

stacles in the way of the pacification, for the purpose of bringing on a general war, which was the great object of his wishes. The Emperor behaved peevishly to England, and presumptuously to the States, who were dissatisfied with him, and suspicious that England was acting in concert with him to their prejudice.

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The situation of affairs in Holland inspired cardinal Fleury with sufficient resolution to urge, in a private letter to Horace Walpole, a heavy accusation against him and the Pensionary, for having divulged the secret correspondence, and to justify himself in his refusal to comply with the conditions of the plan; and he added, that the publication of the plan had raised such indignation in the whole council, that he could not venture to avow or espouse it. The main view of this letter was to close the secret correspondence with Horace Walpole; to serve as a preliminary to the answer of the allies, who rejected the terms of pacification proposed by the maritime powers, and to justify another campaign, which was opened with redoubled exertion.

Hostilities renewed.

April 30.

Thus ended this important negotiation, in which cardinal Fleury, or rather Chauvelin, who governed the cardinal, deceived the British cabinet, lured the Dutch with the hopes of a pacification, and prevented them both from taking such vigorous measures as would have stopped the allies in the career of conquest.

Yet cardinal Fleury does not seem to deserve the reproaches for duplicity which were now lavished upon him. We are too apt to estimate the conduct of other nations, from what passes in our own, without duly considering the peculiar situation and circumstances of those with whom we are negotiating, and without knowing the real state of the public opinion, which every minister, even in the most despotic countries, is in some measure obliged to consult. The real truth seems to be, that the English cabinet expected terms from France which could not be complied with; that cardinal Fleury was probably sincere in his first overtures for peace, but was persuaded by the representations of Horace Walpole, who had gained great ascendancy over him during his embassy at Paris, to accede to conditions, which he could not afterwards venture to propose to the king and council of France. That on sober reflection, he conceived it highly dishonourable in Louis the Fifteenth to desert Stanislaus, in support of whom the war had been undertaken, merely to obtain the transfer of some dominions in Italy to Don Carlos and the king of Sardinia, without either effecting this object, taking vengeance on those who prevented it, or obtaining some acquisition which might serve as

Motives of
Fleury's conduct.

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Objects of
the allies.

Fluctuating
state of the
English ca-
binet.

Displeasure
of the king.

an indemnity for the expences of the war, and justify to the people in France, the dereliction of the cause for which hostilities had been undertaken.

The object of Spain was to drive the Emperor from Italy; the king of Sardinia expected the whole Milanese; while France, under the mask of moderation and professions of disinterestedness, aimed at the acquisition of Lorraine.

To reconcile such jarring interests, and to effect a general pacification, was not in the power of a divided cabinet, whose measures fluctuated with continued versatility. Orders were occasionally given by lord Harrington, in conformity to the sentiments of the king, and contrary to those of the first minister. These orders were sometimes opposed, or at least secretly counteracted by Walpole; either by himself, in his personal conferences with the king and queen, or by means of the suggestions made by Horace Walpole, in his private correspondence with the queen, or by the agency of the duke of Newcastle, who at this period was devoted to him. Various instructions were conveyed to the foreign ministers, each contrary to the other, as the inclinations of the king and lord Harrington in favour of war, or the pacific sentiments of the first minister, gained the ascendancy.

The king was so highly displeased with the refusal of the minister to enter into the war, and gave such unequivocal signs of his displeasure, that queen Caroline could not venture to attempt openly to promote or justify his measures, but with a view to exculpate his conduct, artfully threw the blame on Horace Walpole, whom she often rallied in the king's presence as the principal cause of the inactivity of England, and hinted that his brother had been directed by his advice, influence, and known interference in foreign affairs.

• Horace Walpole's Apology. Walpole Papers.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIFTH;

1735—1736.

Event of the general Elections.—Meeting of the new Parliament.—Proceedings.—Prorogation.—Difference between Spain and Portugal—adjusted by the armed Mediation of England.—Progress of Hostilities between the Allies and the Emperor.—Detail of the various Negotiations which led to the Conclusion of the Preliminaries.—King's Speech.—Unanimity of Parliament, in regard to Foreign Affairs.

THE minister and his friends laboured under great disadvantages, and had many difficulties to encounter in the management of the general elections. The inactivity and neutrality of England, became a matter of popular infamy; and even men of professed impartiality, severely censured the minister, by whose influence the inclinations of the king and the cabinet to assist the house of Austria were restrained. The common topics of want of spirit, and the dereliction of national honour, had great effect in exciting discontents, while the advantages derived from the continuance of peace to trade, manufactures, and agriculture, being tacitly progressive, did not immediately attract public attention, or procure their deserved applause. The rapid success of the French and Spanish arms, and the humiliation of the house of Austria, increased the national dissatisfaction. But above all, the excise scheme had excited ill humour and violent clamours, and it seems to have been ill judged in the minister to introduce it so short a time before the dissolution of parliament. It was more particularly offensive in Scotland, where the frauds in the customs were more extensive than in England. The greater part of the Whigs in Scotland were irritated against the court, and a large number manifested their dissatisfaction, in the manner of their opposition on the election of the sixteen peers. Several of the Presbyterians were averse to the minister for the continuance of the test act, the repeal of which, notwithstanding repeated declarations of his private good wishes, he had never promoted.

Walpole embarked in support of his friends in many expensive contests,
and

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and expended a large sum out of his own private fortune *. The expences of the contested election for the county of Norfolk amounted to £.10,000, and yet he failed of success. The two candidates, Morden and Coke, who stood for the Whig interest, and whom he supported, were supplanted by Bacon and Woodhouse, who were favoured by the Tories. In consequence of these difficulties and defeats in his own county, the return of members who supported his administration was inferior in number to those who sat in the last parliament.

The new parliament assembled on the 14th of January. The speech from the throne alluded to a plan, formed in concert with Holland, to be offered as a basis for a general negotiation, mentioned the treaty with Denmark, and concluded by observing, that while war was raging in Europe, it would be proper for Great Britain to maintain herself in a posture of defence.

The opposition to the address, proposed by the ministerial party in both houses, was vehement and formidable. The amendments proposed by opposition, were supported with great ability, and the divisions of the anti-ministerial party were in the upper house 37 against 87, and in the commons 185 against 265.

During this session few debates of importance occurred, and none which personally affected the minister. Although he permitted several motions, made by opposition, to pass without a division, and in the contested elections as many were carried against as for administration, yet the material points proposed by government were acceded to. The subsidiary treaty with Denmark was approved; £.794,529 was granted for the land service, and 30,000 flamen were voted.

The attention of the house of lords was occupied by a petition from several Scotch peers, complaining of undue influence in the election of the sixteen. The minister was accused of engaging votes by various acts of corruption, and of overawing the electors by the presence of troops. The principal persons who conducted this attack, were those who had been deprived of their places, but though it was managed with great address and asperity, it terminated in his favour. The strength of the opposition was proved by the smallness of the majority, which on the first division was 90 against 47, and on the second, 73 against 39. Two violent protests were entered, the first signed by 33, the second by 32 peers †.

The session was closed by prorogation on the 15th of May, when the king, in his speech from the throne, expressed his intention of visiting his German

* Etough says £.60,000.

† Lords' Debates.

dominions,

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dominions, and appointing the queen regent during his absence, of whose just and prudent administration, he had on the like occasion had experience. "Let me," he concluded, "earnestly recommend it to you to render the burthen of this weighty trust as easy to her as possible, by making it your constant study and endeavour, as I am sure it is your inclination, to preserve the peace of the kingdom, and to discountenance and suppress all attempts to raise groundless discontents in the minds of my people, whose happiness has always been and shall continue my daily and uninterrupted care *."

The secret correspondence with cardinal Fleury was scarcely closed, when a dispute between Spain and Portugal brought on another series of intricate negotiations, and threatened to spread still wider the horrors of war †.

Affairs of
Portugal.

John the Fifth, king of Portugal, had espoused the archduchess Mary Ann, sister of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, and his connection with the house of Austria, had increased the hatred which his family bore to France. For some time after the peace of Utrecht, a great coolness had taken place between him and Philip the Fifth, the natural consequence of situation and connections. At length the jealousy and rivalry which had so long subsisted between them, in some measure subsided, and the two courts had been reconciled by a double marriage between Ferdinand, prince of Asturias, and Barbara, infanta of Portugal, and between Joseph, prince of Brasil, and the infanta of Spain. But this marriage did not long operate in preserving harmony, and a diplomatic dispute nearly produced an open rupture.

Dispute with
Spain.

The servants of Don Cabral de Belmonte, the Portuguese minister at Madrid, being accused of having violently rescued a malefactor from the officers of justice, were arrested and carried to prison. The minister having complained of this insult, as an infraction on the law of nations, was warmly supported by his court; at the same time the Spanish ambassador at Lisbon, demanded satisfaction for the behaviour of the Portuguese minister, but instead of obtaining redress, he had the mortification of seeing nineteen of his own domestics arrested and sent to prison; and as neither court would give the satisfaction reciprocally demanded, the two ministers retired from their respective embassies, and both nations prepared for immediate hostilities.

Chandler. Journals.

† The substance of the remaining part of this chapter is principally taken from the same documents as the forty fourth, from a second continuation of the paper, intitled, "Conduct of England, &c." from July to December 1734,

and from "A Summary Deduction of the Course of Public Affairs, from the Delivery of the Project of Accommodation by the Maritime Powers, to their Approbation of the Vienna Preliminaries," from February 1735 to January 1736. Walpole Papers.

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1734 to 1737.

Claims the
assistance of
England.

Don Azevedo, envoy from the king of Portugal, arrived at London, to solicit, by virtue of the subsisting treaties, and particularly that of 1703, the assistance of England, in favour of the king of Portugal, against an attack which he apprehended from Spain. To this demand the king returned for answer, that he would, agreeably to the honour of his engagements, immediately, in conjunction with the States General, interpose his good offices, and that in the mean time, to secure Portugal from any hostile attempt, especially against the Brazil fleet, which was then upon its return, a strong squadron should be sent to Lisbon; advising the king of Portugal at the same time to shew a readiness in bringing this dispute to an accommodation.

Inclined to
the Emperor.

This advice was by no means acceptable to the king of Portugal: he had seen with a jealous eye the recent successes of the Spaniards in Italy; he had beheld, not without regret, an advantageous peace which Philip had lately concluded with the Moors, and he expected, perhaps, that Spain would again revive their pretensions on Portugal, which, notwithstanding all renunciations, had never been sincerely relinquished. During the war he had uniformly espoused and approved the conduct of the Emperor; and persons of all ranks and distinctions in Portugal, had expressed their wishes in favour of the same cause. He was still farther exasperated against the court of Madrid, by the repeated complaints made by his favourite daughter Barbara, of the ill treatment which she received from the queen of Spain. These concurrent circumstances roused the resentment of John the Fifth, a prince of great spirit; and his violent temper was irritated to such a degree, that he was eager to commence hostilities against Spain, and warmly solicited both the king of England and the Emperor to conclude an offensive alliance. He said * to lord Tyrawley, the British ambassador at Lisbon, the time was now arrived to reduce Philip to reason; that so favourable an opportunity would never again occur; Spain was left in so defenceless a state by the numerous armies employed in Italy, that a small number of Portuguese would overrun the country without opposition; and that the British fleet would prevent the return of the Spanish troops from Italy. His confidential ministers publicly declared, that if manifestos from the prince of Asturias were dispersed, inviting the Spaniards to shake off the tyranny of the queen, and the incapacity of the king, the whole kingdom would rise in his favour; and with a view to induce England to embrace this measure, it was urged, that if the attempt of the prince of Asturias succeeded, Philip would be compelled to recall his troops from Italy, for the defence of his own kingdom; and that

April 17.

* Walpole Papers. Lord Tyrawley to the duke of Newcastle, May 19, 1735.

the force of the allies would be so much weakened, that the Imperial troops might again acquire the ascendancy, and the house of Bourbon be frustrated in its attempts to lower the house of Austria.

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Prospect of a
general war.

These negotiations concerning the disputes between Spain and Portugal, were necessarily blended with those between the Emperor and the allies. The Emperor received the offers of Portugal with avidity, and gave unbounded promises of the most effectual assistance, trusting that if hostilities should take place between Spain and Portugal, England would be drawn into the quarrel, and a general war would be the unavoidable consequence. So great was the difficulty of reconciling two courts, both remarkable for pride and etiquette, and two sovereigns equally intemperate in their anger, and so impossible did it appear to foresee the consequences or controul the events, that a general and bloody war seemed almost inevitable. Affairs wore so gloomy an aspect, that Horace Walpole * says, in a letter to his brother, "I own I see nothing but black clouds gathering on all sides: I don't see a ray of light to disperse them."

English squad-
ron sent to
Lisbon.

Alarms of
France.

But Sir Robert Walpole did not behold things in so discouraging a light, and the British cabinet, directed by him, acted with no less spirit than caution. In the beginning of June, a squadron of twenty-five ships of the line and several frigates sailed from Portsmouth, under the command of Sir John Norris, and arrived in the port of Lisbon. The destination of this fleet made a strong sensation at Paris and Madrid, and gave great weight to the armed mediation of England. Cardinal Fleury was particularly alarmed; he represented to lord Waldegrave †, in a most pathetic manner, that when the king of Portugal should see so *terrible a fleet* as twenty-five men of war, come to his assistance, he would reject all offers of mediation, the friends of the Emperor at Lisbon would encourage him to attack Spain, Spain would be defended by France, and Portugal by England, and a general war, of which no one could see the bounds or calculate the effects, would be the inevitable consequence. The British cabinet was not affected with these remonstrances; the squadron was not withdrawn, but a strong representation was made to the courts of Spain and France, that its object was only to protect the trade of the English subjects, and to defend the coast and commerce of Portugal against any attempt: that Sir John Norris was instructed not to act offensively, nor to encourage or assist the king of Portugal in offensive measures ‡.

* April 29th, 1735. Correspondence.

‡ Mr. Keene to the duke of Newcastle,

† Earl of Waldegrave to the duke of Newcastle, June 1st, 1735. Correspondence.

June 9th, 1735. Keene Papers.

Period VI. This spirited conduct rendered the ministry extremely popular in England, 1734 to 1737. and greatly contributed to restore the tranquillity of Europe *. Spain having at first declined the proffered interposition, proposed at length to refer the decision of the differences to England and France; and Portugal, after making ineffectual endeavours to prevail on England to act offensively, finally acquiesced in the mediation of France and the maritime powers. Hostilities, though began in America against the Portuguese colony of St. Sacrament, never reached Europe; a convention, signed at Madrid, in July, 1736, under the mediation of the English, French, and Dutch plenipotentiaries, was followed by a peace, concluded at Paris, by which all differences were adjusted †.

Reconciliation of the Emperor. A short time before the Portuguese minister solicited the assistance of England, the Imperial court delivered an answer to the plan of pacification; but this answer was only provisional, and not sufficiently explicit, and the acceptance of the armistice was restrained to such conditions as rendered it inadmissible. It concluded by exhorting the maritime powers to make such preparations as to be in readiness to act offensively if the allies should reject the plan. The Emperor ‡, at the same time, stated the right which he had acquired, as well by the treaties made in 1731, as by his conduct since that period, to the friendship and assistance of the maritime powers, against the unjust attacks and ambitious views of the house of Bourbon §, and made the most bitter reflections upon the unmanly and pusillanimous part, which those powers, especially the Dutch, had hitherto acted since the rupture. It was now evident that the Emperor would not hearken to any overtures of accommodation from the maritime powers, unless they promised to assist him, if the allies rejected the plan. They deemed it necessary therefore to declare, in the most positive terms, that they would not on any consideration engage in the war; and to represent to the Imperial court, the necessity of entering into a particular accommodation with Spain or France; with Spain, by giving in marriage an archduchess to Don Carlos, or with France, by exchanging Lorraine for Tuscany. To this representation no immediate answer was given.

Indignation and despondency at Vienna. The notification to the Imperial court, in answer to the memorial delivered by Count Ulfeldt, that England and Holland declined taking a part in the war, was received at Vienna with the strongest symptoms of surprise and despondency; all that Mr. Robinson could draw from them, was

* Tindal, vol. 20, p. 292.

† Walpole Papers. Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, August 16, 1735.

‡ Memoire raisonnée, March 15. Grantham Papers.

§ Deduction.

fullen and abrupt declarations of astonishment and affliction to see the Emperor thus abandoned by the very power from whom he principally and solely expected assistance. Bartenstein*, the confidential, though subordinate minister of Charles the Sixth, said, that Europe was lost, the Emperor was the first sacrifice. He knew, were he Emperor, what party he should take; he would let things follow their own course. The war would end of itself for want of matter to feed the flame. The enemies of the house of Austria would surely not require Vienna; with his hereditary countries the Emperor would still be sufficiently great for himself, though not useful to others.

Prince Eugene also observed, that the wisest measure which the Emperor could follow, was to recal all his forces into his hereditary dominions, and suffer France to take the rest, if the maritime powers had no concern for them. But it was count Sinzendorff, who on this, as on all other occasions, used the most violent expressions of passion and fury. Having asked the British minister, if there were no succours to be expected, and receiving for answer, that in all probability there were none, he exclaimed, "What a severe sentence have you passed upon the Emperor! No malefactor was ever carried with so hard a doom to the gibbet." He was for burning Amsterdam, and for giving up Flanders; "there was, and there could be," he added, "no separate negotiation." The only means left for the Emperor, was to set fire to the four corners of the world, and to perish, if he must perish, in the general conflagration."

These violent expressions of indignation and despair, were soon followed by a suitable conduct; the Emperor was alarmed at the negotiations of France, Sweden, Prussia, and Turkey; at the union, concert, and progress of the allies in Italy; at the retreat of count Konigsegg into the Tyrol, which left Mantua to its fate.

He attributed to the treaty of 1731 all his misfortunes, which arose from a determined resolution of the French to destroy his succession, guaranteed by that treaty, and principally to the introduction of the 6,000 Spaniards into Italy; which enabled the French to gain over the king of Sardinia. Thus abandoned by his allies, he determined to separate himself from the maritime powers, and ordered count Kinsky to express his extreme astonishment at the conduct of England, and to affirm, that he had no other system of accommodation, than to submit to his enemies, when deserted by his friends.

In this situation of affairs, the mind of the Emperor was secretly agitated to such a height, as to raise apprehensions in the Empress, that his understanding might be affected by the conflict. "During the dead of the night," writes

* Walpole Papers. Mr. Robinson to lord Harrington, July 5th, 1735.

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Mr. Robinson to lord Harrington, "and while he was singly with her, he gave a loose to his affliction, confusion, and despair." These agitations were augmented by a total distrust of his own ministers, excepting Bartenstein, who having less to lose than the others, flattered the Emperor with ideas more suitable to romantic glory, than to ordinary prudence. "This court," he adds, "is desperate, and no prudent man can foresee what may be the effect of a violent despair. The Emperor, as in a shipwreck, will lay hold on the first plank."

Peremptory
request of the
Emperor.
July 27th,
1735

The same sentiments were enforced by 'count Kinsky *, in an audience of the king at Hanover. He represented the situation and strength of the Imperial troops, and desired his opinion upon the best method of employing them, either by sending large detachments into Italy, or by abandoning that territory, except Mantua, and the entries into the Tyrol; by collecting an army on the Rhine, to act offensively against France; or, lastly, by penetrating into France, on the side of the Moselle and the Netherlands. He required at the same time a precise declaration of the king's final intentions on the point of succours, and declared, that the Emperor would consider a delay or silence on this question, as an absolute negative; and must then provide, as soon, and as well as he could, for himself, by way of negotiation, without consulting the maritime powers, or considering their interests. A demand was at the same time made for a subsidy, either public or secret, which would enable him to support a large army in the field, and to lure the king of Sardinia from the party of France and Spain.

While the Emperor was thus appealing to the hopes and fears of the maritime powers, and warmly soliciting succours and subsidies, he threatened to abandon the Low Countries, and even to cede them to France, for the recovery of his Italian dominions, and the guaranty of the pragmatic sanction; a threat which excited strong apprehensions in the British cabinet, and was deprecated as an event of the utmost consequence to the commercial and political interests of England.

Walpole re-
news his
overtures to
France.

Mean time the British cabinet was employed in endeavouring to divide the allies, and in renewing their solicitations for peace, even to the very power by which they had been recently duped and deceived. Sir Robert Walpole was conscious that the only hopes of pacification depended on France, and if she could be brought to a sincere co-operation with England, the other belligerent powers, however averse, could not withhold their assent. He was

* Lord Harrington to the duke of Newcastle, Walpole Papers. Deduction.

desirous not to offend the cardinal, by shewing disgust at his duplicity; wished not to be precipitate in divulging the account of the secret negotiation; thought that the publication of that transaction should rather be the consequence than the forerunner or provocation of a war*. He was fully convinced, from his knowledge of the cardinal's and Chauvelin's characters, that unless the points of concession originated with them †, France would never be brought to guaranty the pragmatic sanction, which he considered as essentially necessary to the preservation of tranquillity in Europe; he was aware that the desperate situation of the Emperor's affairs in Italy, and his unwillingness to act in any degree cordially with the maritime powers, increased the difficulty of obtaining an accommodation, and that a peace would be cheaply purchased by suffering France to acquire Loraine, provided Tuscany was given in exchange to the duke of Loraine, the Milanese restored, and Parma and Placentia ceded to the Emperor, in return for the two Sicilies.

