer a parliament; I tell you, you are no longer a parliament; the Lord has done with you!* 1653. He then accused one as a drunkard, another as a whore-master, a third of adultery, and a fourth of extortion. *It is you, added he, that have forced me upon this; I have sought the Lord night and day, that he would rather slay me than put me upon this work.* Then pointing to the mace, *Take away, cried he, that bauble!* After which, turning out all the members, he ordered the door to be locked, and, putting the key in his pocket, retired to Whitehall. Thus, by one daring exploit, the new republic was abolished, and the whole power, civil and military, centered in him alone. The unsteady form of the English government at that time is the strongest proof of a late philosopher's opinion, that every country is possessed of a set of laws and constitutions best adapted to the nature of the inhabitants, the climate, and the soil, which when once broken through, the government must continue weak and unsteady, until the natural constitution is restored; as, in mechanics, all bodies continue to waver till their centre of gravity is supported.

LETTER XLV.

THAT parliament which had long gloried in resisting violence, was now dissolved by an act of the most flagrant oppression. The people, however, expressed no dislike at their dissolution. Cromwell received congratulatory addresses from the fleet, the corporations, and the army: but he was unwilling to put forth all his power at once; he resolved to amuse them with the form of a commonwealth, and familiarise them by degrees to arbitrary government. He decreed that the sovereign power should be vested in one hundred and forty-four persons, under the denomination of a parliament; and he undertook himself to make the choice. The persons he pitched upon were the lowest, mean-

est, and most ignorant among the citizens; he foresaw that, during the administration of such, he alone must govern; or they would soon throw up the reins of government, which they were unqualified to guide. To excel in fanaticism seemed a necessary qualification in this new parliament. Several with long names, borrowed from scripture, were members; but a man, whose name was *Praise God Barebones*, was one of the most remarkable; and by his name the assembly was afterward called in ridicule.

To this assembly was committed the care of making peace with the Dutch; but, being utterly unskilled in such negotiations, the ambassadors of the states were quite at a loss how to treat with them. The people exclaimed at so foolish a legislature, and they themselves seemed not insensible of the contempt and ridicule which they every day failed not to incur. They had now sat five months without doing any thing of importance; when at length Rouse, their speaker, rose up, and proposed that, as they were unable to bear the burden that was laid upon them, they should resign their authority to him from whom they had received it. Cromwell accepted their resignation with pleasure, and sent colonel White to clear the house of the few fanatics who persisted in continuing to sit. White, entering with a detachment of soldiers, asked, *What they did there?* To which replying, that they were seeking the Lord, *Then you may go elsewhere*, cried he, *for to my certain knowledge the Lord has not been here these many years.*

The officers now, by their own authority, declared Cromwell protector. He was possessed of that which is the original of all command, namely, force; for the strong ever give laws to the feeble. The mayor and aldermen were sent for; the usurper was installed at Whitehall, in the palace of the English kings; he assumed the office of protector, was honoured with the epithet of highness, and proclaimed in London and other parts of the kingdom. Thus an obscure inhabitant of Wales, at length, rose to unlimited power, far beyond that of former kings, by his courage and his hypocrisy.

He was about fifty-three years of age when he began to reign, which he did with equal conduct, moderation, and success. He, in the beginning, chose among the officers, the former companions of his dangers and victories, twenty-one counsellors of state, to each of whom he assigned a pension of one thousand pounds a year. The troops were always paid a month in advance; the magazines were well provided; the public treasure, of which he had the disposal, was managed with frugality and care. The Dutch were compelled to sue for peace, and he dictated the terms. He insisted upon their paying deference to the British flag. They were compelled to abandon the interest of the king. They engaged to pay eighty-five thousand pounds, as an indemnification for former expenses; and to restore the English East-India company a part of those dominions of which they had unjustly deprived them in the East.

Every nation with whom the English had any connection now courted their protector's alliance. Among the number, France solicited his aid against Spain. Cromwell, though capable of conducting the internal parts of government, had no skill in foreign policy. He lent his assistance to humble Spain at a time when the interests of Europe required her exaltation. Cardinal Mazarine gave him up Dunkirk. His fleet, under the conduct of the famous Blake, took the island of Jamaica. The kingdom of Ireland was entirely reduced to obedience, and treated by him as a conquered country; many thousands of the wretched natives strove to find in banishment an alleviation of their miseries; numbers died of famine, and by the hands of the executioner not a few.

Cromwell, to give the greater appearance of justice to his usurpation, was resolved to govern by parliament, yet by such a parliament alone as he could govern. He assembled them, and dissolved them, at pleasure. The house of lords was entirely discontinued; but he set up a new chamber of parliament, composed of his own creatures, to oppose that elected by the voices of the people. Thus, ever active, vigi-

lant, and resolute, he discovered every conspiracy against his person, and every insurrection among the people, before they took effect. He had the address to prevail upon his parliament to make him an offer of the crown, merely to have the seeming magnanimity of refusing it, and thus to confirm his real power.

His private life was no less worthy our observation: he led an obscure life in the palace assigned for his habitation, without pomp, without luxury. When he sent his son Henry into Ireland, he allowed him but one servant in his retinue. His manners were naturally austere, and he preserved the dignity and distance of his character in the coarsest familiarity. He was cruel from policy; just and temperate from inclination; laborious and exact in all his designs; without eloquence, he had the talent of persuading, and without sincerity, the art of making sincere adherents; his dexterity equally satisfied every sect; with presbyterians, a presbyterian; with deists, a deist; only an independent in principle. It was by these arts he continued his authority, first cemented by blood, and maintained by hypocrisy and usurpation.

Yet notwithstanding this conduct, which contributed to render him truly formidable at home, he was, after a few years' reign, become truly miserable to himself. He knew that he was detested by every party in the kingdom; he knew the fierce spirit of the people whom he had made slaves; and he was incessantly haunted by the terrors of an assassination. To increase his calamity, a book was published, entitled, *Killing no Murder*; in which it was proved to be just to destroy him at any rate. *Shall we, said this popular declaimer, who would not suffer the lion to invade us, tamely stand to be devoured by the wolf?* Cromwell read this spirited treatise, and, it is said, was never seen to smile afterward. He wore armour under his clothes, and always kept a loaded pistol in his pocket; his aspect became cloudy, and he regarded every stranger with a glance of timid suspicion. He always travelled with hurry and precipitation, and never slept two nights

successively in the same apartment. A tertian ague came at last to deliver him from a life of horror and misery. He died at Whitehall, after having nominated his son Richard Cromwell as his successor. Notwithstanding the evident approaches of death, his fanatical chaplains affirmed that he would recover, and thanked God for the undoubted assurances they had received of his safety. He was even of the same opinion himself. *I tell you*, cried he to the physicians who attended him, *I shall not die of this distemper: favorable answers have been returned from Heaven, not only to my own supplications, but likewise to those of the godly, who carry on a more intimate correspondence with the Lord.* This behaviour, at his death, is an undeniable proof that he was in reality more an enthusiast than a hypocrite; and, in fact, we are more frequently deceived than deceivers.

Whatever were the differences of interest after the death of the usurper, the influence of his name was still sufficient to get Richard his son proclaimed protector. The parties, however, were now grown too headstrong to be controlled by greater abilities; what then could Richard do, who had nothing active in his disposition, no talents for business, no knowledge of government, no ambition, no importance? Oliver, by means of the army, had long governed the kingdom: they were now left to govern alone. They first therefore presented a petition to the new protector, demanding that no member of the army should be subject to the civil power, and that the officers should enjoy the privilege of choosing their own general. Richard, shocked at their presumption, rejected their requests, and even threatened to dismiss them the service. The parliament attempted to support these measures of Richard, but the army prevailed; the parliament was dissolved by their menaces, and the protector again reduced to a private station. The officers, once more being thus left to themselves, determined to replace the remnant of the old parliament which had beheaded the king, and which the late protector had so disgracefully dismissed. This was called *The good old Cause*; and such of the higher officers as seemed un-

willing to give up their authority to the parliament, were intimidated by their subalterns into a compliance.

The Rump parliament, as it was called, being thus once again established, began by vigorously attempting to lessen the power of that very army which had just now given them all their authority. They new-modelled a part of the forces, cashiered such officers as they feared, and placed others in their room. These attempts, however, did not pass without vigorous efforts in the principal officers who were at London to oppose them. They had several conferences together to strengthen their power, and lessen that of their opposers. They at length came to the usual resource of these turbulent times: they first presented a seditious petition, and, upon finding it rejected, conducted by general Lambert, they entered the house, excluded the members, dissolved the parliament by their own authority, and formed a council of ten to provide for the safety of the commonwealth.

During these transactions, general Monk was at the head of twelve thousand veterans in Scotland. This general had begun his fortunes under the command of the late king, and was taken prisoner in his service. Upon the death of his master, he was released from his long confinement to command under Cromwell; for whom he always fought with conduct and success.

In this anarchy and confusion, he seemed agitated by different designs, between loyalty to his lawful king, ambition to advance himself, and the apprehensions he was under from the governing part of the nation: his loyalty at length prevailed; he resolved to restore the royal family, but to use all the precautions that were requisite for their safety and his own. He soon had an opportunity of embarrassing the affairs of the nation still more, to prepare the way for the meditated revolution. The officers, now formed into a council of ten, had sent to treat with him: he consented to a negotiation only in order to gain time; and, after a treaty had been actually signed by those he employed in this business, he refused to ratify it upon frivolous pretences. The deposed parliament, finding that Monk had disapproved of the proceedings of the offi-

cers at London, were resolved to avail themselves of his friendship, in order to be reinstated in their former authority; and sent him a private commission, appointing him commander in chief of all the forces in England, Scotland, and Ireland. He now therefore resolved to march toward London; and, upon his approach, the officers who had deposed the parliament found themselves almost deserted, and at length compelled to resign the authority they had usurped. When he reached St. Alban's, he sent a letter to the house, desiring that London should be cleared of all other troops, to make way for his approach. This demand awakened the suspicion of the parliament; but they were reluctantly obliged to comply. He entered London in triumph at the head of his army, and repaired to the council of state, but refused to take the oath of abjuration, shrewdly observing, that the fewer oaths were taken, the cleaner would the conscience be. He next examined his officers, and, having secured their concurrence, he restored those members to the parliament which long since had been secluded before the trial of the king.

The independents, who had voted for the trial of Charles, were now greatly out-numbered; and it was soon seen that the royal party was likely to prevail. The republicans, who, though they hated a protector, still more feared the royal resentment, endeavoured to persuade Monk to assume the sovereign power, in imitation of Cromwell. He rejected their advice, and in the mean time gave the king private intimations of his designs, new-modelled the army, quelled an incipient insurrection, and prepared all things for his restoration.

Nothing now was wanting, but the authority and consent of a free parliament, to settle the fluctuating constitution. On the twenty-fifth of 1659. April, 1660, the new parliament met in both houses, after the manner of their ancestors. They immediately voted that the government ought to be vested in a king, lords, and commons. On the eighth of May, Charles II was proclaimed in London; on the twenty-sixth, he arrived at Dover; on the twenty-ninth, he

passed on to Whitehall, through an innumerable multitude of people, who rent the air with their acclamations. The wretched kingdom, long torn with faction, and oppressed by its own struggles for freedom, once more began to respire; fanaticism, with all its train of melancholy terrors and cruelties, was now dispelled; the arts of peace began to return; but, unhappily, the arts of luxury entered in their train.

LETTER XLVI.

IT will, undoubtedly, astonish posterity, when they find a whole nation making these sudden changes, from absolute liberty to the most submissive obedience; at one time almost unanimously declaring against monarchy, and soon after, with the most unbounded flattery, soliciting the shackles of arbitrary power. The parliament, which had before so vehemently opposed the late monarch, possessed of every virtue, were now profuse in their submissions to his successor, whose character stood in no competition with that of his father.

They first ordained, that the bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw, should be dug from their graves, and dragged to the place of execution; there to continue hanging the whole day, and then to be interred under the gallows. Of those who sat in judgment on the late monarch's trial, some were dead, and some were thought worthy to find pardon; ten only, out of fourscore, were devoted to immediate destruction. These were enthusiasts, who had all along acted from principle, and bore their fate with all the confidence of martyrs. They had been formerly cruel themselves, and they were now, in turn, treated with shocking inhumanity; the executioner, not content with performing the office of death, added insult to their tortures: the sufferers, to a man, thanked God for being permitted to die for his cause, and braved the fury of their oppressors with manly contempt.

Their deaths seemed to inspire a few desperate en-

thusiasts with the most strange confidence that ever deluded a poor ignorant party. One Venner, who expected the immediate coming of Christ upon earth, appeared in the streets of London in arms, at the head of threescore enthusiasts, like himself, and declared against any other monarch but king Jesus. They had been wrought into such a pitch of frenzy as to believe themselves invulnerable, and fought as men confident of victory. The few survivors of their defeat were taken, tried, condemned, and executed: they affirmed to the last that, if they had been deceived, the Lord himself had deceived them.

It was now feared that the title of royalty would bear down all the former mounds of freedom; the parliament seemed to concur in all the designs of the court, and even to anticipate its wishes. But though the king was established, his old faithful friends, and the followers of his family, were left unrewarded. There were numbers, who had fought for his father, and for him, and had lost their all in his service, still pining in want and misery; while their persecutors, who, profiting by the troubles of their country, had acquired fortunes during the civil war, were still permitted to enjoy them without molestation. The sufferers petitioned in vain; Charles was no way remarkable for gratitude; his pleasures, his flatterers, and concubines, engrossed all his attention, and exhausted his finances: the unhappy cavaliers murmured without redress; he fled from their gloomy expostulations to scenes of mirth, riot, and festivity.

The kingdom now seemed to be converted into a theatre of debauchery, which had before been a scene of blood. The independents were no longer to be seen; the puritans were restrained; the horrors of the late war were the subject of ridicule; the formality and the ignorance of sectaries were displayed upon the stage, and even laughed at in the pulpit. The king had no religion; and though he permitted the persecution of sectaries, it was merely from political motives. The late miseries of the nation were not sufficient to deter a few desperate fanatics from attempting to excite them afresh; they laid a scheme for surprising

several towns in the north, and raising a general insurrection. The ministry discovered the plot before it was ripe for execution: thirty of the conspirators were taken, and executed; and this plot was a pretext for continuing the parliament then sitting, and repealing the act for triennial parliaments, as being dangerous in times of commotion.

The English parliament seemed willing to make the king reparation for their former disobedience; and the Scots were still more sanguine in the expressions of their attachment. Had Charles been an active monarch, he might have now become an absolute one. They confirmed the doctrine of passive obedience by a solemn act; they assigned him a revenue of twelve hundred thousand pounds, exclusive of the expense necessary for fitting and supplying the fleet. None of his predecessors were ever possessed of such a large revenue; nevertheless, his prodigality rendered him indigent, and, instead of desiring an ascendancy over his parliament, he was content to be a humble and continual dependent on their bounty.

His prodigality, his libertinism, and the familiarity with which he permitted himself to be treated by his subjects, soon began to alter their sentiments, from a veneration for royalty to a contempt of his person and administration. He declared war against Holland, merely to have an opportunity of spending upon his pleasures a part of those sums granted him by parliament, for the support of a fleet and army. This war was carried on with doubtful success; but the alarm which the nation received from Ruyter, the Dutch admiral, attempting to sail up the river Thames, still more disgusted them against their governor. Immediate dangers, though small, influence the mind with greater force than distant, though terrible, calamities. They now called to mind the administration of Cromwell, when the people enjoyed security at home, and were respected abroad: they recollected that usurper's vigorous labours for the good of the nation, and compared them with those of the present effeminate and unsuccessful reign.

Natural and accidental calamities seemed to unite

themselves to those brought on by bad management. A plague ravaged London, which swept away more than one hundred thousand of its inhabitants; and, soon after, the City was almost entirely destroyed by a conflagration, which raged for three days without intermission. The spirit of the people surmounted these calamities: London soon rose more beautiful from its ashes; the streets were built anew, more spacious and convenient than before; and their distress soon became their advantage. 1666.

But neither war, nor accident, nor the murmurs of the people, could abate the passion of gallantry, pleasure, and expense, that reigned in the court through the king's example. He had imbibed all that spirit of levity, during his residence in France, for which that kingdom is remarkable. Though he had been married, soon after his restoration, to the infanta of Portugal, he kept several mistresses, by whom he had natural issue. Among this number were Mademoiselle Querouaille, a French woman, whom he created duchess of Portsmouth; Mrs. Palmer, whom he made a countess; and Nel Gwyn and Mrs. Davis, actresses, taken from the theatre.

But though the court was thus lost to decency, the passion for uniformity in religion in the nation seemed to revive. The parliament was equally set against the presbyterians and the papists: an act was made, called the *Test Act*, importing, that every person in office and employment should take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, receive the sacrament in some parish-church, before competent witnesses, and subscribe a declaration, renouncing the doctrine of transubstantiation. This was levelled against the duke of York, the king's brother, who had professed himself a papist, and whom the parliament secretly aimed at excluding from the throne. The fears and discontents of the nation were vented without restraint: the apprehensions of a popish successor; an abandoned court; a parliament that had continued, without a new election, for seven years; an alliance cemented with France, the secret enemy of England and the protes-

tant religion; and an unsuccessful and expensive war with Holland, their natural allies; all gave cause to kindle a spirit of indignation among the people. The court tried every method, but in vain, to satisfy these murmurs, or appease them. Even the coffee-houses were suppressed, where such topics were generally debated.

This universal ferment, as may easily be imagined, broke out into an alarm. When the spirit of the English is once excited, they either find objects of resentment, or they make them. The rumour of a popish conspiracy was first propagated, and one Titus Oates soon appeared to give it confirmation. Titus 1678. Oates had been from his youth an indigent and infamous adventurer. He was abandoned, illiterate, and shameless. He had been once indicted for perjury, afterward the chaplain of a man of war, and dismissed for unnatural practices. He then professed himself a Roman catholic, went to the Jesuits' college at St. Omer, but was dismissed, after some residence there, with infamy. He then returned to London, filled with projects of revenge; and the animosities of this unhappy nation soon appeared a proper place of nourishment to give this viper's virulence effect. He deposed upon oath, that the jesuits, several of whom he named, and who were soon after taken up, had tried the king under the name of the *Black Bastard*, condemned him as a heretic, and resolved to deprive him of life; that several attempts had been made without success; and that not only the king's brother, but even the queen, were privy to the design. The house of commons immediately took fire at this pretended conspiracy; they petitioned for removing the queen, rewarded Oates with a pension of twelve hundred pounds, and immediately ordered the conspirators to be tried in the courts of justice. Several jesuits were tried; their very profession was at that time sufficient to destroy them: before a partial judge and an exasperated jury, mercy could not be expected, and several, though apparently innocent, were executed as traitors upon this miscreant's information. Coleman, the duke of

York's secretary, Ireland, Pickering, Grove, Fenwick, and Whitebread, were among the first that fell; they died declaring their innocence to the last moment of their lives. 1679.

While the protestants were labouring to humble both the puritans and papists, these two parties were at the same time mutually employed in ruining each other. Plot was set against plot; that contrived by Oates was called the *Jesuits' Plot*; that set to oppose it was called by the name of the *Meal-tub Plot*, as the scheme of the conspiracy was found hidden in a meal-tub. This was a design against Oates; for his perjuries had drawn upon him the furious resentment of the catholic party: they were determined to take away his life, by the same false evidence by which he had taken the lives of so many of their fraternity.

Of all these plots, tending to disturb the peace of the kingdom, it is said the earl of Shaftesbury was at the bottom: he had been a member of the long parliament in the civil wars, and had gained great influence among the presbyterians: he had insinuated himself into the confidence of Cromwell, and afterward employed his credit in forwarding the restoration; he had been made one of the privy council in the present reign, but was ejected thence for the duplicity of his conduct: he was possessed of uncommon abilities, joined with turbulence, dissimulation, and unbounded ambition. It was thought that this nobleman, in revenge for his disgrace at court, headed the demagogue faction, and alarmed the king with unceasing dangers.

He artfully increased the people's apprehensions of a popish successor, and, by his interest, brought a bill into the house of commons for the exclusion of James, duke of York, from the succession. In the national animosity raised against papists, it was no difficult matter to have it passed through the house of commons: but being presented to the house of peers, it was thrown out, by a great majority.

The commons were greatly incensed at this repulse, but particularly their anger fell upon the earl of Halifax, who exerted himself in the opposition. Halifax disregarded their anger, secure in conscious innocence.

But their rage fell with more weight upon lord Stafford, who had long been a prisoner in the Tower, upon the deposition of Oates. Notwithstanding his age, his weak intellects, and the justness of his defence, he was arraigned, condemned, and executed for a plot, which had its only foundation in perjury and subornation. All things threatened a renewal of the former troubles from which the kingdom had been lately set free. The commons presented petition after 1680. petition to the king, desiring the punishment of papists, and the abridgement of the royal prerogative. They seemed willing to intimidate the king, or to inflame the nation. At length Charles showed a degree of fortitude that surprised even his friends; he rejected their petitions with contempt, and dissolved the parliament that had abused their power.

The state of the nation at that time, with regard to religion, was thus: The principal men at court, if they professed any, were of the established church; so were all the men of great property, as well as the dregs of the people; but that body of men who voted at elections, placed between a state of opulence and penury, were in general presbyterians: they were therefore willing to return representatives only of that persuasion.

Charles, however, was resolved to try one parliament more, and appointed them to meet him at Oxford, the city of London having long displeased him, by reason of their republican principles. The new parliament, however, seemed still more turbulent than the former; the members came armed, and attended by their friends and adherents, as if they expected to fight, and not to deliberate; the representatives of London were, in particular, attended by a numerous body of horsemen, wearing cockades, inscribed, *No Popery! No Slavery!* To declaim against popery was the voice of faction in the last reign, and such it was in the present. The same spirit that had animated the former parliament seemed redoubled in this. They insisted on the bill for excluding the duke of York from the succession; they persisted in declaring that all papists should be banished, and their children

educated in the protestant religion; that the doctrine of passive obedience was injurious to the rights of society. In a word, the leaders of the opposition were resolved to be displeased with every measure the king could propose, and prepared to recall the former aristocracy into the kingdom. Charles, seeing that nothing could be expected from councils managed by party, and not deliberation, once more dissolved this parliament, with a steadfast resolution of never calling another.

This was a stroke they had never expected, and which the times could alone justify. From the moment the royal and parliamentary commotions were ended, Charles seemed to rule with despotic power, and was resolved to leave to his successor the faults and the misfortunes of his administration. His temper, which had been always easy and merciful, became arbitrary, and even cruel; he entertained spies and informers round the throne, and imprisoned all such as he thought most daring in their designs. He resolved to humble the presbyterians: these were divested of their employments, and their places filled with such as approved the doctrine of nonresistance. The clergy testified their zeal to the court by their writings and sermons. The partizans of the king were most numerous, but those of the opposite faction were most enterprising: the mutual animosity of each was inflamed into rage and rancour, and the king openly declared himself at the head of a faction. The city of London particularly fell under his resentment; he deprived them of their charter, and only restored it when he had subjected the election of the magistrates to his immediate authority.

Such an arbitrary administration could not fail of exciting new insurrections. Several noblemen, among whom were the duke of Monmouth, the king's natural son, the lords Shaftesbury, Russel, Grey, and others, entered into a combination to destroy the king, which was afterward called the *Rye-house Plot*. 1683. The conspirators met at the house of one Shepherd, a wine-merchant, where they promised a rising in London, Bristol, Devonshire, and Cheshire. They agreed upon

a declaration for justifying their design : but the scheme was at first delayed from the difficulty of the preparations previous to taking the field, and soon after discovered by one Keiling, who expected to earn a pardon for himself by impeaching his associates. As the plot began to open, new informers came in ; Monmouth absconded ; Grey escaped the messenger who had been sent to arrest him ; Russel was committed to the Tower ; and Shaftesbury, who foresaw the danger, had taken refuge in Holland. Lord Essex, Sidney, the famous legislator, and Hampden, grandson to him of that name who refused to pay the tax of ship-money, were informed against, and committed to confinement.

The principal informer upon this occasion was lord Howard, a man every way debauched, and who was willing to accept infamy for safety : by his evidence Russel and Sidney were condemned, and died with that intrepidity which was worthy a better cause. While these men were thus executed, Monmouth was in the mean time soliciting his pardon ; and he, who was most culpable, as his crime was most unnatural, easily obtained it.

