

more and more intense, and when Buckingham, at the King's request, offered to give an explanation of his conduct, he was threatened with impeachment. Charles felt that to abandon Buckingham and accept the ministers appointed by the Commons, was equivalent to a surrender of the royal prerogative altogether, and rather than submit to this degradation, he dissolved Parliament.

NOTE.—Character of the House of Commons. The general character of the House of Commons was at this time, far different from that which had existed under the Tudors. The members consisted for the most part of wealthy and powerful gentry, and clever lawyers, whose knowledge of constitutional precedent made them formidable opponents of the encroachments of the Crown. The leaders were men of unusual capacity, possessing broadly extended political views, animated by a warm regard for the liberty of the subject, and resolved at any cost to reduce the royal prerogative to more reasonable bounds. They believed in "*the supremacy of Parliament*," and adhered strongly to the principle "*that grievances and supplies go hand in hand*," and so would grant no vote of money, unless it was accompanied by some concession from the King in favour of civil liberty. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that at this early stage of the struggle the Commons aimed at supreme power. They saw the existence of what seemed certain abuses in the government, and resolutely set their minds on removing them.

4. **The Spanish War and expedition to Cadiz, 1625.** Charles thought that a successful war with Spain, and a revival of the naval glories of Elizabeth's reign, would convince the nation that he was right in his foreign policy and that the Commons were wrong. Accordingly he fitted out a fleet of ninety ships, with 10,000 men on board, and gave the command to **Sir Edward Cecil** (now **Lord Wimbledon**), with instructions to take **Cadiz**, and intercept the treasure fleet, which every year brought the rich produce of the gold and silver mines of America to Spain. The expedition was badly planned, and ended most disastrously. The greater part of the fleet was made up of merchant vessels, whose crews had been pressed into the King's service, while the soldiers had been cruelly torn from their homes and had no heart in the matter. A small fort, which defended the harbour of the town, was taken, but the whole army with the exception of a few officers got helplessly drunk with a store of wine, which they discovered. Without even venturing to attack the city, Wimbledon re-embarked his troops, and put to sea in