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THE REIGN OF CHARLES I

By Professor C. H. FIRTH, F.B.A., V.-P., R.Hist.S.

THE reign of Charles I opened with the celebration of the new king's marriage. Charles succeeded his father on March 27, 1625, and Henrietta Maria made her entry into London on June 16. A ballad entitled ' Jack of Lent's Ballad ' celebrated the Queen's coming, and described by anticipation the pageants with which the citizens of London received her. In one place she was to be met by St. George with a welcome to St. Denis ; in another Jonah was to appear out of the mouth of his whale and promise to supply her with fish on Fridays ; elsewhere the Graces and the Fates were to hail her with appropriate remarks about her beauty and her good fortune. Besides these there was to be a figure symbolising the political significance of the marriage. At the Exchange, beside the three Fates,

' Spain's Infanta shall stand by
Wringing her hands, and thus shall cry,
" I do repent too late." ' ¹

Feasts and pageants, however, soon gave place to military preparations. Since the summer of 1624 England had practically been at war with Spain. In June 1624 the English Government had promised to send 6000 men to Holland to serve in the Dutch armies, and in the winter of 1624 twelve thousand men were raised to serve under Mansfield in Germany for the recovery of the Palatinate. Mansfield's army of raw recruits, ill commanded and worse provided, never got farther than Holland, where most of it perished miserably from hardships and starvation during the spring of 1625. In the autumn of 1625 came another fiasco : the expedition to Cadiz which sailed from England early in

¹ *Choice Drollery*, ed. Ebsworth, 1656, p. 20.

October landed near Cadiz on October 23, re-embarked, after its failure, four days later, and returned to England in November.

Failures of this kind were not calculated to inspire songs or ballads. Three stanzas on the Cadiz expedition 'by a gentleman who was present in all that service' are printed in a contemporary history and reprinted by Mr. Ebsworth.¹ There is also a quaint song on the subject preserved in manuscript, jeering at the motley army, and its exploits in the wine cellars of the Spaniards.² Men contrasted the glorious deeds of Queen Elizabeth's generals and soldiers against Spain with the conduct of their successors.

Public opinion was outraged not merely by the miscarriage of the Cadiz expedition, but by the acquittal of its commander, Lord Wimbledon, and his chief subordinates. 'The fault,' said a newsletter, 'is laid upon old Captain Gore, the only man who behaved himself well, and an old soldier of the Queen's.'

A song, popular a few years earlier, celebrated the achievements of Drake and Raleigh, and all the many Norrises and Wenmans who had distinguished themselves in the Elizabethan wars. The refrain was :

'We are old soldiers of the Queen's,
And the Queen's old soldiers.'³

Another with a similar refrain jeered at the veterans who had emerged from all sorts of odd corners to serve under Vere or Mansfield. It described an old soldier of the Queen's

'With an old motley coat and a malmsey nose,
With an old jerkin that's out at the elbows,
And an old pair of boots drawn on without hose,
Stuffed with rags instead of toes.'

¹ *Roxburghe Ballads*, vi. 420.

² *MS. Rawlinson Poet.*, 160, f. 183. It begins, 'Phœbus fiery hot and weary.'

³ *Old Ballads*, 1723-5, iii. 193. The song ends with a verse on 'young Lord Wenman so valiant and bold' who has gone off to fight in the wars of Bohemia. I take this verse to have been added about 1620, when Sir Horace Vere set out to the defence of the Palatinate.

It ended :

‘He’s now rid to Bohemia to fight with his foes,
And he swears by his valour he’ll have better clothes,
Or else he’ll lose legs, arms, fingers and toes,
And he’ll come again when no man knows.’

A parody of this last now pictured the king’s new soldier, with his love-locks, and ribbons, new white boots, a feather in his hat, and a gun that never was shot off.

‘He’s newly come to sixteen years,
And gone aboard with his mother’s tears,
With his new bravadoes, void of fears,
And a new oath by which he swears.’

His exploits, it said, like those of the army sent to Cadiz, would be summed up in drinking old sack.

A fourth song written to the same tune set forth the experiences of a soldier :

‘Who went over with Lord Mansfield, and got ne’er a good bit,
But came back into England to learn wit.’

It complains of commanders who cheated the soldiers of their pay, and sergeants and lieutenants only capable of fighting in alehouses.¹

With armies of raw soldiers raised and organised in a hurry, and badly officered, as well as badly led, defeat was a foregone conclusion. It was in vain that ballad writers sought to inspirit them by exaggerated stories of Elizabethan battles or narratives of fictitious sea-fights. The two best ballads of the time were of this kind. One was the well-known ballad of Lord Willoughby, which retold with imaginative additions the famous battle of Newport in 1601, for the encouragement of the English regiments who were sent to serve in Holland.² The other was the ballad of the Angel Gabriel, which related an imaginary fight between a Bristol merchantman and a Spanish man-of-war.³

¹ *New Academy of Compliments*, ed. 1713, pp. 239, 242 ; *12th Rep. Hist. MSS. Comm.* pt. ix. p. 549.

See *Transactions*, 3rd Ser. iii. 110.

Roxburghe Ballads, vi. 428.

Things went from bad to worse. At the end of 1626 a breach with France took place and a new war began. In June 1627 Buckingham's expedition sailed to the Isle of Rhé, and at the end of October he re-embarked, having lost more than half his army. This time public opinion fixed all the blame of the failure on the Duke himself. As the press was silenced, libellous and satirical songs and verses circulated in manuscript, and a large collection of them was printed in 1850.¹ Several of them deal with the Duke's intended journey to France in 1625, when the French King refused to allow him to enter the country.² There are three satirical songs on his taking command of the fleet and setting sail for France. One of the songs prophesied that he would make the proud French tremble as Edward III and as Henry V made them, and not only conquer France, but deliver Bohemia and capture the Spanish plate fleet. 'At last,' says the author,

' At last hee is for France,
After his thus long tarrying,
Hee stayed but for his victualling,
And for some kinsfolks marrying.
But now hee is at sea,
Where he commands amaine,
Whence all true Englishmen doe hope
Hee'l nere come back againe.'³

There is a bitter satire on the failure at the Isle of Rhé, in which the Duke is most unjustly accused of cowardice as well as of incapacity,⁴ and there are two sets of verses on the attack of the House of Commons on the Duke in the session of 1628.⁵ These verse satires are literary productions; if

¹ *Poems and Songs relating to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, and his Assassination by John Felton*, edited by F. W. Fairholt, Percy Society, 1850.

² Fairholt, pp. 6, 9.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 10-18.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 19. See also *Diary of John Rous*, p. 19.

⁵ Fairholt, pp. 24-32. The verses attributed to Dr. Corbett beginning 'The wisest king did wonder' refer to the second session of the Parliament of 1628 rather than the first. This is confirmed by their position in *Rous's Diary*, where they appear under August 1629, p. 42.

there were ballads written about Parliament's struggle against Buckingham they have not survived. But the popular feeling against Buckingham found vent in an assault on Dr. Lambe, the Duke's physician and confidant, who was so severely handled by a mob of apprentices and sailors that he died of his injuries. The Duke's life was threatened too. A doggerel rhyme became current :

‘ Let Charles and George do what they can
The Duke shall die like Dr. Lambe.’

Lambe's death is minutely related in a ballad called ‘ The Tragedy of Dr. Lambe.’¹

‘ Neighbours cease to mone
And leave your lamentation :
For Dr Lambe is gone.
The devill of our nation,
As tis knowne

‘ For such a wicked wretch
In England hath lived seldome,
Nor never such a witch,
For his skill from hell came
That made him rich.’

Lambe was killed on June 14, 1628, and the doggerel rhyme proved prophetic ; for Buckingham's assassination by Felton followed on August 23, 1628. In this case too, while a large number of epitaphs and poems on both Buckingham and Felton have reached us, not one of the ballads which must have been written on the subject has survived.

Buckingham was assassinated at Portsmouth, whither he had come to superintend the fitting out of a fleet designed for the relief of Rochelle. A fortnight later the fleet sailed, under the command of the Earl of Lindsey. A verse broadside called ‘ The Supplication of Great Britain's Friends ’ represented the Protestants of the Palatinate, Denmark, the Netherlands and Rochelle, praying Charles

¹ *Pepysian Collection*. The ballad is signed M. P., i.e. Martin Parker.

for succour, and the Nobility, Clergy, and Commons appealing to the King on their behalf.¹

‘ Our hearts, our hands, our purses and our lands,
Our lives and all we offer in this cause,’

began the prayer of the Commons, and ended :

‘ Then in the name of Heaven let us go on
‘Gainst France and Spain and the brood of Babylon.’²

Lindsey’s fleet failed to effect its purpose, and the defenders of Rochelle, having lost half their number by famine, capitulated on October 18, 1628. A ballad entitled ‘ Rochelle her Yielding ’ relates their sufferings :

‘ God grant that we here dwelling
May have a fellow-feeling
Of those Christians’ misery,
Who have endured such sorrow,
And let us from them borrow,
A pattern of true constancy.’³

The war with France ended in 1629 and that with Spain about a year later.⁴ From that period to the beginning of the Scottish rebellion, England, in Clarendon’s phrase, ‘ enjoyed the greatest calm and the fullest measure of felicity that any people in any age for so long a time together have been blessed with. . . .’ ‘ Whilst neighbouring countries,’ he continues, ‘ were engaged, entangled, and some almost destroyed by the rage and fury of arms ’ the British Isles were ‘ looked upon as the garden of the world,’ and the trade of England ‘ increased to that degree that we were the Exchange of Christendom.’⁵ England took no part in their wars.

¹ The best is Zouch Townley’s poem ‘ To his confined Friend, Mr. Felton.’ Fairholt, p. 74. It is also reprinted in Disraeli’s *Curiosities of Literature*.

² Lemon, *Catalogue of Broad-sides in the Possession of the Society of Antiquaries*.

