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MEMOIRS OF SIR ROBERT WALPOLE

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P R E F A C E.

IT is unnecessary to offer an apology for submitting to the Public, the Memoirs of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE, which embrace a period so important in the annals of this country. It will be sufficient to explain the motives which induced me to undertake this Work ; to announce the plan ; to state the authorities from which the materials are derived ; and to acknowledge obligations.

Nine years have elapsed since I undertook to write *The Historical and Political State of Europe* ; the plan of which was printed, and submitted to the public. In the prosecution of that work I obtained access to various collections of original papers, particularly those of the earls of *Hardwicke*, *Harrington*, and *Peterborough*, and of Sir *Benjamin Keene*. It was in such forwardness, that the histories of Spain, Portugal, Austria, the German constitution, Russia, and part of Prussia and Sweden, were already prepared for the press ; I had also sketched the histories of the Italian States, Holland, and France : several maps were finished. Finding it impossible to obtain in England sufficient information respecting foreign countries, I visited Germany in 1794, with a view to obtain an accurate knowledge of recent events.

On my return, I went to Wolterton, for the purpose of inspecting the papers of Horatio lord Walpole, father of the present lord Walpole, whose interesting correspondence, during his embassies in France

and Holland, were of the utmost importance to my undertaking. I employed several months in perusing and arranging these papers. In the course of this occupation, I traced motives of action unknown to historians, which placed in a new light the foreign and domestic transactions of the cabinet. I also derived, from the conversation of lord and lady Walpole, many facts and anecdotes which elucidated the events adverted to in the papers.

The progress of the French revolution, and the uncertain position of Europe compelled me, notwithstanding the expence, and loss of time and labour, to suspend my original design, and to defer the completion of *The historical and political state*, till the return of more quiet and favourable times.

With the sanction of lord Walpole, I proposed, therefore, to give to the public a selection of his father's papers. In the course of this undertaking, I met with several letters and papers of Sir Robert Walpole, which made me solicitous to obtain farther information concerning his character and administration.

On my arrival in London, I had frequent conversations with the late earl of Orford, who related many anecdotes of his father, which led to further inquiries. It now insensibly became a part of my plan, to blend in the narrative, as many particulars relating to Sir Robert Walpole as could be authenticated, and to insert, in the correspondence, as many of his letters as I could obtain.

This design was promoted by the kindness of lord Orford, who imparted to me all his father's papers which remained in his possession, and permitted me to use them at my discretion, without the smallest controul.

The connection and friendship which, for a long period, had subsisted between Sir Robert Walpole, and his brother-in-law Charles viscount Townshend, naturally suggested that the Townshend papers must afford considerable information.

The acquisition of these important documents, led to the discovery

very and communication of others, particularly in the *Hardwicke*, *Grantam*, *Waldegrave*, and *Poyntz* collections.

With these sources of information, the work gradually expanded, and Sir Robert Walpole from being a secondary, became the principal object. I therefore interrupted the impression of lord Walpole's correspondence, and postponed that publication. I determined to give to the world, the Memoirs of the Life and Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, drawn from these copious and original sources, and to illustrate, by interesting and authentic documents, the transactions of the busy and eventful period, in which that minister acted so conspicuous a part.

In pursuance of this extensive plan, I found myself under the necessity of discussing the interests of Great Britain and of Europe, of developing the intricacies of cabinets, of tracing motives of action, of delineating characters, and discriminating the views of discordant politics.

Anxious to avoid an error, too common with biographers, that of considering only one side of the question, I was no less solicitous to procure the papers of those who opposed, than of those who supported the measures of Sir Robert Walpole. With this view I applied for and obtained communications of the *Stanhope*, *Middleton*, *Melcombe*, and *Egremont* Papers. These I have printed without interpolation and without disguise, not omitting a single invective, but leaving the reader to judge between the partial eulogiums of Hervey, and the acrimonious reproaches of Bolingbroke.

The Plan of this work is to give an uninterrupted narrative of the life and administration of Sir Robert Walpole, illustrated by original correspondence and authentic papers.

The Memoirs, which are contained in the first volume, are divided into eight periods, comprehending a term of sixty-nine years, from his birth in 1676, to his death in 1745.

The

The Correspondence, which occupies the second and third volumes, is, for facility of reference, also divided into eight periods, applying to the subjects of the corresponding periods in the narrative.

The Authorities from which the materials are derived, may be divided into PRINTED, ORAL, and MANUSCRIPT information.

PRINTED INFORMATION.

Though this source of intelligence is open to every writer, and an omission to consult and compare the advocates on both sides of the question, indicates either negligence or want of candour, yet *Smollett* and *Belsham*, in their accounts of the times, have betrayed these faults in the highest degree. Dazzled by the eloquence of *Pulteney*, seduced by the sophistry of *Bolingbroke*, or deluded by the speciousness of *Chesterfield*, they appear to have formed their opinions without comparison, to have stigmatized the whole administration of *Sir Robert Walpole*, as an uniform mass of corruption and depravity, as a gloomy period, during which not a single ray of light gleams through the impenetrable darkness. Though I have occasionally noticed the misrepresentations of these writers, yet, as *Smollett* quotes no authorities, and appears *never* to have consulted the Journals, and either partially or superficially to have perused the parliamentary debates; and as *Belsham* is, in general, a mere copyist of *Smollett* as to facts, though he differs from him in speculations; I have not relied on either as an authority.

The history of England which I have principally consulted, is the continuation of *Rapin*, published under the name of *Tindal*, but principally written by *Dr. Birch*. His papers in the Museum, and in the *Hardwicke Collection*, which I have examined with scrupulous attention, and various other documents which were submitted to his inspection, and to which I have had access, prove great accuracy of research, judgment in selection, and fidelity in narration. He derived considerable assistance from persons of political eminence, particularly

particularly the late lord Walpole, the late earl of Hardwicke, and the honourable Charles Yorke *. Birch was a staunch Whig, but his political opinions have never led him to forget his duty as an historian. He has not garbled or falsified debates, or mistated facts; he has not wantonly traduced characters, or acrimoniously reviled individuals, because they espoused the cause which he disapproved; but in his whole work, whether he praises or blames, there is a manly integrity and candid temperance, which must recommend him to the discerning reader.

It naturally became a part of my task to consult all works which treat of the life and administration of Sir Robert Walpole; and it is remarkable, that except political pamphlets, which were confined to temporary and specific objects, my utmost research could only discover two publications.

The first is, "A critical History of the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, now Earl of Orford, collected chiefly from the Debates in Parliament, and the political Writings on both Sides, 1743." This anonymous work is contemptible both in matter and style. It is, with few exceptions, a mere compilation from the most virulent opposition pamphlets, but is useful as an index of the points which, at the time, drew most attention, and as containing an account of the most remarkable publications on both sides.

The second is "Histoire du Ministère du Chevalier Walpole devenu Ministre d'Angleterre, et Comte d'Oxford, Amsterdam, 1764, in three volumes." This work is principally compiled from the preceding publication, although the author affects greater impartiality, and frequently turns the most virulent censures into the most fulsome panegyric. The writer is so ignorant as to call him earl of Oxford, and so deficient in point of information, that the whole pe-

* The account of the partition treaty was written by the late earl of Hardwicke. The account of lord Somers's argument in *Barker's case*, was written by his great nephew, the late Mr. C. Yorke. I can also trace numerous communications by Horace Walpole, though they cannot be so easily specified.

riod, from the declaration of war against Spain in 1739, to the resignation of the minister in 1742, is contained in fourteen lines. From sources so partial and deficient, little information could be derived.

I have carefully consulted the political writings of the times, on both sides of the question. I have perused with the same attention the most violent invectives, and party statements against the minister, as well as those that were written in his favour, and from a scrupulous comparison of both have endeavoured to extract the truth.

These works are too numerous to recapitulate. To the political writings of Bolingbroke, Pulteney, and Chesterfield, I have paid peculiar attention, and scrutinized them with a close, and, I trust, an impartial inspection.

The "Craftsman," which commenced in 1727, was the great vehicle of opposition essays. This paper, as it always contained the strength of the arguments urged against the measures of government, detailed with great eloquence and wit, has been assiduously examined. The Political State of Great Britain, the Historical Register, and Annals of Europe, ample and not incorrect periodical publications, have contributed information with respect to domestic events, points of chronology, and debates in parliament.

I have derived collateral assistance from the Gentleman's and London Magazines, which were ably-conducted.

I have occasionally collected the substance of debates from *Chandler's* Parliamentary Proceedings, to the general accuracy of which, though recently called in question, several reasons have induced me to give credit.

1. They are taken from the contemporary papers, such as the Historical Register, and the Political State of Great Britain; the authors of which were frequently supplied with notes and memorandums by members of parliament. From the year 1735, when the debates were no longer published in the Political State, the speeches were given in the Gentleman's Magazine by Guthrie, and in the
London

London Magazine by Gordon, both of whom constantly attended in the gallery of the house, and received information from members of parliament.

2. There are among the Walpole and Orford papers minutes of Sir Robert Walpole's speeches, and occasional notes, taken by him in the house of commons, of those of other members. In comparing these minutes and notes with the speeches in Chandler, I generally find the leading expressions preserved in the debates; which proves the authenticity of those particular speeches, and furnishes a strong presumption in favour of the rest.

3. Several letters, which I have published in the Correspondence, contain brief accounts of the parliamentary proceedings, and in most instances accord with the printed debates.

4. Sir Robert Walpole told his son, the late earl of Orford, that his speeches were in general faithfully represented in the public prints.

5. Lord Bath assured the present bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Douglas, that most of his speeches were correctly given, yet better than he had delivered them.

From the 19th of November, 1740, many of the debates were *written* by Dr. Johnson, and published in the Gentleman's Magazine. Doubts have arisen concerning their authenticity. Some of Johnson's biographers have declared that they were partly composed by himself; another, Sir John Hawkins, that they were wholly fictitious; and Johnson himself is said to have confessed, that they were not authentic, and excepting their general import, were the work of his own imagination.

This account, however, is not perfectly consonant to fact. Either Johnson deceived himself into an exaggeration of his own powers, or his biographers mistook his assertion. The real truth is, that Johnson constantly received notes and heads of the speeches from

persons employed by Cave, and particularly from Guthrie. The bishop of Salisbury recollects to have seen several of these notes, which Guthrie communicated to him on the very day on which he obtained them, which were regularly transmitted to Johnson, and formed the basis of his orations.

ORAL AND MANUSCRIPT INFORMATION.

WALPOLE PAPERS.

My first and warmest acknowledgments are due to lord Walpole, for the papers of his father Horatio, the first lord Walpole of Wolterton, brother of Sir Robert Walpole, and ambassador in France and Holland. This collection has afforded the most ample materials. *It contains his original correspondence, both public and private, as well abroad as in England; many confidential letters which passed between him, the queen, and Sir Robert Walpole; various documents, memorials, and political dissertations, which afford the clearest insight into foreign affairs, and prove his active and indefatigable exertions.

A specific detail of this collection, which occupies no less than one hundred and forty folio volumes, must be referred to a future publication, in which I purpose to give a selection of the most interesting letters not inserted in this work.

I am also indebted to lord Walpole for many interesting anecdotes and explanations, which he had from his father.

ORFORD PAPERS.

The late earl of Orford, third son of Sir Robert Walpole, favoured me with access to all the papers of his father remaining in his possession.

Had

Had this collection been preserved entire, it would have been invaluable and unparalleled, both for extent and importance, but some have been destroyed, others dispersed, and many lost. When he retired from office, the minister destroyed a large quantity. Not long before his death he said to his son, "Horace, when I am gone, you will find many curious papers in the drawer of this table," and mentioned, among others, the memorial which had been drawn up by Bolingbroke, and presented by the duchess of Kendal to the king. When his son, some time after his death, inspected the drawer, the papers were lost, and were never afterwards recovered. In relating this anecdote, the late earl of Orford declared his opinion that the papers had been either inadvertently destroyed by his elder brother, or stolen by a steward. Several letters belonging to this collection were given to the late lord Walpole, and are preserved at Wolterton. Notwithstanding these defalcations, the collection still contains many documents of high importance, of which I have availed myself.

To lord Orford I am highly indebted for numerous facts and anecdotes relating to Sir Robert Walpole, which nobody but himself could have authenticated. In gratefully acknowledging these favours, I feel it my duty to pay a just tribute to his candour. He repeatedly said, "You will remember that I am the son of Sir Robert Walpole, and therefore must be prejudiced in his favour. Facts I will not misrepresent or disguise, but my opinions and reflections on those facts you will receive with caution, and adopt or reject at your discretion." Although he testified a natural solicitude to see the memoirs of his father, yet he not unfrequently expressed his wishes that the work might not appear while he was alive, lest it might be thought that from motives of delicacy, I had not delivered my sentiments with freedom.

P R E F A C E.

TOWNSHEND PAPERS.

I am obliged to the marquis Townshend for access to the papers of his grandfather Charles, the second viscount Townshend, who was plenipotentiary at Gertruydenberg and at the Hague, and principal secretary of state. Lord Townshend's masterly letters to George the First; the notes between George the Second and him; the confidential intercourse which he regularly maintained with his brother in law, Sir Robert Walpole, while he was at Hanover; have materially contributed to illustrate those transactions in which the brother ministers had a principal share.

HARDWICKE PAPERS.

To my noble friend the earl of Hardwicke, I gratefully acknowledge my obligations for the use of his collection. From it I have been supplied with various papers, memorandums, and narratives of his grandfather, the lord chancellor, and of the late earl of Hardwicke; letters from the duke of Newcastle; the confidential correspondence between Sir Robert Walpole and lord Townshend, and the papers of Sir Luke Schaub, together with other documents of importance.

SYDNEY PAPERS.

I am indebted to lord Sydney for the communication of letters which belonged to his father, the honourable Thomas Townshend, second son of Charles viscount Townshend, and the confidential friend of Sir Robert Walpole. The kindness of lord Sydney, and his brother, Charles Townshend, Esquire, has also supplied many anecdotes derived from the conversation of their father.

WALDEGRAVE PAPERS.

To the Countess of WALDEGRAVE, I am obliged for submitting to my inspection the dispatches of her grandfather James, first
 §
 earl

earl of Waldegrave, during his embassies at Vienna and Paris, from 1727 to 1740. Among other points of secret history, they detail many interesting conversations with Cardinal Fleury, and with Chauvelin, keeper of the seals. They contain also various letters to and from Sir Robert Walpole, of the most private and confidential nature, which are printed in the Correspondence.

In addition to these, I have to enumerate other communications made in the most liberal and obliging manner, and to offer my grateful acknowledgments :

HARRINGTON PAPERS.

To the earl of Harrington, for the correspondence of his grandfather William Stanhope, first earl of Harrington, who was envoy and ambassador at Madrid, plenipotentiary at the congress of Soissons, and secretary of state. Also for some papers of Charles Stanhope, elder brother of the first earl of Harrington, who was private and confidential secretary to earl Stanhope, and secretary to the treasury under the earl of Sunderland. This collection supplied me with many interesting letters, which relate to the schism in the administration in 1716, and a confidential correspondence between Newcastle and Harrington, previous to the dismissal of lord Townshend.

GRANTHAM PAPERS.

To lady Grantham, for the papers of Sir Thomas Robinson, first lord Grantham, who was confidential secretary to lord Walpole, during his embassy in France, and envoy and plenipotentiary at Vienna. These documents comprise an interesting account of the negotiations and transactions between Great Britain and the house of Austria, during a period of eighteen years.

POYNTZ PAPERS.

To Stephen Poyntz, Esquire, for various communications from the papers of his father Stephen Poyntz, Esquire, confidential secretary of lord Townshend, envoy to the court of Sweden, and one of the plenipotentiaries at the congress of Soissons.

KEENE PAPERS.

To Benjamin Keene, Esquire, for the papers of his uncle Sir Benjamin Keene, so long, and with such distinguished eminence, envoy and ambassador at Madrid.

CAMPBELL PAPERS.

To Archibald Campbell, Esquire, for the papers of his grandfather, Archibald earl of Ilay, and duke of Argyle; in which I had the good fortune to find several original letters of Sir Robert Walpole.

DEVONSHIRE PAPERS.

To the late worthy and much regretted lord John Cavendish, for several interesting letters, in the possession of the duke of Devonshire, written by Sir Robert Walpole, the marquis of Hartington, and Sir Robert Wilmot, to William duke of Devonshire, lord lieutenant of Ireland, a short time previous to the resignation of Sir Robert Walpole.

ETOUGH PAPERS.

To John Plumtre, Esquire, for the papers of the Rev. Henry Etough, rector of Therfield, Hertfordshire. These papers form a valuable mass of intelligence. They contain sketches of the reigns of William, Anne, George the First and Second; numerous accounts of Sir Robert Walpole, which he obtained in conversation, either from the minister himself or Horace Walpole, the minutes of which,

which, in various instances, he noted down. They comprise much information derived from Mr. Scrope, secretary to the treasury, and other persons whose authorities he constantly cites; and a long and interesting correspondence with Horace Walpole. Etough was a man of great research and eager curiosity, replete with prejudice, but idolizing Sir Robert Walpole. In the examination of these ample documents, I have only adopted such parts as were in my judgment entitled to full credit.

