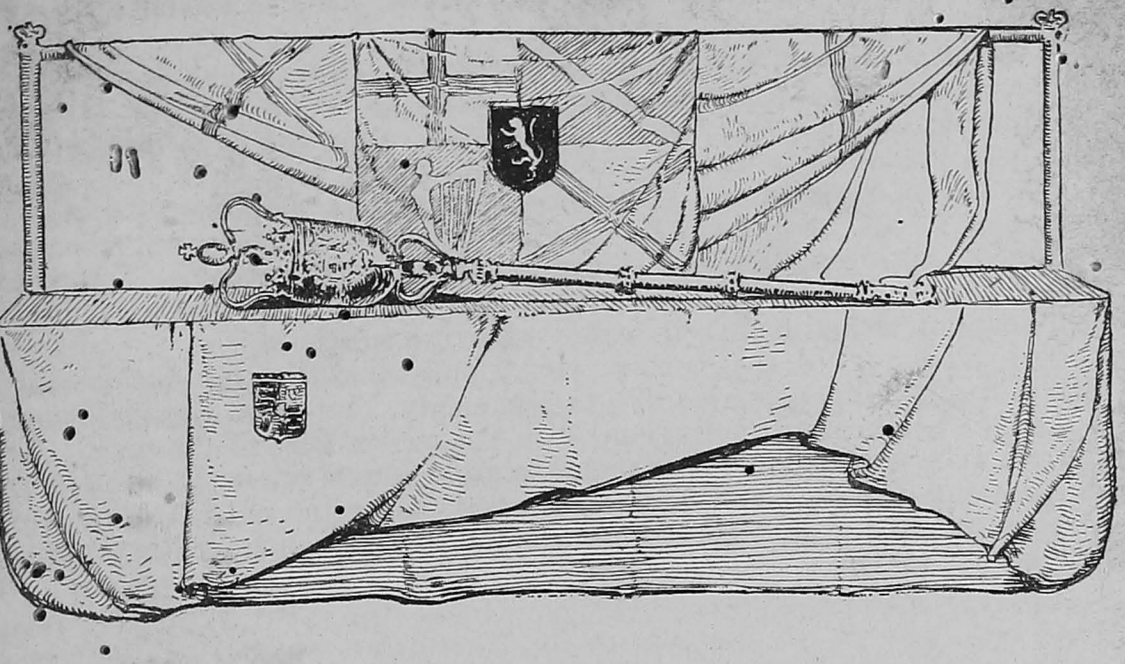

CHAPTER IV

CROMWELL AGAINST PARLIAMENT

[1651–1653 A.D.]

> In these kingdoms the commonwealth now held supreme authority. It had conquered everywhere the two hostile forces just as they were eager for reconciliation, the royal prerogative and the parliamentary or religious faction. In England the parliamentary party with its Presbyterian creed had been ruined from the moment it had tried to patch up a peace with Charles I. Scotland likewise was defeated in the moment of its arrival at a satisfactory understanding with Charles II. In Ireland Cromwell crushed both the Protestant and the Catholic parties when they were just about reconciled. In the history of Great Britain the epoch of the commonwealth is one of the great links in the general historical progress. By striking decisive blows for the commonwealth in all three countries, Cromwell wins an imperishable importance in Great Britain whatever opinion may be held of his personal achievements or his character. — VON RANKE. [b]

THE parliament and people of England felt that Cromwell had saved the commonwealth. He had done more than maintain a form of government. He had stopped the triumphant return to unlimited power of a prince who, once seated at Whitehall by military superiority, would have swept away every vestige of the liberty and security that had been won since 1640. The greater part of Europe was fast passing into complete despotism; and the state vessel of England would have been borne along helplessly into that shoreless sea. The enemies of Cromwell — the enthusiastic royalists and the theoretic republicans — saw, with dread and hatred, that by the natural course of events, the victorious general would become the virtual head of the commonwealth. He probably could not suppress the same conviction in his own breast. Ludlow [c] thus writes of Cromwell's return to London after the battle of Worcester: "The general, after this action, which he called the

crowning victory, took upon him a more stately behaviour, and chose new friends; neither must it be omitted, that instead of acknowledging the services of those who came from all parts to assist against the common enemy, though he knew they had deserved as much honour as himself and the standing army, he frowned upon them, and the very next day after the fight dismissed and sent them home, well knowing that a useful and experienced militia was more likely to obstruct than to second him in his ambitious designs.

