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ARTICLE I.—*History of the Old Covenant.* By J. H. Kurtz, Ord. Prof. at Dorpat.\* Vol. II. 1855. 8vo. pp. 563.

THE first volume of this work traced the history of Israel as a family to its close in the death of Jacob, their last common progenitor. The next period regards Israel as a nation, and, according to the epochs marked by our author, extends to the establishment of the kingdom. This period is divided into four unequal parts, severally represented by the residence in Egypt, the wanderings in the wilderness, the conquest of Canaan, and the residence in Canaan. Each of these has its own distinctly marked character and aim. First, the family was to expand to a nation and to attain a separate and independent existence. Secondly, they must receive their national form and constitution; they are not to be like other nations, but God's peculiar people. Hence he concludes a covenant with them and provides them with their code of laws. Thirdly, in order to realize the destiny thus set before them, and to develop themselves in their newly imparted character, they need to come into the possession of a suitable land. Fourthly,

\* Geschichte des Alten Bundes, von Joh. Heinr. Kurtz, u. s. w. Berlin, New York und Adelaide.

ARTICLE VI.—*The History of England, from the Accession of James II.* By Thomas Babington Macaulay. Vols. III. and IV.

THE historian of England undertakes a work at once the most difficult to execute, and the fullest of political instruction that can be chosen from the annals of modern Europe. Where monarchy is absolute, public measures centre in the prince, and his biography becomes, in the main, his nation's history. The people obey and become the executors of his designs, or resist and become the object of his arms. In either case, the path of narrative is well defined, and admits of little dispute. If a question arises as to the measures of government, it is still a question of the wisdom or rectitude of one man, and of the limited court influence to which he subjects himself. But, where the powers of government rest in the people equally, the truth of history becomes of much more difficult attainment. Conflicting local interests, opposite party feelings, and hundreds of different opinions have to be weighed, in order to ascertain the springs of public action, and to determine what proportion of each must be brought out on the canvas, and in what light and perspective they must stand, in order to the truth of the historical picture. This difficulty is greatly augmented, where, as in the case of England, the motives not only of a large body of commons have to be studied, but also the privileges of a duly recognized and powerful aristocracy, together with a monarchy, which is no mere ornamental attachment, but a real estate by law admitted as superior to law.

The British constitution is the most complicated problem in government that has ever been presented to a people for solution. It has called forth the energies of a host of great statesmen. Its difficulties have expanded and tasked their powers, and forbidden them to run into that narrow channel, which even the greatest are apt to assume, when acting only for a monarch. Many a time has it seemed on the point of turning out a failure. But if one element gave way, some other was found to sustain the weight, and furnish opportunity for recovery. Slow in its progress, it has steadily moved on towards improvement.

If no rapid step can be taken by its means, it guards most jealously against retrogression, and the secret of its permanence lies in the fact, that, with all its complications, it has risen out of the actual life of the different classes of the people, and their efforts to turn to their advantage a royalty which was once absolute. Not written on parchment; but on the hearts and memories of the nation, its historian needs to be not only a narrator of external facts, but also a keen analyst of human motives, and has often to trace great public actions up to their springs in the humble life and sufferings of the peasantry.

Assuming, as we are entitled to do, that the ultimate object of national progress is perfect equality of rights, the existence of England is the longest, the most minute, and the most circumstantial practical commentary upon the law of that progress, which has yet been presented to the modern world. Nor is it likely to reach its final volume for a long time to come. In the meanwhile, every question which can be conceived of as arising upon every step of the course, is undergoing the fullest discussion. Nothing is suffered to depend upon the arbitration of a single mind. While some, who have condemned and ridiculed her slowness, have blustered forward and stumbled, and fallen ignominiously, England continues her progress slowly but firmly, neither deterred by intimidation, nor accelerated by taunts, shrinking from neither self-exposure nor self-condemnation, in the effort to correct abuses, and secure safe footing for another step. Of course, it is not to be understood that such national conduct arises from an express and well defined national purpose to that end. It results from the resistance experienced by the liberal party from a strong body of opponents to all progress. The advocates of absolute monarchy are certainly few in that country now, but the privileges of an aristocracy are still numerously defended, and no ancient custom can be abolished, nor new one introduced, without a debate calling forth the energies of both parties. No work, therefore, can be a history of England without a true record of such agitations. Parliamentary action, in this case, occupies the place of eminence, which in France belongs to the monarch and the army. Hitherto, history has relied for its interest chiefly upon the events of war. But if the annals of England are to be

written aright, government and the discussion of all its questions must constitute the thread of narrative, while wars appear only as incidents and episodes, sometimes interrupting the solution of a question, and sometimes arising as a subordinate state of the controversy, but of importance chiefly as playing into one or other side of an argument. There is less power of popular excitement in the work of legislation than in war; but it is undoubtedly a higher sphere of effort, and a new method of historical writing and of evoking interest must be devised to meet it. This demand we think that Mr. Macaulay rightly understands and has well responded to. Never before has parliamentary business been recorded in such an animated and animating style. In his rapid summaries of conflicting arguments and motives, he skims the cream of debate, while his indirect manner avoids at once the formality of reporting actual speeches, and the responsibility of transferring feebleness and verbosity to his pages.

