

THE COURT OF STAR CHAMBER.

of the mischief of frequenting stage plays, Mr. Prynne had referred to Nero, and spoke of Flavius and others conspiring to murder him for the influence of his "lewd example" upon the magistrates and people. The Chief Justice concludes from this that the author intends to instigate the people to murder the king. "If subjects have an ill prince, marry, what is the remedy? They must pray to God to forgive him, and not say they are worthy subjects that do kill him." He at last addressed the prisoner: "Mr. Prynne, I must now come to my sentence, though I am very sorry, for I have known you long, yet now I utterly forsake you." The Earl of Dorset, another of the court, was even more abusive. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that, in the exercise of their unlimited power, poor Prynne was made to feel the full measure of their indignation. He was deprived of his right to practice as a barrister; condemned to stand in the pillory at Westminster and in Cheapside; to lose his ears,—one at one of these places, and the other at the other; to pay a fine of £5,000; and to be imprisoned during life. Dorset wished to add branding in the forehead, or slitting his nose, and to have his fine £10,000 instead of £5,000.

But a man of Prynne's temperament and nerve was not to be silenced by mere corporal punishment, and some four years afterwards we find him again before this court, for publishing what they chose to call libels. It was at this time he was condemned unheard, as has been before stated, because he could not find counsel bold enough to sign his answer to the information against him. Upon his being placed at the bar to receive his sentence, Finch, the Chief Justice, looking carefully at him, remarked that he thought Mr. Prynne had no ears, but it seemed to him he had. The usher of the court was ordered to raise his hair and show his ears, when the lords were angry to find that only a part of them had been cut off, to which Prynne wittily replied: "There was never one of their honors but would be sorry to have his ears as his were." Laud was particularly bitter and severe in pronouncing sentence. The books alleged to be libellous were religious works, and fell under the Archbishop's special censure; and the sentence pronounced upon him was that he should pay a fine

of £5,000, stand in the pillory, lose the remaining part of his ears, be branded "S. L." on each cheek, and be perpetually imprisoned in what he calls a "nasty dog-hole," at Carnarvon Castle in Wales. All of which was rigidly inflicted until the revolution, which deprived these prelates of their power.

The case of Lilburne was equally cruel and outrageous with that of Prynne, though, from the temperament of the man and the almost eagerness with which he courted martyrdom, we are not apt to regard it with the sense of indignation that we feel in reading that of Prynne. Lilburne was a young man, only twenty years old, when arraigned for being concerned in printing and publishing certain controversial works upon the Litany and other like subjects alleged to be seditious. He was put to the bar with an old man eighty-five years of age, charged with the same offence. As they refused to take the oath when interrogated by the court, they were for this both sentenced to pay a fine and stand in the pillory; and he, being a young man, to be whipped through the streets from the Fleet prison unto the pillory, wherever the court should erect that. He was kept in prison from February to April, when he was placed in a cart, stripped, and whipped with a treble-corded whip, all the way from the Fleet to Westminster, where the pillory was placed, at least five hundred strokes in all. The tipstaff of the Star Chamber was then sent to know if he would acknowledge his fault. This he refused to do, although by so doing he would have saved standing in the pillory. He was accordingly placed in this, and remained there two hours, with head uncovered, in a hot sun, his back dreadfully lacerated by the blows he had received; and he improved the occasion by addressing the people around him, and scattering pamphlets amongst them. After continuing this at a great length, he says: "There came a fat lawyer,—I do not know his name,—and commanded me to hold my peace and leave my preaching." This, of course, he refused to do, and went on with his discourse to the people. After continuing this a while, the warden of the Fleet came with the same fat lawyer, and commanded him to hold his peace. But he refusing again, they gagged him, and kept him an hour and a