³ *Pepysian Collection*. For English feeling about Rochelle, see *Diary of Sir S. D’Ewes*, i. 361, 391, 395.

⁴ Treaty of Susa, April 14, 1629. Treaty of Madrid, November 5, 1630.

⁵ Clarendon, *Rebellion*, i. 159.

She seemed to have lost all interest in the struggle of the Thirty Years' War, which had roused such passionate excitement here when it first began. Educated Puritans, it is true, followed with anxious eyes the fortunes of German Protestantism, exulted at the victories of Gustavus Adolphus and sorrowed at his death. The Diary of Sir Symonds D'Ewes and the letters of Sir John Eliot show that.¹ There were many poems on Gustavus Adolphus and elegies on his death, but to most of the poets the great events happening on the continent were a spectacle performed for their benefit on the stage of the world rather than matters which touched Englishmen personally.² The Stationers' Registers show that a certain number of broadside ballads relating to the continental wars were published, but they have all perished.³ In ballads which survive there are occasional allusions to the English soldiers of fortune who served under the colours of Sweden or France or Holland. One ballad refers to the girls the adventurers left behind them :

‘ There were three lusty soldiers
Went through a town of late,
The one loved Besse, the other Sisse,
The third loved bouncing Kate.
These maidens were three laundresses
To wash men's shirts and bands,
And for their paines these soldiers gave
Them wages in their hands.’⁴

¹ *Diary of Sir S. D'Ewes*, i. 349, 395 ; ii. 2, 57, 83, 100 ; iii. 128 ; Forster, *Life of Eliot*, ii.

² *Randolph's Poems*, ed. Hazlitt, p. 594 ; *King's Poems*, ed. Hannah, p. 66 ; *Carew's Poems*, ed. Ebsworth, p. 114 ; *Diary of John Rous*, p. 73 ; *Fanshawe's Poems*, p. 210, ed. 1676 ; John Russell, *The Two Famous Pitcht Battels of Lypsich and Lutzen, etc.*, 1634.

³ ‘News from Sweathland,’ November 4, 1631 ; ‘Good News from Bohemia,’ January 2, 1632 ; ‘A Great and Bloody Fight,’ *ibid.* ; ‘The Palatinate's Joy,’ March 9, 1632 ; ‘News from the King of Sweden,’ August 3, 1632 ; ‘A Mournful Lamentation on the Death of the King of Sweden,’ Arber, iv. 229, 268, 274, 282, 299 ; ‘The Complaint of Germany,’ February 7, 1638 ; ‘Germany's Misery,’ April 9, 1638 ; *ibid.* iv. 408, 415.

⁴ *Roxburghe Ballads*, i. 109.

Another, to the same tune, celebrates the return of these adventurers :

‘There were three lusty soldiers
Had served in France and Spain,
Germany and Italy,
And were come home again :
One in the warres had lost an eye,
Another shot quite through the thigh,
The third in Turkish slavery
Endured great pain.’¹

Taking the ballads of the period from 1629 to 1639 as a whole, judging both from those entered in the Stationers’ Registers and from those which have survived, one gathers that popular interest in foreign affairs was decreasing. The Puritan sections of the upper class and the middle class were, for religious reasons, deeply interested in the progress of the Thirty Years’ War, but the lower classes and the non-Puritan portion of the population were indifferent. However, an adventure in foreign parts always attracted them. The story of the eight English sailors left behind in Greenland in 1630 and of the shifts by which they contrived to live through the winter, was turned at once into a ballad called ‘A Wonder beyond Man’s Expectation.’² A battle off our own coast, even if Englishmen took no part in it, excited universal curiosity and employed every ballad-maker’s pen.

In the summer of 1639 a Spanish fleet consisting of thirty galleons and thirty-six transports sailed from Corunna to the Netherlands, bearing 10,000 soldiers and large sums of money for the supply of the Spanish forces in Flanders. A Dutch fleet under Tromp met it in the Channel, and after a fight lasting from September 6 to September 8 the Spaniards took shelter in the Downs, and appealed to Charles I for protection. Charles was willing to protect them if he was paid for his services ; but before the bargain was completed, Tromp, on October 11, 1639, attacked the Spanish fleet, and

¹ ‘It is bad jesting with a Halter’ (*Pepysian Collection*, i. 44c).

² *Pepysian Collection*, i. 74.

destroyed or sank most of the ships. About ten ballads on the fight were published at the time, and two of them still survive, viz.: 'A Lamentable Relation of a Fearful Fight at Sea,' by Martin Parker,¹ and 'A New Spanish Tragedy,' by Laurence Price.²

Apart from these exceptions the ballads of the period between the dissolution of the King's third Parliament and the beginning of the Scottish war relate entirely to domestic affairs.

The King's visit to Scotland in 1633 inspired half a dozen ballads, only one of which is now extant.³ Pageants such as the entertainment of Charles by the Inns of Court, or the solemn procession when the Earl of Northumberland was made Knight of the Garter, were narrated in verse.⁴ Murders and executions were, as usual, favourite topics. On April 12, 1629, a woman named Catherine Francis was burnt in Smithfield for killing her husband with a pair of scissors.

'Alas, what wretched bloody times
Do we vile sinners live in!
What horrid and what cruel crimes,
Are done in spite of Heaven!
What barbarous murders now are done,
None fouler since the world begun,
O women, murderous women,
Whereon are your minds?'⁵

But the favourite subjects were imaginary incidents

¹ *Ballads and Other Fugitive Poetical Pieces from the Collections of Sir James Balfour*, Edinburgh, 1834, p. 8.

² Wood, 401 (157).

³ 'Blue Cap for Me' (*Roxburghe Ballads*, i. 75). For the lost ballads see *Stationers' Registers*, iv. 270-274, 289.

⁴ 'The honour of the Inns of Court,' 1633 (Collier, *Broadside Black-letter Ballads*, p. 112); 'The Triumphant Show made by Earl Percy,' 1635 (*Roxburghe Ballads*, iii. 220).

⁵ 'A Warning for Wives' (*Pepysian Collection*, i. 118). There are also ballads on two other wives who murdered their husbands, Alice Davis and Anne Waller, in this collection, i. 122, 124. For other ballads on the murders of this period see *Roxburghe Ballads*, vol. iii. 28, 136, 143, 146, 149, 154.

drawn from the domestic life of the period—the wooings of young men and maidens, the quarrels of husbands and wives, meetings over pots of ale, common things that happened every day and happened to everybody. The disconsolate lover, the jealous wife, the henpecked husband, the spendthrift and the miser, the drunkard and the beggar, are all drawn from the life and drawn at length. There are pictures of every class of society. Instead of seeking to convey intelligence about events the authors of the ballads attempted to represent life. At the same time the best ballads became more finished in style—more correct in metre and grammar—more varied in their contents and less conventional in their expression. As a literary form the ballad reached its highest perfection, and the two rivals Martin Parker and Laurence Price were the men who perfected it. Parker wrote ‘Love will find out the way,’ which Palgrave thought worthy of inclusion in the ‘Golden Treasury.’ We also owe to him the original version of the familiar sea song ‘Ye Gentlemen of England,’ which appeared in its original shape about 1635, under the title of ‘Sailors for my Money.’¹

These ballads of common life have a value to the historian, although they supply him with no direct information: they reveal to him the most important of all the factors in the political history of the times—the character of the average Englishman. It was on the rude, jovial, materialistic people they describe that a strenuous and enthusiastic minority imposed the rigid yoke of Puritanism; and because it was alien to their nature and repulsive to their habits they threw it off as soon as the dissensions of their conquerors allowed them.

However, there are a few of the ballads of the period which either supply information about economic or social facts, or illustrate changes which were in progress. ‘The Coaches’ Overthrow,’ printed about 1636, celebrates the introduction of sedan chairs in London and predicts the abandonment

¹ *Naval Songs and Ballads*, 1908, pp. 40–46; *Roxburghe Ballads*, vi. 432.

of the hackney coaches, which were regarded as a nuisance in the narrow streets.¹ It was an axiom with English governments that London was too large and also too crowded; they endeavoured to check the extension of the city, and the increase of its population by immigration from the country, by proclamations against new buildings. One of the characteristics of the period was the increasing tendency of the nobility and gentry to spend a very large part of the year in London. On April 8, 1617, King James issued a proclamation ordering all gentlemen and noblemen who had mansions in the country to leave London and reside in them, unless they had special business requiring them to come to London and special leave from the Privy Council.² This proclamation was repeated in 1622 and 1623; and on June 20, 1632, a similar one was issued by Charles I, and a gentleman named Palmer was fined £1000 for disobedience.³

To this tendency to flock to London there are frequent references in ballads. 'Christmas's Lamentation for the loss of his acquaintance, showing how he is forced to leave the country and come to London' is a good example.

'Christmas is my name, far have I gone,
Without regard,
Whereas great men by flockes there be flown,
To Londonward.
Where they in pomp and pleasure do waste
That which Christmas was wonted to feast;
Welladay!
Houses where music was wont for to ring,
Nothing but bats and howlets do sing;
Welladay!'⁴

Another ballad describes the manor houses standing

¹ *Roxburghe Ballads*, iii. 333. Cf. *Strafford Papers*, ii.

² Nichols, *Progresses of James I*, iii. 268, 276; iv. 782, 842. *Court and Times of James I*, i. 353; ii. 358, 383. The King himself is said to have written some verses on the subject. *Ibid.* ii. 364.

³ Gardiner, *History of England*, vii. 240; Rymer, xix. 374; Rushworth, ii. 144, 288; D'Ewes, *Autobiography*, ii. 78. See also Fanshawe, *Pastor Fido and Other Poems*, 1676, p. 211.