The only successful efforts of liberalization are those which proceed from the higher ranks of society downwards. A nobility, wresting privileges from the hands of a monarch, is the first scene in such a drama; then a middle class in conflict with an aristocracy. The last scene is one which history has seldom had to record, when the humblest people have secured an equal place. A dominant middle class is the most difficult opponent to be overcome. These positions are variously complicated, but success is not to be expected from their inversion. Every attempt at liberty, originating with the rabble, is doomed to failure. It either sinks from sheer impotency, or in a fury of enthusiasm throws itself into the arms of a master. True freedom cannot be secured otherwise, than by growing up to it according to well-established laws of nature. A nation cannot start up from its bondage and become adequate to all the work of self-government in a day, any more than a boy can become a man by merely dressing himself in the garb of his father. Both must await the course of nature and education. And no people can either secure or retain freedom in a higher degree than they are able to understand and love it. The goodness or badness of a government is not to be determined by its form alone, but by its relation to the people whom it superintends.

The only practical ground of blame, arises when the government does not keep pace with the people; and the healthiest state of things must exist where the people take the lead, and where the government follows, shaping itself to their successive wants. In this respect, no government ever has been, nor can be perfect; but the tendency of the constitution of England is, above all others of the old world, to that end. Though seldom fitting exactly, it is in continual process of approximation thereto. The early history of Rome has many features like that of England; but the Romans reached an equality of rights through a series of revolutions, while the English have a strong dislike of all such violent measures. The Roman, in his haste to be free, dashed aside every element which he felt as a check upon his freedom, forgetting that his successor might abuse what had cost him so dear; and the consequence was, that emancipation from one class of evils involved him in another. The Englishman, on the other hand, is fond of restrictions and counterbalancing influences. He no sooner conceives of attaining a privilege, than he passes in review all the risks to which it may expose him, and sets about hedging it around with limitations. His advance is therefore very cautious and very slow, and he will submit to many inconveniences, rather than hasten it; yet the history of his country for the last six hundred years abundantly attests its prudence. He can scarcely be said to have reached more than the second stage in national progress, yet recent events seem to indicate that he will not stop short of the highest.

That there is no lack of the poetic in English character, is evinced by the broadest and openest of facts, yet the people have never suffered themselves in any of their political movements to be carried away by a fancy. Flaming theories of Pantisocracy and Communist perfection have never enjoyed much favour among them. Their efforts have all along been most practically and ploddingly addressed to freedom of person, of property, and of conscience. The subject on which they have been disposed to run to the wildest extremes, and in reference to which they have been guilty of the greatest errors, is the last. Religion has always been a leading motive in English politics. Their religion lies very near the heart of that people,

taken as a whole. The only revolutions into which, since they began to act as a people, they have ever suffered themselves to be driven, have sprung from religious zeal.

Without a profound apprehension of religious motives, no man can be a true historian of England. His feelings may be impartial, but his narrative must be superficial; and his attempts at exposition of causes unintelligible, like the description of a battle by one who never experienced a spark of military ardour. Hume was an elegant narrator; but the grandest movements in his nation's history were enigmas to him. He was incapacitated to unfold their causes by the lack of a power whereby to see into them. None can more strongly represent his incompetence than he himself has done, in his closing remarks upon the death of Laud. Macaulay gives evidence of possessing a heart that beats in unison with the great natural impulses of his countrymen. His sympathies are evidently true and broad. Yet he also has failed to do justice to this great motive of Englishmen. He does not conceal nor disguise the fact of its predominating influence, nor come short in bringing out as its effects the changes which it really caused; but his delineation of the cause itself, is unfortunately, we do not say intentionally, distorted. Without adducing a single fact which cannot be well substantiated, he manifests such a proclivity to dwell upon those which go to expose pretenders to piety, and says so little about the character and vastly greater influence of the truly pious, that his reader is left under the impression, that the latter were very few, and that the former constituted the body of the nation; and that, as a general thing, piety is the offspring of either hypocrisy or fanaticism.

We are sorry to say that we cannot frame a satisfactory apology for Mr. Macaulay in this case. For one less skilled in historic art we might plead oversight, and lack of regard to proportion; but no man knows better than Mr. Macaulay, that historical truth is not attained by merely recording facts, however undisputed in themselves, but by selecting representative facts, and disposing them in such order, and giving to them such relative prominence in the narrative, as the importance of the class which they represent demands. A fact may be very interesting in itself, and very extraordinary, and calculated to

detain the attention of a reader, and yet for that very reason be unfit to appear in a just history of the period to which it belongs. The neglect of this principle is the continually recurring cause of honest misrepresentation, by ignorant or negligent writers. An historian of the United States who should spend a fourth of his work in relating the affair at Greytown, need not introduce a single doubtful particular in order to misrepresent the nation; for by such disproportion he should constitute his whole book a falsehood. It may be perfectly true that a clergyman of the Church of England, after reading the prayers for William and Mary upon a fast-day of their appointment, afterwards dined on pigeon pie, and, as he cut it open, expressed a wish that it were the heart of the usurper; and it certainly detains the attention of a reader; but is it a representative fact? Does it fairly exhibit the spirit and conduct of any number of that body, or is it a fact of only one man's indecency? If the former, then it ought to occupy a place in the narrative proportioned to the number whose conduct it represents; if the latter, it is untrue to introduce it at all. For it leads a reader to impute to a body of men a spirit, which perhaps none but that one ever entertained. Such abnormal facts suit the purposes of anecdote-mongers and romancers, but are not the proper materials of history. Some degree of disproportion may be inevitable. For narrative cannot be spread out to such length that every element can be presented in exactly its relative size, yet this must be restrained within such bounds as not to mislead. In order to get the coal stratum into a geological section at all, it may be necessary to represent it by a line thicker than its actual proportions justify; but it would be a very different thing to give it a breadth equal to the whole limestone.