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1735 to 1736.

In conformity with these views, Horace Walpole hinted, in a dispatch to lord Waldegrave, the circulation of a rumour in Paris, that the object of France was the acquisition of Loraine, in exchange for Tuscany. Lord Waldegrave, in a conference with the cardinal, casually mentioned this report. The extreme pleasure which this hint gave, the pains he took in setting forth its expediency, and obviating all objections, sufficiently proved that this was the great point which France had in view ‡.

Hints at the
cession of
Lorraine.

While the British cabinet were thus exerting themselves in favour of a pacification, and were endeavouring to persuade the Emperor and France to agree to terms of accommodation without the knowledge of the other powers, a secret negotiation was opened between the Emperor and France, without the concurrence of England. At the time that cardinal Fleury was holding the private correspondence with Horace Walpole, he made secret overtures to the Emperor, with the hopes of detaching him from the maritime powers. In his anniversary letter § of compliments to the Emperor, on occasion of the new year, dated December 12th, 1734, he had added a postscript in his own hand, expressing, in the strongest terms, his affection and respect for the Emperor's person, as well as his earnest desire to see the peace of Europe restored. The Emperor, besides the usual chancery letter, returned an answer in his own hand, dated

Overtures
from Fleury
to the Em-
peror.

* Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, 20th May 1735. Correspondence.

† Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, April 28th 1735. Correspondence.

‡ The earl of Waldegrave to lord Harrington, June 7th, 1735. Walpole and Waldegrave Papers.

§ Walpole Papers. Summary Deduction.

Period VI.
1714 to 1737.

February 16th, to the said postscript, declaring his readiness, in conjunction with his allies, to listen to terms of amity, and the facility of obtaining a peace, if the cardinal would heartily promote it. These two letters were put into the hand of the Pope's nuncio at Brussels, to convey them to the cardinal; who, in opening the nuncio's packet (for he opened all his letters at arms length, and in the chimney) dropt the Emperor's particular letter into the fire, and could not recover it before it was defaced. The cardinal informed the nuncio, by a letter of March 10th, of this accident, and expressed his shame and concern. But the Emperor, considering this story as a *maître fiction* to excuse his silence, the correspondence was interrupted.

Soon after this incident, the Emperor, finding all attempts to induce the maritime powers to act offensively against France ineffectual, artfully made distant overtures to Spain, in relation to the marriage of an archduchess with Don Carlos, with the approbation of England. The dread of a similar union between Spain and Austria to that which took place in 1725, alarmed the cardinal; and he accordingly took occasion, by means of a confidential person at Paris, to convey to count Sinzendorff his wishes to conclude a peace directly with the Emperor, without the intervention of any other power, and added, that he would either depute a person of confidence secretly to Vienna, or the Emperor might send one to Paris, for the purpose of settling the conditions of a separate accommodation.

To this overture, the Emperor consented, and at the very moment when the cardinal was luring the British cabinet with the hopes of opening, under their auspices, a negotiation with the Emperor, he dispatched his agent, La Beaume, to Vienna. This transaction was carried on in so secret a manner, that although some suspicions were entertained, yet the first vague rumour of the mission was communicated by the earl of Waldegrave, on the 2d of August *, which he had casually derived from a spy in the secretary of state's office at Paris; and when he taxed the cardinal with his duplicity, the hoary minister did not blush to deny the fact, and because the negotiation was at that moment suspended, offered in the most solemn manner to take an oath on the bible †, that no private negotiation was at that time pending between France and Austria. La Beaume actually passed through the army, and after holding a conference with prince Eugene, arrived and had continued five weeks at Vienna, before Mr. Robinson ‡ enter-

* Walpole Papers. The earl of Waldegrave to the duke of Newcastle, August 2, 1735. Correspondence.

† The earl of Waldegrave to the duke of

Newcastle, September 28, 1735. Correspondence.

‡ Walpole and Grantham Papers.

tained the smallest suspicions of the fact. The first intimation which he received from lord Harrington, appeared to him nothing more than an uncertain report, and it was not till after much minute inquiry, that he found the information to be true.

Although the king, in his reply to Kinski, had declared that he would not take upon himself to give any advice, and urged that it would be extremely difficult to enter into the war without the concurrence of the Dutch; although he hinted at the several schemes of a separate negotiation; thought the exchange of the dutchies of Loraine and Tuscany preferable; insinuated the readiness of Spain to accept the second archduchess, and offered to assist in forwarding the match, or to adopt any other method for the purpose of effecting a pacification; yet the Emperor, well aware that the king was strongly inclined to afford active assistance, urged his claim with redoubled instances.

Anxiety of
the British
cabinet.

The earnest solicitations of the Emperor, his threats to abandon the Low Countries, and the knowledge of his secret negotiation with France, made a strong impression on the king and cabinet, and gave weight to the opinion of that party which inclined for war. For it was deemed far more eligible to encounter hostilities, than by a refusal of succours to throw the house of Austria into the arms of France, or by permitting the diminution of her territories, to enfeeble the only power which could effectually present a barrier to the encroachments of the house of Bourbon.

This desertion of the house of Austria in her extreme distress, gave great displeasure to several of the minister's friends and co-adjutors, and to none more than to lord Harrington, who, in his capacity of secretary of state, had the mortification to send instructions, and to forward measures contrary to his own sentiments. "The reasons," he observes, in a letter to Horace Walpole, "you alledge to prove that the treaty of Seville was not the cause of the Emperor's misfortunes are unanswerable, and I wish you could suggest as good ones (in case we are forced to it) for justifying to the Emperor our not assisting him; but if that could be done, to justify it to ourselves and our country; considering the present behaviour and operations of France and her allies, nothing but the most absolute inability can do it *."

Differences
in the cabi-
net.

In a subsequent letter, lord Harrington † even suggested a measure, which if followed, would probably have involved England in the war: it was to propose to the Dutch, either an augmentation of their forces, or to join

* Walpole Papers. Hanover, August 7th.

† Walpole Papers. Lord Harrington to Horace Walpole, Hanover, August 31.

Period VI.
1734 to 1737.

the king in requiring from the allies a direct specification of the conditions on which they would conclude a peace, and to declare peremptorily, that unless a positive answer was given, England and the States would decline the mediation, and adopt the necessary measures for preserving their own security, and the equilibrium of Europe. He also urged, if the States should decline both these propositions, that England should withdraw from the mediation, and at the same time acquaint the Emperor, that the king would endeavour to assist him in making a separate peace with any of his enemies, and in failure of that attempt, would join with him afterwards in the war, if an opportunity should arise of doing it with success. *

Effect of
them abroad.

The difference of opinion was now so great, the party for war was so warmly supported by the king, and that for peace by Sir Robert Walpole, as to occasion much indecision in the measures pursued abroad, and in the instructions sent to the foreign ministers. The French cabinet availed itself of these circumstances with considerable effect, and particularly in Holland, where Chavigny, in his passage through the Hague to Hanover, exaggerated the divided state of administration. He decried the spirited attempts made by Horace Walpole to infuse vigour and spirit into the counsels of the States General, and publicly declared, that the sentiments of the court and ministers of England, differed from the plan of pacification delivered by Horace Walpole to the States, and from the joint resolutions of the king and States, on the subject of the plan and armistice, communicated to the French ambassador on the 8th of June.

Sir Robert Walpole had given weight to this opinion, in a private interview with Chavigny*, who pressed him to bring about a pacification by a secret convention between France and England. He avowed his inclination for peace, and expressed his desire to settle the terms with cardinal Fleury, but denied his own power solely to carry any measure into execution. When Chavigny considered him in the light of prime minister, and argued that his known credit with the king would enable him to carry any point he thought necessary: "Let us suppose," replied Walpole, "That I should agree to any measure, without consulting the duke of Newcastle, who is secretary of state for the department of France, and the duke, on being informed of the transaction, should oppose it, what is to be done in that case? and what opinion would you have of me, to find things stopped and overturned by such an opposition?"

* Walpole Papers. Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, June 17th, 1735. Correspond.

It was impossible that affairs could long continue in this state of suspense, and that the tranquillity of Europe could be secured, while the cabinet of England was distracted and embarrassed. It became, therefore, necessary for the honour of the minister, as well as for the preservation of his system, to shew, that whatever private differences might exist in the cabinet, their public opinion was decidedly in favour of pacific measures; and to undeceive the Emperor in his expectations of assistance from the maritime powers, by enforcing the necessity of a separate accommodation either with France or Spain. These two objects were finally attained.

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1735 to 1736.

In this dilemma, Walpole acted with the most consummate address. While the official dispatches from Vienna expressed the strongest disapprobation of the secret negotiation with France, and cast the most bitter reflections on the Imperial ministers, his letters, and those of his brother Horace, breathed nothing but pacific sentiments. They * palliated the conduct of the Emperor, and were anxious not to offend either him or France, by a violent and precipitate condemnation of their measures. They asserted, that although the alteration in the project from that offered by the maritime powers, was executed without the co-operation of England, and the king had just reason to complain of inattention and slight, yet as it was entirely agreeable to what England had proposed, the king could blame nothing but the form of proceeding. They observed, that it would be highly unbecoming to take offence at mere punctilious circumstances; they estimated the blessings of peace too highly to suffer etiquette to prevail over prudence, or to object to an agreement, merely because it did not exactly follow the original project; provided peace was the result, they both repeatedly declared, it was no matter by whom or in what manner it was procured †.

Address of
Walpole

But though Walpole was anxious not to disoblige the Emperor, he would not sanction his demand of succours or subsidies; and as the king and part of the cabinet appear to have strongly recommended that measure, he was firm and decisive in enforcing his pacific sentiments. At length, after much opposition and some delays, a paper was transmitted to Mr. Robinson at Vienna, which seems to have been drawn up by himself. It stated the determined resolution of the king not to take any part in the war, to offer his intervention in favour of the Emperor, but not to send any assistance either in men or money.

Transmits a
final answer
to the Em-
peror.

* Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, December 9th, 1735. Correspondence.

† Horace Walpole to Thomas Robinson. Walpole Papers.

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1734 to 1737.

Having arranged these difficult points, his opinion triumphed, and his pacific measures were adopted in their fullest latitude; the British cabinet now steered a steady and uniform course, no longer divided in counsels, or differing in sentiment; and their unanimous exertions were finally crowned with success.

It was their aim to make it the interest of France to co-operate seriously in the restoration of tranquillity, by candidly agreeing to such conditions as would justify cardinal Fleury in deserting Spain, and making a separate accommodation with the Emperor; and this measure could only be effected by facilitating the cession of Lorraine to France, in exchange for Tuscany, and to leave to cardinal Fleury and Chauvelin the manner of proposing it, and the specific plan to be laid before the Emperor for his approbation.

Plan of pacification:

The earl of Waldegrave *, in conformity to instructions sent from the queen, drew from cardinal Fleury a specific acknowledgment of his intentions. After increasing his alarm, at a resolution of the States, which seemed to announce the adoption of more vigorous measures, he represented the calamities ready to fall upon Europe, from his dilatory and irresolute proceedings; that he foresaw nothing but ruin and destruction from beginning and then dropping negotiations, and substituting new projects in their place. He gradually obtained, by artful questions, a confession that the exchange of Lorraine for Tuscany, was the great object of France; and finally, under a promise of the strictest secrecy, he prevailed on the cardinal to lay open his scheme for a general pacification, which, with a very few exceptions, was similar to that which had been proposed by the maritime powers. At the same time, the cardinal requested that the plan should be proposed and executed by England in concert with France; and he added, that such a peace, being established on the foundation of justice and reason, he would abandon his allies if they did not comply.

Laid before the Emperor.

Having thus prevailed on cardinal Fleury to acquiesce in the intervention of England, the next step was to gain the consent of the Emperor to the terms proposed by France, to be modified by England; and this was effected with equal ability. The British minister at Vienna †, in a private audience of the Emperor, represented the concern of the king at the unfortunate events of the war, and his indefatigable zeal and ardent wishes in desiring to put an end to the troubles of Europe. He observed, that the disappointment which

* The earl of Waldegrave to the duke of Newcastle, August 2d. Correspondence.

† Thomas Robinson to lord Harrington, August 26th. Walpole Papers.

the king derived from his inability to enter into the war, was equal to that which the Emperor must have experienced in not having received that assistance which he so ardently expected. He urged, that in the present situation of affairs, there seemed no other expedient remaining, than to detach one of the allies, and that to carry that project into execution in the manner most agreeable, the king had expressed a desire to have the Emperor's opinion; and had been anxiously waiting for an answer. He then added, that he had now to submit to the Emperor's consideration, a strong instance of the king's confidence and friendship, which was to communicate the offer of a separate accommodation from France, nearly conformable to the plan proposed by the maritime powers, and acceded to by the Emperor; the cession of Loraine to France in exchange for Tuscany, to be given to the duke of Loraine on the decease of the present great duke, and concluded by saying, that the Emperor's consent to this plan would infallibly insure a successful issue.

In reply, the Emperor, after returning his grateful acknowledgments to the king for this instance of his friendship, added with much dignity, "Although I relied upon more substantial marks of friendship from the king, whose word was engaged by treaty to assist me with real succours, and although in a similar case I should not have withheld those succours which I stood engaged to by treaty. yet I am willing to believe that the disappointment which I have experienced, however fatal to myself and family, was less owing to want of inclination in the king, than to the impossibility of acting otherwise: notwithstanding this disappointment, I will pay all imaginable deference to the advice now communicated, and will appreciate as it deserves this mark of confidence. But as it is an affair of the highest importance and delicacy, and as the exchange does not totally depend on myself, I cannot give the previous promise which is now desired, even if I were convinced of the success; for the object under consideration is not so much what should be done, but whether it is proper to be done. I again assure you, however, that I will pay the greatest deference to the king's advice, and after I have duly reflected upon it, and consulted my council, if you desire it, will myself give the answer."

These declarations were soon followed by various explanations from the Imperial ministers, and finally by a formal answer in writing. As far as could be gathered from the dubious and mysterious manner in which the court of Vienna enveloped their sentiments, it appeared as if the Emperor, on certain conditions, might be induced to accede to the overtures of cardinal Fleury, provided Tuscany was given unconditionally to the family of Loraine, and the king of Sardinia would accept the Langhes instead of the Tortonele.

Reply.

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1734 to 1737.

Subsequent
proceedings.

Amidst such discordant views as influenced the conduct of Austria and France, it was not to be expected that any conditions would be finally acceded to on either side without much altercation and delay. But it was a great point gained, that the contending parties seemed gradually drawing towards an amicable compromise. The object of England was secretly to assist in keeping up the intercourse recently established between the Emperor and France, to offend neither of those powers by censuring their conduct, but on the contrary, to declare that, although the king was not unacquainted with the secret negotiation, yet so far from opposing it, if it should be found not inconsistent with the equilibrium of Europe, he would be desirous of facilitating its successful issue.

Nov. 21.

The British ministers at the Imperial and French courts, were instructed to approve the basis of the agreement settled between France and the Emperor, of which they obtained certain information, and a counter project, with some few alterations for preventing the cession of Lorraine to France, without a sufficient indemnity, was drawn up by lord Harrington, and forwarded to Paris and Vienna. The consequence of this conduct was, that the Imperial and French courts at length acknowledged the secret negotiation, and that the British ambassador at Vienna received from prince Eugene, a project of the preliminary articles with which the Emperor and France were said to be contented, and to which the concurrence of the maritime powers was desired.

The answer to this project was made in the name of Great Britain and the United Provinces, who declared, that finding upon examination, that the preliminaries did not essentially differ from the plans before delivered, nor contain any thing detrimental to the equilibrium of Europe, the king and the Republic did not hesitate to declare their approbation and readiness to concur in a future treaty for bringing them to perfection, reserving to themselves the liberty of stipulating the necessary security for their own possessions, rights, privileges, and commerce.

Suspension
of arms on
the Rhine.

The secret negotiation had already produced very advantageous effects in Germany; it occasioned an actual, though not a stipulated armistice on the Rhine. The French and Imperial troops did not undertake any offensive operations. Prince Eugene returned to Vienna in the month of October, and soon afterwards the two armies passed into winter quarters. But the same beneficial consequences could not take place in Italy, since the fate of the war did not wholly depend, as it did in Germany, on the fiat of cardinal Fleury, because no suspension of arms could take place, without the consent

consent of the king of Spain, who, eager to accelerate the possession of Mantua, would not easily be induced to agree to an armistice at the moment when he thought himself secure of success. But what could not be accomplished by persuasion or force, was finally effected by stratagem.

Chapter 45.
1735 to 1736.

Opposite
views of the
all ex.

One great object of the British cabinet was to prevent, or at least to protract the siege of Mantua, which was but scantily provided with ammunition and provisions. With a view to deter the French from attempting it, Horace Walpole, in a letter to the cardinal, and baron Gedda and lord Waldegrave in their conferences, represented, that although the English had declined going into the war, yet they would not see the house of Austria ruined, and that if Mantua was taken, and the Emperor was driven out of Italy, the maritime powers must come forward to his assistance. Fortunately, Mantua was the subject of contention between the allies in Italy. Philip was eager to begin the siege, conscious that the possession of that important fortress, as the key of Lombardy on the side of the Tyrol, would give to Spain the control of Italy. Cardinal Fleury himself, did not attempt to conceal his apprehensions of the consequences that would result from the capture. He said to the earl of Waldegrave*, that the fall of that place into the hands of the Spaniards, would defeat all his schemes, and render the king and queen of Spain untractable. He even promised, and in this instance did not belie his word, to give orders to the French general in Italy, not only not to press the siege of Mantua, but to protract the opening of the trenches, and even to place his troops in such a manner, as to permit the entrance of provisions into the town. The king of Sardinia went still farther, and in a letter to George the Second, declared that he was ready to join the maritime powers, if they would enter into the war †: expatiated on his own danger, should the possession of Mantua encourage Spain to deprive him of all the territories which had been allotted to him by his engagements with France. He pressed the king speedily to negotiate a peace between the Emperor and the allies, as the only means of preventing his falling a sacrifice to the resentment of Spain, for having delayed co-operating in the siege of Mantua. He declared that he would rather make a sacrifice of part of the Milanese, than the Emperor might retain a footing in Italy, by keeping possession of Mantua, with Parma, Placentia, and Tuscany, than even obtain possession of the whole Milanese,

* Walpole Papers. Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, October 4th, 1735. Correspondence.

† Walpole Papers. Lord Harrington to the duke of Newcastle, Hanover, August 14th, 1737.

Period VI. on condition that Mantua, with the other possessions in Italy, should be ceded
 1734^{to} 1737. to Don Carlos *.

In compliance with these views, he had positively refused to furnish a single piece of artillery, and secretly obstructed every measure which tended to facilitate the capture of that important fortress. By these manœuvres, the siege was protracted until the season was too far advanced; and Philip was thus prevented from gaining a preponderance in Italy, which would have rendered him too powerful in that quarter, and have induced him to refuse all conditions of peace which did not confirm the total exclusion of the Emperor.

England fomented the jealousy between France and Spain.

During this whole transaction, cardinal Fleury was kept in continual alarm, by repeated insinuations from Horace Walpole and the earl of Waldegrave, that the Dutch would be induced to act with vigour, provided France would not accede to honourable terms †. They also made continued representations to him, that the Emperor, if rendered desperate, would throw himself into the arms of Spain, and agree to the marriage of Don Carlos with an arch-duchess, which the French minister seemed to deprecate as much, or even more than the king of England. For the same purpose, the British cabinet never ceased making overtures, both to the Emperor and Spain, in favour of the marriages; and this business was so artfully managed, that though it was conducted under the appearance of the strictest secrecy, yet it was duly communicated to the cardinal in the manner the most likely to alarm him.

The cardinal had no sooner agreed to a separate accommodation with the Emperor, and a secret convention with England, than the recollection of his former insincerity in his correspondence with Horace Walpole, and the influence of Chauvelin over him, induced the British cabinet to keep him steady to his engagements, by opposing art to art, and intrigue to intrigue. They availed themselves of his apprehensions of a rupture with Spain, and of his dread lest a close union should be formed between Spain and England. Mr. Keene, the English minister at Madrid, executed, with much address, the instructions of his court on this head. From the time of the first official communications from cardinal Fleury, of the secret accommodation between France and the Emperor, and the partial suspension of arms in Italy, without the knowledge or consent of Spain, he artfully fomented the resentment which the court of Madrid entertained against France, for deserting and betraying the common cause. He encouraged the irritable and punc-

* The duke of Newcastle to lord Harrington, June 6, 1735. Walpole Papers.

† Horace Walpole's Apology.

tilious disposition of Philip the Fifth, who was piqued at being betrayed by his native country; he increased while he affected to allay the ungovernable fury of the queen, who aspired to make her son, Don Carlos, master of Italy, and who considered the disposal of Parma and Tuscany to the Emperor, as an injurious deprivation of her own inheritance.

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1735 to 1736.