The severities exercised in the latter part of this reign, arose merely from the influence of the duke of York, who was as much inclined to cruelty by nature, as his brother Charles was prone to forgiveness. His authority was become terrible even to the ministry : by his advice the king seized upon all the charters of the corporations, in order to extort money for having them renewed. Partiality and oppression were the instruments of his power, and bigotry and innovation the objects of his wish. At this period the reign of Charles was as absolute as that of any monarch in Christendom, and new discontents and treasons were secretly diffusing their poison, while the spirit of liberty still struggled hard against the spirit of obedience, which the clergy attempted to inculcate. Another civil war threatened the nation, still more dreadful than the former, as the forces were more equally divided : but Charles happily died before those calamities could return ; he was suddenly seized with an apoplectic fit, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the twenty-fifth of

his reign. The people, though they despised his administration, loved his person; they were willing to bear with the faults of one, whose whole behaviour was a continual instance of good-nature and affability; but they were by no means willing to grant the same indulgence to his successor, whom they hated for his pride, his religion, his cruelty, and connections. He was unfit to walk in the irregular steps of his predecessor; and, when he pursued the same route, fatal experience soon convinced him that he had at once mistaken himself and the people he attempted to command.

But, though England, during the reign of Charles, seemed, in some measure, agitated like the ocean after a storm, yet commerce continued to increase with its usual celerity and success. The manufacture of certain stuffs, glass, copper, steel, paper, hats, and stockings, was now brought to perfection. Upon the banishing of the protestants from France, numbers came and settled here, and brought their arts with them. This application to arts and commerce gave England great weight in the balance of Europe: Britain became the centre of politics and arms. Though literature was but little encouraged by the sovereign, yet the learned made great proficiency in every department of science; and the philosophers of England began to take the lead. Newton, Tillotson, Burnet, Barrow, and Boyle, enlarged the landmarks of human knowledge: Butler, Dryden, Otway, gave strength and propriety to the language. In a word, the character of the nation now began to alter; the natural rudeness of the inhabitants began to take a polish from good breeding, and British ferocity to meliorate into social happiness.

LETTER XLVII.

As we descend, we find the materials for English history increase: the minutest transactions are recorded with prolixity; and these, however dry and unimproving to some, are yet both interesting and satisfactory

to others. In such a profusion of materials, I must be content rather to give the spirit of the following reigns, than pretend to exhibit a historical detail of particular interests and intrigues. It will be enough to mark those strong outlines that may probably escape the wreck of time, when the internal colouring shall fade. As history increases in time by the addition of new events, an epitome becomes more necessary to abridge its excrescences.

The duke of York, who succeeded his brother, with the title of king James the second, had been bred a papist, and was strongly bigotted to his principles. It is the property of that religion, almost ever, to contract the sphere of the understanding; and, until people are, in some measure, disengaged from its prejudices, it is impossible to lay a just claim to extensive views, or consistency of design. The intellects of this prince were naturally weak, and his bigotted principles still rendered them more feeble: he conceived the ridiculous project of reigning in the arbitrary manner of his predecessor, and changing the established religion of his country, at a time when his person was hated, and the established religion was universally approved.

The people of England were now entirely changed from what they had been in the times of Henry, Mary, and Elizabeth, who had altered religion at will. Learning was now as much cultivated by the laity as by the priesthood: every man now pretended to think himself, and had rational grounds for his opinion. In the beginning of the Reformation, the monarchs had only to bring over the clergy, in order totally to change the modes of belief; for the people were entirely guided by their pastors. But the circumstances of the nation were, at present, entirely altered; and, to make a change in religion, it would have been necessary to convince every individual in the state. But James had no idea of the alteration of circumstances; his situation, he thought, supplied him with authority, and his zeal furnished him with hope of accomplishing this chimerical design.

The success he met with in crushing a rebellion, in

the opening of his reign, seemed to promise a favourable omen toward the completion of his wishes. The duke of Monmouth, who had long been at the head of faction, and inflamed all the discontent that molested the late king's reign, was now resolved to aim at the crown. He was the darling of the people; and some averred that the king had married his mother, and owned his legitimacy at his death. The earl of Argyll seconded his views, and they formed the scheme of a double insurrection. Argyll first landed in Scotland, published his manifestoes, put himself at the head of two thousand five hundred men, and attempted to influence the nation; but a formidable body of the king's forces coming against him, his army fell away, and he himself, after being wounded in attempting to escape, was taken by a peasant, standing up to his neck in water. Being brought to Edinburgh, he prepared for his death, well knowing that it was not in the king's nature to forgive an enemy. 1685.

The duke of Monmouth was not more fortunate: he sailed from the Texel with three vessels, and arrived on the coasts of Dorsetshire with about fourscore followers. The country soon flocked in to his standard, and in two days his army was increased to two thousand men. The earl of Feversham was sent to oppose him, and took post at Sedgemore, a village in Somersetshire. Monmouth resolved to fight him; and began his march about eleven in the night, with profound silence; but the royalists were prepared for his reception: the action began at day-break. Lord Grey, who commanded the duke of Monmouth's horse, was routed at the first onset. The duke, at the head of his infantry, bravely maintained his ground, until he was charged in flank by the enemy's horse, who had been just now victorious. A total rout ensued; three hundred were killed in the engagement, and a thousand in the pursuit. The duke escaped the carnage, and, in a shepherd's disguise, fled on foot, attended by a faithful companion, who had followed his fortunes into England. Thus they travelled on toward Dorsetshire, till, quite exhausted with hunger and fatigue, they laid down in a field, and covered themselves with stubble. In this forlorn situation

he was found, with some peas in his pocket, which he had gathered in the field to sustain life. His spirit sunk with his misfortunes; he wrote to the king; implored his mercy. The king gave him an audience, as if willing to satisfy his vengeance with the sight of a rival's misery; but his death was determined, and no intreaties could extort royal clemency. On the scaffold he resumed his former courage, handled the axe, declared that he meant well to the nation, and his head was cut off, but not till after the third blow.

But it were happy for the nation, and fortunate for the king, if the blood that was already shed had been thought a sufficient expiation for the late offence. The victorious army behaved with the most savage cruelty to the prisoners taken after the battle. Their inhumanity was properly seconded by Jefferies, who was sent on the western circuit to try the insurgents. His furious thirst of blood being inflamed by continual intoxication, he threatened, calumniated, and threw aside every appearance of clemency. Men and women indiscriminately felt the effects of his savage zeal; and not less than two hundred and fifty persons expired under circumstances of wanton cruelty. Cruel kings ever find cruel ministers.

It was not to be expected, that these butcheries could acquire the king the love or the confidence of his people, or tend to alter their opinions, as they rather excited the secret abhorrence of every honest man; yet he thought this a time favorable for the carrying on his scheme of religion and arbitrary government. An attempt at arbitrary power in Charles was, in some measure, excusable, as he had a republican faction to oppose; and it might have been prudent at that time to overstep justice, in order to attain security: but the same designs in James were as unnecessary as impracticable, since there were few republicans remaining, and the people were satisfied with limited monarchy. But this weak and deluded monarch was resolved to imitate one or two princes of Europe, who had just before rendered themselves absolute; and he was incited to this project by Lewis XIV, who secretly desired his destruction. Thus instigated, he began his

designs with the measures which he should not have used till their completion. He sent a splendid embassy to Rome, to acknowledge his obedience to the pope. Innocent, who then filled the chair, was too good a politician to approve of such childish measures, and gave his ambassador a very cool reception. He was sensible that the king was openly striking at those laws and opinions which it was his business to undermine in silence and security. The cardinals were even heard facetiously to declare, *that the king should be excommunicated for thus endeavouring to overturn the small remains of popery that still subsisted in England.*

James, notwithstanding these discouragements, was yet resolved to prosecute his favourite scheme with vigour. Upon every occasion the catholics shared his confidence and favour. Edward Petre, his confessor, ruled his conscience, and drove him blindly forward to attempt innovation. He became every day more and more ambitious of making converts; the earl of Sunderland sacrificed his religion to his ambition; the earl of Rochester lost his employment of treasurer, for refusing to alter his religion. The king stooped so low as to his officers: a rough soldier one day answered his remonstrances, by saying he was pre-engaged; for he had promised the king of Morocco, when he was quartered at Tangiers, that, should he ever change his religion, he would turn Mahometan.

An ecclesiastical court was erected with power to punish all delinquents, or such so reputed by the court, with all manner of ecclesiastical censures. The vice-chancellor of Cambridge was summoned before this court for having refused to admit one Francis, a Benedictine monk, to the degree of master of arts: the vice-chancellor was deprived of his office; but the university persisted in their refusal, and the king thought proper to desist from his purpose. The vice-president and fellows of Magdalen College in Oxford were treated with more severity. They refused to admit one Farmer, a new convert, and one of a profligate life, who was nominated by the king to the place of president, now become vacant. The king next nominated Parker, bishop of Oxford; but he was equally

obnoxious for the same reasons. The king repaired in person to Oxford: he reproached the fellows with insolence and disobedience; but neither he nor his ministers could prevail to alter the resolutions of this society. The fellows were expelled by his order, and their places filled with papists, who he knew would be more obedient to his commands.

His designs hitherto were sufficiently manifest; but he was now resolved entirely to throw off the mask. By his permission, the pope's nuncio made his public entry into Windsor in his pontificals, preceded by the cross, and attended by a great number of monks, in the habit of their respective orders. He next published a declaration for liberty of conscience, by which all restraints upon popery were taken away. The church of England took the alarm. The peculiar animosity of the people against the catholic religion proceeded not less from religion than temporal motives. It is the spirit of that religion to favor arbitrary power, and its reproach to encourage persecution. The English had too often smarted under both, to be willing again to submit to either. Seven bishops, who had received the king's express orders to cause this declaration of liberty of conscience to be read in their churches, refused to comply. They drew up a modest petition to excuse their refusal, which only served to increase the king's resentment and rage. They were cited before
1687. the council, and still adhered to their former resolution with that firmness which is the characteristic of virtue. The attorney-general was ordered to prosecute them for publishing sedition, and abridging the king's prerogative. They were committed prisoners to the Tower, conducted thither amid the prayers and condolence of an incredible multitude of the populace, who regarded them as sufferers for truth. The day appointed for their trial arrived. The cause was looked upon as the crisis of English freedom. The council managed the debate on both sides with learning and candour: the jury withdrew into a chamber, where they passed the whole night, but next morning returned into court and declared the bishops not guilty. The joy of the people, on this occasion, was inex-

pressible; the whole city, and the city round, seemed at once to catch the shouts of exultation; they even reached the camp, where the king was then sitting at dinner, who heard them with indignation and amazement.

If the bishops testified the readiness of martyrs in support of their religion, James showed no less obstinacy in his attempts toward the establishment of his own. Finding the clergy adverse to his designs, he next tried what he could do with the army. He thought, if one regiment would promise implicit obedience, their example would soon induce others to the same compliance. He ordered one of the regiments to be drawn up in his presence, and desired that such as were against his late declaration of liberty should lay down their arms. He was surprised to see the whole battalion ground their arms, except two officers and a few Roman catholic soldiers.

Opposition only served to increase the infatuated monarch's zeal; he was continually stimulated by his queen and his priests to proceed rashly onward. But he was particularly urged on by the jesuit Petre, his confessor, an ambitious and intriguing priest, whom some historians have even accused of being the creature of the prince of Orange, the king's son-in-law, who had long since conceived hopes of seizing the crown. James now, therefore, issued orders for prosecuting all those clergymen who had forborn to read his declaration. He placed one Gifford, a doctor of the Sorbonne, at the head of Magdalen college, and likewise nominated him to the see of Oxford, lately become vacant. Every member of the church of England now saw their danger; and whigs and tories united their efforts to oppose it.

William, prince of Orange, had married Mary, the daughter of king James. This prince had been early immersed in danger, calamities, and politics: the designs of France, and the turbulence of Holland, had served to sharpen his talents, and give him a propensity for intrigue. This great politician and soldier concealed, beneath a phlegmatic appearance, a most violent and boundless ambition; all his actions were le-

velled at power, while his discourse never betrayed the wishes of his heart. His temper was cold and severe, his genius active and piercing; he was valiant without ostentation, politic without address; disdainng the pleasures or the elegancies of life, yet eager after the phantom of pre-eminence. He was no stranger to the murmurs of the English, and was resolved to turn them to his interest: he therefore accepted the invitations of the nobility and others, and still more willingly embarked in the cause, as he found the malecontents had concerted their measures with prudence and secrecy.

A fleet was equipped, sufficient to transport fifteen thousand troops; and it was at first given out that this armament was designed against France. James, at length, began to see his own errors, and the discontents of the people: he would now have retracted his measures in favour of popery, but it was too late; the fleet of the prince was already sailed, and had landed thirteen thousand troops at the village of Broxholme, in Torbay.

The expectations of the prince of Orange seemed, at first, to be frustrated; very few Englishmen offered him their services, though the people were, in general, well affected to his design. Slight repulses were not sufficient to intimidate a general who had, from early youth, encountered adversity: he continued ten days in expectation of being joined with the malecontents without success; but, just when he began to deliberate about re-embarking his forces, he was joined by several persons of consequence, and the country people came flocking to his standard. From this day his numbers began to increase; the nobility, who had composed the court and council of king James, now left their old master to solicit protection from the new.

Lewis XIV had long foreseen this defection, and had formerly offered the king thirty thousand men for his security. This was then refused by James, by the advice of Sunderland, his favourite, who was secretly in the interest of the prince of Orange. James, however, now requested assistance from France, when it was too late. He wrote in vain to Leopold, emperor of Germany, who only returned for answer, that what

he had foreseen had happened. He had some dependence on his fleet; but they were entirely dissatisfied. In a word, his interests were deserted by all; for he had long deserted them himself. He was at the head of an army of twenty thousand men, and it is possible that, had he led them to the combat without granting them time for deliberation, they might have fought in his favor: but he was involved in a maze of fears and suspicions; the defection of those he most confided in took away his power of deliberation, and his perplexity was increased, when told that the prince of Denmark, and Anne, his favourite daughter, had gone over to the prince of Orange. In this exigence he could not repress his tears, and, in the agony of his heart, was heard to exclaim, *God help me, my own children have forsaken me!*

He now hung over the precipice of destruction! Invaded by one son-in-law, abandoned by another, hated by his subjects, and detested by those who had suffered beneath his cruelty. He assembled the few noblemen who still adhered to his interests, and demanded their advice and assistance. Addressing himself to the earl of Bedford, father to lord Russel, who was beheaded by James's intrigues in the preceding reign, *My lord*, said he, *you are an honest man, have great credit, and can do me signal service. Ah, sir*, replied the earl, *I am old and feeble, I can do you but little service; I once had a son that could have assisted you, but he is no more.* James was so struck with this reply, that he could not speak for some minutes.

The king was naturally timid; and some counsellors about him, either sharing his fears, or bribed by the prince, contributed to increase his apprehensions. They reminded him of the fate of Charles I, and aggravated the turbulence of the people. He was, at length, persuaded to think of flying from a nation he could no longer govern, and of taking refuge at the court of France, where he was sure of finding assistance and protection. Thus instructed, he first sent away his queen, who arrived safely at Calais; and, soon after, disguising himself in a plain dress, he went down to Feversham, and embarked on board a small

vessel for France. But his misfortunes still continued to follow him; the vessel was detained by the common people, who, not knowing their sovereign, robbed, insulted, and abused him. He was now persuaded by the earl of Winchelsea to return to London, where he was once more received amid the acclamations of the people.

The return of James was by no means agreeable to William, though he well knew how to dissemble. It was his interest and his design to increase the forsaken monarch's apprehensions, so as to induce him to fly. He, therefore, received the news of his return with a haughty air, and ordered him to leave Whitehall, and to retire to Richmond. The king remonstrated against Richmond, and desired that Rochester might be appointed as the place of his abode. The prince perceived his intention was to leave the kingdom; nor did one wish for flight more ardently than the other desired him away. The king soon concurred with his designs: after staying but a short time at Rochester, he fled to the sea-side, attended by his natural son, the duke of Berwick, where he embarked for France, and arrived in safety, to enjoy, for the rest of life, the empty title of a king, and the appellation of a saint, a title which still flattered him more. There he continued to reside among a people who pitied, ridiculed, and despised him. He enrolled himself in the order of jesuits; and the court of Rome, for whom he had lost all, repaid him only with indulgences and pasquinades.

From this moment the constitution of England, that had fluctuated for so many ages, was fixed. The nation, represented by its parliament, determined the long-contested limits between the king and the people: they prescribed to the prince of Orange the terms by which he was to rule; they chose him for king, jointly with Mary, who was the next protestant heir to the crown. They were crowned by the titles of William III, and Mary, king and queen of England. The prince saw his ambition at length gratified; and his wisdom was repaid with that crown which the folly of his predecessor had given away.

LETTER XLVIII.

THOUGH William was chosen king of England, his power was limited on every side; and the opposition he met with from his parliaments still lessened his authority. His sway in Holland, where he was but the stadtholder, was far more arbitrary; so that he might, with greater propriety, have been called the king of the United Provinces, and the stadtholder of England. He was not sufficiently acquainted with the difficulty of governing the nation by which he was elected: he expected in them a people ready to second the views of his ambition in humbling France; but he found them more apt to fear for the invasion of their domestic liberties from himself.

His reign commenced, however, with the same attempt which had been the principal cause of all the disturbances in the preceding reign, and had excluded the monarch from the throne. William was a Calvinist, and naturally averse to persecution. He, therefore, began by attempting to repeal those laws that enjoined uniformity of worship; and though he could not entirely succeed in his design, yet a toleration was granted to such dissenters as should take the oaths of allegiance, and hold no private conventicles. The papists also enjoyed the lenity of his government; and though the laws against them continued to subsist, yet they were seldom put into rigorous execution. What was criminal in James was virtuous in his successor: James only wanted to introduce persecution, by pretending to disown it; William was averse to persecution from principle, and none suffered for religious opinions during his reign.

But, though William was acknowledged in England, Scotland was still undetermined. The parliament of that country, however, soon recognised his authority, and took that opportunity to abolish episcopacy, which had been long disagreeable to the nation. Nothing now remained to the deposed monarch, of all his former dominions, but Ireland. His cause was espoused by all the catholics of that country, who were

much more numerous there than those of the protestant persuasion. The king of France, either touched with compassion for his sufferings, or willing to weaken a rival kingdom by promoting its internal dissensions, granted James a fleet and some troops to assert his claims there. On the seventh day of May, this unhappy monarch embarked at Brest, and on the twenty-second arrived at Kinsale. He was received by the catholics of Ireland with open arms. The protestants, who were unanimously attached to king William, had been previously disarmed by Tyrconnel, their lord-lieutenant, and a papist. James made his public entry into Dublin amid the acclamations of the inhabitants. He was met by a popish procession, bearing the host, which he publicly adored; and this served to alienate the few protestants of that kingdom who still adhered to his cause. A small party of that religion were resolved to defend their lives and liberties in the little city of Londonderry. They were besieged by the forces of king James, and suffered all the complicated miseries of war, famine, and bigotted cruelty: but, determined never to yield, they rejected capitulation, and always repulsed the besiegers with considerable loss. At length, supplies and succours arriving 1689. from England, king James's army thought proper to raise the siege.

The cruelties exercised upon the protestants were as shocking as unnecessary; soldiers were permitted to pillage them without redress, and they were compelled to accept base money in exchange for those commodities they were forced to sell. But their sufferings were soon to have a period. The duke of Schomberg was sent over with assistance; and William himself soon after followed, and landed at Carrickfergus. He was met by numbers of the protestants, who had fled from persecution; and now, at the head of six and thirty thousand men, he was resolved to go in quest of the enemy. Having marched to Dundalk, and then to Ardee, he at length came in sight of the Irish army. The river Boyne lay between the two armies, the front of the Irish being secured by a morass and a rising ground. These obstacles were insufficient to prevent

the ardour of William, who, when his friend the duke of Schomberg expostulated upon the danger, boldly replied, that a tardy victory would be worse than a defeat. The duke, finding his advice not relished, retired to his tent in a melancholy manner, as if he had a prescience of his own misfortune. Early in the morning, at six, king William gave orders to pass the river: the army passed in three different places, and the battle began with unusual vigour. The Irish troops, which have been reckoned the best in Europe abroad, have always fought indifferently at home; they fled, after a long resistance, with precipitation, and left the French and Swiss regiments, who came to their assistance, to make the best retreat they could. William led on his horse in person, and contributed by his activity and vigilance to secure the victory. James was not in the battle, but stood aloof, during the action, on the hill Dunmore, surrounded with some squadrons of horse; and, at intervals, was heard to exclaim, when he saw his own troops repulsing the enemy, *O spare my English subjects!* The Irish lost about fifteen hundred men, and the English about one-third of that number: but the death of the duke of Schomberg, who was shot as he was crossing the water, seemed to outweigh all the numbers of the enemy. He had been long a soldier of fortune, and fought under almost every power in Europe. His skill in war was unparalleled, and his fidelity equal to his courage. The number of battles in which he had been personally engaged was said to equal the number of his years, and he died aged eighty-two. James fled, regardless of the safety of his soldiers. William rode round the scene of slaughter, relieving the wounded, as well of the enemy's troops as his own. O'Regan, an old Irish captain, was heard to say, upon this occasion, If the English would exchange generals, the conquered army would fight the battle over again.

This blow totally depressed the hopes of James: he fled to Dublin, advised the magistrates to get the best terms they could from the victor, then set out for Waterford, where he embarked for France, in a vessel prepared for his reception. Had he possessed either

conduct or courage, he might still have headed his troops, and fought with advantage; but prudence forsook him with good fortune.

His friends were still resolved to second his interests, though he had abandoned them himself. After his retreat, another desperate battle was fought at Aughrim, in which his adversaries were again victorious. Limerick, a strong city in the southern part of the kingdom, still held out in his favour. The city was besieged, and made a brave defence; but, despairing of the king's fortunes, the garrison at length capitulated. The Roman catholics, by this capitulation, were restored to the enjoyment of such liberty, in the exercise of their religion, as they had possessed in the reign of Charles II, and about fourteen thousand of those who had fought in favour of king James, had permission to go over to France, and transports were provided for their reception.

The conquest of Ireland being thus completed, the only hopes of the fugitive king now depended on the assistance of Lewis XIV, who promised to make a descent upon England in his favour. The French king was punctual; he supplied the fugitive monarch with an army consisting of a body of French troops, some English and Scotch refugees, and the Irish regiments which had been transported from Limerick into France, by long discipline now become excellent soldiers. This army was assembled between Cherburgh and La Hogue: king James commanded it in person; and more than three hundred transports were provided for landing it on the English shore. Tourville, the French admiral, at the head of sixty-three ships of the line, was appointed to favour the descent, and had orders to attack the enemy, if they should attempt to oppose him. All things conspired to revive the hopes of the hitherto unfortunate king. These preparations on the side of France were soon known at the court of England, and precautions were taken for vigorous opposition: all the secret machinations of the banished king's adherents were early discovered to the English ministry by spies, and they took proper measures to defeat them. Admiral Russel was ordered to put to

sea with all possible expedition; and he soon appeared with ninety-nine ships of the line, beside frigates and fire-ships. Both fleets met at La Hogue. On the success of this engagement all the hopes of James depended: but the victory was on the side of the English, and of numbers. The combat continued ten hours, and the pursuit two days. Fifteen French men of war were destroyed; and the blow was so decisive, that from that time France seemed to relinquish her claims to the ocean.

James was now reduced to the lowest ebb of despondence: his designs upon England were quite frustrated: nothing was now left his friends but terrors and despair, or the hopes of assassinating the monarch on the throne. These base attempts, as barbarous as they were useless, were not entirely disagreeable to the temper of James: it is said, he encouraged and proposed them; but they all ended in the destruction of their undertakers. He passed the remainder of his days at St. Germain; a pensioner on the bounties of Lewis, and assisted by occasional liberalities from his daughter, and friends in England. He died in 1700, at St. Germain. Some pretend that miracles were wrought at his tomb. We have seen few deposed kings that have not died with a reputation for sanctity.

The defeat at La Hogue confirmed king William's safety and title to the crown; the jacobites were now a feeble and disunited faction: new parties therefore arose among those who had been friends of the revolution, and William found as much opposition from his parliament at home, as from the enemy in the field. His chief motive for accepting the crown was to engage England more deeply in the concerns of Europe. It had ever been his ambition to humble the French, whom he considered as the most formidable enemies of that liberty which he idolized; and all his politics lay in making alliances against them. Many of the English, on the other hand, had neither the same animosity against the French, nor the same terrors of their increasing power; they therefore considered the interests of the nation as sacrificed to foreign connections,

and complained, that the war on the continent fell most heavily on them, though they had the least interest in its success. To these motives of discontent was added his partiality to his own countrymen, in prejudice of his English subjects, together with his proud reserve and sullen silence, so unlike the behaviour of all their former kings. William heard their complaints with the most phlegmatic indifference; the interest of Europe alone employed all his attention: but while he incessantly watched over the schemes of contending kings and nations, he was unmindful of the cultivation of internal polity. Patriotism was ridiculed as an ideal virtue; the practice of bribing a majority in parliament became universal. The example of the great was caught by the vulgar; all principle, and even decency, was gradually banished; talents lay uncultivated; and the ignorant and profligate were received into favour.