Too close adherence to this rule would confine history to cold generalities; the neglect of it gives distortion and virtual untruth. Mr. Macaulay, like an artist, has chosen the more picturesque. His readers will defend his choice, except where their own particular views have suffered from it. We mean distinctly to say, that while enjoying his portraitures, we deny, in some cases, the likeness. It may be true that Penn was guilty of acts beneath his reputation, but do those alone correctly

represent his influence upon the men of his day? That certain ultraists were ridiculous, certain hypocrites criminal, and some good men inconsistent, is not to be denied; but why give to these facts such a depth and breadth of shading as to obscure the whole virtue and consistent piety of the nation? While reading his volumes, we perceive that there is a power somewhere which is controlling, and punishing the vicious politicians, and other actors who appear upon the stage, and reflection leads to the conclusion, that it must be the right-minded and religious community, but the author keeps that great power singularly in the background.

The position of England upon the map of Europe, as well as her place in its history, is full of the deepest interest. By her support and influence alone is freedom saved from extinction on that continent. But for England under the rule of Elizabeth, reacting Romanism might have crushed out the Reformation. The same England, under Cromwell, stayed the hand of oppression, and compelled the persecutor to yield up his victim. But for England, in the hands of William the Third, the absolute and intolerant despotism of Louis XIV. could scarcely have failed to extinguish the flame of liberty in Holland and Switzerland. At this moment, obliterate the constitution and religion of England, and how long would it take the masters of the continent to put out all that should remain of religious and civil liberty? We have suffered ourselves to forget the true position of that country in the course of various debates that have sprung up between us. Popular government and Protestant religion would constitute a very feeble power on the eastern side of the Atlantic, after the subtraction of the British Isles. Enmity to that great Protestant state is to the minion of despotism and advocate of Rome perfectly consistent, but in a Protestant and friend of constitutional government, is suicidal. The plain speaking, which is constantly exchanged between us, is also calculated to mislead a person who contents himself with appearances. If a native of Japan should compare for the first time the stately and complimentary style of our intercourse with other nations, together with the homely phrase and hard arguments to which we treat our Anglo-Saxon correspondent, and for which we are so often repaid in kind, he would certainly



conclude that of all nations we had the least interest in being on good terms with England. But professions of kindly feeling and of admiration, though very pleasant, doubtless, are by no means, in the intercourse of nations, to be taken as proofs of governmental sympathy, nor unmistakable guaranties of profitable international commerce. Nay, quite the reverse. How easily we throw out compliments to a merchant's goods, when we have no intention of buying. But a keen dealer will expatiate upon every fault he can detect in the article he wishes to make his own. Nations that have little to do with each other can afford to be highly complimentary, and bandy praise in the most gracious terms; for they have no dread of spoiling a bargain thereby. But where great, and varied, and far extending common interests have bound two countries together, they have something else to do, in diplomatic intercourse, and must be cautious in their compliments from respect to their profits. To honour with special attention his American visitors, and gratify them with glowing praises of the great republic, was a cheap act of the late Russian Czar. For he knew that of all countries pretending to freedom, America was the very one from whom he had least to fear. The poor ignorant population of his dominion could not, for ages, be made to comprehend the nature and working of American institutions, much less attempt the imitation of them. American liberty is far too high, and demands far too much intelligence, and is far too much out of the way of Russia, to inspire any fear in her master. A faint agitation in a little state of Germany, a rising against some single act of oppression, an outcry for some smallest and most obvious right among some of his neighbours, would inspire him with more anxiety than the gigantic progress of the United States.

The example of England is more dangerous to a Russian emperor, than that of America. For, while he has nothing to fear from his people's comprehension of American institutions, his nobility are in exactly that condition which prepares them to imitate the aristocracy of England. They are maturing fast, if not already matured, for that first step in liberalizing progress, which consists in either adding to, or substituting for, the monarchy a commonwealth of nobles. It is natural, that a

despot should hate the example which may wrest power out of his own hand, while he may be indifferent to that which can affect only his distant posterity.

The presence of England upon the edge of the European continent, is of the more value to her neighbours, that her institutions do not present a model of ideal perfection. She offers them an example which they can more readily understand, and which they may rationally hope to follow with success. Every one of their recent attempts at republican government has failed, and we may venture to say must fail, for the present. The only progress made has been attained by the limitation of existing monarchies. And if the nations will be faithful to themselves in increasing those limitations, as circumstances shall prepare them so to do, and maintain at the same time the means of public instruction, their complete emancipation must come in the end.