⁴ *Roxburghe Ballads*, i. 154.

empty in the country while their masters are in town. It is entitled 'The Map of Mockbeggar Hall, with his situation in the spacious country called Anywhere.'¹

The contrast between the hospitable habits of the old gentry and the selfish extravagance of the new is the theme of a well-known ballad comparing the old courtier of Queen Elizabeth's days with the King's new courtiers. I take it to have been written about 1630. The old courtier—

'Had an old fashion when Christmas was come,
To call his old neighbours with a bagpipe or a drum,
And good cheer enough to furnish out every old room,
And beer and ale would make a cat speak or a man dumb.'

His successor—

'With a new fashion, when Christmas was drawing on,
On a new journey they must all to London be gone,
And leave none to keep house in the country but their
new man John,
Who relieves all his neighbours with a great thump on
the back with a cold stone.'²

The old courtier, when he died, charged his son to be kind to his tenants. The new one cared nothing about them. Like the Lord of Mockbeggar Hall he exacted great fines from them and raised his rents to maintain his monstrous pride. There is a verse dialogue called 'A Merry and Pleasant Discourse betwixt Simple-Wit the Tenant and Mr. Money-love the Landlord.'³

The tenant urges that he has been for twenty years tenant to Mr. Money-love's father, as his forefathers were before him, that he has a large family to maintain, and other moving arguments, 'Oh then, good landlord, do not raise my rent!' He begs in vain. Mr. Money-love replies that

¹ *Roxburghe Ballads*, ii. 132.

² 'Old Courtier' (*Roxburghe Ballads*, vi. 756). Mr. Ebsworth says the earliest printed copy is of the date of 1660, but the song is certainly a generation older.

³ Bodleian Library: *Rawlinson*, 4to, 566 (146).

he wants six horses for his coach, that he means to keep race-horses, go to plays, and wear fine clothes. 'I tell thee, fellow, I thy rent must raise!'

Other ballads repeated the old complaints against greedy farmers who hoard their corn to get higher prices. One is 'A Warning for all Engrossers of Corn: how the Devil met Goodman Inglebred as he was coming from Lynn Market.'¹ Another is 'A Looking Glass for Cornhoarders by the example of John Russell, a farmer dwelling at St. Peter's Chalfont in Buckinghamshire, whose horses sunk into the ground the 4 of March, 1631.'²

The best of these economic ballads is one against the draining of the Fens, which is preserved in Dugdale's 'History of Embanking.' The success of any scheme like that for draining the Great Level of the Fens threatened the livelihood of all those who made a living in the swamps and islands of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. These watery wastes were regarded as commons; the fishermen and fowlers who frequented them considered themselves as commoners. Freed from the water the lands would become the private property of the speculators who had provided the money for the drainage works, and corn or grass would be grown where the fowlers had snared geese and wild ducks. The fowlers, therefore, since their interests were most affected by these operations, raised riots, and tried to destroy the banks. The ballad Dugdale prints is a kind of call to arms.³

'Come brethren of the water, and let us all assemble,
To treat upon this matter, which makes us quake and
tremble,
For we shall rue it, if 't be true that fens be undertaken,
For where we feed in fen and reed they'll feed both beef
and bacon.

¹ Bodleian Library: Wood, 401 (161).

² *Pepysian Collection*, i. 148.

³ 'The Powtes Complaint' (Dugdale, *History of Embanking*, p. 391); cf. Gardiner, *History of England*, viii. 294.

'Behold the great design, which they do now determine,
Will make our bodies pine, a prey to crows and vermine ;
For they do mean all fens to drain and waters overmaster,
All will be dry, and we must die, 'cause Essex calves want
pasture.

'The feathered fowls have wings to fly to other nations,
But we have no such things to help our transportations ;
We must give place (oh grievous case) to horned beasts
and cattle,

Except that we can all agree to drive them out by battle !'

Their leader, they say, shall be ' good old Captain Flood.'

'This noble captain yet was never known to fail us,
But did the conquest get of all that did assail us.'

Legal opposition was organised too, in which Mr. Oliver Cromwell of Ely took a prominent part, and though the drainage scheme was finally carried out, it was considerably altered in the interest of the ' commoners.'¹

The ballad was probably not printed as a broadside, and was certainly not entered on the Register of the Stationers' Company. For there was a censorship exercised with regard to ballads as there was with regard to all other classes of literature. Instances of their suppression or punishment by the government or the courts of law are not unfrequent. A certain number of these suppressed ballads were satires against particular persons. This was an old practice.

¹ Cromwell's intervention is discussed by Mr. Gardiner in a note (*History of England*, viii. 297), but two pieces of evidence were then unknown to him. They are as follows: 'It was commonly reported,' says a letter, 'by the commoners in Ely Fens and the Fens adjoining, that Mr. Cromwell of Ely had undertaken, they paying him a groat for every cow they had upon the commons, to hold the drainers in suit of law for five years, and that in the mean time they should enjoy every foot of their commons.' *Cal. S. P. Dom.* 1631-2, p. 501. The second is a letter from Sir William Killigrew to Captain Adam Baynes, June 25, 1653: 'I am told that my Lord General Cromwell should say, the draining of the Fens was a good work, but that the drainers had too great a proportion of land for their hazard and charges, and that the poor were not enough provided for, and that the drainers did not pay for the land they had cut through.' *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 1st series, iii. 258.

Falstaff threatened his companions with revenge of this kind when he was displeased with them. 'An I have not ballads made on you all, and sung to filthy tunes, let a cup of sack be my poison.'¹ Such publications were punished by the Star Chamber as libels whenever a complaint was made to it. 'The defendant,' says a Star Chamber case in the second year of Charles the First's reign, 'bearing malice to the plaintiff, did at several times and places, and to several persons in alehouses and elsewhere, publish, divulge, and sing, several libels to the scandal of the plaintiff, and alleged the plaintiff was intended thereby; one of which libels was entitled "A proper song of a great block-head Woollen-draper living in Holborn."' The author was committed to the Fleet and fined 500 marks.²

Again in 1632 two respectable Puritans at Rye, Micha Smith and Martha Osmonton, the wife of one of his neighbours, were libelled in a ballad called 'Certain verses made of the purer sort.' Mrs. Osmonton's appearance was carefully described :

'Her face is long, her brows are black,'

and as for Micha Smith :

'So holy he is that he will speake to nobody he meets.'

In this case the defendant was fined 500 marks, and heavy fines were also inflicted on those who had circulated the ballad.³

A ballad-monger was also liable to be brought before the High Commission Court if his ballads touched ecclesiastical matters or sacred things. In 1631 Henry Goskin was complained of for printing and composing a ballad 'wherein all the histories of the Bible were scurrilously abused.' It was that entitled 'The Wanton Wife of Bath,' which tells how the lady celebrated by Chaucer died, attempted to find her way to heaven, and defeated by her satirical

¹ *Henry IV*, Act II, Scene ii. 249.

² Rushworth, vol. iii., Appendix, p. 6. See also vol. ii. p. 202.

³ *Ibid.* p. 47; 'Star Chamber Cases' (Camden Society).

tongue the efforts of various patriarchs and apostles to keep her out.¹

'First Adam came unto the gate, "Who knocketh there?" quoth he.

"I am the wife of Bath," she said, "and fain would come to thee."

"Thou art a sinner," Adam said, "and here no place shalt have."

"Alas for you! good sir," she said, "now gip, you doating knave!

I will come in, in spite," she said, "of all such churls as thee; Thou art the causer of our woe, our pain and misery.

Thou first broke God's commandment to pleasure thine own wife."

When Adam heard her tell this tale he ran away for life.

Then down came Jacob to the gate, and bids her pack to Hell.

"Thou false Deceiver, why?" quoth she, "thou should'st be there as well;

For thou deceivedst thy father dear and thine own brother too."

Away went Jacob presently, and made no more ado.'

Goskin's defence was 'that the same was printed before he was born, and he hath but renewed it, and is very sorry for it, and that this was never called in.'

The defence was true enough, but did not save Goskin. 'This is not worth the sentence of the court,' said Laud, then Bishop of London, and Goskin was sent to Bridewell. Laud added, 'There was a parish clerk chosen to view all the ballads before they were printed, but he refuseth to do it: let it be ordered that he shall undertake it by commandment from this court.'²

Owing no doubt to the activity of the censors, the ballads published during the ten years from 1629 to 1639 afford very

¹ *Roxburghe Ballads*, vii. 213; *Percy's Reliques*, ed. Wheatley, iii. 333. This ballad was long reprinted as a chap-book. I have a copy entitled 'The Wife of Beith revived once more,' with the imprint 'Moscow: Printed for the Cossacks.' It is really an adaptation of the French fabliau 'Du Vilain qui conquist Paradis par plait.'

² *Cases in the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission*, ed. by S. R. Gardiner, p. 314.

few illustrations of the history of the Puritan movement. There were many satirical verses written against the Puritans and some songs, but they were mostly circulated in manuscript. John Rous, a Suffolk clergyman, who preserved some of these for posterity by copying them into his journal, says: 'Many of these rhymes came out in these late times on both sides.'¹ These verse satires were the production of men of letters or poets, and written for the educated classes, not for the multitude. In Richard Corbett's poems, for instance, there is a satire on the hostility of the Puritans to maypoles, in the form of a letter supposed to be written by a 'zealous brother from the Blackfriars' to the minister of Bewdley, 'for the battering down the vanities of the gentiles which are comprehended in a maypole.'² John Randolph in his 'eclogue' on Robert Dover's revival of the Cotswold Games inserted verses against the 'melancholy swains' who sought to suppress bagpipes as well as organs.³ Other satires ridiculed the hostility of the Puritans to painted glass in churches.⁴ The dress and demeanour of Puritan preachers, their short hair, ruffs, little caps, nasal twang, trick of turning up the eyes, and other characteristics, all afforded material for scoffers. Cleveland's 'New Teacher of the Town,' an imitation of the ballad on the King's New Courtier, is the best example of these.⁵ Puritan women were attacked with equal vigour, and scandals were invented about the 'holy sisters.'⁶ Corbett's 'Mad Zealot,' or the 'Distracted Puritan' as it is sometimes called, depicted a

¹ *Diary of John Rous, incumbent of Santon Downham, Suffolk*. Edited by M. A. E. Green, Camden Society, 1856, p. 79.

