

# HALIFAX PEARL,

A VOLUME DEVOTED TO POLITE LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Published every Friday evening, at Fifteen Shillings per Annum, in advance.

VOLUME TWO.

FRIDAY EVENING, JULY 6, 1859.

NUMBER TWENTY SEVEN.

## HISTORICAL SCENE.

We quote below a description of Charles's entry into the commons' hall to claim thence Hollis, Hazlerig, Pym, Strode, and Hampden. He had already demanded them in the morning of the same day; but the commons avoided the question by an adjournment. The following description of his subsequent attempt we give in the author's words—somewhat verbose and laboured, it is true, yet bringing to the mind's eye very forcibly a scene upon which as a pivot turned the liberties of England:—

“The interval passed speedily away, consumed in wise and seemly preparation. Notice was despatched to the lord mayor and corporation of the threatened danger; the citizens were all admonished to stand upon their guard; and members were sent down to the Temple and the Inns of Court to warn the students that the house was well aware how they had been already tampered with; and to command they should not come, on any plea, to Westminster; and ere the time appointed, the house was crowded. Edgar was in his place among the first; and as he saw the five obnoxious members calmly resume their seats, as though no peril threatened them, a mingled sentiment of admiration and regret thrilled to his heart at the idea that, if indeed the king, with his wild, dissolute attendants, should forcibly attempt to seize them, they surely would resist, and but too probably be slaughtered on the very spot which they had made to ring so often with their proud, patriotic eloquence. As he thus thought, a new impression shot with the speed of light into his mind—“If they be absent—if they be absent when he come—the fearful consequences may be perchance averted, which otherwise must, beyond doubt, result from letting loose a band of reckless soldiery to rush in, sword in hand, on gentlemen armed likewise, and almost unanimous to guard their liberties with life.” And on the instant he arose, and in a few words, powerful and manly, moved that the house should grant permission to those members to withdraw themselves, lest tumult, and perhaps even worse than tumult, fall of it. “I second it,” cried Cromwell, starting to his feet—“I second the most honourable member's motion. Let them withdraw them straightway to the city until this tyranny be overpast.” Without a single voice or vote dissentient, the question then was carried; and the house gave permission that they might retire; and, at solicitation from their friends, they instantly departed. Scarcely had the hurry and confusion consequent on their withdrawal ceased, ere a dull, trampling noise was heard without, as of a powerful band of men; a word to halt was given, and for a while the sound was hushed, the members sitting stern and silent in their places, disdaining to show any sign either of wrath or terror. Again the sounds were heard ascending the great staircase; and now the clink of steel, as the broad blades of partisan or halberd clashed together—and now a shout, ‘Fall on! fall on!’ mixed with the shuffling tramp of feet, the jingling of scabbards, and all the bustle that accompanies a sudden and disordered march. Nearer and nearer came the tumult—the lobby was already filled, to judge from the increasing clatter, with armed intruders; and now the din of grounded arms rang audibly upon the ears of the undaunted counsellors. Then for the first time was a show of passion manifested among the younger gentlemen—a dozen, at the least, impetuously started to their feet, and not a few grasped, with an energy that proved how fearlessly they would have used them, the hilts of the long rapiers which all of gentle birth at that time carried. A single word, however, from the speaker of the house—a single cry of order, sufficed to bring them peacefully into their places. But there they sat, with eyes that actually lightened with strong indignation, and with that fiery aspect of the gladiator, which marked how rapturously they would have plunged into the fiercest conflict. At this instant was the door thrown open, and a messenger sent in, who reverentially enough informed the house that the king was at the door, and that the speaker was commanded to sit still, with the mace lying on the board before him. Still not one word was spoken—not a whisper—not a breath, nor murmur, through that spacious hall!—and every man sat fast, with head unmoved, and eyes fixed sternly straight before him; as if they did not so much as to cast a glance, still less a thought, toward the violator of their rights. Had there been aught of riot or confusion—had there been aught of armed and passionate resistance—nay, had there been any fear, or doubt, or wavering, it then had been an easier task for the misguided king to carry out his frantic and destructive purpose. But hard it is, and most revolting to all human feelings, to outrage and assault where there is neither terror nor resistance. It was perhaps a minute after the messenger