The fact that our commercial interests and governmental system connect us most intimately with England, is the very cause of the differences which spring up between us. But these differences, while it is highly proper, nay indispensable that we should, in them, manfully maintain our own, should never be permitted to blind our eyes to the grand and common interests from which they spring. The opposite course is not only unstatesman-like, it is unbusiness-like. We must expect to differ on many minor points, but when compared with all other nations, we are to Englishmen as brother to brother. There is a relationship between their institutions and our own, as well as kindred in our blood. There is a social, a religious, and a literary community between us which we can have with no other nation. There is a common property of honour in the lives and deeds of our forefathers. Were not Milton, and Bacon, and Shakspeare, and Spencer, were not Cranmer, and Ridley, and Latimer, the countrymen of our ancestors also? And does not England claim the literature of America, as the offspring of her own? There is a commercial profit between us, which we cannot, for the present at least, find anywhere else. Consequently, the history of England is a subject of profoundest interest to the people of the United States. And

the progress of Mr. Macaulay's work cannot be watched with more eagerness in Britain than here.

The two volumes last issued embrace the history of only eight years and nine months. But, though short, the period is of more than common importance, and constitutes a perfect drama in itself. It was rightly judged by the author, to devote so large a portion of his work to its elucidation. For to those few years does England owe the elements of more than a century and a half of her greatest prosperity. It was then that the monarchy was demonstrated to be dependent upon the popular will. For nothing but the preference of the nation had expelled one king and set up another. Limitations of the regal power, which had formerly been precarious, were then defined and settled. It was then that the House of Commons, as the representatives of the people, secured the exclusive control of all matters pertaining to the revenue. Previously, though they claimed the sole right of granting supplies, yet, once granted, the whole remained at the disposal of the crown. Now, after setting apart a definite salary for the king and his family, they reserved the rest, under their own hand, for public defence and contingencies. Army, navy, and other branches of the public service, were thus made dependent upon the yearly action of the Commons. It was then also, that in order to have a check upon the House of Commons, the duration of a parliament was limited to three years, and the great body of office-holders under the government excluded from its consultations. Then was the judiciary emancipated from its dependence upon the crown, by making the judges secure in office during good behaviour, and not removable at the pleasure of the monarch. It was then that the censorship of the press was discontinued; and the earliest steps taken towards religious toleration. Though, on this latter point, the vehement feelings prevalent in the time, permitted little more than a beginning to be made. And within the same few years, that most important agency in government, the ministry, first assumed its peculiar constitution and functions, which have since made it the truest exponent of the national purpose.

The blow struck at monopolies in the discussions arising upon the East India Company's charter, the establishment of

the Bank of England, and the renovation of the currency, were of similarly radical benefit to the interests of industry and commerce. Some of these changes were due to party measures, some to the enlightened views of the king, and others resulted from necessities of the peculiar emergency. The danger to which the new government was meanwhile exposed, from foreign as well as domestic enemies, from war and treachery, from fomentations of rebellion, and attempts at assassination, together with the prominence of the king in European affairs, gives a dramatic interest to the whole.

There was no special merit in rightly conceiving of the spirit of this period, nor of its importance; for both are obvious to the most cursory reader of English history. But Mr. Macaulay alone has apprehended its sources of graphic power, and conferred upon it all the popular attractiveness which is usually sought for in a brilliant military campaign. His method of handling the separate topics, in reference to his conception of the whole, is masterly. In the course of reading, we have often felt impelled to designate the work a great prose epic. The hero and heroine are William and Mary, in relation to whom, directly or indirectly, intimately or remotely, all the events are represented as taking place. Unity in this respect is severely and justly observed. Episodes are few, brief, and never foreign to the point. The sources of danger and anxiety are national prejudices, Jacobite machinations, and the ambition of Louis XIV. The heroic element is drawn from the loveliness of Mary, the pure moral character and enlightened statesmanship of William, and the patriotism of the English people. The plot lies between the efforts to restore James with his despotism, and those for the establishment of freedom under the government of William; and its resolution or denouement is the triumph of William in the peace of Ryswick.

Subordinate to the two great parties to which they respectively belong, are disposed the character and movements of the Irish, of the Highland and Lowland Scotch, of the Dutch, and of the larger ecclesiastical bodies then struggling for power; while from these different groups stand forth their respective leaders or victims.

The relation of the Celts, both in Scotland and Ireland, to

the Revolution and to the race by whom it was effected, is for the first time correctly laid before the public. It has been believed that the Celtic population were sincerely and intelligently attached to the house of Stuart, as if they distinctly apprehended and fully sympathized with the principles of high Toryism; and Tory writers have, of course, industriously fostered the notion. There is a life-like tone in the delineation of their motives, by Mr. Macaulay, that leaves no question of its correctness. The Irish certainly had no intention of restoring James to the throne of his fathers. Their sole object was to avail themselves of the emergency to shake off the yoke of England; and they hoped that he, being a Catholic, would make their cause his own, and found an independent monarchy in Ireland. The Scottish Gael neither knew nor cared to know the difference between Whig and Tory, his position in regard to them being dictated merely by the accidental coincidence of the interests of one or the other, with petty feuds between himself and his neighbours: as, in this country, we have seen Indians enlisted in the wars of white men.

The position, the errors, the vices, the sufferings and grievances of the Celtic Irish, have never been more truly estimated, nor more affectingly portrayed by any previous historian. That whole Irish war looks, upon these pages, like some newly discovered passage of adventure. We feel almost as if we had never read of the Boyne, or of Athlone and Limerick before. Tyrconnel, and Sarsfield, and Ginkell rise before us, in spite of Smollett, like Homeric heroes, and Schomberg, as if we had never laughed at the prosaic lines in which the

“ Brave duke lost his life  
In crossing over the water.”