The following are the principal articles in this collection, of which I have availed myself: "A Miscellany, being Minutes of several Conversations while Sir Robert Walpole, and when Lord Orford, on several Subjects, from 1734 to 1744, with some Particulars relating to his latest Transactions."—"Minutes of a Conversation with Sir Robert Walpole, on the Attempt of Lord Bolingbroke and the Duchess of Kendal, to obtain his Dismissal in 1727." Printed in the Correspondence.—"An imperfect Essay on the Character and Behaviour of the late Earl of Orford, addressed to the right honourable Horatio Walpole, Esquire."—"Minutes of two Conferences with Horatio Walpole at Putney, August 6th and 20th, 1752."—"Minutes of a Conversation with the right honourable Horace Walpole, Esquire, November 3, 1755."—"Observations on the Elections in 1734 and 41, relative to lord Orford."—"Minutes of a Conversation with Mr. Scrope, secretary to the Treasury, relating to the Arrangement of the new Ministry on the Accession of George the Second." Printed in the Correspondence.

WESTON PAPERS.

To the Rev. Charles Weston, prebendary of Durham, for communications from the papers of his father, Edward Weston, Esquire, under secretary of state; containing, among other interesting particulars, letters from Sir Robert Walpole and lord Townshend, on the arrival

arrival of the duke of Ripperda in England, and a manly remonstrance of lord Townshend to the king, dissuading the journey to Hanover; which the reader will find in the Correspondence.

ONFLOW PAPERS.

To lord Onslow, for some very interesting remarks of speaker Onslow, on various parts of Sir Robert Walpole's conduct, with anecdotes of the principal leaders of opposition. Printed in the Correspondence.

ASTLE PAPERS.

To Thomas Astle, Esquire, keeper of the records at the Tower, for various communications from his private collection of manuscripts, particularly, correspondence of the earl of Clarendon, during his mission at Hanover, and letters from secretary St. John to Drummond; which are printed in the Correspondence.

STANHOPE PAPERS.

The schism in the Whig administration divided Walpole and Stanhope, and converted their long established friendship into bitter enmity. As the character of James, first earl of Stanhope, was severely arraigned by Townshend and Walpole, candour impelled me to apply to his representative, the present earl, for any documents in his possession, which might tend to vindicate his memory from those aspersions. This request was acceded to in the most liberal manner, and those papers have materially tended to elucidate the transactions of that period.

MIDDLETON PAPERS.

I am indebted to lord Middleton for the papers of his grandfather, the chancellor of Ireland, which develop the history of Wood's patent,

patent, and comprise several letters from his brother Thomas Brodrick, chairman of the committee of secrecy in the South Sea inquiry, and of his son Saint John Brodrick; most of these are replete with the severest sarcasms and invectives against the minister.

EGREMONT PAPERS.

To the earl of Egremont, for the letters of lord Bolingbroke to his grandfather Sir William Wyndham, remarkable for that animation, elegance of style, plausibility of argument, and virulence of invective, which distinguish his writings. They contain the most severe animadversions on the conduct and principles of Sir Robert Walpole, and are filled with the most bitter reproaches against his measures: I have thought it my duty not to suppress a single paragraph which reflected on the administration of the minister.

PULTENEY PAPERS.

To Sir William Pulteney, for the papers of his wife's father Daniel Pulteney, who was commissioner of the board of trade, lord of the admiralty, who became the strenuous opponent of Sir Robert Walpole, and wrote against him with great severity in the "Craftsman."

MELCOMBE PAPERS.

To Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, Esquire, for the papers of George Dodington, Lord Melcombe, from which I have selected several private letters, animadverting, with much acrimony, on the conduct and system of Sir Robert Walpole, extolling the principles and directing the views of that opposition which drove him from the helm.

To Dr. Douglas, bishop of Salisbury, I am indebted for several interesting particulars, derived from daily conversations, during an intimate intercourse of many years with his friend and patron the earl of Bath. While I gratefully acknowledge my obligations to this learned and highly-respected prelate, for much valuable information during the progress of this work, I feel extraordinary gratification in reflecting that the Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole have derived assistance from the friend of his great opponent, William Pulteney.

Governor Pownall claims my grateful acknowledgments for the communication of a very ingenious and able essay on the conduct and principles of Sir Robert Walpole, which places the minister in a new point of view. It is inserted in the Correspondence.

With the assistance of these extensive sources of information, I have been enabled to elucidate many parts of secret history, either totally unknown, or wholly misrepresented, and to trace the motives of action which influenced the conduct of the minister, and directed the views of the British cabinet.

I have not been biased by the prejudices of party hatred or party affection. I have always considered the connections and principles of the persons from whom I derived political information, and after duly weighing all the circumstances, have equally avoided the extremes on either side.

It has naturally been my principal object to trace and discuss those events, which personally relate to Sir Robert Walpole, either in his public or private character, and in which he was either directly or eventually concerned. In the course of my inquiries, and in the perusal of the numerous documents to which I have had access, I obtained information of various collateral circumstances, and
of

of numerous characters, which though they did not immediately attach to the life of the minister, yet were connected with the transactions which he either influenced or directed. Hence I have been led to make occasional digressions, in order to elucidate interesting but obscure points of history. I have also introduced biographical memoirs of eminent persons, who were either the opposers or favourers of the minister, whose characters the papers and documents in my possession have enabled me to illustrate.

Fully aware of the uncertainty of tradition, I have been extremely cautious to confine myself to the narrowest limits. I have never once adopted the hearsay of a hearsay, and have paid no attention to any anecdotes or facts except from those who derived their information from persons of veracity, that were themselves engaged in the transactions of the times, and who authenticated their narratives.

I have, in general, quoted my authorities, and though in some instances I have omitted to enumerate them, that I might avoid the appearance of affectation, yet I can safely aver, that I have not advanced a single fact in the whole work, of the truth of which I have not been convinced by the most unexceptionable evidence.

In a few instances I have collected the substance of the minister's speeches from parliamentary minutes in his own hand writing. From these memorandums I have particularly drawn his speeches against the peerage bill, on proposing the excise scheme, in opposing Sir John Barnard's plan for the reduction of interest, and in reply to the motion made by Sandys to remove him.

I have scrupulously avoided all allusions to the transactions which are now passing before us, lest I might have been tempted to make my work the vehicle of panegyric or invective, and have fallen into an error not uncommon with speculative writers, who judge of remote facts by recent circumstances, and affectedly assimilate

milate the events of past ages with the transactions of the present day.

I cannot close this Preface without paying a just tribute of gratitude to my ingenious friend Mr. Adolphus, for the advantages which I have derived from his literary assistance in preparing these Memoirs for the press.

March 10, 1798.

ADDITIONAL CORRECTIONS

For the MEMOIRS of SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

SINCE the publication of these Memoirs, the author has discovered some inaccuracies, which the reader is requested to correct.

Vol. I. Preface, p. xix. l. 2. of the note, for *Barker's* case, read the *Banker's* case.—P. 2. l. 7. dele *elected*.

In p. 63. It is asserted, that Sir Horatio Townshend *was created a peer in 1682*, that his son Charles lord Townshend, took his seat in the house of peers in 1696, and that *being of a Tory family*, he attached himself so strongly to that party, that he *signed the protest respecting the impeachment of the Whig lords*.

Sir Horatio Townshend was *created a baron in 1661*, and *raised to the dignity of viscount in 1682*. Charles lord Townshend took his seat in December 1697. His family could not be called a Tory family, as the distinctions of Whig and Tory had only taken place a short time before his father's death. The inference, that he attached himself to the Tories because he signed the protest respecting the impeachment of the Whig lords, is not sufficiently founded. 1. It appears that several peers who also signed the protest, were known Whigs. 2. This protest was merely upon a collateral point. It stated, that it was contrary to the proceedings in parliament to take notice in that house of what was represented only by some lords to have passed in the other. 3. Townshend did not sign any of the other protests respecting the impeachment of the Whig lords.

In p. 83 and 180. The countess of Platen, mistress of Ernest Augustus, is confounded with the countess of Platen her daughter-in-law, who was mother of Amalia, married to the count de St. Florentin. The confusion of German genealogies, and the want of authentic documents, have rendered it difficult to ascertain every particular respecting the families of Platen, Kilmanseck, and Schulenburg.

Instead of the first six lines, p. 83. read, *His other mistress was Sophia Charlotte, wife of baron Kilmanseck, master of the horse, from whom she was separated. In 1721 she was created countess of Leinster in the kingdom of Ireland, and in 1722 made a British peeress, by the title of baroness of Brentford and countess of Darlington.*

In p. 167. l. 25 for Sir Joseph, read Sir Jonathan Trelawney.—P. 169. l. 20, 22. read *Layer having been tried and condemned, and bills of pains and penalties having been passed against the inferior agents, Kelly and Plunket, &c.*—P. 177. l. 26, 27. dele *and Stanhope*.—P. 195. l. 9. for *who had ever been*, read *who since the reign of James the First had been*.—P. 533. l. 27. dele *since the revolution*.—P. 627. l. 3. dele *almost without a division*.—P. 637. l. 27. for *having read leaving*.—P. 655. l. 26. for *brother* read *nephew*.—P. 656. note, l. 5. for *nephew* read *cousin*.—P. 683. l. 23. for *Irwin* read *Edwin*.—P. 718. l. 24. for *from* read *to*.—P. 725. l. 33. for *increase* read *decrease*.

Vol. II. p. 289. l. 6. for *Hoadley* read *Willis*.—P. 647. dele the marginal note.

M E M O I R S

O F

S I R R O B E R T W A L P O L E.

P E R I O D T H E F I R S T :

From his Birth, to the Accession of GEORGE the First ;

1676—1714.

C H A P T E R T H E F I R S T : 1676—1701.

*Family. — Birth. — Talents. — Education. — Country Pursuits. — Marriage. —
Paternal Estate.*

THE ancestors of Sir Robert Walpole, who was the eighteenth male of his family, in a lineal descent, may be traced from the conquest. They took their surname, according to the custom of those days, from the town of Walpole, in Norfolk, on the borders of Lincolnshire, where they had their residence, until one of them exchanged the family seat for Houghton, in the same county*.

Sir Edward Walpole, his grandfather, was elected member for the borough of Lynn Regis, in the convention parliament, assembled in April 1660, and voted for the restoration of Charles the Second. As a recompence for his zeal in the royal cause, he was created Knight of the Bath. He was remarkable for his eloquence and weight in parliament, and once, on a warm altercation in the house, he suggested an expedient which was immediately adopted by both

Period I.
1676 to 1714.
FAMILY.

* Annexed Genealogical Table. Edmonstone's Baronetage. Collins's Peerage; Article, Earl of Orford. Documents among the Orford Papers.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

parties, for which Waller the poet, in a high strain of panegyric, ironically proposed that he should be sent to the Tower, for not having sooner composed the dispute when he had it in his power *. He died in 1667.

Robert, the eldest son and heir of Sir Edward Walpole, sat in parliament for the borough of Castle Rising, in the county of Norfolk, from the first year of William and Mary, till his decease in November 1700. He was elected deputy lieutenant, and colonel of the militia, in the county of Norfolk, and took as active a share as his situation and circumstances permitted in forwarding the Revolution. He considerably improved his estate by his prudent management; educated a large family with much credit, and was held in great estimation by the Whig party, whose measures he appears to have uniformly supported. He had by his wife Mary, only daughter and heiress of Sir Jeffery Burwell, of Rougham, in Suffolk, nineteen children, of whom Robert, afterwards Sir Robert Walpole †, and Earl of Orford, the subject of these Memoirs, was the third son.

It seems to be an error not uncommon in mankind, to endeavour to exalt the merit of favourite and eminent characters, by false and exaggerated encomiums, and to attribute solely to nature, what is usually the combined effect of nature, education, and accident. The voice of friendship, admiration, or flattery, has declared, with a similar prejudice, that Sir Robert Walpole was born a minister. It was said of him, that he was endowed with a genius for calculation; and that the method which he adopted in settling accounts, was a mystery understood only by himself. Others of his admirers considered application in him as not necessary, because he knew every thing by intuition. But truth and impartiality reject such unqualified assertions, and the events of his early life will shew that the natural talents of Walpole, were rather solid than brilliant, and that his acquirements were the fruit of considerable industry.

He received an excellent education. He came early into parliament; spoke at first indifferently, until habit and practice rendered him an able debater. He was promoted to an office in the admiralty in the 28th year of his age; became secretary at war at thirty; was trained to business under Marlborough and Godolphin; and managed the house of commons during the Whig administration. Being deprived of his place, he distinguished himself in opposition; was persecuted by the Tories, and considered as a martyr by the Whigs. He promoted, with unabated zeal, the Protestant succession, and was rewarded for his services with the place of paymaster of the forces by

* *Ædes Walpolianæ.*

† The early traits in the life of Sir Robert Walpole, were principally communicated by his son Horace, the late earl of Orford.

A GENEALOGICAL TABLE of the WALPOLE FAMILY, with the Descendants of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE.

REGINALD DE WALPOLE,

Time of William the Conqueror.

RICHARD de WALPOLE.

Sir HENRY de WALPOLE.

HENRY WALPOLE.

Sir JOHN WALPOLE.

Sir HENRY WALPOLE.

Sir HENRY WALPOLE,
Knight of the Shire, 9 Edw. II. 1316.HENRY WALPOLE, d. 1442.
bur. at Houghton.

HENRY WALPOLE.

JOHN WALPOLE.

THOMAS WALPOLE, d. 1514.

EDWARD WALPOLE, d. 1557.

JOHN WALPOLE, d. 1585.

CALISTOT WALPOLE, 1646, or 1648.

ROBERT WALPOLE,
b. 1593. d. 1663.SUSAN, daughter of
Sir Edward Barkham,
Lord Mayor of London.Sir EDWARD WALPOLE,
d. 1667.SUSAN, daughter of
Robert Crane.ROBERT WALPOLE,
b. 1650.MARY, daughter of
Sir Jeffrey Burwell.

HORATIO WALPOLE,

CATHERINE SHORTER,
daughter of
Sir John Shorter,
Lord Mayor of London,
of Bybrook in Kent.
d. 1737.

Sir ROBERT WALPOLE,

Wife of
Sir Robert Walpole,
and Earl of Orford,
b. 1676. d. 1745.MARIA SKERRET,
daughter of
Thomas Skerret, Esq.
d. 1738.MARY,
m. Sir Charles
Turner, Bart.
b. 1673,
of Warham,
in Norfolk.DOROTHY,
b. 1686,
d. 1726,
2nd wife of Charles,
2nd Viscount
Townshend.SUSAN,
b. 1687,
d. 1763,
m. Anth.
Hammond, Esq.,
South Wotton,
Norfolk.HORATIO WALPOLE,
b. 1678. d. 1757.
6th Baron WALPOLE
of Wolterton,
m. Mary Lombard,
coheiress of Peter Lombard, Esq.,
of Burnhamthorpe, Norfolk.GALFRIDUS,
b. 1683,
d. 1726.ROBERT,
created Baron WALPOLE
of Walpole, 10 June 1753;
2nd Earl of ORFORD,
d. 1751.MARGARET,
daughter of
Samuel Rolle, Esq.,
of Hayton,
Devonshire.Sir EDWARD WALPOLE,
Knight of the Bath,
d. 1784, aged 73.HORATIO WALPOLE,
4th Earl of ORFORD,
d. 1797, aged 79,
in whom the Title
of ORFORD
became extinct.MARY WALPOLE, d. 1732.
m. George, Visct. Malpas,
afterwards 3rd Earl of Cholmondeley.HORATIO,
2^d Baron WALPOLE of Wolterton,
succeeded as
Baron WALPOLE of Walpole, 1797,
on the death of Horatio, 4th Earl of
Orford in 1797.GEORGE,
3rd Earl of ORFORD,
b. 1730. d. 1791.GEORGE, Viscount MALPAS,
d. 1764.GEORGE JAMES,
2nd Earl of Cholmondeley,
succeeded to the Estate and Seat at Houghton,
on the death of Horatio, 4th Earl of Orford.

GEORGE HORACE, Viscount Malpas.

ROBERT.
GEORGE JAMES.

WILLIAM

HORACE GEORGE.

the new sovereign, whom he had assisted in fixing upon the throne. Thus educated and inured to business, having thus served under government, and acted in opposition, he was placed at the head of the treasury. In this situation, adored by his family, beloved by his friends, and esteemed by his party, he was courted and idolized. His facility for transacting business, and his talents for calculation, were considered by his fond admirers as the gift of nature, when, in reality, they were the result of education, assiduity, and experience.

Chapter 1.

