

to prison, on account of the last tumult in the House, which was called sedition.^g With great difficulty, and after several delays, they were released; and the law was generally supposed to be wrested, in order to prolong their imprisonment. Sir John Elliot, Hollis, and Valentine, were summoned to their trial in the king's bench, for seditious speeches and behaviour in parliament; but refusing to answer before an inferior court for their conduct as members of a superior, they were condemned to be imprisoned during the king's pleasure, to find sureties for their good behaviour, and to be fined, the two former a thousand pounds a piece, the latter five hundred.^h This sentence, procured by the influence of the crown, served only to show the king's disregard to the privileges of parliament, and to acquire an immense stock of popularity to the sufferers, who had so bravely, in opposition to arbitrary power, defended the liberties of their native country. The Commons of England, though an immense body, and possessed of the greater part of national property, were naturally somewhat defenceless; because of their personal equality, and their want of leaders: but the king's severity, if these prosecutions deserve the name, here pointed out leaders to them whose resentment was inflamed, and whose courage was nowise daunted by the hardships which they had undergone in so honourable a cause.

So much did these prisoners glory in their sufferings, that though they were promised liberty on that condition, they would not condescend even to present a petition to the king, expressing their sorrow for having offended him.ⁱ They unanimously refused to find sureties for their good behaviour; and disdained to accept of deliverance on such easy terms. Nay, Hollis was so industrious to continue his meritorious distress, that, when one offered to bail him, he would not yield to the rule of court, and be himself bound with his friend. Even Long, who had actually found sureties in the chief justice's chamber, declared in court, that his sureties should no longer continue.^k Yet because Sir John Elliot happened to die while in custody, a great clamour was raised against the administration; and he was universally regarded as a martyr to the liberties of England.^l

CHAP. LII.

Peace with France—Peace with Spain—State of the court and ministry—Character of the queen—Strafford—Laud—Innovations in the church—Irregular levies of money—Severities in the star-chamber and high commission—Ship money—Trial of Hambden.

A. D. 1629. THERE now opens to us a new scene. Charles, naturally disgusted with parliaments, who, he found, were determined to proceed against him with unmitigated rigour, both in invading his prerogative, and refusing him all supply, resolved not to call any more, till he should see greater indication of a compliant disposition in the nation. Having lost his great favourite, Buckingham, he became his own minister; and never afterwards reposed in any one such unlimited confidence. As he chiefly follows his own genius and disposition, his measures are henceforth less rash and hasty; though the general tenor of his administration still wants somewhat of being entirely legal, and perhaps more of being entirely prudent.

We shall endeavour to exhibit a just idea of the events which followed for some years; so far as they regard foreign affairs, the state of the court, and the government of the nation. The incidents are neither numerous nor illustrious; but the knowledge of them is necessary for understanding the subsequent transactions which are so memorable.

Charles, destitute of all supply, was necessarily reduced to embrace a measure, which ought to have been the result of reason and sound policy: he made peace with the two crowns against which he had hitherto waged a war, entered into without necessity, and conducted without glory.

g Rushworth, vol. i. p. 661. 661. Parl. Hist. vol. viii. p. 354. May, p. 13.
h Rushworth, vol. i. p. 684. 691. i Whitlocke, p. 13.
k Kennet, vol. iii. p. 49. l Rushworth, vol. v. p. 440.

Notwithstanding the distracted and helpless condition of England, no attempt was made either by France or Spain, to invade their enemy; nor did they entertain any further project, than to defend themselves against the feeble and ill-concerted expeditions of that kingdom. Pleased that the jealousies and quarrels between king and parliament had disarmed so formidable a power, they carefully avoided any enterprise which might rouse either the terror or anger of the English, and dispose them to domestic union and submission. The endeavours to regain the good-will of the nation were carried so far by the King of Spain, that he generously released and sent home all the English prisoners taken in the expedition against Cadiz. The example was imitated by France, after the retreat of the English from the isle of Rhé. When princes were in such dispositions, and had so few pretensions on each other, it could not be difficult to conclude a peace. The treaty was first signed with France.^a The situation of the king's affairs did not entitle him to demand any conditions for the hugonots, and they were abandoned to the will of their sovereign. Peace was afterwards concluded with Spain; where no conditions were made in favour of the palatine, except that Spain promised in general to use their good offices for his restoration.^b The influence of these two wars on domestic affairs, and on the dispositions of king and people, was of the utmost consequence: but no alteration was made by them on the foreign interests of the kingdom.

Peace with France and Spain. 14th April.

A. D. 1630. 5th Nov.

Nothing more happy can be imagined than the situation in which England then stood with regard to foreign affairs. Europe was divided between the rival families of Bourbon and Austria, whose opposite interests, and still more their mutual jealousies, secured the tranquillity of this island: their forces were so nearly counterpoised, that no apprehensions were entertained of any event which could suddenly disturb the balance of power between them. The Spanish monarch, deemed the most powerful, lay at greatest distance: and the English, by that means, possessed the advantage of being engaged by political motives into a more intimate union and confederacy with the neighbouring potentate. The dispersed situation of the Spanish dominions rendered the naval power of England formidable to them, and kept that empire in continual dependence. France, more vigorous and more compact, was every day rising in policy and discipline; and reached at last an equality of power with the house of Austria: but her progress, slow and gradual, left it still in the power of England, by a timely interposition, to check her superiority. And thus Charles, could he have avoided all dissensions with his own subjects, was in a situation to make himself be courted and respected by every power in Europe; and what has scarcely ever since been attained by the princes of this island, he could either be active with dignity, or neutral with security.

A neutrality was embraced by the king; and during the rest of his reign, he seems to have little regarded foreign affairs, except so far as he was engaged by honour, and by friendship for his sister and the palatine, to endeavour the procuring of some relief for that unhappy family. He joined his good offices to those of France, and mediated a peace between the Kings of Sweden and Poland, in hopes of engaging the former to embrace the protection of the oppressed protestants in the empire. This was the famed Gustavus, whose heroic genius, seconded by the wisest policy, made him in a little time the most distinguished monarch of the age, and rendered his country, formerly unknown and neglected, of great weight in the balance of Europe. To encourage and assist him in his projected invasion of Germany, Charles agreed to furnish him with six thousand men; but that he might preserve the appearance of neutrality, he made use of the Marquis of Hamilton's name.^c That nobleman entered into an engagement with Gustavus; and enlisting these troops in England and Scotland at Charles's expense, he landed them in the Elbe. The decisive battle of Leipsig was fought soon after; where the conduct of Tilly and the valour of the Imperialists

a Rushworth, vol. ii. p. 23. 24.
b Idem, ibid. p. 75. Whitlocke, p. 14.
c Rushworth, vol. i. p. 46. 53. 62. 88.

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