In no part of his work has Mr. Macaulay more fully vindicated the vivifying touch of genius, than in his handling of this hitherto most dully treated affair. His closing remarks upon Ireland are touchingly beautiful, and lighted up with a generous hope, which we devoutly wish may be realized.

Desperate as was the Stuart cause, when it had to rely so much upon the side action of those who had really no direct interest in it, yet had the passions and prejudices of such men

been wielded by a wise and vigorous mind, it is impossible to say that they might not have been successfully guided into the channel of Jacobite victory. It could not have required a great amount of skill to persuade Irish Catholics to sustain any measures of a Catholic prince, whom they regarded as suffering in the same cause with themselves, nor to have inspired such a people with a valour that would have been irresistible by all the forces that William commanded at the Boyne. The condition of the Celtic Irish at that time, and the particular emergency, were such as to furnish the elements of the most tremendous enthusiasm and patriotic spirit of self-sacrifice that ever drove men upon the point of the bayonet. For all that the human heart holds dearest, was, according to their views, for them, at stake. Nor could it have been difficult so to manage Highland feuds, as to enlist them in all their vehemence on either side. But James was most pitifully incompetent to every office of a king, and seemed, by a strange fatality, to attempt all that he did attempt, in precisely the way in which he ought not; and his generals, with only one or two exceptions, were as incompetent as himself.

This was most notoriously the case in Scotland. Sarsfield in some degree redeemed the character of the Irish, but in Scotland, their unqualified incapacity was demonstrated by their own admission, that the ablest among them was viscount Dundee, a man whose only claim to notice had been earned by dragooning the unarmed population of a thinly settled country, by invading worshipping assemblies, in which he did not always come off without defeat, by breaking up prayer-meetings, by visiting with troops of cavalry, now one and then another lonely cottage among the mountains, and insulting heartbroken women over the bodies of their murdered protectors, and who never commanded in anything that could be called a battle, save that of Killiecrankie, in which he fell; and even that was won not by him, in respect to either design or execution, but by Cameron of Lochiel, a man with whom the party had only a brief and indirect connection. The Jacobites of Scotland were in hopeless case, when they had nothing better to make a hero of, than such material. Perhaps the notoriety conferred by the hatred of one party, had recommended him to the honour of

the other. By an unprejudiced observer he cannot be deemed worthy of either; in himself he was merely insignificant.

James's chief expectations, however, were based upon the power, friendship and ambition of Louis XIV.; and he was mean enough to be willing to follow a foreign army to the conquest of his native land, and to hold his father's throne as the vassal of a foreign prince. Nor was that spirit peculiar to himself. Of the whole dynasty to which he belonged, it may be fairly said, that their servility to foreign powers matched their despotism at home. Nothing but the silliness of the first James, and the talents of his predecessor, rendered his reign tolerable. The first Charles has been rescued from well merited detestation, only by his execution. The best that can be said of the second of that name is, that he was a good-natured profligate. James the Second, added to the irrational obstinacy of his father almost the weakness of his grandfather; and to a profligacy only more tasteless than that of his brother, a blindness of bigotry which may be set down as all his own. It was well for England, that the reign of Anne occurred after the firm establishment of monarchical restrictions. The only one of the dynasty on whom history can dwell with pleasure, is Mary, who to a native sweetness of temper had, from devoted attachment to her husband, added much of his pure and lofty principle.

The character of James is an unpleasant subject to treat. Its delineator can scarcely get light enough upon it to bring out the features distinctly. It is one heavy, dull mass of stupidity, vindictiveness, and bigotry. Untruthfulness was the heirloom of his family. Macaulay, though skilled in historical portraiture, has failed to relieve it with one noble or interesting trait; and Hume has succeeded only by the unscrupulous use of notorious falsehood. The only element which an historian can effectively avail himself of, to this end, is the compassion which naturally attaches to the subject of adversity. We pity in affliction, him whose conduct in prosperity merited nothing but condemnation; and are disposed to confer a kind of half-praise upon even a bad man, when we find him rejecting the counsels of some who are worse; though it is but small praise to James, that he did not countenance any plan for the

assassination of William, till after the death of Mary, for he knew that it would have served him no purpose; nor, that he spurned Avaux's horrid plan for the pacification of the Protestant Irish. To be a bad man and incapable prince, it was not necessary that he should be a heartless monster. A scanty portion of common sense was needed to perceive, that to massacre all the Protestants of Ireland, was not a likely way to reach the throne of England.

The real danger to William lay not in any hold that James retained upon the hearts of his countrymen, but in the fact, that the king of France was disposed to adopt the cause of the exile, and to avail himself thereof, as a plea for a descent upon England. His fleets were hovering round the coast, and had defeated the Dutch and British off Beachy Head. He had aided the Irish both by land and sea; and a large army, under the command of James, long threatened from the coast of La Hogue; while others were directed against William's native land, and laid waste the country of his allies.

These operations, however, resulted in establishing more firmly the throne of the reigning king; for the people came to associate him with their defence, and James with the plans of their enemies; and, when success had crowned his efforts, their victorious king became to them an object of pride, as well as of love.