"In a word, so much was he elevated with that success, that Mr. Hugh Peters, as he since told me, took so much notice of it, as to say in confidence to a friend upon the road in his return from Worcester, that Cromwell would make himself king." Again and again Ludlow dwells upon the expression used by Cromwell in his letter to the parliament, as if it were a foreshadowing of his own "crowning." Later writers accept it in the same sense. Cromwell's real phrase is this: "The dimensions of this mercy are above my thoughts: it is, for aught I know, a crowning mercy." To one who was as familiar with Scripture phraseology as Ludlow was, it seems extraordinary that he should attach any more recondite sense to this epithet than that of a perfecting mercy or victory. "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness" is the same as "Thou completest the year with thy goodness."[d]

The parliament seemed at a loss to express its gratitude to the man to whose splendid services the commonwealth owed its preservation. At Aylesbury, Cromwell was met by a deputation of the two commissioners of the great seal, the lord chief justice, and Sir Gilbert Pickering; to each of whom, in token of his satisfaction, he made a present of a horse and of two Scotsmen selected from his prisoners. At Acton he was received by the speaker and the lord president, attended by members of parliament and of the council, and by the lord mayor with the aldermen and sheriffs; and heard from the recorder, in an address of congratulation, that he was destined "to bind kings in chains, and their nobles in fetters of iron." He entered the capital (Oct. 12) in the state carriage, was greeted with the acclamations of the people as the procession passed through the city, and repaired to the palace of Hampton Court, where apartments had been fitted up for him and his family at the public expense. In parliament it was proposed that the 3rd of September should be kept a holiday forever in memory of his victory; a day was appointed for a general thanksgiving; and in addition to a former grant of lands to the amount of two thousand five hundred pounds per annum, other lands of the value of four thousand pounds were settled on him in proof of the national gratitude. Cromwell received these honours with an air of profound humility. He was aware of the necessity of covering the workings of ambition within his breast with the veil of exterior self-abasement; and therefore professed to take no merit to himself, and to see nothing in what he had done, but the hand of the Almighty fighting in behalf of his faithful servants.[1]

In the preceding chapter we have followed the fortunes of Charles Stuart from his landing in Scotland to his defeat at Worcester and his escape to the continent. We may now look back and direct our attention to some of the more important events which occurred during the same period, in England and Ireland. The reader is aware that the form of government established in England was an oligarchy. A few individuals, under the cover of a nominal

[1] "Next day, 18th, the common prisoners were brought through Westminster to Tuthill fields — a sadder spectacle was never seen except the miserable place of their defeat — and there sold to several merchants, and sent to the Barbadoes," says Heath.[e] Fifteen hundred were granted as slaves to the Guinea merchants, and transported to the Gold Coast in Africa.

CROMWELL AND HIS FAMILY LISTENING TO MILTON PLAYING THE ORGAN AT HAMPTON COURT

(From the painting by Charles Lucy, in the Glasgow Corporation Galleries)

[1652 A.D.]

parliament, ruled the kingdom with the power of the sword. Could the sense of the nation have been collected, there cannot be a doubt that the old royalists of the cavalier, and the new royalists of the Presbyterian party, would have formed a decided majority; but they were awed into silence and submission by the presence of a standing army of forty-five thousand men; and the maxim that power gives right was held out as a sufficient reason why they should swear fidelity to the commonwealth. This numerous army, the real source of their security, proved, however, a cause of constant solicitude to the leaders.

The pay of the officers and men was always in arrear; the debentures which they received could be seldom exchanged for money without a loss of fifty, sixty, or seventy per cent.; and the plea of necessity was accepted as an excuse for the illegal claim of free quarters which they frequently exercised. To supply their wants, recourse was therefore had to additional taxation, with occasional grants from the excise, and large sales of forfeited property; and, to appease the discontent of the people, promises were repeatedly made, that a considerable portion of the armed force should be disbanded, and the practice of free quarter be abolished. But of these promises, the first proved a mere delusion; for, though some partial reductions were made, on the whole the amount of the army continued to increase; the second was fulfilled; but in return, the burthen of taxation was augmented; for the monthly assessment on the counties gradually swelled from sixty to ninety, to one hundred and twenty, and in conclusion, to one hundred and sixty thousand pounds.

Another subject of disquietude sprung out of those principles of liberty which, even after the suppression of the late mutiny, were secretly cherished and occasionally avowed by the soldiery. Lilburne was revered as an apostle and a martyr; they read with avidity the publications which repeatedly issued from his cell; and they condemned as persecutors and tyrants the men who had immured him and his companions in the Tower. An act was passed making it treason to assert that the government was tyrannical, usurped, or unlawful. No enactments, however, could check the hostility of Lilburne. He published more offensive tracts, and distributed them among the soldiery. A new mutiny broke out at Oxford; its speedy suppression emboldened the council; and Keble, with forty other commissioners, was appointed to try him for his last offence on the recent statute of treasons. He electrified the audience by frequent appeals to Magna Charta and the liberties of Englishmen, and stoutly maintained the doctrine that the jury had a right to judge of the law as well as of the fact. It was in vain that the court pronounced this opinion "the most damnable heresy ever broached in the land," and that the government employed all its influence to win or intimidate the jurors; after a trial of three days, Lilburne obtained a verdict of acquittal.