The court of Spain was so irritated, that Mr. Keene observed, in a letter to the duke of Newcastle *, "There is scarce any thing that they would not do, to revenge themselves upon the French; you will easily judge of their desire to do it, when, contrary to their pride, they make such applications to the king before they know the least of his majesty's sentiments. I wish, indeed, that matters may not have been pushed rather too far; for hitherto I found more disposition in them to sit down quietly with their mortification, if there was no remedy, than I do at present; but they now seem to be drove to despair, and to be resolved to act as people in that state."

Even Don Patinho, the first minister, who was so mysterious, that, according to cardinal Fleury, he always spoke as well as wrote † in cypher, was so highly irritated, that he proposed, in unambiguous terms, to undermine the French commerce with Spain, and particularly that with the Indies, by increasing the English trade; "and thus we shall," as he observed to the British minister at Madrid ‡, "revenge ourselves upon the cardinal in the most easy and effectual manner, and kill him *with a staff of cotton* §."

The British cabinet, long accustomed to the violent and changeful temper of the court of Madrid, and well knowing that the king, though alienated by temporary displeasure, was from principle and interest attached to France, amicably deprecated these counsels, and urged the good policy as well as necessity of acceding to the preliminaries.

The result of all these wisely combined measures, was the signature of preliminaries for a general pacification, which was concluded on such favourable terms, that even lord Bolingbroke, the implacable enemy of Sir Robert Walpole, observed, that, "If the English ministers had any hand in it, they were wiser than he thought them; and if not, they were much luckier than they deserved to be ||."

Signature of
the preliminaries.

The opinion which truth extorted unwillingly from lord Bolingbroke, that

* Madrid, December 10th, 1735. Keene Papers.

† The earl of Waldegrave to the duke of Newcastle, October 28th, 1733.

‡ Benjamin Keene to the duke of Newcastle, November 28th, Keene Papers.

§ Un Bâton de Coton.

|| Lord Hervey to Horace Walpole, December 23d, January 3d, 1735. Correspondence.

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King's
speech.

January 15.

the terms of the preliminaries were as just and honourable as the circumstances would permit, seems to have been the opinion of the greatest part of the nation; for the annals of England give no instance of a session in parliament which passed with so little opposition, in regard to foreign affairs, as that in the commencement of 1736. With becoming pride and satisfaction,* for having settled the great outlines of a general peace, the speech from the throne expressed the pacific sentiments of the minister, that provided peace was made, it was no object of consideration by whom, or in what manner it was made. After mentioning the happy turn which the affairs of Europe had taken, and after observing, that a plan of pacification had been proposed by the king, in conjunction with the States, and that the Emperor and France had separately concerted the preliminaries for obtaining that end, the king said, "It appearing, upon due examination, that these articles do not essentially vary from the plan proposed by me and the States, nor contain any thing prejudicial to the equilibrium of Europe, or to the rights and interests of our respective subjects, we thought fit, in pursuance of our constant purpose, to contribute our utmost towards a pacification; to declare, by a joint resolution, to the courts of Vienna and France, our approbation of the said preliminaries, and our readiness to concur in a treaty to be made for bringing them to perfection."

As an infallible symptom of peace, he noticed, that a considerable reduction would be made both by sea and land, and concluded with this pathetic exhortation to moderation and harmony at home: "I am willing to hope, this pleasing prospect of peace abroad, will greatly contribute to peace and good harmony at home. Let that example of temper and moderation, which has so happily calmed the spirits of contending princes, banish from among you all intestine discord and dissension. Those who truly wish the peace and prosperity of their country, can never have a more favourable opportunity than now offers, of distinguishing themselves, by declaring their satisfaction in the progress already made, towards restoring the public tranquillity, and in promoting what is still necessary to bring it to perfection*."

On this occasion, the address was carried in the house of commons, not only without a division, but without the smallest opposition, and the session ended with scarcely a single reflection on the conduct of foreign affairs; a singular phenomenon in the political annals of this country.

* Chandler, vol. 9. p. 103, 104. Journals.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SIXTH:

1736.

Parliamentary Proceedings.—*Gin Act.*—*Motion to repeal the Test Act, negatived.*—*Bill for the Relief of the Quakers passes the Commons, but is thrown out by the Lords.*—*Account of Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London.*—*Prorogation.*—*Horace Walpole declines the Office of Secretary of State.*—*Accompanies the King to Hanover, as Vice Secretary.*—*Foreign Negotiations.*—*Prudence of Sir Robert Walpole.*—*Private Correspondence with his Brother.*—*Objects to guaranty the Provisional Succession to Berg and Juliers.*—*Opposes the Northern League, and the Mediation between Russia and the Porte.*—*Promotes the definitive Treaty.*—*The Delays of the Emperor.*—*Ineffectual attempt to bribe Chauvelin.*—*Secret Correspondence with Cardinal Fleury, and Dismissal of Chauvelin.*

THE parliamentary proceedings of this session, relating to domestic affairs, were, in general, of little importance. The only subjects which it may be necessary to particularize, were The *Gin Act*; the repeal of the test act, and the bill for giving relief to Quakers.

Parliamentary proceedings.

The act for laying a tax on spirituous liquors, and licensing the retailers, was a measure in which the minister had no immediate concern, but for which he suffered much unmerited obloquy. The bill was principally promoted by Sir Joseph Jekyll, from a spirit of philanthropy, which led him to contemplate with horror the progress of vice, licentiousness, and immorality that marked the popular attachment to these inflammatory poisons. This benevolent attempt embarrassed the minister, but did not answer the desired end.

Gin act.

It was incumbent on the minister to prevent any diminution of the revenue of the crown, and for that purpose to supply any deficiency which might arise from the reduced consumption of spirituous liquors; but this attention to his official duty, exposed him to much intemperate abuse, and he was reproached for wishing to sacrifice the morals of the people to financial considerations. After many debates, in which the minister took an active share, the bill passed, and £.70,000 per annum was granted to the king as a

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compensation for the diminution of the civil list, to which the duty had hitherto belonged *.

The populace shewed their disapprobation of this act in the usual mode of riot and violence. Numerous desperados availed themselves of the popular discontents, and continued the clandestine sale of gin in defiance of every restriction. The demand of penalties, which the offenders were unable to pay, filled the prisons, and removing every restraint, plunged them into courses more audaciously criminal. It was found, that a duty and penalty so severe as to amount to an implied prohibition, were as little calculated to benefit the public morality as the public revenue, and, as Walpole predicted, a subsequent administration was obliged to modify the measure.

Repeal of
the test act.

Few subjects were more embarrassing to the minister, than the proposed repeal of the test act. He had for a long time acted with the dissenters; he fully appreciated the advantage which the protestant succession had derived from their exertions; he had received from them the warmest support; he knew that they had reason to expect relief from a protestant king, whom they had assisted in placing on the throne; he had even given them hopes, that the time was not far distant, when they might obtain what they so earnestly desired. In this session, the motion for repealing the test act was prematurely brought forwards by Plummer, who supported it in a very able speech. Though the minister opposed the motion in the present instance, he did it with such candour and moderation, and "expressed himself so cautiously, with regard to the church, and so affectionately, with regard to the dissenters, that neither party had cause to complain of him. The public has been long informed of all the arguments urged for and against the motion, as almost every year produced some event that revived them, therefore they are omitted here. The motion was negatived by a majority of 251 against 123 †."

March 2d
and 12th.

Negatived.

Quakers' bill.
March 2d.

Yet, although the minister thus opposed the repeal of the test act, he warmly patronised and supported a bill for the relief of the Quakers, who presented a petition to the house of commons. It stated, "that notwithstanding the several acts of parliament made, for the more easy recovery of tythes, and ecclesiastical dues, in a summary way, by warrant from justices of the peace, yet as the said people conscientiously refused the payment, they were not only liable to, but many of them had undergone grievous sufferings, by prosecution in the exchequer, ecclesiastical, and other courts, to the impropri-

* Chandler, vol. o. d. 172.

† Tindal, vol. 20, p. 323. Journals.

sonment of their persons, and the impoverishing and ruin of them and their families, for such small sums as were recoverable by those acts; and therefore praying, that the house would be pleased to afford them such relief as to them should seem meet *."

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1736.

Though the minister and the majority of the house were disposed to favour the petition, and a bill was framed accordingly, yet the great interest of the established clergy, rendered it a matter of much difficulty. Counter-petitions poured in from all quarters, setting forth, "That such a law would be extremely prejudicial to themselves and brethren, excluding them from the benefit of the laws then in being, for the recovery of tythes and other dues, and thereby putting the clergy of the established church, upon a worse foot than the rest of his majesty's subjects; and praying to be heard by council against the bill †."

March 26.

Notwithstanding all obstacles, the disposition of the house was very strong in favour of the quakers. Their petition was not considered a party affair; and the proceedings against many of them, had such an air of persecution, as procured them many friends amongst all parties. The bill underwent great alterations in the committee. The main intention of it was, to make the determination of two justices of the peace final, as to all payments of tythes and church dues, when the quaker, who was to pay them, did not litigate the same, which the justices were to certify under their hands and seals, without fee or reward. But in case the quaker should litigate the payment, then either party, who should dissent from the adjudication of the justices, might have recourse to the courts in Westminster hall. The payment of all church and chapel rates, if refused by quakers, were, upon the complaint of the churchwardens, to be levied by distress, by order of two justices, upon their goods, in the same manner as the poor rates are levied, and no quaker was to be sued or prosecuted for not paying any church or chapel rates, in any other manner.

Such was the main purport of this famous bill (though clogged with a great number of other clauses); when after long debates, and several divisions, it passed the house of commons, by a majority of 164 against 48 †.

Passes the commons.
May 3d.

In the upper house it was successfully opposed by the interest of the church and the law; a considerable number of courtiers were also non-contents. The two great lawyers, lord chancellor Talbot and lord Hardwicke, made a strong impression by observations on the incorrectness and imperfections of the bill,

Rejected by the lords.

* Chandler. Journals.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

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Dissatisfac-
tion of the
minister.

Resentment
against
bishop Gib-
son.

Account of
that prelate.

for the amendment of which, the short remainder of the session would not afford time. "The speakers on both sides displayed great abilities and temper, but when the question was put, for committing the bill, it passed in the negative, by a majority of 54 against 35 *."

The minister was highly dissatisfied with the rejection of a bill which he was induced from various considerations to promote. He was strongly averse to all measures which bore the appearance of persecution in religious matters. His conduct was also influenced by personal considerations. A large body of quakers were established in the county of Norfolk, and particularly in the city of Norwich, who had always supported the candidates whom he favoured at the general elections, and he was anxious, from a principle of gratitude, to prove that he was not unmindful of past favours, and deserving of future assistance. These motives operated so strongly in its favour, that few circumstances ever ruffled his temper, or affected his equanimity more than the rejection of this bill. He bitterly complained of the vindictive spirit which reigned in the house of lords, and his resentment was principally excited against the bishop of London, to whom he attributed its defeat. That prelate had prevailed on the bench of bishops, to give their decided opposition to the bill, and had exhorted the clergy, in all quarters of the kingdom, to petition against it, as highly prejudicial to the interests of the church. In consequence of these exertions, the minister, with a spirit of acrimony very unusual to him, withdrew from the learned prelate the full confidence which he had hitherto placed in him, and transferred into other hands the conduct of ecclesiastical affairs with which he had been chiefly entrusted.

Edmund Gibson was born in 1669 †, and educated at the free grammar school at Bampton, in Westmoreland, the place of his nativity. At the age of seventeen, he was admitted a scholar of Queen's college Oxford, and raised himself into early notice by various publications, which proved his classical erudition, his accurate acquaintance with the Northern languages, and a correct knowledge of the Roman and Saxon antiquities, and British topography. His great talents and extensive learning, introduced him to the patronage of archbishop Tenison, who made him librarian of Lambeth, and appointed him his domestic chaplain. By the archbishop's interest, he became precentor and residentiary of Chichester, rector of Lambeth, and archdeacon of Surry. In 1713, he gave to the public that great and la-

* Tindal, vol. 20, p. 315. Lords' Debates.

† Biographia Britannica.

borious work, intituled, "Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani, or the Statutes, Constitutions, Canons, Rubricks, and articles of the Church of England, methodically digested under their proper heads; with a cominentary, historical and juridical, and with an introductory discourse concerning the present state of the power, discipline, and laws of the church of England, with an appendix of instruments, antient and modern, in folio."

Being a great friend to the protestant succession, he was promoted, in 1716, to the bishopric of Lincoln, and in 1720 translated to the see of London.

In this eminent station, he enjoyed the full confidence of the king and ministry, and was principally consulted by lord Townshend and Sir Robert Walpole, in all ecclesiastical matters, particularly during the long decline of health which incapacitated archbishop Wake for transacting business. He was always zealous in supporting the establishment of the church of England, and uniformly opposed the repeal of the test act. He declined a translation to Winchester *, and looked forwards to the primacy with such confidence of expectation, that he was called by Whiston, heir apparent to the see of Canterbury. These well-founded hopes were frustrated by the indignation of Walpole for his opposition to the quakers' bill. On the decease of Wake, the see was conferred on Potter. And when, on his death, in 1747, it was offered to Gibson, he declined it on account of his advanced age and increasing infirmities †. He died on the 6th of February 1748.

The inveteracy displayed against this eminent prelate for the conscientious discharge of his duty, reflects no credit on the memory of Sir Robert Walpole. His esteem for the bishop of London had been so great, that when he was reproached with giving him the authority of a pope, he replied, "And a very good pope he is ‡." Even after their disagreement, he never failed to pay an eulogium to the learning and integrity of his former friend.

On the 20th of May, the king put an end to this late session of parliament, by a speech, in which he acquainted both houses, "that since the preliminary articles had been concluded between the Emperor and his most Christian majesty, a further convention, concerning the execution of them, had been made and communicated by both those courts, and that negotiations

Prorogation
of parliament.

* Letter from bishop Gibson to Sir Robert Walpole. Orford Papers.

† Letter from bishop Gibson to the king,

communicated by the bishop of Salisbury (Dr. Douglas.)

‡ Etough's Minutes of Conversations with Sir Robert Walpole.

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were carrying on by the several powers engaged in the late war, in order to settle the general pacification." He expressed himself with great concern in relation to the seeds of dissension that had been sown amongst his people, exhorting his parliament to cultivate unanimity, and promising impartial protection to all his subjects. He then acquainted them, that being obliged that summer to visit his German dominions, he hoped that they would make the administration of the queen, whom he had resolved to appoint regent during his absence, as easy to her, as her wise conduct would render her government agreeable to them *.

Horace Walpole declines the office of secretary of state.

At this period, Sir Robert Walpole and his brother gave a memorable proof of their prudence and moderation. The king being dissatisfied with lord Harrington, proposed to dismiss him from the office of secretary of state, and queen Caroline offered the place to Horace Walpole; but conscious that the elevation of two brothers to the principal posts of government, would augment the jealousy and popular outcry which already prevailed, and fearful lest so important a change should increase the divisions among the ministers, he declined the offer. The king, however, would not admit lord Harrington's attendance at Hanover, and though he acquiesced in the refusal of Horace Walpole, yet he insisted on his undertaking the employment of secretary of state during his residence abroad; an order which Horace Walpole, though he attempted to elude, could not venture to disobey, and accordingly accompanied the king to Hanover †.

Accompanies the king to Hanover.
Confidential correspondence.

As the king was extremely jealous of being governed, and yet as his ignorance of the English constitution, and his natural attachment to German measures, rendered it expedient that he should be advised by those who were responsible for the administration of affairs, it became necessary to convey this advice in so delicate a manner, that he should appear to guide the reins, which were conducted by another hand. With this view, a confidential correspondence was carried on between the two brothers; and as the king always expected to see any private letters which passed between them, an arrangement was made, that ostensible letters should be sent for the perusal of the king, and confidential ones to Horace Walpole alone. A part of this correspondence is still preserved; those letters of Sir Robert Walpole which relate to foreign affairs, prove, as usual, his extreme caution in avoiding, as much as possible, any continental embarrassments, which were not immediately necessary to the preservation of external peace and internal tranquillity.

* *Trial*, vol. 20. p. 325. *Journals*. Chandler.

† Horace Walpole's Apology.

The letters on domestic occurrences, are chiefly concerning the murder of captain Porteus; tumults in Spitalfields, on employing Irish manufacturers, and the riots on account of the gin act. They display his good sense and prudence, in endeavouring to prevent rather than punish disturbances, and yet indicate no deficiency of vigour, when it was requisite to act with spirit.

Besides the difficult task of settling the disputes between the Emperor and the allies, which encountered continual obstructions from the discordant views of the contending powers, three foreign objects of great importance principally occupied the attention of the king at Hanover, and gave sufficient employment to the sagacity of Walpole: The regulation of the succession of Berg and Juliers; the project of a league with the northern powers; and the mediation between Russia and the Porte.

John William, duke of Cleves, Juliers, and Berg, dying in 1609 without issue, his dominions were claimed by the houses of Saxony, Brandenburg, and palatine Newburgh. After a long contest, the disputed succession was regulated by a family compact, and divided between the great elector Frederick William, who was descended from the eldest sister of John William, and Philip William, duke of Newburgh, afterwards elector palatine, who was descended from the second sister. Frederick William obtained Cleves, La Marck, and Ravenstein; Philip William, Juliers and Berg. By the family compact, it was stipulated, that should the male issue of either branch become extinct, the other should inherit the whole succession.

As at this period Charles, son of Philip William, had no issue, and was advanced in years, the succession of Berg and Juliers was claimed by Frederick William, king of Prussia, grandson of the great elector. But his claims were opposed by Charles Frederick, prince palatine of Sultzbach, of the collateral line of the house of palatine Newburgh, as being lineally descended from the third sister of the last duke of Cleves. He accordingly remonstrated against the family compact; and was supported in his pretensions by the elector palatine, to whom he was presumptive heir. This succession had long been a favourite object of Frederick William: He was prepared to assert his pretensions with his whole force, on the death of the elector palatine, and was secure of wresting these duchies from the house of Sultzbach, had not the latter been openly supported or secretly abetted by other powers.

It became an object of common prudence and policy, to obviate the difficulties which were likely to arise on the death of the elector palatine, and to regulate, if possible, the provisional succession to the disputed provinces, in such a manner as to prevent the disturbance of the public peace.

Period VI. But the discordant views and complicated interests of the powers who were
 1734 to 1737. capable of interfering with effect, gave little hopes of a successful and stable arrangement.

France had given her guaranty to the house of Sultzbach, but she had given it at a time when she was interested to secure the palatine family, and as that motive no longer operated with the same force, it was probable that she would act in conformity to the situation of affairs at the time of the vacancy.

The Emperor, with his usual duplicity, had secretly guarantied the provisional succession to both the contending parties; but although he had lured Frederick William with the most solemn professions to support his pretensions, yet he was known to be secretly inclined to favour the house of Sultzbach. In all events, however, he was unwilling to offend either Prussia or the palatine family, and was no less anxious than France to avoid a public declaration of his future resolutions.

The Dutch, whose territories bordered on Berg and Juliers, were more than any other power interested to prevent any disturbances on the death of the elector palatine, and extremely anxious to propose such an accommodation as should remove the apprehensions of a war. They therefore applied to the Emperor and France, and desired the king of England's concurrence to act in concert with them, for disposing those two powers to propose instant and proper measures for obviating the troubles by an accommodation between the contending parties, and preventing all hostile aggressions while that accommodation was negotiating.

George the Second, highly disgusted with the king of Prussia, was averse to support any measures which might tend to his aggrandisement, and would not easily be prevailed on to guaranty his succession to Juliers and Berg, unless some advantage was stipulated for himself. For this reason, the Dutch had proposed that East Friesland, to which both he and the king of Prussia had pretensions, should, on the death of the reigning sovereign without issue, revert to George the Second as elector of Hanover, the right of maintaining a garrison in Embden being reserved to the Dutch. They farther recommended, that in consideration of renouncing his claim on East Friesland, such a portion of Juliers and Berg, as might be adjudged to the king of Prussia, should be secured under the guaranty of England.

The king seemed inclined to consent to these stipulations; but the minister, strongly averse to complicated and distant guaranties, expressed his objections to all interference; declared himself against prematurely agreeing to guaranty the succession of Berg and Juliers, in which they might be left singly with the Dutch, or making any declaration which might disoblige
 either

either Prussia or the palatine family. He stated the great inconveniences which might arise from blending that affair with the general transactions then in agitation, when the Emperor and France had agreed to postpone the consideration of it till the chief business of the present negotiation should be concluded. His opinion prevailed, and all thoughts of interference were relinquished *.

The northern league was the object which most embarrassed the minister, and reduced him to the necessity of opposing the king's inclinations. Rosencrantz, the Danish minister at Hanover, with a view to benefit his own country, and Mr. Finch, the British envoy at Stockholm, from a desire of favouring the court at which he was employed, had represented to the king the good policy of forming a league between the maritime powers, and Sweden and Denmark. The king, who understood the interests of Hanover better than those of England, and who could not sufficiently appreciate the great commercial and naval principles by which the minister was actuated in forming alliances and giving guaranties, eagerly embraced, and zealously supported the scheme; and with a view to keep the king of Prussia in awe, proposed † the accession of Russia. He communicated his wishes to the queen, and requested the opinion of Sir Robert Walpole in such a manner, as sufficiently proved to which side he inclined. The minister disapproved the measure, and considered it not only as highly inexpedient, but as absolutely impracticable. He was convinced that such an alliance with Sweden would offend the Czarina, unless she was invited to accede, and that her accession could not be obtained but by guarantying the possession of Livonia and Ingria, which would no less offend Sweden.