In this great historical epic, Louis appears in all the state and magnificent display of power which he loved, as well as in some of those human weaknesses, which his utmost art and self-apotheosis could not conceal. His hospitality to the exiled king was worthy of a great monarch; his willingness to put a creature of his own upon the throne of England, was a kingly weakness. To raise his cane to a faithful minister, when tendering advice, and break it over the shoulders of a poor waiter, for some mistake at table, with his public acts of devastating the Palatinate, and persecuting the Huguenots, go to show how little difference, after all, there really was, intrinsically, between the great monarch and the wretched rapparee, whom he despised; his appropriation of the prudent plans and brave exploits of others, was the art whereby he made himself appear divine; his preference of a safe retreat in the day of danger,



was excusable in one, who had so much more to gratify his tastes in this life than he had any reason to expect elsewhere; and his hatred to the Prince of Orange could justify itself in the fact, that the Prince was the only opponent whom he had reason to fear.

The character of William III. has suffered from the misrepresentations of a party that laboured long, and excelled in the art of unscrupulous vilification. Far above the narrow views and vindictive passions which prevailed in all parties, he was ill-understood even by his friends. The men through whom he was made acquainted with England, were, with few exceptions, not calculated to impress him with respect for those whom they represented. He shut himself up from their confidence. The sourness of the Puritans on the one hand, and the profligacy of the Cavaliers on the other; the sight of the same men who had canted, and whined, and professed piety under the Commonwealth, rushing with headlong abandonment into profanity and dissipation, when a debauched king was restored, had gone far to remove all respect for religious profession from the minds of those who enjoyed no religious experience. The various changes in the aspects of hypocrisy, called out by the different colours of successive powers, had exposed her arts and made her utterly shameless. Never before had England been cursed with such a number of mean, selfish, narrow-minded, vicious, and servile retainers of a court, as in the latter years of Charles II., and the reign of the second James. The leaders of the people, who finally removed the nuisance, had long to struggle with the remnants of that corruption within their own body, as well as from the place of its banishment; and we have reason to fear that the king never rightly appreciated the depth and breadth of the piety really existing in a land which he found thus represented at court.

It was no more than what was to be expected, that the exiled Jacobites and their friends, as well as the mercenary time-servers, who conceived of their return to power as probable, should spare no arts of defamation upon him, whom they deemed the principal obstacle in their way. On the other hand, his cold and distant attitude towards those who, changing their politics with the tide of success, still lingered near the

throne, and his withholding of confidence from even the leaders in his own elevation, kept the tongue of eulogy under restraint. He seemed determined that nothing but his work should praise him. Fortunately, the English are eminently accessible to such an argument, and more readily than most people, excuse an ungracious manner, where it is found to be only the exterior crust of a worthy nature; and such were his great and obvious services to the country, that latterly his bitterest detractors, in order to find an audience out of their own number, were compelled to moderate their abuse with certain admissions of merit.

The cause of freedom owes a larger debt to William, than to any other statesman of the remarkable century in which he lived. He certainly had less zeal for it than the leaders of the Long Parliament, and was, as a king, not disposed to yield any of his prerogatives; but his place among the powers of Europe, as the opponent of the great despot of that day, made him the champion of liberation, and his measures were safe, practical, and devised with a far-seeing wisdom. Whig liberty was only that of one party, his extended to all alike; and nothing but the barriers of party prejudices prevented it from taking a wider practical range than it actually did. In this respect, we feel constrained to differ from Mr. Macaulay, in his estimate of William's relation to England. When the historian remarks, that it is erroneous to regard him as an English statesman, there is a sense in which he is correct; but, when he goes on to assign as the reason, that we can find no principle of either Whig or Tory party, to which his most important acts can be referred, we deny the correctness of the standard. It was precisely because his measures were neither Whig nor Tory, but above and comprehensive of the interests of both, that William deserves the name of a great statesman, and a great English statesman in the highest sense in which he could be English at all. To have attached himself to Whig or Tory, or narrowed down his plans to the views of either, or even both, would have made him less a statesman without making him more English. He served higher interests of England, by consulting not only for both parties, but also for their allies, and by making their alliance felt as a blessing. It was his broad European policy,

his masterly work of defending civil and religious liberty in general, that peculiarly qualified William to be a great English statesman; for such was the true policy of England, both then and now. It was the best for her interests both at home and abroad. It was this very far-seeing and comprehensive policy which made William the best king that ever sat upon the English throne. It was thereby that he lifted his adopted country from the humiliating subserviency to France into which she had been sunk by his predecessors. It was thereby that he promoted her prosperity by removing the obstacles to her commerce, and by extending her influence among neighbouring nations. It was thereby that he repelled a dangerous enemy from her coasts, and secured for her better government at home, by extinguishing the interference with it from abroad; and it was thereby that he was enabled to alleviate the bitterness of party spirit, and counteract its most dangerous consequences.

This liberality could not fail to be astounding to the self-seeking politicians whom he found in power. Incapable of rightly apprehending it, some attempted to take advantage of what they deemed his easy indifference. The ablest of them, however, had occasion to learn that they were in the hands of a man who knew as well how to nullify their mischief, as to serve himself of their talents. When the Houses of Parliament had both failed to carry through a bill of indemnity in favour of the party who had opposed the Revolution, he assumed the initiative himself in an Act of Grace, whereby, with the exception of a few great criminals, all political offences were covered with a general oblivion. He admitted some of the most extreme Tories to his private councils. Attempts sufficiently ingenious and mean were made to abuse his generosity. Yet, not even Russell, and Godolphin, and Marlborough, could succeed in concealing their treasonable designs from his detection. Though severely truthful himself, he knew the heart of his fellow-men too well to be easily imposed upon by others. Seeing so completely through most of the characters about him, that their perfidy was harmless, he could afford to be lenient while making them undo their own plots. In this masterly attitude, he calmly served himself of men, and to a degree trusted men,

whom he knew to be well disposed to ruin him. The treason of Marlborough alone seems to have surprised him, or given him any real anxiety. That his manner was dry, hard, and distant, was not other than might have been expected of a man consciously occupying such a position.