Before the end of the next year he drew upon himself the vengeance of the men in power, by the distribution of a pamphlet which charged Sir Arthur Haslerig and the commissioners at Haberdashers' Hall with injustice and tyranny. This by the house was voted a breach of privilege, and the offender was condemned (Jan. 16, 1652) in a fine of seven thousand pounds with banishment for life. Probably the court of Star Chamber never pronounced a judgment in which the punishment was more disproportionate to the offence. Lilburne submitted; but his residence on the continent was short: the reader will soon meet with him again in England.

The levellers had boldly avowed their object, the royalists worked in the dark and by stealth; yet the council by its vigilance and promptitude proved

a match for the open hostility of the one and the secret machinations of the other. A doubt may, indeed, be raised of the policy of the Engagement, a promise of fidelity to the commonwealth without king or house of lords. As long as it was confined to those who held office under the government, it remained a mere question of choice; but when it was exacted from all Englishmen above seventeen years of age, under the penalty of incapacity to maintain an action in any court of law, it became to numbers a matter of necessity and served rather to irritate than to produce security. A more efficient measure was the permanent establishment of a high court of justice to inquire into offences against the state, to which was added the organisation of a system of espionage by Captain Bishop, under the direction of Scott, a member of the council.

While the king was on his way to Scotland, a number of blank commissions had been seized in the possession of Dr. Lewen, a civilian, who suffered the penalty of death. Soon afterwards Sir John Gell, Colonel Eusebius Andrews, and Captain Benson, were arraigned on the charge of conspiring the destruction of the government established by law. Andrews and Benson suffered death, and Gell, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, with the forfeiture of his property. These executions did not repress the eagerness of the royalists, nor relax the vigilance of the council. In the beginning of December (1650) the friends of Charles took up arms in Norfolk, but the rising was premature; a body of roundheads dispersed the insurgents; and twenty of the latter atoned for their temerity with their lives. Still the failure of one plot did not prevent the formation of another; and many of the Presbyterians, through enmity to the principles of the Independents, devoted themselves to the interests of the prince. Love, one of the most celebrated of the ministers, was apprehended with several of his associates. It was clearly proved against him that the meetings had been held in his house, the money collected for the royalists had been placed on his table, and the letters received, and the answers to be returned, had been read in his hearing. The unfortunate minister lost his head on Tower Hill with the constancy and serenity of a martyr. Of his associates, only one, Gibbons, a citizen, shared his fate.[m]

FINAL CONQUEST OF SCOTLAND AND IRELAND

The Channel Islands, Scilly, Man, and the colonies of Barbadoes and Virginia had been reduced by the end of the year 1651. Scotland and Ireland only remained to occupy the attention of the council of state. The total conquest of Ireland was speedily achieved. After the departure of Cromwell, Ireton had reduced Waterford and Carlow, while Sir Charles Coote was equally successful in Ulster, and Lord Broghill in Munster. Connaught and the city of Limerick only remained to the Irish. Ormonde, thwarted and impeded in every possible manner by the priesthood, quitted the kingdom (Dec. 7), leaving his uneasy seat to be filled by the marquis of Clanricarde, a Catholic nobleman of high honour and unsullied loyalty. Clanricarde was half-brother to the late earl of Essex. Their mother was the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham and widow of Sir Philip Sidney. A negotiation was meantime going on with that princely *condottiere* the duke of Lorraine for the service of himself and his army; but he required for himself, his heirs, and successors the title of protector-royal, with the chief civil and military authority, to be retained until Charles Stuart should repay him his expenses. To these extravagant demands the agents sent to Brussels subscribed (July 27, 1651); but Clanri-

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carde rejected them with indignation, and the arrest of the duke by the Spanish government soon put an end to all hopes from that quarter.

Ireton opened the campaign of 1651 with the siege of Limerick (June 11). It had a garrison of three thousand men under Hugh O'Neil, the gallant defender of Clonmel, but the keys of the gates and the government of the city remained with the mayor. Coote advanced from the north, and in spite of Clanricarde pushed on to Portumna and Athunree; Broghill defeated Lord Muskerry, the Catholic commander in Munster; Ireton himself forced the passage of the Shannon at Killaloe, and transported a part of his army to the Clare side of that river; and Limerick was thus shut in on all sides. The defence was gallant; and it was not till after a siege of four months and a wide breach having been effected in the walls, that the people and the garrison consented to treat. (Oct. 27). Twenty-two persons were excepted from mercy, of whom five, namely, the bishop of Emly, Woulfe a turbulent friar, Stritch the mayor, Barron one of the town-council, and General Purcell, were executed. The intercession of the members of the court-martial which tried him saved the life of the brave O'Neil. Ireton did not long outlive his conquest; he fell a victim to the plague, which was then raging in that part of the kingdom (Nov. 25). His remains were transmitted to England and honoured with a magnificent funeral in Westminster Abbey, and an estate of 2000*l.* a year was settled on his family. Lieutenant-General Ludlow, who succeeded to the command, completed the subjugation of the country in the following year.