1676 to 1701

Robert Walpole was born at Houghton on the 26th of August 1676 *. BIRTH

* There is great confusion, and difference of opinion, with regard to the age of Sir Robert Walpole. He himself writes, in his letter to general Churchill, June 24th 1743; "No disgrace attends me since *sixty-seven*." According therefore to this account he must have been born in 1675, and died aged 69, or in his 70th year. His son Horace, the late Earl of Orford, confirmed this account, and told me that, had he lived till the 26th of August 1745, he would have been 70.—The register at Houghton gives no account of his birth or time of baptism; but his death is thus recorded: A. D. 1745. The right honourable earl of Orford died March 18, and was buried the 25th, in the 68th year of his age.—At the bottom of the same page, in another hand, is, "The

great Sir Robert Walpole, earl of Orford, departed this life the 18th March 1745, aged "68 Years, and was interred the 25 D^o."—According to Collins's Peerage, and the Gentleman's Magazine, he was 71 at the time of his death, which would place his birth in 1674.—The register of his birth by his mother settles the dispute. The reverend Horace Hammond, rector of Great Massingham, in Norfolk, great nephew to Sir Robert Walpole, to whom I am obliged for the abovementioned extracts from the parish register, favoured me with an account of the births of all the children of Robert and Mary Walpole, registered in her own hand, in a book which is in his possession.

AGE OF MY CHILDREN.

Susan was born	-	-	-	6th June	-	-	-	1672.
Mary	—	-	-	8th June	-	-	-	1673.
Edward	—	-	-	23d June	-	-	-	1674.
Burwell	—	-	-	6th August	-	-	-	1675.
ROBERT	—	-	-	26th August	-	-	-	1676.
John	—	-	-	3d September	-	-	-	1677.
Horatio	—	-	-	8th December	-	-	-	1678.
Christopher	—	-	-	20th February	-	-	-	1679.
Elizabeth	—	-	-	24th March	-	-	-	1680.
Elizabeth	—	-	-	16th October	-	-	-	1682.
Galfridus	—	-	-	15th March	-	-	-	1684.
Anne	—	-	-	6th April	-	-	-	1685.
Dorothy	—	-	-	18th September	-	-	-	1686.
Susan	—	-	-	5th December	-	-	-	1687.
Mordaunt	—	-	-	13th December	-	-	-	1688.
A boy still-born	-	-	-	8th April	-	-	-	1690.
Charles	-	-	-	30th June	-	-	-	1691.
William	—	-	-	7th April	-	-	-	1693.
A daughter still-born	-	-	-	20th January	-	-	-	1694.

MEMOIRS OF

Period I.

1676 to 1714.

1689.

EDUCATION.

He received the first rudiments of learning at a private seminary at Maffingham, in Norfolk, and completed his education on the foundation at Eton, under Mr. Newborough, who appears to have been distinguished for his knowledge, and to have raised the school to a high degree of eminence. Walpole was naturally indolent, and disliked application, but the emulation of a public seminary, the alternate menaces and praises of his master, the maxim repeatedly inculcated by his father, that he was a younger brother, and that his future fortune in life depended solely upon his own exertions, overcame the original inertness of his disposition. Before he quitted Eton, he had so considerably improved himself in classical literature, as to bear the character of an excellent scholar. A peculiar fondness for Horace *, marked his good sense, and even after his retirement from public life, when he had long discontinued his early studies, he was by no means deficient in the knowledge of the Greek language. His talents for oratory began to develop themselves at a very early period, for his school-master being informed that several of his former scholars who had been educated at Eton, and particularly St. John, had distinguished themselves for their eloquence in the house of commons, replied, "But I am impatient to hear that Robert Walpole has spoken, for I am convinced that he will be a good orator."

On the 22d of April 1696 †, he was admitted a scholar at King's ‡ College, in the university of Cambridge. During his residence, he was seized with the small-pox, which was of a most malignant sort; and he continued for some time in imminent danger. Doctor Brady, the famous historical advocate for the Tory principles of the English constitution, who was his physician, said to one of the fellows of King's College, warmly attached to the same party; "We must take care to save this young man, or we shall be accused of having purposely neglected him, because he is so violent a Whig." It was indeed principally owing to his kind and assiduous attention, that Walpole recovered. Notwithstanding Brady's political prejudices, he was so much pleased with the spirit and disposition of his young patient, that he observed, with an affectionate attachment, "His singular escape seems to me a sure indication that he is reserved for important purposes." In the latter period of his life, when the prediction had been fulfilled, this anecdote was frequently related by Walpole with a complacency, which shewed that it had made a

* He was accustomed to give his son, the late earl of Orford, subjects for his Latin compositions, and he almost always took them from Horace. Lord Orford used to recollect two themes which were applicable to his situation as first minister:

*Principibus placuisse viris non ultima laus est.
Non cuius homini contingit adire Corinthum.*

† Register of King's College.

‡ A collection being made, after he was prime minister, for the new building at King's College, he subscribed £. 500, and on receiving the thanks of the provost and fellows, he replied, "I deserve no thanks, I have only paid for my board."

deep impression on his mind, and proved his satisfaction at the recollection of an event that seemed to anticipate his subsequent elevation.

Chapter I.
1676 to 1701.

At college he formed a strict intimacy with Hare and Bland, who were members of the same foundation, and in every situation of life, shewed an affectionate regard for the friends of his early youth. He raised Hare, who afterwards ably distinguished himself in defending the measures of the Whig administration, to the bishopric of Chichester, and promoted Bland to the provostship of Eton College, and deanery of Durham.

On the death of his elder surviving brother, in 1698, becoming heir to the paternal estate, he resigned his scholarship on the 25th of May. He had been originally designed for the church, and was frequently heard to say, with the confidence which characterises an aspiring mind, that if such a destination had taken place, instead of being prime minister, he should have been archbishop of Canterbury. Fortunately the superstructure of his education was made before the death of his elder brother, for after that event he relapsed into his natural indolence, and, the impulse of necessity being removed, no longer continued to prosecute his studies for the purpose of pursuing a liberal profession. His father also assisted in withdrawing him from literary occupations. He immediately took his son from the university, endeavoured to fix him in the country, and make him attend to the improvement of his estate: with that view he employed him once a week in superintending the sale of his cattle at the neighbouring towns, and seemed ambitious that his son should become the first grazier in the county. His father was of a jovial disposition, and often pushed to excess the pleasures of the table: the hospitable mansion of Houghton was much frequented by the neighbouring gentry, and the convivial temper of Walpole accorded with the scenes of rustic jollity. At these meetings the father occasionally supplied his glass with a double portion of wine, adding, "Come Robert, you shall drink twice, while I drink once; for I will not permit the son, in his sober senses, to be witness to the intoxication of his father." His mornings being thus engaged in the occupations of farming, or in the sports of the field, of which he was always extremely fond, and his evenings passed in festive society, he had no leisure for literary pursuits.

PATERNAL
ESTATE.

On the 30th of July 1700, he married, in Knightsbridge Chapel *, Catherine, daughter of Sir John Shorter, lord mayor of London, a woman of exquisite beauty and accomplished manners, and the amusements of London succeeded the more active employments of the country. Soon after

Nov. 22.
1700.

* Register of Knightsbridge Chapel, which the reverend D. Lysons, the learned author of the Environs of London, was so obliging as to search at my request.

MEMOIRS OF

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

the marriage his father died, and Walpole inherited the family estate, the rent-roll of which exceeded £. 2,000 a year*. It was charged with his mother's jointure, and with the fortunes of the younger children, which amounted to £. 9,000. His wife's dowry discharged this incumbrance, and his mother's jointure fell in by her death in 1711.

The death of his father threw him into the busy scenes of public life, when the violent spirit of party gave an impulse to his political exertions; and at the moment when the demise of Charles the Second, king of Spain, fixed the attention of Europe, and excited general apprehensions in England, left the united dominions of the whole Spanish monarchy should center in a prince of the house of Bourbon.

* Among the Orford Papers is a document in the hand-writing of his father, shewing the amount of the estate, of which the substance is submitted to the reader, as a proof that the reproaches cast upon him by his opponents, of being a needy adventurer, were unfounded.

June 9, 1700. A particular of my estate within the county of Norfolk, as it is now let

	£.	s.	d.
Manor of Houghton - - -	352	11	—
Manor of Birch Newton - - -	80	—	—
Manor of Great Bircham - - -	277	—	—
Manor of Bircham Toft - - -	101	—	—
of Darlington - - -	253	11	4
of Siffem - - -	304	16	8
of Westwich - - -	180	10	—
of Glostnops in Ledgett - - -	100	—	—
of Harply - - -	100	11	—
In Burrough, near Yarmouth -	18	—	—
Small lands and tenements -	50	—	—
Total in Norfolk -	1,818	—	—
In Suffolk.			
Manor of Haslett - - -	300	—	—
Farm of Cavendish, &c. - - -	51	—	—
Total -	2,169	—	—

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1700—1701.

Elected Member of Parliament.—Sketch of the important Transactions during the Two last Parliaments of King William.—Act of Settlement in favour of the Protestant Succession and Family.—Principles and Conduct of the Leaders at the Revolution.—Ineffectual Endeavour of William to extend the Act of Settlement in favour of the Hanover Line, virtually introduced by the Act for disabling Papists.—Artful Management of William to procure the Extension of that Act on the Death of the Duke of Gloucester.

ON the decease of his father, Walpole was elected member for Castle Rising, and sat for that borough in the two short parliaments, which were assembled in the two last years of the reign of king William.

Chapter 2.
1700 to 1701

The death of Charles the Second, king of Spain, in the month of October 1700, the acceptance of his testament by Louis the Fourteenth, in breach of the second partition treaty, and the quiet accession of Philip duke of Anjou to the crown of Spain, acknowledged by England and the United Provinces, were events which had preceded the meeting of the parliament in which Walpole first sat. The act of settlement in favour of the electress Sophia; the violent conduct of the Tory house of commons in the impeachment of Somers and the Whig lords; the death of James the Second; the acknowledgment of his son as James the Third, by Louis the Fourteenth; the indignation of the English at that event; the successful manœuvres of William to rouse the spirit of the nation against France, and to obtain the concurrence of the Tories to a Continental war; the second grand alliance; the dissolution of the Tory parliament and ministry; the choice of a Whig administration and parliament; the declaration of war against France; the attainder of the pretended prince of Wales; the abjuration oath; the death of William, at the moment when he had infused an impulse into the grand combination; were the important events which agitated the public mind during the two last parliaments of his reign. To give a detail of these complicated and interesting transactions is not the province of a writer of memoirs, but must be left to the historian of the times; except so far as they may be supposed to influence the future conduct and policy of the minister, whose life I am attempting to delineate. With this view, it may not be improper

POLITICAL
EVENTS.

to

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

to state the circumstances which preceded and accompanied the passing of the act of settlement, and induced all parties, notwithstanding the avowed repugnance of a majority in the commons, to adopt that measure, which secured to the house of Hanover the throne of Great Britain, and had so strong and permanent an influence on the subsequent conduct of Walpole.

When the arbitrary conduct of James the Second against the constitution and religion had raised the indignation of England, and when our great deliverer William, the prince of Orange, had co-operated with the nation in driving that monarch from the throne; the leaders of the convention parliament, which established the revolution, acted with a spirit and wisdom well becoming the arduous situation of affairs, and with a temper which accommodated itself, as occasion required, to the customs and prejudices of the nation. While they set aside that absolute and indefeasible right, which it was averred no conduct, however tyrannical, could violate, and laid down the doctrine of resistance in cases of extreme necessity, they dreaded the evils of an elective monarchy, and guarded against the future establishment of a republican form of government. When they found it necessary to break the hereditary line of descent, they made the deviation as small as possible, no more than the exigency of circumstances required, and re-established it in the same manner as it existed before that breach was made. With these principles constantly in view, they declared that James, having endeavoured to subvert the constitution, had abdicated the government, and thereby rendered the throne vacant.

The throne being thus declared abdicated or vacant, by the absence of James the Second, and his son being supposed illegitimate, the next in order of succession was Mary, eldest daughter of James. But as the nation owed its deliverance from arbitrary power to William, the convention departed from the regular line by declaring him king, jointly with his wife Mary, and by vesting in him the sole administration of government. This appointment was a deviation from the system of hereditary descent, dictated by imperious necessity, and confirmed by gratitude; yet as Mary and Anne both consented to devolve their right to the crown on William, the convention may be said only to have confirmed this transfer. This single deviation excepted, the succession was continued after the death of William and Mary in the natural order: in the children of Mary; in Anne; in the children of Anne; and in the children of William, who being the son of Mary, eldest daughter of Charles the First, was, after Anne, the next in order of succession.

In 1689, the first parliament which was summoned by William and Mary confirmed this act of settlement; but the king, ever anxious to promote the tranquillity of his subjects, and to prevent those future troubles which might arise, should all the persons named in that Act die without issue, thought it indispensibly necessary to extend it to the next heirs in the Protestant line. He ordered, therefore, bishop Burnet to propose in the house of lords, the addition of an amendment to the bill of rights, nominating Sophia, dutchess of Hanover, and her issue, next in the succession. Being carried by the lords without opposition, it was thrown out in the house of commons by the Republicans, high Tories, and Jacobites, who all united on this occasion against a bill which equally confounded their respective hopes, under the specious pretence that such a nomination was unjust, because it would preclude all those who were prior in lineal descent to the dutchess, even should they become Protestants*. The birth of the duke of Gloucester, having still farther removed the apprehensions of a popish successor, William did not chuse to press the nation in favour of the Hanover line, but was satisfied in obtaining his views by a more concealed but not less effectual method. Instead of naming Sophia, a clause was annexed to the bill of rights, disabling all Papists from succeeding to the crown, or such as should marry Papists. This clause first opened the prospect of succession to the house of Brunswick, without naming it; because that family, being the first among the Protestant descendants of James the First, became, from the perpetual exclusion of Catholics, next in expectancy to the persons named in the act of settlement. This remarkable clause passed, in both houses, without opposition or debate, notwithstanding the well known disinclination of the majority of the lower house; and the management of the whole affair reflects the highest honour on the judgment and temper of William.

Such was the order of succession when Walpole came into parliament; at which time the recent death of the duke of Gloucester alarmed the nation with the dread of a Popish successor; and enabled William to carry into execution his favourite measure of extending the act of settlement to the house of Hanover. Having been deceived by Louis the Fourteenth in the negotiations for the second partition treaty, he had dismissed the Whig ministers, who had rendered themselves obnoxious by signing it, and formed a Tory administration, at the head of which were Rochester, Godolphin, and Harley, who, from being a violent partisan of the Whigs, now sided with their opponents.

* Burnet, vol. 2. p. 15. Tindal, vol. 13. p. 144.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

William well knew that the greater part of the Tories had consented with the utmost reluctance to the breach of hereditary descent at the revolution, and had almost uniformly opposed his endeavours in favour of Sophia, as tending, in their opinion, to overturn the system of hereditary monarchy, so long cherished by the constitution of England. He also well knew that the whole body of the real Whigs earnestly promoted the transfer of the crown to the succession in the Protestant line, but, at the same time, he was aware that among those who called themselves Whigs, were many Republicans, who would oppose it from a hope, that if the persons named in the act of settlement should die, means might be found to establish their favourite form of government. He had long perceived that the Whigs themselves could never have carried the bill which he had so much at heart, in opposition to the united force of the Tories, Jacobites, and Republicans; but he had now divided the Republicans from the Tories, by placing the latter in power, and being secure of the Whigs on this question, he thought it a favourable opportunity to make the extension of the act of settlement with the ministers the price of their elevation. He accordingly recommended, in his speech from the throne, February 1701, a further provision for the succession of the crown in the Protestant line; notwithstanding this acquiescence of the Tories, he could not carry his point without the consent of the princess Anne, who was at that time entirely governed by the dutchess of Marlborough; and the dutchess was highly incensed against William, for having formerly arrested the duke her husband, and still more for having publicly withdrawn his confidence from him. With a view therefore to counteract the influence of that artful favourite, and to gain the concurrence of Anne, he permitted insinuations to be thrown out, as if he intended to make a cession of his crown to the son of James the second. These artful rumours alarmed both the princess and her favourite, and extorted her consent to the act of settlement*.

But although the Tories had promised the king to promote the extension of the Act of Settlement, before they came into power, and had even permitted a recommendation of it to be introduced into the king's speech, yet the method in which they conducted the business, proved their wish to obstruct it. The speech was made on the 11th of February; the commons, in their address, took not the least notice of that part which related to the Protestant succession; and it was not until the 3d of March that the house resolved itself into a committee to take that subject into consideration.

* Cunningham, vol. 1. p. 185. Somerville's History of King William, p. 545.

Harley observed, that the haste in which the government was settled at the revolution, had prevented the nation from requiring such securities from the future sovereign, as would have prevented much mischief; and he hoped they would not fall into the same error; he therefore moved, that before the person should be named, a provision should be made by a committee for the security of the rights and liberties of the people. This proposal being accepted, the resolutions of the committee were laid before the house, on the 12th of March, specifying certain restrictions *, to be ratified by every future sovereign.

Chapter 2.
1700 to 1701.