Project for a
northern
league.

In his ostensible letter to his brother, Walpole frankly stated his objections to precipitate resolutions, recommended cautious proceedings, and particular attention not to offend the Emperor and Russia, and reprobated expensive and burthenome guaranties.

As the negotiation became more and more complicated, and the king seemed inclined to persevere in his opinion, Walpole prudentially insinuated, that a matter of such extreme delicacy and importance, should be transacted by an official correspondence, rather than by private letters between the king and queen. The king having approved this proposal, Horace Walpole was ordered to prepare the project, and received hints from his brother in

Countersigned
by Walpole.
August 15.

* Sir Robert Walpole to Horace Walpole, June 1st, 1736. Correspondence. Thoughts on the Succession of Berg, Juliers, and East Friesland, by Horace Walpole. Walpole Papers.

—History of the Succession to the Duchies of Juliers and Berg.

† Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, August 5. Correspondence.

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what manner it should be drawn. Being submitted to the king, he highly approved it, and was eager for the conclusion. It was then transmitted to Sir Robert Walpole for the consideration of the queen and the lords justices, and was accompanied by a paper of private observations against the treaty. The minister found this paper so convincing, that although intended for his own use, he communicated it to the queen. Convinced by the soundness of the arguments, she promised to conceal any knowledge of this paper from the king, and to write her sentiments in conformity to that opinion. At the same time, Sir Robert Walpole wrote an ostensible letter to his brother, informing him that he should decline laying the project before the cabinet council, lest the sudden disclosure of so important a transaction, might create surprise and alarm, and proposed to delay the communication until the negotiation was farther advanced, the inclination of the northern courts sounded, and the situation of affairs more settled, "that we may see" he adds "who and who are together, before we form new schemes, that may clash with we know not whom nor how." These prudent measures were attended with the desired effect, and the king finally consented to abandon his favourite project.

This whole transaction reflects equal honour on the minister and the king: On the minister, for frankly delivering his sentiments, and preserving in them, though opposite to those of his sovereign; on the king, for yielding to the arguments and wishes of his faithful counsellor. Those who consider the impatience of contradiction, and pertinacity of opinion, which marked the character of George the Second, will highly appreciate the merit of his submitting to the guidance, and conforming to the advice, which so strongly contradicted his own wishes.

War between
Russia and
the Porte.

In the midst of these transactions, hostilities broke out between the Russians and Turks, which, in consequence of the alliances of France and Sweden with the Turks, and of the Emperor with Russia, appeared likely to excite a general war; yet, contrary to these expectations, this event contributed more than any other cause to accelerate the pacification in Europe. The Emperor, divided between the fear of irritating the Czarina on one hand, and of retarding the peace on the other, and tempted with the hope of sharing the spoils of the Turks, became less averse to the aggrandisement of the house of Bourbon.

Walpole declines
mediating.

A mediation between the contending powers had been proposed by Calcoen, the Dutch minister at Constantinople, and too eagerly adopted by the English ambassador, Sir Everard Fawkener. Walpole was apprehensive lest the Czarina should construe a premature officiousness into a partiality for the Porte.

Porte, and consider it as an attempt to stop the career of that success with which her arms were crowned. Chapter 46.
1736.

He was alarmed, lest the dignity of England should be lowered by offering the mediation before it was desired, and without a certainty of its being accepted. He was convinced, that any attempt to reconcile Russia and the Porte, would be fruitless and ineffectual; and he observed, in a letter to Horace Walpole, "For my part, I think you may as well hope to break in upon the constancy of two lovers in the honey-moon, as to stop the career of two powers just engaged in war, in the heat of their resentment, and before they have had time to feel, to reflect, and grow cool*." His advice prevailed also in this instance, and the mediation was declined.

The signature of the preliminaries between France and the Emperor, did not, however, produce an immediate pacification. Several months elapsed before the kings of Sardinia and Spain could be prevailed on to accede, and when their concurrence was reluctantly obtained, disputes occasionally revived between France and the Emperor, and a long series of negotiation took place before the final ratification. Difficulties
in recon-
ciling the
Emperor and
the allies.

Nor are these delays to be attributed solely to the allies. The Emperor, though a prince of high spirit, and by no means deficient in capacity, was of such a changeful and capricious temper, and appeared so different at different intervals, that to define his real character and situation, confounded the wisdom of the wisest, and baffled the conjectures of the most enlightened. Capricious
disposition
of the Em-
peror.

At one time he was so exasperated with England, that he threatened to separate himself from her for ever, and was so devoted to France, as to induce Mr. Robinson to observe, in a letter to lord Harrington, "This court is too much in the hands of that of Versailles, not to do every thing that the other wills, or to do any thing that the other wills not." At another time he courted England with the greatest eagerness; denounced the house of Bourbon as his irreconcilable enemy, and offended cardinal Fleury by the most arrogant and presumptuous demeanour. With a prince of such a changeful temper, it was no easy task to negotiate. His ministers were no less intractable; and Vienna exhibited a motley scene of pride, humility, cabal, intrigue, and procrastination. June 20.

Another great difficulty arose from the duke of Loraine, who had espoused the eldest archduchess, Maria Theresa, and was unwilling to renounce his family inheritance. He required, that if Loraine was ceded to France before the Dissatisfac-
tion of the
duke of Lo-
raine.

* Sir Robert Walpole to Horace Walpole, August 27 1736. Correspondence.

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death of the grand duke of Tuscany, an adequate compensation should be secured to him. Mr. Robinson, in one of his dispatches, gives a pathetic and interesting account of his extreme distress and agitation on this occasion *. "In an audience which I demanded of him, to announce the marriage of the prince of Wales with the princess of Saxe Gotha, he interrupted me in the midst of his compliments, to pour out his joy at the marriage, and his respect and veneration for the king, which he first expressed aloud; but lest any of his attendants in the next room might overhear, he retreated with me to a window at the farther end of the apartment, and said with the greatest emotion, "Good God, where are you, where are the maritime powers! As for my part," he continued, "I rely upon the king singly, not upon treaties, not upon formal promises, but upon what his majesty has told me over and over again of his goodness for me by word of mouth." If his words expressed the highest agony and distress, his gestures and actions expressed no less: "He threw himself, in a reclining posture, and in an inconsolable manner, upon the arms and end of an adjoining table and chair." "Such also," adds Mr. Robinson, "is the extreme agitation of his mind, that his health is affected by it; he owns that he has no friend to look up to, and that next to God and the Emperor, all his fortune depends on the king of England."

Views and
conduct of
the Em-
peror.

Perhaps these complicated disputes would never have been settled without another war, had not the pacific spirit of Walpole and Fleury interposed, and had not the Emperor, eager to make war against the Turks, with a view to indemnify himself on the side of Bosnia, for the loss of Naples and Sicily, found it previously necessary to secure the peace of Italy, that he might draw his troops into Hungary.

The French, aware of his inclination, refused, under various pretences, to evacuate the Milanese; the Emperor was induced to make repeated concessions, and finally to yield the immediate possession of Lorraine, for the eventual succession of Tuscany. He was so eager to conclude the definitive treaty, that he paid 600,000 florins more than he had stipulated. He gave to the king of Sardinia, estates among the Langhes, as fiefs of the empire, which never belonged to the empire, and suffered that monarch to mark the limits of his dominions according to his own convenience †.

Ineffectual
attempts to
bribe Chau-
velin.

In the course of these various negotiations, Walpole had used every effort to conciliate discordant parties, and to effect a general accommodation.

* Mr. Robinson to lord Harrington, May 30th, 1736. Walpole Papers.

† Thomas Robinson to lord Harrington, August 5. Grantham Papers.

He well knew that the great obstacles to a general peace, proceeded from the intrigues of Chauvelin, who, from the time of his appointment to the office of secretary of state, and keeper of the seals, almost invariably used the ascendancy which he had gained over cardinal Fleury, in counteracting the designs of England. To obtain his co-operation, Walpole directed his principal attention, and even adopted the chimerical project of bribing him to compliance. The prospect of success was principally founded on the extravagance of Chauvelin. He lived in a stile of great profusion. He had laid out, and continued to expend large sums in beautifying his favourite villa of Gros Bois, which vied in magnificence with the royal palaces.

With whom or in what manner the scheme originated, the papers under my inspection do not supply specific information. Sir Robert Walpole was too cautious to make such attempt, had not some favourable circumstances occurred. It is not improbable that a hint imparted by Trevor, and insinuated in a letter from Horace Walpole to queen Caroline, might have suggested the first * idea. It was an experiment which the minister deemed it imprudent to reject, though he never entertained sanguine hopes of success. Perhaps the first opening was afforded by Chauvelin himself, who, to support his own declining interest, was desirous of securing the assistance of Sir Robert Walpole, with whom Fleury was anxious to co-operate in establishing the peace of Europe. But he had no sooner effected a temporary re-establishment of his credit, than he discontinued this private correspondence, rejected all pecuniary gratifications, refused to give any farther information, and became, as before, the inveterate enemy to England.

The origin, progress, and termination of this intrigue, are detailed in the private correspondence which passed between Sir Robert Walpole and the earl of Waldegrave, and was communicated only to the king. In the succeeding year, Chauvelin made another attempt to renew his secret offers, in such a manner as induced the earl of Waldegrave to conclude, that he would accept a bribe. Walpole wrote to the English ambassador, to avoid being again deceived; to offer a large bribe, of not less than £. 5 or 10,000, and if that was not accepted, to obtain the removal of one whom he calls our quondam friend, but now our greatest enemy †.

While this intrigue was in agitation, cardinal Fleury, in a confidential conversation with the earl of Waldegrave, made heavy complaints against

Fleury proposes an alliance with England.

* Horace Walpole to queen Caroline, August 7th, 1735. Correspondence.

† Sir Robert Walpole to the earl of Waldegrave, September 26, 1726. Correspondence.

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the conduct of the British ministers abroad, and proposed, through the channel of Horace Walpole alone, an alliance with England *, to check the ambitious designs of the Emperor, and keep in awe the restless spirit of the queen of Spain, who had so often convulsed Europe to aggrandise her own family. The answer of Horace Walpole began with a spirited remonstrance against the weakness of the cardinal, in listening to all the idle and malicious reports of those who endeavoured to sow dissensions between the two crowns; stated the impossibility of acceding to the proposal of a particular union with France in the present juncture, because Chauvelin would obstruct and disappoint all hopes of bringing it to a successful issue. He concluded with representing, that the king had always had in view the preservation of the tranquillity and equilibrium of Europe; that the numerous treaties which France had made before the late troubles, and the complicated negotiations for the execution of the preliminaries, in which the king had not participated, rendered it impossible to determine what measures or alliances would be most proper for preserving the balance of power, until the whole plan of the peace should be proposed; that if the plan should appear conformable to that great end, the king would support it by every means in his power; and concluded with representing, that the cardinal would always find the king disposed to preserve a good understanding with France.

Secret correspondence with Walpole.

Foiled in this attempt, the cardinal endeavoured to succeed by opening a private correspondence with Sir Robert Walpole, the knowledge of whose pacific sentiments, inspired him with the confidence and hopes of imposing upon him, and drawing him in gradually to abet the alliance with France, and by that means to separate the Emperor still more from England. Two conversations which the cardinal held with the earl of Waldegrave on this subject, will serve to shew the art with which he endeavoured to amuse the British cabinet †.

After delivering his sentiments on the murder of captain Porteus, and recommending lenity to the misled populace who were concerned in that transaction, he represented the necessity of curbing the overgrown power of the Emperor; hinted as his opinion, to be solely communicated to Sir Robert Walpole, that the best method of effecting that end, would be a league of the protestant princes in Europe, to be proposed by England, and supported by France. In reply to these friendly communications, the minister commissioned lord Waldegrave to express great respect for the cardinal, and an

* Horace Walpole to the earl of Waldegrave, August 8-19th, 1735. Correspondence.

† The Earl of Waldegrave's letters to Sir

Robert Walpole, October 23d, and November 21st, 1736. Correspondence.

earnest desire to cultivate his friendship, for the mutual honour and interest of the two kingdoms. At this, the cardinal interrupting him, expressed the highest opinion of Sir Robert Walpole's distinguished abilities, and particularly expatiated on his integrity and spirit, characteristics highly necessary in the composition of a great minister. He then proposed a secret correspondence, through the channel of the earl of Waldegrave, to which, in France, no one should be privy but the king, and in England, only the king and queen; trusting, on his part, that no advantage would be taken, and no hints given of this intercourse.

Although Sir Robert Walpole was not ignorant, that during these overtures, the cardinal had been endeavouring to persuade the Emperor to conclude a definitive treaty, exclusive of the maritime powers, he neither reproached him for his insincerity, nor declined the offer of a confidential communication. He on the contrary affected to disbelieve, while he hinted the report, because, he said, it contradicted the declarations so frequently and solemnly made by the cardinal, that the maritime powers should be included in all the definitive transactions for a treaty, as also, because he did not doubt his sincerity in desiring a particular alliance with England. Uniformly attached to his grand principle of promoting peace by whomsoever, or in whatever manner it was effected, he expressed his readiness to concur in all measures which might be just and honourable to the two nations, and requested him to draw up the heads of a definitive treaty.

Although the earl of Waldegrave justly remarked, from his knowledge of the cardinal's character, that much could not be concluded from these private transactions, they served, however, to preserve harmony, and to soften the immediate effects of that inveterate jealousy which had so long divided the two nations. The mutual interchange of friendly discussion strengthened the pacific sentiments adopted by both ministers, and prevented the hasty renewal of offensive measures. The outlines of the definitive treaty were settled, and the conclusion of the general pacification accelerated.

Another considerable advantage was also unquestionably derived from this private transaction. It gave to Sir Robert Walpole and the earl of Waldegrave, opportunities of representing the malicious conduct of Chauvelin, and occasioned, or hastened his downfall, which took place in the commencement of the ensuing year, and to which the representations of Waldegrave greatly contributed.

Before the dismissal of Chauvelin, an interesting correspondence had passed between the two brothers and the other ministers, relating to a cu-

Fit of the
Correspondence.

Disgrace of
Chauvelin.

The Pretender's
letters.

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nous incident that happened to the earl of Waldegrave at Paris. Chauvelin having, among other papers, by mistake, put into his hands a letter from the Pretender, the ambassador sent it by a courier to the queen. Immediate information was forwarded by Newcastle to the king at Hanover, with the remarks of Sir Robert Walpole. Several letters passed between the minister in London, Horace Walpole at Hanover, and the earl of Waldegrave at Paris, which prove the extreme uneasiness and jealousy excited by this discovery.

Jacobitism at that time produced a tremor through every nerve of government; and the slightest incident which discovered any intercourse between the Pretender and France, occasioned the most serious apprehensions. It was no wonder, therefore, that this event should spread alarms, which the observations of the two brothers were calculated to obviate. The letters which passed, on this occasion, are given in order of date, and are sufficiently explicit without any farther illustrations*.

Riots in
London :

During the absence of the king at Hanover, where he remained till the beginning of January, the spirit of discontent and insurrection was busy at home; and various tumults took place in the capital, and other parts of the kingdom. In the capital, these disturbances were occasioned by the weavers in Spitalfields, who took umbrage that the Irish were employed at an inferior rate of wages; and by the discontent of the populace, excited by the execution of the gin act.

And Edinburgh.

These alarming riots, which were notoriously fomented by the disaffected, were scarcely suppressed, when a more atrocious outrage demanded the attention of government. One Wilson, a daring smuggler, was sentenced to be hanged at Edinburgh, for having robbed a collector of the revenue. This man, having abetted the escape of his fellow criminal, in the time of divine service, and from the midst of his guards, the magistrates of Edinburgh increased their usual precautions for the execution of the sentence, by ordering the officers of the train bands and the city guard, provided with arms and ammunition, to attend for the purpose of preventing his rescue. The procession passed along; the sentence was performed without the smallest appearance of a riot, and the executioner was at the top of the ladder cutting down the body, when the magistrates retired. At this moment, the populace rushed forward towards the gallows, part forced their way through the guards, with intention, as was supposed, to carry off the body, under the hopes of recovering it. Others threw large stones, maimed several soldiers, and

* Correspondence. Period VI. Article, the Pretender's Letter.

struck captain Porteous, who was so provoked at this outrage, that he ordered the soldiers to fire. Five were killed, and several wounded. Porteous was immediately apprehended, and tried, for having directed the soldiers to fire without the orders of the civil magistrate, and was condemned to death. But so many favourable circumstances appeared on his trial, that seven of the fifteen jurymen acquitted him, and the verdict which condemned him, acknowledged that "he and his guards were attacked and beat with several stones of a considerable bigness, thrown by the multitude, whereby several of the soldiers were bruised and wounded *." In consequence of this ridiculous inconsistency in the verdict, and other favourable circumstances, the queen regent lent down a respite of six weeks, for the purpose of inquiring into the circumstances of the case.

On the 3d, the reprieve was brought to Edinburgh, and on the 4th, vague reports were circulated, that the populace had resolved, on the evening of the 8th, to set fire to the prison, if Porteous was not executed on that day, according to his sentence. But the magistrates, on inquiry, could not discover any foundation for the report, and no precaution was taken to remove the prisoner into the castle. On Tuesday the 7th, about a quarter before ten at night, the magistrates had notice, that a few boys had seized the drum in the suburb of West Port, and beat it in the Grass Market within the city. About six minutes before ten, they sent to call out the guard immediately under arms; but a few minutes before the clock struck, a mob suddenly rushed in upon, and surprised the guards, drove them from the guard room, seized all their arms, being ninety firelocks in number, besides several Lochaber axes, and almost at the same time made themselves masters of the city gates. They then provided themselves with shot, by breaking open the shops where ammunition was sold, attacked the jail, drove out the provost and magistrates, who attempted to disperse them, and wounded several of their attendants. They next set fire to the gate of the prison, and rushed into the wards, forced the turnkeys to open the doors, released all the prisoners, seized Porteous, and dragged him to the Grass Market, where they broke into a shop, took out a coil of ropes, and hung him upon a dyer's cross post, close to the common place of execution †. Lindsay, member for the city, found means to escape from the town, and to convey information of the tumult to general Moyle, commander of the king's troops, who were quartered in the suburbs; but as he was obliged to

Murder of
Porteous.

* Trial and Sentence. Political State, 1736; and Gentleman's Magazine.

† Narrative of the Tumult. Correspondence.

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make a large circuit, he did not reach the head quarters till near eleven. General Moyle had already collected his own troops, and sent for those who were quartered at Leith, but made no attempt to force the gate of the city, which was occupied by the armed populace. He persisted in refusing to act against the insurgents, on the faith of Lindsay's intelligence, without an order from the civil magistrate; and as he deemed it impossible to obtain an order from the magistrate in the city, he dispatched a messenger to Andrew Fletcher, lord justice clerk of Scotland, who was at his villa at the distance of above two miles and a half. Fletcher being in bed, no answer was procured until one o'clock, and by some mistake, it was then delivered not to the general, but to Lindsay. Meanwhile, the execution of Porteous had taken place, the exertions of the military were rendered unnecessary, by the dispersion of the rioters, and in the morning, Edinburgh was in a state of perfect tranquillity.

Lord Hay was sent to Edinburgh, as the only person capable of bringing the offenders to justice. The accounts * which he transmitted to Sir Robert Walpole, proved that a regular systematic plan had been formed with the utmost secrecy and order; that several made this infamous murder a point of conscience; and that one of the actors went to a country church, where the sacrament was given to a large number of people in the church-yard, and boasted of the share which he had taken in the transaction. He observed, that persons who affected sanctity, spoke of the murder as the hand of God doing justice, and reprobated all endeavours to bring the actors to condign punishment, as grievous persecution. He added also, that although several persons had been imprisoned, and large rewards offered, no discoveries had been made of the perpetrators or instigators of this atrocious act.

* Correspondence.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SEVENTH.

1737.

Meeting of Parliament.—Speech from the Throne.—Proceedings:—On the Bill respecting the Tumults at Edinburgh.—On Sir John Barnard's Scheme for the Reduction of Interest.—Licentiousness of the Stage.—Origin and Progress of the Playhouse Bill.

THIS session of parliament, which opened on the 1st of February, was as unquiet and stormy, as the last had been easy and tranquil.

Meeting of parliament.

The parliamentary proceedings which it is necessary to notice, are the debates respecting the tumults in Edinburgh; Sir John Barnard's proposal for the reduction of interest; the playhouse bill, and the motion for an address to the king, to settle £. 100,000 per annum on the prince of Wales.

Parliamentary proceedings.