The parliament appointed Lambert to the office of lord-deputy in Ireland (Jan. 30, 1652). Lambert, who was a vain ostentatious man, went immediately to great expense, laying out not less than 5000*l.* on his coach and equipage; but a simple accident came to terminate his visions of glory. His wife and Ireton's widow happened to meet in the park; the former, as the lady of the actual deputy, claimed precedence. The mortified relict complained to her father; about the same time she gave her hand to Lieutenant-General Fleetwood, who was now a widower; and to complete her triumph over her rival, it only remained that her husband and not Lambert should be the deputy, and this was easily effected. It was proposed to limit Lambert's commission to six months, but he objected to this and sent in his resignation. Cromwell was then empowered to appoint the commander of the forces for Ireland, and he nominated Fleetwood (July 9).

Commissioners, as in the case of Scotland, were appointed to regulate the affairs of Ireland. The people of that most unhappy country were treated as we shall now proceed to relate.[f]

CRUELTIES OF THE IRISH SETTLEMENT

One of the first cares of the commissioners was to satisfy the claims of vengeance. In the year 1644 the Catholic nobility had petitioned the king that an inquiry might be made into the murders alleged to have been perpetrated on each side in Ireland, and that justice might be executed on the offenders without distinction of country or religion. To the conquerors it appeared more expedient to confine the inquiry to one party; and a high court of justice was established to try Catholics charged with having shed the blood of any Protestant out of battle since the commencement of the rebellion in 1641. Donnelan, a native, was appointed president, with Commissary-General Reynolds, and Cook, who had acted as solicitor at the trial of Charles I. for his assessors. Lords Muskerry and Clanmaliere, with Mac-

carthy Reagh, whether they owed it to their innocence or to the influence of friends, had the good fortune to be acquitted; the mother of Colonel Fitzpatrick was burned; Lord Mayo, colonels Tool, Bagnal, and about two hundred more, suffered death by the axe or by the halter. It was, however, remarkable, that the greatest deficiency of proof occurred in the province where the principal massacres were said to have been committed. Of the men of Ulster, Sir Phelim O'Neil is the only one whose conviction and execution have been recorded.

Cromwell had not been long in the island before he discovered that it was impossible to accomplish the original design of extirpating the Catholic population; and he had therefore adopted the expedient of allowing their leaders to expatriate themselves with a portion of their countrymen, by entering into the service of foreign powers. This plan was followed by his successors in the war, and was perfected by an act of parliament, banishing all the Catholic officers. Each chieftain, when he surrendered, stipulated for a certain number of men: every facility was furnished him to complete his levy; and the exiles hastened to risk their lives in the service of the Catholic powers who hired them; many in that of Spain, others of France, others of Austria, and some of the republic of Venice. Thus the obnoxious population was reduced by the number of thirty, perhaps forty thousand able-bodied men; but it soon became a question how to dispose of their wives and families, of the wives and families of those who had perished by the ravages of disease and the casualties of war, and of the multitudes who, chased from their homes and employments, were reduced to a state of utter destitution. These at different times, to the amount of several thousands, were collected in bodies, driven on shipboard, and conveyed to the West Indies.

According to Petty,[g] six thousand boys and women were sent away. Lynch[h] (*Cambrensis Eversus*) says that they were sold for slaves. Bruodin[i] in his *Propugnaculum* (Prague, 1669), numbers the exiles at one hundred thousand. After the conquest of Jamaica in 1655, the protector, that he might people it, resolved to transport a thousand Irish boys and a thousand Irish girls to the island.

Yet with all these drains on the one party, and the continual accession of English and Scottish colonists on the other, the Catholic was found to exceed the Protestant population in the proportion of eight to one. Cromwell, when he had reached the zenith of his power, had recourse to a new expedient. He repeatedly solicited the fugitives, who, in the reign of the late king, had settled in New England, to abandon their plantations and accept of lands in Ireland. On their refusal, he made the same offer to the Vaudois, the Protestants of Piedmont, but was equally unsuccessful. They preferred their native valleys, though under the government of a Catholic sovereign, whose enmity they had provoked, to the green fields of Erin, and all the benefits which they might derive from the fostering care and religious creed of the protector. By an act of Aug. 12, 1652, entitled "An Act for the Settlement of Ireland," the parliament divided the royalists and Catholics into different classes, and allotted to each class an appropriate degree of punishment. Forfeiture of life and estate was pronounced against all the great proprietors of lands, banishment against those who had accepted commissions; the forfeiture of two-thirds of their estates against all who had borne arms under the confederates of the king's lieutenant, and the forfeiture of one-third against all persons whomsoever who had not been in the actual service of parliament, or had not displayed their constant affection to the commonwealth of England. This was the doom of persons of property: to all others, whose estates, real and personal, did not

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amount to the value of ten pounds, a full and free pardon was graciously offered.