William, upon accepting the crown, was resolved to preserve, as much as he was able, the privileges of a sovereign. He was, as yet, entirely unacquainted with the nature of a limited monarchy, which was not then thoroughly understood in any part of Europe, except in England alone; he therefore often controverted the views of his parliament, and was directed by arbitrary councils. One of the first instances of this was in the opposition he gave to the bill for triennial parliaments: it had passed the two houses, and was sent up to receive the royal assent, which William refused to grant: the commons then voted, that whoever advised the king to this measure was an enemy to his country. The bill, thus rejected, lay dormant till another season; and, being again brought in, the king found himself obliged, though reluctantly, to comply. The same opposition, and the same success, attended a bill for regulating trials in cases of high treason, by which the accused was allowed a copy of his indictment, and a list of the names of his jury, two days before his trial, together with council to plead in his defence; that no person should be indicted, but upon the oaths of two faithful witnesses. This was one of the most salutary

laws that had been long enacted : but while penal statutes were mitigated on one hand, they were strangely increased by a number of others.

The great business of the parliament, from this period, seemed to consist in restraining corruption, and bringing such to justice as had grown wealthy from the plunder of the public. The number of laws that were now enacted every session seemed calculated for the safety of the subject ; but, in reality, were symptoms of the universal corruption. The more corrupt the commonwealth, the more numerous are the laws.

William was willing to admit all the restraints they chose to lay on the royal prerogative in England, upon condition of being properly supplied with the means of humbling the power of France. War and foreign politics were all he knew, or desired to understand. The sums of money granted him for the prosecution of this war were incredible ; and the nation, not contented with furnishing him with such supplies as they were immediately capable of raising, involved themselves in debts, which they have never since been able to discharge. For all this profusion, England received, in return, the empty reward of military glory in Flanders, and the consciousness of having given the Dutch, whom they saved, frequent opportunities of being ungrateful.

The treaty of Ryswick, at length, put an end to a war, in which England had engaged without interest, and came off without advantage. In 1697. the general pacification, for her blood and treasure, the only equivalent she received, was the king of France's acknowledgment of king William's title to the crown.

The king, now freed from a foreign war, laid himself out to strengthen his authority at home. He conceived hopes of keeping up the forces that were granted him in time of war, during the continuance of the peace ; but he was not a little mortified to find that the commons had passed a vote, that all the forces in English pay, exceeding seven thousand men, should be forthwith disbanded ; and that those retained should be natural English subjects. A standing army was this monarch's greatest delight : he had been bred up in camps, and knew no other pleasure but that of re-

viewing troops, or dictating to generals. He professed himself therefore displeased with the proposal; and his indignation was kindled to such a pitch, that he actually conceived a design of abandoning the government. His ministers, however, diverted him from this resolution, and persuaded him to consent to passing the bill. Such were the altercations between the king and his parliament; which continued during his reign. He considered his commons as a set of men desirous of power, and consequently resolved upon obstructing all his projects. He seemed but little attached to any party in the house: he veered from whigs to tories, as interest, or immediate exigence, demanded. England he considered as a place of labour, anxiety, and altercation. He used to retire to his seat at Loo, in Holland, for those moments which he dedicated to pleasure or tranquillity. It was in this quiet retreat he planned the different successions of Europe, and laboured to undermine the politics of Lewis XIV, his insidious rival in power and in fame. Against France his resentment was ever levelled; and he had made vigorous preparations for entering into a new war with that kingdom, when death interrupted the execution of his schemes. He was naturally of a very feeble constitution, and it was now almost exhausted by a life of continual action and care. He endeavoured to conceal the increase of his infirmities, and repair his health by riding. In one of his excursions to Hampton-court, his horse fell under him, and he himself was thrown off with such violence that his collar-bone was fractured. This, in a robust constitution, would have been a trifling misfortune, but to him it was fatal. Perceiving his end approach, the objects of his former care still lay next his heart; the interests of Europe still filled him with concern. The earl of Albemarle arriving from Holland, he conferred with him in private on the posture of affairs abroad. Two days after, having received the sacrament from archbishop Tension, he expired, in the fifty-second year of his age, after having reigned thirteen years.

William left behind him the character of a great politician, though he had never been popular; and a

formidable general, though he was seldom victorious: his deportment was grave and sullen, nor did he show any fire, but in the day of battle. He despised flattery, yet loved dominion. Greater as the general of Holland, than the king of England: to one he was a father, to the other a suspicious friend. He scrupled not to employ the engines of corruption to gain his ends; and while he increased the power of the nation he was brought to govern, he contributed, in some measure, to corrupt their morals.

LETTER XLIX.

THE distresses occasioned by the death of princes are not so great, or so sincere, as the survivors would fondly persuade us. The loss of king William was, at first, thought irreparable; but the prosperity which the kingdom seemed to acquire under his successor, queen Anne, showed the contrary. This princess was the second daughter of king James by his first wife: she was, by the mother's side, descended from chancellor Hyde, afterward earl of Clarendon, and had been married to the prince of Denmark, before her accession to the crown. She ascended the throne in the thirty-eighth year of her age, having undergone many vicissitudes after the expulsion of her father, and many severe mortifications during the reign of the late king: but naturally possessed of an even serene temper, she either was insensible to the disrespect shewn her, or had wisdom to conceal her resentment.

She came to the throne with the same hostile disposition toward France in which the late monarch died. She was wholly guided by the countess of Marlborough, a woman of masculine spirit and understanding. This lady advised a vigorous exertion of the English power against France, as she had already marked the earl, her husband, for conducting all the operations both in the cabinet and the field. Thus influenced, the queen took early measures to confirm her allies, the Dutch, with assurances of union and assistance.

Lewis XIV, now grown familiar with disappointment and disgrace, yet still spurring on an exhausted kingdom to second the views of his ambition, expected, from the death of king William, a field open for conquest and glory. The vigilance of his late rival had blasted his laurels, and circumscribed his power; for, even after a defeat, William still was formidable. At the news of his death, therefore, the French monarch could not suppress his joy, and his court at Versailles seemed to have forgotten its usual decorum in the sincerity of their rapture. But their pleasure was soon to terminate; a much more formidable enemy was now rising up to oppose them; a more able warrior, and one backed by the efforts of an indulgent mistress and a willing nation.

Immediately upon the queen's accession, war was declared against the French king, and that monarch was accused of attempting to unite the crown of Spain to his own dominions, by placing his grandson upon the throne of that kingdom; thus attempting to destroy the equality of power among the states of Europe. This declaration was soon seconded with vigorous efforts; an alliance was formed between the Imperialists, the Dutch, and the English, who contributed more to the support of the war than the other two united. Marlborough was sent over to command the English army, and the allies declared him generalissimo of all their forces. Never was a man better calculated for debate and action than he: serene in the midst of danger, and cool in all the fury of battle. While his countess governed the queen, his talents, popularity, and influence, governed the kingdom. An indefatigable warrior while in camp, and a skilful politician in courts; he thus became the most fatal enemy to France that England had produced since the conquering times of Cressy and Agincourt.

This general had learned the art of war under the famous marshal Turenne, having been a volunteer in his army. He, at that time, went by the name of the *Handsome Englishman*; but Turenne foresaw his future greatness. He gave the first proofs of his wisdom by advancing the subaltern officers, whose merit had hi-

therto been neglected: he gained the enemy's posts without fighting, ever advancing, and never losing one advantage which he had gained. To this general was opposed, on the side of France, the duke of Burgundy, grandson of the king; a youth more qualified to grace a court, than conduct an army: the marshal Boufflers commanded under him, a man of courage and activity. But these qualifications in both were forced to give way to the superior powers of their adversary: after having been forced to retire by the skilful marches of Marlborough, after having seen several towns taken, they gave up all hopes of acting offensively, and concluded the campaign with resolutions to prosecute the next with greater vigour.

Marlborough, upon his return to London, received the rewards of his merit, being thanked by the house of commons, and created a duke by the queen. The success of one campaign but spurred on the English to aim at new triumphs. Marlborough next season returned to the field, with larger authority, and greater confidence from his former success. He began the campaign by taking Bonne, the residence of the elector of Cologne; he next retook Huys, Limebourg, and became master of all the lower Rhine. Marshal Villeroy, son to the king of France's governor, and educated with him, was now general of the French army. He was ever a favourite of Lewis, and had shared his pleasures and his campaigns. He was brave, virtuous, and polite, but unequal to the great task of command; and still more so, when opposed to so great a rival.

Marlborough, sensible of the abilities of his antagonist, was resolved, instead of immediately opposing him, to fly to the succour of the emperor, his ally, who loudly requested his assistance, being pressed on every side by a victorious enemy. The English general, who was resolved to strike a vigorous blow for his relief, took with him about thirteen thousand English troops, traversed extensive countries by hasty marches, arrived at the banks of the Danube, defeated a body of French and Bavarians stationed at Donavert to oppose him, passed the Danube, and laid the dukedom of Ba-

varia, that had sided with the French, under contribution. Villeroy, who at first attempted to follow his motions, seemed, all at once, to have lost sight of his enemy; nor was he apprized of his route till he was informed of his successes.

Marshal Tallard prepared, by another route, to obstruct the duke of Marlborough's retreat, with thirty thousand men. He was soon after joined by the duke of Bavaria's forces; so that the French army amounted to a body of sixty thousand disciplined veterans, commanded by the two best-reputed generals at that time in France. Tallard had established his reputation by former victories: he was active, penetrating, and had risen by the dint of merit alone. But this ardour often rose to impetuosity; and he was so short-sighted, as to be unable to distinguish at the smallest distance. On the other hand, the duke of Marlborough was now joined by prince Eugene, a general bred up from his infancy in camps, and equal to Marlborough in intrigue and military knowledge. Their talents were congenial; and all their designs seemed to flow but from one source. Their army, when combined, amounted to about fifty-two thousand men; troops that had been accustomed to conquer, and had seen the French, the Turks, and the Russians, fly before them. As this battle, both from the talents of the generals, the improvements in the art of war, the number and discipline of the troops, and the greatness of the contending powers, is reckoned the most remarkable of the eighteenth century, it demands a more particular detail.

The French were posted on a hill, their right being covered by the Danube and the village of Blenheim, and commanded by marshal Tallard; their left was defended by a village, and headed by the elector of Marsin, an experienced French general. In the front of their army ran a rivulet, the banks of which were steep, and the bottom marshy. Marlborough and Eugene went together to observe the posture of the French forces. Notwithstanding their advantageous situation, they were resolved to attack them immediately. The battle began between twelve and one in the afternoon. Marlborough, at the head of the English troops, hav-

ing passed the rivulet, attacked the cavalry of Tallard on the right. This general was at that time reviewing the disposition of his troops on the left; and the cavalry fought for some time without the presence of their general. Prince Eugene, on the left, had not yet attacked the forces of the elector; and it was an hour before he could bring his forces up to the engagement.

Tallard had no sooner understood that his right was attacked by the duke, but he flew to its head. He found the furious encounter already begun, his cavalry thrice repulsed, and rallied as often. He had a large body of forces in the village of Blenheim; he made an attempt to bring them to the charge. They were attacked by a part of Marlborough's forces so vigorously, that, instead of assisting the main body, they could hardly maintain their ground. All the French cavalry, being now attacked in flank, was totally defeated. The English army, thus half victorious, pierced up between the two bodies of the French, commanded by the marshal and the elector, while at the same time the forces in the village of Blenheim were separated by another detachment. In this terrible situation, Tallard flew to rally some squadrons, but, from his shortsightedness, mistaking a detachment of the enemy for his own, he was taken prisoner by the Hessian troops, who were in English pay. In the mean time, prince Eugene on the left, after having been thrice repulsed, put the enemy into confusion. The rout then became general, and the flight precipitate. The consternation was such, that the French soldiers threw themselves into the Danube without knowing where they fled: the officers lost all their authority; there was no general left to secure a retreat. The allies were now masters of the field of battle, and surrounded the village of Blenheim, where a body of thirteen thousand men had been posted in the beginning of the action, and still kept their ground. These troops seeing themselves cut off from all communication with the rest of the army, threw down their arms, and surrendered themselves prisoners of war. Thus ended the battle of Blenheim, one of the most complete victories that was ever obtained. Twelve thousand French and Bava-

rians were slain in the field, or drowned in the Danube; thirteen thousand were made prisoners of war. Of the allies about five thousand men were killed, and eight thousand wounded or taken.

The loss of the battle is imputed to two capital errors committed by marshal Tallard; first weakening the centre, by detaching such a number of troops to the village of Blenheim; and then suffering the confederates to pass the rivulet, and form unmolested. The next day, when the duke of Marlborough visited his prisoner, the marshal paid him the compliment of having overcome the best troops in the world. *I hope, sir,* replied the duke, *you will except those by whom they were conquered.*

A country of a hundred leagues in extent fell, by this defeat, into the hands of the victor.

Having thus succeeded beyond his hopes, the duke once more returned to England, where he found the people in a transport of joy: he was welcomed as a hero, who had retrieved the glory of the nation; and the queen, the parliament, and the people, were ready to second him in all his designs. The manor of Woodstock was conferred upon him for his services; and the
1706. lord-keeper, in the name of the peers, honoured him with that praise he so well deserved.

The success of the last campaign induced the English to increase their supplies for the next, and the duke had fixed upon the Moselle for the scene of action; but being disappointed by prince Lewis, who promised his assistance, he returned to the Netherlands to oppose Villeroy, who, in his absence, undertook the siege of Liege. Villeroy, having received advice of the duke's approach, abandoned his enterprise, and retreated within his lines. Marlborough was resolved to force them. He led his troops to the charge; after a warm, but short engagement, the enemy's horse were defeated with great slaughter. The infantry, being abandoned, retreated in great disorder to an advantageous post, where they again drew up in order of battle. Had the duke been permitted to take advantage of their consternation, as he proposed, it is possible he might have gained a complete victory: but he was opposed by the

Dutch officers, who represented it in such a light to the deputies of the states, that they refused to consent to its execution. This timidity was highly resented in England, and laid the first foundation of suspecting the Dutch fidelity: they were secretly accused of a desire to protract the war, by which they alone, of all the powers in Europe, were gainers.

While the arms of England were crowned with success in the Netherlands, they were not less fortunate in Spain, where efforts were made to fix Charles, duke of Austria, upon the throne. The greatest part of that kingdom had declared in favour of Philip IV, grandson to Lewis XIV, who had been nominated successor by the late king of Spain's will. We have already seen, that, by a former treaty among the powers of Europe, Charles of Austria was appointed heir to that crown; and this treaty had been guaranteed by France herself, who now intended to reverse it in favour of a descendant of the house of Bourbon. Charles therefore entered Spain, assisted by the arms of England, and invited by the Catalonians, who had declared in his favour. He was furnished with two hundred transports, thirty ships of war, nine thousand men; and the earl of Peterborough, a man of even romantic bravery, was placed at their head.

One of the first exploits of these forces was to take Gibraltar, which had hitherto been deemed impregnable. A ledge of lofty rocks defended it almost on every side by land, and an open and stormy bay took away all security for shipping by sea; a few troops were therefore capable of defending it against the most numerous armies. The security of the garrison proved their ruin. A detachment of eighteen hundred marines were landed upon that neck of level ground which joins it to the continent. These were incapable of attempting any thing effectual, and even destitute of hopes of succeeding. A body of sailors, in boats, were ordered to attack a half-ruined mole: they took possession of the platform, unterrified by a mine that blew up a hundred men in the air: with the utmost intrepidity they kept their ground, and, being soon joined by other seamen, took a redoubt, between the mole and the

town, by storm. The governor was now obliged to capitulate; and the prince of Hesse entered the town, amazed at the success of so desperate an enterprise. This was a glorious and a useful acquisition to the British dominions: their trade to the Mediterranean was thus secured: and they had here a repository capable of containing all things necessary for the repairing of fleets, or equipment of armies.

Soon after the taking of this important garrison, the English fleet, now mistress of the seas, attacked the French admiral, who commanded fifty-two ships of war. After an obstinate contest, the English became victorious; the French fleet sailed away, nor could it be brought again to the engagement, though the losses on either side were equal. This may be reckoned the final effort of France by sea: in most subsequent engagements their chief care was rather to consult means of escape than of victory. Nor yet were the French and Spaniards willing to suffer Gibraltar to be taken, without an effort for reprisal. Philip sent an army to retake it, and France a fleet of thirteen ships of the line: both were equally unsuccessful; part of the fleet was dispersed by a tempest, and another part taken by the English; while the army, having made little or no progress by land, was obliged to abandon the enterprise.

Nor were the English less successful in asserting the title of Charles to the kingdom. Their army was commanded by the earl of Peterborough, one of the most singular and extraordinary men of the age. At fifteen, he fought against the Moors in Africa; at twenty, he assisted in compassing the revolution: he now carried on this war in Spain, almost at his own expense; and his friendship for the duke Charles was his strongest motive to undertake it. He was deformed in person, but of a mind the most generous and active that ever inspired a honest bosom. His first attempt in Spain was to besiege Barcelona; a strong city, with a garrison of five thousand men, while his own army amounted to about seven thousand. Never was an attempt more bold, or more fortunate. The operations began by a sudden attack on fort Monjuce, strongly

situate on a hill that commanded the city. The out-works were taken by storm: a shell chanced to fall into the body of the fort, and blew up the magazine of powder; the garrison of the fort was struck with consternation, and surrendered without further resistance. The town still remained unconquered: the English general erected batteries against it, and in a few days the governor capitulated. During the interval of capitulation, the Germans and Catalonians in the English army had entered the town, and were plundering all before them. The governor thought himself betrayed; he upbraided the treachery of the general. Peterborough flew among the plunderers, drove them from their prey, and returned soon after coolly to finish the capitulation. The Spaniards were equally amazed at the generosity of the English, and the baseness of their own countrymen, who had led on to the spoil.

The conquest of all Valencia succeeded the taking of this important place: the enemy, after a defeated attempt to retake Barcelona, saw themselves deprived of almost every hope; the party of Charles was increasing every day; he became master of Arragon, Carthagen, and Grenada; the road to Madrid, their capital city, lay open before him; the earl of Galloway entered it in triumph, and there proclaimed Charles king of Spain without further opposition.

The English had scarce time to rejoice at these successes of their arms, when their attention was turned to new victories in Flanders. The duke of Marlborough had early commenced the campaign, and brought an army of eighty thousand men into the field, and still expected reinforcements from Denmark and Prussia. The court of France was resolved to attack him before this junction. Villeroy, who commanded an army consisting of eighty thousand men, near Tirlemont, had orders to engage. He accordingly drew up his forces in a strong camp; his right was flanked by the river Mehaigne, his left was posted behind a marsh, and the village of Ramilies lay in the centre. Marlborough, who perceived this disposition, drew up his army accordingly. He knew that the enemy's left could not pass the marsh, to attack him, but at a great

disadvantage; he therefore weakened his troops on that quarter, and thundered on the centre with superior numbers. They stood but a short time in the centre, and at length gave way on all sides. The horse abandoned their foot, and were so closely pursued, that almost all were cut to pieces. Six thousand men were taken prisoners, and about eight thousand men killed or wounded. This victory was almost as signal as that of Blenheim; Bavaria and Cologne were the fruits of one, and all Brabant was gained by the other. The French troops were dispirited, and the city of Paris overwhelmed with consternation. Lewis XIV, who had long been flattered by conquest, was now humbled to such a degree as almost to excite the compassion of his enemies: he intreated for peace, but in vain; the allies carried all before them, and his very capital dreaded the approach of the conquerors. What neither his power, his armies, nor his politics, could effect, a party in England performed; and the dissension between the whigs and the tories saved the dominions of France, that now seemed ready for ruin.

LETTER L.

QUEEN ANNE's councils had hitherto been governed by a whig ministry: they still pursued the schemes of the late king, and, upon republican principles, strove to diffuse freedom throughout Europe. In a government where the reasoning of individuals, retired from power, generally leads those who command, the designs of the ministry must change, as the people happen to alter. The queen's personal virtues, her successes, her adulation from the throne, contributed all to change the disposition of the nation: they now began to defend hereditary succession, non-resistance, and divine right: they were now become tories, and were ready to contest the designs of a whig ministry, whenever a leader offered to conduct them to the charge.

These discontents were, in some measure, increased by a meditated union between the two kingdoms of

England and Scotland. The treaty for this purpose was chiefly managed by the ministry; and although it was fraught with numberless benefits to either kingdom, yet it raised the murmurs of both. The English expected nothing from the union of so poor a nation, but a participation of their necessities: they thought it unjust, that, while Scotland was granted an eighth part of the legislature, it yet should be taxed but a fortieth part of the supplies. On the other hand, the Scots considered that their independency would be quite destroyed, and the dignity of their crown betrayed: they dreaded an increase of taxes, and seemed not much to esteem the advantages of an increased trade. In every political measure there are disadvantages on either side, which may be sufficient to deter the timid, but which a bold legislator disregards. *July 22, 1706.* The union, after some struggles, was effected; Scotland was no longer to have a parliament, but to send sixteen peers, chosen from the body of their nobility, and forty-five commoners. The two kingdoms were called by the common name of Great Britain; and all the subjects of both were to enjoy a communication of privileges and advantages.

This measure, which strengthened the vigour of government by uniting its force, seemed to threaten the enemies of Great Britain with dangers abroad; but the discontents of the nation at home prevented the effects of its newly-acquired power. The Tories, now become the majority, were displeased with the Whig ministry; they looked with jealousy on the power of the earl of Godolphin and the duke of Marlborough, who had long governed the queen, and lavished the treasures of the nation on conquests more glorious than serviceable. To them the people imputed the burdens under which they now groaned, and others which they had reason to fear. The loss of a battle near Almanza in Spain, where the English army were taken prisoners, under the command of the earl of Galloway, with some other miscarriages, tended to heighten their displeasure, and dispelled the inebriation of former success. The Tories did not fail to inculcate and exaggerate these causes of discontent; while Robert Harley, after-

ward earl of Oxford, and Henry St. John, made soon after lord Bolingbroke, secretly fanned the flame.

Harley had lately become a favourite of the queen: the petulance of the duchess of Marlborough, who formerly ruled the queen, had entirely alienated the affections of her mistress: she now placed them upon one Mrs. Masham, who was entirely devoted to lord Oxford. Oxford was possessed of uncommon erudition; he was polite and intriguing; he had insinuated himself into the royal favour, and determined to sap the credit of Marlborough and his adherents. In this attempt, he chose, for his second, Bolingbroke, a man of great powers of thinking, eloquent, ambitious, and enterprising. Bolingbroke was, at first, contented to act a subordinate character in this meditated opposition; but, conscious of the superiority of his own talents, from being an inferior, he was resolved to become lord Oxford's rival. The duke of Marlborough soon perceived their growing power, and resolved to crush it in the beginning. He refused to join in the privy council, while Harley was secretary. Godolphin joined his influence in this measure; and the queen was obliged to appease their resentment by discharging Harley from his place; Bolingbroke was resolved to share his disgrace, and voluntarily relinquished his employments.

This violent measure, which seemed, at first, favourable to the whig ministry, laid the first foundation of its ruin; the queen was entirely displeased with the haughty conduct of the duke; and, from that moment, he lost her confidence and affection. Harley was enabled to act now with less disguise, and to take more vigorous measures for the completion of his designs. In him the queen reposed all her trust, though he now had no visible concern in the administration.

The whig party, in this manner, seemed to triumph for some time, till an occurrence, in itself of no great importance, served to show the spirit of the times. Doctor Sacheverel, a clergyman of narrow intellects and bigotted principles, had published two sermons, in which he strongly insisted on the illegality of resisting kings, and enforced the divine origin of their authority; declaimed against the dissenters,

1707.

and exhorted the church to put on the whole armour of God. There was nothing in the sermons either nervous, well written, or clear: they owed all their celebrity to the complexion of the times, and are at present justly forgotten. Sacheverel was impeached by the commons, at the bar of the upper house; they seemed resolutely bent upon punishing him, and a day was appointed for trying him before the lords at Westminster-hall. Meanwhile the tories, who, one and all, approved his principles, were as violent in his defence as the parliament had been in his prosecution. The eyes of the kingdom were turned upon this extraordinary trial; the queen herself was every day present as a private spectator. The trial lasted some days; and vast multitudes attended him each day, as he went to the hall, shouting and praying for his success. The body of the people espoused his cause. They destroyed several meeting-houses, and plundered the dwellings of dissenters; and the queen herself could not but relish those doctrines which contributed to extend her prerogative. The lords were divided; they continued undetermined for some time; but at length, after much obstinate dispute and virulent altercation, Sacheverel was found guilty by a majority of seventeen voices. He was prohibited from preaching, for the term of three years; his two sermons were ordered to be burnt by the hands of the common hangman. The lenity of this sentence was considered, by the tories, as a victory; and, in fact, their faction took the lead all the remaining part of this reign.

