

Macaulay writes, in his "Essay on Atterbury," that Pope "was a frequent guest at the Episcopal Palace, among the elms of Bromley, without suspecting that his host was carrying on a reasonable correspondence with the exiled house of Stuart." Bishop Atterbury, as readers of English history are aware, was one of the leading plotters for a revolution in favour of the Pretender, the other "heads" being the Earls of Arran and Orrery, and Lords Lansdowne, North, and Gower. "These men of mark," writes Macfarlane, "were in communication with Queen Anne's Tory prime minister, Lord Oxford, and numerous others who were too timid to take decisive steps at first, but ready to join might and main when the opportunity should seem free from danger. But of the bold—though there were veteran soldiers like Lord North—not one was so bold as Bishop Atterbury, who, in addition to hardihood and daring, had ability and genius of a rare order, and a truly classical mind. Atterbury's great object was to obtain a foreign force under the exiled Duke of Ormond, and he fondly fancied that if that nobleman could land with only 5,000 men, the enthusiasm of the Jacobites and the dissatisfaction of the people would do the rest. As long as England was engaged in war the bishop and his brother councillors hoped that Spain or some other country might fit out such an expedition, and, favoured by circumstances, effect an invasion; but now that the kingdom was at peace with all the world, such an armament was scarcely to be expected. But, instead of being deterred, these resolute men resolved to proceed with that less kind of assistance that might be procured clandestinely from abroad, and they trusted sufficiently in the insincerity of treaties to believe that not only Spain, but also France, would gladly contribute to light a fire in Britain by sending, or *permitting* to be sent, over some of their disbanded troops, money, and arms. While the Duke of Ormond intrigued to this end at Madrid, General Dillon, an Irish Catholic, and an exile from his country ever since the victories of William III., laboured in the same vocation at Paris. Atterbury and his friends in England engaged on their side to get possession of the Tower, the Bank, the Exchequer, and other places where public money was deposited, and to proclaim King James III. simultaneously in different parts of the country. But in the month of May (1722) the English Government was informed by the Regent of France, upon condition that no one should die for it, that there was a formidable design against the person and government of King George. This opened wide the eyes of Walpole,

which probably had not been altogether closed before; and the minister ascertained that the Pretender had actually left Rome, and that the Duke of Ormond was on his way from Madrid to the Biscayan coast. . . . As Walpole had now the names of the chief conspirators and proofs of their guilt, warrants were issued for the apprehension of some of them. . . . There seems to have been an intention or a desire to overlook the plotting bishop altogether, but proofs accumulated upon proofs, and it was adjudged indispensable to commit him. The warrant, however, was not executed until the 24th of August, when Atterbury was arrested at his deanery [palace] at Bromley, in Kent, and sent a prisoner to the Tower."

Mr. Thorne, in his "Environs of London," writes:—"Here it was that the forged Deed of Association for the restoration of James II., which, it was pretended, was drawn up by Bishop Sprat, and signed by Marlborough, Sancroft, and other prominent malcontents, was deposited in a flower-pot, in order to be found by the Government officers. Sprat was certainly innocent of Jacobite conspiracies, if he was not free from Jacobite tendencies; but his successor, Atterbury, undoubtedly did make Bromley Palace the theatre of plots for the restoration of the exiled family. Pope and Swift often visited Atterbury here. Horace Walpole made a journey to the palace in 1795, 'for the sake of the chimney in which stood the flower-pot in which was put the counterfeit plot against Bishop Sprat,' the flower-pot itself having been secured as a precious relic by George Selwyn for his house at Matson, in Gloucestershire. Walpole admired the bishop's grounds and fish-ponds, but pronounced the palace 'a paltry parsonage.'"

The following is the true version of the story. An attempt had been made to implicate Bishop Sprat and others in a conspiracy against the Prince of Orange. For this purpose his name was forged and appended to a document purporting to describe the plot, which document, it appears, was secreted in Bromley Palace. This, being found, led to the arrest of the bishop, who thus describes the circumstance:—"As I was walking in the orchard at Bromley, meditating on something I intended to preach the next day, I saw a coach and four horses stop at the outer gate, out of which two persons alighted; I immediately went towards them, believing they were some of my friends. By the time I had got to the gate they were entered into the hall; but seeing me hastening towards them, they turned and met me, about the middle of the court. The chief of them perceiving me look wistly