The speech from the throne noticed the late disturbances, but without any specific mention of the tumult at Edinburgh. It was answered by loyal addresses from both houses, expressing their abhorrence of such outrages, and their resolution to support the royal authority in suppressing all riotous and seditious attempts, which threatened the very being of the constitution. The minister, however, seems to have been embarrassed in what manner to introduce the inquiry. Fortunately, lord Carteret relieved him from this dilemma. Although he was in violent opposition to the measures of administration, yet he justly thought that the indignity committed against the established government, should not remain unpunished. He accordingly referred to that part of the speech which alluded to the tumults in various parts of the kingdom. After arguing that these riots did not proceed from disaffection to government, and complaining, that notwithstanding the power with which the civil magistrate was armed, the military force had been employed in suppressing them, he adverted to the murder of captain Porteous, which he particularly stigmatised as a most atrocious deed; observing that the conspiracy which had effected it was the more dreadful, because it was concerted and executed with great deliberation and method, and was attended with no other disorder. He was of opinion, that some citizens of Edinburgh

On the murder of Porteous.

In the house of lords.

burgh

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burgh had been concerned in the murder; that the magistrates had encouraged the riot, and that the city had forfeited its charter; he concluded with expressing hopes that an inquiry would be made into the particulars and circumstances of the case.

The duke of Newcastle and the lord chancellor, after contending for the necessity of employing the military force in suppressing riots and putting the laws in execution, and justifying the reprieve of captain Porteous, did not resist or promote the investigation proposed by lord Carteret; they only argued for a general inquiry into the causes and circumstances of the riot, and not for a specific inquiry into the disturbances. Carteret, in reply, maintained the necessity of a particular inquiry, and of confining it to the tumult at Edinburgh. The earl of Ilay, after opposing the forfeiture of the charter, and observing that the outrages had originated from disaffection to government, declared himself in favour of a particular inquiry, and expressed his readiness to join in any proposition for that purpose. A motion was accordingly made by Carteret, for the attendance of the magistrates, and other persons who could give the necessary information, and for an address to the king, that copies of the trial of captain Porteous, and the account of the murder, should be laid before the house.

In consequence of this motion, which passed without opposition, the respective documents were produced. In examining the proceedings of the trial, it plainly appeared that Porteous was fully justified, from the principles of self-defence, in firing upon the mob, and that the reprieve granted by the queen was founded on law and justice; and as the constitution of the criminal law in Scotland was different from that in England, it appeared incomprehensible to most of the peers, that a person could be condemned to death, upon a verdict so inconsistent with common justice. Accordingly, it was suggested by Carteret, to declare the verdict erroneous; this proposal was opposed by the earl of Ilay and the lord chancellor, and no motion was made*.

Having thus justified the proceedings of government, the next object was to discover those who were concerned in the murder, and to punish all who either concerted or connived at it. The magistrates of Edinburgh, the commander in chief of the forces, Lindsay, member for the city, as well as the Scots judges, were severally and separately examined at the bar. Their allegations, however, were confused and unsatisfactory; but proofs appeared that the magistrates had not been sufficiently active in preventing the rising of the mob, or in suppressing it when excited. Yet no legal evidence was obtained to convict them, nor did it appear that any of

* * * Lords' Debates.

the citizens had been accessory to the murder, and not a single person was discovered who had been concerned in it. Notwithstanding this deficiency, the majority of the peers thought it necessary to bring in a bill of pains and penalties against the provost and city, for conniving at, or not preventing the perpetration of so atrocious a deed.

The bill was opposed in a very animated speech by the duke of Argyle, who contended that it was an *ex post facto* law, punishing a whole community for crimes within the reach of the inferior courts of justice. It was nevertheless carried by a majority of 54 against 22, and sent down to the commons, under the title of "An Act to disable Alexander Wilson, esquire, from taking, holding, or enjoying, any office or place of magistracy, in the city of Edinburgh, or elsewhere, in Great Britain, for imprisoning the said Alexander Wilson, and for abolishing the guard kept up in the said city, commonly called the town guard; and for taking away the gates of the Nether Bow Port of the said city, and keeping open the same."

May 12.

Such was the title, and such were the penalties of this famous bill, as it was sent to the commons. It is certain, the ministerial party in the house of peers, had not thoroughly considered the nature of the Scottish constitution, as left by the act of union; nor was the evidence sufficient for justifying the severities contained in the bill. Wilson, the lord provost, was a weak well-meaning man, and had acted to the best of his courage and capacity; and the greatest imputation fixed on him by evidence, was his not having been active in arming the citizens the day before the riot had happened, when only vague rumours were whispered. With respect to the penalties inflicted upon the city of Edinburgh, doubts were raised whether they could regularly be imposed, even by a British parliament, consistently with the articles of union*.

Accordingly, the opposition was violent and strenuous; most of the persons who had appeared at the house of lords, were again examined before the commons; petitions were received, and counsel heard against the bill. The Scottish members, who were affected by the stigma to be affixed on their capital, and looked upon the question as a national concern, uniformly opposed, and many of them, particularly Duncan Forbes, the lord advocate of Scotland, displayed great abilities. On every reading it produced fresh debates, and in one instance was carried only by the casting voice of colonel Bladen, the chairman of the committee.

In the house of commons

Walpole spoke only on the first reading, and then he said but a few words

* Tindal,

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in reply to those who objected to the bill, because it originated in the house of lords. He observed, that he was as jealous of their right as any other gentleman could be, but thought too scrupulous a jealousy at this time might be attended with the worst consequences. In reply to an observation of Duncan Forbes, that tenderness ought to be shewn to the corporations and boroughs which the commons represented, especially those of Scotland, he urged that the commitment of the bill was the greatest mark of tenderness which could be shewn. It was to punish, in an exemplary manner, a practice that had been too much encouraged; a practice, which if not suppressed, must destroy the right of all corporations, and perhaps abolish the privileges of the house, and the very form of the constitution. He concluded, by saying, that gentlemen would not oppose the bill without better reasons than any that had yet appeared. He did not enter into the merits, or discuss the proofs of the objections urged by the Scottish lawyers, but left those points to be argued by the attorney and solicitor general. He by no means made it a ministerial question. In the house of lords, some of his friends had promoted and others resisted it, and on one question, the duke of Newcastle and lord chancellor Hardwicke had voted on different sides. The same circumstance occurred in the house of commons. Some of the most violent opposers of government befriended the bill, and others absented themselves while it was depending. He was most anxious that the queen should be justified for granting the reprieve, and that some punishment should be inflicted on the magistrates, as an example to deter others, and to render the civil power responsible for outrages committed in their jurisdiction: A salutary and essential act of policy.

When these points were gained, he was not inclined to enforce the penalties. He suffered therefore the bill to be modified and mitigated. That part which ordered the abolition of the city guard, and the demolition of the gates, was omitted, and the whole was reduced to an act "for disabling Alexander Wilson, the provost, from taking, holding, or enjoying, any office, or place of magistracy, in the city of Edinburgh, or elsewhere, in Great Britain, and for imposing a fine upon the said corporation, of £. 2,000, for the benefit of the widow of Porteous *." The bill, however, thus mitigated and rendered "stingless †," met with unceasing opposition, and after having narrowly escaped being thrown out, was sent back to the lords, who agreed to the amendments, and it finally received the royal assent.

* Tindal.

† Ibid.

While this act was in agitation, another passed the lords, and was sent down to the commons, "For the more effectual bringing to justice, any persons concerned in the barbarous murder of captain John Porteous, and punishing such as shall knowingly conceal any of the said offenders." This bill was of a severe nature, and was directed to be read, for a stated time, by the established clergy of Scotland, in their pulpits, every Sunday. Amongst other clauses, it contained an indemnity to any person who was concerned in the murder, provided he discovered and convicted an accomplice, before the first of February. This clause was added to the bill by the commons, as was also another, promising "a reward of £. 200 to any one who should discover, and convict, by their evidence, any person concerned in the murder." These provisions were by many thought too severe, and censured as giving too great encouragement to informers. The Scots, when the act was read to them, treated it with the utmost contempt; and though many thousands were publicly concerned in the murder, and some of them tried, yet none were legally convicted*.

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June 3.

These proceedings augmented the unpopularity of the minister, by inflaming the resentment of Scotland, and facilitated the efforts of the duke of Argyle, to return, at the next elections, a majority of the Scots members in favour of opposition.

Sir Robert Walpole incurred great censure by the alienation of the sinking fund; and has been exposed to no less obloquy, for his opposition to Sir John Barnard's scheme, for reducing the interest of the national debt. He has been accused by party, prejudice, or misapprehension, of the meanest motives for adopting this line of conduct: motives so contradictory, that they refute each other. By some †, he was suspected of having clandestinely promoted the introduction of the bill. It was insinuated that, at first, he intended it should pass; and that he only deferred the measure until the queen, who was supposed to have a million in the funds, could sell out to advantage. Others ‡, on the contrary, ascribe his opposition to the mean spirit of jealousy, and reproach the minister with having exerted the whole power of government, that he might deprive Sir John Barnard of his due applause.

Proposal for the reduction of interest.

In the committee of supply the minister moved a resolution, that a sum of one million should be taken from the sinking fund, and applied to redeem a million of old South Sea annuities. The motion was opposed by

March 9.

* Tindal, vol. 20, p. 344.—The reader is referred for the above particulars, to the Correspondence—Lords' Debates—Chandler—Journals—Tindal—Political State of Great Britain.

† Opinions of the Duchess of Marlborough, p. 45.

‡ Sinclair on the Revenue, chap. 5.

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several members, principally of the minority, who argued for the expediency of appropriating that sum to the discharge of the debt due to the bank, because the interest paid to the bank was six per cent. whereas that on the other parts of the public debt did not exceed four. They accordingly proposed the amendment; but the original motion was carried without a division.

Sir John Barnard's
scheme.

On the 14th of March the resolution was reported and agreed to*. On this occasion, Sir John Barnard proposed, that the house should resolve itself into a committee, to take into consideration the national debt, and to receive any proposal which might be made to reduce the interest to three per cent. The minister, after a few observations on the danger of meddling with public credit, or taking any step which might be likely to affect it, without the most mature reflection, declared that he had no objection to a committee, because time would be allowed for deliberation; and concluded, that if any reasonable scheme for reducing the interest should be then proposed, he should readily agree to it.

On the 18th, the account of the national debt, which amounted to £.47,866,596, was produced. On the 21st, the house resolved into a committee of supply, and Sir John Barnard brought forward his scheme. With a view to popularity, it was called, a proposal towards lowering the interest of all the redeemable debts to three per cent. and thereby to enable the parliament to give immediate ease to his majesty's subjects, by taking off some of the taxes which are most burthensome to the poor, and especially to the manufacturers, as likewise to give ease to the people, by lessening the annual taxes for the current service of the year†.

Though

* Journals.

† The proposal was as follows:

"That an offer be made to the proprietors of the South Sea annuities, as well old as new, at such times as the respective transfer books shall be shut, in the following manner, viz. That all persons be at liberty to make their option for the whole, or any part of their capital of one or more of the particulars under-mentioned, for which books be laid open at the South Sea house, for so long time as shall be thought proper, viz. All who desire to be paid their money, to enter their names and sums in one book. Those who shall chuse to have annuities for certain terms of years, and the capital to be annihilated, may subscribe in particular books for that purpose, at the following rates:

"For 47 Years at 4 per Cent. per Ann.

31 Years at	5	-	-	-
23½ Years at	6	-	-	-
19 Years at	7	-	-	-
16 Years at	8	-	-	-
13½ Years at	9	-	-	-
12 Years at	10	-	-	-

"That the proprietors of so much of the capital, as shall not be claimed in money, nor subscribed into some of the annuities for terms of years, shall, for the future, be intitled to an annuity of 3 per cent. per annum only. And for the encouragement of the annuitants to accept of 3 per cent. per annum, it is proposed, that they be not subject to redemption or diminution of their annuities for the term of 14 years. And that all the annuities for terms of years be transferable at the South Sea house, without

Though the principle of the measure was such as to intitle its founder to expect much popularity, yet as the interests and prejudices of many persons were to be combated, great opposition was excited, and the stores of argument and calculation exhausted in defending the plan.

Sir John Barnard moved, in a committee of supply, "that his majesty be enabled to raise money, either by sale of annuities for years or lives, at such rates as should be prescribed, or by borrowing at an interest not exceeding three per cent. to be applied towards redeeming old and new South Sea annuities, and that such of the annuitants as should be inclined to subscribe their respective annuities, should be preferred to all others."

This motion occasioned long debates. It was principally defended by the landed, and resisted by the monied interest, and the minister's friends were divided. The house did not appear inclined to adopt any specific determination; some of those who were averse to the measure, declared themselves incapable of giving their opinion, without due reflection and more information. They moved, therefore, that the farther consideration should be deferred till that day se'nnight, which was agreed to without opposition. This point being carried, the adversaries of the bill made another effort, which was attended with success. It had been urged as an objection, that a considerable part of the South Sea annuities belonged to widows and orphans, and to persons who were proprietors of small sums: This suggestion had a great effect upon the house. Willing therefore to take advantage of this impression,

without any charge; as well as the annuities which shall be continued at 3 per cent. per annum. And that all the annuities for terms of years, commence from the determination of the annuities of 4 per cent. without any loss of time. It is apprehended, that this offer will be more beneficial to the proprietors than the remaining in their present situation, and receiving a million at a time, to be divided alternately between the old and the new annui-

tants, which must affect them in a very high manner, as it tends greatly to reduce their capital, by continual laying out the money paid off in new annuities at advanced prices.

"If the parliament should be willing to indulge any persons, not being foreigners, who may be advanced in years, with annuities for term of life; the following rates are submitted to the consideration of gentlemen who have turned their thoughts to this subject, viz.

To Persons 44 Years old, or upwards, 7 per Cent. for Life.

53	-	-	-	8
59	-	-	-	9
63	-	-	-	10

"If these rates for lives, or any other rates, should be thought convenient to be offered; it is then proposed, that the old and new annuitants be permitted to subscribe any part of their capital, they being within the limitation of years above expressed; and that none of the proposals foregoing be made for ready money;

because it is reasonable that the present creditors should have the preference in any advantageous offer made by the parliament, as this is apprehended to be, since money may be raised at 3 per cent. per annum, with a liberty of redeeming the same at pleasure."

Period VI. they moved on the following day, that an account should be laid before the
 1734 to 1737. house, of the quantity of old and new South Sea annuity stock, holden by any executors, administrators, or trustees; which accounts were presented on the ensuing Friday.

Hitherto the minister took no public part, either for or against the scheme; although he was generally supposed * to be inclined in its favour. But from this period he was determined to oppose it, though he thought it prudent to act with circumspection, as many members, who were personally attached to him, favoured the measure. In this situation the minister had watched the progress of public opinion, and found it decidedly adverse to the proposal, which excited the most violent clamours among the proprietors of the funds.

During the adjournment of the business, the ministerial papers were filled with objections to the measure, and a perspicuous statement †, exposing

* Robert to Horace Walpole. Trevor, April 19, 1737. Correspondence. Opinions of the duchess of Marlborough.

† "As I can by no means approve of the scheme, published in your paper of Saturday last, for reducing the interest of the national debt to 3 per cent. I shall, for the sake of those who are not acquainted with calculations of this kind, make a few observations on the proposed method of reduction, that such proprietors of the public funds may see how far their interests are like to be affected by it. And, in the first place, I observe, that the annuities proposed for certain terms of years are calculated at compound interest, allowing the annuitants 3 per cent. for their money, and the surplus of the annuity is to reimburse them their purchase money at the same rate of interest.

"To explain this, I shall fix upon the first annuity proposed, which is 4 per cent. for 47 years, at the end of which the capital is to be annihilated. By this proposal, the purchaser is to receive 3 per cent. interest, and the remaining 1 per cent. is to reimburse the purchase money in the term proposed at compound interest; but I cannot think this a fair method of computation in the present case; for, although it be true, that £. 1 per annum will, in 47 years, amount to £. 100 at compound interest; yet it is highly improbable, if not impossible, that interest upon interest, or indeed any interest at all, should be made of such small sums for 47 years running, as must be

done, to raise the sum advanced; and therefore such a method of calculation must be fallacious, and nothing but the surplus of the annuity can be safely relied on for reimbursement of the purchase money; and then it will be evident to the meanest capacity, that if the annuitants are allowed 3 per cent. for their purchase money, they will, at the end of 47 years, have received no more than 47 per cent. of their principal; and in all the other cases the purchasers of the proposed annuities will be considerable losers; only it is to be observed, that the shorter the term is, the less the loss will be: for if the annuity be 7 per cent. for 19 years, the purchasers will receive back 76 per cent. and if 10 per cent. be allowed for 12 years, they will receive back 84 per cent. of their principal money: The reason of which is very obvious to those who know, that compound interest is a series of geometrick progression.

"Secondly, I observe, that if, out of any of the proposed annuities, there is annually reserved a sum sufficient to reimburse the purchase money, the annuitants will not receive an interest of 2 per cent. upon their principal. And for the proof of this, I shall only take notice of the two extremes and middle term in the annuities proposed; by which it will appear, that if £. 2 out of £. 4 be reserved for 47 years, it will raise no more than £. 94, and if £. 5 out of £. 7 be reserved for 19 years, it will amount to no more than £. 95, and £. 8 out of £. 10 for 12 years, will give only £. 96.

"Thirdly, It is to be observed, that the method

exposing its inexpediency, appeared in the Whitehall Evening Post, which was either drawn up by the minister himself, or approved by him. In the same paper, of the 26th, an appeal was made to the feelings and passions of the public, in which the bill was described, as tending to ruin trade, to depopulate the capital, to impoverish widows and orphans, to reduce the farmers to day labourers, and the sons of noblemen and gentlemen to farmers.

These exaggerated declamations made a deep impression on the public mind. When the house met on the 28th to resume the consideration of the bill, Sir John Barnard entered into a full explanation of his scheme, and laboured with great address and ability to obviate these popular objections. He went over all the grounds of political expediency, and in the course of a very long and ingenious explanation, urged, that in every view of the subject, relating to the extension of commerce, both domestic and foreign, to the en-

Sir John
Barnard's
speech.

method proposed will not enable the parliament to give immediate ease to his majesty's subjects, by taking off some of the taxes which are most burthensome to the poor, and especially to the manufacturers: For, by the first proposal, the same annual interest which is now paid, viz. 4 per cent. is to be continued for 47 years; and consequently the taxes by which that interest is raised must be continued for that term, which will give but small relief to the present generation. And in all the other cases, the annual interest must be augmented, instead of being reduced: for if the proprietors of £. 20,000,000 of the public debts could be supposed to accept any of these annuities upon the terms proposed, the annual interest must then be increased in the following manner, viz.

For 31 Years	£. 200,000 per Ann.
23½ Years	£. 400,000
19 Years	£. 600,000
16 Years	£. 800,000
13½ Years	£. 1,000,000
12 Years	£. 1,200,000

"Fourthly, I observe, That the other part of the scheme, which relates to annuities upon lives, is liable to the same objection: for if the proposed annuities are taken at a medium of 8½ per cent. and the lives are supposed at a medium to continue 18 years (which very nearly coincides with the rules laid down for finding the number of years due to any given life) then it will be evident, that a further interest of 4½ per cent. must be raised to pay

such annuities, which will more than double the present annual interest.

"Fifthly, It is to be observed, that this scheme is not calculated for the good of the whole, but, according to the old proverb, to rob Peter to pay Paul, or, to remove the burthen from one part of the community, and lay it upon another, and upon that part too which hath already contributed no less than six shillings and eight-pence in the pound towards lessening the public debts. I am unwilling to charge the author with an intention to oppress the proprietors of the public funds, though his scheme manifestly tends to it: but why does his tenderness lie all on one side? Is there no part of it due to those widows and orphans, who have no other way of subsistence, but the income of small fortunes in government securities? For my part, I cannot perceive the honesty or policy of easing one part of the community, by distressing another; neither can I apprehend any wisdom or justice in making invidious distinctions between the landed and monied interest, since it is in a great measure owing to those, who ventured their fortunes in the public funds, that the Protestant part of this nation have any lands or liberties left. I do therefore hope that their present interest will not be lessened; but if nothing else will serve, I am persuaded I can propose a way of doing it that will be the least injurious to them of any that can be thought of, which, if called upon, I am ready to publish."

couragement.

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couragement of industry, the increase of population, the augmentation of the manufactures, and the improvement of agriculture, this plan would be attended with the most extensive and beneficial consequences. He said, that even those public securities which bore an interest of three per cent. only, were sold at a premium in Change Alley: he was, therefore, persuaded, that all those who were willing to give a premium for a three per cent. security, would gladly lend their money to government for the same interest, should books of subscription be opened for that purpose, with an assurance, that no part of the principal should be paid off for fourteen years. He expatiated on the national advantages that would accrue from a reduction of interest. From a long series of calculations, he inferred, that in a very little time the interest upon all the South Sea annuities would be reduced from four to three per cent. without any danger to public credit, or breach of public faith; that then the produce of the sinking fund would amount to fourteen hundred thousand pounds per annum, to be applied only towards redeeming the capital of the several trading companies: he proved that this measure would bring every one of them so much within the power of parliament, that they would be glad to accept of three per cent. interest on any reasonable terms; in which case the sinking fund would rise to one million six hundred thousand pounds per annum. Then the parliament might venture to annihilate one half of it, by freeing the people from the taxes upon coals, candles, soap, leather, and other such impositions as lay heavy upon the poor labourers and manufacturers: the remaining part of the sinking fund might be applied towards the discharge of those annuities and public debts, which bore an interest of three per cent. only, and afterwards, towards diminishing the capitals of the several trading companies, till the term of fourteen years should be expired; then the sinking fund would again amount to above a million yearly, which would be sufficient for paying them off, and freeing the nation entirely from all its incumbrances *."