The king of France, long persecuted by fortune, and each hour fearing for his capital, once more petitioned for peace. Godolphin and Marlborough, who had, since the beginning of the war, enjoyed the double advantage of extending their glory, and increasing their fortunes, were entirely averse to any negotiation which tended to diminish both. The tories, on the other hand, willing to humble the general, and his partner Godolphin, were sincerely desirous of a peace, as the only measure to attain their ends. A conference was, at length, begun at Gertruydenburg, under the influence of Marlborough, Eugene, and

Zinzendorf, all three entirely averse to the treaty. The French ministers were subjected to every species of mortification; their conduct narrowly watched; their master insulted, and their letters opened. They offered to satisfy every complaint that had given rise to the war: they consented to abandon Philip IV, in Spain; to grant the Dutch a large barrier; they even consented to grant a supply toward dethroning Philip: but even this offer was treated with contempt, and at length the conference was broken off, while Lewis resolved to hazard another campaign.

The designs of the Dutch, and the English general, were too obvious not to be seen, and properly explained by their enemies in England. The writers of the tory faction, who were men of the first rank in literary merit, displayed the avarice of the duke, and the self-interested conduct of the Dutch: they insisted, that, while England was exhausting her strength in foreign conquests, she was losing her liberty at home; that her ministers were not content with sharing the plunder of an impoverishing state, but were resolved upon destroying its liberties also. To these complaints were added the real pride of the then prevailing ministry, and the insolence of the duchess of Marlborough, who hitherto had possessed more real power than the whole privy council united. Mrs. Masham, who had first been recommended to the queen's favour by the duchess, now fairly supplanted her patroness; and, by a steady attention to please the queen, had gained all that confidence which she had reposed in her former confidante. It was too late that the duchess perceived this alienation of the queen's favour, and now began to think of repairing it by demanding an audience of her majesty, in order to vindicate her character from every suspicion; but formal explanations ever widen the breach.

Mr. Hill, brother to the new favourite, was appointed by the queen to be colonel of a regiment: this the duke of Marlborough could by no means approve. He expostulated with his sovereign: he retired in disgust: the queen, by a letter, gave him leave to dispose of the regiment as he should think proper; but, before

it came to his hands, he had sent a letter to the queen, desiring she would permit him to retire from his employments. This was the conjuncture which the tories had long wished for, and which the queen herself was internally pleased with. She now perceived herself set free from an arbitrary combination, by which she had been long kept in dependence. The earl of Godolphin, the duke's son-in-law, was divested of his office; and the treasury submitted to Harley, the antagonist of his ambition. Lord Somers was dismissed from being president of the council, and 1711. the earl of Rochester appointed in his room. In a word, there was not one whig left in any office of state, except the duke of Marlborough: he retained his employments for a short time, unsupported and alone, an object of envy and factious reproach; till at length he found his cause irretrievable, and was obliged, after trying another campaign, to resign, as the rest of his party had done before.

As war seemed to have been the desire of the whig party, so peace seemed to have been that of the tories. Through the course of English history, France seems to have been the peculiar object of the hatred of the whigs, and continual war with that nation has been their aim. On the contrary, the tories have been found to regard that nation with no such opposition of principle; and a peace with France has generally been the result of a tory administration. For some time, therefore, a negociation for peace had been carried on between the court of France and the new ministers, who had a double aim in this measure; namely, to mortify the whigs and the Dutch, and to free their country from a ruinous war, which had all the appearance of becoming habitual to the constitution.

LETTER LI.

THE conferences for peace were first opened at London; and some time after the queen sent the earl of Strafford as ambassador into Holland, to communicate the proposals which the French king 1712.

had made toward the re-establishment of the general tranquillity. The spirit of the times was now changed; Marlborough's aversion to such measures could no longer retard the negotiation; lord Strafford obliged the Dutch to name plenipotentiaries, and to receive those of France. The treaty began at Utrecht: but as all the powers concerned in this conference, except France and England, were averse to every accommodation, their disputes served rather to retard than accelerate a pacification. The English ministry, however, had foreseen and provided against those difficulties. Their great end was to free the subjects from a long unprofitable war; a war where conquest could add nothing to their power; and a defeat might be prejudicial to internal tranquillity. As England had borne the chief burden of the war, it was but just to expect that it would take the lead in dictating the terms of peace. There were, however, three persons of very great interest and power, who laboured, by every art, to protract the negotiation: those were the duke of Marlborough, prince Eugene, and Heinsius, the Dutch grand pensionary. Prince Eugene even came over to London, in order to retard the progress of a peace, which seemed to interrupt his career of glory: he found at court such a reception as was due to his merits and fame; but, at the same time, such a repulse as the proposals he made seemed to deserve.

This negotiation at London failing of effect, the allies practised every artifice to intimidate the queen, and blacken the character of her ministers; to raise and continue a dangerous ferment among the people; to obstruct her councils, and divulge her designs. Her ministers were very sensible of their present dangerous situation; they perceived her health was daily impairing, and her successor countenanced the opposite faction. In case of her death, they had nothing to expect but prosecution and ruin, for obeying her commands; their only way therefore was to give up their present employments, or hasten the conclusion of a treaty, the utility of which would be the best argument with the people in their favour. The peace therefore was hastened; and this haste, in some measure,

relaxed the ministers' obstinacy, in insisting upon such terms and advantages as they had a right to demand. Seeing that nothing was to be expected from the concurrence of the allies, the courts of London and Versailles resolved to enter into a private treaty, in which such terms might be agreed on, as would enable both courts to prescribe terms to the rest of the contending powers.

In the mean time, the duke of Marlborough, having been deposed from his office of general, the command of the English army in Flanders was given to the duke of Ormond: but, at the same time, private orders were given him not to act with vigour against an enemy, which was upon the point of being reconciled by more mild terms of treatment. The allies, thus deprived of the assistance of the English, still continued their animosity, and were resolved to continue the war separately: they had the utmost confidence in prince Eugene, their general; and, though lessened by the defection of the British forces, they were still superior to those of the enemy, which were commanded by marshal Villars, a man who seemed to possess all the great qualities, and all the foibles, of his country, in a supreme degree; valiant, generous, alert, lively, boastful, and avaricious. The loss of the British forces was soon severely felt in the allied army. Villars attacked a separate body of their troops incamped at Denain, under the command of the earl of Albemarle. Their intrenchments were forced, and seventeen battalions either killed or taken, the earl himself, and all the surviving officers, being made prisoners of war.

The successes of marshal Villars served to hasten the treaty of Utrecht. The British ministers at the congress, responsible at once for their conduct to their queen, their country, and all Europe, neglected nothing that might have been serviceable either to the allies, or that might conduce to the public safety. They first stipulated that Philip V, who had been settled on the throne of Spain, should renounce all right to the crown of France; the union of two such powerful kingdoms being thought dangerous to the liberties of the rest of Europe. They covenanted that the duke

of Berry, his brother, the presumptive heir to the crown of France, after the death of the dauphin, should also renounce his right to the crown of Spain, in case he became king of France. The duke of Orleans was to make the same resignation. To oblige men thus to renounce their rights might have been injustice; but, for every good acquired, some inconvenience must be endured: these resignations, in some measure, served to calm the world tempested up by long war, and afterwards became the basis of the law of nations, to which Europe professed submission.

By this treaty, the duke of Savoy had the island of Sicily, with the title of king, with Fenestrelles, and other places on the continent; which increase of power seemed, in some measure, drawn from the spoils of the French monarchy. The Dutch had that barrier granted them which they so long sought after; and, if the house of Bourbon seemed stripped of some dominions, in order to enrich the duke of Savoy, on the other hand, the house of Austria was taxed to supply the wants of the Hollanders, who were put in possession of the strongest towns in Flanders. With regard to England, its glory and interests were secured. They caused the fortifications of Dunkirk to be demolished, and its port to be destroyed. Spain gave up all right to Gibraltar and the island of Minorca. France resigned Hudson's Bay, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland; but they were left in possession of Cape Breton, and the liberty of drying their fish upon the shore. Among the articles which were glorious to the English, it may be observed, that the setting free those who had been confined in the French prisons, for professing the protestant religion, was not the least. It was stipulated, that the emperor should possess the kingdom of Naples, the duchy of Milan, and the Spanish Netherlands; that the king of Prussia should have Upper Gueldre; and a
 1713. time was fixed for the emperor's acceding to these resolutions, for he had hitherto obstinately refused to assist at the negociation. Thus, it appears that, the English ministry did justice to all the world; but their country refused it to them; they were branded with all the terms of infamy and reproach by the whig

party, and accused of having given up the privileges and rights which England had to expect. Each party reviled the other in turn; the kingdom was divided into opposite factions, both so violent in the cause, that the truth, which both pretended to espouse, was attained by neither; both were virulent, and both wrong. These commotions, in some measure, served still more to impair the queen's health. One fit of sickness succeeded another: nor did the consolation of her ministry serve to allay her anxieties; for they now had fallen out among themselves, the council chamber being turned into a theatre for the most bitter altercations. Oxford advised a reconciliation with the whigs, whose resentment he now began to fear, as the queen's health appeared to be impaired. Bolingbroke, on the other hand, affected to set the whigs at defiance; professed a warm zeal for the church, and mixed flattery with his other assiduities. Bolingbroke prevailed; lord Oxford, the treasurer, was removed from his employment, and retired, meditating schemes of revenge, and new projects of re-establishment. His fall was so sudden, and so unexpected, that no plan was adopted for supplying the vacancy occasioned by his disgrace. All was confusion at court: and the queen had no longer force to support the burden: she sunk into a state of insensibility, and thus found refuge from anxiety in lethargic slumber. Every method was contrived to rouse her from this state, but in vain; her physicians despaired of her life. The privy council assembled upon this occasion: the dukes of Somerset and Argyll, being informed of the desperate state in which she lay, entered that assembly without being summoned: the members were surprised at their appearance, but the duke of Shrewsbury thanked them for their readiness to give their assistance at such a critical juncture, and desired them to take their places. They now took all necessary precaution for securing the succession in the house of Hanover, sent orders to the heralds at arms, and to a troop of life-guards to be in readiness to mount, in order to proclaim the elector of Brunswick king of Great Britain.

On the thirtieth of July, the queen seemed somewhat

relieved by medicines, rose from her bed, and, about eight; walked a little; when, casting her eyes on the clock that stood in her chamber, she continued to gaze for some time. One of the ladies in waiting asked her what she saw there more than usual; to which the queen only answered by turning her eyes upon her with a dying look. She was soon after seized with a fit of the apoplexy, from which, however, she was relieved by the assistance of doctor Mead. In this state of stupefaction she continued all night; she gave some signs of life between twelve and one next day, but expired the next morning, August 1, 1714, a little after seven, having lived forty-nine years five months and six days; and having reigned more than twelve years with honour, equity, and applause.

This princess was rather amiable than great, rather pleasing than beautiful; neither her capacity nor learning were remarkable. Like all those of her family, she seemed rather fitted for the private duties of life than a public station; a pattern of conjugal affection, a good mother, a warm friend, and an indulgent mistress. During her reign none suffered on the scaffold for treason: so that, after a long succession of faulty or cruel kings, she shines with peculiar lustre. In her ended the line of the Stuarts; a family, the misfortunes and misconduct of which are not to be paralleled in history; a family, who, less than men themselves, seemed to expect from their followers more than manhood in their defence; a family, demanding rather our pity than assistance, who never rewarded their friends, nor avenged them of their enemies.

LETTER LII.

THE nearer we approach to our own times, in this survey of English history, the more important every occurrence becomes: our own interests are blended with those of the state; and the accounts of public welfare are but the transcript of private happiness. The two parties which had long divided the kingdom,

under the names of whig and tory, now seemed to alter their titles; the whigs being styled Hanoverians, and the tories branded with the appellation of Jacobites. The former desired to be governed by a king who was a protestant, though a foreigner; the latter, by a monarch of their own country, though a papist. Of the two inconveniences, however, that seemed the least, where religion seemed to be in no danger; the Hanoverians prevailed.

The popish Jacobites had been long flattered with the hopes of seeing the succession altered by the earl of Oxford; but, by the premature death of the queen, all their expectations at once were blasted: the diligence and activity of the privy council, in which the Hanoverian interest prevailed, completed their confusion, and they now found themselves without any leader to give consistency to their designs, and force to their councils. Upon recollection, they saw nothing so eligible as silence and submission; they hoped much from the assistance of France, and still more from the vigour of the pretender.

Pursuant to the act of succession, George, son of Ernest Augustus, first elector of Brunswick, and Sophia, granddaughter to James I, ascended the British throne. His mature age, being now fifty-four years old, his sagacity and experience, his numerous alliances, the general peace of Europe, all contributed to his support, and promised a peaceable and happy reign. His virtues, though not shining, were solid. He was of a very different disposition from the Stuart family, whom he succeeded: they were known to a proverb for leaving their friends in distress; George, on the contrary, soon after his arrival in England, used to say, *My maxim is never to abandon my friends; to do justice to all the world; and to fear no man.* To these qualifications he joined great application to business; but generally studied more the interests of those subjects he had left behind, than of these he came to govern.

The king first landed at Greenwich, where he was received by the duke of Northumberland, and the lords of the regency. From the landing-place he walked to his house in the Park, accompanied by a

great number of the nobility, and other persons of distinction, who had the honour to kiss his hand as they approached. When he retired to his bedchamber, he sent for those of the nobility who had distinguished themselves by their zeal for his succession; but the duke of Ormond, the lord-chancellor, and lord Trevor, were not of the number; lord Oxford too, the next morning, was received with marks of disapprobation; and none but the whig party were admitted into any share of confidence. The king of a faction is but the sovereign of half his subjects: of this, however, the monarch I speak of did not seem sensible: it was his misfortune, as well as that of the nation, that he was hemmed round by men who soured him with all their interests and prejudices: none now but the violent in faction were admitted into employment; and the whigs, while they pretended to secure for him the crown, were, with all possible diligence, abridging the prerogative. An instantaneous and total change was effected in all the offices of honour and advantage. The whigs governed the senate, and the court disposed of all places at pleasure: whom they would, they oppressed; bound the lower orders of the people with new and severe laws; and this they called liberty.

These partialities, and this oppression, soon raised discontents throughout the kingdom. The clamour of the church being in danger was revived; jealousies were harboured, and dangerous tumults raised in every part of the country. The party cry was, Down with the whigs! Sacheverel for ever! During these commotions in the pretender's favour, the prince himself continued a silent spectator on the continent, now and then sending over his emissaries to inflame the disturbances, to disperse his ineffectual manifestoes, and to delude the unwary. Copies of a printed address were sent to the dukes of Shrewsbury, Marlborough, and Argyll, and other noblemen of the first distinction, vindicating the pretender's right to the crown, and complaining of the injustice that was done him by receiving a foreigner: yet, for all this, he still continued to profess the truest regard to the catholic religion; and, instead of concealing his sentiments on that head,

gloried in his principles. It was the being a papist which had dispossessed his father of the throne; and surely the son could never hope to gain a crown by the very methods in which it was lost! But an infatuation seemed for ever to attend the family.

A new parliament was now called, in which the whigs had by far the majority: all prepossessed with the strongest aversion to the tories, and led on by the king himself, who made no secret of his displeasure. Upon their first meeting, he informed them, that the branches of the revenue granted for the support of civil government, were not sufficient for that purpose; he apprised them of the machinations of the pretender, and intimated, that he expected their assistance in punishing such as had endeavoured to deprive him of that blessing which he most valued,—the affection of his people. As the houses were then disposed, this served to give them the alarm; and they outwent even the most sanguine expectations of the most vindictive ministry.

Their resentment began with arraigning lord Bolingbroke of high treason, and other high crimes and misdemeanors. To this it was objected, by one of the members of the house of commons, that nothing in the allegations laid to his charge amounted to high treason. To this there was no reply given: but, lord Coningsby standing up, *The chairman*, said he, *has impeached the hand, but I impeach the head; he has impeached the scholar, and I the master. I impeach Robert earl of Oxford, and Mortimer, of high treason, and other crimes and misdemeanors.* When, therefore, this nobleman appeared the next day in the house of lords, he was avoided by his brother peers, as infectious; he, whose favour had been, but a little before, so earnestly sought after, was now rejected and contemned. When the articles were read against him, in the house of peers, some debates arose as to the nature of his indictment, which, however, was carried by his adversaries, and the articles of impeachment approved by the house: he was, therefore, again impeached at the bar of the house of lords; and a motion was made, that he might lose his seat, and be committed to close custody. The earl, now

seeing a furious spirit of faction raised against him, and aiming at his head, was not wanting to himself upon this emergency, but spoke to the following purpose : *I am accused, says he, for having made a peace ; a peace, which, bad as it is now represented, has been approved by two successive parliaments. For my own part, I always acted by the immediate directions and command of the queen, my mistress, and never offended against any known law. I am justified in my own conscience, and unconcerned for the life of an insignificant old man. But I cannot, without the highest ingratitude, remain unconcerned for the best of queens ; obligation binds me to vindicate her memory. My lords, if ministers of state, acting by the immediate commands of their sovereign, are afterward to be made accountable for their proceedings, it may, one day or other, be the case of all the members of this august assembly. I do not doubt, therefore, that out of regard to yourselves, your lordships will give me an equitable hearing ; and I hope that, in the prosecution of this inquiry, it will appear, that I have merited, not only the indulgence, but also the favour, of this government. My lords, I am now to take my leave of your lordships, and of this honorable house, perhaps, for ever ! I shall lay down my life with pleasure, in a cause favoured by my late dear royal mistress. And when I consider that I am to be judged by the justice, honour, and virtue of my peers, I shall acquiesce, and retire with great content. And, my lords, God's will be done !* On his return from the house of lords to his own house, where he was for that night permitted to go, he was followed by a great multitude of people, crying out, High-church, Ormond, and Oxford for ever ! Next day he was brought to the bar, where he received a copy of his articles, and was allowed a month to prepare his answer. Though doctor Mead declared, that, if the earl should be sent to the Tower, his life would be in danger, it was carried that he should be sent there ; whither he was attended by a prodigious concourse of people, who did not scruple to exclaim against his prosecutors. Tumults grew more frequent ; and this only served to increase the severity of the legislature. An act was made, decreeing, that if any persons, to the number of twelve, un-

lawfully assembled, should continue together one hour, after being required to disperse by a justice of peace, or other officer, and heard the proclamation against riots read in public, they should be deemed guilty of felony without benefit of the clergy.

A committee was now appointed to draw up articles of impeachment, and prepare evidence against him and the other impeached lords: he was confined in the Tower, and there remained for two years; during which time the kingdom was in a continual ferment; several other lords, who had broke out into actual rebellion, and were taken in arms, being executed for treason. The ministry seemed weary of executions; and he, with his usual foresight, presented, upon this occasion, a petition for coming to his trial: a day was therefore assigned him. The commons appointed a committee to inquire into the state of the earl's impeachment, and demanded a longer time to prepare for the trial. The truth is, they had now begun to relax in their former asperity; and the intoxication of party was not quite so strong as when he had been first committed. At the appointed time, the peers repaired to the court, in Westminster-hall, where lord Cowper presided, as lord-steward. The commons were assembled, and the king and royal family assisted at the solemnity. The prisoner was brought from the Tower, and his articles of impeachment read, with his answers, and the replies of the commons. Sir Joseph Jekyl, one of the agents for the commons, standing up to enforce the first article of his lordship's accusation, one of the lords, adjourning the house, observed, that much time would be consumed in going through all the articles of the impeachment; that nothing more remained than for the commons to make good the two articles of high treason contained in his charge; and that this would at once determine the trial. His advice was agreed to by the lords; but the commons delivered a paper, containing their reasons for asserting it as their undoubted right to carry on the impeachment in the manner they thought most conducive to their aim: on the other hand, the house of lords insisted on their former resolution, considering it as the privilege of

every judge to hear each cause in the manner he thinks most fitting. The dispute grew still more violent; a message was at length sent to the commons, intimating, that the lords intended to proceed immediately to the earl of Oxford's trial; and soon after repairing to the hall of justice, they took their places. The commons, however, did not think fit to appear; and the earl, having waited a quarter of an hour at the bar, was dismissed for want of accusers. To this dispute, perhaps, he owed his safety, though it is probable they would have acquitted him of high treason, as none of his actions could justly suffer such an imputation. With the same acrimony, prosecutions were carried on against lord Bolingbroke and the duke of Ormond; but they found safety in flight.

Such vindictive proceedings as these naturally excited indignation; the people groaned to behold a few great ones close up all the avenues to royal favour, and rule the nation with rigour and partiality. 1715. In Scotland, the discontent broke forth, at length, into the flames of rebellion. The earl of Mar, assembling three hundred of his own vassals, in the Highlands of Scotland, proclaimed the pretender at Castletown, and set up his standard at Brae Mar, on the sixth day of September; then assuming the title of lieutenant-general of the pretender's forces, he exhorted the people to take arms in defence of their lawful sovereign. But these preparations were weak, and ill-conducted; all the designs of the rebels were betrayed to the government, the beginning of every revolt repressed, the western counties prevented from rising, and the most prudent precautions taken to keep all suspected persons in custody, or in awe. The earl of Derwentwater and Mr. Foster took the field near the borders of Scotland; and, being joined by some gentlemen, proclaimed the pretender. Their first attempt was to seize upon Newcastle, in which they had many friends; but they found the gates shut upon them, and were obliged to retire to Hexham, while general Carpenter, having assembled a body of dragoons, resolved to attack them before their numbers were increased. The rebels had two methods

of acting with success; either marching immediately into the western parts of Scotland, and there joining general Gordon, who commanded a strong body of highlanders; or of crossing the Tweed, and attacking general Carpenter, whose forces did not exceed nine hundred men. From their usual infatuation, neither of these schemes were put into execution; for, taking the route another way, they left general Carpenter on one side, and resolved to penetrate into England by the western border. They accordingly advanced, without either foresight or design, as far as Preston, where they first heard the news that general Wills was marching at the head of six regiments of horse, and a battalion of foot, to attack them. They now therefore began to raise barricadoes, and to put the place in a posture of defence, repulsing at first the attack of the king's army with some success. Next day, however, general Wills was reinforced by the troops under Carpenter, and the rebels were invested on all sides. Foster, their general, sent colonel Oxburgh with a trumpet to the English commander, to propose a capitulation. This, however, general Wills refused, alleging that he would not treat with rebels; and that all they could expect was, to be spared from immediate slaughter. These were hard terms; but they were obliged to submit. They accordingly laid down their arms, and were put under a strong guard. Their leaders were secured, and led through London pinioned, and bound together, while the common men were confined at Chester and Liverpool.

While these unhappy circumstances attended the rebels in England, the earl of Mar's forces, in the mean time, increased to the number of ten thousand men, and he had made himself master of the whole country of Fife. Against him the duke of Argyll set out for Scotland, as commander-in-chief of the forces in North-Britain; and assembling some troops in Lothian, returned to Stirling with all possible expedition. The earl of Mar, being informed of this, at first retreated; but, being joined soon after by some clans under the earl of Seaforth, and others under general Gordon, who had signalized himself in the Russian service, he

resolved to march forward toward England. The duke of Argyll, apprised of his intention, and being joined by some regiments of dragoons from Ireland, determined to give him battle in the neighbourhood of Dumblain, though his forces were by no means so numerous as those of the rebel army. In the morning, therefore, of the same day on which the Preston rebels had surrendered, he drew up his forces, which did not exceed three thousand five hundred men, but found himself greatly outflanked by the enemy. The duke, therefore, perceiving the enemy making attempts to surround him, was obliged to alter his disposition; which, on account of the scarcity of general officers, was not done so expeditiously as to be all formed before the rebels began the attack. The left wing therefore of the duke's army fell in with the centre of the enemy's, and supported the first charge without shrinking. The wing seemed, for a short time, victorious, as they killed the chief leader of part of the rebel army. But Glengary, who was second in command, undertook to inspire his intimidated forces; and, waving his bonnet, cried out several times, *Revenge!* This animated his men to such a degree, that they followed him close to the muzzles of the muskets, pushed aside their bayonets with their targets, and with their broad swords did great execution. A total rout of that wing of the royal army ensued, and general Witham, their commander, flying full speed to Stirling, gave out that all was lost. In the mean time, the duke of Argyll, who commanded in person on the right, attacked the left of the enemy, and drove them before him for two miles, though they often faced about, and attempted to rally. The duke, having thus entirely broke the left, and pushed them over the river Allen, returned to the field, where he found that part of the rebel army which had been victorious, but instead of renewing the engagement, both armies continued to gaze at each other, neither caring to attack; and toward evening both sides drew off, each boasting of victory. Whichever might claim the triumph, it must be owned that all the honour, and all the advantages of the day, belonged only to the duke of Argyll. It was sufficient for him to

have interrupted the enemy's progress; and delay was to them a defeat. The earl of Mar, therefore, soon found his disappointments and losses increase. The castle of Inverness, of which he was in possession, was delivered up to the king by lord Lovat, who had hitherto appeared in the interest of the pretender. The marquis of Tullibardine left the earl to defend his own country; and many of the clans, seeing no likelihood of coming soon to a second engagement, returned home: for an irregular army is much easier led to battle, than induced to bear the fatigues of a campaign.