He seems likewise to have been annoyed by the conflict of parties, and subdivisions of parties, as well as by the jealousy manifested of the favour by which he distinguished some of his own countrymen. On this latter point not much blame could be attached to either side. It was natural that the king should repose confidence in men whom he had found faithful in many years of trial, and not wrong that he should reward them for real services. It was equally natural that his people should dislike to see Dutchmen in the highest places of their country's government. Moreover, a peculiar dislike of foreigners may very reasonably exist in the English mind. Britain has had, for many ages, a difficult conflict to maintain in opposition to powerful neighbours, of governmental and religious principles most hostilely antagonist to her own, and who have, on many occasions, attempted to interfere with and crush her progress; several of them, too, of greater military resources than she could ever command.

One stain on William's fame, which even Mr. Macaulay's vindication has failed entirely to remove, is the fearful tragedy of Glencoe. It has, indeed, been shown that the act of cruelty was not designed by the king, and that of the peculiarly aggravated treachery, whereby it was accomplished, he was totally ignorant; but it cannot be disguised that it resulted from his carelessness of all Scottish affairs. A real defect in his character as a prince, was his lack of interest in the people for their own sake, and indifference to those portions of his dominions which could not contribute to the great European alliance.

Though much engaged in war, and though skilful in his greater movements, and personally brave, he lacked several important elements of a general. He had neither an accurate estimate of the physical endurance of men, nor the quick eye to detect the capabilities of ground, nor the invention fertile of expedients in the moment of emergency. But in the higher

power of grasping at a glance all the advantages to be derived from the position of affairs, resulting from a battle, he has never been surpassed. Even after a defeat, he generally withheld from his enemy all but the barren honour of the field, and sometimes secured to himself the real profits of victory. It is true that he was called upon to command armies before he had learned the art of war, and that he never had time to repair that deficiency of his education, except in the face of an enemy, and that his opponents were the greatest generals of France, such as Luxemburg and Condé; yet it is also true that his genius never developed itself in that direction, as it did otherwise. The true greatness of William lay in his capacity of comprehending human motives, of contemplating the operation of the great elements of national strength and well-being, and the links whereby the interests of nations are connected. During his reign, England was the protector of Europe. The Stuarts had sunk their country to the condition of a mere dependency of France. William, in a few years, not only raised it from that degradation, but placed it at the head of the coalition which humbled France: and that not to the wasting of its strength and neglect of future well-being; but while repairing its internal resources and building up the means of a growing prosperity for many generations.

The character of Mary is also rescued from unjust reproach, and is beautifully drawn. Her generous resignation of her right to the English crown, in favour of a husband, whom she knew to be better able to defend its honour; her tender and admiring attachment to him, her prudent government in his frequent absences, her charity and piety, and the affecting incidents attendant upon her death, are set forth with the skill of one who sympathizes truly with the more gentle and lovely in human nature.

Around these principal figures are arrayed the heads of the different departments of the public service. Caermarthen, afterwards Duke of Leeds, sickly and feeble in body, but of indomitable perseverance in business, administers the home government of England; Hamilton and Dalrymple that of Scotland; the credit of the British Navy, impaired by the dissolute Torrington, is restored by Russell and Sir Cloudesley

Shovel, and the interests of industry and commerce are promoted by the genius of Montague, Locke, and Sir Isaac Newton, while Burnet and Tillotson head the movement in the Church. The *fidus Achates* of the hero is Bentinck, Duke of Portland, the only man to whom the Prince of Orange ever opened all his heart, and who, in every emergency, proved himself fully worthy of the trust. From boyhood had Bentinck devoted himself to the person and interests of his master. He was rewarded with the highest honours in his master's gift.

On the other side, Louvois but partially fills that place in the service of Louis, made vacant by the death of Colbert, and is crushed by the harshness of his imperious sovereign. The armies of France are commanded by Turenne and Luxemburg, and Vauban, the greatest engineer of his time, constructs her defences; while Tourville leads her navy to the very coasts of England. The Jacobites are chiefly directed by French counsels. Tyrconnel, and others of the same stamp, stand forward prominently not much to their credit: and little better can be said of Sancroft, and his fellow non-jurors.

The principal scenes of action are the English and Scottish Parliaments, Highland glens, Ireland, in her length and breadth, the British channel, and the Spanish Netherlands. The decisive military actions are the Boyne and Aghrim, La Hogue and the retaking of Namur, all victories of England, and the first and last achieved under the command of the king in person; and the culminating interest in which the work closes, is the recognition of William, as king of England, and the abandonment of the cause of James, by Louis XIV., thus finally rescuing the British constitution from the interference of a despot, and confirming it in its spontaneous career of progress.