² *Corbett's Poems*, ed. Gilchrist, p. 105. Written probably in the time of James I.

³ *Randolph's Poems*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, ii. 622.

⁴ Cf. *Corbett's Poems*, ed. Gilchrist, p. 235; *Cleveland's Poems*, ed. 1686, p. 316; *Wit Restored*, p. 186.

⁵ *Cleveland's Poems*, ed. 1687, p. 355. (It is here entitled 'The Puritan' and was written, I should say, between 1630 and 1640.)

⁶ 'The Way to woo a zealous Lady' (*Rump Songs*, i. 194; *Merry Drollery*, p. 77). See also 'The Ballad of a Puritan,' p. 35 of the supplement of *Loose and Humorous Songs from Bishop Percy's Folio MS*.

Puritan preacher, driven mad by the study of prophecy, and committed to Bedlam.

‘ In the house of pure Emmanuel
I had my education,
Where my friends surmise
I dazzled mine eyes
With the light of Revelation.

‘ I appeared before the Archbishop,
And all the High Commission ;
I gave him no grace,
But told him to his face
That he favoured superstition.

‘ They bound me like a bedlam,
They lashed my four poor quarters ;
Whilst this I endure,
Faith makes me sure
To be one of Foxe’s martyrs.

‘ These injuries I suffer
Through Anti-Christ’s persuasion ;
Take off this chain,
Neither Rome nor Spain
Can resist my strong invasion.

‘ Of the Beast’s ten horns (God bless us)
I have knockt off three already ;
If they let me alone
I’ll leave him none :
But they say I am too heady.

‘ Boldly I preach, hate a cross, hate a surplice,
Mitres, copes, and rochets :
Come hear me pray
Nine times a day,
And fill yourselves with crochets.’¹

To escape the imposition of ceremonies which they deemed

¹ *Corbett’s Poems*, ed. Gilchrist, p. 243 ; *Percy’s Reliques*, ed. Wheatley, ii. 347. I have changed the order of the verses.

superstitious, and to be free of the jurisdiction of the High Commission, were two of the motives which led the Puritans to emigrate. A third was the desire to form congregations consisting solely of men and women of their own way of thinking. Between 1620 and 1640 not less than 20,000 persons settled in New England. Two ballads satirising the emigration and its motives have survived. One is entitled 'A proper new Ballad called "The Summons to New England."' ¹

It described the fertility of New England, its richness in all the fruits of the earth, in turkeys, geese, wild fowl, fish, deer, and all kinds of food. In that country there was complete freedom ; no set feasts or fasts to observe, no surplices, no church discipline, no law but the law of nature ; and all Puritans were adjured to embark for it.

'Let all the purifidian sect,
I mean the counterfeit elect . . .
Let them sell all, and out of hand
Prepare to go for New England,
To build new Babel strong and sure,
Now called a church unspotted pure.'

The other ballad is called 'The Zealous Puritan,' in the only version we have, which is a later reprint, but its original title probably was 'A friendly Invitation to a new Plantation.' It is an exhortation put into the mouth of a Puritan.

'My brethren all attend,
And list to my relation ;
This is the day, mark what I say,
Tends to your renovation ;
Stay not amongst the wicked,
Lest that with them you perish,
But let us to New England go
And the pagan people cherish.

¹ *Tanner MS.* 306, p. 286 ; Ebsworth, *Merry Drollery*, 1661, p. 243.

'Then for the truth's sake come along, come along,
 Leave this place of superstition,
 Were it not for we that the brethren be,
 You would sink into perdition.'¹

The Puritans were hardly capable of answering their adversaries in kind. They neither wrote ballads nor sang them. Their maxim was 'if a man be merry, let him sing psalms,' and they disapproved of the amorous ditties, romances, and satirical songs loved by the common people. But now and then a Puritan retaliated upon the clergy. The song called 'The New Churchman,' which was written about 1634 or 1635, is an instance. It describes 'the time's new churchman,' with his long coat and cassock, and cardinal's cap.

'With long hair, and a short grace,
 Which, being sharp set, he snaps up apace,
 And after dinner such a little touch,
 His belly is so full he cannot say much.

'His divinity is trussed up with five points,
 He dops, ducks, bows, as made all of joints;
 But when his Roman nose stands full east
 He fears neither God nor beast.

'Some half-dozen of benefices gone down his gullet,
 Yet he gapes as though his belly were not full yet;
 And sure his curate must be turned away,
 If he chance to preach twice a day.'²

There is evidence that hostility to the clergy was not confined to Puritan zealots. Worldlings groaned under the disciplinary jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, which imposed fines and penalties upon them for moral

¹ There are four more verses. The only extant version is in *The Rump, or an Exact Collection of the Choicest Poems and Songs relating to the Late Times*, 1662, p. 1. The 'Friendly Invitation' was entered in the *Stationers' Registers* under March 20, 1638-9.

² *Diary of John Rous*, p. 78. This appears to be an answer to 'The Town's New Teacher'; and, like it, was apparently suggested by the 'New Courtier of the King.' See also pp. 83, 109.

delinquencies. The apparitor was as unpopular in the days of James I and Charles I as the 'sompnour' was in Chaucer's time. His business was to inform against offenders and bring them before the courts, and often he was merely a blackmailer. 'A New Ballad of the Parator and the Devil' related that, on a certain sabbath day, the Devil rode a-hunting, and met an apparitor hidden behind a bush in a field.

'The Devil desired him courteously,
His whole authority for to tell :
"I am an instrument," quoth he,
"To punish those that live not well . . .
And this is a place that fits me so—
There is none but that I can spy ;¹
Young men with maids a milking go
That think full little I am so nigh.
Although they do no other thing,
But change a glove, or say a ring,
My corum nomine is ready there,
I'll cite them at Lichfield to appear.''

It did not matter whether they were guilty or innocent of the charges he brought : the fees of the ecclesiastical courts must be paid, and the cheapest thing was to bribe the apparitor to suppress the writ.

'The lawyers' fees must needs be paid,
And every clerk in his degree,
Or else the law cannot be stayed
But excommunicate must they be.
For if they come within the curse,
Full largely will it cost their purse,
(My corum nomine telleth me),
How free from sin so ever they be.'

This procedure shocked the Devil's sense of justice.

"Well," quoth the Devil, "where I do dwell,
The law in sharpness doth exceed ;
But yours excell the pains of Hell
To punish men for no misdeed.'"

¹ I have altered 'see' to 'spy' and 'courts' to 'curse' for the sake of the rhyme.

The apparitor does not hesitate to blackmail the Devil.

“ ‘Why fellow,’ quoth he, “I can thee stay
For travelling on the sabbath day;
My corum nomine doth say so,
Thou shalt pay fee before thou go.”’¹

On this the Devil replies by carrying the apparitor off to hell, and the ballad ends by warning young men and maidens walking in the fields to be careful, for though this one is gone others quite as bad remain behind.²

In 1637 Charles and Laud attempted to impose a Liturgy on Scotland, with the result that three years later the Government collapsed, and Puritans were able to speak their mind about bishops. At first the disturbances in Scotland did not attract much attention in the south, but when the king raised an army ballads for and against the Scots began to be produced. Of those against the Scots about eight are entered in the Stationers’ Registers for 1639, of which one perhaps survives.³ The Government was still strong enough to prevent ballads on the other side from being printed. In April 1640 the King’s necessities forced him

¹ *Sherburn Ballads*, p. 306. ‘The Devil and the Parator’ is enumerated amongst the transfers registered December 14, 1624, and June 1, 1629.

² There is another ballad on the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, entitled ‘Penance,’ in which two sisters set forth their fears ‘Lest they do penance in a sheet, and pay their money too.’ *Merry Drollery*, ed. Ebsworth, p. 176. For pamphlets and caricatures against the ecclesiastical courts, see the *British Museum Catalogue of Satirical Prints*, pp. 151–156. Cf. *Transactions*, 3rd series, i. 262.

³ April 25, 1639, ‘A willing subject or the soldier’s resolution’; May 24, ‘The Warr’s Cruelty’; May 29, ‘Newes from the North’; July 23, ‘The Duty of all loyal subjects’; August 6, ‘England’s rejoicing for the safe return of our royal king’; December 4, ‘A true subject’s Welcome’; December 4, ‘A loyal subject’s Wellwishing’; December 11, ‘Tom’s return from Scotland.’ In a small collection of ballads from the collections of Sir James Balfour, printed in 1834, there are a few poems and ballads, mostly printed in Scotland and taking the side of the Scots. They belong to 1640, as a rule, but one of them, entitled ‘An English Challenge and Reply from Scotland,’ is an English ballad with an answer to every verse added to the original text. The English ballad seems to me to be the ‘Soldier’s Resolution’ mentioned above.

to summon Parliament. Martin Parker published a ballad called 'A brief Description of the Manner how His Majesty and his Nobles went to the Parliament, on Monday the thirteenth day of April, 1640, to the comfortable expectation of all loyal subjects.' Poet and people were full of hope.

'We may be assured of this,
If anything hath been amiss,
Our king and state will all redress,
In this good Parliament.'¹

But the Parliament refused to grant supplies without the redress of grievances, and showed an intention to support the Scots, so, on May 5, it was dissolved. The King raised a new army, and the Scots prepared to enter England. On August 28 the forces of Charles I were defeated at Newburn. Martin Parker, 'the prelates' poet' as a pamphleteer calls him, wrote many ballads about the war. One was 'A true subject's wish for the happy success of our Royal Army preparing to resist the factious rebellion of those insolent Covenanters.' A second, called 'Britain's Honour,' celebrated the exploits of two valiant Welshmen at Newburn. Some of the King's forces at Newburn made rather a hasty retreat.