The pretender might now be convinced of the vanity of his expectations, in imagining that the whole country would rise up in his cause. His affairs were actually desperate; yet, with the usual infatuation of the family, he resolved to hazard his person among his friends in Scotland, at a time when such a measure was totally useless. Passing therefore through France in disguise, and embarking in a small vessel at Dunkirk, he arrived, on the twenty-second day of December, on the coast of Scotland, with only six gentlemen in his retinue. Upon his arrival in Aberdeen, he was solemnly proclaimed, and soon after made his public entry into Dundee. In two days more, he came to Scoon, where he intended to have the ceremony of his coronation performed. He ordered thanksgivings for his safe arrival; enjoined the ministers to pray for him in the churches; and, without the smallest share of power, went through all the ceremonies of royalty, which were, at such a juncture, perfectly ridiculous. After this unimportant parade, he resolved to abandon the enterprise with the same levity with which it had been undertaken, and embarked again for France, together with the earl of Mar, and some others, in a small ship that lay in the harbour of Montrose; and in five days arrived at Gravelin. General Gordon, who was left commander-in-chief of the forces, with the assistance of the earl-marshal, proceeded with them to Aberdeen, where he secured three vessels to sail northward, which took on board the persons who intended to make their escape to the continent. In this manner the rebellion was suppressed: but the fury of the vic-

tors did not seem in the least to abate with success. The law was now put in force, with all its terrors; and the prisons of London were crowded with those deluded wretches, whom the ministry showed no disposition to spare. The commons, in their address to the crown, declared they would prosecute, in the most vigorous manner, the authors of the rebellion; and their resolutions were as speedy as their measures were vindictive. The earls of Derwentwater, Nithsdale, Carnwath, and Wintown; the lords Widrington, Kenmuir, and Nairn, were impeached. The *habeas corpus* act was suspended; and the rebel lords, upon pleading guilty, received sentence of death. Nothing could soften the privy council; the house of lords even presented an address to the throne for mercy, but without effect. Orders were dispatched for executing the earls Derwentwater and Nithsdale, and viscount Kenmuir, immediately; the others were respited for three weeks longer. Nithsdale, however, escaped in women's clothes, which were brought him by his mother, the night before his intended execution. Derwentwater and Kenmuir were brought to the scaffold on Tower-hill, at the hour appointed. Both underwent their sentence with calmness and intrepidity, pitied by all, seemingly less moved themselves than the spectators.

An act of parliament was also made for trying the private prisoners in London, and not in Lancashire, where they were taken in arms; which proceeding was, in some measure, an alteration of the ancient constitution of the kingdom; when Foster, Mackintosh, and several others, were found guilty. Foster, however, escaped from Newgate, and reached the continent in safety; and some time after also Mackintosh, with some others, forced their way, having mastered the keeper and turnkeys, and disarmed the sentinel. Four or five were hanged, drawn, and quartered; among whom was William Paul, a clergyman, who professed himself a true and sincere member of the church of England; but not of that schismatical church whose bishops had abandoned their king. Such was the end of a rebellion, probably first inspired by the

rigour of the new whig ministry and parliament. In running through the vicissitudes of human transactions, we too often find both sides culpable; and so it was in this case. The royal party acted under the influences of partiality, rigour, and prejudice; gratified private animosity under the mask of public justice; and, in their pretended love of freedom, forgot humanity. On the other hand, the pretender's party aimed, not only at subverting the government, but the religion of the kingdom: bred a papist himself, he confided only in counsellors of his own persuasion; and most of those who adhered to the cause were men of indifferent morals, or bigotted principles. Clemency, however, in the government, at that time, would probably have extinguished all the factious spirit which has hitherto disturbed the peace of this country; for it has ever been the character of the English, that they are more easily led than driven into loyalty.

LETTER LIII.

IN a government so very complicated as that of England, it must necessarily change from itself, in a revolution of even a few years, as some of its weaker branches acquire strength, or its stronger decline. At this period, the rich and noble seemed to possess a greater share of power than they had done for some ages preceding; the house of commons became each day a stronger body, at once more independent on the crown and the people. It was now seen that the rich could at any time buy their election; and that, while their laws governed the poor, they might be enabled to govern the law. The rebellion was now extinguished; and the severities which justice had inflicted, excited the discontent of many, whose humane passions were awakened as their fears began to subside. This served as a pretext for continuing the parliament, and repealing the act by which they were to be dissolved at the expiration of every third year. An act of this nature, by which a parliament thus extended their own power,

was thought by many the ready means of undermining the constitution; for if they could with impunity extend their continuance for seven years, which was the time proposed, they could also for life continue their power: but this, it was observed, was utterly incompatible with the spirit of legislation. The bill, however, passed both houses; all objections to it were considered as disaffection; and, in a short time, it received the royal sanction. The people might murmur at this encroachment; but it was now too late for redress.

Domestic concerns being thus adjusted, the king began to turn his thoughts to his Hanoverian dominions, and determined upon a voyage to the continent. Nor was he without his fears for his dominions there, as Charles XII, of Sweden, professed the highest displeasure at his having entered into a confederacy against him in his absence. Having therefore passed through Holland to Hanover, in order to secure his German territories, he entered into a treaty with the Dutch and the regent of France, by which they promised mutually to assist each other in case of invasion; but the death of the Swedish monarch, who was killed by a cannon-ball at the siege of Frederickstadt, soon put an end to his inquietudes from that quarter. However, his majesty, to secure himself, as far as alliances could add to his safety, entered into various negotiations with the different powers of Europe: some were brought to accede by money, others by promises. Treaties of this kind seldom give any real security; they may be considered as mere political playthings; they amuse for awhile, and then are thrown neglected by, never more to be heard of, as nothing but its own internal strength can guard a country from insult.

Among other treaties concluded with such intentions, was that called the *Quadruple Alliance*. It was agreed upon, between the Emperor, France, England, and Holland, that the emperor should renounce all pretensions to the crown of Spain, and exchange Sardinia for Sicily with the duke of Savoy; that the succession for the duchies of Tuscany, Parma, and Placentia, should be settled on the queen of Spain's eldest son, in case the present possessors should die without

male issue. This treaty was by no means favourable to the interests of England, as it interrupted the commerce with Spain; and as it destroyed the balance of power in Italy, by throwing too much in the hands of Austria. However, England fitted out a strong squadron, in order to bring Spain to terms, if that kingdom should insist upon its rights in Italy. The war between the emperor and the king of Spain was actually begun in that country; and the mediation of the king of England was rejected, as partial and unjust. It was, therefore, resolved by the court of London to support its negotiations with the strongest reasons; namely, those of war. Sir George Byng sailed to Naples with twenty-two ships of the line, where he was received as a deliverer, that city having been under the utmost terrors of an invasion from Spain. Here the English admiral received intelligence, that the Spanish army, amounting to thirty thousand men, had landed in Sicily; wherefore he immediately determined to sail thither, fully resolved to pursue the Spanish fleet. Upon doubling Cape Faro, he perceived two small Spanish vessels, and pursuing them closely, they led him to their main fleet, which, before noon, he perceived in line of battle, amounting, in all, to twenty-seven sail. At sight of the English, the Spanish fleet, though superior in numbers, attempted to sail away; as the English had, for some time, acquired such expertness in naval affairs, that no other nation would venture to face them, except with manifest disadvantage. The Spaniards seemed distracted in their councils, and acted with extreme confusion: they made a running fight; but, notwithstanding what they could do, all but three were taken. The admiral, during this engagement, acted with equal prudence and resolution; and the king wrote him a letter with his own hand, approving his conduct. This victory necessarily produced the resentment and complaints of the Spanish ministers at all the courts of Europe, which induced England to declare war with Spain; and the regent of France joined England in a similar declaration. The duke of Ormond now, once more, hoped, by the assistance of cardinal Alberoni, 1718.

the Spanish minister, to restore the pretender in England: he accordingly set sail with some troops, and proceeded as far as Cape Finisterre, where his fleet was dispersed and disabled by a violent storm, which entirely frustrated the armament, and, from that time, the pretender seemed to lose all hopes of being received in England. This blow of fortune, together with the bad success of the Spanish arms in Sicily and elsewhere, once more induced them to wish for peace; and the king of Spain was at last contented to sign the quadruple alliance.

King George, having thus, with equal vigour and deliberation, surmounted all the obstacles he met with in his way to the throne, and used every precaution that sagacity could suggest for securing himself in it, again returned to England, where the addresses from both houses were as loyal as he could expect. From addressing, they turned to an object of the greatest importance; namely, that of securing the dependency of the Irish parliament upon that of Great Britain. Maurice Annesley had appealed to the house of peers in England, from a decree of the house of peers in Ireland; which was reversed. The British peers ordered the barons of the Exchequer in Ireland to put Mr. Annesley in possession of the lands he had lost by the decree in that kingdom. The barons obeyed this order, and the Irish house of peers passed a vote against them, as having attempted to diminish the just privileges of the parliament of Ireland; and, at the same time, ordered the barons to be taken under the custody of the black rod. On the other hand, the house of lords in England resolved, that the barons of the exchequer in Ireland had acted with courage and fidelity; and addressed the king to signify his approbation of their conduct, by some marks of his favour. To complete their intention, a bill was prepared, by which the Irish house of lords was deprived of all right of final jurisdiction. This was opposed in both houses. In the lower house Mr. Pitt asserted, that it would only increase the power of the English peers, who already had too much. Mr. Hungerford demonstrated that the Irish lords had always exerted their

power of finally deciding causes. The duke of Leeds produced fifteen reasons against the bill; but, notwithstanding all opposition, it was carried by a great majority, and received the royal assent. The kingdom of Ireland was not at that time so well acquainted with the nature of liberty, and its own constitution, as it was afterwards. Their house of lords might then consist mostly of men bred up in luxury and ignorance; neither spirited enough to make opposition, nor skilful enough to conduct it.

But this blow, which the Irish felt severely, was not so great as that which England now began to suffer from that spirit of avarice and chicanery which had infected almost all ranks of people. In the year 1720, John Law, a Scotsman, had erected a company in France under the name of the Mississippi; which at first promised the deluded people immense wealth, but too soon appeared an imposture, and left the greatest part of that nation in ruin and distress. The 1721. year following, the people of England were deceived by just such another project, which is remembered by the name of the South-sea scheme, and was long felt by thousands. To explain this as concisely as possible, it is to be observed, that, ever since the revolution, the government not having sufficient supplies granted by parliament, or, what was granted requiring time to be collected, they were obliged to borrow money from several different companies of merchants, and, among the rest, from that company which traded to the South-sea. In the year 1716, they were indebted to this company about nine millions and a half of money, for which they granted annually, at the rate of six *per cent.*, interest. As this company was not the only one to which the government was debtor, and paid such large interest yearly, sir Robert Walpole conceived a design of lessening these national debts, by giving the several companies an alternative, either of accepting a lower interest, namely, five *per cent.* for their money, or of being paid the principal. The different companies chose rather to accept of the diminished interest than the capital; and the South-sea company, accordingly, having made up

their debt to the government ten millions, instead of six hundred thousand pounds, which they usually received as interest, were satisfied with five hundred thousand. In the same manner the governors and company of the Bank, and other companies, were contented to receive a diminished annuity for their several loans, all which greatly lessened the debts of the nation. It was in this situation of things that sir John Blount, who had been bred a scrivener, and was possessed of all the cunning and plausibility requisite for such an undertaking, proposed to the ministry, in the name of the South-sea company, to lessen the national debt still further, by permitting the South-sea company to buy all the debts of the different companies, and thus to become the principal creditor of the state. The terms offered the government were extremely advantageous. The South-sea company was to redeem the debts of the nation out of the hands of the private proprietors, who were creditors to the government, upon whatever terms they could agree on; and for the interest of this money, which they had thus redeemed, and taken into their own hands, they would be contented to be allowed for six years five *per cent.*, and then the interest should be reduced to four *per cent.*, and be redeemable by parliament. For these purposes a bill passed both houses; and, as the directors of the South-sea company could not of themselves alone be supposed to be possessed of money sufficient to buy up these debts of the government, they were empowered to raise it by opening a subscription, and granting annuities to such proprietors as should think proper to exchange their creditors; namely, the crown for the South-sea company, with the advantages that might be made by their industry. The superior advantages with which these proprietors were flattered, by thus exchanging their property in the government funds for South-sea company stock, were a chimerical prospect of having their money turned to great advantage, by a commerce to the southern parts of America, where it was reported that the English were to have some new settlements granted them by the king of Spain. The directors' books therefore were no sooner

opened for the first subscription, but crowds came to make the exchange; the delusion spread; subscriptions in a few days sold for double the price they had been bought for. The scheme succeeded, and the whole nation was infected with a spirit of avaricious enterprise. The infatuation prevailed; the stock increased to a surprising degree; but, after a few months, the people awaked from their delirium; they found that all the advantages to be expected were merely imaginary, and an infinite number of families were involved in ruin. Many of the directors, whose arts had raised these vain expectations, had amassed surprising fortunes: it was, however, one consolation to the nation to find the parliament stripping them of their ill-acquired wealth; and orders were given to remove all directors of the South-sea company from their seats in the house of commons, or the places they possessed under the government. The delinquents being punished by a forfeiture of their estates, the parliament next converted its attention towards redressing the sufferers. Several useful and just resolutions were taken, and a bill was speedily prepared for repairing the mischief. Of the profits arising from the South-sea scheme, the sum of seven millions was granted to the ancient proprietors; several additions also were made to their dividends out of what was possessed by the company in their own right; the remaining capital stock also was divided among all the proprietors at the rate of thirty-three pounds *per cent.* In the mean time petitions from all parts of the kingdom were presented to the house, demanding justice; and the whole nation seemed exasperated to the highest degree. During these transactions, the king, with serenity and wisdom, presided at the helm, influenced his parliament to pursue equitable measures, and, by his councils, endeavoured to restore the credit of the nation.

The discontents occasioned by these public calamities once more gave the disaffected party hopes of rising; but in all their councils they were weak, divided, and wavering. Their present designs therefore could not escape the vigilance of the king, who had emissaries in every court, and who made, by his alliances, every

potentate a friend to his cause. He was therefore informed by the duke of Orleans, regent of France, of a new conspiracy against him by several persons of distinction, which postponed his intended journey to Hanover. Among those against whom the most positive evidence was obtained, was Christopher Layer, a young gentleman of the Middle Temple. He was convicted of having inlisted men for the pretender's service, and received sentence of death; which he underwent, after having been often examined, and having strenuously refused to the last to discover his accomplices. He was the only person who suffered death upon this occasion: but several noblemen of high distinction were made prisoners upon suspicion. The duke of Norfolk, bishop of Rochester, lord Orrery, and lords North and Grey, were of this number. Of these, all but bishop Atterbury came off without punishment, the circumstances not being sufficient against them for conviction. A bill was brought into the house of commons against him, although a peer; and though it met with some opposition, yet it was resolved, by a great majority, that he should be deprived of his office and benefice, and banished the kingdom for ever. The bishop made no defence in the lower house, reserving all his power to be exerted in the house of lords. In that assembly he had many friends; his eloquence, politeness, and ingenuity, had procured him many; and his cause being heard, a long and warm debate was the consequence. As there was little against him but intercepted letters, which were written in cipher, earl Pawlet insisted on the danger and injustice of departing, in such cases, from the fixed rules of evidence. The duke of Wharton, having summed up the depositions, and shown the insufficiency of them, concluded with saying, That, let the consequences be what they would, he hoped the lustre of that house would be never tarnished, by condemning a man without evidence. Lord Bathurst spoke also against the bill, observing, That, if such extraordinary proceedings were countenanced, he saw nothing remaining for him and others to do, but to retire to their country-houses, and there, if possible, quietly enjoy their estates within their own

families, since the least correspondence, or intercepted letter, might be made criminal. Then, turning to the bishops, he said, he could hardly account for the inveterate hatred and malice some persons bore the ingenious bishop of Rochester, unless it was, that they were infatuated like the wild Americans, who fondly believed they inherit, not only the spoils, but even the abilities of any man they destroy. The earl of Stafford spoke on the same side; as also lord Trevor, who observed, that if men were in this unprecedented manner proceeded against, without legal proof, in a short time the minister's favour would be the subject's only protection; but that for himself, no apprehensions of what he might suffer would deter him from doing his duty. He was answered by lord Seafield, who endeavoured to show, that the evidence which had been produced before them was sufficient to convince any reasonable man: and in this he was supported by the duke of Argyll and lord Lechmere. To these lord Cowper replied, that the strongest argument urged in behalf of the bill, was necessity; but, for his part, he could see nothing that could justify such unprecedented and such dangerous proceedings. The other party, however, said little in answer; perhaps already sensible of a majority in their favour. The bill was passed against the bishop, and several lords entered their protest. Among the members in the house of commons, who had exerted themselves most strenuously in the bishop's favour, was doctor Freind, the celebrated physician; and he was now taken into custody, on suspicion of treasonable practices. He was soon after, however, admitted to bail, his friend doctor Mead becoming his security. In two days after, the bishop of Rochester embarked for banishment, accompanied with his daughter; and on the same day that he landed at Calais, the famous lord Bolingbroke arrived there, on his return to England, having obtained his majesty's pardon: upon which the bishop, smiling, said, *His lordship and I are exchanged.* In this manner the bishop continued in exile and poverty till he died; though it may not be improper to observe, that doctor Sacheverel left him, by will, five hundred pounds.

Few transactions of importance happened during the remainder of this reign: the ministry were employed in making various and expensive negociations, and covenants made without faith, and only observed from motives of interest or fear. The parliament made also some efforts to check the progress of vice and immorality, which now began to be diffused through every rank of life; luxury and profligacy had increased to a surprising degree; nor were there any transactions to fill the page of history, except the mercenary schemes of vile projectors, or the tasteless profusion of new-made opulence. The treaties lately concluded with Spain were again broken, perhaps by every party: admiral Hosier was sent to intercept the Spanish galleons from America, of which the Spaniards being apprised, remanded back their treasure; and the greatest part of the English fleet sent on this errand was rendered, by the worms, entirely unfit for service, 1726. and the men were cut off by the unhealthy climate and long voyage. To retaliate this, the Spaniards undertook the siege of Gibraltar, and with similar success. New treaties were set on foot; France offered its meditation; and such a reconciliation as treaties could procure was the consequence.

The king had not now, for two years, visited his German dominions; and, therefore, soon after the breaking up of parliament, he prepared for a journey to Hanover. Accordingly, having appointed an administration in his absence, he embarked for Holland; lay, upon his landing, at the little town of Vert; next day proceeded on his journey; and in two days more, between ten and eleven at night, arrived at Delden, in all appearance in perfect health. He supped there very heartily, and continued his progress early the next morning. Between eight and nine he ordered the coach to stop; and it being perceived that one of his hands lay motionless, monsieur Fabrice, who had formerly been the servant of the king of Sweden, and now attended king George, chafed it between his. As this had no effect, the surgeon was called, who followed on horseback, and also rubbed it with spirits; soon after the king's tongue began to swell, and he had just force

enough to bid them hasten to Osnaburgh; and falling into Fabrice's arms, quite insensible, never recovered, but expired about eleven the next morning. He died on Sunday, the eleventh of June, 1727, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and in the thirteenth of his reign. Whatever was good or great in the reign of George I., ought to be attributed wholly to himself; whenever he deviated, it might justly be imputed to a ministry always partial, and often corrupt. He was almost ever attended with good fortune, which was partly owing to prudence, and more to assiduity. In short, his successes are the strongest instance of how much may be achieved by moderate abilities exerted with application and uniformity.

LETTER LIV.

I HAVE not hitherto said any thing of the literature of the present period, having resolved to refer it to a separate letter, in which we may have a more perspicuous view of it than if blended with the ordinary occurrences of the state. Though learning had never received fewer encouragements than in the present reign, yet it never flourished more. That spirit of philosophy which had been excited in former ages, still continued to operate with the greatest success, and produced the greatest men in every profession. Among the divines, Atterbury and Clarke distinguished themselves. As a preacher, Atterbury united all the graces of style with all the elegance of a just delivery; he was natural, polite, spirited; and his sermons may be ranked among the first of this period. Clarke, on the other hand, despising the graces of eloquence, only sought after conviction, with rigorous though phlegmatic exactness, and brought moral truths almost to mathematical precision. Yet neither he, Cudworth, nor any other divine, did such service to the reasoning world, as the great Mr. John Locke, who may be justly said to have reformed all our modes of thinking in metaphysical inquiry. Though the jargon of schools had been before

him arranged, yet several of their errors had still subsisted, and were regarded as true. Locke, therefore, set himself to overturn their systems, and refute their absurdities: these he effectually accomplished; for which reasons his book, which, when published, was of infinite service, may be found less useful at present, when the doctrines it was calculated to refute are no longer subsisting.

This seemed to be the age of speculation. Berkeley, afterward bishop of Cloyne, in Ireland, surpassed all his contemporaries in subtlety of disquisition: but the mere efforts of reason, which are exerted rather to raise doubt than procure certainty, will never meet with much favour from so vain a being as man.

Lord Bolingbroke had also some reputation for metaphysical inquiry: his friends extolled his sagacity on that head, and the public were willing enough to acquiesce in their opinion: his fame therefore might have continued to rise, or, at least, would have never sunk, if he had never published. His works have appeared, and the public are no longer in their former sentiments.

In mathematics and natural philosophy, the vein opened by Newton was prosecuted with success: doctor Halley illustrated the theory of the tides, and increased the catalogue of the stars; while Gregory reduced astronomy to one comprehensive and regular system.

Doctor Freind, in medicine, produced some ingenious theories, which, if they did not improve the art, at least showed his abilities and learning in his profession. Doctor Mead was equally elegant, and more successful; to him is owing the useful improvement of tapping in the dropsy, by means of a swathe.

But, of all the other arts, poetry in this age was carried to the greatest perfection. The language, for some ages, had been improving, but now seemed entirely divested of its roughness and barbarity. Among the poets of this period we may place John Phillips, author of several poems, but of none more admired than that humorous one, entitled *The Splendid Shilling*: he lived in obscurity, and died just above want. William Congreve deserves also particular notice: his co-

medies, some of which were but coolly received upon their first appearance, seemed to mend upon repetition; and he is, at present, justly allowed the foremost in that species of dramatic poesy: his wit is ever just and brilliant; his sentiments new and lively; and his elegance equal to his regularity. Next him Vanburg is placed, whose humour seems more natural, and characters more new; but he owes too many obligations to the French entirely to pass for an original; and his total disregard of decency, in a great measure, impairs his merit. Farquhar is still more lively, and, perhaps, more entertaining than either: his pieces continue the favourite performances of the stage, and bear frequent repetition without satiety; but he often mistakes pertness for wit, and seldom strikes his characters with proper force or originality. However, he died very young; and it is remarkable, that he continued to improve as he grew older; his last play, entitled *The Beaux Stratagem*, being the best of his productions. Addison, both as a poet and prose writer, deserves the highest regard and imitation. His Campaign, and Letter to Lord Halifax from Italy, are masterpieces in the former, and his essays published in the Spectator are inimitable specimens of the latter. Whatever he treated of was handled with elegance and precision; and that virtue, which was taught in his writings, was enforced by his example. Steele was Addison's friend and admirer: his comedies are perfectly polite, chaste, and genteel; nor were his other works contemptible: he wrote on several subjects, and yet it is amazing, in the multiplicity of his pursuits, how he found leisure for the discussion of any; ever persecuted by creditors, whom his profuseness drew upon him, or pursuing impracticable schemes, suggested by ill-grounded ambition. Dean Swift was the professed antagonist of both Addison and him. He perceived that there was a spirit of romance mixed with all the works of the poets who preceded him; or, in other words, that they had drawn nature on the most pleasing side. There still therefore was a place left for him, who, careless of censure, should describe it just as it was, with all its deformities; he therefore owes much of his fame, not so much to the

greatness of his genius, as to the boldness of it. He was dry, sarcastic, and severe; and suited his style exactly to the turn of his thought, being concise and nervous. In this period also flourished many of subordinate fame. Prior was the first who adopted the French elegant easy manner of telling a story; but if what he has borrowed from that nation be taken from him, scarce any thing will be left upon which he can lay claim to applause in poetry. Rowe was only outdone by Shakspeare and Otway as a tragic writer: he has fewer absurdities than either, and is, perhaps, as pathetic as they; but his flights are not so bold, nor his characters so strongly marked. Perhaps his coming later than the rest may have contributed to lessen the esteem he deserves. Garth had success as a poet; and, for a time, his fame was even greater than his desert. In his principal work, the *Dispensary*, his versification is negligent, and his plot is now become tedious; but whatever he may lose as a poet, it would be improper to rob him of the merit he deserves for having written the prose dedication, and preface, to the poem already mentioned, in which he has shown the truest wit, with the most refined elegance. Parnel, though he has written but one poem, namely, the *Hermit*, yet has found a place among the English first-rate poets. Gay, likewise, by his *Fables* and *Pastorals*, has acquired an equal reputation. But of all who have added to the stock of English poetry, Pope, perhaps, deserves the first place. On him foreigners look as one of the most successful writers of his time: his versification is the most harmonious, and his correctness the most remarkable, of all our poets. A noted contemporary of his own, calls the English the finest writers on moral topics, and Pope the noblest moral writer of all the English. Mr. Pope has somewhere named himself the last English muse; and, indeed, since his time, we have seen few productions that can justly lay claim to immortality: he carried the language to its highest perfection; and those who have attempted still further to improve it, instead of ornament, have only caught finery.