Indirectly
opposed by
Walpole.

Walpole, among others, replied to this statement, but his arguments were confined to shew that the time was improper for the reduction of interest†. He was fully convinced that the proposal, in the shape it was offered by Sir John Barnard, was neither expedient or practicable. It became necessary therefore either to amend or throw it out. To throw it out by direct opposition, was not in his power, as notwithstanding its increasing unpopularity without doors, it still seemed agreeable to the general sense of the house, and was warmly supported by many of the members who were personally attached

* Chandler. Smollett's History of England, vol. 2. p. 521.

† Chandler.

to him. His confidential friend, Mr. Howe, who, in consequence of the uniform support which he gave to his administration, was afterwards created lord Chedworth, had proposed the scheme in the warmest terms of approbation. He had said that the country gentlemen would be benefited by the reduction; that the landed interest required, and were intitled to relief, that the land had hitherto been loaded with all the burthens, while the funds had borne none; and that their necessities had arisen from the abundance of the stocks*. Under these circumstances, Walpole, apprehensive that it would be carried with all its imperfections, adopted indirect means of throwing it out. At the close of the debate, his friend Winnington proposed to extend the reduction to all the redeemable debts. He observed, that he would not enter into the question, whether a reduction of interest would tend to the advantage of the nation, or whether the natural interest of money lent on public security was below three per cent. But should both be resolved in the affirmative, according to the principles of the bill, he must condemn the injustice and partiality of confining the reduction to the South Sea annuities. He was of opinion, that it ought to be extended in its operation to all the public creditors. These, he concluded, were his sentiments, and if they were approved by the house, he should move for resolutions to redeem all public debts that were redeemable by law, and to enable the king to borrow money at three per cent. for that purpose.

Proposal extended.

These observations seemed to meet the general sentiments of the house, and Sir John Barnard could not venture to oppose them. He observed, however, that the proposal was intended to frustrate his scheme, by introducing such amendments as must render it abortive, according to the old proverb, "Grasp at all, and lose all." He added, that although government could borrow money at three per cent. sufficient to pay so many proprietors of the South Sea annuities as were willing to accept that interest, because their united stock did not exceed twenty-four millions, yet it would be extremely difficult to obtain such a loan as would discharge the whole of the redeemable fund, which amounted to forty-four millions. But as the scheme, even thus amended, might be productive of signal advantage to the nation, he should not oppose it, and he hoped the honourable gentleman would move for such a resolution as he had just intimated. Two resolutions were accordingly moved for by Winnington. They contained in substance, "That all the public funds, redeemable by law, which carry an interest of

* Heads of Mr. Howe's Speech; Parliamentary Memorandums. Oxford Papers.

Period VI. 1734 to 1737. four per cent. per annum, be redeemed according to the respective provisos or clauses of redemption contained in the acts of parliament for that purpose, or (with consent of the proprietors) be converted into an interest or annuity, not exceeding three per cent. per annum, not redeemable till after fourteen years. That his majesty be enabled to borrow from any person or persons, bodies politic or corporate, any sum or sums of money, at an interest not exceeding three per cent. to be applied towards redeeming the national debt *."

March 30. These resolutions being reported, and carried by a majority of 220 to 157, in which division Walpole appeared in the minority, Sir John Barnard, Wortley Montague, and the master of the rolls, were ordered to prepare a bill accordingly †.

Motion for abolition of taxes. Sir John Barnard, however, had not sufficient discretion to be satisfied with this partial victory; instead of weakening the resistance to his favourite scheme, by making it as much as possible a great national object, he on the contrary united a numerous body of adversaries, lost the vantage ground on which he before stood, and reduced it to a mere party question. He followed up the report by moving, "that the house would, as soon as the interest of all the national redeemable debt should be reduced to £.3 per cent. per annum, take off some of the heavy taxes which oppressed the poor, and the manufacturer ‡."

His view in making this unprecedented motion, was to attach popularity to his bill; but it had a contrary effect, for it was proved to be fallacious, illusory, and irregular. It was fallacious, because it assumed as facts, statements that were not true; that the public imposts fell more heavily upon the poor in England, than in other countries, and implied, that the reduction of the interest from four to three per cent. would compensate for the loss of the revenue if those taxes were abolished. It was illusory, because it held out a prospect of taking off the taxes several years before the reduction could be effected; and it was irregular, because it bound future parliaments to the adoption of a measure which might not at a future time be feasible. It was ably and unanswerably argued by the minister, and those who opposed it, that to agree to the resolution, would be exposing the public to unavoidable disappointment, "that it would be time enough to come to a resolution to abolish some taxes, when the scheme had taken effect, for if such a previous resolution should be adopted, and the scheme should afterwards prove altogether abortive, the whole world would laugh at their precipitancy."

* Chandler, vol. 9. p. 452.

† Tindal. Chandler. Journals.

‡ Journals.

Chapter 47.

1737.

Rejected.

Bill introduced.

April 22.

Walpole's speech.

In the speech which Sir John Barnard made in defence of this motion, he betrayed such a confusion of projects, and indistinctness of ideas, assumed so many principles which were untrue, and so violently transgressed the bounds of parliamentary engagement, that the motion was negatived, by 200 against 142, and the public clamour very much heightened.

Under these unfavourable circumstances, the bill, prepared on the basis of Winnington's resolutions, was presented to the house by Sir John Barnard, and it was read the first time.

On the 29th, the bill was read a second time, and a motion being made for recommitting it, it was no less resolutely supported than vigorously attacked. Several speakers on both sides had been heard before Walpole delivered his sentiments.

He began by denying the truth of an assertion, which had been assiduously disseminated, that Sir John Barnard had held private conferences with him, and settled the scheme then in agitation. He proceeded to review his own conduct during its progress; acknowledged that he had acquiesced in the committee, but that on the first reading, feeling some doubts on the propriety of the measure, he had desired time to weigh maturely its beneficial against its evil consequences. "But whatever doubts," he continued, "I might then entertain, deliberate reflection has removed them, and convinced me of its inefficiency.

"The measure is founded on plausible assumptions, that it is better to pay three than four per cent. and that it is desirable to discharge the debt of the nation. These positions are undoubtedly true; but the question is, whether the method proposed to effect them is just and adequate? We must take care not to confound public necessity with public utility. Public utility differs essentially from profit or benefit gained to the public; for when profit accrues to the public, at the expence of many individuals, it loses all claim to consideration under the title of public utility. This house, in carefully attending to their duty as guardians of the national purse, must not forget that they are trustees for the creditors. We must not assume a right to prejudice the public creditors, or to convert the right of redemption which we possess, into a right of reduction, to which we have no claim. Debts not originally subject to reduction, are, in that respect, in the situation of irredeemables, and the faith of parliament is equally pledged to prevent any reduction without the consent of the proprietors. If we advert to the time and manner in which these debts were created, every argument against the reduction of interest, acquires a great additional force. At that disastrous period, the creditors of the South Sea and East India com-

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panies had a power to demand the whole amount of their bonds. Their forbearance was essentially necessary to the defence and well-being of the community, for, had they persisted in claiming their principal, the whole must have fallen on the landed interest, or the result must have been such as I dare not mention, or hardly think of. And is the service then rendered to the country, to be now repaid by a compulsory reduction of their dividends? I call it compulsory, for any reduction by terror, can only be described by that name. If they are to be so reduced, the pretence is, that it will ease the current service, or take off taxes; but that would be only to take the taxes off others, to be imposed on them, in the most cruel and insupportable manner. It would be equally just to take away one fourth from the income of every individual, or to deprive him of one fourth of his lands or stock in trade; or rather the injustice would be less in such case, because the national creditor is, by express contract, exempt from all public taxes and impositions.

“Nor is it true that the interest proposed is equivalent to the value of money, for though money cannot be invested in the funds without an advance above three per cent. at par, yet all loans on real securities, on estates, or on personal securities, bear a much higher interest. The preference given to the funds, arises from various causes; from the facility of receiving interest, cheapness of transfer; and from none more than the faith placed in the national honour, which is bound to suffer no loss to fall on the public creditor. Stock, while the credit remains untarnished, is but another name for ready money bearing interest, a property which in no other case can attach to ready money; and if the confidence now placed in the guardians of the public honour is diminished, even that advantage will not in future tempt individuals to trust their money out of their own custody. No diminution of taxes, or other contingent advantage, can compensate for such a privation; nor is it to be compared to a repayment of the principal at any time, however inconvenient, for it is not to be supposed that any one would prefer a sudden and absolute privation of one fourth of his whole income, to the casual and distant resumption of 10 or 15 per cent. on his capital, not to be effected without an equivalent payment, which may be delayed by accident, or frustrated by necessity.

“The injustice of the present plan appears in this; that it is calculated to mark out all the great companies, and to benefit the borrowers at the expence of the lenders. But this is not the whole extent of the evil. A double duty is incumbent on the legislature; to use their utmost exertions towards paying the national debt, and to avoid creating distresses and discontent.

content. Now the whole number of persons interested in the stock to be affected by the proposed measure, is about 23,000, of these, upwards of 6,000 are interested as executors, administrators, and trustees, and upwards of 17,000 are possessed only of sums not exceeding £. 1,000. The executors and trustees must necessarily be infinitely embarrassed, especially if the sums committed to them are small, in perfecting the purposes for which they are confided; and those who possess such small sums as do not amount to £. 1,000, must be much distressed by so unexpected and wanton a reduction of their income."

The minister, in the course of these observations, took an ample review of the bill, which he shewed to be unequal to the ends it was designed to answer. He proved that the alternatives of the proposition produced repugnant and discordant effects; and that the plan was destructive of the purposes, and inadequate in benefit to the sinking fund.

On this head, he should beg leave to take notice of a circumstance that personally alluded to him. Gentlemen had discussed, in the course of the debate, *the advantages which had been derived from the plan of reducing the national debt from six to five per cent. which he had the honour of proposing to the house.* They had conceived it impossible for him to resist a similar reduction from four to three per cent. without the grossest inconsistency. But he was free to declare, that he could oppose the present scheme without subjecting himself to that imputation. It became his duty, on the authority of the former scheme, to give his negative to this, because no two schemes ever differed more widely in their intention, effect, and consequences.

He then stated the difference between the present scheme, and that which he had proposed. This scheme, he observed, is compulsory, his was optional. On the former occasion, money was prepared; on this, it was yet to be raised. His scheme laid the foundation, this reverses the whole system of the sinking fund. His was founded upon converting numbers of years at higher rates, into perpetuities at lower rates. This plan establishes terms of years at higher rates, in lieu of perpetuities at lower rates, after an expiration of twenty years of the former terms. This was intended to lock up the sinking fund for several years, of which the shortest term was not less than twelve, and the longest forty-seven. During this time, all reduction of interest would be prevented, all abolition of taxes rendered impracticable, and a necessity imposed of laying fresh burthens in case of emergency. Whereas his had a contrary tendency; a million of the debt might be annually discharged, or some of the existing taxes might be abolished, or the imposi-

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tion of fresh taxes prevented, by applying the surplusses of the sinking fund to the current service.

"The declared intention of the bill is, to give ease to the subject; and the title specifies *immediate* ease. But its tendency is calculated to violate this very principle, and to falsify the title, for no ease can be given, until the reduction has taken place, and that event is distant, uncertain, and precarious. In fact, the present disadvantages of the scheme proposed by the honourable gentleman, evidently appear from the affectation with which he expatiated on *his love to posterity*. For certain it is, that his scheme cannot benefit the present generation, but its salutary effects will principally be confined to those who are yet unborn *."

Barnard's
reply.

Sir John Barnard said in reply, "I am very much obliged to the honourable gentleman, Sir, and therefore, I thank him for vindicating me from the imputation of having had any private conversation with him, or of having ever had any concert with him, and if he is afraid lest people should suspect his having had a hand in the scheme I proposed to you, I shall be equally just to him, by declaring, I never had any private conversation with him about it, nor did I so much as ask his approbation or consent to what I was to offer; but as to the scheme as it now stands, every gentleman that hears me, knows it is very different from what I offered; and every one likewise knows, that the new model, which is the model we have now before us, if it was not offered by the honourable gentleman himself, it was at least offered by some of his friends; and what they proposed was agreed to by other gentlemen, in order that we might have their assistance in carrying it through. Therefore, the scheme now before you, cannot properly be called mine; and it is very remarkable, that all objections made to the bill, are only to those articles and clauses of it, which relate to the improvements and additions made to my scheme, by the honourable gentleman's friends †."

Bill rejected.

The house divided, and the question of committing the bill was negatived, by 249 against 134 ‡.

Walpole's
motives.

It is difficult, without farther documents on this subject than I possess, to ascertain

* The substance of this speech is taken from parliamentary minutes in the hand-writing of Sir Robert Walpole. Walpole Papers.

† Chandler, vol. 9. p. 479.

‡ I have dwelt thus particularly on the consideration of Sir John Barnard's scheme, because the accounts given by most writers, who have fallen under my observation, are superficial and inaccurate. Even Tindal is unusually

short and barren of information. Tindal, vol. 20. p. 348.

Smollett, excepting a good abstract of Sir John Barnard's speech, which I have adopted in the text, is extremely deficient. He says it produced other debates, and was at last postponed by dint of ministerial influence. The falsity of this account is evident. Smollett, vol. 2. p. 627.

ascertain all the motives which induced the minister to resist the reduction. It may be sufficient, perhaps, to attribute it to a full conviction, that the measure was highly and generally unpopular. He had relinquished his favourite excise scheme, notwithstanding the certainty of its beneficial tendency, solely on that account. It was not to be supposed that he would promote this scheme, of the good tendency of which he was not assured, and which in many respects was partial and unjust.

But in addition to this motive, I can suggest two others, which influenced his dissent. First, he foresaw, from the disputes with Spain, which then began to arise, that the nation might be involved in a war, and that government could borrow with greater facility at four per cent. than at three.

He was still more swayed by another motive, which he could not venture to disclose. He had already appropriated part of the surplus of the sinking fund to the current service of the year, and as the measure was extremely popular, he had resolved, in case of emergency, to alienate the whole. But his design would have been frustrated by this bill, which would have locked up the greatest part of the sinking fund for several years, and have rendered it necessary to impose new taxes for the purpose of supplying the incidental expenses*.

An act of this session, which is commonly denominated the playhouse bill, has exposed the minister to no less obloquy, from subsequent writers, than his opposition to the reduction of interest.

Playhouse
bill.

Those who thus load him with indiscriminate censure, and impute this act solely to his *despotic influence*, have not paid due attention to the history of the English stage, to the power of the lord chamberlain over the players and theatrical representations, and to the opinion of the most moderate and best informed magistrates at the period of passing this act, which has been so much calumniated, and so little understood.

It is needless to discuss the question concerning the necessity of fixing some bounds to the licentiousness of the stage. The necessity must be allowed, except by those who think it fitting to subject to public mockery,

Belsbam observes, "A bill was, however, ordered upon the basis of Winington's proposition, which being in the sequel warmly attacked, and faintly defended, was finally postponed to a distant day, by a motion of the minister." In this short account there are three errors. It was warmly attacked, but by no means faintly defended. It was not finally postponed to a distant day, but the second reading was only put off for seven days; and it was then *negotiated*, but

not on the motion of the minister. Belsbam, vol. 1. p. 380.

* A reduction of interest took place in 1749, upon a plan, which has been described as similar, though it is essentially different from the original scheme proposed by Sir John Barnard. It was finally carried, though not without great opposition, by the united influence of the minister (Pelham) and Sir John Barnard.

law,

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law, government, and religion, and to expose magistrates, judges, and kings, to the personalities of satire, buffoonery, and low mimicry. In all well regulated governments, the fact has been universally admitted, and wherever it has not been adopted, the most fatal consequences have followed.

Even the freest democracy which perhaps ever existed, that of Athens, after having experienced the effects of unrestrained licentiousness in their theatrical performances, found it necessary to remedy the evil, and to limit the stage within the boundaries of common decency and justice.

Power of the
lord cham-
berlain.

It appears from the history of the English stage, that no period ever existed when it was not subject to superintendence, when players were not licenced, and when plays were not reviewed and amended, allowed or rejected. Before the reign of Henry the Eighth, the power of superintending the king's hunting parties, the direction of the comedians, musicians, and other royal servants, appointed either for use or recreation, was exclusively vested in the lord chamberlain.

Master of
the Revels.

Under him, and subject to his controul, was an inferior officer, who exerted himself on particular occasions for the purpose of regulating pageants, public festivals, and masquerades. This man was called by the fanciful names of the *Abbot of Mithule*, or *Lord of Pastimes*. But in the reign of Henry the Eighth, this temporary office was rendered regular and permanent by letters patent, and called the office of *Master of the Revels* *.

Theatrical
regulations
under Eliza-
beth.

Under Elizabeth, some wise regulations, with the advice of Walsingham, and co-operation of Burleigh, were made for allowing the use, but correcting the abuse of the stage; particularly, when the earl of Leicesters obtained the first general licence for his theatrical servants to act stage plays in any part of England, a proviso was added in the patent, enjoining that *all comedies, tragedies, interludes, and stage plays, should be examined and allowed by the master of the revels*. Thus that authority which was before confined to the pastimes of the court, was now extended to the theatrical exhibitions of the whole kingdom.

During her reign also, the privy council exercised an authority, legislative and executive, over the dramatic world. They opened and shut playhouses; gave and recalled licences; appointed the proper seasons when plays ought to be presented or withheld; and regulated the conduct of the lord mayor of London, and the vice-chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge, with regard to plays and players. The privy council gave Tilney, the master of the revels in 1589, two co-adjutors, a statesman and a divine, to assist him in reforming comedies and tragedies.

* Officium magistrî jocorum, *revelorum* et *mascorum*.

These prudent regulations, and the wisdom with which they were exercised, were attended with the most beneficial effects. The master of the revels, by regulating the stage, and restraining the number of theatres, gave greater respectability to the profession of a player, and the genius of the drama expanded and soared to a greater height, although its limits were contracted and its flight circumscribed.

Had not these wise regulations taken place, Shakespear might have confined to burlesque farces, and low buffoonery, those vast powers of invention and description which his own language can alone adequately delineate.

“ The poet’s eye in a fine frenzy rolling,
Glances from heav’n to earth, from earth to heav’n,
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen
Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name *.”

By the wise and temperate use which the master of the revels made of his power, his weight and influence increased, and he gradually appropriated to himself the greater part of that authority, which had belonged to the lord chamberlain. During the latter part of the reign of James the First and Charles the First, it was held by Sir Henry Herbert †, nearly allied to the earl of Pembroke, lord chamberlain, under whose prudent management the reputation and consequence of the office increased, and produced the most salutary effects, until his functions were wholly suspended, by the troubles and confusion of the civil wars, and the fanaticism of the republicans.

On the restoration of Charles the Second, the master of the revels endeavoured to re-assume his former authority, but met with insuperable opposition from the proprietors and managers of the king’s and duke’s companies, one of whom had obtained a fresh licence to act plays, the other a renewal of a former grant. In vain the master of the revels applied to the courts of justice for redress; in vain he appealed to the sovereign, or to the lord chamberlain; he was neither supported by the one, or countenanced by the other; his authority,

* *Midsummer Night’s Dream.*

† Brother to the eccentric lord Herbert, of Cherbury, and of George Herbert, rector of

Bemerton, known by the name of the divine Herbert.

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though not overthrown, was considerably shaken, and his regulations were combated and despised.

During this suspension of his power, the particular differences, pretensions, or complaints, were generally settled by the personal interference of the king and duke, or referred to the decision of the lord chamberlain. In consequence of this relaxation of authority, and the libertine character of the court, the theatre was disgraced by the grossest ribaldry and obscenity, and the best authors vied who should produce the most licentious comedies. Ladies could not venture to attend a new play without masks, then daily worn, and admitted into the pit, the side boxes, and the gallery.

On the death of Sir Henry Herbert, the mastership of the revels was conferred on Charles Killigrew, manager of the king's company. The union of these two functions increased the evil, and the smallest check was not imposed on the glaring immorality of the stage.

At the revolution, the power of the lord chamberlain over the theatre was revived without restriction. He opened and shut playhouses, imprisoned and licensed players, corrected and rejected plays. Under him the master of the revels seems to have recovered some part of his former power, and to have had his share in the revolutions of the theatre. He revised and sanctioned plays, and his aid greatly contributed to the celebrated conquest which Jeremy Collier, by the publication of his short view of the stage, obtained over the immorality of the drama. In this publication, the most profane and obscene passages in several modern plays, which had been written by Dryden, Vanbrugh, Wycherley, Congreve, and the most admired dramatic authors, were detected and exposed. The truth of his observations, which all the wit and talents of the authors who were deservedly chastised could not controvert, produced a surprising effect; a general outcry was raised against the licentiousness of the stage, and king William sent the following order to the playhouses: "His majesty being informed, that notwithstanding an order made in June 1697, by the earl of Sunderland, then lord chamberlain of the king's household, to prevent the profaneness and immorality of the stage, several plays have lately been acted, containing several expressions contrary to religion and good manners: And whereas the master of the revels hath represented, that, in contempt of the said order, the actors did neglect to leave out such profane and indecent expressions, as he had thought proper to be omitted: therefore, it is his majesty's pleasure, that they shall not hereafter presume to act any thing in any play, contrary to religion and good manners, as they shall answer at their utmost peril." At the same time, the master of the revels was commanded

not

not to licence any plays containing irreligious or immoral expressions, and to give notice to the lord chamberlain, or in his absence to the vice-chamberlain, if the players presumed to act any thing which he had struck out *.