Burnet, whose reflections on the Tories cannot be admitted without extreme caution, observes, that these limitations were designed to disgust the king, and to raise disputes between the two houses, by which the bill might be lost †; although some of these restrictions were just, and highly beneficial, this observation is fully justified by the subsequent proceedings of the commons. So many delays were still made, that the patience of the Whigs began to be exhausted, and one of their party was going to propose the electress Sophia. Harley could only prevent this measure by bringing on the question. With a view, however, to cast a ridicule on the act of settlement, he employed Sir John Bolles, who was disordered in his senses, to propose the bill ‡. The business was so contrived, that this man thus deranged in his intellects, was, by the forms of the house, appointed one of the committee who were instructed to prepare the bill, was twice placed in the chair, and twice gave in the report. The first reading was postponed to the

* 1. All things relating to the well governing of this kingdom which are properly cognizable in the privy council, by the laws and customs of this realm, shall be transacted there, and all resolutions taken thereupon shall be signed by such of the privy council as shall advise and consent to the same. 2. No person born out of the kingdoms of England, Scotland, or Ireland, or the dominions thereunto belonging, or who is not born of English parents beyond the seas, although naturalized or made a denizen, shall be capable to be of the privy council, or a member of either house of parliament, or to enjoy any office or place of trust. 3. No such person shall have any grant of lands, tenements, or hereditaments from the crown to himself, or to any others in trust for him. 4. In case the crown shall hereafter come to any person not being a native of the kingdom of England, this nation shall not be obliged to engage in any war for the defence of any dominions or territories not be-

longing to the crown of England, without the consent of parliament. 5. Whoever shall hereafter come to the possession of the crown, shall join in communion with the church of England. 6. No pardon under the great seal shall be pleadable to an impeachment in parliament. 7. No person who shall hereafter come to the possession of the crown, shall go out of the dominions of England, Scotland, or Ireland, without the consent of parliament. 8. No person who has an office or place of profit under the king, or receives a pension from the crown, shall be capable of serving as a member of the house of commons. Judge's commissions shall be made *quam diu se bene gesserint*, and their salaries ascertained and established: But, upon the address of both houses of parliament, it may be lawful to remove them.

Journals of the House of Commons.—Tindal.

† Vol. 2. p. 271.

‡ Burnet.—*Journals.*

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

first of April, the second to the seventh, and it did not finally pass till the fourteenth of May. Thus the act of settlement, which was to secure the religion and constitution of the country, was received with so much coldness and contempt, that several members, during the sitting of the committee, indecently quitted the house, and so many delays were purposely made, that more than three months elapsed, from the day in which it was recommended from the throne to the time it was sent up to the lords. It passed that house after a slight opposition from the marquis of Normanby. Being carried back to the commons, it was received in a thin house, and several reproachful expressions were uttered against it by some of the members*.

After such a conduct, apparently calculated to render the bill odious and contemptible, what thanks can be given to the Tories, and to their idol Harley, for having in this manner brought forwards the act of settlement? Is it not evident that they had been drawn into a promise to support it by the artful management of William, and that they endeavoured to counteract the bill at the very moment when they appeared to promote it? The most zealous Whig, however, cannot presume to deny that the nation is highly indebted to the Tories for one of the limitations in the act of settlement, which the Whigs, with all their ardour for civil and religious liberty, would not have ventured to propose, because it was considered by the king as an insult on his conduct and administration. The restriction to which I allude is, that no foreigner, though naturalized, should be a member of the privy council, or of either house of parliament, or should enjoy any office or place of trust, or have any grant of lands from the crown. These necessary precautions, naturally suggested by the experience of those evils to which the nation had been already exposed, in consequence of raising a foreign prince to the throne, proved highly beneficial in preventing, on the accession of George the First, the admission of German denizens into the councils and cabinet of England.

* Burnet.—Tindal.—Oldmixon.

CHAPTER THE THIRD:

1701—1702.

Walpole soon becomes an active Member of Parliament.—Is upon various Committees, and Teller on several important Questions.—Supports the Whigs.—Seconds the Motion for extending the Oath of Abjuration to ecclesiastical Persons.—Death and Character of King William.

ALTHOUGH neither the Journals of the House of Commons, nor any contemporary accounts, nor the traditions of his family, record that Walpole made any specific motion, or spoke in favour of the act of settlement, yet there is no doubt that he joined the Whigs in promoting it.

The Journals of the House of Commons prove, that he soon became a very active member. His name appears upon several committees, and in one for privileges and elections, so early as the 13th of February, only three days after the meeting of the parliament in which he first sat. He was particularly attentive to the business which related to the county of Norfolk; and zealously promoted the questions which concerned the trade of Norwich. He made the report from the committee on the bill for erecting hospitals and workhouses in the borough of Lynn, and for the better employing and maintaining the poor, and was ordered to carry it up to the house of lords.

He is also mentioned as teller on several important questions which related as well to the trade and revenues of England, as to questions of party. He was one of the tellers against the bill proposed by the Tories for the better preservation of the Protestant religion, and for preventing the translation of bishops from one see to another. His high veneration for the character of Lord Somers, and his zealous attachment to his party, naturally induced him to oppose the motion for his impeachment, and it is not improbable that he afterwards took a considerable part in his defence. Being young and unexperienced at the period when that question was moved, he gave only a silent vote, but he made a judicious remark, which proved his sagacity: it was, that the zeal of the warmest friends is oftentimes more hurtful to the person whose cause they espouse, than the bitterest accusations of the most inveterate opponents. The defence spoken by Somers in the house of commons was so able and perspicuous, and made so deep an impression, as induced Walpole to be of opinion, that if the question had been immediately put, the

Chapter 3.
1701 to 1702.

1701.

April 23.

April 14.

Period I
1676 to 1714

the prosecution would have been withdrawn. But the accusers of Lord Somers, foreseeing this event, made such inconsistent observations, and used such intemperate expressions, as provoked his friends to reply. According to the account of this debate, given by Walpole, Harcourt began with extremely fallacious, but as plausible remarks, as the subject could admit. Cowper's indignation moved him to reply, which occasioned the prolongation of the debate, at the end of which, what had been significantly and fully urged by Somers, was in a great measure forgotten. But had the impetuous zeal of his friends been restrained, and his enemies been permitted to proceed without interruption, as long as they thought fit, Walpole apprehended they would have not been able to divide the house *. He was one of the tellers in favour of the question, that the engrossed replication to the answer of Lord Somers to the articles of impeachment, should be read. On which motion, he divided with 90 against 140.

On entering into parliament, a due diffidence of his own powers repressed his zeal; and he formed a resolution not to speak until he had attained more experience, and some degree of parliamentary knowledge: but his prudence and caution were overcome by the more powerful passion of emulation.

During his continuance at Eton, he had been the rival of St. John, who was three years older than himself. The parts of St. John were more lively and brilliant; those of Walpole more steady and solid. Walpole was industrious and diligent, because his talents required application. St. John was negligent, because his quickness of apprehension rendered less labour necessary. When both came into public life, this emulation did not cease, and as they took different parties, opposition kindled their zeal. St. John soon distinguished himself in the house of commons, and became an eloquent debater; repeated encomiums bestowed on his rival, roused the ardour of Walpole, and induced him to commence speaker sooner than he at first intended. It does not, however, appear at what time, or on what occasion, he first spoke in the house of commons; all that is known on that subject is, that the first time he rose, he was confused and embarrassed, and did not seem to realize those expectations which his friends had fondly conceived. At the same time, another member made a studied speech, which was much admired. At the end of the debate, some persons casting ridicule on Walpole as an indifferent orator, and expressing their approbation on the maiden speech made by the other member, Arthur Mainwaring,

* The general account of this debate is accurately stated in Tindal's *Continuation of Rapin*, by the author, Dr. Birch, on the express authority of Sir Robert Walpole himself.

I have added other particulars from the authority of Etough. He derived his information from a conference which he had with Sir Robert Walpole October 31, 1734.

who was present, observed in reply, "You may applaud the one, and ridicule the other, as much as you please, but depend upon it, that the spruce gentleman who made the set speech will never improve, and that Walpole will in time become an excellent speaker *." The prediction of Mainwaring was soon verified. Walpole took a still more active part in the debates of the ensuing parliament, which met on the 30th of December 1701; which being composed of a majority of Whigs, and acting under a Whig administration, whom William had again called to the helm of government, was more congenial to his political opinions. Yet notwithstanding the preponderance of their interest, the Tories gained a victory in the choice of a speaker, of which lord Townshend takes notice in a letter to Walpole, who was detained at Houghton by the illness of his wife: "Mr. Harley has carried it from Sir Thomas Littleton, by a majority of four votes, which gives his party great encouragement, and is no small mortification to the Whigs. I am extremely sorry to hear my cousin has miscarried of a son, but I hope she is in no danger, and that we shall shortly have the happiness of seeing you here †." Walpole did not long delay taking his seat in the new parliament.

At this period, Louis the Fourteenth having, on the death of James the Second, acknowledged his son king of England, under the title of James the Third, William ordered his ambassador, the earl of Manchester, to quit France, and in a speech to the new parliament, told them, "He need not press them to lay seriously to heart, and to consider what further means might be used for securing the succession of the crown in the Protestant line, and extinguishing the hopes of all pretenders, and their open and secret abettors." Animated by this exhortation, the commons addressed the crown not to make peace with France, until reparation was made for the great indignity offered by the French king, in arming, and declaring the pretended prince of Wales king of England, Scotland and Ireland. The Whigs having now the power, abundantly testified their inclination to confirm the act of settlement by every means best calculated to favour the exclusion of the dethroned family. Accordingly, a bill for attainting the pretended prince of Wales, passed in both houses with little opposition. A bill also for the security of the king's person, for the succession of the crown in the Protestant line, and for extinguishing the hopes of the pretended prince of Wales, was carried with equal success. A clause in this bill, well known under the title of the act of abjuration, enjoined all subjects to swear allegiance to the king, by the title of *lawful* and *rightful* king, and his heirs, according to the act of settlement: this oath was to be

* From Charles Townshend, Esq.

† December 30.—Orford Papers.

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1676 to 1714.

188 to 187.

taken by all persons in any office, trust, or employment, and to be tendered by two justices of the peace, to any person whom they should suspect of disaffection. Even this clause met with no opposition, and the great struggle was confined to the question, whether this oath should be compulsory or free. The enemies of the Protestant succession could not venture to oppose the oath of abjuration, but they exerted their whole strength to render it null, by contending, that it ought not to be imposed by force, but left to the option of every person to take or to decline it. The contest on this occasion was so great, and the two parties so equal, that this important clause was only carried in a full house by one voice.

This great victory being thus obtained, it was thought proper to extend the oath to all ecclesiastical persons, and members of the universities. Sir Charles Hedges accordingly moved for an addition to the clause, which should comprehend all clergymen, fellows of colleges, and school-masters. Walpole having, during his residence at Cambridge, observed many instances where masters and fellows of colleges had never taken the oath of allegiance, seconded the motion for this amendment, and it was carried without a division; so effectual was the triumph of the Whigs, over the friends of the dethroned family. Horace Walpole alludes to his conduct on this memorable occasion, in a letter from Cambridge*, in which he describes the consternation of the nonjurors, on being compelled to take the oath of abjuration, and the indignation which they expressed against his brother, for his zeal in promoting the Protestant succession.

When the bill was moved in the house of lords, the Tories proposed, and warmly supported an additional amendment, excusing the peerage from the obligation of the oath. Nottingham particularly distinguished himself in its favour, and spoke with so much agitation, that the tears fell from his eyes†. But the singular absurdity and injustice of exempting the upper house from the same strictness of engagements to which the lower house had consented, met with the fate which it deserved: The motion was negatived. Although the Tories could not carry their question, they succeeded in adding two amendments, with a view still farther to protract the business. The opponents of the Protestant succession in the lower house, coincided with their intentions, for the bill sent down to the commons, with these amendments, was not returned to the lords till the 3d of March. It was there detained several days, and was not sent back to the commons

* Feb. 28, 1701-2. See Correspondence.

† Etough's Papers.

till the 7th, on a Saturday *, in the hope of deferring it till the Monday; and as the king then lay upon his death bed, almost at the last extremity, such a delay would have been fatal. But the precautions of William, and the vigilance of the Whigs defeated their well-laid scheme. The commons adjourned till six in the afternoon; in this interval, the king, who was so weak that he could not hold a pen in his hand, stamped his name to the commission for passing the acts. When the commons met, a message was brought from the lords, importing that the king had signed the commission, and desiring the house to come up. The speaker, accordingly, accompanied as usual with other members, went out, and returned with the report, that the royal assent had been given to the bill, and to two other acts. No event ever happened in a more critical moment; for William expired between eight and nine on the following morning. Thus the last exercise of his kingly power, was his assent to the oath of abjuration, emphatically styled, by the friends of the dethroned family, his *curst legacy*. "Thus, observes a contemporary † author, he confirmed to posterity, with his expiring breath, that liberty, civil and religious, for which during his life he had so often fought in the field; which he was indefatigably augmenting and establishing in his parliament; which he was continually bringing to perfection in his councils, and which, on his accession to the throne, he promised (as he faithfully performed) to secure against all future attempts to subvert it."

March 8.

* Journals of the Lords and Commons.

† Toland.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH:

1702—1710.

Accession of Anne.—Walpole makes a Motion in Opposition to Sir Edward Seymour.—Distinguishes himself in the Proceedings on the Assembly Election.—Noticed by Earl Godolphin, and the Duke of Marlborough.—Appointed one of the Seven Council to the Lord High Admiral—Secretary at War, and Treasurer to the Navy.—Nominated one of the Managers for the House of Commons, upon the Prosecution of Sacheverell.—His Speech, and Publication on that Occasion.

IN the first parliament of queen Anne, Walpole was returned for Lynn Regis, where his family had long possessed a permanent interest. For this borough he was regularly chosen, until he was created earl of Orford.

Supports the
Whigs.

Although he had spoken frequently in the house of commons, yet the first time in which he appears upon record, on a public * question, in the parliamentary debates, was on the 23d of December 1702, when Sir Edward Seymour having carried a resolution to bring in a bill for the resumption of all grants made in the reign of king William, and applying them to the service of the Public; Walpole moved, that all the grants made in the reign of the late king James, should also be resumed; but his motion was negatived †. The proposition of Sir Edward Seymour, directed against the Whigs, who had received the principal grants from king William, was supported by a Tory ministry, and easily passed through a Tory parliament; and the counter motion by so young a member, levelled against the grants made to the Tories, and in opposition to one of their great leaders, sufficiently proved that Walpole was rising into consequence, and had decidedly enlisted himself under the banner of the Whigs ‡.

In

* Notitia Parliam.—Lists of the House of Commons in Chandler's Proceedings of Parliament.

† Journals of the House of Commons. Tindal, v. 15. p. 474.

‡ As a proof of Walpole's activity, and an indication of the principles and party which he supported, I have extracted, from the Journals of the House of Commons, the several ques-

tions in which he was teller, besides those already mentioned, until he was appointed secretary at war.

1702.—February 19th.—Against a clause to be added to a bill, for the further security of his majesty's person and government, that persons who take upon them offices, shall not depart from the communion of the church of England.—February 26th.—Against delaying
to,

In the celebrated cause concerning the Aylesbury election, Walpole distinguished himself in an eminent degree, and attained an high estimation with his party. Complaints of great partiality and injustice in the election of members of parliament, had been continually urged against the sheriffs in the counties, and returning officers in the boroughs, who often found pretexts for rejecting those electors who voted against the members they espoused. When these disputes were brought before the commons, the house seldom entered into the merits of the cause, but usually decided in favour of the candidate who voted with the majority. It was no easy matter to apply a remedy for such a glaring abuse; because all parties, when oppressed, made heavy complaints, and when certain of a majority forgot the grievance against which they had before so loudly exclaimed, and even excused themselves on the necessity of retaliation. At length, after many attempts to obtain justice, Ashby, a freeman, prosecuted William White, constable of Aylesbury, for having refused to admit his vote at the election of burgeses. A verdict, with damages, was found in favour of Ashby, but

Chapter 4.
1702 to 1710.

1704.

January.

