

*Unparliamentary Junto* (6. 30), which was published on Jan. 19, would make the date of composition later still, unless the sneer at Prynne was inserted when Milton was revising the first sheets of his manuscript. The pamphlet then must have been written between Jan. 8 and Jan. 27, the date on which sentence was pronounced against the king. If it was written before the trial of Charles, the period of composition would be narrowed to an interval of twelve days, between Jan. 8 and Jan. 20. The former time-limit seems to be the more probable, but even nineteen days was a wonderfully short space of time for the production of such a piece of work.

## II. HISTORICAL SITUATION.

The historical situation, which forms the background to this hurriedly written book, and with which it deals in the boldest manner, was intensely dramatic. From the serene pages of Philips, with his talk of the prospect of Lincolns-Inn Fields from the High Holborn retreat, and his references to the private life of Milton while he was 'prosecuting his curious search into knowledge,' we gain only a partial view of the great writer's interests. It is true that he still kept up his studies, and this is one of the strange and well-nigh unaccountable things about so many of the scholars, statesmen, and soldiers of that age of commotion and upheaval, that they could turn so easily from the turmoil of events to 'the still air and quiet of delightful studies,' and prosecute all kinds of laborious, and what seem to us trivial researches. Considerable material in this pamphlet reveals the 'private' scholar, the curious student of ancient laws