LETTER LV.

UPON the death of George I, his son George II ascended the throne ; of inferior abilities to the late king, and consequently still more strongly attached to his dominions on the continent. The various 1727. subsidies that had been in the last reign granted to maintain foreign connections, were still kept up in this ; and the late system of politics underwent no sort of alteration. The rights and privileges of the throne of England were, in general, committed to the minister's care ; the royal concern being chiefly fixed upon balancing the German powers, and gaining an ascendancy for the elector of Hanover in the empire. The ministry was, at first, divided between lord Townshend, a man of extensive knowledge ; the earl of Chesterfield, the only man of genius employed under this government ; and sir Robert Walpole, who soon after engrossed the greatest share of the administration to himself.

Sir Robert Walpole, who is to make the principal figure in the present reign, had, from a private station, raised himself to the head of the treasury. Strongly attached to the house of Hanover, and serving it at times when it wanted his assistance, he still maintained the prejudices with which he set out ; and, unaware of the alteration of sentiments in the nation, still attempted to govern by party. He, probably, like every other minister, began by endeavouring to serve his country ; but, meeting with strong opposition, his succeeding endeavours were as much employed in maintaining his post as in being serviceable in it. His great fault was a disposition to govern by venality and corruption : his great merit, an anxious desire to prevent the country from going to war : and to suppress the friends of the pretender, without rebellion and bloodshed. He was possessed of a most phlegmatic insensibility to bear reproach, and a calm dispassionate way of reasoning upon such topics as he desired to enforce. His discourse was fluent, without eloquence ; and his reasons convincing, without any share of elevation.

The house of commons, which in the preceding reign had been distinguished into whigs and jacobites, now underwent another change, and was again divided into the court and country party. The court party were for favouring all the schemes of the ministry, and applauding all the measures of the crown. They regarded foreign alliances as conducive to internal security; and paid the troops of other countries for their promises of future assistance. Of these sir Robert was the leader; and such as he could not convince by his eloquence, he undertook to buy over by places and pensions. The other side, who called themselves the country party, were entirely averse to continental connections: they complained that immense sums were lavished on subsidies, which could never be useful; and that alliances were bought with money, which could be only rewarded by a reciprocation of good intentions. These looked upon the frequent journeys of the king to his electoral dominions with a jealous eye, and sometimes hinted at the alienation of the royal affections from England. Some of these had been strong assertors of the protestant succession; and, not fearing the reproach of jacobitism, they spoke with still greater boldness. As the court party generally threatened the house of commons with imaginary dangers to the state; so these of the country usually declaimed against the encroachments of the prerogative. The threats of neither were founded in truth; the kingdom was in no danger from abroad; nor was internal liberty in the least infringed by the crown. On the contrary, those who viewed the state with an unprejudiced eye, were of opinion, that the prerogatives of the crown were the only part of the constitution that was growing every day weaker; that, while the king's thoughts were turned to foreign concerns, the ministry were unmindful of his authority at home; and that every day the government was making hasty steps to an aristocracy. As Walpole headed the court party, so the leaders of the opposite side were Mr. William Pitt, Mr. Shippen, sir William Wyndham, and Mr. Hungerford.

The great objects of controversy during this reign were the national debt, and the number of forces to be

kept in pay. The government, at the accession of the present monarch, owed more than thirty millions of money; and though it was a time of profound peace, yet this sum was continually found to increase. To pay off this, the ministry proposed many projects, and put some into execution; but what could be expected from a set of men, who made the public wealth only subservient to private interest, and who grew powerful on the wrecks of their country? Demands for new supplies were made every session of parliament, either for the purposes of securing friends upon the continent, of guarding the internal polity, or for enabling the ministry to act vigorously in conjunction with their allies abroad. These were as regularly opposed as made; the speakers of the country party ever insisted, that the English had no business to embroil themselves with the affairs of the continent; that expenses were incurred without prudence or necessity; and that the increase of the national debt, by multiplying taxes, would at length become intolerable to the people. Whatever reasons there might be in such arguments, they were, notwithstanding, constantly overruled; and every demand granted with pleasure and profusion.

All these treaties and alliances, however, in which the kingdom had been lately involved, seemed no way productive of the general tranquillity expected from them. The Spaniards, who had never been thoroughly reconciled, still continued their depredations, and plundered the English merchants upon the southern coasts of America, as if they had been pirates. This was the reign of negotiations; and from these alone the ministry promised themselves and the nation redress. Still, however, the enemy went on to insult and seize, regardless of our vain expostulations. 1728. The British merchants complained, by petition, of the losses sustained by the Spaniards; and the house of commons deliberated upon this subject. They examined the evidence, and presented an address to his majesty. He promised them all possible satisfaction, and negotiations were begun as formerly, and a new treaty was signed at Vienna between the em-

peror and the kings of Great Britain and Spain, tending to confirm the former. Though such transactions did not give the security that was expected from them, yet they, in some measure, put off the troubles of Europe for a time. An interval of peace succeeded, in which scarce any events happened that deserve the remembrance of a historian: such intervals are, however, the periods of happiness to a people; for history is too often but the register of human calamities. By this treaty at Vienna, the king of England conceived hopes that the peace of Europe was established upon the most lasting foundation. Don Carlos, upon the death of the duke of Parma, was, by the assistance of an English fleet, put in peaceable possession of Parma and Placentia. Six thousand Spaniards were quietly admitted, and quartered in the duchy of Tuscany, to secure for him the reversion of that dukedom. Thus we see Europe, in some measure, resembling a republic, putting monarchs into new kingdoms, and depriving others of their succession by a universal concurrence. But this amiable disposition among the great powers could never continue long; and the republic of Europe must be an empty name, until there be some controlling power set up by universal consent, to enforce obedience to the law of nations.

During this interval of profound peace, nothing remarkable happened, except the constant disputations in the house of commons, where the contests between the court and country party were carried on with the greatest acrimony, the speeches on either side being dictated less by reason than resentment. A calm uninterested reader is now surprised at the heat with which many subjects, of little importance in themselves, were discussed at that time; he now smiles at those denunciations of ruin with which their orations are replete. The truth is, the liberty of a nation is better supported by the opposition, than by what is said in the opposition.

In times of profound tranquillity the slightest occurrences become objects of universal attention. A society of men, entitled *The Charitable Corporation*, excited the indignation of the public. Their professed

intention was, to lend money at legal interest to the poor, upon small pledges; and to persons of better rank, upon proper security. Their capital was at first limited to thirty thousand pounds; but they afterward increased it to six hundred thousand, and the care of conducting the capital was intrusted to a proper number of directors. This company, having continued for more than twenty years, the cashier, George Robinson, and the warehousekeeper of the company, disappeared in one day. Five hundred thousand pounds of the capital appeared to be sunk and embezzled by the directors, in a manner the proprietors could not account for. They therefore petitioned the house, representing the manner in which they had been defrauded of such vast sums of money, and the distress to which many were reduced, in consequence of such imposition. The petition was received, and a secret committee appointed to inquire into the grievance. They soon discovered a most iniquitous scene of fraud, which had been carried on by Thomson and Robinson, in concert with some of the directors, for embezzling the capital, and cheating the proprietors. Many persons of rank and quality were concerned in this infamous conspiracy; even some of the first characters in the nation did not escape without censure. The house of commons declared their resentment, and expelled one or two of their members; but the sufferers met with scarce any redress. Nor can I mention such a circumstance without reflecting on that spirit of rapacity and avarice which infected every degree of people. An ill example in the governing part of a country ever diffuses itself downward; and while the ministry do not blush at detection, the people of every rank will not fear guilt. About this time not less than five members of parliament were expelled for the most sordid acts of knavery; sir Robert Sutton, sir Archibald Grant, and George Robinson, for their frauds in the management of the *Charitable Corporation* scheme; Dennis Bond, esquire, and serjeant Burch, for a fraudulent sale of the late earl of Derwentwater's estates. Luxury had produced prodigality, the sure parent of every meanness. It was even asserted in the house of lords, that not one

shilling of the forfeited estates was ever applied to the service of the public, but became the reward of avarice and venality.

LETTER LVI.

THE history of England has little during this interval to excite curiosity. The debates in parliament grew every day more obstinate, as every subject happened to come round in voting the annual supplies : but as the subjects were mostly the same, so also were the arguments. There was one, however, of a different nature from those in the usual course of business, which was laboured for strenuously by the ministry, and as warmly opposed by their antagonists; namely, 1733. the excise-bill, which sir Robert Walpole introduced into the house, by first declaiming against the frauds practised by the factors in London, who were employed by the American planters in selling their tobacco. To prevent these frauds, he proposed, instead of having the customs levied in the usual manner upon tobacco, that what was imported should be lodged in warehouses appointed for that purpose by the officers of the crown; and thence to be sold, after paying the duty of four pence *per* pound, when the proprietor found a market for it : this proposal raised a violent ferment not less in the house than without doors. Those who opposed the scheme asserted, that it would expose the factors to such hardships, that they would not be able to continue the trade, nor would it prevent the frauds complained of. They asserted, that it would produce an additional swarm of excise-officers and warehouse-keepers, who would at once render the ministry formidable, and the people dependent. Arguments, however, were not what the ministry most dreaded : for the people had been raised into such a ferment, that all the avenues of the house were crowded with complaining multitudes; and sir Robert began even to fear for his life. The ministry carried the proposal in the house; but, observing the tumult of

the people, they thought fit to drop the design. The miscarriage of the bill was celebrated with public rejoicings in London and Westminster; and the minister was burned in effigy by the populace.

This success, in the members of the opposition, encouraged them to go on to a proposal for repealing an act made in the last reign, by which the house of commons was to be septennial. They proposed that parliaments should again be made triennial, as had been settled at the revolution. In the course of this debate, in which they were opposed, as usual, by the ministry, they reflected, with great severity, on the measures of the late reign. They asserted, that the septennial act was an incroachment on the rights of the people; that, during the continuance of that parliament, several severe laws had been enacted; that, by one of these, a man might be removed, and tried at any place where the jury might be favourable to the crown, and where the prisoner's witnesses could not, or dared not, to come; that, by another, a justice of the peace was empowered to put the best subjects to immediate death, after reading a proclamation against riots. The South-sea scheme, they said, was established by an act of a septennial parliament; and the excise-bill had like, under their influence also, to have passed into a law. Sir William Wyndham distinguished himself in this debate: *Let us suppose*, said he, *a man without any sense of honour raised to be a chief minister of state. Suppose him possessed of great wealth; the plunder of the nation. Suppose him screened by a corrupt majority of his creatures, and insulting over all men of family, sense, and honour, in the nation. Let us suppose a venal parliament, and an ignorant king; I hope such a case will never occur; but should such ever happen to be at once united, a short parliament will be the only means of lessening the evil.* Notwithstanding these expostulations, the ministry were, as usual, victorious, and the motion suppressed by the majority. Thus the country party now found themselves outnumbered upon every occasion: they had long complained, in vain, that debate was useless, since every member seemed to have listed himself under the banners of party,

to which he held without shrinking. Despairing therefore of being able to stem the torrent of corruption, they retired to their seats in the country, and left the minister an undisputed majority in the house.

The minister, being now left without opposition in the house, took an opportunity to render his rivals odious or contemptible, by getting several useful laws passed in their absence; while the king laboured with equal assiduity to adjust the political scale of Europe, and for this purpose made several journeys to his electoral dominions. But his assiduity in healing foreign differences did not prevent one of a more domestic nature: for a misunderstanding arose between him and the prince of Wales; a prince that was the darling of
1738. the people, and who professed his dislike both to the ministry and their venal measures. He had been, a short time before, married to the princess of Saxegotha; and the prince's mistaking a message from the king, at the time when the princess was lying-in, first caused the rupture. It was soon after widened by the vile emissaries of the court; so that his majesty forbade the prince his presence, and gave orders that none of his attendants should be admitted to court. A motion, however, was made in the house of commons for increasing the prince's settlement, which was but fifty thousand pounds, to a hundred thousand. It was represented that so much had been granted by the late king to his present majesty, when prince of Wales; and that such settlement was conformable to the practice of former times, and necessary to the independency of the heir-apparent to the English crown. This motion was vigorously opposed by sir Robert Walpole, as an encroachment on the prerogative, and an officious intermeddling in the king's family-affairs. The supporters of the motion observed, that the allowance of fifty thousand pounds was not sufficient to defray the prince's yearly expenses, which, by his majesty's own regulation, amounted to sixty-three thousand. The motion, however, met the fate of all other antiministerial measures, being rejected by the majority.

But whatever imaginary disappointments the people might suffer, there was a blow levelled at the little wit

that was yet remaining, which the admirers of the drama tell us has effectually banished all taste from the stage. When Walpole entered into power, he resolved to despise that set of under-rate writers, who live by arraigning every ministry, and disseminating scandal and abuse. For a time he prosecuted that intention; but, at last, found it necessary to employ a set of mean hirelings, to answer calumny with calumny. He wanted judgment to distinguish genius: or none possessed of such a gift were mean enough to applaud his measures. From hence he took an implacable aversion to the press, which so severely exposed his corruption, and branded his follies. But the press alone was not the only scourge he had to fear; the theatre joined all its ridicule, and he saw himself exposed as the object of scorn, as well as hatred. When licence once transgresses the rules of decency, it knows no bounds. Some of the pieces exhibited at that time were not only severe, but immoral also. This was what the minister held to; he brought in a bill to limit the number of playhouses; to subject all dramatic writings to the inspection of the lord-chamberlain, whose licence was to be obtained before any work could appear. Among those who undertook to oppose this bill, was the earl of Chesterfield, who observed, that the laws already in being for keeping the stage within due bounds were every way sufficient. *If, says he, our stageplayers at any time exceed those bounds, they ought to be prosecuted, and may be punished. A new law therefore is, in the present instance, unnecessary; and every unnecessary law is dangerous. Wit, my lords, is the property of those that have it; and it is too often the only property they have. It is unjust therefore to rob a man at any rate of his possessions; but it is cruelty to spoil him, if already poor. If poets and players are to be restrained, let them be restrained like other subjects; let them be tried by their peers, and let not a lord-chamberlain be made the sovereign judge of wit. A power lodged in the hands of a single man to determine, without limitation or appeal, is a privilege unknown to our laws, and inconsistent with our constitution.* The house applauded his wit and eloquence; and the question was carried against him.

The discontents occasioned by such proceedings at home, were still more increased by the depredations of the Spaniards. They disputed the right of the English to cut logwood in the bay of Campeachy, in America; a right which had been often acknowledged, but never clearly explained, in all former treaties between the two kingdoms. Their *Guarda Costas* plundered the English merchants with impunity; and upon the least resistance behaved with insolence, cruelty, and rapine. The subjects of Britain were buried in the mines of Potosi, deprived of all means of conveying their complaints to their protectors, and their vessels confiscated, in defiance of justice. The English court made frequent remonstrances to that of Madrid, of this outrageous violation of treaties, and they received for answer only promises of inquiry, which produced no reformation. Our merchants loudly complained of these outrages: but the minister expected, from negotiation, that redress which could only be obtained by arms. He knew that a war would increase the difficulties he had to encounter; and he was sensible, that those he already encountered required all his art and industry to remove. A war, he was sensible, would require expenses which he wished to share in peace. In short, all his measures were now not to serve the state, but to preserve his power. Influenced by these considerations, he industriously endeavoured to avoid a rupture. The fears he discovered only served to increase the enemy's insolence and pride. However, the complaints of the English merchants were loud enough to reach the house of commons; their letters and memorials were produced, and their grievances enforced at the bar by counsel. The house, at length, agreed to an address, to intreat his majesty to obtain effectual relief, and to convince Spain, that its indignities would be no longer borne with impunity. These complaints produced a convention between the two crowns, concluded at Prado, importing, that two plenipotentiaries should meet at Madrid, to regulate the respective pretensions of either kingdom, with regard to the trade in America, and the limits of Florida and Carolina. These conferences were to be finished in eight months, and in the

mean time all hostile preparations were to cease on either side. His catholic majesty agreed to pay the king of Great Britain ninety-five thousand pounds, to satisfy the demands of the British subjects upon the crown of Spain, after deducting from the whole the demands of the crown and subjects of Spain upon that of Britain. Such an agreement as this was justly regarded on the side of the British ministry as a base desertion of the honour and interests of their country; and when the house of commons came to take the convention under consideration, it produced the warmest debate. All the adherents to the prince of Wales joined in the opposition. It was alleged, that the Spaniards, instead of granting a redress, had rather extorted a release for their former conduct; that they still asserted their right of searching English ships, and had not so much as mentioned the word *satisfaction* in all the treaty. Notwithstanding all the remonstrances against this treaty, the majority of the house declared in its favour; and several members of the opposite sentiment retired from parliament, having despaired of being longer serviceable in a place where party and not reason was seen to prevail.

As Spain had engaged to pay a large sum of money by this convention, some time after, when the minister demanded a supply, upon a different occasion, lord Bathurst moved to know, whether Spain had paid the sums stipulated, as the time limited for the payment was expired. The duke of Newcastle, by his majesty's permission, acquainted the house, that it was not paid; and that Spain had assigned no reason for the delay. In some measure, therefore, to atone for his former slowness, the minister now began to put the nation into a condition of war. Letters of reprisals were granted against the Spaniards. These preparations were regarded by the Spanish court as actual hostilities. The French ambassador at Hague declared, that the king his master was obliged, by treaties, to assist the king of Spain; he dissuaded the Dutch from espousing the cause of England, who promised him an inviolable neutrality. It is curious enough to consider the revolutions which the political system of Europe had under-

gone. Not above twenty years before, France and England were combined against Spain; at present, France and Spain united against England. Those statesmen, who build upon alliances as a lasting basis of power, will, at length, find themselves fatally mistaken.

A rupture between Great Britain and Spain being now become inevitable, the people, who had long clamoured for war, began to feel uncommon alacrity at its approach; and the ministry, finding it unavoidable, began to be earnest in preparation. Orders were issued for augmenting the land-forces, and raising a body of marines. Two rich Spanish prizes were taken in the 1739. Mediterranean, and war declared against them in form.

Admiral Vernon was sent to the West-Indies, commander of the fleet, in order to distress the Spaniards in that part of the globe. Vernon was a rough and honest sailor, untainted with the corruption or the effeminacy of the times. He had in the house of commons asserted, that Porto Bello, a fort and harbour in South-America, might be easily taken, and that he himself would undertake to reduce it with six ships only. A project which appeared so wild and impossible, was ridiculed by the ministry; but, as he still insisted upon the proposal, they were pleased to comply with his request. This they supposed would at once rid them of a troublesome antagonist in the house; and, in case of his failure, it would be a new cause of triumph at his disgrace. In this, however, they were disappointed. The admiral, with six ships only, attacked and demolished all the fortifications of the place, and came away victorious, almost without bloodshed. This dawning of success upon the British arms induced the house of commons to enter vigorously into the king's measures for carrying on the war. They enabled him to equip a very powerful navy: they voted a subsidy to the king of Denmark, and impowered their sovereign to defray some other expenses, not specified in the estimates; the whole of their grants amounting to about four millions. The war was now carried on with vigour, and the debates in the house of commons became less violent. In a nation, like England, of arts, arms, and commerce, war, at certain intervals,

must ever be serviceable ; it turns the current of wealth from the industrious to the enterprising. Thus, all orders of mankind find encouragement, and the nation becomes composed of individuals, who have skill to acquire property, and who have courage to defend it.

LETTER LVII.

A WAR between England and Spain was sufficient to communicate disturbances over all the globe. Countries, that were once too obscure to be known, were now seen to send out fleets, one ship of which was capable of destroying all the naval power of an Asiatic empire. A squadron of ships commanded by commodore Anson was equipped, in order to sail through the Straits of Magellan into the South-Sea, and to act against the enemy on the coasts of Chili and Peru. This fleet was to co-operate occasionally with admiral Vernon across the isthmus of Darien: but the delays and blunders of the ministry frustrated this scheme, though originally well laid. However, though too late in the season, the commodore set forward with five ships of the line, a frigate, and two store-ships, supplied with provisions and other merchandise, designed to carry on a trade with the savage inhabitants of that part of the world, or to conciliate their affections. The number of men amounted, in all, to about fourteen hundred, including two hundred invalids taken from the hospitals, and two hundred new-raised recruits. This whole expedition is a fine instance of the power of perseverance in forcing fortune. The commodore steered his course by the island of Madeira, proceeded to the Cape Verd islands, and sailed along the coast of Brazil. He refreshed for some time at the island of St. Catharine, in twenty-seven degrees of southern latitude; a spot that enjoys all the verdure and fruitfulness of those luxurious climates. From this place he steered still onward into the cold and tempestuous climates of the south, along the coast of Patagonia; and, in

about five months, entered the famous Straits of Magellan. After having suffered the most violent tempests, he doubled Cape Horn; the rest of his fleet were dispersed or wrecked; his crew deplorably disabled by the scurvy; and his own ship with difficulty arrived at the island of Juan Fernandez. In this delicious abode he remained for some time, where nature seemed, in some measure, to console mankind for the calamities of their own avarice and ambition. In order to improve still further a retreat of such elegance, he ordered several European seeds and fruits to be sown upon the island, which increased to such a surprising degree, that some Spaniards, who, several years after, landed there, and found them in plenty, could not avoid acknowledging this act of generosity and benevolence. Here the commodore was joined by one ship more of his fleet, and by the Tyral frigate of seven guns. Advancing now northward, toward the tropic of Capricorn, he attacked the city of Payta by night. In this bold attempt he made no use of his ships, nor even disembarked all his men. A few soldiers landed by night, and filled the whole town with terror and confusion. The governor of the garrison, and the inhabitants, fled on all sides; accustomed to cruelty over a conquered enemy themselves, they expected a similitude of treatment.

In the mean time, for three days, a small number of English kept possession of the town, and stripped it of all its treasures and merchandise, to an immense amount. Such of the negroes as had not fled, were made use of in carrying the goods of their former masters on board the English shipping; and the Spaniards, refusing to treat, soon saw their town all in flames. This, however, was but a small punishment for all the cruelties which they had practised, in taking possession of that country, upon its first inhabitants. The plunder of this place served to enrich the captors; and the ravage made among them, by the scurvy, still increased the share of every survivor. Soon after, this small squadron came up as far as Panama, situate on the straits of Darien, upon the western side of the great

American continent; so that, by Anson on the one, and Vernon on the other, the Spanish empire was attacked on both sides : but the scheme failed from Vernon's want of success.