Aylesbury
Case.

to read the report of a committee, to consider further of the rights, liberties, and privileges of the house of commons.—March 3d.—In favour of a motion for an instruction to a committee on the bill for granting to his majesty divers subsidies.—1703.—January 5th.—For an amendment to an address, in reply to the queen's message.—1704.—November 14th.—Against leave to bring in a bill for preventing occasional conformity.—December 14th.—Against the said bill.—December 19th.—Against an instruction to a committee, that they have power to receive a clause for the qualification of justices of the peace, in a bill for the better recruiting her majesty's land forces, and the marines.—1705.—January 16th.—For a motion, that a bill be committed for appointing commissioners to treat of an union between England and Scotland, &c.—January 17th.—For a question, that towards the supply, a duty be laid upon all goods imported from the East Indies, Persia, and China, into England, prohibited to be used in England, and from thence to be exported to Ireland, or any of the plantations.—January 27th.—Against a bill, to prevent persons who are entitled by their offices to receive any benefit by public annual taxes, from being members of parliament, while they are in such offices.—February 21st.—For an amendment in a bill for prohibiting all trade and com-

merce with France.—March 14th.—Against a clause in an act for preventing the further growth of popery.—December 8th.—Against a motion for a committee to consider of the resolution of the lords, declaring those who should insinuate the church to be in danger, enemies to the queen, the church, and the kingdom.—December 19th.—For the second reading of a bill, for better security of her majesty's person and government, and the succession in the Protestant line.—1706.—February 4th.—For an amendment made by the lords in the same bill.—February 13th.—Against a clause to prevent irregular listing of men, to be added to the bill for recruiting the army and marines.—1707.—February 10th.—For an amendment to a bill for securing the church of England, as by law established.—February 22d.—Against a motion for an instruction to the committee on the Bill of Union, that the subjects of this kingdom shall be forever free from any oath, test, or subscription, within this kingdom, contrary to or inconsistent with the true Protestant religion of the church of England, as is already provided for the subjects of Scotland, with respect to their Presbyterian government.—December 12th.—For an amendment to the above bill.—1708.—January 29th.—For the adjournment of a debate on the English forces in the service of Spain and Portugal, in 1707.

Period I.
1676 to 1711.

reversed by the court of Queen's Bench. The cause being carried by appeal to the house of lords, the order of the Queen's Bench was set aside, and the verdict given at the assizes confirmed. The Tories, who formed the majority of the commons, considering these proceedings as an encroachment on their privileges, and esteeming that house the judge of such questions as related to the election of its members, the solicitor-general, Sir Simon Harcourt, moved, "That the sole right of examining and determining all matters relating to the election of members to serve in parliament, except in such cases as are otherwise provided for by an act of parliament, is in the house of commons; and that neither the qualification of the electors, or the right of the persons elected, is elsewhere cognizable or determinable." The question was debated with uncommon vehemence and ability; on the side of the Tories, principally by Harley, St. John, Harcourt, and Sir Edward Seymour; on the side of the Whigs, by Sir Joseph Jekyll, Cowper, King, the marquis of Hartington, and Walpole. He took a short, but sensible part in the debate; and after arguing with much judgment against the motion, proposed to omit that part of it which concerned the qualification of the electors. This amendment, seconded by the marquis of Hartington, was negatived by a majority of only eighteen, and the original question carried.

Yet, although the Whigs were defeated, their arguments produced a strong effect on the public mind. A general discontent prevailed against the severity of the commons, for committing to Newgate Ashby, and four other inhabitants of Aylesbury, who had likewise sued the returning officers; for preventing their having a Habeas Corpus, and for addressing the queen not to permit a motion for a writ of error in the house of lords, which would have released them from prison, and for declaring all solicitors and council, who should prosecute or plead in any such cause, guilty of a high breach of privilege. The final decision of this important controversy was suspended by the perseverance of the lords, who declared, that a writ of error was a matter of right, not of grace; by the steady determination of the queen not to obstruct, in favour of the house of commons; the course of judicial proceedings in the courts of law; and by the manly opposition of lord chief justice Holt. These contrary pretensions produced a violent quarrel between the two houses, which was terminated by the dissolution of parliament *. Although the question was never revived, yet from this time, the house of commons considered itself as the sole judge of the qualifications of electors, and of all other matters which related to the return of members. It was principally

* See Journals of the Lords and Commons.—Raymond's Reports; p. 938.—Proceedings in the great case of Ashby and White, and in the case of the Aylesbury men.—Chandler.—Tindal.

owing to these resolutions, that the decisions, in regard to controverted elections, were seldom regulated by the merits of the case, but became questions of personal or political expediency; nor was this abuse corrected, until the act, known by the name of Grenville's Bill, referred to a committee, chosen by ballot, and acting upon oath, the final decision in all contested elections.

At this period of his life, Walpole began to be held in high estimation by the great leaders of the Whigs, and was particularly noticed by the duke of Devonshire, the earl of Sunderland, lord Halifax, and lord Somers. Among the persons of his own age, with whom he entered into habits of close intimacy, were James, afterwards earl Stanhope, Spencer Compton, afterwards earl of Wilmington, the marquis of Hartington, eldest son of the duke of Devonshire, whose family uniformly proved themselves his firm friends and adherents, and viscount Townshend, who was then just beginning to acquire political importance. But Walpole owed his rise and consequence less to his connections, than to his own talents and situation. A member of parliament of a great Whig family, whose interest brought in three * representatives, and who had distinguished himself in the debates for sound sense, manly argument, and perspicuous eloquence, could not long remain unnoticed. Nor was his reputation solely confined to the party whose cause he so warmly espoused. The lord treasurer Godolphin †, at a period when a Whig was his aversion, discerned his rising abilities, favoured him with his immediate protection, and strongly recommended him to the patronage of the Duke of Marlborough.

The firm adherence of Walpole to his party, was, however, a hindrance to his preferment, as long as Godolphin continued to act solely with the Tories; but no sooner had the leaders of the Whigs regained their lost popularity, and appeared secure of a majority in the ensuing parliament, than the lord treasurer brought several into office, and opened to others a prospect of preferment. The duke of Newcastle was declared privy seal, in the room of the marquis of Normanby; and among the inferior places of government, Walpole was appointed one of the council ‡ to prince George of Denmark, lord high admiral of England. This first service was attended with many disagreeable circumstances: Great mismanagement, both at home and at sea, was imputed to the navy board. Admiral Churchill, brother to the duke of Marlborough, possessed, at this period, the greatest influence at the admiralty, and was accused, with some of the other members, of negligence and corruption.

Chapter 4.
1702 to 1710.

(1770.)

Highly
esteemed by
his party.

Noticed by
Godolphin.

1705.

March 1701
Appointed
one of the
council to
the lord high
admiral.
June.

* Two for Castle Rising, and one for Lynn Regis.

† From the late earl of Orford.—Etough's Summary Account of Sir Robert Walpole.

‡ Walpole Papers.—MS. account of Sir Robert Walpole, in King's College, Cambridge.—Collins's Peerage.

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Period I.
1676 to 1714.

To him the merchants attributed their losses; their loud complaints were heard in both houses, and zealously supported by the principal Whigs. Walpole endeavoured to excuse and mitigate the conduct of the council, and gave a proof of the spirit that marked the decision of his character. Being reproached by one of his friends for acting against his party, he replied, "I never can be so mean to sit at a board, when I cannot utter a word in its defence *." But although he conceived, that it was unbecoming in him not to defend those with whom he sat in council, and although he well knew that their faults had been exaggerated, yet he found sufficient abuses to call for immediate correction. He laboured therefore to prove to the board, the necessity of assuming a more decisive conduct; and he so far ingratiated himself with his fellow counsellors †, that his advice was followed, and his plans were usually adopted.

The union of spirit and prudence, in so young a man, still farther recommended him to the notice of Godolphin, who appears to have placed in him the most implicit confidence, and to have availed himself of his advice and assistance on many important occasions.

1705.
October.
New parliament.

At the meeting of the new parliament, Walpole seconded the motion, made by lord Granby, to nominate Smith speaker, who was favoured by the Whigs, against Bromley, who was proposed by the Tories. The contest was carried on with great heat and animosity between the two parties; but the majority in favour of Smith proved the triumph of the Whigs.

Reconciles
Godolphin
with the
Whigs.

Walpole had already exerted himself with considerable success, in cementing this union between Godolphin and the Whigs; but he now came forward with still greater effect, and strenuously exhorted his patron to obtain the zealous co-operation of that powerful and popular party. He urged, that the leaders of the Tories in the house of commons, were directed and influenced by his enemies and rivals; and censured the spirit of bitterness and violence, of umbrage and persecution which had been lately predominant in all their measures; he represented, in the strongest terms, that the Tories, although they had been roused by the general energy of the nation to approve and second the grand alliance, were yet averse to the continuance of the war with France; and that on the contrary, the Whigs were not only sincere, but enthusiasts in their zeal for the depression of the house of Bourbon.

His representations were listened to with attention, and gradually had their effect; Godolphin availed himself of his intimacy with Devonshire, Halifax, Somers, and Townshend, to arrange the coalition, which afterwards

* From the late lord Walpole, to the late earl of Hardwick.

† Etough's Account of Sir Robert Walpole.

took place. If the union of the Treasurer with this party was not so complete and uniform as some of the zealous Whigs expected, the failure proceeded from his apprehensions of the queen's displeasure, his inclination to the principles of the Tories, and his affection for the dethroned family, which was never entirely obliterated.

In consequence of these repugnant principles, the administration was a motley mixture of Tories and Whigs, perpetually at variance, and secretly caballing to supplant each other. At first the Tories seemed predominant in the cabinet; but the ascendancy of the Whigs soon appeared, from the nomination of Cowper to be lord keeper of the great seal, in the room of sir Nathaniel Wright; yet Harley still continued secretary of state, and through the means of Mrs. Masham, was gradually undermining the influence of Godolphin and Marlborough. During these cabals, the leaders of the Whigs, perceiving that the queen favoured the Tories, forced Charles earl of Sunderland into the office of secretary of state, in the place of sir Charles Hedges, in direct opposition to the avowed wish of the queen, and in contradiction* to the secret inclinations both of Godolphin and Marlborough. The appointment of Sunderland was a decided victory, and from that moment the whole administration adopted the principles, and followed the measures of the Whigs. After some unavailing struggles, Harley was dismissed from the office of secretary of state, and succeeded by Henry Boyle, afterwards lord Carleton, who proved his friendship for Walpole, by appointing his brother, Horace, his private secretary; and the subsequent nomination of lord Somers to the presidentship of the council, completed the triumph of the party.

Walpole himself was not overlooked in the change. He was selected by Marlborough as the most proper person to succeed his favourite, St. John, in the delicate office of secretary at war†; an office which required a person of no less prudence than ability. During the absence of Marlborough, the secretary at war transacted the business of the department personally with the queen; he was to correspond officially and confidentially with the commander in chief; and had the difficult task to conciliate the capricious temper of the duchess of Marlborough, who interfered in all business, governed her husband with the most absolute sway, and who now treated the queen with those marks of disrespect, which finally occasioned her own disgrace, and the fall of the Whig administration.

Chapter 4.
1702 to 1710.

Changes in
the cabinet.

December
1706.

Whig admini-
stration.

February
1708.

Appointed
secretary at
war.

* Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough.

† The office of secretary at war was destined to Cardonne, confidential secretary to the

duke of Marlborough; but as he was abroad with the duke, Walpole retained that place until his return.

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1676 to 1714.

1709.

Treasurer of
the navy.

On the decease of Sir Thomas Littleton, Walpole was appointed treasurer of the navy, which office he held for a short time, with that of secretary at war.

In addition to his parliamentary abilities, Walpole endeared himself to Godolphin by activity and punctuality in business, order and precision in accounts, great knowledge of finance, and the most engaging manners. The treasurer admitted him into his most secret councils, entrusted him with the delicate office of composing the speeches from the throne, and from the time of Harley's resignation, committed to him the management of the house of commons *. Nothing will place the prudent and conciliating character of the young senator in a stronger light, than that Godolphin and Marlborough, who never cordially coalesced with the Whigs, should take into their confidence, one who had proved himself, and still continued to prove himself, so ardently attached to that party; at the same time he was so far from forfeiting the favour of the Whigs, that he was equally beloved and trusted by their leaders.

Manager for
the trial of
Sacheverel.
1710.

In 1710, Walpole was appointed one of the managers for the impeachment of Sacheverel, and principally conducted that business in the house of commons. To bring Sacheverel to a trial, and to distinguish him with an impeachment, managed in the most solemn manner, for a miserable performance, which, without such notice, would have speedily sunk into oblivion, was an inexcusable degradation of the dignity of the house of commons, and affords a striking instance of the height of folly and infatuation to which the spirit of party will carry even the wisest men. It is well known that this measure was suggested by Godolphin, who was severely satirised in the sermon under the name of Volpone, and that it was warmly opposed by Somers and the Whig lords. Walpole, in conformity to their opinion, endeavoured to prevail on Godolphin to desist from the prosecution; but all arguments were ineffectual. The minister, in this instance, laid aside his usual circumspection, and, irritated by a passion unworthy of the occasion, insisted with so much vehemence, that he finally extorted the consent of his colleagues in office.

Walpole, acting in conformity to their resolutions, conducted himself on the occasion with no less prudence than spirit. It fell to his share to support the first article of the charge; that Sacheverel had suggested and maintained, "That the necessary means used to bring about the happy revolution, were odious and unjustifiable; that his late majesty, in his declaration, disclaimed the least imputation of resistance, and that to impute resistance to the

* Etough's Account of Sir Robert Walpole.

" said

"said revolution, was to cast black and odious colours upon his late majesty and the said revolution."

Chapter 4.
1702 to 1713.

On this delicate subject, which it is so difficult to define and restrain within the proper bounds, while the doctrine of resistance is allowed, in cases of extreme necessity, he spoke with equal precision, moderation, and energy, and drew the happy medium between the extremes of licentiousness and rational liberty; between a just opposition to arbitrary measures, and a due submission to a free and well-regulated government*. While he reprobated, in the strongest terms, the doctrines of divine indefeasible right, and passive obedience, he by no means encouraged, even in the slightest degree, any vague notions of resistance in undetermined cases, or upon trivial motives; but established hereditary right as the essence of the British constitution, never to be transgressed, except in such instances as justified the revolution.

The result of this ill-judged trial was far different from the event which Godolphin and his friends weakly expected. The triumph of the Tories was evident from the lenity of the sentence, which only ordered, that the sermon should be burnt by the common hangman, and suspended Sacheverel from preaching during three years. The unpopularity of the ministers was highly increased; the inclination of the queen, in favour of their opponents, was ostentatiously manifested; the populace was inflamed; and the consequence of this act of imprudence and precipitation, was the downfall of those who hoped to find, in the condemnation of Sacheverel, the revival of their popularity, and the establishment of their power.

It may not perhaps, in this place, be improper to observe, that the fatal and mischievous consequences which resulted from the trial of Sacheverel, had a permanent effect on the future conduct of Walpole, when he was afterwards placed at the head of administration. It infused into him an aversion and horror at any interposition in the affairs of the church, and led him to assume, occasionally, a line of conduct which appeared to militate against those principles of general toleration, to which he was naturally inclined.

Soon after the removal of the Whig administration, Walpole published a pamphlet on this † remarkable trial, entitled, *Four Letters to a Friend in North Britain, upon the publishing the Trial of Dr. Sacheverel*. The first letter states the particulars which preceded the trial; the second, those which

* This speech, written in his own hand, is still extant among the Orford Papers. The printed speech, in the account of Sacheverel's trial, is taken from it verbatim. Burke has quoted a sensible passage of it in his *Appeal from the new to the old Whigs*, p. 65.

† This pamphlet is erroneously attributed to Arthur Mainwaring, by Tindal, and the *Biographia Britannica*. See Royal and Noble Authors; Article, Earl of Orford.

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accompanied it; the third, those which followed it; and the fourth displays the consequences. The purport of this publication, was to prove in clear and familiar language, and by a plain, but strong deduction of reasoning, that the abettors of Sacheverel were the abettors of the Pretender; and that those who agreed with him to condemn such resistance as dethroned the father, could have no other meaning than the restitution of the son.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH:

1710.

Intrigues and Cabals which occasioned the Removal of the Whig Administration.—Walpole holds a confidential Correspondence with the Duke of Marlborough, Lord Townshend, and Horace Walpole.—Rejects the Offers and despises the Threats of Harley.—Refuses to take a Part in the new Administration.

Removal of
the Whig ad-
ministration.

WALPOLE now began to enjoy, in the possession of an honourable and lucrative office, the reward of his able and uniform conduct, and had the pride of seeing his country successful beyond the example of former ages, since the days of Elizabeth, under a great and wise administration, in which he bore an active part. Marlborough, Godolphin, Somers, Sunderland, Wharton, Cowper, Halifax, and Townshend, occupied the first posts of government, were united in the same cause, acted with the same views, and promoted the honour and advantage of England by the most vigorous and spirited measures; but he did not long feel this satisfaction, for at the very moment when the country was reaping the fruits of their wisdom, foresight, and energy, the ministry was removed. Had not this change taken place, the king of France must have accepted the terms of peace offered by England, and unequivocally compelled his grandson, Philip, to renounce the crown of Spain. St. Simon* calls the intrigues which introduced a Tory administration that saved France, *les miracles de Londres*. The king of Prussia †, also speaking of Marlborough, says,

* *Memoires secrets du regne de Louis XIV, par Louis duc de St. Simon.*

† *Dialogue Des morts Marlborough, Eugene, Lichtenstein.*

“ What !

"What! Hoechstet, Ramilies, Oudernarde, Malplaquet, were not able to defend the name of that great man; and even victory itself could not shield him against envy and detraction? What part," he adds, "would England have acted without that true hero? he supported and raised her, and would have exalted her to the pinnacle of greatness, but for those wretched female intrigues, of which France took advantage to occasion his disgrace. Louis the Fourteenth was lost, if Marlborough had retained his power two years more." In fact, the removal of the Whig ministry retarded, instead of accelerating the peace, because it encouraged Louis the Fourteenth to break the congress of Gertruydenberg, threw the queen entirely into his power, and the prediction of Marlborough, in a letter * to Walpole, was eventually verified. "If the schemers are fond of a peace; they are not very dexterous, for most certainly what is doing in England, will be a great encouragement to France for continuing the war."

