

A

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

PRINCIPALLY

IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

BY

LEOPOLD VON RANKE

VOLUME IV

CONTENTS.

BOOK XVI.

THE LATER YEARS OF CHARLES II, 1675—1685. WHIGS AND TORIES.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	3
CHAP. I. Parliament in 1675. Formation of new parties	7
„ II. The fourteen months' prorogation. Parliamentary Session of 1677	20
„ III. Dynastic and political alliance of Charles II with the Prince of Orange	33
„ IV. Complications at the conclusion of the Peace of Nimuegen. Alliance of Louis XIV with the Parliamentary opposition in England	44
„ V. Denunciation of a Jesuit conspiracy. Last Session of the Parliament of the Restoration	58
„ VI. Parliament of 1679	72
„ VII. Parliamentary interim, 1679, 1680	87
„ VIII. The Parliamentary Session of 1680	106
„ IX. Parliament at Oxford, March 1680, 1681	121
„ X. Antagonism of the Prince of Orange and the Duke of York	137
„ XI. Reaction against the Whigs. Rye-House Plot. Execution of Lord William Russell	155
„ XII. End of Charles II's Government	182

BOOK XVII.

REIGN OF JAMES II, FEBRUARY 1685 TO SEPTEMBER 1688.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	209
CHAP. I. Accession of James II. First sittings of a new Parliament	212
„ II. Repulse of the Refugees	238
„ III. Later sittings of the Parliament	264
„ IV. Declaration of the Right of Dispensation The Ecclesiastical Commission	281
„ V. The King and William Penn. Declaration of Indulgence	303
„ VI. Preparations for securing a Nonconformist Parliament	323
„ VII. Trial of the Bishops. Further projects	342

BOOK XVIII.

THE FALL OF JAMES II IN ITS CONNEXION WITH THE EUROPEAN CONFLICTS WHICH MARKED THE CLOSE OF 1688.

INTRODUCTION	369
CHAP. I. Relations of James II to the Court of Rome and to the disputes of the Continental Powers	371
„ II. The Prince of Orange and the Protestant Episcopal party in England	385
„ III. Preparations and German alliances of the Prince of Orange	401
„ IV. Irresolute behaviour of the English Government. Landing of the Prince	418
„ V. Decision of the struggle in England. Flight of James II	441

BOOK XIX.

COMPLETION OF THE REVOLUTION IN THE THREE KINGDOMS, 1688—1691.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	473
CHAP. I. William of Orange in London. Summoning of a Convention	477
„ II. First sittings of the Convention. Debates on the vacancy of the Throne	490
„ III. Elevation of the Prince of Orange to the English Throne. Constitutional limitations of the power of the Crown	502
„ IV. James II in Ireland supported by help from France	529
„ V. Dundee in the Scottish Highlands	543
„ VI. Military events in Ireland in the year 1689	555
„ VII. Dissensions in the Convention Parliament	565
„ VIII. Dissolution of the Convention Parliament. First sittings of the Parliament of 1690	579
„ IX. The Court at Dublin. Rivalry of the French and English Navies	589
„ X. Decision of the struggle in Ireland. Battle of the Boyne	600

BOOK XVI.

THE LATER YEARS OF CHARLES II, 1675-1685.

WHIGS AND TORIES.

NEITHER a republic nor an absolute monarchy was seriously contemplated in England at this period. There were still many men in whom the passions of the fanatics and republicans continued to work; but the general feeling of the nation was opposed to their return at any time to power. And Charles II could never flatter himself that he would acquire such an authority as Louis XIV possessed in France. For he had been restored by Parliament, and we have seen how Parliament, though at first devoted to his authority and allied with him, gradually took up a position of resistance.

The questions of the day were of a constitutional nature, and were concerned with determining the limits of the authority of the Crown and of the two Houses in accordance with the Parliamentary constitution; and it is precisely this question of limitation, at this time practically undetermined, that lends a new and general interest to affairs.