Care, however, was taken that the third parts, which by this act were to be restored to the original proprietors, were not to be allotted to them out of their former estates, but "in such places as the parliament, for the more effectual settlement of the peace of the nation, should think fit to appoint." When the first plan of extermination had failed, another project was adopted of confining the Catholic landholders to Connaught and Clare, beyond the river Shannon, and of dividing the remainder of the island, Leinster, Munster, and Ulster, among Protestant colonists. This, it was said, would prevent the quarrels which must otherwise occur between the new planters and the ancient owners; it would render rebellion more difficult and less formidable; and it would break the hereditary influence of the chiefs over their septs, and of the landlords over their tenants. Accordingly the Little Parliament, called by Cromwell and his officers (Sept. 26) passed a second act, which assigned to all persons, claiming under the qualifications described in the former, a proportionate quantity of land on the right bank of the Shannon; set aside the counties of Limerick, Tipperary, and Waterford in Munster, of King's County, Queen's County, Westmeath, and Meath in Leinster, and of Down, Antrim, and Armagh in Ulster, to satisfy in equal shares the English adventurers who had subscribed money in the beginning of the contest, and the arrears of the army that had served in Ireland since Cromwell took the command; reserved for the future disposal of the government the forfeitures in the counties of Dublin, Cork, Kildare, and Carlow; and charged those in the remaining counties with the deficiency, if there should be any in the first ten, with the liquidation of several public debts, and with the arrears of the Irish army contracted previously to the battle of Rathmines.

To carry this act into execution, the commissioners, by successive proclamations, ordered all persons who claimed under qualifications, and in addition, all who had borne arms against the parliament, to "remove and transplant" themselves into Connaught and Clare before the first of May, 1654. How many were prevailed upon to obey, is unknown; but that they amounted to a considerable number is plain from the fact that the lands allotted to them in lieu of their third portions extended to more than 800,000 English acres. Many, however, refused. Retiring into bogs and fastnesses, they formed bodies of armed men, and supported themselves and their followers by the depredations which they committed on the occupiers of their estates. They were called rapparees and tories. This celebrated party name, "tory," is derived from "toruighim," to pursue for the sake of plunder. So formidable did they become to the new settlers, that in certain districts, the sum of two hundred pounds was offered for the head of the leader of the band, and that of forty pounds for the head of any one of the privates. To maintain this system of spoliation, and to coerce the vindictive passions of the natives, it became necessary to establish martial law, and to enforce regulations the most arbitrary and oppressive. No Catholic was permitted to reside within any garrison or market town, or to remove more than one mile from his own dwelling without a passport describing his person, age, and occupation; every meeting of four persons besides the family was pronounced an illegal and treasonable assembly; to carry arms, or to have arms at home, was made a capital offence; and any transplanted Irishman, who was found on the left bank of the Shannon, might be put to death by the first person who met him, without the order of a magistrate.

Seldom has any nation been reduced to a state of bondage more galling

and oppressive. Under the pretence of the violation of these laws, their feelings were outraged, and their blood was shed with impunity. They held their property, their liberty, and their lives, at the will of the petty despots around them, foreign planters, and the commanders of military posts, who were stimulated by revenge and interest to depress and exterminate the native population. The religion of the Irish proved an additional source of solicitude to their fanatical conquerors. By one of the articles concluded with Lord Westmeath, it was stipulated that all the inhabitants of Ireland should enjoy the benefit of an act lately passed in England "to relieve peaceable persons from the rigours of former acts in matters of religion"; and that no Irish recusant should be compelled to assist at any form of service contrary to his conscience. When the treaty was presented for ratification, this concession shocked and scandalised the piety of the saints. The first part was instantly negatived; and, if the second was carried by a small majority through the efforts of Marten and Vane, it was with a proviso that "the article should not give any the least allowance, or countenance, or toleration, to the exercise of the Catholic worship in any manner whatsoever."

In the spirit of these votes the civil commissioners ordered by proclamation of January 6th, 1653, all Catholic clergymen to quit Ireland within twenty days, under the penalties of high treason, and forbade all other persons to harbour any such clergymen under the pain of death. Additional provisions tending to the same object followed in succession. Whoever knew of the concealment of a priest, and did not reveal it to the proper authorities, was made liable to the punishment of a public whipping and the amputation of his ears; to be absent on a Sunday from the service at the parish church, subjected the offender to a fine of thirty pence; and the magistrates were authorised to take away the children of Catholics and send them to England for education, and to tender the oath of abjuration to all persons of the age of one and twenty years, the refusal of which subjected them to imprisonment during pleasure, and to the forfeiture of two-thirds of their estates real and personal. During this period the Catholic clergy were exposed to a persecution far more severe than had ever been previously experienced in the island. The Irish people lay prostrate at the feet of their conquerors; the military were distributed in small bodies over the country; their vigilance was sharpened by religious antipathy and the hope of reward; and the means of detection were facilitated by the prohibition of travelling without a license from the magistrates. Of the many priests who still remained in the country, several were discovered, and forfeited their lives on the gallows; those who escaped detection concealed themselves in the caverns of the mountains, or in lonely hovels raised in the midst of the morasses, whence they issued during the night to carry the consolations of religion to the huts of their oppressed and suffering countrymen. A proclamation was also issued ordering all nuns to marry or leave Ireland. They were successively transported to Belgium, France, and Spain, where they were hospitably received in the convents of their respective orders.