There never was any event in the annals of this country attended with more disgraceful consequences to England, or followed by more fatal effects to Europe in general, than the dismissal of those great men, who formed that glorious and successful administration in the reign of queen Anne, called, by way of distinction, the Whig administration.

1710.

Our regret at their fall, is still further heightened from the consideration, that it was occasioned by the overbearing temper of a mistress of the robes †, and principally effected by the petty intrigues of a bed-chamber-woman ‡, against her benefactress. The surprising influence which the duchess of Marlborough had acquired over the weak and irresolute mind of the good queen Anne, is well described in that extraordinary apology of her conduct, which the duchess gave to the public. We there find a princess of the most placid temper, fascinated by the captivating manners of an artful, but agreeable woman; a queen, imbued with high notions of regal dignity, and a most exact observer of forms, throwing off all etiquette, and corresponding with her favourite, under the fictitious names of Morley and Freeman. We find the duchess, after having engaged the affections of her mistress by the most assiduous attention, relapsing into gross neglect, and in consequence gradually sinking in favour. We find her at the same time either not perceiving, or striving to conceal from others, and even from herself, the decline of her ascendancy, and increasing the disgust of the queen, by her rude and intemperate behaviour. Unfortunately, the duchess of Marlborough had so

* See Correspondence, June 23d, 1710.

† Duchess of Marlborough.—‡ Abigail Hill, M^{rs}. and afterwards lady Masham.

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1676 to 1714.

much credit and power with the duke, her husband, and Godolphin, that to remove her it became necessary to remove the ministry, over whom she possessed so strong an influence. The artful and cautious manner by which Mrs. Masham supplanted the duchess of Marlborough, is also related in this apology, which may be called a manual of court intrigues, and her cabals with Harley, are detailed in the writings of Swift, who derived his information on that subject, from the most unquestionable authorities.

The Whigs were beginning to lose their popularity, when the trial of Sacheverel raised a ferment in the nation, and excited a general outcry against them. The ministry, and particularly the duke of Marlborough, were accused of protracting the war for their own interests; and this calumny was urged so boldly and repeatedly, that it was finally believed; the terms also, which the British plenipotentiaries attempted to exact from Louis the Fourteenth, though strictly consonant to true policy, and founded on the principles laid down at the commencement of the war, were declared illiberal, and only advanced to prevent that haughty monarch from acceding to them.

From an impartial review of the numerous papers, to which I have had access, and from a diligent comparison of the political writings of those times, I feel the strongest conviction, that the ministry were sincere in proposing the terms of peace at the congress of Gertruydenberg; that they were even anxious to lower the demands of the Dutch, and make them as moderate as were consistent with the security of Europe, and that they were sanguine in their expectations that Louis the Fourteenth, circumstanced as he then was, would accede to them. It also appears, from the Diary of Lord Cowper, that he was the only one of the ministers who harboured a doubt on the subject, and that by expressing that doubt he incurred the indignation of Godolphin *. During the trial of Sacheverel, when their unpopularity increased,

Intrigues of
Harley.

* 23^d Janry. 1709, Sunday, lord treasurer at his house, read duke Marlborough's letter, dated abo^t 15 days before, from Hague; that Buys and 3 of the Burg^{rs} of Amsterdam, and the Pensioner had rec^d sometime since, by overtures of peace from France, viz^t to quit Spain and the West Indies, and to give a barrier to states in Flanders, that 'twas a great secret, known only as above; that the Pensioner said he should be ruined if known he had kept it from the states so long. Lord treasurer said, he shew'd it me by queen's order; I advis'd, and it was agreed only to put the proposals more particularly, and at large, as soon as possible, several intermediate debates in cabinet, shew'd by lord treasurer.

April 12, the following letter from duke Marlborough, Hague, April 19, 1709. The deputies of States Gen^l were with me yesterday abo^t 2 hours, the which time was spent upon the subject of their barrier. After I had given them all the assurances I thought necessary of the intentions and inclinations of the queen and English nation, of concurring with them in what might be reasonable for their barrier, I did endeavour to cure them of any jealousy they might have of my being particularly concerned. I hope it has had a good effect with 'em; however, I have done all I can, and shall do so to keep them in good humour, if possible. The inclosed is what they desire for their barrier. It incloses what might be thought a great kingdom.

creased, Harley was admitted, by the introduction of Mrs. Masham, to several private interviews with the queen, in which he endeavoured to persuade her to dismiss the ministry, but as she was of a timid, procrastinating disposition, he had great difficulty in succeeding. Not being able to prevail upon her to take a bold step, he artfully led her, by insensible degrees, to the accomplishment of his scheme. With this view, he persuaded her to consult the duke * of Shrewsbury, whom he had previously gained, and in whom she placed great confidence, on these points; "Would the public credit suffer by the change of administration? Could that measure be carried into effect without a dissolution of parliament? or would that dissolution be attended with danger? Could a peace be negotiated with safety to the queen, and with honour to the allies?"

The duke of Shrewsbury having given his opinion in the affirmative, and supported the queen in her resolution, Harley persuaded her to appoint earl Rivers lieutenant of the Tower, in opposition to the recommendation of Marlborough †, and to bestow a regiment, vacant by the death of the earl of Essex, on Mr. Hill, brother to Mrs. Masham. As the promotion of this officer was highly disagreeable to the duchess of Marlborough, and must tend to lessen the duke's weight and authority in the army, he remonstrated in person, and urged his objections in such a manly and spirited manner, as displeased the queen, and induced her to answer, that he would do well to advise with his friends. Godolphin having no less ineffectually represented to her, that the duke's long and faithful services, deserved a more favourable treatment, Marlborough retired in disgust to Windsor, and wrote a high

kingdom. I hope to persuade them from some of it; so that I beg very few may see it: but when I have done all that may be in my power, I shall then send it to the secret, so that it may come regularly to her majesty, and the cab. council. Mons^r Rouillies messenger returned last night, but I am told he desires two days to decypher his dispatches; so that Tuesday will be the soonest I shall be able to give you an account of this matter. This is so critical a time, that I dare not be of any opinion: but I tremble when I think that a very little impatience may ruin a sure game Barrier, Dendm^e, Chateau de Ghent, Dame, Ostend, Newport, Furnes, Knocq, Ipre^s, Menin, Lisle, Tournay, Condé, Mons, Valenciennes, Maubeuge, Charleroy, Namur, Luxemburgh, Sier, Haut-Geldre en propre, permission to fortify Hall, St-le Demer, the head of Flanders, with

the forts on the Sche'd, Huy, Leige, and Bon.

Note, during the remaining transaction of the intended peace, which was laid in all its steps before whole cabinet, lord treasurer, lord president Somers, and all other lords, did ever seem confident of a peace. My own distrust was so remarkable, that I was once perfectly chid by the lord treasurer, never so much in any other case, for saying such orders would be proper if the French King signed the preliminary treaty. He resented my making a question of it, and said there could be no doubt, &c. For my part, nothing but seeing so great men believe it, could ever incline me to think France reduced so low as to accept such conditions.—Lord Cowper's Diary; Hardwicke Papers.

* Life of the Duke of Shrewsbury.

† Swift's Memoirs relating to the Change in the Queen's Ministry, v. XV. p. 29.

spirited,

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1676 to 1714.

spirited, but indiscreet letter; which, after stating his readiness to obey her commands, expressed his regret that all his services could not protect him from the malice of a bedchamber woman, and requested instant permission to retire. Before the queen had received this letter, she became apprehensive lest the resignation of the duke at this critical juncture, should cause discontents in the nation, and alarmed at the threats of Sunderland, to propose in the house of lords the removal of Mrs. Masham, ordered Godolphin to inform Marlborough, that he might dispose of the regiment. In reply to his letter, she also expressed her concern at what had passed, and by this condescension engaged him to continue the command of the army in Flanders. But although the queen yielded in this instance, she persevered in her intentions, and soon afterwards gave unequivocal proofs of her resolution, by dismissing the marquis of Kent from the post of lord chamberlain, and conferring that office on the duke of Shrewsbury, against the inclinations of the ministry.

Walpole
corresponds
with Marlbo-
rough.

During these transactions Walpole maintained an official and confidential correspondence with the duke of Marlborough, while absent from England; with Lord Townshend, plenipotentiary at the congress of Gertruydenberg; and with his brother Horace Walpole, private secretary to Lord Townshend. The whole of this interesting correspondence is not extant, but a sufficient part is still preserved* to do honour to the persons who were engaged in it, to throw a new light over the transactions of that period, and to illustrate the conduct of the ministers on that memorable occasion. It shews that their fall was owing no less to their own disunion, than to the intrigues of Mrs. Masham and Harley, and the opposition of the Tories. It plainly appears to have been the opinion of Walpole, that more active and decisive measures should have been pursued before the removal of Sunderland. He lamented the division of the ministry, the jealousy and coldness of Godolphin, who would not make any attempt to save Sunderland; he conjectured that his disgrace would be followed by the dismissal of Godolphin and Marlborough, which they did not foresee, or else their disinclination to Sunderland overcame the apprehensions which they ought to have entertained for their own safety.

Laments the
disunion of
the Whigs.

Walpole was at that time in a subordinate situation. He had great obligations both to Godolphin and Marlborough, and he was joined in opinion with the Whig leaders. He had therefore a very delicate part to act; yet he wrote to Marlborough with great spirit and freedom; and even ventured to advise him not to offend the queen, by refusing obstinately to promote the

* See Correspondence, Period I.

husband and brother of Mrs. Masham; although such advice was most likely to offend, as in fact it did offend, the duchess of Marlborough. It appears also from these letters, that Marlborough and Godolphin meanly tampered with the duke of Shrewsbury, and attempted, through his influence over the queen, to prevent the dissolution of the parliament; instead of boldly and manfully coming forward, they acted this underhand part, and suffered by this dilatory and equivocal conduct Harley to divide and disunite the Whigs.

Perhaps it may be conjectured, that if on the dismissal of Sunderland, which was sure to be followed by other changes, notwithstanding the positive assurances of the queen to the contrary, Godolphin and all his friends had instantly resigned their places, and if the duke of Marlborough had given up his command of the army, so unanimous and bold a measure would have dispirited the queen, and alarmed the Tories. Under these impressions she could not have ventured to make a sudden and total change; she would probably have been checked by the apprehension of alienating the whole party of the Whigs, who then formed a large majority in parliament, and of disgusting the monied men, many of whom made the public credit personal to Godolphin, and scrupling to advance money upon the faith of the nation, offered it upon his single word*. She would have dreaded the remonstrances of the emperor and the Dutch, who justly considered the great successes of the war as principally owing to the military talents of Marlborough.

Such was the opinion of Walpole; and Sir Richard Temple, afterwards Lord Cobham, expressed his sentiments in favour of a general resignation, in a spirited letter to his friend Walpole, with whom he then acted, and by whom he had been strongly recommended to the duke of Marlborough. But, both Walpole and his brother Horace foresaw and lamented that the Whigs, instead of adopting this decisive and manly conduct, would be divided among themselves, and that several would listen to the insidious overtures of Harley. In effect, that artful minister flattered them with the hopes that the parliament should not be dissolved, and representing the danger which would threaten the constitution and religion, should their whole body desert the queen, he used the remarkable expressions, "That a Whig game was intended at the bottom," and that his great object would be to promote the Protestant succession†.

These representations and promises had a due effect, and helped to break the phalanx, which, had it remained firm and compact, must have been invincible.

* Life of the duke of Shrewsbury.

† Cowper's Diary; Hardwicke Papers.

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Many of the Whigs hesitated, and delayed their resignation. Newcastle remained in power until he was removed. The duke of Somerset was persuaded by the queen to keep his place, but affected to declare that he would not attend the privy council; and even Halifax, the stern champion of the party, is said to have availed himself of his long acquaintance with Harley, and to have so effectually treated with him in private, that none of his own relations were displaced*. Marlborough retained the command of the army only to be dismissed with ignominy†, when his services were no longer thought necessary. Devonshire, Henry Boyle, Wharton, Somers, and Cowper, were among the few leaders who resigned with spirit and dignity.

Resignation
of Lord Cowper

Lord Chancellor Cowper, in particular, behaved with unexampled firmness and honour. He rejected with scorn all the overtures which Harley made, in the most humble and supplicating manner, to induce him to continue in office. When he waited on the queen to resign, she strongly opposed his resolution, and returned the seals three times, after he had laid them down. At last, when she could not prevail, she commanded him to take them; adding, I beg it as a favour of you, if I may use that expression. Cowper could not refuse to obey her commands; but after a short pause, taking up the seals, he said that he would not carry them out of the palace, except on the promise, that the surrender of them would be accepted on the morrow. "The arguments on my side," to use the words of Lord Cowper himself, "and professions, and the repeated importunities of her majesty, drew this audience into the length of three quarters of an hour‡." On the following day, his resignation was accepted, and soon afterwards the seals were given to Sir Simon Harcourt.

Walpole rejects the overtures of Harley.

Walpole acted on this occasion an honourable and disinterested part. In the wreck of this great administration, Harley, desirous of retaining in power several of the Whigs, with a view to counterbalance the credit of St. John and Harcourt, who already began to give him umbrage, endeavoured to gain Walpole. He made very flattering advances; told him that he was worth half his party§, and pressed him to continue in administration; but all his efforts proved ineffectual.

Harley finding at last, that promises and flattery were employed without avail, had recourse to threats. Hawes, one of his confidential emissaries, who was afterwards receiver of the customs, informed Walpole, that the treasurer had in his possession a note for the contract of forage, indorsed by him; this

* Cunningham's History of Great Britain, vol. 2. p. 305. Letter from Horace Walpole to Etough, September 21st 1752. See Correspondence, Period II.

† The manner in which Marlborough was treated by the new ministry, appears by two

letters from Bolingbroke to Drummond. See Correspondence, Period I, 1711.

‡ Cowper's Diary.

§ Letter to Mr. Pulteney, in answer to his Remarks, p. 47.

insinuation

insinuation was made in such a manner, as to imply, that if Walpole would come over to the new ministry, this note should not be produced against him. But he, no less disdainful of menaces than before he was regardless of promises, rejected all overtures. In a letter* written on the 19th of September, he observes to his friend general Stanhope; "I believe, in all probability, this will be the last letter I shall write from this office. We are in such a way here, as I cannot describe. But you can imagine nothing worse than you will hear. The parliament is not yet dissolved, but this week will certainly determine it. Dear Stanhope, God prosper you, and pray make haste to us, that you may see what you will not believe if it were told you." A few days after writing this letter, he retired from the office of secretary at war.

Chapter 5.
1710.

Sept. 29. •
Retires from
the office of
secretary at
war.

Harley, however, was not repelled by the first refusal of Walpole to support his administration. He had too much success with many of the Whigs, not to exert every effort to gain a man whose talents and eloquence he held in the highest estimation. He suffered him to continue in his place of treasurer of the navy, several months after the Whig ministry were entirely routed. He sent several messages, and held several conversations with him, to persuade him to moderate his opposition against the new measures; but his constant answer was, "Make a safe and honourable peace, and preserve the Protestant succession, and you will have no opposition †."

CHAPTER THE SIXTH:

1711—1713.

Conduct of Walpole in Opposition.—Able defends the late Administration against the Charge of not accounting for the public Expenditure.—Accused of Breach of Trust and Corruption when Secretary at War.—Committed to the Tower.—Expelled the House, and incapacitated from sitting in the present Parliament.—Visited by Persons of the first Distinction and Abilities.—Writes an able Defence of himself.

AS Walpole dignified and supported an administration, prosperous at home and glorious abroad, so when it was vilified and disgraced, he made animated replies to the attacks of a powerful and irritated party. During

Chap. 6.
1711 to 1713.
Supports the
late adminis-
tration.

* Walpole Papers.
Ms. L. I.

† Etough's Papers; Horace Walpole to Etough, Oct. 14, 1752.

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the intervening period, from his resignation to the death of queen Anne, he persevered in attachment to his late associates, and in harassing the new ministers, with great ability, both in and out of parliament. The first instance in which he appeared the champion of the fallen party, was upon the motion of an address to the queen. On this occasion, Walpole, whom Swift, in his history of the four last years of queen Anne, calls *one* Mr. Robert Walpole, proposed an amendment to the address, importing that no peace can be honourable to Great Britain and Europe, if Spain and the Indies are to be allotted to a branch of the house of Bourbon. This clause, which had been carried by the lords, was negatived in the house of commons by a very great majority.