'Yet blame them not!
For why? The Scot
Was five to one, and came so hot,
Nothing by staying could be got.'

But these Welshmen — 'two undaunted Trojan worthies' — would not stir out of their trenches till one was killed and the other taken prisoner, after slaying between them five Scots. A third of Parker's ballads, 'Good News from the North,' described a skirmish in which about forty Scots were taken prisoners as they were plundering a

¹ Bodleian Library : Wood, 401 (140).

gentleman's house in Durham.¹ Perhaps these compositions were useful to keep up the spirits of the King's supporters, but when the tide turned Parker 'narrowly escaped jail and a whipping to boot' for his 'base ballads against the Scots.' Englishmen in general regarded the Scots as friends, not enemies. One ballad personified the two countries. It told how 'Jock of broad Scotland went south to complain' against the bishops and other oppressors, and 'Jack of fair England took Jock by the hand,' promising him justice, and Jock pledged himself to stand by Jack with his cudgel in all his quarrels.² The refrain of the ballads which Robert Baillie heard when he rode to London in the winter of 1640 was always 'grammercie good Scot.' One of these ballads is called 'A New Carol for Christmas,' and is a rejoicing at the fall of the bishops and the monopolists.

'Where be our proud prelates that straddled so wide,
As if they had meant the moon to bestride,
To tread on the nobles, to trample them down,
To set up the mitre above the king's crown?
That e'er they were clerks our priests have forgot
Which now they'll be taught—grammercie good Scot.'³

'Where are the monopolists?' asks another verse, for the Long Parliament began by expelling any members concerned in monopolies. But though there were many satires in verse and prose against patentees and projectors,⁴ the bishops were hated still more bitterly.

¹ These three ballads are in Anthony Wood's collection in the Bodleian. Wood, 401, numbers 132, 134, 141. They are reprinted in an article on 'Ballads on the Bishops' Wars,' in the *Scottish Historical Review* for April 1906.

² 'A New Carroll,' compiled by a burges of Perth, is reprinted in the *Scottish Historical Review* for July 1912, p. 363. See, for a sequel, Maidment's *Book of Scottish Pasquils*, p. xvii.

³ There are two versions in print: *Diary of John Rous*, p. 110; *Ballads from the Collections of Sir James Balfour*, p. 36. Maidment's *Book of Scottish Pasquils*, p. 106, contains another ballad of the same kind.

⁴ See the *British Museum Catalogue of Satirical Prints*, i. 192-204.

Their abolition was predicted.

‘Since bishops first began to ride
in state so near the crown,
They have been aye puffed up with pride,
and rode with great renown ;
But God hath pulled these prelates down,
in spite of Spain and Pope,
So shall their next eclipse be soon,
in England seen, I hope.’¹

Archbishop Laud’s impeachment and imprisonment filled Puritans with delight : it was celebrated in ‘The Organ’s Echo.’

‘Memento mori,
I’ll tell you a strange story,
Will make you all sorry
For our old friend William ;
Alas poor William !

‘As he was in his bravery,
And thought to bring us all in slavery,
The Parliament found out his knavery,
And so fell William ;
Alas poor William !

‘Some say he was in hope
To bring England again to the Pope,
But now he’s in danger of an axe or a rope ;
Farewell old Canterbury ;
Alas poor Canterbury !’²

Strafford was often coupled with Laud : the two were the great enemies of the people, brethren in iniquity : one wanted to wear the triple crown of the Pope, the other to be as arbitrary as the sultan.

¹ ‘The Bishop’s Bridle.’ See also ‘The Lofty Bishop and the Lazy Brownist’ (*Roxburghe Ballads*, vii. 609).

² ‘The Organ’s Echo’ (*Roxburghe Ballads*, vii. 612).

‘Laudless Will of Lambeth Strand
 And black Tom, tyrant of Ireland,
 Like fox and wolf did lurk,
 With many rooks and magdepies,
 To pick out good king Charles his eyes,
 And then be Pope and Turk.’¹

Strafford’s fate had in it so many of the elements of tragedy, and he defended himself with such courage and eloquence that even his enemies admired him. There are epitaphs or elegies upon him by three poets, Cleveland,² Denham,³ and Fanshawe.⁴ ‘Here lies wise and valiant dust’ runs Cleveland’s verdict. There is also a poem entitled ‘Verses written by Thomas Earl of Strafford a little before his Death’—a farewell to the world beginning ‘Go empty joys’—but it is evidently by a fourth poet and not by the Earl.⁵ Even hostile ballad writers in their droning doggerel showed some touch of pity.

‘Draw near, give ear, and hear a peer, whose misery was such,
 As envy’s hate, a great man’s fate, relentlessly did touch.
 Once I was near the prince’s ear, and dear unto the state,
 But now my bliss reduced is to this sad tragic fate. . . .
 Relent hard heart what e’er thou art, when thou shalt see my
 fall,
 What happened me, may fall to thee, do justice then to all.’⁶

After Strafford’s execution (May 12, 1641) the attack on the bishops and the Church redoubled in vigour and bitterness. In December 1641 twelve bishops, prevented by

¹ A ballad called ‘Will and Tom’ amongst the *Domestic State Papers of Charles I*, vol. 487, No. 48. Other satirical compositions are noticed in the *British Museum Catalogue of Satirical Prints*, i. 139, 147, 149.

² Cleveland’s *Poems*, p. 184, ed. 1687, on the Earl of Strafford’s trial.

³ Denham’s *Poems*, p. 65, ed. 1671.

⁴ Fanshawe’s *Pastor Fido with the addition of divers other poems*, 1676, p. 302 and perhaps p. 266.

⁵ *Ballads from the Collections of Sir James Balfour*, p. 40.

⁶ ‘The Lieutenant’s Lacrimæ’ (*Somers Tracts*, iv. 284–7).

mob violence from attending the House of Lords, drew up an ill-judged protest declaring that its proceedings in its absence were null and void, and that it was no free parliament. For this all twelve were sent to join Laud in the Tower. In 'The Bishops' last Good Night' a ballad-maker gave utterance to the exultation of the Puritan mob.

'Come down, Prelates, all a-row,
Your Protestation brings you low,
Have we not always told you so?
You are too saucy, Prelates,
Come down, Prelates.'¹

With bishops it was hoped all other relics of superstition and superfluous pomps and ceremonies would vanish. Organs and choristers would go.

'We may now abjure our singing,
For ceremonies bringing
Into the Church, and ringing,
For the downfall of the organs;
Alas poor organs.'²

Choristers, it was said, might go and hang themselves, and the young scholars of the two universities, who had hoped to get good benefices as the reward of their learning, found gifted mechanics preferred before them. As one scholar complained:

'All the arts I have skill in
Divine and humane,
Yet all's not worth a shilling;
When the women hear me they do but jeer me,
And say I am profane:
Once I remember, I preached with a weaver,
I quoted Austin, he quoted Dod and Cleaver;
I nothing got. He got a cloak and beaver:
Alas, poor scholar! whither wilt thou go?'³

¹ 'The Bishops' Last Good Night,' cf. *Catalogue of Satirical Prints*, i. 166.

² 'The Organ's Funeral' (*Roxburghe Ballads*, vii. 614).

³ 'Alas, Poor Scholar,' by Dr. Robert Wild (*Roxburghe Ballads*, vi. 456). See also *Diary of John Rous*, p. 115.

He decided that all he could do was to turn schoolmaster in some country place.

Naturally there were verses written in defence of the Church and against the Puritans, but from 1640 to 1642 what was printed and published in the form of ballads and songs was nearly all on one side. Royalist songs produced during this period were many of them not printed till later, and many are still in manuscript. The Long Parliament seems to have retained its popularity throughout 1641. 'Good News for all true-hearted subjects: videlicet the Parliament still sits' is the title of a ballad published about May in that year.¹ 'Thanks to the Parliament' is the title of another, published in 1642, but when the second was written Parliament had need of defending from its critics.

'See how this wise assembly they abuse,
And fill our heads with tittle tattle news,
As if they were far worse than Turks or Jews,
Because they are the men whom we did choose,
For the great Council of the King,
And the King's great Council.'

Whatever others may do, the author resolved to stick to the Parliament against all opponents.

'They go in fear of poison and of knives,
Are slaves themselves to free our feet from gyves,
Neglect their own to save us and our wives;
I'll lose them all had I a thousand lives,
For the great Council of the King,
And the King's great Council.'²

The reaction against the Long Parliament began, it is usually said, when the King came back from Scotland and was welcomed and entertained by the City on November 25, 1641, with an enthusiasm which proved that the tide had turned. A 'stately cavalcade' of citizens rode out to meet

¹ *Thomason Tracts*, 669, p. 4 (22).

² *Luttrell Collection*, vol. ii. 221.

Charles. A satirical poet describes the Lord Mayor himself 'on cock horse' at the head of the procession: next

'Two dozen aldermen rode two by two,
Their gowns were all scarlet, but their noses were blue . . .
The citizens rode in their golden chains,
Some held by their pummels and some by their manes.'¹

The King's attempt to arrest the Five Members gave a shock to the reviving loyalty of London, but its results were only temporary.² As the Civil War drew nearer, the party which wished to maintain the Church was reinforced by all the timid and cautious, and satirical verses against the Parliament multiplied. For instance there is 'The Parliament's Hymn,'³ which begins by praising the Triennial Act.

'O Lord preserve the Parliament
And send them long to reign,
From three years' end to three years' end,
And so to three again.

'Let neither King nor Bishops, Lord,
Whilst they shall be alive,
Have power to rebuke thy saints,
Nor hurt the Members Five.

'For they be good and godly men,
No sinful path they tread,
They now are putting Bishop down
And setting up Roundhead.'

The most prominent of the Five Members was Pym, and he was consequently the special mark for loyal satirists—'King Pym' they called him.