Parliament calls the King's ministers to account; the King, if the decision is contrary to his inclination, makes difficulties about dismissing them from his service.

Parliament lays claim to the control over the expenditure of the moneys granted by it; the King reserves the right of examining the account books himself, and judging about them.

The King has on the whole free scope, as he is not compelled to summon Parliament every year. He can at his will

adjourn or dissolve it; but the dissolution gives him a prospect of such unfavourable results that he recoils from it; and the adjournment embitters men's tempers.

Parliament, by granting the crown insufficient revenues, has placed it under the necessity of seeking Parliamentary assistance, not only in very extraordinary cases, but in the ordinary course of things as well; the King does not hesitate to emancipate himself, by means of foreign subsidies, from this duty which is to him the most burdensome of all.

Already Parliament in different cases has exercised a decided influence upon foreign affairs; the King considers the main point of his prerogative to consist in determining with unconditional authority, his relations with foreign powers.

Parliament has accompanied the restoration of the Anglican Church with exclusive privileges, oppressive to every diverging opinion; the King looks upon it as a right and duty to restrict these privileges.

Though we have seen how all these points of dispute originated in the circumstances and affairs of England, and so took their peculiar form, yet they have a general meaning which reaches beyond the persons concerned, their weaknesses, errors, and transgressions; they are questions to a certain extent inevitable. For if monarchy is to have any meaning of its own, and otherwise it would be useless to the constitution, it cannot renounce the freedom of individual judgment, without which no one would choose to live. But on the other hand, a Parliament which once feels its power, will hardly reconcile itself to the necessity of remaining subordinate to an external will. The opposition lies in the nature of the two powers, each of which strives, in accordance with its inward impulse, after an authority which, if obtained, would destroy the freedom of action enjoyed by the other, and hamper its self-consciousness.

This became most strikingly apparent in the religious question. Without doubt Parliament was within its rights, to a greater degree even than it was aware, when it opposed the intrusive advance of Catholicism, by the restoration of which the monarchy hoped to establish once for all the royal supremacy. Charles II had now submitted, but near to him

stood his brother, the heir to the throne, who adhered to the Catholic faith with unwavering zeal. Was the country calmly to submit to the dangers which the Established Church would run on the accession of a prince who held these views? Or should the heir to the monarchy allow Parliament to set him measure and limit in the most private and personal of all matters, his religion? Or if not, how were the complications, which might be expected, to be safely avoided?

But whilst the expectation of this great contest, in which the future of Great Britain was involved, filled the horizon, political action was at the same time excited day by day by continental relations and their changes.

The European war had taken another direction, now that a great continental alliance had come to the support of the Dutch. For Louis XIV this could not be in itself disagreeable, for it gave him the opportunity of returning to the most important of all his schemes, and the one which has had most effect upon posterity,—the extension of the French boundary on the East. He not only opposed to the forces of the allies, which were in themselves superior, his well-practised and well-commanded army, but he knew also how to occupy them on another side, by awakening enemies in their rear, Swedes, Poles, Hungarians, and Turks. Still even so he would with difficulty have resisted his opponents, if England had joined with them as Parliament continually demanded. To keep King Charles on their side, the French never wearied of representing to him that Parliament aimed at interfering in his government and overthrowing his ministers: must it not be, they urged, the chief maxim of a prince to carry out his will under all circumstances, and to maintain his ministers? for otherwise the next attack might be directed against himself. And if Charles II asked for subsidies, they were always inclined to consent, for French money, even in the time of war, could not be better employed than in neutralising the English Parliament¹. But with all his submission to France, Charles II could not shut his eyes to his relations with the

¹ Ruvigny, Jan. 27, 1675: 'Que les finances du roi ne pouvoient pas être mieux employées qu'à la destruction d'un puissant ennemi qui soutenoit tous les autres.'

other European powers, and to the position which the English kingdom held in the world; his financial necessities also perpetually awakened in him the desire to stand well with Parliament. He wavered, according to his custom, from one side to the other, as his advantage required. Whether he would follow this or that impulse, formed always one of the most important elements in determining the fate of Europe and the Parliamentary difficulties at home.