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1737.

But this reformation did not continue long in its full force. As soon as the first awe and panic of the actors had subsided, the stage nearly relapsed into its former immorality, all attempts to reform it became the object of theatrical wit, and were ridiculed in plays, prologues, and epilogues. Although the new plays were usually more decent and moral, yet the old plays were frequently acted, without being freed from their exceptionable passages.

Either in consequence of these proceedings, or of some disputes which arose between the actors of the royal theatres, and produced the desertion of the principal performers from Drury Lane to the Haymarket, the nuisance of playhouses, and the conduct of the performers, became so flagrant, that a bill, in the twelfth year of queen Anne, included players, who acted without a legal settlement in the places where they performed, among vagrants, and subjected them to the same penalties as rogues and vagabonds. But before the beneficial effects of this act could have time to operate, the death of the queen produced a new revolution in the drama.

Soon after the accession of George the First, the power of the master of the revels, which had been considerably circumscribed, was almost annihilated; a new patent was injudiciously granted to Sir Richard Steele, Colley Cibber, and Booth, for acting plays without subjecting them to the licence or revision of any officer.

In consequence of this grant, the master of the revels was abridged of his power, and defrauded of his dues, and his emoluments were reduced to a small salary from the exchequer, to lodgings in Somerset House, and to occasional fees.

At the death of Charles Killigrew, the office, thus mutilated, was conferred on Charles Henry Lee, and the decline of his power was sufficiently shewn by the growing licentiousness of the stage, and the numerous pieces which offended equally against religion, decency, and common sense.

Although, in all the letters patent for acting plays since the time of Charles the First, no mention was made of the lord chamberlain, yet he was still considered as possessing an absolute, though an undefinable authority over the stage, which he had occasionally exercised. The performance of several theatrical pieces had been prevented, particularly *Lucius Junius*

* Tindal, vol. 14. p. 478.

Period VI. Brutus, a prologue of Dryden to the Prophetess, Mary Queen of Scotland, and recently Polly, the sequel to the Beggar's Opera.

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But as this exercise of his power had been always attended with much unpopularity, it was seldom exerted. Numerous theatres were erected in different parts of the metropolis, in which the actors performed without licence or authority. To prevent this, several attempts were made to enforce the laws then existing. An actor, who performed on the theatre of the Haymarket, without licence, was taken from the stage, by the warrant of a justice of peace, and committed to Bridewell, as coming under the penalty of the vagrant act. The legality of the commitment was disputed; a trial ensued; it was decided, that the comedian being a housekeeper, and having a vote for electing members of parliament, did not come within the description of the said act; and he was discharged amidst the loud acclamations of the populace. The issue of this trial gave full scope to the licentiousness of the stage, and took away all hopes of restraining the number of playhouses.

From this representation of the state of the drama, it is evident, that some reformation was indispensably necessary. The minister himself had long seen that necessity. The obloquy which pursued him was not confined to the press; the stage was made the vehicle of the most malignant sarcasms, not expressed in the elevated tone of tragedy, or couched in sentiments and language perceptible only to men of refined understandings, but his person was brought on the stage, his actions maligned, his measures misrepresented and arraigned, and his conduct made the sport of the populace, in all the petulance of vulgar farce. He was unwilling, however, to make this a personal consideration, but rather a public and national question, in which the good of the law, constitution, religion, and morality, was intimately involved, and such an opportunity seemed to present itself, when Sir John Barnard brought in a bill "to restrain the number of houses for playing of interludes, and for the better regulating of common players of interludes."

March 5,
1735.

Bill for re-
straining the
number of
playhouses.

On his representing the mischiefs which theatres had done to the city of London, by corrupting youth, encouraging vice and debauchery, and greatly prejudicing trade, the proposal was at first received with contempt and ridicule, until it was seconded by Sandys, Pulteney, and warmly supported by the minister himself. It was observed by a member, in the course of the debate, that there were at that time not less than six theatres in London. The house being fully convinced of the necessity of the bill, leave was given to bring it in without a single dissenting voice. It

was

was accordingly, on the 3d of April presented, read the first time, and ordered to be printed; notwithstanding petitions against it from the proprietor of the theatre in Goodman's Fields, and from the master and comptroller of the revels. It was read a second time on the 14th of April.

The minister conceived this to be a favourable opportunity of checking the daring abuse of theatrical representation, which had arrived to a most extravagant height. It was proposed to insert a clause, to ratify and confirm, if not enlarge the power of the lord chamberlain, in licensing plays, and at the same time insinuated to the house, that unless this addition was made, the king would not pass it. But Sir John Barnard strongly objected to this clause. He declared that the power of the lord chamberlain was already too great, and had been often wantonly exercised, particularly in the prohibition of *Polly*. He should therefore withdraw this bill, and wait for another opportunity of introducing it, rather than establish by law a power in a single officer so much under the direction of the crown, a power which might be exercised in an arbitrary manner, and consequently attended with mischievous effects.

The attempt of Sir John Barnard having thus failed, the immorality of the drama increased, and the most indecent, seditious, and blasphemous pieces were performed, and resorted to with incredible eagerness. Among those who principally supported this low ribaldry, was the celebrated Henry Fielding, who, though he never shone in the higher line of perfect comedy, wrote these dramatic satires in a style agreeable to the populace. One of his pieces, called *Pasquin*, which was acted in the theatre at the Haymarket, ridiculed, in the grossest terms, the three professions of divinity, law, and physic, and gave general offence to persons of morality. "Religion, laws, government, priests, judges, and ministers," observes Colley Cibber, "were laid flat at the feet of the Herculean satirist, this *Drawcanfir* in wit, who spared neither friend nor foe, who to make his poetical fame immortal, like another *Erostrates*, set fire to his stage, by writing up to an act of parliament to demolish it."

Licentiousness of the stage.

This piece was peculiarly offensive to the minister, because it contained many personal allusions and invectives. But as he was not willing to employ the power of government in a mere temporary prohibition of this and other performances, which would have been extremely unpopular, and not attended with permanent effects, he wished to avail himself of the present flagrant abuse, to prevent future representations so disgraceful and indecorous.

In the course of the session, an opportunity offered, which he did not

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omit to seize. Giffard, the manager of Goodman's Fields theatre, brought to him a farce, called the Golden Rump, which had been proposed for exhibition; but it is uncertain whether the intentions of the manager were to request his advice on this occasion, or to extort a sum of money to prevent its representation.

The minister, however, paid the profits which might have accrued from the performance, and detained the copy. He then made extracts of the most exceptionable passages, abounding in profaneness, sedition, and blasphemy, and submitted them to several members of both parties, who were shocked at the extreme licentiousness of the piece, and promised their support to remedy the evil. With their advice, concurrence, and promise of co-operation, he read the several extracts to the house, and a general conviction prevailed, of the necessity of putting a check to the representation of such horrid effusions of treason and blasphemy. He acted, however, with his usual prudence on this occasion. He did not bring forward, as is generally supposed, an act for subjecting all plays to the licence of the lord chamberlain, and restraining the number of playhouses, but contrived to introduce it by amending the vagrant act.

Bill for licensing plays.

May 20,
1737.

The bill was called, "A bill to explain and amend so much of an act, made in the twelfth year of the reign of queen Anne, intituled, an act for reducing the laws relating to rogues, vagabonds, sturdy beggars, and vagrants, and sending them whither they ought to be sent, as relates to the common players of interludes *." Leave was accordingly given to bring it in, and Pelham, Dodington, Howe, the master of the rolls, the attorney and solicitor general, were ordered to prepare it. During its rapid progress through the house, certain amendments were made, and two clauses were added. The first, which occasioned so much obloquy, empowered the lord chamberlain to prohibit the representation of any theatrical performances, and compelled all persons to send copies of any new plays, parts added to old plays, prologues and epilogues, fourteen days before they were acted, and not to perform them, under forfeiture of £. 50, and of the licence of the house, if any such existed, in which the play was acted. The second, which is said to have been added at the instigation of Sir John Barnard, operated in restraining the number of playhouses, by enjoining, that no person should be authorised to act, except within the liberties of the city of Westminster, and where the king should reside †.

The

* Journals.

† 1. Every person who shall for hire, gain, or reward, act, represent, or perform, or cause

to be acted, represented, or performed, any interlude, tragedy, comedy, opera, play, farce, or other entertainment of the stage, or any part
or

The bill is generally said to have been warmly opposed in both houses; but it is remarkable that no trace (excepting the speech of lord Chesterfield) of this opposition is to be found in the periodical publications of the times, which are filled with accounts of the other debates. It is also certain, that not a single petition * was presented against it, and not a single division appears in the journals of either house. Striking proofs, if any were still wanting, to shew the general opinion in favour of its necessity.

The dispatch with which it was carried through both houses, affords additional evidence that it scarcely met with any resistance. The bill was ordered to be brought in on the 20th of May, read the 24th, a second time on the 25th, and committed to the whole house; ordered to be reported, with amendments, on the 26th, reported on the 27th, all amendments but one agreed to, and the bill ordered to be engrossed; passed on the first of June, and Mr. Pelham ordered to carry it to the lords. It was read the first time on the same day, the second time on the 2d, after a debate, carried in

or parts therein, in case such person shall not have any legal settlement in the place where the same shall be acted, represented, or performed, without authority, by virtue of letters patent from his majesty, his heirs, successors, or predecessors, or without licence from the lord chamberlain of his majesty's household for the time being, shall be deemed a rogue and a vagabond, within the intent and meaning of the said recited act, and shall be liable and subject to all such penalties and punishments, and by such methods of conviction, as are inflicted on, or appointed by the said act for the punishment of rogues and vagabonds who shall be found wandering, &c.

2. Any person having or not having any legal settlement, who shall without such authority or licence, act, &c. for hire, &c. any interlude, &c. every such person shall, for every such offence, forfeit the sum of fifty pounds, &c.

3. No person shall for hire, &c. act, &c. &c. any new interlude, &c. or any part or parts therein, or any new act, scene, or other part added to any old interlude, &c. or any new prologue or epilogue, unless a true copy thereof be sent to the lord chamberlain of the king's household, &c. fourteen days at least before the acting, &c. together with an account of the playhouse or other place where the same shall be, &c. the time wherein the same shall be first acted, &c. signed by the master or manager, or one, &c. of such playhouse, &c.

It shall be lawful for the said lord chamberlain, as often as he shall think fit, to prohibit the acting, &c. any interlude, &c. or any act, &c. thereof, or any prologue or epilogue; and in case any such persons shall for hire, &c. act, any, &c. &c. before a copy shall be sent as aforesaid, or shall for hire, &c. &c. contrary to such prohibition, every person so offending shall, for every such offence, forfeit the sum of fifty pounds, and every grant, &c. (in case there be any such) under which the said master, &c. set up or continued such playhouse, &c. shall cease.

4. That no person or persons shall be authorized by virtue of, &c. from his majesty, &c. or the lord chamberlain, to act, &c. any interlude, &c. in any part of Great Britain, except in the city of Westminster, and within the liberties thereof, and in such places where his majesty, &c. shall reside, and during such residence only.

5. If any interlude, &c. shall be acted, &c. in any house or place, where wine or other liquors shall be sold, the same shall be deemed to be acted, &c. for gain, &c. Statutes at large, 17 G. 2. c. 28.

* Sir John Hawkins, in his *Life of Johnson*, asserts, that the manager of Goodman's Fields presented a petition against it, and was heard by counsel, but this petition was presented against Sir John Barnard's bill in 1735.

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the affirmative; the third time on the 6th, returned to the commons on the 8th, without any amendments, and received the royal assent on the 21st.

It is most probable that lord Chesterfield alone spoke against the bill, and that his speech, so deservedly admired, has been repeated by subsequent writers who copy each other, until a violent opposition to the measure has been supposed, which never existed.

Chesterfield did not confine his exertions to the house, but wrote against the new act, in a paper called *Common Sense*; his arguments have little to recommend them, at a time when the propriety and utility of the measure against which they were directed, is generally conceded. The fatal evils which were predicted as the certain consequences of this bill, perpetual slavery and the introduction of absolute authority, have not followed; the good effects which were expected from it, have been confirmed by never failing experience. While it suppressed the licentiousness, it has not destroyed the spirit of the drama; wit has not appeared less lovely and attracting, in promoting virtue and curbing vice with decency, than in recommending treason and obscenity; nor are the shafts of ridicule rendered useless, because, while they have preserved the power to do good, they are divested of the power to do mischief. "The facts, which have been detailed, evince, with sufficient conviction, that this act of parliament merely restored to the lord chamberlain, the ancient authority which he possessed before the appointment of the master of the revels; armed him with legal power, in the place of customary privilege; and enabled him to execute, by warrantable means, the useful, but invidious trusts, which experience had long required, and policy at length conferred *."

* Journals of the Lords and Commons. Chandler, for 1735. Lords' Debates, 1737. Colley Cibber's Apology. Jeremy Collier's View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage. Tindal, vol. 20, p. 350. Oldmixon, vol. 3. p. 192. Introduction to Biographia Dramatica. Gentleman's and Lon-

don Magazine, 1737. Maty's Life of Chesterfield. Hawkins's Life of Johnson, p. 75. Smollett, vol. 3. p. 525. Burn's Justice, article Players. Chalmers's Apology for the Believers of the Shakspeare MSS. p. 471 to 543; to whose elaborate researches on this subject I have been principally indebted.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-EIGHTH.

1737.

Origin and Progress of the Misunderstanding between the King and Prince of Wales.—Application to Parliament.—Conduct of Walpole—of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke—of Opposition.

THIS year was marked by two domestic events, which proved highly prejudicial to the influence of Sir Robert Walpole, and greatly contributed to hasten the close of his administration; the public opposition of the prince of Wales, and the death of queen Caroline.

Frederick Louis, prince of Wales, was born in 1707, and continued at Hanover until he had attained the twenty-first year of his age.

George the Second had found, from his own experience, the embarrassments to which government might be exposed from the opposition of the heir apparent, and dreaded the arrival of a son who might irritate the state of parties, and increase the ferment arising in the kingdom against the measures of the cabinet. He had from time to time deferred his removal from Hanover, and did not send for him to England, until a concurrence of circumstances rendered it impolitic to permit his longer residence on the continent.

Causes of the
misunder-
standing.

Clamours were justly raised in England, that the heir apparent had received a foreign education, and was detained abroad, as if to keep alive an attachment to Hanover, in preference to Great Britain. The ministers at length ventured to remonstrate with the king on the subject, and the privy council formally represented the propriety of his residence in England. The king, however, still hesitated, when an event occurred, which decided his choice, and induced him to accelerate the prince's departure from Germany.

A long negotiation had taken place between the houses of Brunswick and Brandenburg, for a double marriage between the prince of Wales and the princess royal of Prussia, and the prince royal of Prussia and the princess Amelia. This negotiation had commenced in the reign of George the First, and was eagerly promoted by his daughter Sophia Dorothy, who had espoused Frederick William, king of Prussia. Both parties seemed to have desired this union with equal anxiety; but the capricious and brutal temper of Frederick William, and his sudden secession from the treaty of Hanover,

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Hanover, had so highly offended George the First, that he ceased to favour the proposed intermarriages. Still farther obstacles were thrown in their way at the accession of George the Second. The two kings, from their early years, had formed a violent antipathy to each other. The system of politics adopted by England increased this misunderstanding. Frederick William had been lured by the Emperor to join the allies of Vienna, in opposition to those of Hanover, and his recruiting officers frequently made illegal inroad on the Hanoverian territories.

In vain the queen of Prussia endeavoured to reconcile her husband and brother, and to promote the conclusion of the family union, which she so earnestly desired. The antipathy of the two monarchs increased instead of abating, and the king of Prussia was endeavouring to arrange another alliance for his son and daughter, which both they and his queen highly deprecated.

During the progress of this affair, the prince had formed an attachment to the princess of Prussia, and by the secret information of his aunt, the queen of Prussia, was apprized that her daughter felt an equal affection for him.

The prince was now twenty-one; his passion was inflamed by opposition, and being filled with apprehensions of losing the object of his affection, he adopted an expedient which proved the ardour of his attachment. He sent La Mothe, a Hanoverian officer, to Berlin, who obtained a private audience of the queen, in which he told her that he was commanded by the prince to declare his resolution of repairing incognito to Berlin, and secretly espousing her daughter, if the king and queen of Prussia would sanction this step with their approbation. At the same time he entreated the queen that it should be communicated to no one but the king. The queen received the message with a transport of joy, approved the design, and promised to keep the secret inviolable. The next morning, however, she disclosed it to Dubourgeay, the English envoy, observing, that she believed him to be so much her friend as to partake of her satisfaction. Dubourgeay expressed his concern that so important a secret should be confided to him, and declared it his duty to send immediate information to the king of England. The queen, conscious of the error which she had unwarily committed, conjured him not to betray her confidence, but he persisted in his resolution; and a messenger was immediately dispatched *. The queen was greatly embarrassed at this unexpected incident, but trusted that the affair might be concluded before the return of

* Polnitz, Histoire des quatre derniers Souverains de la Maison de Brandebourg Royale de Prusse, tom. 2. p. 182-184.

the messenger from England, and so sanguine were their hopes of success, that the king of Prussia came from his hunting seat to Berlin, expecting the daily arrival of the intended bridegroom.

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But while they were indulging these hopes, information was received that the prince had been sent for to England. George the Second, on the intelligence from Dubourgay, dispatched colonel Launay to Hanover for that purpose. The prince received these commands with respect, and instantly obeyed them. At the conclusion of a ball, he set out from Hanover, accompanied only by Launay and a single domestic, traversed Germany and Holland as a private gentleman, embarked at Helvetfluis, and arrived at St. James's, where he was coldly received by his father.

The prince's arrival.

For some time after his arrival in England, the novelty of his situation, his little acquaintance with the language, his total ignorance of the constitution and manners of the country, and the dread which he seems to have entertained of his father's indignation, kept him in due submission, and prevented him from openly testifying his dissatisfaction. But as he increased in years, and became conscious of his dignified station, the estrangement of his father, and the restraint in which he was kept, naturally disgusted a young prince of high spirit, and increasing popularity, and the resentment which he had conceived against his parents, excited an antipathy to the minister, in whom they had placed implicit confidence. As he had a taste for the arts, and a fondness for literary pursuits, he sought the society of persons who were most conspicuous for their talents and knowledge. He was thrown into the company of Carteret, Chesterfield, Pulteney, Cobham, and Sir William Wyndham, who were considered as the leading characters for wit, talents, and urbanity.

Courtied by opposition.

His house became the rendezvous of young men of the highest expectations, Pitt, Lyttleton, and the Grenvilles, whom he afterwards took into his household, and made his associates. The usual topic of conversation in select society, was abuse of the minister, and condemnation of his measures, urged with all the keenness of wit, and powers of eloquence. The prince found the men whose reputation was most eminent in literature, particularly Swift, Pope, and Thomson, adverse to Walpole, who was the object of their private and public satire.

But the person who principally contributed to increase his resentment against the king, and to foment his aversion to the minister, was Bolingbroke, who was characterised by the first poets of the age, as the "all accomplished St. John, the muse's friend." The prince was fascinated with his conversation and manners. His confident assertions, and popular declamations, his

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affected zeal to reconcile all ranks and descriptions, the energy with which he decried the baneful spirit of party, and his plausible theories of a perfect government, without influence or corruption, acting by prerogative, were calculated to dazzle and captivate a young prince of high spirit and sanguine disposition, and induce him to believe that the minister was forming a systematic plan to overthrow the constitution, and that the cause of opposition was that of honour and liberty.

His peremptory demands.

So early as 1734, the misunderstanding between the father and son had increased to a very alarming degree, and the prince, encouraged by the opposition, took a very injudicious step, which was calculated to provoke the king, and occasion an immediate and open rupture. He repaired to the anti-chamber, and without any previous arrangement, requested an immediate audience. The king delayed admitting him till he had sent for Sir Robert Walpole, on whose arrival, he expressed his indignation against his son, and would have proceeded to instant extremities, had not the minister contrived to calm his resentment. He strongly inculcated moderation, and persuaded the king to hear with complacency what he wished to communicate.

On being admitted, the prince made three requests, in a tone and manner which indicated a spirit of perseverance. The first was, to serve a campaign on the Rhine in the Imperial army; the second related to the augmentation of his revenue, at the same time insinuating, that he was in debt; the third was, his settlement by a suitable marriage. To the first and third points, the king made no answer; in regard to the second, he shewed an inclination to comply, if the prince would behave with due respect to the queen.

The king had suppressed the emotions of his anger on these demands of his son; but his resentment broke out with redoubled violence, when rumours were circulated, that the prince would apply to parliament for an augmentation of his revenue. The queen exerted all her efforts to soften the king's indignation, and the minister used every argument which policy suggested to incline him to moderation, and to induce him not to drive the prince wholly into the arms of opposition. These exertions had a temporary effect*. The rupture was suspended, and the hopes of opposition were disappointed.