'Reader behold the counterfeit of him
Who now controls the land, almighty Pym,'

¹ 'Upon the King's Return to London' (Dryden's *Miscellany Poems*, vi. 383, ed. 1716). See Gardiner's *History of England*, x. 84-5.

² 'The Five Members' Thanks to the Parliament' (*Rump Songs*, i. 58).

³ *Rump Songs*, i. 64.

begin some lines upon Pym's picture, and end by saying :

'The picture's like him; yet 'tis very fit
To add one likeness more, that's hang like it.'¹

One ingenious ballad purports to be the dying speech of a Devonshire gentleman who was executed for high treason ; it was evidently meant for a prophetic version of Pym's last remarks. He owns his sins, confesses to treason, corruption, extortion, and other iniquities, and makes a penitent ending.

'O Tyburn, Tyburn, O thou sad Triangle,
A viler weight on thee ne'er yet did dangle,
See here I am at last, with hemp so new,
To give thee what was long before thy due.

'How could I bless thee, couldst thou take away
My life and infamy both in one day ;
But this in ballads will survive I know,
Sung to that preaching tune, *Fortune my Foe*.

'Then mark, good Christian people and take heed,
Use not religion for an upper weed,
Serve God sincerely, touch not his Anointed,
And then your necks shall never be disjointed.'²

In the summer of 1642 the Civil War began.³ The Parliament raised its army largely by subscriptions, promising eight per cent. interest for the money lent. Contributions in kind such as horses, arms, and plate, were registered and taken in lieu of money. Some royalist wrote a satirical song urging the zealous citizens to bring in their silver to the Committee at the Guildhall.

¹ *Rump Songs*, i. 7 ; see also pp. 3, 18, 21, 32, 33, 37, 49, 50, 68, 79, 93, 95, 131.

² 'The Penitent Traitor.' There are two versions of this ballad ; one is given in *Rump Songs*, i. 53 ; the other is in Wright's *Political Ballads*, p. 30, and though apparently not printed till 1647, was evidently written in 1642 or 1643.

³ Cf. 'The Old Earl of Bristol's verses on an Accommodation' (*Rump Songs*, p. 63) ; *Diary of John Rous*, i. 124.

'Your basins large and ewers,
 Unto this use allot them,
 If ever you mean your hands to clean
 From the sins by which you got them.

'Let the religious sempstress
 Her silver thimble bring here,
 'Twill be a fine thing in deposing a king
 To say you had a finger.

'Your child's redeemed whistle
 May here obtain admittance,
 Nor shall that cost be utterly lost,
 They'll give you an acquittance.'¹

The constitutional fictions by which the Parliament covered its warlike proceedings with a show of legality were another good subject for the satirists. It used the King's name, and its soldiers nominally fought for King and Parliament.

''Tis to preserve his Majesty
 That we against him fight,
 Nor ever are we beaten back,
 Because our cause is right.
 If any make a scruple at
 Our declarations, say
 Who fight for us fight for the king
 The clean contrary way.'²

Of course there were exhortations in verse on the other side.³ There is 'A spiritual Song of Comfort or Encouragement to the soldiers that are now gone forth in the cause of Christ.'

¹ *Rump Songs*, i. 88.

² 'Colonel Venne's Encouragement to his Soldiers' (*Rump Songs*, i. 149; Alexander Brome's *Poems*, p. 162).

³ For instance, 'An Encouragement to Warre or Bellum Parliamentare,' by John Ward.

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'What though the walls of Jericho
 Be strong and broad and tall and high,
 'Tis faith, though with the sound of rams-horns,
 Upon the ground shall make them lie.'¹

Perhaps it was because the poets were all on the King's side that the Puritan armies sang psalms rather than war-songs—certainly Puritan attempts to supply their place by compositions written for the purpose were all failures.² On the other hand; though we are told more than once that the Cavaliers charged singing, we do not know what they sang.

Strangely enough there are very few ballads about the incidents of the war; there are none of the long verse narratives which had been habitually issued about famous battles in France and Germany. All we have about the battles and sieges which took place in England are a few satirical songs or ballads. First of all there is 'The Banbury Song' which tells the story of the capture by Colonel Lunsford and the Cavaliers of certain guns (sent from London to Warwick Castle), which were very tamely surrendered by Colonel Fiennes and the Roundheads of Banbury.³ There is next a doggerel ballad on the defeat of the Roundheads at Powick Bridge near Worcester by Prince Rupert on September 23, 1642.⁴ There are two songs by Denham on the war in the west of England—'A Western Wonder' and 'A Second Western Wonder,' the first celebrating the battle of Stratton, the second those of Lansdown and Roundway.⁵ There are two little ballads setting forth the feelings of the garrisons of Newark⁶ and Hereford and

¹ By William Starbuck: *British Museum*, 669, f. 8 (47).

² Professor Henry Morley reprints in *The King and the Commons*, 1868, two specimens of Wither's which are better than the rest.

³ *Bishop Percy's Folio MS.*, ed. Hales and Furnivall, ii. 39; *Oxford Drollery*, p. 121.

⁴ *Rump Songs*, i. 153. See Gardiner's *Great Civil War*, i. 30.

⁵ *Rump Songs*, pp. 134, 152; see Gardiner, i. 136, 169; Denham's *Poems*, pp. 105, 107.

⁶ See 'Newark' in *Bishop Percy's Folio MS.* ii. 33, and for the 'Song on the Siege of Hereford,' *Ashmolean MS.* xxxvi. 226. Part of the latter is printed in the article on 'Ballads illustrating the Relations of England and Scotland during the seventeenth century,' published in the *Scottish Historical Review* for January 1909 (p. 117).

their scorn for their besiegers. The valiant commander, 'with his resolute Lady,' tells how a royalist officer in Chester, fearing its capture, wished his wife were safe in Shrewsbury, but the lady resolved to fight by his side.

'Put me on man's attire, give me a soldier's coat,
I'll make King Charles's foes quickly to change their note.
Cock your match, prime your pan, let piercing bullets fly,
I do not care a pin whether I live or die.'¹

Last in the series comes 'Prince Rupert and Prince Maurice, their Farewell to England.'² This is a dialogue between the two in which the younger brother reproaches Rupert with the taste for plundering which had earned him the hatred of the people, and had more than once caused the loss of a battle. 'Our army at Edgehill was a rare sight,' says Rupert. 'Yes,' says Maurice,

'We like St. Georges had killed all the dragons,
But thou wast too eager to plunder their waggons.'

'I banged them at Newbury,' says Rupert. 'Yes,' says Maurice, 'there was "handsome knocking" at Newbury, but they got the best of it, and you were routed at Naseby. Though we got the better of them at first, in the end we were worsted.'

'For now we are forced to bid England adieu.'

The last five words are the refrain of each verse.

Throughout the whole war, from 1642 to 1646, there were frequent negotiations between the King and the Parliament; in each camp there was a peace party and a war party. The most important of the early negotiations was the treaty which took place at Oxford in March 1643. Amongst the Parliamentary leaders Hampden was conspicuous for his conviction that the quarrel must be fought out before it would be possible to come to terms with Charles I. Sir John Denham wrote a ballad professing to represent Hampden's speech to the Committee of Safety in favour of the vigorous prosecution of the war. Another wit wrote an

¹ *Roxburghe Ballads*, vi. 281.

² *Roxburghe Ballads*, viii. ; preface, p. xxiii.***

imaginary account of a debate in the House of Commons in which thirty members gave their reasons against peace. A parliamentarian answered it by another, in which the leaders of the King's party explained that they, too, in order to avoid the consequences of their crimes, were opposed to any agreement.¹

Religious far more than political differences prevented any compromise. After abolishing episcopacy Parliament proceeded to try and to condemn to death Archbishop Laud. There are many lamenting elegies on his death,² and one savagely exultant ballad anticipating his execution—'You must preach,' it tells him, 'in the pulpit that stands on Tower Hill, you filled Church and state with strife.'

'Like a bless'd martyr you will die
For church's good ; she rises high
When such as you fall down.'³

In their hatred of all that seemed to savour of popery or superstition, the Puritans destroyed monuments and stained-glass windows, and waged a bitter war against crosses, whether in churches or outside them. In 1643 Cheapside and Charing Crosses⁴ were pulled down and the remains carted away. The removal of these landmarks had its disadvantages, says a ballad on Charing Cross.

'Undone, undone the lawyers are,
They wander about the town,
Nor can find the way to Westminster
Now Charing Cross is down.'⁵

¹ 'Mr. Hampden's Speech against Peace at the Close Committee' (*Rump Songs*, p. 9) ; 'The sense of the House' (*ibid.* p. 9) ; 'The Sence of the Oxford Junto' (*British Museum*, 669, f. 6, numbers 117, 122, and 669, f. 10 (20)).

² See *Rump Songs*, i. 71.

³ 'A Prognostication on Will Laud, late Archbishop of Canterbury' (Wilkins, *Political Ballads*, i. 13). See also *Catalogue of Satirical Prints*, pp. 288-301.

⁴ 'The Downfall of Cheapside Cross' ; 'A Vindication of Cheapside Cross against the Roundheads' (*Rump Songs*, i. pp. 138, 140). See also *Catalogue of Satirical Prints*, i. 221, 262.

⁵ *Percy's Reliques*, ed. Wheatley, ii. 323.

A few weeks before the Solemn League and Covenant was made with the Scots, Parliament had entrusted the reformation of the Church to an assembly of divines. It met in July 1643, and consisted originally of about 150 persons, of whom 120 were divines, twenty M.P.'s, and ten members of the House of Lords. To these were added, in 1644, four Scottish divines and about as many Scottish laymen. The Assembly drew up a new service book called the Directory to replace the Book of Common Prayer, a new Catechism, and a scheme for the organisation of the English Church on a Presbyterian basis. Parliament, after amending the proposals of the Assembly to its own satisfaction, passed ordinances imposing them upon England.