CHAPTER I.

PARLIAMENT IN 1675. FORMATION OF NEW PARTIES.

THE French influence did not at first extend so far that King Charles would have allowed himself to be restrained from summoning Parliament. The French offers, even an autograph letter which Louis XIV wrote for that purpose¹, had, this time, no effect upon him. For he could have no doubt that an understanding with Parliament, if it could be brought about without loss to the crown, was far preferable to a French alliance. Charles II said to the French ambassador, that he must give Parliament another trial, but that he would defend the outworks of the crown against all its attacks; he would not allow it to interfere either with his ministers or with the succession to the kingdom, or let it meddle with political matters²; he would never allow himself to be separated from the King of France: Parliament might still be very useful; should he see that nothing could be done with it, he would decide upon dissolution. On the 13th April, 1675, the fourteenth session of Parliament was opened.

The King had from the first determined on a change in the conduct of affairs. Buckingham had retired; Arlington fell into disfavour immediately after the first debates, in which

¹ 'Tendre et pleine d'amitié'; such is Charles II's opinion: but Ruvigny, February 24, adds—'il est persuadé que les affaires seroient ruinées s'il éloignoit encore le parlement.'

² 'Que le parlement fasse aucune entreprise contre ses droits—parle d'alliance, de traités de succession, de paix, de guerre ou d'attaquer les ministres.' Ruvigny, March 3.

his friends took up a factious position. The King no longer asked his advice, and no longer attended to him when he gave his opinion unasked.

The chief ground for this lay in the fact that Arlington's advice had led to the most serious complications, and the King was of opinion that he would not be able to do anything with Parliament, unless he avoided all Catholic tendencies. The man he now trusted was Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, whom he had raised to be Lord Treasurer, and who, in his administration of this office, in which he discovered unexpected financial resources, won his especial favour. But even in this, Danby became convinced that it was impossible to administer the state without agreement with the Commons, and this again could not be attained if their religious sentiments were resisted. Already beforehand he had planned the publication of a declaration against Catholics and Nonconformists, to which Arlington could never have consented; from the first he had been excluded from the discussions about it; besides Danby, only the old Presbyterian, Lauderdale took part in it. It was in accordance with this that the speech from the throne joined to the demand of subsidies for the restoration of the navy the most express assurances in favour of religious uniformity.

For only by this means was further progress considered possible. Thomas Osborne had been one of the chief opponents of Lord Chancellor Clarendon; as Lord Treasurer he returned, if not to Clarendon's system, at least to his principal ideas. He wished to attempt the union of the Anglican interest with the maintenance of the prerogative.

He himself belonged to a Royalist family, which in the civil wars had suffered great losses, and had never been indemnified for them; his wife was the granddaughter of the Lord Lindsay who perished fighting most bravely at the battle of Edgehill. He had, as it were, an inherited right to favour and advancement from the King. But he also neglected no means of advancing himself. When Buckingham rose into power he was one of his most zealous adherents; the Duke

¹ Resesby (Memoirs 176) ascribes this also to Buckingham: they may, without knowing it, have co-operated.

of York claims to have recommended him as Lord Treasurer¹: still this did not keep him, when once he had entered upon his high office, from turning away with equal decision from both; he took up his position midway between the patron of the Dissenters and the head of the Catholics. Only by closely uniting the crown with the bishops and the Anglican gentry, to whom he himself belonged, did he see any possibility of forming a compact administrative power. He was a minister who could still prevail upon himself, in reality against his better judgment, to follow the King in his doubtful policy, and to be responsible for him in the embarrassments which it produced: adapting himself to circumstances, not particular in the choice of means, in his private life as little correct as most others, he still occupied himself with wide and comprehensive schemes, maintained them with perseverance, and even knew how to convert the King to them: Danby was of greater importance in the general development of English affairs than is usually supposed.