THE SUBJUGATION OF SCOTLAND

In Scotland the power of the commonwealth was as firmly established as in Ireland. When Cromwell had hastened in pursuit of the king to Worcester, he had left Monk with eight thousand men to complete the conquest of the kingdom. Monk had invested Stirling, and the Highlanders who composed the garrison compelled the governor to capitulate (Aug. 14, 1651). The

maiden castle, which had never been violated by the presence of a conqueror, submitted to the English "sectaries"; and, what was still more humbling to the pride of the nation, the royal robes, part of the regalia, and the national records, were irreverently torn from their repositories, and sent to London as the trophies of victory. Thence the English general marched forward to Dundee, where he received a proud defiance from Lumsden, the governor. During the preparations for the assault, he learned that the Scottish lords, whom Charles had entrusted with the government in his absence, were holding a meeting on the moor at Ellet, in Angus. By his order, six hundred horse, under the colonels Alured and Morgan, aided, as it was believed, by treachery, surprised them at an early hour in the morning (Aug. 28).

Three hundred prisoners were made, including the two committees of the estates and the kirk, several peers, and all the gentry of the neighbourhood; and these, with such other individuals as the general deemed hostile and dangerous to the commonwealth, followed the regalia and records of their country to the English capital. At Dundee a breach was soon made in the wall: the defenders shrunk from the charge of the assailants; and the governor and garrison were massacred (Sept. 1). Balfour *i* says "Mounche commaundit all, of quhatsummeuer sex, to be putt to the edge of the suord. Ther wer eight hundred inhabitants and souldiers killed, and about two hundred women and children. The plounder and buttie they gatte in the toune, exceided 2 millions and a halffe" (about £200,000). That, however, the whole garrison was not put to the sword appears from the mention in the Journals (Sept. 12) of a list of officers made prisoners, and from Monk's letter to Cromwell. Cary *k* says "There was killed of the enemy about five hundred, and two hundred or thereabouts taken prisoners. The stubbornness of the people enforced the soldiers to plunder the town."

Warned by this awful example, St. Andrews, Aberdeen, and Montrose opened their gates; the earl of Huntley and Lord Balcarres submitted; the few remaining fortresses capitulated in succession. To show the hopelessness of resistance, the army was successively augmented to the amount of twenty thousand men; citadels were marked out to be built of stone at Ayr, Leith, Perth, and Inverness; and a long chain of military stations drawn across the highlands served to curb, if it did not tame, the fierce and indignant spirit of the natives. The parliament declared the lands and goods of the crown public property, and confiscated the estates of all who had joined the king or the duke of Hamilton in their invasions of England, unless they were engaged in trade, and worth no more than £5, or not engaged in trade, and worth only £100.

All authority derived from any other source than the parliament of England was abolished by proclamation (Jan. 31, 1651); the different sheriffs, and civil officers of doubtful fidelity, were removed for others attached to the commonwealth; a yearly tax of £130,000 was imposed in lieu of free quarters for the support of the army; and English judges, assisted by three or four natives, were appointed to go the circuits, and to supersede the courts of session.

The English judges were astonished at the spirit of litigation and revenge which the Scots displayed during the circuit. More than one thousand individuals were accused before them of adultery, incest, and other offences, which they had been obliged to confess in the kirk during the last twenty or thirty years. When no other proof was brought, the charge was dismissed. In like manner sixty persons were charged with witchcraft. These were also acquitted; for, though they had confessed the offence, the confession had been drawn from them by torture. It was usual to tie up the supposed witch

by the thumbs, and to whip her till she confessed; or to put the flame of a candle to the soles of the feet, between the toes, or to parts of the head, or to make the accused wear a shirt of hair steeped in vinegar.

It was with grief and shame that the Scots yielded to these innovations; though they were attended with one redeeming benefit, the prevention of that anarchy and bloodshed which must have followed, had the cavaliers and covenanters, with forces nearly balanced, and passions equally excited, been left to wreak their vengeance on each other. But they were soon threatened with what in their eyes was a still greater evil.

The parliament resolved to incorporate the two countries into one commonwealth, without kingly government or the aristocratical influence of a house of peers. This was thought to fill up the measure of Scottish misery. Not only national but religious feelings were outraged. The ministers forbade the people to give support to the measure. The parliamentary commissioners (they were eight, with St. John and Vane at their head), secure of the power of the sword, derided the menaces of the kirk. They convened at Dalkeith the representatives of the counties and burghs, who were ordered to bring with them full powers to treat and conclude respecting the incorporation of the two countries. Twenty-eight out of thirty shires, and forty-four out of fifty-eight burghs, gave their consent; and the result was a second meeting at Edinburgh, in which twenty-one deputies were chosen to arrange the conditions with the parliamentary commissioners at Westminster. There conferences were held, and many articles discussed (Sept. 22, 1652); but, before the plan could be amicably adjusted, the parliament itself, with all its projects, was overturned by the successful ambition of Cromwell.