retired, before aught new disturbed the silence that prevailed—unbroken beneath the vaulted roof—a minute fraught with the thronged sensations of unnumbered years—a minute that seemed longer than a life to every patriot seated there, as gravely steadfast as those senators of early Rome, who waited in their robes of dignity and on their curule chairs, the moment when the Gallic horde should pour out on their white, unshrinking heads the cups of massacre and vengeance. Then came a quick, irregular tread; that readily betokened, by its uncertain time, the irresolution and anxiety that were at work within the breast of him who was approaching. “Enter not, any of ye, on your lives!” was uttered in the harsh voice of the king, before his person came in view—an order understood by all who heard, as it was doubtless meant by him who uttered it, to be words, empty words, and spoken for effect. Then leaning on the shoulder of the palsgrave, Charles Stuart advanced! Those who stood nearest to his person might have seen a momentary pause—a brief, involuntary hesitation—a reluctance hardly, perhaps, acknowledged to himself, to cross what was to be the Rubicon of all his future fortunes; but so short was the pause, so small the effort it required to conquer that reluctance, that it would seem indeed as if—according to the classic proverb—destined already to destruction, he were deserted by his sanity of intellect. Perhaps he had expected fear—abject and tame submission—had supposed that he should stride in triumph, unopposed, and sued to on the bended knee, through that magnificent assemblage! Perhaps he had expected anger, indignation, and defiance! But now, as he looked up those lines of crowded benches, and met no glance of recognition—encountered no full front either of wrath or scorn—but caught alone, row behind row, those stern and masculine profiles, composed, severe, and passionless—profiles, averted less in resentment than in proud, contemptuous sorrow—his wayward spirit for a moment's space recoiled, and he half-wished the perilous step undertaken. It was but for the twinkling of an eye, however, that his rash mood of obstinacy failed him; for without a quiver of his nerves, a change of his dark features, he strode across the threshold, about a pace before his foreign kinsman. The Earl of Roxborough, a tall and powerful man, armed, somewhat more than commonly, with a long military sword and heavy poniard at his belt, had followed close upon his master's footsteps, until he also stood upon the threshold; he crossed it not, however, but stood there, leaning with his whole weight against the door, which opened outwardly, so that it would have been impossible for any from within the house to close it—his right hand resting, as if carelessly, upon the pommel of his war-sword, and his left twirling, with a gesture of unbridled insolence, his long mustaches—while many a fierce, licentious countenance might be seen glaring from behind him on the conservators of their country's freedom with a wild and wolfish aspect of malignant hatred. The king himself, attired as usual in a plain garb of sable velvet, wearing no weapon but an ordinary walking sword, and carrying in his right hand, together with his staff, the dark-plumed beaver which he had doffed on entering, stalked coolly up the house—the palsgrave following slowly, and, as it seemed, with a half-timid and reluctant step. Still all was silence—silence so profound that, save the heavy footsteps of the monarch, not a sound could be perceived—unless it were when from without some weapon-clang was heard, or some rude threat or grisly imprecation was muttered in the ante-chamber by the desperate attendants of a Lunsford or a Digby. The face of Charles, grave and even sorrowful by nature, was something paler than its wont; but with that sort of paleness which conveys no thought of cowardice or trembling, but of resolve immovable and icy. His mouth was firmly closed, but not compressed, nor showing aught of effort. His eye calm, searching, cold—but keen and hard as iron. His nostril only of his features gave token of emotion, or of any feeling hotter than determination; for it was dilated, wide, and slightly quivering! Yet was his hand steady as the columns which upheld the roof above him, and his stride, now that he stood among his lieges—however it had been irregular and hasty ere he entered—was measured, long and equal.