Marries the
princess of
Saxe Gotha.

The passion which the prince had entertained for the princess Frederica, being thwarted by his parents, preyed upon his mind and increased his dis-

* Lettre de Monf. de Lofs à Monf. de Brühl, sans date; de Monf. John à Monf. Von Hagen, 26 de Juillet 1734. Correspondence.

gust, and when the proposal of another union was imparted to him, he remonstrated with great marks of offended sensibility, and expressed his repugnance to espouse a princess whom he had not seen, instead of one whom he had seen and approved. When the arrangement was made for his marriage with Augusta, princess of Saxe Gotha, the prince of Wales sent for baron Borck, the Prussian minister, and complained, with much indignation, that the king his father compelled him to renounce all hopes of espousing a Prussian princess. He requested him to lay his grief before the king his master, and to assure him that he was determined to have resisted all compulsion, and was only induced to agree to the alliance with the princess of Saxe Gotha, on being informed by his mother, that the king of Prussia had refused to give him his daughter in marriage. He expressed his heartfelt regret that he was not permitted to have the honour of forming an union with a family which he loved more than his own, and to which, from his earliest infancy, all his desires had been directed; he hoped, nevertheless, that the king would not withdraw his favour and friendship. He testified his concern, that he was to be connected with a house from which he could not expect that support, which he should have found in the king of Prussia, and lamented his hard fate in being condemned to remain under the severe controul of the queen his mother. He concluded by observing, that he must submit to his destiny, that he could not see, without grief, the king of England disdaining the friendship of a great monarch, without which the ruin of his house must infallibly ensue*. The letter, in which Borck gave an account of this indiscreet conference to his master, fell into the hands of the king, and greatly irritated his inflammable temper.

On the 27th of April 1736, the prince of Wales espoused the princess of Saxe Gotha, in whose beauty, accomplishments, and virtues, he forgot his former passion. But the marriage did not remove the unfortunate misunderstanding between the father and son, it rather had a contrary tendency. The increased expences of the prince's household, without an adequate increase of income, rendered his situation still more irksome. His revenue, although enlarged from £.36,000 to £.50,000, with the emoluments of the duchy of Cornwall, did not amount to £.60,000, a sum the prince and his friends deemed insufficient to support the dignity of his station. It became matter of public animadversion, that out of a civil list of £.800,000, he re-

* Letter from Borck to the king of Prussia, December 23, 1735. Orford Papers.

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ceived only £.50,000 a year, although the king, when prince of Wales, received £. 100,000 out of a civil list of only £.700,000. But while this was industriously circulated, it was not considered, that George the Second, when prince of Wales, had a large family, and that he had several younger children, for whom he was to make a provision out of the civil list, which was not the case of George the First.

The marriage of the heir apparent greatly increased his popularity. The affability of his manners, the courtesy of his deportment, were contrasted with the phlegmatic reserve of George the Second. His protection of letters, his fondness for the polite arts, and his rising merits became the favourite theme of popular applause, and of parliamentary declamation among the members of opposition.

April 29.

It is remarkable, that the address of congratulation to the king, on the nuptials of the prince of Wales with the princess of Saxe Gotha was moved by Pulteney, and that the principal speakers in the prince's praise, were those who uniformly opposed the measures of government. It was on this memorable occasion, that William Pitt made his maiden speech, in a strain of declamation, which a contemporary historian describes as not inferior to the great models of antiquity, "it being more ornamented than Demosthenes, and less diffuse than Cicero *." Both he and his friend Lyttleton, who also first spoke on the same occasion, described the prince as a most dutiful son; descanted on his filial obedience and respectful submission to the will of his royal parents, and expatiated, with ostentatious energy, on his generous love of liberty, and his just reverence for the British constitution. In affecting to praise the king, for having gratified the impatient wishes of a loyal people, they gave the prior merit to the prince, for having requested a marriage so necessary to the public good, and ascribed only a secondary merit to the king for granting this request.

The manner in which this debate † was conducted, the warm panegyric bestowed on the prince, the cold praises given to the king, and the acrimonious censures of the minister, gave great offence, and tended still farther to widen the breach.

Joins opposition.

At length the misunderstanding arose to so great a height, that the prince threw himself into the arms of opposition. Bolingbroke, who had

* Tindal

† Chandler, vol. 9. p. 222.

long advised the most violent proceedings, now laid down a systematic plan of proceeding to be followed by the prince, the first step of which was an emancipation from all dependence on the crown, by the acquisition of a permanent allowance of £. 100,000 per annum, which the king should be compelled to grant, at the remonstrance, and under the guaranty of parliament.

From the time that this scheme was first suggested by Bolingbroke, and which had been unadvisedly insinuated to the king, in 1734, before it was maturely weighed, the prince seems to have persisted in his resolution of appealing to parliament. Soon after his marriage, he mentioned his intention to the queen. The queen, perceiving that any advice would be ineffectual, affected to consider it as an idle and chimerical scheme; she treated it as a jest, and declared that there was not the least prospect of success. But her remonstrance had no effect. Urged on by Bolingbroke, whose last advice, before his retreat into France, was to pursue unremittingly this one favourite object, the prince at length determined to lay his case before parliament. He accordingly applied to the most respectable member of opposition, without any previous intimation, not with a view of asking advice, but of demanding support. Pulteney, though surprised at the unexpected request, declared a hearty inclination on his own part to promote the measure, but added, that he must consult his friends. Finding, however, the prince determined to persevere, he engaged for the unanimous consent of his particular friends, and offered to make the motion himself. Sir John Barnard promised his support, and Sir William Wyndham answered for the Tories; observing, that they had long desired an opportunity of shewing their regard and attachment to the prince. He also declared, that all his party were anxious to prove by their zeal, the falsity of the reproaches cast against them, that they were Jacobites, and to shew that they were misrepresented under that name.

Requires an increased allowance.

Dodington, afterwards lord Melcombe, was the first person connected with government, to whom the prince imparted his design, and to him it was declared only on the 7th of February. Dodington gave a striking proof of firmness and integrity, by declining to support a scheme pregnant with so many evils, and made strong and sensible remonstrances to induce the prince not to press any farther a measure which must render all who voted desperate either with the possessor of, or successor to the crown; but all his efforts were ineffectual*.

* Dodington's Diary

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No information was conveyed to the king, and the minister did not receive the least intimation of the business, or even suspect it, until the 13th of February. He was never before engaged in any transaction which gave him more concern or greater embarrassment. He was aware that £. 50,000 a year was inadequate to the dignified station of the heir apparent, and yet convinced that the king, incensed as he was against his son, could not be persuaded to increase that allowance. He was not however intimidated by a dread of offending the heir apparent, who might one day become his master, and did not shrink from his duty to his sovereign and to his country; but resolved to support the king in his just prerogative, and to oppose a measure which he considered as no less unconstitutional than disrespectful. He lamented, however, that the king had imprudently delayed to make the prince a permanent allowance of £. 50,000 a year, in the same manner as George the First had granted his allowance when prince of Wales, and that he had not settled a jointure on the princess. Walpole was not ignorant that the prince derived from these circumstances just cause of complaint, and that until that was removed, the opposition would have great advantage in the argument. In consequence of these sentiments, he used all his efforts to obtain a concession of these points, and finally conquered the repugnance of the king.

Proceedings
in the cabinet.
Feb. 19.

But the ungracious manner in which this was offered, widened rather than repaired the breach. The minister summoned a meeting at his own house, at which were present, the dukes of Newcastle, Grafton, and Devonshire, the earl of Scarborough, Horace Walpole, and lord Hardwicke, recently nominated lord chancellor, on the death of lord Talbot*. Walpole informed them, that he had, though not without the greatest difficulty, prevailed on the king to render the prince's allowance independent, and to settle the princess's jointure, and that his majesty had been pleased to give him authority to announce to the house of commons, when the motion was made, his consent to both these points. The chancellor objected, that if this declaration should be first made in the house of commons, without properly acquainting the prince, or his treasurer, it would have the appearance of an intended surprise. He added, that the friends of the royal family might think themselves ill used, if they were reduced to so great a difficulty as that of voting in a dispute between the king and the prince, when perhaps such previous information as he recommended might have prevented the motion.

* Lord Hardwicke has left a circumstantial narrative of this important transaction, from which I have selected the most interesting particulars. Hardwicke Papers.

To this sensible representation, the minister replied, that it was in vain to imagine the king could be reduced to so low an act of submission, as to permit any private communication of this kind, after the steps the prince had already taken. The suggestion, however, of the chancellor made a due impression, and Walpole persuaded the king to send a message to the prince, by some of the lords of the cabinet council.

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Accordingly, on the day which lord Hardwicke received the great seal, while he was waiting in the antichamber with the dukes of Newcastle and Argyle, the earl of Wilmington, and other lords of the council, Sir Robert Walpole came out of the king's chamber in a great hurry, holding a paper in his hand. Calling all the lords of the cabinet to the upper end of the room, he then read to them a draught of a message, in his own hand writing, and acquainted them, that it was the king's pleasure, that it should be immediately carried to the prince by the lord chancellor, lord president, lord steward, and lord chamberlain.

Feb. 27.

The king's
message.

The draught was not fairly transcribed, and several of the lords complained, that the whole business was transacted with such precipitation, that sufficient leisure was not allowed to consider the terms of the message. The time pressed extremely, and the place was highly improper for such momentous consultation. For the company which assembled to attend the levee filled the room, and could not avoid hearing many of the things which passed in the course of conversation. The chancellor, however, ventured to object to the expressions, "*the undutiful measures which his majesty is informed your royal highness intends to pursue*;" but it was replied by the minister, that the king insisted on the word *undutiful*, and that it was with great difficulty he was induced not to add severer epithets. The chancellor, however, persisting in his objection, the word *intends*, was changed for *hath been advised to pursue*.

The chancellor took Walpole aside, and expostulated with him on the hardship of making such a disagreeable errand the first act of his office. The minister answered, that he had hinted this to the king, *as far as he durst venture in so nice a case*, but the king prevented all farther discussion, by exclaiming, *my chancellor shall go*.

The expostulations of the chancellor, however, produced a variation in point of form; instead of only four officers of the crown, the whole cabinet council was ordered to attend with the message. It then growing late, Sir Robert Walpole acquainted them that business of consequence was expected in the house of commons, that he and Sir Charles Wager must attend, and
they

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they both went away, leaving the foul draught of the message. Lord Hay, under a pretence of attending the house of lords, also retired.

When the ceremony of giving the great seal was over, the remaining * lords of the cabinet deliberated in the council chamber on the mode of executing their charge. The message was not yet copied, and a rumour was circulated, that the prince was going to the house of commons; the lord steward and the lord chamberlain were deputed to inform him, that the lords of the cabinet were ordered to attend with a message from the king, and requested to know where he would receive it. He answered, in his own apartment. As soon as the fair copy was compared with the draught, the lords went to the prince, and being shewn into the levee room, the chancellor kissed his hand, on being appointed to his high office, and received his congratulations. The door being then closed, he read the message over audibly and distinctly, as follows :

“ His majesty has commanded us to acquaint your royal highness, in his name, that upon your royal highness’s marriage, he immediately took into his royal consideration the settling a proper jointure upon the princess of Wales; but his sudden going abroad, and his late indisposition since his return, had hitherto delayed the execution of these his gracious intentions; from which short delay his majesty did not apprehend any inconveniences could arise, especially since no application had, in any manner, been made to him upon this subject by your royal highness : and that his majesty hath now given orders for settling a jointure upon the princess of Wales, as far as he is enabled by law, suitable to her high rank and dignity, which he will, in proper time, lay before his parliament, in order to be rendered certain and effectual, for the benefit of her royal highness.

“ The king has further commanded us to acquaint your royal highness, that although your royal highness has not thought fit, by any application to his majesty, to desire, that your allowance of £. 50,000 per annum, which is now paid by monthly payments, at the choice of your royal highness, preferably to quarterly payments, might, by his majesty’s further grace and favour, be rendered less precarious, his majesty, to prevent the bad consequences which he apprehends may follow, from the undutiful measures, which his majesty is informed, your royal highness has been advised to pursue, will grant to your royal highness, for his majesty’s life, the said £. 50,000 per annum, to

* The lord chancellor, the earl of Wilmington, the dukes of Dorset and Grafton, the duke of Richmond, master of the horse, the duke of Argyle, commander in chief, the duke

of Newcastle, the earl of Pembroke, groom of the stole, the earl of Scarborough, and lord Harrington.

be issuing out of his majesty's civil list revenues, over and above your royal highness's revenues arising from the duchy of Cornwall, which his majesty thinks a very competent allowance, considering his numerous issue, and the great expences which do, and must necessarily attend an honourable provision for his whole royal family."

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The chancellor having concluded, there was a short pause, and a profound silence ensued. The prince looking about him, said, my lords, "Am I to return an immediate answer?" to which the chancellor replying, "if your royal highness pleases," the prince then delivered a verbal message to the following import:

The prince's answer.

"He desired the lords to lay him, with all humility, at his majesty's feet; and to assure his majesty that he had, and ever should retain, the utmost duty for his royal person; that he was very thankful for any instance of his majesty's goodness to him, or the princess, and for his majesty's gracious intention for settling a jointure upon her royal highness; but that, as to the message, the affair was now out of his hands, and therefore he could give no answer to it." After which, he used many dutiful expressions towards the king, and then added, *Indeed, my lords, it is in other hands, I am sorry for it*, or to that effect. He concluded, with earnestly desiring the lords to represent his answer to his majesty in the most respectful and dutiful manner *."

When this answer was reported to the king in the evening, by the lords, he looked displeased, but made no reply.

The situation of the minister was rendered more embarrassing at this particular period, from the ill health of the king, who was at that time so indisposed as to give real apprehension, that he could not long survive. Hence Bolingbroke, in a letter † to Sir William Wyndham, expresses his astonishment at Walpole's imprudence, in offending the heir apparent, who was likely to become his master, and the duchess of Marlborough thought his conduct no less incomprehensible ‡. This circumstance had given to opposition a great accession of strength, but had no effect on the conduct of Walpole.

Situation of the minister.

On the 22d, Pulteney made his motion for an address, requesting the king to settle £.100,000 a year on the prince of Wales, and the same jointure on the princess as the queen had when she was princess of Wales, assuring the king, that the house would enable him effectually to fulfil the same.

Motion in the house of commons.

* Chandler, vol. 9, p. 301, 303.

† Correspondence, Feb. 3, 1738. Period VII.

‡ [Feb. 6. 1736.] Heard this day, from a pretty good hand, that his majesty has been worse than they cared to own, but upon re-

medies they applied, his fever lessened, and was better. However, the physicians say, that if he does get over this illness, he cannot live a twelvemonth. Opinions of the Duchess of Marlborough, p. 36.

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The great points which Pulteney, and those who supported the motion, laboured to prove, were, that the prince had a claim to the proposed allowance, founded on equity and good policy, and a legal right, founded on law and precedent, and that the revenue of the civil list had been granted to George the First, and afterwards augmented under George the Second, on the express, or at least implied, condition, that, out of that revenue, the sum of £100,000 should be reserved for the prince of Wales, as a permanent and independent establishment, which the king had it not in his power to withhold. Pulteney supported the principles on which the motion was founded with great ability, and with a long series of historical references to heirs apparent and presumptive to the crown, who, he maintained, had received an independent and permanent allowance. He concluded by anticipating several cogent objections to the proposed address, arising from the impropriety and indecency of interposing between the king and the prince, between the father and the son, and of interfering with the prerogative of the crown.

The minister in reply, began by observing, that he never rose to speak upon any subject with a deeper concern, and a greater reluctance, than he did on the present important affair. He expressed the concern and embarrassment under which most members of that house must lie, in giving their votes or opinion; if they declared in favour of the motion, they must seem to injure the royal father, their sovereign, or by declining the motion, seem to injure the royal son, and apparent heir to the crown. But he would declare his sentiments with freedom, because, from his *personal* knowledge of the two great characters, he was satisfied that neither of them would think himself injured, because any gentleman gave his opinion or vote freely in parliament; and he was convinced that the prince of Wales had so much wisdom, and such a true sense of filial duty, that he would never consider as a favour bestowed on him, what had the least tendency towards offering an indignity to his father.

He supported the prerogative of the crown, and the right of the king to dispose of his civil revenues, without the interference of parliament, and to suffer no controul in the management of his own family. In the course of his speech, he communicated the substance of the message which had been sent by the king to the prince, and declared that £50,000 a year, exclusive of the revenues arising from the duchy of Cornwall, was a competent allowance, and as much as the king could afford out of the civil list. He expatiated on the impropriety of parliament's interposing be-
tween

tween the father and son, deprecated the attempt to make a breach between them, entered into an historical examination of the several precedents mentioned by Pulteney, and denied that any foundation for such a parliamentary interposition could be found, except that single precedent under Henry the Sixth, whose reign was so weak, that the parliament found it necessary to assume several rights and privileges, to which they were not properly entitled. He declared, that the prince had neither a claim from equity or good policy, and still less a right, founded on law or precedent, and he mentioned that the revenues of the civil list had been granted unconditionally to the king, without the most distant allusion to a stipulation, that £. 100,000 per annum should be paid to the prince of Wales.

The reasons urged by Walpole, in contradiction to those advanced by opposition, sufficiently proved, to all dispassionate persons, that the motion was not founded on law, good policy, or precedent, and were not invalidated by the reply of Pulteney, in summing up the arguments on both sides. But a confident and plausible assertion, advanced by a supporter of the motion, made a deep impression on the house, and seemed to vindicate the proceedings of the prince, and to arraign the conduct of the king.

“ By the regulation and settlement of the prince’s household, as made some time since by his majesty himself, the yearly expence comes to £. 63,000, without allowing one shilling to his royal highness for acts of charity and generosity. By the message now before us, it is proposed to settle upon him only £. 50,000 a year, and yet from this sum we must deduct the land tax, which, at two shillings in the pound, amounts to £. 5,000 a year, we must likewise deduct the sixpenny duty to the civil list lottery, which amounts to £. 1,250 a year, and we must also deduct the fees payable at the exchequer, which amount to about £. 750 a year more, all these deductions amount to £. 7,000 a year, and reduce the £. 50,000, proposed to be settled upon him by the message, to £. 43,000 a year. Now as his royal highness has no other estate but the duchy of Cornwall, which cannot be reckoned, at the most, above £. 9,000, his whole yearly revenue can amount but to £. 52,000, and yet the yearly expence of his household, according to his majesty’s own regulation, is to amount to £. 63,000, without allowing his royal highness one shilling for the indulgence of that generous and charitable disposition with which he is known to be endued in a very eminent degree. Suppose then we allow him but £. 10,000 a year for the indulgence of that laudable disposition, his whole yearly expence, by his majesty’s own acknowledgment, must then amount to £. 73,000, and his yearly income, according to this message, can amount to no more than £. 52,000, is this, Sir, shewing any respect to his merit? Is this providing for his generosity? Is it not reducing him to a real want,

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even with respect to his necessities, and consequently, to an unavoidable dependance, and a vile pecuniary dependance too, upon his father's ministers and servants? I confess, Sir, when I first heard this motion made, I was wavering a good deal in my opinion; but this message has confirmed me: I now see, that without the interposition of parliament, his royal highness the prince of Wales, the heir apparent to our crown, must be reduced to the greatest straits, the most insufferable hardships *."

Full credit was, at the time, given to this statement, as well because it was ostentatiously displayed by two of the prince's servants during the debate, as because the minister, to prevent great heats and animosities, made no immediate answer, and several persons were induced by this representation to vote in favour of the motion, which was negatived by a majority of only 234 against 204 †.

This small majority of 30 would have been reduced to a minority, had Sir William Wyndham been able to fulfil the promise of support, which he made to the prince in the name of his party. But forty-five Tories considered the interference of parliament as hostile to the principles of the British constitution, highly democratic, and such a dangerous innovation, that they quitted the house in a body before the division; an act highly honourable to those who refused to sacrifice their principles to their party.

In the lords.

On the 23d, the same motion was made in the house of peers by lord Carteret, and a similar debate ensued. It was negatived by a large majority of 103 against 40, and a protest was inserted only by fourteen peers ‡.

Mis-statement of opposition.

But although this unconstitutional proposition was thus thrown out in parliament, yet the smallness of the majority in the lower house, proved the difficulties under which the minister laboured. His cause was highly unpopular. The opposition introduced the question in every shape and form which was most likely to attract the public attention, and in the periodical papers and pamphlets, written with all the address and subtlety which the talents of the great leaders of the minority could supply. Among other pamphlets which were circulated with zeal, and read with avidity, was one intitled, "A Letter from a Member of Parliament to his Friend in the Country, on the Motion for addressing the King to settle £. 100,000 per Annum on his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales." This work was written with such an air of candour, and plausibility of argument, and yet contained so much bitterness and acrimony, that the minister himself revised the answer, which was composed by lord Hervey, called "An Examination of the Facts and Reasons contained in a Pamphlet intitled, A Letter, &c." In this work, Sir Robert Walpole made several insertions,

* Chandler.

† Journals.

‡ Lords' Debates.

which