Vainly the Independents struggled, in the Assembly itself and outside it, for toleration for their tenets, the right to preach what they believed, and the power to form congregations of their adherents. The Assembly, backed by the City of London and the Scots, was determined to put down heresy as well as episcopacy. The soldiers of the New Model Army complained that they were denied the liberty they had fought for, and by the mouth of Cromwell demanded freedom of conscience. Independents and Episcopalians and free-thinkers all united to attack the Assembly. Satires in prose and verse were directed against its members and its proceedings, especially during the years 1645, 1646, and 1647. Cleveland, Denham, Cowley, and Butler were the protagonists in this literary war. Cleveland was particularly prolific and abusive. 'Avaunt, prodigious mountebanks' begins one of his satires; 'Flea-bitten synod' begins another.¹

The divines were very sensitive to the attacks made

¹ 'Westminster College; or, England's Complaint against those that sit in the chamber called Jerusalem' (*British Museum*, 669, f. 11 (88)); 'The Mixt Assembly'; 'The Hue and Cry after Sir John Presbyter' (*Rump Songs*, i. 192; Cleveland's *Poems*, pp. 30, 32); 'The Ghost of Sir John Presbyter' (*Catalogue of Satirical Prints*, i. 383, 389); 'The Assembly Man' (*Somers Tracts*, v. 487); 'The Four-legged Elder' (*Rump Songs*, i. 350).

upon them, especially to those which came from the Independents.

'The Sectarrians,' complained Thomas Edwards, 'have carried themselves towards the Assembly with the greatest scorn and reproach that ever any sort of men carried themselves towards such a company of ministers learned and godly and called by Parliament to advise with in matters of religion. Oh, how many books have been written against them within the two last years or thereabouts, as "The Arraignment of Mr. Persecution," "Martin's Echo," and their fellows. Oh the railing, bitter, disgraceful passages in "Lilburn's Letter to Mr. Prynne," "Tender Conscience religiously affected," and divers other pamphlets against the Assembly, calling them the black-coats in the synod, dry-vines good for nothing to be burnt, having two horns like a lamb but a mouth like a dragon, teaching the Parliament to speak blasphemy against those saints that dwell in Heaven. Oh how commonly by word of mouth and in writing is the Assembly called Anti-christian, Romish, bloody, the plagues and pests of the kingdom, Baal's priests, diviners, soothsayers, all manner of evil being spoken of them. A ballad hath been made of them having a first and second part, wherein they are scoffed with the title of Black-bird Divines: the name of the ballad is "A Prophecy of the Swineherd's Destruction," to the tune of "The Merry Soldier or the Jovial Tinker." This ballad calls the Assembly swineherds, and saith these swineherds are sitting to build old Babel's Tower.'¹

Unluckily this ballad is lost. One which has survived takes a different line; the divines, it says, had sat for four years to find out a new religion, but without success, and they would go on sitting as long as their salaries continued.

'The synod who dare to control?

They sit in Sion House.

The people looked for mountains, but

They have brought forth a mouse.'

Edwards, *Gangraena*, pt. iii. p. 230, 1646.

‘What religion are we to have in England?’ it goes on to ask. ‘Are we to be Brownists, or Presbyterians, or Antinomians, or Adamites and wear no clothes? Give us some religion, old or new, and we shall be obliged to you.’

‘And now farewell, O synod brave!
It is in vain to think
We a religion e’er shall have,
While that your pockets chink.
Four shillings every day, besides
Your greasy benefices,
Makes you to have enlarged sides,
But pulls the truth in pieces.’¹

The Parliament’s allies, the Scots—detested by the English Royalists as rebels—were now hated by the English Independents as the authors of the Presbyterian tyranny, which Parliament and the Synod were attempting to establish. The inhabitants of the northern counties complained loudly that they had been plundered by the Scottish soldiers called in to help them against the Royalists. When the Scots left England at the close of 1646, and handed over the king to the Parliament’s commissioners, in exchange for their arrears of pay, they were stigmatised by the Royalists as a race of Judases.²

In the spring of 1647 a quarrel broke out between the Parliament and the army because the Parliament wished to disband the army without paying its arrears. Little sympathy was felt for the soldiers,³ but there was great joy

¹ ‘A Justification of the Synod of Sion College’ (Wright’s *Political Ballads*, p. 76).

² See Cleveland’s ‘Rebel Scot’ and ‘The Scot’s Apostacy’ (*Poems*, pp. 37, 182, 340); ‘The Committee-man’s Complaint’ (Wright, *Political Ballads*, p. 60); ‘The Scot’s Arrears’ (*Rump Songs*, i. 222); ‘A Justification of our Brethren of Scotland’ (*British Museum*, 669, f. 11 (77)); ‘Judas justified’ (*ibid.* 669, f. 11 (103)).

³ There are a certain number of poems and ballads on the soldiers. See the ‘Mercenary Soldier’ (April 1646: *British Museum*, 669, f. 10 (49)); ‘The Zealous Soldier’ (*ibid.* 669, f. 10 (50)); ‘The Soldier’s Sad Complaint’ (July 1647: *ibid.* 669, f. 11 (48)); ‘Ireland’s Complaint of the Army’s Hypocrisy’ (September 1647: *ibid.* 669, f. 11 (85)).

amongst the Royalists to see their enemies falling out, and great exultation when the army marched on London. Take for an example 'The Parliament's Knell.'

'Farewell old Parliament of seven years' standing,
Now make your testament ; there's no disbanding ;
That very rebel rout, your first upholders,
Are come to pull you out by head and shoulders.

'King Charles is loose at last, the Scots have sold him,
And when you had him fast, you could not hold him,
He is now on his way, he'll no more sue to ye,
Fairfax hath played fair play and done his duty.

'Your proud Presbytery cannot protect you,
Your wise Directory cannot direct you,
We shall have bishops' stoles with copes and mitres,
Buff coats shall preach no more, nor priests be fighters.'¹

Other ballad-writers predicted a political as well as an ecclesiastical revolution. The city was to be plundered ; the mayor led up and down with his gold chain round his neck ; the aldermen to be treated with indignities which my pen refuses to transcribe. All the pent-up hatred of the Royalists against London for its support of the Parliamentary cause found vent in verse.² Nor were the members of Parliament to escape justice ; they were to be hung up at Tyburn like beads on a string, amid general rejoicings.

'Not a bell shall be heard that tolls, tolls,
Not a saint sing one pitiful rhyme,
Nor a sister shall pray for their poor souls,
As up to the gallows they climb.'

All these things were to happen when Cromwell and Fairfax captured London, or as a ballad put it, 'when Ironsides to London rides, and with his nose shall set the town

¹ Wood, 416, No. 7.

² See, for instance, *Rump Songs*, i. 114.

on fire.’¹ But none of these bloody prognostications were fulfilled. When the army marched on London the citizens and apprentices did not show fight. Southwark opened its gates to the army as soon as it drew near, and Fairfax’s regiments entered London in August 1647 without striking a blow. The government of London was put into the hands of the Independents, the Tower was garrisoned by the army, and the Presbyterian leaders were expelled from Parliament. The tame submission of the city was ridiculed in a dozen ballads.

‘Brave citizens you have done well,
To make your slaves your masters,
Your policy it doth excel—
Your grooms will be your tasters.
My Lord Mayor and the Aldermen,
Your gowns must make them breeches;
And if you do retort again
They’ll make you eat your speeches.

‘O brave Common-Council men!
O brave trained bands!
When do you think to get again
The staff into your own hands?’²

Another ballad said:

‘London is a fine town,
Yet I their cases pity,
Their Mayor and some few aldermen
Have quite undone the City.’³

One thing the army did was to order the destruction

¹ Bodleian Library; *MS. Rawlinson Poet.* 246, p. 30b.

² ‘A la Mode: the City’s profound policy in delivering themselves, etc.’ See also ‘The City’s Thanks to Southwark,’ ‘The Braggadocia Soldier and the Civil Citizen’ (Wright, *Political Ballads*, pp. 64, 70, 85); ‘The City’s Welcome to Colonel Rich and Colonel Baxter’ (*British Museum*, 669, f. 11 122); ‘The City Asse’; ‘Troynovant must not be Burnt’ (669, f. 12 (21)).

³ ‘The City’s Loyalty to the King’ (Wright, *Political Ballads*, p. 42).

of the entrenchments raised for the defence of the City in 1643—'the lines' as they were called. A poet wrote :

'Is this the end of all the toil
And labour of the Town,
And did our bulwarks rise so high
Thus low to tumble down ?

'The popish doctrine shall no more
Prevail within our nation,
For now we see that by our works
There's no justification.'¹

The triumph of the army was shortlived. They might purge the Parliament and subdue the City ; they could not succeed in achieving the settlement of the kingdom. By the threat of force they obliged the Parliament to draw up terms of which they approved, and to offer them to the King, but they could neither persuade nor force Charles to accept them. The soldiers justly thought that it was unsafe to restore the King to his powers except upon stringent conditions. The majority of the nation felt only that unless the King was restored to his powers a peaceful settlement was impossible. That was the moral of the popular ballad 'When the King enjoys his own again,' written about 1643 by Martin Parker, and often reprinted with additional verses.

'All things will be well when the King enjoys his own again,' says the first verse. 'The Times will not mend till the King enjoys his own again' and 'The wars will not cease till the King enjoys his own again,' add others.²

Every year's fighting strengthened this belief, and the confusion which followed the close of the war made it general.

¹ *Rump Songs*, i. p. 245 ; Alexander Brome's *Poems*, p. 145. Compare 'Black Tom's Speech' (*British Museum*, 669, f. 11 (84)).

² Wilkins, *Political Ballads*, vol. i. p. 10 ; *Roxburghe Ballads*, vii. 633, 682.