Early in the session a bill for security against disaffected persons was introduced, which perfectly expresses his sentiments¹. According to it the declaration already imposed upon the clergy, to the effect that all resistance to the King and his officials was illegal, and that no attempt would be made to introduce any change into the government of Church and State, was now prescribed for lay officials also, and even for members of Parliament. It is easy to see what this involved. The laws enacting unconditional obedience in civil matters and uniformity in religion, would have been most closely united and permanently established; the Presbyterians, who had been carried in continually increasing numbers in chance elections, would have been obliged to retire from the Lower, and the Catholics from the Upper House; the power of the state would have been concentrated in the hands of the Anglicans; Parliament and Government would have been united into one single dominant party. Danby made it known, that in that case the government would make common cause with Parliament in foreign politics also.

¹ The no resisting test. Parliamentary History iv. 715.

wrong¹. The city objected that the offensive words related not to the King, but to his ministers; but the lawyers decided that this should have been said expressly. Equally little would they, as was desired, distinguish between the city and the Common Council, so that the guilt should only fall upon the latter: they maintained that the Common Council represented the municipality.

The matter was twice discussed in the year 1683 before the King's Bench; in June judgment was given, that all the liberties of the city had been forfeited and had reverted into the King's hands².

It could not possibly be intended to abolish peremptorily the liberties of the city, in which were included the most indispensable rights, such as that of the market; there could be no intention of governing the great metropolis like a village. The object only was to put an end to the independence of the municipal magistrates; the King caused the unconditional restoration of its charters to be offered to the city, if it would accept the regulations which he proposed³. The drift of this was, that henceforth the election of the Lord Mayor and the remaining municipal officials, the recorder, coroner, and some others, including the sheriffs, should require royal confirmation; should the King reject the elections made, and should those held in their stead produce likewise no acceptable results, he should be empowered himself to name the Lord Mayor and sheriffs. For hitherto, so said Lord Keeper North, a faction in the city had sought to obtain support for all its insolence and disorderly conduct by only electing the most decided opponents of the government to the municipal offices, and that with a heat and violence which had been the terror of good and peaceful citizens; this faction must be deprived of the hope of setting up magistrates of its choice, and so procuring immunity from punishment. What

¹ 'That the petition was scandalous and libellous, and the making and publishing it a forfeiture.' Sentence against the Charter.

² Already in March 1683, Barrillon gives notice of this intention: 'Le plan des ministres seroit, que la ville de Londres remist volontairement la chartre de ses privilèges pour en retrancher ce qui est abusif.'

³ Proceedings in State Trials viii.

was the Common Council to do? The loss of its ancient rights seemed to it so unbearable that, however hard it might be, it agreed to accept the regulations; this was decided by a majority of eighteen, 101 votes against 83. On the 21st of June the Lord Mayor and sheriffs went to the King to acquaint him with this result and their submission to his will. Charles II was rejoiced; he thought he had at last really become King of his capital.

Altogether he only now seemed to attain to the fulness of his power. For he had, so it was said, the right of appointing the officers of the militia and of dismissing the judges, according as it seemed good to him: by influence exercised upon the sheriffs, he could determine the jury-lists; now a veto on the appointment of the magistrates, and, if necessary, their actual appointment fell into his hands; in all other towns things would take the same course as in London; none would in future venture to resist him; in time he would succeed in obtaining a Parliament according to his wishes¹.

This affected most sensibly the Nonconformists, who in the last Parliament had had the upper hand, and who now not only saw their position in the towns threatened, but were visited with the strictest execution of the Act of Uniformity. There were amongst them many rich merchants, who withdrew their capital, so that a number of bankruptcies occurred, and money became scarce in London. This was ascribed to government, which desired in general to make the people poor, so as to rule them more easily. What remained when even such moderate men, who had done so much for religion as Baxter, were apprehended? He was accused of having infringed the Five-mile Act: only on the most urgent representations by his physician was he allowed to return to his house, as was said, to die there. The prisons were full to overflowing with Dissenting ministers. Many conventicles were dispersed in the various parishes; even the laity were punished.