“As he advanced along the floor, he turned his head from side to side, perusing, with deliberate and steady glance, the lineaments of every member whom he passed; and if when at a distance not one eye had sought him, so when he now stood close beside them, not one eye avoided him. Each as Charles came into his line of direct vision, met his hard gaze with an unblenching and unloving brow; for not one man—even of those the most devoted to his will, of those who would have served him at that moment, and who afterwards did serve him

with their whole hearts and lives—but was disgusted, angered, full of deep sorrow, almost of despair. Little there was, however, of the stronger and more stormy passions painted upon the brows of those who sat thus fearlessly, braving the temper of a king whose wrath was no less lasting and vindictive than it was hot and sudden. The expression that prevailed most largely was of mingled aspect—half pity, half defiance. But when the tyrant—for that action, if that only, justified the title—approached the seat of Cromwell—perhaps at that day scarcely known by name to the proud sovereign—and his glance fell upon those grim, ungainly features—then Ardenne witnessed—for his eye was still attracted, why he knew not, with a strange sense of fascination toward the puritan—then Ardenne witnessed that which in after times he often called to mind, and never without awe and wonder—a dark conflict—for such it might indeed be termed—a conflict of eye, countenance, and bearing, between those men so eminently thrown together, and blended in their spheres of good or evil action. The glance of Charles, when first it fell upon the coarse and most unpleasing lineaments of Oliver, was instantly averted; but averted merely as men ever turn the eye away from objects naturally hateful or unseemly. At that point of time the face of Cromwell was as tranquil, as immovable as that of his great future rival; but the tranquillity was no less different than is the stillness of a hushed volcano and the peaceful calm of heaven. The swollen and corded veins upon the temple—the eyebrows lowered and contorted—the balls gleaming beneath them with a fixed and baleful light—the nostril rigidly distended, and the lips pressed so tightly, that they alone of his whole aspect were of a livid whiteness! Ere Edgar had the time to think had there been any matter yet for thought, the eye of Charles stole back, half-timidly as it appeared, toward that tiger-like and glaring face. Then, as it met the sinister and ominous stare of fierce defiance, it brightened also—vivid, and keen, and with a falcon-like and noble splendour. For some short space they gazed—those two undisciplined and haughty spirits—into each other's very souls—mutually, as it seemed, conscious of a glance of irremediable and desperate hostility. The king's look quiet, although high and angry, and most unutterably proud;—Cromwell's, sarcastic, bitter, furious, and determined—and withal so savagely triumphant, so mirthful in its dire malignity, that Ardenne thought he never had beheld a countenance so fiendishly expressive! And Charles Stuart's aspect—after a fixed encounter of ten seconds' space—Charles Stuart's haughty aspect quailed beneath it; and, as he passed along—for the whole occurred in less time than were needful to recite it—he gazed no more around him, but went directly onward, looking—and that, too, gloomily—upon the ground, toward the speaker's chair. But the stern democrat, as conscious that his genius had prevailed, cast his eyes round him with an air of loftier and more sublimated feeling than Edgar had as yet observed him wear. It was a trifle at the period when it passed, and none but he have noticed or recorded it; but after times and after deeds stamped it, no more to be erased, upon the tablets of his inmost soul. Meanwhile the king had reached the chair; and Lenthall, the bold speaker, who had hitherto sat still, as proud and far more placid than his visiter, arose, and stepped out stately and cold to meet him. Then the king mounted to his place, and stood upon the step, but spake not, nor sat down; and there he stood, gloomily gazing on the house, with a dark look of sullen anger, for many minutes—and after he had looked a great while—“Gentlemen,” he said, in a high voice, clearly audible, though neither musical nor pleasing, to the most distant corner—“Gentlemen of the commons, I am sorry for this my cause of coming to you. Yesterday I did send a sergeant to demand some who, by my order, were accused of treason. Instead of prompt obedience, I received—a message!” and he uttered the last word with the most concentrated scorn and insolence—“I must, then, here declare to you, that though no king that ever was in England could be more careful of your privileges than I have been—and shall be—yet; I can tell you, treason hath no privilege!—and therefore am I come to tell you that I must have these men, and will, wherever I may find them!” And, as he spake, he looked around the hall with a deliberate air, scanning the faces of all present, if he might find his men; then, raising the voice higher yet, he called aloud, till the roof rang again—“Ho! I say, Master Hollis!—Master Pym!” No answer was returned, nor any sound, save an increased and angry tumult in the lobby, with a brandishing of partisans and a producing of concealed but ready pistols, so that some members thought to see the soldiers instantly rush into the chamber. After a little pause, finding he got no answer, he turned to the speaker—