frey of Bulloign, which was turned into English by Mr Fair­fax.” Waller’s second poem was written on the occasion “ Of his Majesty receiving the Duke of Buckingham’s Death.” The duke was assassinated by Felton in 1628, and “ the steadiness,” as Johnson observes, “ with which the king received the news in the chapel deserved indeed to be rescued from oblivion.” There are few persons, how­ever, who have not had frequent occasion to admire the philosophic composure with which some of their friends can listen to the calamities of others. There is sufficient internal evidence to demonstrate that this poem has no better pretensions than its predecessor to be considered a hasty effusion of fancy. He was indeed incapable of pro­ducing any thing on the spur of the occasion. The duke of Buckinghamshire told Fenton, that he spent the greater part of a summer in composing and correcting ten lines to be written in a copy of Tasso belonging to the duchess of York.

Waller now pursued an earthly mistress, who suffered herself to be more speedily overtaken than the Muse. When still very young, he obtained the hand of Miss Banks, a rich city heiress, in opposition to the addresses of Mr Crofts, whose suit was backed by the influence of the court. By this lady he had two children, a son, who died in in­fancy, and a daughter, who afterwards became the wife of one Mr Dormer of Oxfordshire. When Waller was about twenty-five years of age, his wife died in giving birth to a child, whether the one last mentioned does not appear. A rich young widower is more easily reconciled to the loss which he has sustained, than one who is left in solitary in­digence to pine away the evening of his days. Looking about for another wife, or perhaps only for a poetical mis­tress, Waller fixed his eyes on the Lady Dorothea Sidney, the eldest daughter of the earl of Leicester. He began to celebrate this lady in verse under the absurd name of Sacharissa ; but his tuneful gallantry is said to have been rewarded with contempt, for which he took a severe though late revenge. Meeting accidentally with Waller after she had become a wrinkled widow, she asked him, with senseless and indelicate jocularity, when he proposed to write some more verses to her ? “ When you are as young, madam,” he answered, “and as handsome as you were.” After this disappointment, Apollo laid the following injunc­tion on the slighted bard :

On yon aged tree

Hang up thy lute, and hie thee to the sea.

Fenton supposes it possible that he may have diverted his chagrin by accompanying the earl of Warwick to the Ber­mudas ; and the knowledge of whale-fishing as practised by the inhabitants of that archipelago, displayed in his Battle of the Summer Islands, lends some strength to this conjec­ture. This poem, whether a record of experience, or an effort of imagination, is so unhappy both in the design and execution, that it is difficult to determine whether the poet is in jest or earnest. From 1629 to 1640 no parliament was assembled, and Waller spent a great part of that interval in prosecuting his studies, which were directed by Mr Morley, afterwards bishop of Winchester. He continued to produce various pieces ; but to ascertain the precise order in which they were written, is of as little interest or utility as to be informed which was the third, fourth, or fifth bullet that was cast in some particular mould. In other poets it is curious to watch the progress of excellence ; but Waller’s powers arrived at sudden maturity, and remained unimpaired to the last ; his first poetical essays exhibit none of the tasteless crudities of youth, and it is not easy to believe that his latest efforts were the children of decrepitude.

Having forgotten the cruelty of Sacharissa, he married a lady of such inferior celebrity that it is not known whether her name was Bresse or Breaux. It is however certain that she made him the father of thirteen children, five sons and eight daughters. In the parliament of 1640 he stood up in his place and opposed the king’s demand of a supply. In his speech, which still remains, Johnson remarks that he quotes Hooker in one passage, and copies him in another, without acknowledgment ; a proceeding resembling that of one who should borrow a sum of money from a man, and afterwards pick his pocket. Notwithstanding the vehe­mence of this harangue, the king is said to have sent to him to second his demand of some subsidies for the payment of the troops. Waller was not sufficiently flattered by this dis­tinction to decline undertaking the prosecution of Sir Fran­cis Crawley, one of the twelve judges who had declared that ship-money might be legally and equitably exacted from the subject. This was an employment worthy the nephew of Hampden, and he executed his task with great dignity and vigour. The most brilliant passage of a very eloquent speech, which he delivered upon that occasion, is the one in which he compares the atrocious villany of enslaving and beggaring the nation, under pretence of supplying the navy, to the barbarity of seething a kid in his mother’s milk ; an act of inhumanity which the Mosaic law forbids, and which is understood to mean the employing for the destruc­tion of any creature what was intended for its preservation. Crawley escaped unpunished ; but Waller’s speech was so much admired that twenty thousand copies were sold in one day. Though a friend of reform, both civil and ecclesias­tical, Waller was no enemy either to the church or the king; for he spoke in favour of episcopacy, and when Charles took up arms against his subjects, he sent him a thousand broad pieces. But in times like those, the loyalty or patriotism of timid contemplation could be of small service either to a tyrant or a mob ; and it was of little consequence whether a faltering voice muttered prerogative or privilege.

We have seen Waller perform the part of a public accuser ; he has now to appear in the character of an abject criminal. In an evil hour he turned plotter against the parliament. Being one of the commissioners appointed to treat with Charles at Oxford after the battle of Edgehill, the king said some kind things to him, which are supposed to have melted his heart, and given rise to the abortive scheme called Waller’s Plot ; or perhaps his loyalty, wa­vering as it was, was transmitted to him by his mother, who, although the sister of Hampden, was so zealous a royalist, that her kinsman Cromwell, half jesting and half serious, made her a prisoner to her own daughter in her own house. This plot of Waller’s, which, as Hume says, might with more propriety be called a project, was a secret association of persons disgusted with the violence of the commons, to com­municate with those of their own principles, who, when their strength was united, might, as they hoped, be enabled to make a stand against the progress of treason, by petition­ing for peace, and refusing to contribute to the support of the parliamentary forces. The probability of success in this undertaking Waller was in the habit of discussing with his brother-in-law Tomkyns, who was clerk of the queen’s council. Lord Conway, who had served in the army, was one of their confederates, and, as Clarendon supposes, might possibly have harboured some ulterior design of an appeal to the sword ; but, as far as Waller was concerned, the scheme was of a nature purely civil, and such as might have been attempted with perfect safety at any other period. Infant anarchy however is still more jealous and malignant than superannuated despotism. About the same time that Waller’s plans were discovered, there came to light an enter­prise of a more martial aspect, projected by Sir Nicholas Crispe, who had obtained from the king a commission of array, transmitted to London by Lady Aubigney. Of these two unconnected schemes it was not difficult to make one direful confederacy.

Of the discovery of Waller’s plot two distinct accounts are given. Clarendon relates that a conference between Waller and Tomkyns was overheard by a servant of the