Such are the prime elements, the chief actors, and ultimate bearing of these new volumes. They not only sustain their author's reputation, but, in the eye of literary art, are superior to their predecessors, inasmuch as in point of unity of action and symmetry of parts, they constitute a complete work of themselves.

From the manner in which we find this history distributed over the period to which it pertains, the author probably does

not intend to treat the succeeding events at so great a length. Taking up Harper's octavo edition, we observe, that from the accession of James II., where he professes to enter upon the full tide of narrative, until the landing of William at Torbay, a period of four years and nine months, occupies six hundred and sixty-four pages. The three years succeeding the landing of William, employ about a thousand pages, while five hundred and eighty recount the events of the next nearly six years. Thus it would seem that the work has passed the period of its utmost expansion, and by a full detail, at this point, may afford to treat many succeeding years with the greater brevity.

Respecting the accuracy of the facts adduced, we have not, on this side of the water, complete means of judging. Moreover, we perceive by his references, that the author draws from original sources, many of them of such a nature as must be accessible to few. But his misrepresentation of the religious character of the whole country, and especially of Scotland, is a blemish which cannot escape the notice of any one who reads history with a view to tracing the causes of human action; inasmuch as it amounts to an actual ignoring of the fundamental cause which moved to the Revolution. Can Mr. Macaulay think to impose the action of hypocrites, and fanatics, and selfish politicians upon the world, as the prime source of the national changes which he records? It may be his design to bring up the matter at some future time; he may think enough written about it previously; we can only say, that in our estimation, it is a serious defect of the present volumes, that the great honest heart of the British people, with its noble and scriptural faith, and manly independence, which was the real cause of the whole movement, should be represented only by persons, and doctrines, and vices, with which it had no congeniality.

In these remarks we have had no reference to the political tactics of the different denominations. Viewed, however, in this latter relation, the period is not without its valuable lessons. From the opening of the Long Parliament, until the death of William, the great divisions of the Church in Britain had each an opportunity of manifesting the nature of its influence upon civil government. The leaders in the first resistance to monarchical assumption were Presbyterians; but, being too moder-

ate for the times, were outstripped by the Independents under Cromwell. The Independents demonstrated the utter impotency of their system to the government of a nation, and compelled their leader, in order to avoid anarchy, into absolutism. The Restoration put the Episcopalians into power, who forthwith became the most servile adulators of monarchy, and preachers of implicit obedience. James, upon his accession, more consistently than wisely, proved the merciless tyranny of Romanism. A satisfactory government was not secured until setting aside the extremes of each denomination, the great body of all united in one common effort.

We may, at the same time, be indulged in the observation, that the great national body, in that united effort, returned radically to the position of limiting the monarchy, urged by the Presbyterians before the death of Charles I.; and that the most momentous change in British constitutional history, and the most highly promotive of public well-being, was thus the carrying out of a Presbyterian purpose; and that the greatest co-operation ever extended to national progress from the throne, was given by the hand of a Presbyterian king.

There is another important lesson taught by this period of history, for which, even if for nothing else, we should rejoice at the popularity of these volumes; a lesson which it is good for us, as well as Englishmen to know, and to keep always fresh upon our memories. It teaches how great is the difficulty of retrieving freedom when once alienated. Not only the monarch and privileged few become interested in withholding it from the people, but also, all that low and numerous class of mankind, who will court and sustain power in any hand from which they can expect reward. Inheriting a free government, we do not, perhaps, duly estimate what it would cost us to regain it, should we by any negligence or error, permit it to elude our grasp. How many unsuccessful efforts have been put forth by our neighbours! The disentangling of a nation from the toils of despotism is no easy matter; and so far from being within the capacity of cannon balls and bayonets, as we have recently been informed, that war is just the most dangerous experiment in the process, victory itself being sometimes more disastrous than defeat. In the case of the United States,



the knot was cut by conditions and men, especially one man, that cannot be expected to occur again. If we cherish the boon from its intrinsic worth, we should value it more highly from the greatness of its price. On this point these volumes must constitute a lesson of ever-during value, while mankind remains the same.

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ART. VII.—*Memoirs of John M. Mason, D. D., S. T. P., with Portions of his Correspondence.* By Jacob Van Vechten. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. 1856. Pp. 559, 8vo.

WHEN we consider that a quarter of a century has elapsed since the death of Dr. John M. Mason, we cannot but think it strange that no memoir of his life has appeared until now. During this period, a generation of clergymen, professors, and scholars, has left the world; and of these, many who occupied less of public attention while living, have been celebrated when dead. In the estimation of his admirers, Dr. Mason was inferior to no Presbyterian preacher of his time; yet now, for the first, are we enabled to bring together the details of his biography. The work has been accomplished by his son-in-law, the Rev. Dr. Van Vechten, with the aid and counsel of other surviving members of his family. While we do not conceal our persuasion that the excellent clergyman who addressed himself to this needful task, has undertaken it amidst peculiar difficulties, arising from the death of contemporaries, and the destruction of documents, we are agreeably surprised with the large amount of valuable information which he has been able to set forth. The great commanding interest of the volume before us lies, as the author obviously would have it lie, in those parts which proceeded from the pen of Dr. Mason himself. Long and much as we had heard of this remarkable man, we were not before apprized of his talent as a letter-writer. There are passages in the extensive, and certainly unequal correspondence now first gathered, which give us a far better insight into that power which held great assemblies rapt, than anything in