TRANSACTIONS WITH PORTUGAL AND SPAIN

From the conquest of Ireland and Scotland we may now turn to the transactions between the commonwealth and foreign powers. The king of Portugal was the first who provoked its anger, and felt its vengeance. At an early period in 1649, Prince Rupert, with the fleet which had revolted from the parliament to the late king, had sailed from the Texel, swept the Irish Channel, and inflicted severe injuries on the English commerce. Vane, to whose industry had been committed the care of the naval department, had made every exertion to equip a formidable armament, the command of which was given to three military officers, Blake,[1] Deane, and Popham. Rupert retired before this superior force to the harbour of Kinsale; the batteries kept his enemies at bay; and the Irish supplied him with men and provisions. At length the victories of Cromwell by land compelled him to quit his asylum; and, with the loss of three ships, he burst through the blockading squadron, sailed to the coast of Spain, and during the winter months sought shelter in the waters of the Tagus. In March, 1650, Blake appeared with eighteen men-of-war at the mouth of the river; to his request that he might be allowed to attack the pirate at his anchorage, he received from the king of Portugal a peremptory refusal; and, in his attempt to force his way up the river he was driven back by the fire from the batteries.

In obedience to his instructions, he revenged himself on the Portuguese trade, and John IV, by way of reprisal, arrested the English merchants, and took possession of their effects. Alarmed, however, by the losses of his subjects, he compelled Rupert to quit the Tagus (Dec. 17), and despatched an

[1 Blake had never been to sea when he took command at the age of fifty, but he speedily revolutionised old-school methods.]

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envoy, named Guimaraes, to solicit an accommodation. Rupert sailed into the Mediterranean, and maintained himself by piracy, capturing not only English but Spanish and Genoese ships. All who did not favour him were considered as enemies. Driven from the Mediterranean by the English, he sailed to the West Indies, where he inflicted greater losses on the Spanish than the English trade. Here his brother, Prince Maurice, perished in a storm; and Rupert, unable to oppose his enemies with any hope of success, returned to Europe, and anchored in the harbour of Nantes, in March, 1652. He sold his two men-of-war to Cardinal Mazarin. The progress of the treaty with Portugal was interrupted by the usurpation of Cromwell, and another year elapsed before it was concluded. By it valuable privileges were granted to the English traders; four commissioners — two English and two Portuguese, were appointed to settle all claims against the Portuguese government; and it was agreed that an English commissary should receive one-half of all the duties paid by the English merchants in the ports of Portugal, to provide a sufficient fund for the liquidation of the debt.

To Charles I (nor will it surprise us, if we recollect his treatment of the infanta) the court of Spain had always behaved with coldness and reserve. The ambassador Cardenas continued to reside in London, even after the king's execution, and was the first foreign minister whom the parliament honoured with a public audience. He made it his chief object to cement the friendship between the commonwealth and his own country, fomented the hostility of the former against Portugal and the United Provinces, the ancient enemies of Spain, and procured the assent of his sovereign that an accredited minister from the parliament should be admitted by the court of Madrid. The individual selected for this office was Ascham, a man who, by his writings, had rendered himself peculiarly obnoxious to the royalists. He landed near Cadiz, proceeded under an escort for his protection to Madrid, and repaired to an inn, till a suitable residence could be procured. The next day, while he was sitting at dinner with Riba, a renegado friar, his interpreter, six Englishmen entered the house; four remained below to watch; two burst into the room, exclaiming, "Welcome, gallants, welcome"; and in a moment both the ambassador and the interpreter lay on the floor weltering in their blood. Of the assassins, one — Sparkes, a native of Hampshire — was taken about three miles from the city; and the parliament, unable to obtain more, appeared to be content with the blood of this single victim.

RELATIONS WITH HOLLAND; THE NAVIGATION ACT

These negotiations ended peaceably; those between the commonwealth and the United Provinces, though commenced with friendly feelings, led to hostilities. It might have been expected that the Dutch, mindful of the glorious struggle for liberty maintained by their fathers, and crowned with success by the Treaty of Munster, would have viewed with exultation the triumph of the English republicans. But William II, prince of Orange, had married a daughter of Charles I; his views and interests were espoused by the military and the people; and his adherents possessed the ascendancy in the states general and in all the provincial states, excepting those of Friesland and Holland. As long as he lived, no atonement could be obtained for the murder of Dorislaus, no audience for Strickland, the resident ambassador, though that favour was repeatedly granted to Boswell, the envoy of Charles. However, in November, 1650, the prince had died of the small-pox

in his twenty-fourth year; and a few days later his widow was delivered of a son, William III, the same who subsequently ascended the throne of England. The infancy of his successor emboldened the democratical party; they abolished the office of stadtholder, and recovered the ascendency in the government.

