

mander; and signing all their names in a circle, lest he should discover the ringleaders, they laid it under his prayer-book. Pennington declared, that he would rather be hanged in England for disobedience, than fight against his brother protestants in France. The whole squadron sailed immediately to the Downs. There they received new orders from Buckingham, lord admiral, to return to Dieppe. As the duke knew that authority alone would not suffice, he employed much art and many subtilties to engage them to obedience; and a rumour which was spread that peace had been concluded between the French king and the hugonots, assisted him in his purpose. When they arrived at Dieppe they found that they had been deceived. Sir Ferdinando Gorges, who commanded one of the vessels, broke through and returned to England. All the officers and sailors of all the other ships, notwithstanding great offers made them by the French, immediately deserted. One gunner alone preferred duty towards his king to the cause of religion; and he was afterwards killed in charging a cannon before Rochelle.^h The care which historians have taken to record this frivolous event, proves with what pleasure the news was received by the nation.

The House of Commons, when informed of these transactions, showed the same attachment with the sailors for the protestant religion; nor was their zeal much better guided by reason and sound policy. It was not considered, that it was highly probable the king and the duke themselves had here been deceived by the artifices of France, nor had they any hostile intention against the hugonots; that were it otherwise, yet might their measures be justified by the most obvious and most received maxims of civil policy; that if the force of Spain were really so exorbitant as the Commons imagined, the French monarch was the only prince that could oppose its progress, and preserve the balance of Europe; that his power was at present fettered by the hugonots, who, being possessed of many privileges and even of fortified towns, formed an empire within his empire, and kept him in perpetual jealousy and inquietude; that an insurrection had been at that time wantonly and voluntarily formed by their leaders, who, being disgusted in some court intrigue, took advantage of the never-failing pretence of religion, in order to cover their rebellion; that the Dutch, influenced by these views, had ordered a squadron of twenty ships to join the French fleet, employed against the inhabitants of Rochelle.ⁱ That the Spanish monarch, sensible of the same consequences, secretly supported the protestants in France; and that all princes had ever sacrificed to reasons of state the interests of their religion in foreign countries. All these obvious considerations had no influence. Great murmurs and discontents still prevailed in parliament. The hugonots, though they had no ground of complaint against the French court, were thought to be as much entitled to assistance from England, as if they had taken arms in defence of their liberties and religion against the persecuting rage of the catholics. And it plainly appears from this incident, as well as from many others, that of all European nations, the British were at that time, and till long after, the most under the influence of that religious spirit which tends rather to inflame bigotry than increase peace and mutual charity.

On this occasion the Commons renewed their eternal complaints against the growth of popery, which was ever the chief of their grievances, and now their only one.^k They demanded a strict execution of the penal laws against the catholics, and remonstrated against some late pardons granted the priests.^l They attacked Montague, one of the king's chaplains, on account of a moderate book which he had lately published, and which, to their great disgust, saved virtuous catholics, as well as other Christians, from eternal torments.^m Charles gave them a gracious and compliant answer to all their remonstrances. He was, however, in his heart extremely averse to these

furious measures. Though a determined protestant by principle as well as inclination, he had entertained no violent horror against popery; and a little humanity, he thought, was due by the nation to the religion of their ancestors. That degree of liberty which is now indulged to catholics, though a party much more obnoxious than during the reign of the Stuarts, it suited neither with Charles's sentiments, nor the humour of the age, to allow them. An abatement of the more rigorous laws was all he intended; and his engagements with France, notwithstanding that their regular execution had never been promised or expected, required of him some indulgence. But so unfortunate was this prince, that no measure embraced during his whole reign was ever attended with more unhappy and more fatal consequences.

The extreme rage against popery was a sure characteristic of puritanism. The House of Commons discovered other infallible symptoms of the prevalence of that party. They petitioned the king for replacing such able clergy as had been silenced for want of conformity to the ceremonies.ⁿ They also enacted laws for the strict observance of Sunday, which the puritans affected to call the Sabbath, and which they sanctified by the most melancholy indolence.^o It is to be remarked, that the different appellations of this festival were at that time known symbols of the different parties.

The king, finding that the parliament was resolved to grant him no supply, and would furnish him with nothing but empty protestations of duty,^p or disagreeable complaints of grievances; took advantage of the plague,^q which began to appear at Oxford, and on that pretence immediately dissolved them. By finishing the session with a dissolution, instead of a prorogation, he sufficiently expressed his displeasure at their conduct.

To supply the want of parliamentary aids, Charles issued privy-seals for borrowing Aug. 12. money from his subjects.^r The advantage reaped by this expedient was a small compensation for the disgust which it occasioned: by means, however, of that supply, and by other expedients, he was, though with difficulty, enabled to equip his fleet. It consisted of eighty Oct. 1. vessels great and small; and carried on board an army of 10,000 men. Sir Edward Cecil, lately created Viscount Wimbleton, was intrusted with the command. He sailed immediately for Cadiz, and found the bay full of Spanish ships of Naval expedition against Spain. great value. He either neglected to attack these ships, or attempted it preposterously. The army was landed and a fort taken: but the undisciplined soldiers, finding store of wine, could not be restrained from the utmost excesses. Further stay appearing fruitless, they were reimbarcked; and the fleet put to sea with an intention of intercepting the Spanish galleons. But the plague having seized the November. seamen and soldiers, they were obliged to abandon all hopes of this prize, and return to England. Loud complaints were made against the court for intrusting so important a command to a man like Cecil, whom, though he possessed great experience, the people, judging by the event, esteemed of slender capacity.^s

Charles, having failed of so rich a prize, A. D. 1626. was obliged again to have recourse to a parliament. Though the ill success of his enterprises diminished his authority, and showed every day more plainly the imprudence of the Spanish war; though the increase of his necessities rendered him more dependent, and more exposed to the encroachments of the Commons; he was resolved to try once more that regular and constitutional expedient for supply. Perhaps, too, Second parliament. a little political art, which at that time he practised, was much trusted to. He had named four popular leaders, sheriffs of counties; Sir Edward Coke, Sir Robert Philips, Sir Thomas Wentworth, and Sir Francis Seymour; and, though the question had been formerly

h Franklyn, p. 109. Rush, vol. i. p. 175, 176, &c. 325, 326, &c.
i Journ. 18 April, 1626. k Franklyn, p. 3, &c.
l Parl. Hist. vol. vi. p. 374. Journ. 1. Aug. 1625.
m Parl. Hist. vol. vi. p. 353. Journ. 7. July, 1625.
n Rushworth, vol. i. p. 281. o 1 Car. 1. cap. i. Journ. 21 June, 1625.
p Franklyn, p. 113. Rushworth, vol. i. p. 190.
q The plague was really so violent, that it had been moved in the House,

at the beginning of the session, to petition the king to adjourn them. Journ. 21 June, 1625. So it was impossible to enter upon grievances, even if there had been any. The only business of the parliament was to give supply, which was so much wanted by the king, in order to carry on the war in which they had engaged him.
r Rush, vol. i. p. 192. Parl. Hist. vol. vi. p. 407.
s Franklyn, p. 113. Rushworth, vol. i. p. 196.