Anson, who now only commanded two ships, the remainder having either put back to England, or been wrecked by the tempests, placed all his hopes in taking one of those rich Spanish ships which trade between the Philippine Islands, near the coast of China, and Mexico on the Spanish main. Only one, or two at the most, of these vessels passed from one continent to the other in a year. These are made immensely strong, large, and carry great quantities of treasure and merchandise. The commodore, therefore, and his little fleet, traversed that great ocean lying between the Asiatic and American continent, in hopes of meeting this rich prize, which it was hoped would, at that time of the year, return from the east, and amply repay the adventurers for all their dangers and fatigues. Avarice thus became honourable when pursued through peril and distress. But the scurvy once more visited his crew, now long kept at sea, and without fresh provisions. This disorder, though it takes the same name, is very different from that on land. The sea-scurvy is attended with a universal putrefaction; the teeth loosen, old wounds that are healed again open, and sometimes the limbs are seen to drop off at the joints. By this terrible disorder several of his men daily fell, and others were disabled. One of his ships becoming leaky, and the number of his hands decreasing, he thought proper to set it on fire in the midst of the ocean. His fleet now being reduced only to one ship, called *The Centurion*, of sixty guns, and all the crew in the most deplorable situation, he cast anchor on the deserted island of Tinian, which lies about half way between the old and new world. This island had, some years before, been peopled by near thirty thousand inhabitants; but an epidemical distemper coming among them, destroyed a part, and the rest forsook the place. Nothing however could exceed the beauty of this spot. The most romantic imagination cannot form a scene surpassing what Tinian naturally afforded; greens, groves, cas-

cares, fields, flowers, and prospects. This retreat saved the English squadron. All that a sea-beaten company of mariners could wish, was found here in great abundance; clear and wholesome water, medicinal herbs, domestic animals, and other necessaries for refitting their shattered vessel. Thus refreshed, he went forward toward China, passed by the kingdom of Formosa, and went up the river Canton, in order to careen the only ship which was now left him. Being thus far on his way homeward, nothing can better testify the hardy and untameable spirit of the English, than his venturing once more back into the same ocean, where he had experienced such a variety of distress. The commodore having put his vessel into good order, by the assistance of the Chinese, and having taken Dutch and Indian sailors on board, he again returned toward America. At length, on the 9th of June, he discovered the galleon he so ardently expected. This vessel was formed as well for the purposes of war as of merchandise. It mounted forty guns, and six hundred men, while the crew of the commodore did not exceed half that number. The engagement soon began; but as those who attack have always the advantage of those who defend, and the English are more expert in naval affairs than any other nation, the Spanish ship soon became the Centurion's prize. There were but a few men killed on the side of the English, while the Spaniards lost nearly seventy. The conqueror now returned to Canton, once more, with his prize. He there maintained the honour of his country, in refusing to pay the imposts which were laid upon ordinary merchants; and insisted, that an English ship of war was exempted from such a duty. From Canton he proceeded to the Cape of Good Hope, and prosecuted his voyage to England, where he arrived in 1744. safety, with immense riches. His last prize was valued at three hundred and thirteen thousand pounds sterling; and the different captures that had been made before this last piece of good fortune, might amount to as much more. Upon his return, commodore Anson received all that honour which prudence and perseverance deserve. He soon became the oracle

consulted in all naval deliberations; the king afterward raised him to the dignity of the peerage; and he was made first lord of the admiralty.

LETTER LVIII.

THIS expedition of Anson took up almost three years. The English, in the mean time, carried on the operations against Spain with vigour, and various success. When Anson had set out, it was only to act a subordinate part to a formidable armament, designed for the coasts of New Spain, consisting of twenty-nine ships of the line, and almost an equal number of frigates, furnished with all kinds of warlike stores, near fifteen thousand seamen, and twelve thousand land-forces. Never was a fleet more completely equipped, and never had the nation more sanguine hopes of victory. Lord Cathcart commanded the land-forces; but, dying on the passage, the command devolved upon general Wentworth, whose chief merit was his favour with those in power. This, with several other unfortunate circumstances, concurred to frustrate the hopes of the public. The ministry, without any visible reason, had detained the fleet in England until the season for action was almost over. In the country where they were to carry on their operations, periodical rains begin about the end of April; and this change in the atmosphere is always attended with epidemical distempers. They at length, however, set sail for the continent of New Spain; and, after some tempests and some delays, arrived before Carthagena. This city, which lies within sixty miles of Panama, served as the magazine for the Spanish merchandise, which was brought from Europe hither, and thence transported, by land, to Panama, lying on the opposite coast. The taking of Carthagena, therefore, would have interrupted the whole trade between Old Spain and the New. The troops were landed on the island Terra Bomba, near the mouth of the harbour, known by the name of the Bocca-Chica, which was fortified by all the arts of en-

gineering. The British forces erected a battery on shore, with which they made a breach in the principal fort; while the admiral sent a number of ships to divide the fire of the enemy, and to co-operate with the endeavours of the army. The breach being deemed practicable, the forces advanced to the attack: but the Spaniards deserted the forts, which, had they had courage, they might have defended with success. The troops, upon this success, were brought nearer the city, where they found a greater opposition than they had expected. The climate killed numbers of the men; and a dissension, which arose between the land and naval officers, retarded all the operations. Stimulated by mutual recriminations, the general ordered his troops to attack the fort of St. Lazar; but the guides being slain, the troops mistook their way, and attacked the strongest part of the fortification, where, after suffering incredible slaughter with the most serene intrepidity, they were at length obliged to retire. Bad provisions, a horrid climate, and an epidemical fever, still more contributed to thin their numbers, and to deprive them of all hopes of success. It was determined therefore to reembark the troops, and to conduct them, as soon as possible, from this scene of slaughter and contagion. The fortification and harbour were demolished; and the fleet returned to Jamaica. This fatal miscarriage, which tarnished the British arms, was no sooner known in England, than the kingdom was filled with murmurs and discontents: a measure, which, if it had succeeded, would have crowned the promoters of it with honour, now only served to cover them with reproach. The greatest part of this discontent fell upon the minister: his former conduct, which justly deserved censure, was not so powerfully objected against him as this failure, of which he was innocent. It is not villany, but misfortune, that find censure from mankind. Besides, the activity of the enemy in distressing the trade of England, contributed to increase the murmurs of the people. Their privateers were so numerous and successful, that in the beginning of this year they had taken, since the commencement of the war, four hundred and seven ships belonging to the subjects of

Great Britain. The English, though at immense expense in equipping fleets, seemed tamely to lie down under every blow, and suffered one loss after another without reprisal. This general discontent had a manifest influence upon the election of members for the new parliament. All the adherents of the prince of Wales, who now lived retired from the court as a private gentleman, concurred in the opposition to the ministry. Obstinate struggles were maintained in all parts of the kingdom; and such a national spirit of opposition prevailed, that the country interest seemed, at length, to preponderate in the house of commons. It was soon seen that the interest of the minister was in the wane; and that opinion once established, began to deprive him of even those who had determined to act with neutrality. *In proclinantes, as Ovid says, omne recumbit onus.*

Sir Robert now tottered on the brink of ruin. He was sensible that nothing but a division in the opposition could give him safety. The prince was his most formidable rival; a prince revered by the whole nation, for his humanity, benevolence, and candour. These were only private virtues; but these were all he had then a liberty of exercising. The minister's first attempt was, to endeavour taking him from the party: a message therefore was carried to his royal highness, by the bishop of Oxford, importing, that, if the prince would write a letter to the king, he and all his counsellors should be taken into favour; fifty thousand pounds should be added to his revenue, two hundred thousand given him to pay his debts, and suitable provision should be made, in due time, for all his followers. This, to a prince already involved in debt, from the necessity of keeping up his dignity, was a tempting offer; but his royal highness generously disdained it, declaring he would accept no such conditions dictated to him under the instrument of sir Robert Walpole. The minister now therefore saw that no arts could dissolve the combination against him: he resolved, as an expiring struggle, to try his strength once more in the house of commons upon a disputed election; but he had the mortification to see the majo-

rity still increased against him by sixteen voices. He then declared he would never sit in that house more. The parliament was adjourned the next day, and sir Robert, being created earl of Orford, resigned all his employments. Never was a joy more universal and sincere, than this resignation produced. The people now flattered themselves that all their domestic grievances would find redress; that their commerce would be protected abroad; that the war would be carried on with vigour; and that the house of commons would be unanimous in every measure. But they were disappointed in most of their expectations. The misconduct of a minister is more likely to affect his successor than himself, as a weak reign ever produces a feeble succession. The house of commons had been for a long time increasing in power; and Walpole, with all his arts, was, in fact, rather weakening than extending the prerogative; while his successor, pursuing all the former schemes of the deposed minister, presented the political part of the nation with the mortifying prospect of pretended patriotism unstripped of its mask, and showed the little certainty there is in all political reasonings.

LETTER LIX.

THE war with Spain had now continued for several years, but with indifferent success. Some unsuccessful expeditions were carried on in the West-Indies under admiral Vernon, commodore Knowles, and others; and these were all aggravated by a set of worthless and mercenary *things* called *political writers*—a class of beings first employed against Walpole, and afterward encouraged by him, at the expense, it is said, of no less than thirty thousand a year. These were men naturally too dull to shine in any of the politer kinds of literature, which adorn either the scholar or the gentleman, and therefore they turned their thoughts to politics; a science on which they might declaim without knowledge, and be dull without detection. These men, I say, had for some time embarrassed the con-

stitution, inflamed the people, and were paid with large pensions from the crown. It was upon this occasion that they exaggerated every misconduct, and drew frightful pictures of the distresses and misery which they foreboded to posterity. This clamour, and want of success in a naval war, in which the principal strength of the kingdom lay, induced the new ministry to divert the new attention of the public to a war which might be carried on by land. The king's attachment to his electoral dominions contributed still more to turn the current of British indignation that way, and an army was therefore now prepared to be sent into Flanders; the war with Spain being become an object but of secondary consideration. 1743.

To have a clear, yet concise, idea of the origin of the troubles on the continent, it will be expedient to go back for some years, and trace the measures of the European republic to that period where we formerly left them. After the duke of Orleans, who had been regent of France, died, Cardinal Fleury undertook to settle that confusion in which the former had left the kingdom. His moderation was equal to his prudence: he was sincere, frugal, modest, and simple. Under him France repaired her losses, and enriched herself by commerce; he only left the state to its own natural methods of thriving, and saw it daily assuming its former health and vigour. During the long interval of peace which his councils had procured for Europe, two powers, unregarded, now began to attract the notice and the jealousy of their neighbouring states. Peter the Great had already civilized Russia; and this new extensive empire began to influence the councils of other princes, and to give laws to the North. The other power was that of Prussia, whose dominions were compact and populous, and whose forces were well maintained and ready for action. Germany continued under Charles VI, who had been placed upon the throne by the treaty of Utrecht. Sweden languished, being not yet recovered from the destructive projects of Charles XII. Denmark was powerful; and part of Italy subject to the masters which had been imposed upon it by foreign treaties. All, however, continued

to enjoy a profound peace, until the death of Augustus, king of Poland, was found again to kindle up the general flame. The emperor of Germany, assisted by the arms of Russia, declared for the elector of Saxony, son to the deceased king. On the other hand, France declared for Stanislaus, who had been long since elected king of Poland by Charles XII, and whose daughter had been since married to the French king. Stanislaus repaired to Dantzic, in order to support his election. Ten thousand Russians appearing, the Polish nobility dispersed, and their new-elected monarch was shut up, and besieged by so small a number of forces. The city was taken, the king escaped with the utmost difficulty, and fifteen hundred Frenchmen, that were sent to his assistance, were made prisoners of war. He had now no hopes left but in the assistance of France, which accordingly resolved to give him powerful succours, by distressing the house of Austria. The views of France were seconded by Spain and Sardinia: both hoped to grow more powerful by a division of the spoils of Austria; and France had motives of alliance and revenge. A French army therefore soon overran the empire under the command of old Marshal Villars; the duke of Montemar, the Spanish general, was equally victorious in the kingdom of Naples; and the emperor, Charles VI, had the mortification of seeing himself deprived of the greatest part of Italy, for having attempted to give a king to Poland. These rapid successes of France and its allies soon compelled the emperor to demand a peace. By this treaty, Stanislaus, upon whose account the war was undertaken, was obliged to renounce all right to the throne of Poland; and France made some valuable acquets of dominion, particularly the duchy of Lorrain. In the year 1740, the death of the emperor gave the French another opportunity of exerting their ambition. Regardless of treaties, particularly the pragmatic sanction, as it was called, which settled upon the daughter of the emperor the reversion of all his dominions, they caused the elector of Bavaria to be crowned emperor. Thus the daughter of Charles VI, descended from an illustrious line of emperors, saw herself stripped of her inherit-

ance, and for a whole year without hopes of succour. She had scarce closed her father's eyes, when she lost Silesia, by an irruption of the young king of Prussia, who seized the opportunity of her defenceless state to renew his antient pretensions to that province, of which it must be owned his ancestors had been unjustly deprived. France, Saxony, and Bavaria, attacked the rest of her dominions.

In this forlorn situation she found a powerful ally in Britain; Sardinia and Holland soon after came to her assistance, and, last of all, Russia joined in her cause. It may be demanded, What part Britain had in these continental measures? The interests of Hanover: the security and aggrandizement of that electorate, depended upon the proper regulation of the empire. Lord Carteret had now taken that place in the royal confidence which had formerly been possessed by Walpole; and, by pursuing these measures, he soothed the wishes of his master, and opened a more extensive field for his own ambition. He expected honour from victories, which could produce no good, and campaigns, whether successful or not, that could only terminate in misfortune. When the parliament met, his majesty informed them of his strict adherence to his engagements, though attacked in his own dominions; and that he had augmented the British forces in the Low Countries with sixteen thousand Hanoverians. When the supplies came to be considered, by which this additional number of troops was to be paid, it raised violent debates in both houses. It was considered as hiring the troops of the electorate to fight their own cause. The ministry, however, who were formerly remarkable for declaiming against continental measures, now boldly stood up for them; and at length, by dint of number, carried their cause. The people saw, with pain, their former defenders sacrificing the blood and treasure of the nation upon destructive alliances; they knew not now on whom to rely for safety, and began to think that patriotism was but an empty name. However injurious these measures might have been to the nation, they were of infinite service to the queen of Hungary. She began, at this period, to triumph over

all her enemies. The French were driven out of Bohemia. Her general, prince Charles, at the head of a large army, invaded the dominions of Bavaria. Her rival, the nominal emperor, was obliged to fly before her: abandoned by his allies, and stripped of all his dominions, he repaired to Francfort, where he lived in indigence and obscurity. He agreed to continue neuter during the remainder of the war; while the French, who first began it as allies, supported the burden. The troops sent by England to the queen's assistance were commanded by the earl of Stair, an experienced general, who had learned the art of war under the famous prince Eugene; and the chief object he had first in his view was, to effect a junction with the army commanded by prince Charles of Lorraine. The French, in order to prevent this junction, assembled
1743. sixty thousand men upon the river Mayne, under the command of marshal Noailles, who posted his troops upon the east side of that river. The British forces, to the number of forty thousand, pushed forward on the other side, while the French, in the mean time, found means to cut off all communications by which they could be supplied with provisions. The king of England arrived at the camp while the army was in this situation; and, seeing it in danger of starving, resolved to proceed forward, to join twelve thousand Hanoverians and Hessians, who had reached Hanau. With this view he decamped; but before the army had marched three leagues, he found the enemy had inclosed him on every side, near the village called Dettingen. In this situation he must have fought at great disadvantage, if he began the attack; and, if he continued in the same situation, his army must have perished for want of subsistence. The impetuosity of the French, however, saved his army; they passed a defile which they should have guarded, and under the conduct of the duke of Grammont, their horse charged with great impetuosity. They were received by the English infantry with undaunted resolution; the French were obliged to give way, and to pass the Mayne with great precipitation, with the loss of about five thousand men. The king, who was possessed of personal cou-

rage, which seems hereditary to the family, exposed himself to a severe fire of cannon, as well as musketry; and, in the midst of the ranks, encouraged his troops by his presence and example. The whole of the battle, on either side, exhibited more courage than conduct. The English had the honour of the day; but the French soon after took possession of the field of battle, treating the wounded English that were left behind with a clemency unprecedented in ancient history, and that serves to show how superior the present times are in point of humanity to the boasted ages of antiquity. Though the English were victorious upon this occasion, yet the earl of Stair, who commanded, did not assume any honour from such a victory: he was unwilling that his reputation should suffer for measures, which he was not allowed to conduct; he therefore solicited, and obtained, leave to resign; and the British troops desisted from further operations that campaign.

Mean while the French went on with vigour on every quarter: they opposed prince Charles of Lorraine: they interrupted his progress in his attempts to pass the Rhine, and gained some successes in Italy; but their chief expectations were placed in a projected invasion of England. Cardinal Fleury was now dead, and cardinal Tencin succeeded in his place: this was a person of a very different character from his predecessor, being proud, turbulent, and enterprising. France, from the violence of parliamentary disputes in England, had been long persuaded that the country was ripe for a revolution, and only wanted the presence of the pretender to induce the majority to declare against the reigning family. Several needy adventurers who wished for a change, some men of broken fortunes, and almost all the Roman catholics of the kingdom, endeavoured to confirm the court of France in these sentiments. An invasion therefore was actually projected. Charles, son of the old chevalier St. George, departed from Rome in the disguise of a Spanish courier, and, prosecuting his journey to Paris, had an audience of the French king. The troops designed for this expedition amounted to fifteen thousand; preparations were made for em-

barking them at Dunkirk, and some other of the nearest ports to England, under the eye of the young pretender; and seven thousand of the number actually went on board. The duke de Rouqueseuille, with twenty ships of the line, was to see them landed safely in England; and count Saxe was to command them, when put ashore. The whole project, however, was concerted by the appearance of sir John Norris, with a superior fleet, making up against them: the French fleet was obliged to put back; a very hard gale of wind damaged their transports beyond redress. All hopes of invasion were now frustrated; and, at length, the French thought fit openly to declare war.

But, though fortune seemed to favour England on this occasion, yet, on others, she was not equally propitious. The combined fleets of France and Spain, for some time, fought the British armament under admiral Matthews and Lestock, though with inferior forces, and came off upon nearly equal terms. Such a parity of success in England was regarded as a 1744. defeat. Both the English admirals were tried by a court-martial: Matthews, who had fought the enemy with intrepidity, was declared incapable of serving for the future in his majesty's navy; Lestock, who had kept aloof, was acquitted with honour, for he had intrenched himself within the punctilios of discipline: he barely did his duty: a man of honour, when his country is at stake, should do more.

The proceedings in the Netherlands were still more unfavourable. The French had assembled a formidable army of one hundred and twenty thousand men; the chief command of which was given to count Saxe. This general was originally a soldier of fortune, and natural son to Augustus king of Poland, by the famous countess of Köningsmark. He had been bred from his youth in camps, and had shown the most early instances of cool intrepidity. He, in the beginning of the war, had offered his service to several crowns, and among the rest, it is said, to that of England; but his offers were rejected. He was possessed of great military talents; and, by long habit, preserved an equal compo-

sure in the midst of battle as in a drawing-room at court. On the other side, the allied forces, consisting of English, Hanoverians, Dutch, and Austrians, did not amount to above seventy thousand. These were incapable of withstanding such a superior force, and commanded by such a general. The French besieged and took Friburg before they went into winter-quarters, and early the next campaign invested the city of Tournay. The allies were resolved to prevent the loss of this city by a battle. Their army was inferior, and they were commanded by the duke of Cumberland. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, they marched toward the enemy, and took post in sight of the French, who were encamped on an eminence; 1745. the village of Antoine on the right, a wood on their left, and the town of Fontenoy before them. This advantageous situation did not repress the ardour of the English: on the thirtieth day of April, the duke of Cumberland marched to the attack at two in the morning. The British infantry pressed forward, bore down all opposition, and, for near an hour, were victorious. Marshal Saxe was at that time sick of the same disorder of which he afterward died. He visited all the posts in a litter, and saw, notwithstanding all appearances, that the day was his own. The English column, without command, by a mere mechanical courage, had advanced upon the enemy's line, which formed an avenue on each side to receive them. The French artillery began to play upon this forlorn body; and, though they continued for a long time unshaken, they were obliged to retreat about three in the afternoon. This was one of the most bloody battles that had been fought this age: the allies left upon the field near twelve thousand slain, and the French bought their victory with nearly an equal number.

This blow, by which Tournay was taken, gave the French a manifest superiority all the rest of the campaign, which they did not forego during the continuance of the war. Emperor Charles VII, who had been raised to the throne from the dukedom of Bavaria, and for whom the war first began, was now dead; yet this

did not in the least restore tranquillity to Europe. The grand duke of Tuscany, husband to the queen of Hungary, was declared emperor upon his decease: but the war between France and the allies still continued, and the original views and interests seemed now quite forgotten, that had at first inspired the contention.

LETTER LX.

THE intended French invasion had roused all the attention of the English ministry; and nothing but loyalty breathed throughout the whole kingdom. The administration of affairs being committed to the earl of Harrington, the earl of Chesterfield, and others, who enjoyed a great share of popularity, the views of the crown were no longer thwarted by an opposition in parliament. The admirals Rowley and Warren had retrieved the honour of the British flag, and made several rich captures. Louisburg, in the island of Cape Breton, in North-America, a place of great consequence to the British commerce, surrendered to general Pepperel; while, a short time after, two French East-India ships, and another from Peru, laden with treasure, supposing the place still in the possession of the French, sailed into the harbour, and their capture added to the English success. It was in this period of universal satisfaction, that the son of the old pretender resolved to make an effort at gaining the British crown. Young Charles Edward, the adventurer in question, had been bred in a luxurious court without sharing its effeminacy: he was enterprising and ambitious; but, either from inexperience, or natural inability, utterly unequal to the undertaking. He was flattered by the rash, the superstitious, and the needy, that the kingdom was ripe for a revolt; that the people could no longer bear the immense load of taxes, which was daily increasing; and that the most considerable persons of the kingdom would gladly seize the opportunity of crowding to his standard. Being furnished with some money, and still

larger promises from France, who fanned this ambition in him, from which they hoped to gain some advantages, he embarked for Scotland on board a small frigate, accompanied by marquis Tullibardine, sir Thomas Sheridan, and a few other desperate adventurers. For the conquest of the whole British empire, he brought with him seven officers, and arms for two thousand men. Fortune, which ever persecuted his family, seemed no way more favourable to him: his convoy, a ship of sixty guns, was so disabled in an engagement with an English man of war, called the *Lion*, that it returned to Brest, while he was obliged to continue his course to the western parts of Scotland; and, landing on the coast of Lochabar, July 27, was, in a little time, joined by some chiefs of the Highland clans, and their vassals. These chiefs had ever continued to exercise an hereditary jurisdiction over all their tenants. This power of life and death, vested in the lords of the manor, was a privilege of the old feudal law, long abolished in England, but which had been confirmed to the Scotch lairds at the time of the union. Hence we see, that a chief had the power of commanding all his vassals, and that immediate death was the consequence of their disobedience.

By means of these chiefs, therefore, he soon saw himself at the head of fifteen hundred men; and invited others to join him by his manifestos, which were dispersed throughout all the Highlands.

The boldness of this enterprise astonished all Europe: it awakened the fears of the pusillanimous, the pity of the wise, and the loyalty of all. The whole kingdom seemed unanimously bent upon opposing the enterprise, which they were sensible, as being supported only by papists, would be instrumental in restoring popery. The ministry was no sooner confirmed of the truth of his arrival, which, at first, they could scarcely be induced to believe, than sir John Cope was ordered to oppose his progress. In the mean time, the young adventurer marched to Perth, where the unnecessary ceremony was performed of proclaiming the chevalier de St. George, his father, king of Great Bri-

tain. The rebel army descending from the mountains, seemed rather to gather as it went. They advanced toward Edinburgh, which they entered without opposition. Here too the pageantry of proclamation was performed, August 17, in which he promised to dissolve the union, and redress the grievances of the country. But, though he was master of the capital, yet the citadel, which goes by the name of the *Castle*, a strong fortress built upon a rock, and commanded by general Guest, braved all his attempts. In the mean time, sir John Cope, who had pursued them to the Highlands, but declined meeting them in their descent, now reinforced by two regiments of dragoons, resolved to march toward Edinburgh, and give them battle. The young adventurer, unwilling to give him time to retreat, attacked him near Preston-pans, about twelve miles from the capital, and, in a few minutes, put him and his troops totally to the rout. This victory, in which the king lost about five hundred men, gave the rebels great influence; and, had the pretender taken advantage of the general consternation, and marched toward England, the consequence might have been dangerous to the safety of the state: but he spent the time at Edinburgh, seeming to enjoy the useless parade of royalty, pleased at being addressed and treated as a king. By this time, he was joined by the earl of Kilmarnock, the lords Elcho, Balmerino, Ogilvy, Pitsligo, and the eldest son of lord Lovat. This lord Lovat was the same whom we have seen upon a former occasion trusted by the old pretender, and betraying him by taking possession of the castle of Stirling for king George. This nobleman, true to neither party, had again altered from his attachment to the house of Hanover, and, in secret, aided the young chevalier: studious only for his own interest, he exerted all the arts of low cunning, to appear an open enemy to the rebellion, yet to give it secret assistance.