The change in the position of the King was remarkable. When he was at the head of an army he had possessed the passionate loyalty of a part of his people ; when he was a prisoner he began to attract a pity and a sympathy due rather to his sufferings than his acts. Poets hitherto had celebrated the romantic incidents in his life: the Spanish journey—the meeting with the Queen on the field of Edgehill—the escape in disguise from Oxford—and so on.¹ They now began to idealise his character ; to represent him as the patient and forgiving father of a wayward and factious people, and to endow him with all the qualifications for saintship and martyrdom. He was represented as fighting for the rights of the people, not merely for his own, and he certainly was the champion of principles dear to a large part of them. Hence they applauded his refusal to accept the terms offered him by Parliament. One poet said :

‘ Hold out brave Charles, and thou shalt win the field,
 Thou canst not lose thyself unless thou yield
 On such conditions as will force thy hand
 To give away thy sceptre, crown, and land,
 And what is worse, to hazard by thy fall,
 To lose a greater crown more worth than all.’²

His sale by the Scots had suggested the betrayal of Christ by Judas, and this parallel was developed at length both in prose and verse. Dr. Gardiner quotes an imitation of George Herbert’s ‘ Sacrifice,’ published in June 1647, in which the King complains that he has been bought and sold. The army, whose captive he now is, will sell him as the Scots did, or kill him, but it is not for his own sake that he sorrows.

¹ ‘ Upon the Meeting of the King and Queen upon Edgehill ’ (*Ashmole MS.* 36) ; ‘ The King’s Disguise ’ (*Rump Songs*, i. p. 211 ; Cleveland’s *Poems*, p. 46) ; ‘ A Satire Occasioned by the Author’s Survey of a Scandalous Pamphlet entitled, “ The King’s Cabinet Opened ” ’ (*Rump Songs*, i. p. 169).

² ‘ Upon His Majesty’s Coming to Holmby ’ (Wilkins, *Political Ballads*, i. 38).

‘For my wronged kingdom’s sake, my very grief
 Doth break my heart. Until I find relief
 I’ll sue to heaven mercy from God, my chief :
 Never was grief like mine.’¹

The last words are the refrain of every verse. Of all the poems attributed to the King himself the most famous is that entitled ‘Majesty in Misery: a copy of verses written by his Majesty in his captivity,’ which, according to Burnet, ‘a very worthy gentleman, who had the honour of waiting on him then, and was much trusted by him,’ were copied out from the original.²

It begins by asserting the divine right of monarchy; Charles appeals to the King of Kings, as the founder of monarchy, to protect his rights.

‘Nature and law by the divine decree
 (The only root of righteous royalty),
 With this dim diadem invested me. . . .’

Yet his own servants and favourites have forsaken him.

‘The fiercest furies that do daily tread
 Upon my grief, my grey discrowned head,
 Are those that owe my bounty for their bread.’

Loyalty and faithfulness to the Church are punished as if they were crimes.

‘Churchmen are chained and schismatics are freed,
 Mechanics preach, and holy fathers bleed,
 The crown is crucified with the creed.’

Presbyter and Independent agree against true religion as Pontius Pilate and Herod did against Christ. They promise the King great things if he will yield to their demands, and threaten his life because he refuses.

¹ Gardiner, *History of England*, iii. 310.

² Burnet, *Lives of the Hamiltons*, p. 483, ed. 1852.

‘Felons obtain more privilege than I,
They are allowed to answer ere they die,
’Tis death for me to ask the reason why.’¹

But, instead of asking God to avenge his wrongs, he prays Him to have mercy on these misguided men, to forgive them because they know not what they do. Since they despise God’s edicts about his worship, how can they respect the power of his Anointed ?

Many Englishmen supported the King, not because they loved Charles but because the maintenance of monarchy seemed to them the only thing that could save England from chaos. Conflicting sects and warring factions could never agree ; to restore the King was the only way.

This is set forth in a ballad, published in 1648, called ‘The Anarchy.’ It describes a sort of mass meeting to settle the future religion and government of England. A member of Parliament addresses it :

‘Now that, thanks to the powers below,
We have e’en done out our do,
The mitre is down,
And so is the crown,
And with them the coronet too ;
Come clowns, and come boys,
Come hobber-de hoys,
Come females of each degree,
Stretch your throats, bring in your votes,
And make good the anarchy.
And “thus it shall go,” says Alice ;
“Nay, thus it shall go,” says Amy ;
“Nay, thus it shall go,” says Taffy, “I trow,”
“Nay, thus it shall go,” says Jamy.’

‘Ah, good people,’ says the speaker, ‘the truth is a difficult thing to discover ; you must decide what the

¹ According to Burnet these lines were written when the King was at Carisbrooke Castle, but from the allusion to his trial they must have been written later. A broadside copy is in the *Roxburghe Ballads* (vi. 619), but undated.

truth is and which of your sects has it.' Again the answer is discordant.

' "Sure, I have the truth," says Numph;
 "Nay, I have the truth," says Clem;
 "Nay, I have the truth," says reverend Ruth,
 "Nay, I have the truth," says Em.'

'Well,' says the speaker, 'let the truth be where it will, these divisions in religion reduce our power; take one religion and stick to it, here are forty to choose from.'

"Take your choice, the major voice
 Shall carry it right or wrong."

"Then we'll be of this," says Meg;
 "Nay, we'll be of that," says Tib;
 "Come, we'll be of all," says pitiful Paul,
 "Nay, we'll be of none," says Gib.'

'After all,' replies the speaker, 'religion does not really matter, the question of government is really the important one.'

'As for religion, to speak right,
 And in the House's sense,
 The matter's all one to have any or none,
 If it were not for the pretence;
 But herein doth lurk the key of the work,
 Even to dispose of the crown,
 Dexterously, and as may be
 For your behoof and our own.

"Then let's have King Charles," says George,
 "Nay, let's have his son," says Hugh,
 "Nay, let us have none," says jabbering Joan,
 "Nay, let's all be kings," says Prue.'

Despairing of arriving at any agreement, since even when the populace is victorious it can do nothing but debate, the speaker appeals to the Royalists.

'Come royalists then do you play the men,
 And cavaliers give the word,
 Now let us see at what you would be,
 And whether *you* can accord.

“A health to King Charles,” says Tom,
 “Up with it,” says Ralph like a man,
 “God bless him,” says Doll, “and raise him,” says Moll,
 “And send him his own,” says Nan.’¹

This was the feeling which produced the premature attempt to restore the monarchy known as the Second Civil War. The second war lasted less than six months, for the army was too well led and too well organised for their opponents to keep the field long, and sieges fill a large part of the story. There are ballads on the defeat of the Scots at Preston² and the siege of Colchester,³ but they are not worth quoting. The ballads on the King’s execution are poor too. It is strange that an event which moved England so deeply, and was so long remembered, should not have inspired ballads more worthy of the subject. About half a dozen survive, and several of those are of much later date.

‘Fair England’s joy is fled, welladay, welladay,
 Our noble King is dead, sweet prince of love.
 This heavy news so bad, hath made three kingdoms sad,
 No comfort to be had but from above.

‘On Tuesday last his grace, cheerfully, cheerfully,
 Went to his dying place, to end all strife,
 With many a weeping eye, with groans unto the sky,
 To see his Majesty there end his life.

‘His foes he did forgive, graciously, graciously,
 And wisht we all might live in quiet peace;
 He wisht whate’er was past that he might be the last,
 No sorrow we might taste, but wars might cease.’⁴

¹ ‘The Anarchie; or, the blest Reformation since 1640.’ There are two editions, one dated January 11, 1648, the other October 24, 1648. It is reprinted in Wright’s *Political Ballads*, p. 112, in Wilkins’s *Political Ballads*, i. p. 32; and in *Rump Songs*, i. 291.

² ‘The Piteous Moans of the Prisoners lately taken at Colchester’ (*British Museum*, E. 470 (9)); ‘A letter from Colchester relating their Diet’ (*MS. Rawlinson Poet.* xxvi. p. 21).

³ *Rump Songs*, i. 248.

⁴ See *Roxburghe Ballads*, vol. vii. Preface, p. xc***. This ballad so far as it goes does attempt to summarise what the King said. There is in the same series, vii. 626, another ballad called ‘The King’s Last Speech,’ which begins ‘I come, my blessed Saviour.’ It is a poor composition, in no way reproducing the King’s real words.

The best and probably the earliest is 'King Charles his Speech and last Farewell to the World,' of which only seven stanzas survive.

There are also two narrative ballads: 'The Manner of the King's Trial'¹ and 'England's Black Tribunal.' The first of them was clearly written immediately after the trial itself, and gives a fairly accurate account both of trial and execution. 'England's Black Tribunal' is later. It is addressed to 'true Churchmen all,' bids them remember how the best of kings was murdered by the cruel Presbyterians, and exhorts men to remember his fate and never put it in the power of the Nonconformists to overthrow the Church again. Most likely it was written in the reign of Queen Anne, but there is no precise evidence of its date. One interesting point is that it reproduces with tolerable exactness the King's conversation with the Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Gloucester.²

Whenever, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the struggle between the Church and the Nonconformists rose high, the murder of the King was adduced as an argument against any relaxation of the laws against Nonconformity, or any extension of their political rights. It was long remembered in other countries too. There is a curious ballad, called 'The success of the two English Travellers,' printed about April 1685, describing how two Englishmen travelled through Europe for some twenty years and wherever they went, in France, Spain, or Italy, were rebuked by foreigners for the crime their nation had committed.

'When we was a walking along in the street,
Both men, wives and children and all we did meet,
They gathered up stones and at us did fling,
Crying "Rebels of England, you murdered your king."'³

¹ 'The Manner of the King's Trial' (*Roxburghe Ballads*, vii. 622). It begins, 'King Charles was once a King of great state.'

² 'England's Black Tribunal; or, King Charles' Martyrdom' (*Douce Ballads*, iii. 25. Bodleian Library). There is also a ballad called 'Tyrant's Triumphant; or, the High Court of State,' which is to be found only in the Chetham Library. It consists of a list of the King's judges and characters of them.

³ *Roxburghe Ballads*, v. 543.