

gland. The following year Sir William Alexander obtained from James a charter for the colonization of the peninsula of Nova Scotia; but the French having already taken possession of that country, its occupation by the English had to be postponed to a later period.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HOUSE OF STUART.—CHARLES I.
1625 to 1649 A.D.

1. Charles I. was in his twenty-fifth year when he ascended the throne. His first care was to carry out his marriage-contract with the French Princess, Henrietta Maria. Buckingham, whose influence over Charles was even greater than that which he had exercised over the preceding King, was despatched to Paris to bring over the royal bride. The next matter that engaged the attention of Charles was the financial state of the kingdom. The treasury was exhausted, and the heavy expenses of a war with Spain were impending.

Accession of Charles I.

2. Charles was an accomplished Prince, and his person and manners were in striking contrast to those of his father. His frame was well-proportioned, his bearing dignified, his features handsome and expressive. He possessed highly-cultivated tastes, being fond of music, painting, and architecture. His mind was of a deeply religious cast, and in private life he was a model of all the domestic virtues. The weakness which historians profess to find in his character is a fatal tendency towards insincerity, a disposition to make promises when not really expecting to fulfil them. Both in political and in religious matters Charles inherited his father's views. He was a firm believer in the doctrine that the prerogatives of Kings should not be questioned by their subjects. This led him, from the very beginning of his reign, to make assertions of arbitrary power that brought him into constant conflict with Parliament. The favorite phrase to express his view of the duty of the subject to the King was "passive obedience." Like his father, Charles was a zealous upholder of the Episcopal form of Church government.

Character of Charles I.

3. The first Parliament of this reign met in June 1625. The House of Commons contained a number of singularly able men, whose names will become familiar to the student of this part of English history. We may mention Coke, Eliot, Pym, Selden, and Wentworth. These were all determined opponents of arbitrary power, though Wentworth subsequently united his fortunes with those of the King. This, as well as succeeding

Charles's first Parliament.