While the young pretender thus trifled away the time at Edinburgh, (for all delays in dangerous enterprises are even worse than defeats,) the ministry of Great Britain took every possible measure to defeat his

intentions. Six thousand Dutch troops, that had come over to the assistance of the crown, were sent northward, under the command of general Wade; but, as it was then said, these could lend no assistance, as they were, properly speaking, prisoners of France, and upon their parole not to oppose that power for the space of one year. However this be, the duke of Cumberland soon after arrived from Flanders, and was followed by another detachment of dragoons and infantry. Volunteers in different parts of the kingdom employed themselves in the exercise of arms; and every county exerted a generous spirit of indignation, both against the ambition, the religion, and the allies of the young adventurer.

It would be illiberal and base to deny this enterprising youth that praise which his merit may deserve. Though he might have brought civil war, and all the calamities attending it, with him into the kingdom; yet we must consider, that he had ever been taught, that bathing his country in blood was but a just assertion of his right; that altering the constitution, and perhaps the religion, of his supposed dominions, was a laudable object of ambition. Thus inspired, he went forward with vigour; and resolving to make an irruption into England, he entered it by the western border. On the sixth day of November, Carlisle was invested, and in less than three days it surrendered. Here he found a considerable quantity of arms, and was declared king of Great Britain. General Wade, being apprised of his progress, advanced across the country from the opposite shore; but, receiving intelligence that the enemy were two days' march before him, he retreated to his former station. The young pretender now resolved to proceed, having received assurances from France, that a considerable body of troops would be landed on the southern coast of Britain, to make a diversion in his favour, and flattered with the hopes of being joined by a large body of English malecontents, as soon as he should make his appearance among them. Leaving therefore a small garrison at Carlisle, which he should rather have left defenceless, he advanced to Pen-

rith, marching on foot in a Highland garb, and continued his irruption till he came to Manchester, where he established his head-quarters. He was here joined by about two hundred Englishmen, who were formed into a regiment, under the command of colonel Townley. Hence he prosecuted his route to Derby, intending to go by the way of Chester into Wales, where he hoped for a great number of adherents. He was, by this time, advanced within a hundred miles of the capital, which was filled with terror and confusion. The king resolved to take the field in person. The volunteers of the City were incorporated into a regiment. The practitioners of the law agreed to take the field with the judges at their head. Even the managers of the theatres offered to raise a body of their dependents for the service of their country. Yet these combinations only served as instances of the national terror; for the trading part of the city, and those concerned in the money corporations, were overwhelmed with dejection. They could hope for little safety in the courage or discipline of a militia, especially as they every hour dreaded an invasion from France, and an insurrection of the Roman catholics, and other friends to the expelled family. This therefore was the moment for the advancement of the adventurer's enterprise. Had he marched up to the capital, he would undoubtedly have been joined by several secretly attached to his cause; but he determined to retreat once more to Scotland, and thus his scheme was defeated. In fact, he was but nominally the leader of his forces. His generals, the chiefs of Highland clans, were, from their education, ignorant; and, from their independency, obstinate. They each embraced peculiar systems, and began to contend with each other for the preeminence; so that, after violent disputes, they resolved to march back. They effected their retreat to Carlisle without any loss; and thence crossed the rivers Eden and Solway, into Scotland. In this irruption, however, they preserved all the rules of war; they desisted, in a great measure, from rapine; levied contributions; and, in the usual form, left a garrison in Carlisle in their retreat; which, a short time after, to

the number of four hundred, surrendered to the duke of Cumberland prisoners at discretion. The pretender, being returned to Scotland, proceeded to Glasgow; from which city he exacted severe contributions. Advancing to Stirling, he was joined by lord Lewis Gordon, at the head of some forces which had been assembled in his absence: other clans, to the number of two thousand, came in likewise; Spain sent him some supplies of money; and, in one or two skirmishes with the royalists, his generals came off with victory; so that his affairs once more seemed to wear an aspect of success. Being joined by John lord Drummond, he invested the castle of Stirling, commanded by general Blakeney; but his forces, being unused to sieges, consumed much time to no purpose. General Hawley, who commanded a considerable body of forces near Edinburgh, undertook to raise the siege. He advanced toward the rebel army, and rendezvoused his whole force at Falkirk, while the rebels lay encamped at no great distance. After two days, mutually examining each other's strength, the rebels, on the seventeenth day of January, came on in full spirits to attack the king's army. The pretender, who stood in the front line, gave the signal to fire; and the first volley served to put Hawley's forces into confusion. The horse retreated with precipitation, and fell in upon their own infantry; the rebels followed their blow; and the greatest part of the royal army fled with the utmost precipitation. They retired in confusion to Edinburgh, leaving the field of battle, with part of their tents and artillery, to the rebels.

This was the end of all their triumphs; a new scene of conduct was now going to open; for the duke of Cumberland, at that time the favourite of the English army, had put himself at the head of the troops at Edinburgh, which consisted of about fourteen thousand men. He resolved therefore to come to a battle as soon as possible; and marched forward, while the young adventurer retired at his approach. The duke advanced to Aberdeen, where he was joined by the duke of Gordon, and some other lords attached to his

family and cause. After having refreshed his troops there for some time, he renewed his march; and, in twelve days, came upon the banks of the deep and rapid river Spey. This was a place where the rebels might have disputed his passage; but they seemed now totally void of all council and subordination, without conduct, and without expectation. The duke still proceeded in his pursuit; and, at length, had advice that the enemy had advanced from Inverness to the plain of Culloden, which was about nine miles distant, and there intended to give him battle. On *April 15.* this plain the Highlanders were drawn up in order of battle, to the number of eight thousand men, in thirteen divisions, supplied with some pieces of artillery. The battle began about one in the afternoon: the cannon of the king's army did dreadful execution among the enemy, while theirs, being but ill served, was ineffectual. One of the great errors in all the pretender's warlike measures, was his subjecting undisciplined troops to the forms of artful war, and thus repressing their native ferocity, from which alone he could hope for success. After they had stood the English fire for some time, they, at length, became impatient for close engagement; and about five hundred of them attacked the English left wing with their accustomed fierceness. The first line being disordered by this onset, two battalions advanced to support it, and galled the enemy by a terrible and close discharge. At the same time the dragoons under Hawley, and the Argyllshire militia, pulling down a park-wall that guarded the enemy's flank, and which the rebels had left but feebly defended, fell in among them, sword in hand, with great slaughter. In less than thirty minutes they were totally routed, and the field covered with their wounded and slain, to the number of above three thousand men. Civil war is in itself terrible, but still more so when heightened by cruelty. How guilty soever men may be, it is ever the business of a soldier to remember, that he is only to fight an enemy that opposes him, and to spare the suppliant. This victory was in every respect complete; and humanity to the

conquered would even have made it glorious. The conquerors often refused mercy to wretches who were defenceless or wounded; and soldiers were seen to anticipate the base employment of the executioner.

Thus sunk all the hopes and ambition of the young adventurer: one short hour deprived him of imaginary thrones and sceptres, and reduced him from a nominal king to a distressed forlorn outcast, shunned by all mankind, except such as sought to take his life. To the goodnatured, subsequent distress often atones for former guilt; and while reason would repress humanity, yet our hearts plead in favour of the wretched. The duke, immediately after the decisive action at Culloden, ordered six and thirty deserters to be executed; the conquerors spread terror wherever they came; and, after a short time, the whole country round was one scene of slaughter, desolation, and plunder: justice seemed forgotten, and vengeance assumed the name.

In the mean time, the unhappy fugitive adventurer wandered from mountain to mountain, a wretched spectator of all these horrors, the result of his ill-guided ambition. He now underwent a similarity of adventures with Charles II, after the defeat at Worcester. He sometimes found refuge in caves and cottages without attendants, and exposed to the mercy of peasants, who could pity but not support him. Sometimes he lay in forests, with one or two companions of his distress, continually pursued by the troops of the conqueror, as there was thirty thousand pounds bid for his head. Sheridan, an Irish adventurer, was he who kept most by him, and inspired him with courage to support such incredible hardships. He was obliged to trust his life to the fidelity of above fifty individuals. One day, having walked from morning till night, pressed by hunger, and worn by fatigue, he ventured to enter a house, the owner of which he well knew was attached to the opposite party: *The son of your king, said he, entering, comes to beg a bit of bread and clothes. I know your present attachment to my adversaries; but I believe you have sufficient honour not to abuse my confidence, or to take the advantage of my misfortunes. Take these rags that have for some time been my only*

covering, and keep them. You may, probably, restore them to me one day when seated on the throne of the kings of Great Britain. His host was touched with his distress, assisted him as far as he was able, and never divulged his secret. In this manner he wandered among the frightful wilds of Glengary, for nearly six months, often hemmed round by his pursuers, but still finding some expedient to save him from captivity and death. At length a privateer of St. Malo, hired by his adherents, arrived at Lochnanach, on which he embarked, and arrived at France in safety.

While the prince thus led a wandering and solitary life, the scaffolds and the gibbets were bathed with the blood of his adherents. Seventeen officers of the rebel army were executed at Kennington-common, in the neighbourhood of London, whose constancy in death gained more proselytes to their cause than perhaps their victories could have done. Nine were executed in the same manner at Carlisle; six at Brumpton; seven at Penrith; and eleven at York. A few obtained pardons; and a considerable number were transported to the plantations. The earls of Kilmarnock and Cromartie, with the lord Balmerino, were tried by their peers, and found guilty. Cromartie was pardoned; the other two were beheaded on Tower-hill. Kilmarnock, either from conviction, or from the hope of pardon, owned his crime, and declared his repentance of it. On the other hand, Balmerino, who had from his youth up been bred to arms, died in a more daring manner. When his fellow-sufferer, as commanded, bid God bless king George, Balmerino still held fast to his principles, and cried out, God bless king James, and suffered with the utmost intrepidity. Lord Lovat, and Mr. Radcliff, the titular earl of Derwentwater, suffered the same fate with equal resolution. Thus ended a rebellion, dictated by youth and presumption, and conducted without art or resolution. The family of Stuart found fortune become more averse at every new solicitation of her favours. Let private men, who complain of the miseries of this life, only turn to the vicissitudes in that family, and learn to bless God, and be happy.

LETTER LXI.

A REBELLION quelled, and mercy shown to the delinquents, ever strengthens the reigning cause. How it might have been in the present instance, I will not pretend to determine: whether too much rigour might have been exerted upon the conquered, posterity must determine: actions of this kind are too near our own times to be either judged of or talked of with freedom. Immediately after the rebellion was suppressed, the legislature undertook to establish several regulations in Scotland, which were equally conducive to the happiness of the people there, and the tranquillity of the united kingdom. The Highlanders, who had, till this time, continued to wear the old military dress of the Romans, and who always went armed, were now reformed. Their habits were, by act of parliament, reduced to the modern modes; the obedience they were under to their chiefs was abolished; and the lowest subject of that part of the kingdom was granted a participation of British freedom.

But, whatever tranquillity might have been restored by these means at home, the flames of war still continued to rage upon the continent with their accustomed violence. The French went forward with rapid success, having reduced almost the whole Netherlands to their obedience. In vain the Dutch negotiated, supplicated, and evaded war; they saw themselves stripped of all those strong towns which defended their dominions from invasion; and they now lay, almost defenceless, ready to receive terms from their conquerors. The Dutch at this time were very different from their forefathers, the brave assertors of liberty, in the beginning of the republic; the individuals of the state were now rich, while their government was poor; they had lost, in a spirit of traffic and luxury, all their generosity of sentiment, and desire of independence; they only

sought riches, regardless of public virtue. They were divided in their councils between two factions, which now subsisted, namely, that which declared for a stadtholder, and that which, with attachments to France, opposed his election. The prevalence of either side was almost equally fatal to liberty: if a stadtholder were elected, they then saw their constitution altered from a republic to a kind of limited monarchy; if the opposite party prevailed, they were to feel the weight of a confirmed aristocracy, confirmed by French power, and crouching under its authority. Of the two evils they chose the former; the people, in several towns, inflamed almost to tumult and sedition, compelled their magistrates to declare for the prince of Orange as stadtholder, captain-general, and admiral of the United Provinces. The vigorous consequences of this resolution immediately appeared: all commerce with the French was prohibited; the Dutch army was augmented; and orders were issued to commence hostilities against the French by sea and land.

Thus we see this war diffused throughout the whole system of Europe; in some measure resembling a disorder, the symptoms of which, at different times, appear in different parts of the body, remitting and raging by turns. At the commencement of the war, we have seen the queen of Hungary upon the point of losing all her possessions. Soon after we saw the unfortunate duke of Bavaria, who had been chosen emperor by the name of Charles VII, banished from his throne, stripped of his hereditary dukedom, and shrinking from surrounding dangers. We have seen the duke of Savoy, now king of Sardinia, changing that side which some years before he had espoused, and joining with Austria and England against the ambitious designs of France: while Italy still felt all the terrors of war, or rather saw foreigners contending with each other for her dominions; the French and Spaniards on one side, the Imperialists and the king of Sardinia on the other. Thus, Italy, that once gave laws to the world, now saw the troops of Germany and Spain, by turns, enter into her territories; and, after various combats, she, at last, saw

the Imperialists become masters. The Spaniards and French lost the most flourishing armies, notwithstanding the excellent conduct of the prince of Conti their general; and, at last, after a bloody victory obtained over the Spaniards at St. Lazaro, the beautiful city of Genoa, which had sided with Spain, was obliged to submit to the conquerors, to suffer some indignities imposed upon them, and to pay a most severe contribution.

The city of Genoa had for ages before maintained its own laws, and boasted of liberty. Besides its inner wall, it had another formed by a chain of rocks of more than two leagues extent; but both being built in those times when modern fortification was yet unknown, it was not thought, by its senate, capable of making a proper resistance. Upon submitting, the unhappy Italians too soon found that no mercy was to be expected from the court of Vienna, who had ever patronised oppression. More than a million sterling was demanded for a contribution; a tax, the payment of which must have utterly ruined the city. The magistrates did all in their power to pay the exorbitant sum demanded; and the German troops exercised every inhumanity in exacting it. The conquerors lived upon the people, and treated them with an insolence which was natural to them as conquerors, and as Germans. The Genoese were, at length, reduced to despair, and were resolved to make a last effort for the recovery of their liberty and independence. The Austrians took the cannon of the city, in order to transport them to Provence, where their arms had already penetrated. The Genoese themselves were obliged to draw those cannons, which they had once considered as the defence and ornament of their citadel. It was on this occasion that an Austrian officer struck one of the citizens, who had been employed in this laborious task. This blow served to animate the people with their former spirit of freedom. They took up arms in every quarter of the town, and surprised some battalions of the Austrians, surrounded others, and cut them in pieces. The senate, uncertain how to proceed, neither encouraged nor stopped the citizens, who drove the Austrians en-

tirely out, and then appointed commanders, and guarded the walls with the utmost regularity.

This revolution in a little city, the transactions of which has filled whole folios of history, should not be passed over without remark : though no longer capable of maintaining its liberties amid the shock of the enormous powers of Europe, yet still we find it possessed of its ancient spirit ; only to lose it, however, by the prevailing power of the senate, which established their aristocracy on the necks of the citizens, as before.

In this manner we see victory and miscarriage mutually declaring for either ; all sides growing more feeble, and none acquiring any real recompense for the losses sustained. Thus, about this time, the
1746. English made an unsuccessful expedition into France, in order to attack Port l'Orient, in which they came off without any honour. The French gained a considerable victory at Roucroux, in Flanders, over the allies, although it procured them no real advantage ; and it cost them a greater number of lives than those whom they obliged to retire. The Dutch, in this general conflict, seemed the greatest losers. A victory gained over the allies at La Feldt served to reduce them to a still greater degree of distrust in their generals than they had hitherto shown : but the taking of Bergen-op-Zoom, the strongest fortification of Dutch Brabant, and which put the French in possession of the whole navigation of the Scheldt, threw them almost into despair. But these victories in favour of France were counterbalanced with almost equal disappointments. In Italy, the French general, marshal Belleisle's brother, at the head of thirty-four thousand men, attempted to penetrate into Piedmont ; but his troops were put to the rout, and he himself slain. The French king equipped an unsuccessful armament for the recovery of Cape Breton ; and, not discouraged by this failure, fitted out two squadrons, one to make a descent upon the British colonies in America, and the other to assist the operations in the East-Indies. These, however,
1747. were attacked by Anson and Warren, and nine of their ships were taken. Soon after this, commodore Fox, with six ships of war, took about forty

French ships laden from St. Domingo; and this loss was soon after followed by another defeat, which the French fleet sustained from Admiral Hawke, in which seven ships of the line and several frigates were taken.

This variety of success served to make all the powers at war heartily desirous of peace. The states-general had, for some years, endeavoured to stop the progress of a war, in which they could gain no advantages, and had all to lose. The king of France was sensible, that, after conquest, was the most advantageous opportunity of proposing terms of peace; and even expressed his desire of general tranquillity, in a personal conversation with sir John Ligonier, who had been made prisoner in the last victory obtained by the French at La Feldt. The bad success of his admirals at sea, his generals' misfortunes in Italy, the frequent bankruptcies of his subjects, the election of a stadtholder in Holland, who opposed his interests, his views in Germany entirely frustrated by the elevation of the duke of Tuscany to rule the empire; all these contributed to make him weary of the war. An accommodation was therefore resolved upon; and the contending powers agreed to come to a congress at Aix la Chapelle, where the earl of Sandwich and sir Thomas Robinson assisted as plenipotentiaries from the king of Great Britain. This treaty, which takes its name from that city, was concluded on the seventh day of October; a lasting instance of precipitate councils and English humility. By this it was agreed, that all prisoners, on each side, should be mutually restored, and all conquests given up: that the duchies of Parma, Placentia, Guastalla, should be ceded to Don Philip, heir-apparent to the Spanish throne, and his heirs; but in case of his succeeding to the crown of Spain, that then these dominions should revert to the house of Austria: that the fortifications of Dunkirk to the sea should be demolished: that the ship annually sent with slaves to the coast of Spain, should have this privilege continued for four years: that the king of Prussia should be secure in the possession of Silesia, which he had conquered; and that the queen of Hungary should be secured in her

patrimonial dominions. But one article of the peace was more displeasing and afflictive to the English than all the rest: for it was agreed, that she should give two persons of rank and distinction to France as hostages, until restitution should be made of all the conquests which England possessed of the enemy, either in the East or West Indies. This was a mortifying stipulation: but there was no mention made of the searching the English ships in the American seas, upon which the war originally began. The treaty of Utrecht had long been a subject of reproach to those by whom it was negotiated; but, with all its faults, the treaty that was just concluded was far more despicable and erroneous. The honour of the nation was forgotten; its interests left undetermined. Yet such was the strange infatuation of the multitude, that the treaty of Utrecht was held in universal contempt, and this was extolled with the highest strain of panegyric. The truth is, the people were wearied with repeated disgrace, and only expected an accumulation of misfortunes by continuing the war. The ministers and their emissaries, about this period, had the art of persuading men to what they thought proper, and represented the circumstances of the nation as flourishing, though the public was groaning beneath an immense load of debt, and though all measures were guided by an ignorant and unconstitutional faction.

LETTER LXII.

THIS peace might, in every respect, be termed only a temporary cessation from general hostilities: though the war between England and France had actually subsided in Europe, yet in the East and West Indies they still carried on hostile operations, both sides equally culpable, yet each complaining of the infraction.

In the mean time, as Europe enjoyed a temporary tranquillity, the people of England expected, and the

government promised them, a restitution of those blessings which had been taken from them by a long and obstinate war. A magnificent firework was played off upon this occasion; which, though a useless and vain expense, served, to amuse the populace, and render them more contented with the late precarious treaty.

The ministry also showed some desire to promote the commerce of the kingdom; and, for this purpose, a bill was passed for encouraging a British herring-fishery, under proper regulations. From such a scheme carried into execution, great advantages were expected to accrue: the Dutch, who had long enjoyed the sole profits arising from it, considered the sea as a mine of inexhaustible wealth. However, experience has shown, that the English were either incapable of turning this fishery to the same advantage, or that their company was not established with the most strict economy. Private persons have often been found to make fortunes by this fishery; but the company have found themselves considerable losers.

A scheme, which by many was thought still more advantageous to the nation, was, the encouraging of those who had been discharged the army 1749. or navy to become members of a new colony in North-America, called Nova Scotia. To this retreat, it was thought, the waste of an exuberant nation might well be drained off: and here those free spirits might be kept employed, who, if suffered to remain at home, would only prey upon the community. This was a cold climate, and a barren soil, where the English kept a fort, and a small garrison, rather to intimidate the neighbouring French, and repress their encroachments, than to derive any advantages from the improvements of trade, or the cultivation of the country. It was here that a scheme was laid for the foundation of a new colony, which might improve the fishery upon that coast, and become a new source of wealth to the mother-country. Thus did the nation exchange her hardy and veteran troops for the expectation of precarious wealth.

It was advertised by authority, that all proper encouragement would be given to such officers and pri-

vate men, who, being discharged from the service of the government, should be willing to settle in Nova Scotia. Fifty acres of land were granted to every private soldier or seaman, free from taxes for ten years, and then to pay only one shilling a year. Beside this fifty, ten acres more were to be granted to every individual of which each family should consist. Every officer, under the rank of ensign, was to have four-score acres; ensigns were to have two hundred, lieutenants three, captains four, and those above that rank six. Such offers failed not to induce numbers to try their fortunes on that desolate coast: and in a little time about four thousand adventurers, with their families, were carried thither; a town named Halifax was built; and the colonists left to glean a scanty subsistence from an ungrateful soil. For a long time, notwithstanding all the encouragement this colony received from the government, the inhabitants cleared but a very small part of the woods with which the face of the country is covered. Agriculture was quite forgotten; and the settlement chiefly subsisted by the sums expended by the army and navy stationed in that part of the western world.

Here, however, those voluntary outcasts of their country expected to live, though hardly, yet at least securely: but in this they found themselves disappointed. The Indians, a savage and fierce people, from the first looked upon these settlements of the English as an encroachment upon their own liberties; and the French, who were equally jealous, fomented these suspicions. Commissaries were therefore appointed to meet at Paris, and compromise these disputes: but these conferences were rendered abortive by mutual cavillings, and all the arts of evasion.

In the mean time, Mr. Pelham, who chiefly conducted the business of the state, and was esteemed a man of candour and capacity, laid a scheme for lightening the immense load of debt that was laid upon the nation. His plan was to lessen the national incumbrance, by lowering the interest which had been promised upon the first raising the supply, or obliging the

lenders to receive the sums originally granted. Those who were proprietors of stocks, and received for the use of their money, four *per cent.*, were, by royal authority, ordered to subscribe their names, signifying their consent to accept of three pounds ten shillings *per cent.* a year after, and three *per cent.* only about six years after their thus subscribing; and, in case of a refusal, that the government would pay off the principal.

This scheme was attended with the desired effect: though it, in some measure, was a force upon the lender, who had originally granted his money upon different terms, yet it was salutary to the nation; and, as Machiavel has it, political injustice is sometimes allowable, in order to secure national benefits. Besides this salutary measure, others were pursued by the minister at the helm with equal success. The importation of iron from America was allowed, and the trade to Africa laid open to the whole nation, but, at the same time, to be superintended by the board of trade and plantation.

Another measure was soon after taken, which, in reality, made distinctions among the people, and laid an unpassable line between the rich and poor. This was an act for the better preventing clandestine marriages, and for the more public solemnization of that ceremony. The grievance complained of, and which this law was to redress, was, that the sons and daughters of opulent families were often seduced into marriage, before they had acquired sufficient experience in life to be sensible of the disparity of fortune in the match. This statute therefore enacted, that the banns of marriage should be regularly published three successive Sundays, in the church of the parish where both parties had resided for one month at least before the ceremony: that a marriage which was solemnized without this previous publication, or a licence obtained from the bishop's court, should be void, and the person who solemnized it should be transported for seven years.

This session of parliament was also distinguished by another act more unpopular, and, perhaps, more in-

jurious to the religion of the community. This was a law for naturalizing the Jews. The ministers boldly affirmed, that such a law would greatly contribute to the advantage of the nation; that it would increase the credit and commerce of the kingdom, and set a laudable example of political toleration. Many others, however, were of very different sentiments: they saw that greater favour was shown by this bill to Jews, than to some other sects professing the Christian religion; that an introduction of this people into the kingdom would disgrace the character of the nation, and cool the zeal of the natives, already too lukewarm. However, notwithstanding all opposition, this bill was passed into a law; nor was it till the ensuing session of parliament, that it was thought necessary to be repealed.

END OF VOLUME I.

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