- But his subsequent efforts were still more important and useful. The Tories having attempted to arraign the measures of their predecessors in office, turned their principal objections against the management of the revenue; a topic on which it was most easy to delude the public mind, by introducing a series of complicated calculations. This attack was principally levelled against Godolphin, who was accused of having profusely lavished the public money, and of not having accounted for the sums voted by parliament. When several of his former adherents in the house of commons deserted the *ex-minister*, a few defended his *cause*, and argued that the clamours raised against him, were merely the effusions of malice and calumny. The insidious attack was masqued under the plausible appearance of appointing a committee for examining and stating the public accounts. St. John employed all the powers of his eloquence, to shew the necessity of taking into consideration the national expenditure; maintained that none but those who were enemies to their country, or who would themselves plunder the treasury, would be so bold as to oppose the inquiry; and supported his arguments with the most ardent affectation of zeal for the church and constitution.

Speaks in favour of Godolphin.

No sooner had St. John ceased speaking, than Walpole rose with great spirit to vindicate his patron from the imputation of corruption and malversation. He did not, however, condescend to make any reply to the hypocritical asseveration of St. John, in regard to religion, but confined his remarks to the subject of debate. He explained, in a calm and distinct manner, the accounts of the public expenditure, and confirmed the truth of his report, by the original receipts, and the most authentic testimonies. After having proved that the inquiry was founded on party animosity, he concluded by observing, "If he is accused, who cannot be charged with any crime, or any just suspicion of a crime, and whom the member who spoke last could neither fear nor hate, take heed lest the constitution should receive a wound through his sides. It is obvious, how much the multitude is under

the

the influence of bribery, it is obvious, that the people of England are at this moment animated against each other, with a spirit of hatred and rancour. It behoves you, in the first place, to find a remedy for those distempers, which at present are predominant in the civil constitution, and unless you reject this inquiry with becoming indignation, I leave you to conjecture the situation to which this kingdom and government are likely to be exposed *". But the zeal and eloquence of Walpole had no effect; for the committee was appointed, consisting of persons principally Tories, and two notorious Jacobites; all previously determined to arraign the proceedings of the former administration. The result of their inquiry was given in a most extraordinary report, which passed the house on the 12th of April, and was presented to the queen on the same day. After stating the great arrears due from public taxes, many embezzlements and scandalous abuses, evil mismanagement in public offices, and misapplication of parliamentary supplies, it boldly asserted, "That of the monies granted by parliament, and issued for the public service to Christmas 1710, THERE REMAINS UNACCOUNTED FOR, THE SUM OF £.35,302,107, FOR A GREAT PART OF WHICH NO ACCOUNTS HAVE SO MUCH AS BEEN LAID BEFORE THE AUDITORS; and for the rest, though some accounts have been brought in, yet they have not been prosecuted by the accountants, and finished." This unqualified reproach cast by the house of commons on the ex-ministers, had for a short time a prodigious effect in increasing the unpopularity of the Whigs. The people conceived it to be impossible, that the commons would advance such an assertion, without the most convincing proofs in its favour. A general belief gained ground, that the nation had been deceived and betrayed; fresh confidence was placed in the new ministers, who thus displayed their care for the people, and proved their capacity by contriving such means as might ascertain and secure so vast a debt.

In opposition to these accusations, Walpole again came forth as the champion of his colleagues, and published "The Debts of the Nation stated and considered," and the "Thirty-five Millions accounted for." In these publications, the author, who is called by Arthur Mainwaring, *the best master of figures of any man of his time*, gave, in a small compass, so accurate a scheme of the public debts, especially of the navy, together with the management of the revenues, the anticipations, the debts, and the reasons and necessity of them, as entirely undeceived the public, and refuted the calumnies which had been so industriously raised †. He proved, in a clear and satisfactory

Answered by
Walpole.

* Cunningham's History of Great Britain, vol. 2 p. 349, 350

† Conduct of Robert Walpole, Esquire,

from the beginning of the reign of queen Anne, to the present time, 1717, p. 29.—Tindal.—Oldmixon.

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1676 to 1714.

manner, that the debt of the navy, which was estimated at £. 5,130,539; did not exceed £. 574,000; and that of the whole £. 35,000,000, all but £. 4,000,000 had been accounted for.

Accused of
Corruption.

December 21.

Walpole had distinguished himself too ably in the house of commons, and by his publications had proved himself too warm a friend of the fallen ministry, and too powerful an adversary to the reigning administration, not to be singled out as one of the sacrifices to be made at the shrine of party vengeance. His expulsion, therefore, from the house of commons was resolved, and a meeting held for the purpose of consulting on the means of proceeding, by the leaders of the opposite party. But the injustice of this act was esteemed so flagrant, and the imputations of guilt so faint and false, that many of those who had united to overturn the late administration, declared their aversion to this malicious design. Bromley *, however, removed their scruples, by declaring that the expulsion of Walpole was the *unum necessarium*, as they could not carry on the business, if he was suffered to continue in the house. It is no wonder, therefore, that his enemies, who could command a majority, should find a plausible pretext. The commissioners of public accounts laid a charge of venality and corruption against him for forage-contracts in Scotland while he was secretary at war. They accused him of having taken, in two contracts, two notes of hand, one for 500 guineas, the other for £. 500, the first of which had been paid, and a receipt given in his name, and of the other £. 400 was paid. It appeared, on examination of the witnesses, on oath, that the contractors, rather than admit into their partnership Robert Mann, agent for Walpole, who, according to the tenour of the original agreement, reserved a share for a friend, to have a benefit of the fifth part, if not redeemed by the contractors with a sum of money, had preferred paying the 500 guineas and £. 500; and that Mann had received the money for the first note, and had obtained the second note as a deposit for the sum specified to be paid.

1712.
January 17.

In consequence of these reports, Walpole was heard in his own defence, though no particulars of his speech are preserved in the proceedings of parliament; after he had withdrawn, a warm debate took place, which lasted till past ten at night. His friends, on this occasion, supported him with so much zeal, that the house was divided four times in the same sitting; and the ministers, who carried all political questions in this session with only a trifling opposition, gained the motions for his condemnation and expulsion, by a small majority. On the first division, in which Pulteney, then his intimate friend, afterwards his most bitter opponent, was teller, the

* Letter from Horace Walpole to Etough, September 21, 1751.

amendment, to leave out the words, "and notorious corruption," was negatived by a majority of 52. The main question passed in the affirmative by 57. The motion for committing him to the Tower by only twelve; and his expulsion was decreed by 22 *. These small majorities sufficiently prove, either that Walpole possessed great personal influence in the house, or that many of the Tories considered his accusation a scandalous prosecution, and would not give their votes against him. The house, however, resolved, "That Robert Walpole, esquire, was guilty of a high breach of trust, and notorious corruption. That he should be committed prisoner to the Tower of London;" and on a subsequent motion, which was carried only by a majority of twenty votes, that he should be expelled †.

Chapter 5.
1711 to 1713.

Expelled the house.

On the next morning, Walpole surrendered himself a prisoner, and was committed to the Tower. It was expected, that he would have petitioned, and submitted himself to the censure of the house; but he refused making any concession, which could imply a consciousness of guilt, and he therefore remained a prisoner until the prorogation of parliament. In the mean time a new writ being issued for Lynn, he was re-chosen for that borough; but a petition being made against the return, by Samuel Taylor, the opposing candidate, the commons resolved, "That having been expelled this house for an high breach of trust in the execution of his office, and notorious corruption, when secretary at war, he was incapable of being re-elected a member to serve in the present parliament ‡."

Committed to the Tower.

While he remained a prisoner, he was considered as a martyr to the cause of the Whigs, and repeatedly visited by persons of the highest distinction and abilities, particularly by the duke and duchess of Marlborough, Godolphin, Sunderland, Somers, and Pulteney; and his apartment exhibited the appearance of a crowded levee ||.

Visited by persons of distinction.

During his confinement, he had sufficient leisure to compose a clear and judicious vindication of himself, which was published under the title of "*The Case of Mr. Walpole, in a Letter from a Tory Member of Parliament to his Friend in the Country.*" In this masterly defence, he fully justifies himself, and appeals to evidence, taken upon oath, from the two principal charges, high breach of trust, and notorious corruption. In regard to high

Publishes his defence.

* 1st. 155 against 207. 2d. 148—205 1d. 156—168. 4th. 148—170. The motion of censure against the duke of Marlborough was carried by a much greater majority, 270 against 65.—Journals.

† Journals.—Chandler's Debates.

‡ Journals.—Chandler's Debates.

|| Life of the Duke of Shrewsbury.—Annals of Queen Anne, for 1712, p. 140.—Conduct of Mr. Walpole.—Answer to a scurrilous Libel.

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1676 to 1714.

breach of trust, he shews that he had no advantage in the contracts; that he was not the only person concerned in making them, and that they were settled on the best and most advantageous terms to be obtained at the time; in reply to the charge of notorious corruption, he proves that a share in the contract being given to his friend, Robert Mann, the contractors preferred paying him a sum of money in recompence for giving up his share; that the contractor, who had negotiated this bargain with Mann, dying, the other not knowing his name, made the note of hand payable to Walpole or order, for the use of his friend; that the note was endorsed by himself only for form, and the money received by Mann was for his own use and benefit, and that Walpole had not the least interest, directly or indirectly, in this affair.

I have been thus particular in stating the defence of Walpole, because it gives strong proofs of his innocence, and was never fairly and candidly answered; because some of the very persons who visited him in prison, and not only defended but applauded his conduct in this instance, afterwards, when in opposition, reproached him with the commission of this very crime, of which they had publicly and formally absolved him; and because some late * writers, of different principles, have stigmatised his memory, without having sufficiently examined his defence †.

This imprisonment has been called the prelude to his rise; and lord Lansdowne, who was afterwards confined to the same apartment, wrote these lines under Walpole's name, which he had left on the window:

Good unexpected, evil unforeseen,
Appear by turns, as fortune shifts the scene;
Some rais'd aloft, come tumbling down again,
And fall so hard, they bound and rise again ‡.

Eastcourt's
ballad.

A popular ballad, composed by Eastcourt the player, in honour of Wal-

* See Smollet, vol. 2. p. 209. Macpherson's History, vol. 2. p. 537.

† For the investigation of this inquiry, in which the honour and character of Sir Robert Walpole is involved, I have consulted and compared the Journals of the House of Commons, Proceedings in Parliament, Burnet, Tindal, Oldmixon, Case of Mr. Walpole, Conduct of Robert Walpole, esquire, and An Answer to the Character and Conduct of Robert Walpole, esquire, with an exact account

of his popularity, published in 1717. In this last publication, the author endeavours to refute Walpole's defence of himself, and to shew that the money paid to Mann was for Walpole himself, but as all his accusations amount to mere assertions and conjectures, without the smallest evidence of the fact, it is only here mentioned as a proof that I have not examined only one side of the question.

‡ Walpole's Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors, V. II. p. 128. Lansdowne's Poems.

pole, during his imprisonment, proves the high esteem in which he was then held by his party, and predicted, with a true prophetic spirit, his future greatness.

Chapter 6.
1711 1710 1713.

On the Jewel in the Tower.

1.

If what the Tower of London holds
Is valu'd for more than its power;
Then counting what it now enfolds,
How wondrous rich is the same *Tower*.

2.

I think not of the armory,
Nor of the guns and lion's roar,
Nor yet the valu'd library,
I mean the Jewel in the *Tower*.

3.

This jewel late adorn'd the court,
With excellence unknown before;
But now being blown upon in sport,
This Jewel's case is now the *Tower*.

4.

State lapidaries there have been,
To weigh and prove and look it o'er;
The very fashion's worth being seen,
Th' intrinsic, more than is the *Tower*.

5.

'Tis not St. George's diamond,
Nor any of his partner's store;
It never yet to such belong'd,
Which sent this Jewel to the *Tower*.

6.

With thousand methods they did try it,
Whose firmness strengthen'd ev'ry hour;
They were not able all to buy it,
And so they sent it to the *Tower*.

They

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1676 to 1714.

7.

They would have prov'd it counterfeit,
That it was right 'twas truly swore;
But oaths, nor words, cou'd nothing get,
And so they sent it to the *Tower*.

8.

It's brilliant brightness who can doubt,
By Marlborough it was sometimes wore;
They turn'd the mighty master out,
Who turn'd this jewel into the *Tower*.

9.

These are the marks upon it found,
King William's crest it bears before,
And liberty's engraven round,
Though now confin'd within the *Tower*.

10.

Nor France in it an interest has,
Nor Spain with all its golden ore;
For to the queen and high allies,
Belongs this Jewel in the *Tower*.

11.

The owners modestly reserv'd
It in a decent Norfolk bower,
And scarce yet think it has deserv'd
The Cæsar's honour of the *Tower*.

12.

The day shall come to make amends,
This jewel shall with pride be wore,
And o'er his foes, and with his friends,
Shine glorious bright out of the *Tower*.

Lady Walpole*, who had a pleasing voice, used to sing this ballad with great spirit and effect, and was particularly fond of dwelling on the last verse, at the time when the prophecy was fulfilled; when the prisoner

"O'er his foes, and with his friends,
Shone glorious bright out of the *Tower*."

* From Lord Oxford.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH:

1712—1714.

Released from his Imprisonment.—Exertions in Favour of his Party.—Publishes various political Pieces.—Eulogium of him, by Godolphin.—Publishes the History of the late Parliament.—Re-elected for Lynn.—Speaks against the Peace; the Treaty of Commerce; and the Schism Bill:—In favour of Sir Richard Steele, for printing the Crisis and the Englishman.

THE ministry having protracted the session by adjournment *, instead of ending it by prorogation, merely to detain him in prison, Walpole was not released until the 8th of July. From that period till the dissolution, which took place on the 8th of August 1713, being incapacitated from serving his party in the house of commons, he exerted himself in maintaining the union of the Whigs, in conciliating the leaders, often discordant in their opinions, jealous of each other, or lukewarm in their conduct. He was a principal director of their counsels, and the great manager of their deliberations. The magnanimity and cheerfulness with which he acted and suffered, his liberality in expending large sums in procuring intelligence, and promoting the Protestant succession, the hospitality with which he entertained his political associates, endeared him to the party, animated their counsels, and contributed to preserve them from defection. The heavy expences incurred by these means, injured his private fortune, and involved him in pecuniary embarrassments; a circumstance which perhaps gave rise to, or at least sanctioned the report, afterwards industriously circulated by opposition, of his being a needy adventurer, who had not credit enough to raise an hundred pounds on his own security †. The gratitude he afterwards displayed to those persons who accommodated him with money at a considerable risk, does honour to his character.

1712.
June 21.
Released.

During this period, he ably employed his pen in the service of his party. He assisted Steele in several political pamphlets ‡; and published an answer

Political
publications.

* Journals.—History of his Administration, p. 16.

† Pultenev's Reply to Sedition and Defa-

mation Displayed, p. 8.—An Answer to one Part of an Infamous Libel, &c. p. 34.

‡ Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2. p. 511.

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1676 to 1714.

September
1712.

publishes the
History of
the last Par-
liament.

to the vote of the house of commons, that the states general had been deficient in their proportion of troops, and that the queen had paid subsidies to the amount of three millions of crowns above the sum stipulated.

His zeal and exertions were so conspicuous, that he received a flattering testimony of esteem, in a visit which he paid to Godolphin, while confined with his last illness at St. Alban's, in the house of the dutchess of Marlborough. The dying statesman turning to the dutchess, who stood by his bedside, said to her, "If you ever forsake that young man, and if souls are permitted to return from the grave to the earth, I will appear to you and reproach you for your conduct *."

The dissolution of the parliament at length taking place, Walpole's incapacity was removed, and he was again chosen for Lynn. While the elections were depending, it was the opinion of Somers, and the Whig lords, that to state to the people, in a strong and perspicuous manner, the proceedings of the late parliament, with a view to expose the measures of the ministry, and to guide the electors in the choice of the new representatives, would be highly advantageous to their party. As no one seemed better calculated for this office than Walpole, he undertook a pamphlet, at their desire, on the Thursday, and published it on the Tuesday following †, under the Title of, A Short History of the Parliament, with the motto :

Venalis Populus, venalis Curia Patrum.

To this publication is prefixed, a dedication by Pulteney, then his coadjutor, composed in a strain of irony and humour peculiarly his own, and in which, though addressed to an anonymous peer, it was easy to perceive that the earl of Oxford was the object of allusion.

The pamphlet tends to prove, that the proceedings of the parliament had been directly contrary to the honour and advantage of England. The author defends the measures of the late administration with great ability; and after refuting the censures passed on Marlborough and Townshend, instances his own case, and describes himself as sharing the honour of an impeachment with those illustrious men. His animadversions on the conduct of the parliament, were made with so much freedom and asperity, that it was not deemed prudent to entrust them to a common printer. Walpole himself, at a subsequent period, expresses the apprehensions of the danger he might have incurred, had the author been discovered. "There is a noble lord

* From the late earl of Orford.

† Article, Earl of Orford, in Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors, in which many of his other pamphlets are enumerated.

in the other house, who can, if he pleases, inform gentlemen, that the author of that history was so apprehensive of the consequences of printing it, that the press was carried to his house, and the copies printed there *."

Chapter 7.
1713 to 1714.