¹ Gachon, then the correspondent of Brandenburg, asserts on the 19/29 June, 'Le roi viendra à bout à la fin, d'avoir un parlement favorable.' But he adds, 'Les persécutions, qu'on fait aux nonconformistes, produisent beaucoup de mécontentement.'

As is always the case in controversies which affect the general course of affairs, an impulse given from one side provoked one from the other. James II intended by his demand addressed to the bishops, and by the proceedings taken against them, to humiliate the members of the Church of England, or at least to separate them from the Nonconformists: but the contrary happened; under the influence of public opinion, and of anxiety as to his objects, the judicial authority on which he counted in this undertaking refused him the support which it had hitherto given. The birth of a Prince of Wales awoke in him, and in those about him, a redoubled confidence in their cause, as it seemed to bring with it a guarantee that God willed the success of their project; but the coincidence of the event with the purposes of the Catholic camarilla was just what made the other side see in it a sort of coup-d'état of that very camarilla, executed in order to enable it to go to work with a full justification. On the first report of the Queen's pregnancy the opinion began to circulate in England and Holland that a trick would be practised in the matter¹. Accordingly, when, at the time of the lying-in itself, all the usual forms were not accurately observed, the suspicion that a child had been introduced from without acquired a certain plausibility. A plan of St. James' Palace still exists on which the way is marked by which the spurious child was said to have been brought from room to room to the Queen's bed-chamber. And yet it was not doubted that such a Parliament as the government aimed at getting together would recognise the child as Prince of Wales, confirm the prevailing system in all points, and assume a hostile attitude towards the opposing party, which might become dangerous to the latter in the highest degree. 'Blows given by a Parliament are deadly ones;' so says a letter which Lord Mordaunt addressed to the Prince of Orange. It was considered quite possible that a majority of fiery sectaries, with whom aversion to the English Church prevailed, might be procured, and thereby apparent legality be obtained for the King's projects.

¹ Diest, January 16/26, 1618. It was said, 'that all was only feigned in order at the proper time to palm off a son with the more plausibility, and to confirm the Catholic religion in the realm': there were 'wagers that it will be a prince.'

In the conflict of these tendencies and expectations, of hopes on the one side and apprehensions on the other, which embraced the religious and political future of the realm, it came to pass that some of the most eminent leaders of the Protestant and Parliamentary party, allies of the Prince of Orange, held it necessary that he should come himself with an armed force to England, in order to make an open resistance to the faction which oppressed them possible. They were resolved now to put in practice the right of resistance of which so much had been said.

'We have great reason to believe,' they say, 'that we shall be every day in a worse condition than we are, and less able to defend ourselves, and therefore we do earnestly wish we might be so happy as to find a remedy before it be too late for us to contribute to our own deliverance.' They thought that they could foresee three things:—a new thoroughgoing change of persons, both in the civil administration and among the officers of the army; further, the resolutions of a Parliament brought together by the means which the government had already begun to employ—resolutions which would be aimed at those very persons whom the Parliament might regard as its opponents; finally, if the objects desired could not be carried out in the Parliament, the adoption in some other way of arbitrary measures which would make it possible for the authors of those measures to save themselves. To this gloomy prospect, which might be realised, they said, very soon, even before the lapse of a year, they opposed the hopes which might be drawn at the actual moment from the disposition of the country. The evils that people had already experienced, or still apprehended, had brought it to pass that nineteen-twentieths of the nation were eager for change, and ready to rise if it were only possible for them to do so without having to fear that they would be struck down at the first moment; the greater part of the higher nobility and of the gentry shared these feelings. But all depended on the Prince's landing with a force strong enough to defend itself; it would then become possible for the lords who were in the understanding to arm their people and to lead them to join him. There was nothing to be feared from the King's