In the new parliament, which met on the 16th of February, Walpole, deriving fresh lustre from his late temporary eclipse, distinguished himself with more than usual ability. He warmly opposed the peace; the foundation of the South Sea company; the treaty of commerce with France; the schism bill: and in all these instances he proved his consummate knowledge and experience in affairs of the most complicated nature, and greatly embarrassed the speakers on the side of government.

1714.

He was also particularly active in defence of Steele, who had rendered himself obnoxious to the ministers by his bold writings on the side of the Whigs, and was accused by auditor Foley, sir William Wyndham, and the Tories, of having published the *Englishman* and the *Crisis*. The rage of party was so violent on this occasion, that an attempt was made to compel Steele to withdraw, without entering into his own defence, but this unjust proposition was over-ruled without a division, though it occasioned a debate of some length, in which Walpole took an active part. The motion, that he should be permitted to make his defence to the imputed libel, paragraph by paragraph, was, however, determined against him. He then entered on his defence, with a temper, modesty, and eloquence quite unusual to him, and continued speaking three hours. After he had withdrawn, no member on the side of the ministry attempted to answer him; and auditor Foley only observed, that without amusing the house with long speeches, it was plain to every body, that the writings complained of, were seditious and scandalous, injurious to her majesty's government, the church, and the universities; and moved for the question. This motion occasioned a warm debate, in which Walpole bore the most active and principal share. Among other bold animadversions, he observed, That this violent prosecution struck at the liberties of the subject in general, and of the members of that house in particular; justified Mr. Steele on all the heads of the accusation raised against him; and said, he hoped the house would not sacrifice one of their members to the resentment and rage of the ministry, for no other crime than his exposing their mismanagements, and, like a good patriot, warning his countrymen against the imminent dangers with which the nation in general, and in particular her majesty's sacred person were threatened, by the visible encouragement that was given to the Pretender's friends. In this defence,

Defence of
Steele.

March 18.

* Chandler's Debates, April 13, 1738.—Probably the peer alluded to was lord Cobham.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

Walpole asked the house, "Why the author was answerable in parliament for the things which he wrote in his private capacity? And if he is punishable by law, why is he not left to the law? By this mode of proceeding, parliament, which used to be the scourge only of evil ministers, is made by ministers the scourge of the subject. The ministers, he added, are sufficiently armed with authority; they possess the great sanction of rewards and punishments, the disposal of the privy purse, the grace of pardoning, and the power of condemning to the pillory for seditious writings; powers consistent with, and naturally arising from their exalted situation, and which they cannot too jealously guard from being perverted to answer indirect or criminal purposes. In former reigns, the audacity of corruption extended itself only to judges and juries; the attempt so to degrade parliament was, till the present period, unheard of. The liberty of the press is unrestrained; how then shall a part of the legislature dare to punish that as a crime which is not declared to be so by any law, framed by the whole? And why should that house be made the instrument of such a detestable purpose; that house, which had to boast the honourable distinction of being applied to, as the source of redress, in all cases of oppression. Steele, he observed, has advanced nothing which bears a direct criminal construction; nothing which can be construed into guilt without the assistance of forced inferences; and shall parliament assume the ungracious part of thus inferring guilt from mere arbitrary construction? If they do, what advantage to government or the community can be expected to result from such a measure? Are doctrines refuted, and truths suppressed, by being censured or stigmatized?—In the reign of James, it was criminal to say, that the king was a Papist; but the severity of the law, or the cruelty of its ministers could not eradicate from the mind of a single individual, the confirmed belief of the fact. Steele is only attacked, because he is the advocate for the Protestant succession, the cause which he so ably defends, gives the offence; through his sides the succession is to be wounded; his punishment will be a symptom, that the succession is in danger; and the ministry are now feeling the pulse of parliament, to see how far they may be able to proceed. Does Mr. Steele, he inquired, incur any blame for writing against Popery? In the reign of James, indeed, preaching against Popery was considered as casting a reflection on the ministry. But it was not so in the reign of king William. From what fatality does it arise, that what is written in favour of the Protestant succession, and was countenanced by the late ministry, is deemed a libel on the present administration? General invectives in the pulpit against drinking, fornication, or any particular vice, have never been esteemed a reflection on particular persons, unless these per-

sions are guilty of the darling sin against which the preacher inveighs. It becomes, then, a fair inference, from their irritability and resentment against its defender, that the darling sin of the present administration is to obstruct the Protestant succession. If a Papist, nay an Irish Papist, who for many years has been a servant to the late king James, and the Pretender, (meaning Sir Patrick Lawless) one who has borne arms against her majesty in France and Spain; one who is strongly suspected of having embued his hands in the blood of the late duke of Medina Celi, and marquis of Leganez; if such a man be not only permitted to come into England, but to appear at court, in the presence-chamber; if he be caressed by the ministers; nay, I speak it with horror, if such a man be admitted into her majesty's private audience, in her closet, will not every good subject think her person in danger? And is it then a crime in Mr. Steele to shew his concern for so precious a life *."

The ministers, however, carried their point; the *Crisis* and *Englishman* were voted seditious libels, and Steele was expelled the house †.

The speech of Walpole on this occasion procured him great applause; but the public did not know, that the defence made by Steele himself, was in a great degree the offspring of his eloquence; a fact related by bishop Newton, on the authority of Pulteney ‡. "When Steele was to be expelled the house of commons, Mr. Walpole and Mr. Pulteney, and Mr. Addison, were commissioned to go to him, by the noblemen and members of the Kit Kat Club, with their positive order and determination, that Steele should not make his own speech, but Addison should make it for him, and he should recite it from the other's writing, without any insertion or addition of his own. Addison thought this an hard injunction, and said, that he must be like a school-boy, and desire the gentlemen to give him a little sense. Walpole said, that it was impossible to speak a speech in cold blood; but being pressed, he said he would try, and immediately spoke a very good speech of what he thought proper for Steele to say on the occasion; and the next day in the house made another speech as good, or better, on the same subject; but so totally different from the former, that there was scarce a single argument or thought the same; which particulars are mentioned as illustrious proofs of his uncommon eloquence."

* The principal part of this speech is taken from memorandums, in the hand-writing of Sir Robert Walpole: Orford Papers.—Chandler.

† Steele afterwards published, "An Apology for himself and his Writings occasioned

by his Expulsion from the House of Commons," which, with a becoming gratitude, he dedicated to Walpole.

‡ Life of Bishop Newton, by himself.

Period I.
1676 to 1714

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1714.

Zeal of Walpole for the Hanover Succession.—Justification of his Conduct, on the Presumption that the Protestant Succession was in Danger—Public Alarms and Apprehensions.—Death of Queen Anne.

1714.

Declares the
Protestant
Succession in
danger.

THE great question, in which Walpole appears to have always exerted himself with unabated zeal, was on the state of the nation with regard to the danger of the Protestant succession. In the course of this debate, Bromley, secretary of state, having attempted to prove the negative, by representing the endeavours of the queen to secure that object, and to remove the Pretender from Loraine; Walpole, with great spirit and warmth, avowed his opinion, that although the queen herself afforded no cause of apprehension, yet much was to be dreaded from the dubious conduct of some persons, and therefore insisted that her name should not be introduced.

The zeal of Walpole on this subject, was by no means adopted from a spirit of opposition, and was not a sudden spark struck out by the circumstances of the moment: it was a leading principle which had regulated his political conduct from his first entrance into life; it had been instilled into him by education, and matured by reason and reflection, to which he uniformly adhered in all situations and under all circumstances.

Examination
of his mo-
tives.

If his object in spreading these alarms was to distress government, and to excite tumults against the ministers, he acted a false and wicked part; but if he really had reason for his suspicions, he must be justified by every principle of attachment to the religion and constitution of the country. He can only be fully vindicated from the conviction, that it was the secret wish and resolution of the queen to exclude the Hanover family, and to restore the Pretender, and that the ministers were disposed to co-operate with her inclinations. At the period of which we are now speaking, the strongest suspicions were entertained, that such a scheme was in agitation, and those suspicions have been since verified by the most authentic documents.

Intrigues in
favour of the
Pretender.

It was natural to suppose, that as the queen had no surviving issue, her affection for her brother, of whose legitimacy she appears never to have entertained a doubt, would supersede her inclination to a foreign family. She had often declared that she did not consider the crown as her right, and the impressions of conscience

conscience naturally led her to atone for the wrongfulness of her possession, by permitting it to resume its ancient course of descent. In these ideas, she was encouraged by her favorite, Mrs. Masham; and when, by the intrigues of that artful woman, the chief impediment to her projects, the ascendancy of the Whig party, was removed, she entertained them with less reserve, and employed herself assiduously to give them effect. Harley, who had succeeded in dividing the Whigs, so as to prevent their exerting their whole united force in a consistent opposition, yet found he could not carry on the government, and make a peace, without the assistance of the Jacobites: a direct communication was opened between the court of St. Germain's, and that of London; the Pretender addressed a pathetic letter * to the queen, urging his own right to the crown, in which every soothing effort of supplication and submission was employed, and every appeal made to family pride, to tenderness, and justice, which could be supposed to influence a mind naturally benevolent and just, and which was beginning, through lassitude and perplexity, to seek some repose from the multiplied cares of a stormy government. Under these sinister auspices, the peace of Utrecht was made; a peace which confounded the characters of victors and vanquished, and in which the grand objects of the war were completely relinquished. The interests of the Pretender were kept in view, rather than those of the country, and the queen was anxious that the French king should not be deprived of the power of affording him effectual assistance.

The establishment of the Protestant religion was the only motive which could counteract the bias of the queen's mind in favour of her brother. The influence of that consideration was much diminished by her dislike to the family destined to succeed her; a prejudice which induced her to resist all approach of them to her person, and to oppose the applications of the electress Sophia, for a writ to call up the electoral prince to the house of peers; as a prejudice so well known to those who possessed her confidence, that Mrs. Masham made no scruple to declare to the French minister, whom Louis the Fourteenth sent to treat for peace, that the Hanover family *was all their aversion* *, and that it was the wish of the queen, that matters should be so arranged that justice might at some time take place. Those who favoured the cause of the Pretender, were so anxious to avail themselves of these favourable appearances, that they advised him, either in shew, or in fact, to renounce his religion, to withdraw himself from the protection of the French king, to marry a Protestant, and reside in Sweden. Matters were carried so far, that some

* Matpherson's Papers, vol. 2.

Period I.
1696 to 1714.

of his sanguine partisans advised him to come to Scotland, and others even projected a plan for his being presented by the queen to the parliament, and publicly acknowledged as her successor*. Meetings were also held, both in town and country, to promote the repeal of the act of settlement, and to vest in the queen the power of nominating a successor. These schemes were directly over-ruled, or indirectly counteracted by Harley, who, notwithstanding his junction with the Jacobites, for the sole purpose of making a peace, and maintaining his ground against the Whigs, does not appear ever to have wished to frustrate the provisions of the act of settlement. His conduct at length made such an impression on that party, that through their intrigues he was dismissed from administration, on a suspicion of lukewarmness or duplicity, and Bolingbroke, who was supposed to be more implicitly devoted to their interests, was recommended as his successor by the duke of Berwick, natural son of James the Second, and the Pretender's agent with the disaffected in England.

The Whigs
apprized of
these in-
trigues.

These intrigues were too public and notorious to escape the knowledge of the friends to the Protestant succession; Sir Robert Walpole †, in the latter period of his life, frequently declared that the leaders of the Whigs were fully apprized of them, and that he, in particular, drew his information from two persons who were present at a meeting in the country between the chiefs of the ministry and the leading men of both houses. Their deliberation turned on the manner of invalidating or repealing the act of succession. An actual repeal, and a positive declaration of the Pretender's right, was moved by some: it was recommended by others, to leave to the queen a full power to nominate her successor by will.

Arguments
of the other
party.

Those who treat the danger of the Protestant succession as chimerical, observe in reply to these inferences, that from the time of the Revolution, many of the ministers had corresponded with the Pretender and his family; some of them with the connivance of the sovereign on the throne, and probably with a view of discovering the schemes of the Jacobites. On similar principles it may be conjectured, that Bolingbroke ‡ and Ormond might also have caballed with Berwick and the agents of the Pretender, with a view only of obtaining the dismissal of Oxford, and the support of the Jacobites; and might, as soon as they had secured themselves in their places, have followed the example of Oxford. In corroboration of this argument, it appears from a letter of Erasmus Lewis to Swift §, that Bolingbroke, at this period, courted

* See Memoires de Berwick.

† See Macpherson's Papers, vol. 2. p. 529

‡ Etough's Minutes of a Conference with
Horace Walpole, at Putney, August 6 and 20,
1752.

—534.

§ Swift's Letters, vol. 1. Letter 150.

the principal leaders of the Whigs, and Walpole * himself admitted that Bolingbroke had held a meeting with them for the purpose of arranging the terms of a coalition, at which he gave the most positive assurances of his good wishes to the Protestant succession; but when it was insisted, that as a proof of his sincerity, the Pretender should be removed to such a distance as would prevent his interference in the affairs of England, the minister declared his inability to obtain the consent of the queen, to what she deemed the banishment of her brother. To attempt to fathom the politics, and unquestionably trace the designs of the artful and unprincipled Bolingbroke, would be difficult, even at this time, when party prejudices have subsided, and when many lights have been thrown on his conduct. But at the period here alluded to, the task was impracticable. How could the Whigs discriminate whether his intrigues with Marlborough, and his attempts to open a negotiation with some of their leaders, were intended merely to counteract the designs of Oxford, or to deceive them; or whether his correspondence with Berwick and the Pretender, was carried on with the view to promote or frustrate their schemes?

Refuted.

But such conjectures do not strictly apply to the question in agitation, Whether intrigues were not employed to set aside the Hanover line, and to induce the queen to assist in placing the Pretender on the throne? That simple fact is incontrovertible, and affords a justification of the Whigs, and of those Tories who were friends to the Hanover line, that having knowledge of such cabals, or even entertaining strong presumptions of them, they should use every means to defeat those attempts. They were bound in duty to propose such strong measures as would awaken the Protestants to a sense of their danger, and force the queen and ministry to consent to such acts, as were most likely to secure the succession; and they were to come forwards repeatedly and continually, that the passions of men might not be suffered to sleep, and that the danger might be made manifest to the discernment of the public. They are therefore sufficiently vindicated for setting a price on the Pretender's head; for consulting with the agents of Hanover; for advising Baron Schutz to demand the writ for the electoral prince to be called to the house of peers, and for insisting that he should be permitted to reside in London, although Oxford told the duke of Kent, that to bring over one of the electoral family, would be to bring the queen's coffin to her view. Here then is an ample justification of the Whigs, and of Walpole their zealous partisan, for so decisively

Friends of the succession vindicated.

* Etough's minutes of a conference with Sir R. Walpole.

Period I.
1676 to 1714.

Alarming
state of af-
fairs.

endeavouring to counteract, in every legal manner, the designs of the queen and the Jacobites.

The last six months of the reign of Anne, was a fearful period; big with alarms, during which the kingdom stood on the "*perilous edge* *" of domestic commotions and foreign invasion. The nation was divided into three parties, each differently interested in regard to the succession of the Hanover line. The Jacobites, hostile and exulting; the Tories, disaffected, neutral, or lukewarm; the Whigs, always active, yet occasionally desponding, anxious to avoid a civil war, yet determined to hazard their lives and fortunes in support of their religion and constitution; and it is impossible to read the Stuart and Hanover Papers, in Macpherson's Collection for 1714, and the Memoirs of Berwick, and of the duke of Hamilton, without shuddering at the dangers which seemed likely to burst forth from the violence of those parties, and the collision of discordant opinions.

The earl of Chesterfield † was firmly convinced, that if the queen had lived three months longer, the religion and liberties of this country would have been in imminent danger. The patience of the Whigs was nearly exhausted; their apprehensions increased, and induced them to form associations for the protection of their religion and liberties; the people caught the alarm; many of the Tories began to see the danger, and to act in conjunction with the Whigs for the general security.

At this important crisis, the queen was seized with a sudden stroke of apoplexy, which took away her senses, and soon occasioned her death. Although she had dismissed Oxford, she had not yet nominated his successor; and while Bolingbroke and his party were wavering, the dukes of Argyle and Somerset entered the council chamber without being summoned, and moved for an examination of the physicians. The queen being pronounced in great danger, they represented that it was necessary to fill up the place of lord treasurer, and the duke of Shrewsbury was proposed. The whole board assenting, the queen, during a lucid interval, delivered to him the white staff. The privy counsellors being summoned, Somers, and other friends to the Protestant succession, made their appearance ‡; and every precaution was taken to quiet the public mind, and to ensure the accession of the elector of Hanover. Anne expired on the first of August 1714; and Bolingbroke expresses himself in a § letter to Swift, dated August 3; "The earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday; the queen died on Sunday. What a world is this, and how does fortune banter us!"

Death of
Queen Anne.

* Milton.

† Life of Lord Chesterfield, p. 13. Letter to Mr. Jumeau.

‡ Tindal.

§ Swift's Letters, vol. 1. p. 507.