Among the numerous projects which the English leaders cherished under the intoxication of success, was that of forming, by the incorporation of the United Provinces with the commonwealth, a great and powerful republic, capable of striking terror into all the crowned heads of Europe. But so many difficulties were foreseen, so many objections raised, that the ambassadors received instructions to confine themselves to the more sober proposal of "a strict and intimate alliance and union, which might give to each a mutual and intrinsical interest" in the prosperity of the other. The states had not forgotten the offensive delay of the parliament to answer their embassy of intercession for the life of Charles I; nor did they brook the superiority which it now assumed, by prescribing a certain term within which the negotiation should be concluded. Pride was met with equal pride. The states, having demanded in vain an explanation of the proposed confederacy, presented a counter project; but while the different articles remained under discussion, the period prefixed by the parliament expired, and the ambassadors departed. To whom the failure of the negotiation was owing became a subject of controversy. The Hollanders blamed the abrupt and supercilious carriage of St. John and his colleague; the ambassadors charged the states with having purposely created delay, that they might not commit themselves by a treaty with the commonwealth, before they had seen the issue of the contest between the king of Scotland and Oliver Cromwell.

In a short time that contest was decided in the battle of Worcester, and the states condescended to become petitioners in their turn. Their ambassadors arrived in England with the intention of resuming the negotiation where it had been interrupted by the departure of St. John and his colleague. But circumstances were now changed; success had enlarged the pretensions of the parliament; and the British, instead of shunning, courted a trial of strength with the Belgic lion. First the Dutch merchantmen were visited under the pretext of searching for munitions of war, which they were carrying to the enemy; and then, at the representation of certain merchants, who conceived themselves to have been injured by the Dutch navy, letters of marque were granted to several individuals, and more than eighty prizes brought into the English ports.

In addition, the Navigation Act had been passed and carried into execution, by which it was enacted that no goods, the produce of Africa, Asia, and America, should be imported into England in ships which were not the property of England or its colonies; and that no produce or manufacture of any part of Europe should be imported, unless in ships the property of England or of the country of which such merchandise was the proper growth or manufacture. Hitherto the Dutch had been the common carriers of Europe; by this act, the offspring of St. John's resentment, one great and lucrative branch of their commercial prosperity was lopped off, and the first, but fruitless demand of the ambassadors was that, if not repealed, it should at least be suspended during the negotiation. The Dutch merchants had solicited permission to indemnify themselves by reprisals; but the states ordered a numerous fleet to be equipped, and announced to all the neighbouring powers that their object was, not to make war, but to afford protection to their commerce. By the council of state, the communication was received

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as a menace; the English ships of war were ordered to exact in the narrow seas the same honour to the flag of the commonwealth as had been formerly paid to that of the king; and the ambassadors were reminded of the claim of indemnification for the losses sustained by the English in the East Indies, of a free trade from Middelburg to Antwerp, and of the tenth herring which was due from the Dutch fishermen for the permission to exercise their trade in the British seas.

NAVAL BATTLES OF BLAKE AND TROMP

While the conferences were yet pending, Commodore Young met a fleet of Dutch merchantmen under convoy in the Channel (May 12, 1652); and, after a sharp action, compelled the men-of-war to salute the English flag. A few days later (May 18) the celebrated Tromp appeared with two-and-forty sail in the Downs. He had been instructed to keep at a proper distance from the English coast, neither to provoke nor to shun hostility, and to salute or not according to his own discretion; but on no account to yield to the newly-claimed right of search. To Bourne, the English commander, he apologised for his arrival, which, he said, was not with any hostile design, but in consequence of the loss of several anchors and cables on the opposite coast. The next day (May 19) he met Blake off the harbour of Dover; an action took place between the rival commanders; and, when the fleets separated in the evening, the English cut off two ships of thirty guns, one of which they took, the other they abandoned, on account of the damage which it had received. It was a question of some importance who was the aggressor. By Blake it was asserted that Tromp had gratuitously come to insult the English fleet in its own roads, and had provoked the engagement by firing the first broadside. The Dutchman replied that he was cruising for the protection of trade; that the weather had driven him on the English coast; that he had no thought of fighting till he received the fire of Blake's ships; and that, during the action, he had carefully kept on the defensive, though he might with his great superiority of force have annihilated the assailants.

ROBERT BLAKE
(1598–1657)

The great argument of the parliament in their declaration is the following: Tromp came out of his way to meet the English fleet, and fired on Blake without provocation; the states did not punish him, but retained him in the command; therefore he acted by their orders, and the war was begun by them. Each of these assertions was denied on the other side. Tromp showed the reasons which led him into the track of the English fleet; and the states asserted, from the evidence before them, that Tromp had ordered his

sails to be lowered, and was employed in getting ready his boat to compliment the English admiral at the time when he received a broadside from the impatience of Blake.

The reader will probably think, that those who submitted to solicit the continuance of peace were not the first to seek the commencement of hostilities. Immediately after the action at sea, the council ordered the English commanders to pursue, attack, and destroy all vessels the property of the United Provinces; and, in the course of a month, more than seventy sail of merchantmen, besides several men-of-war, were captured, stranded, or burnt. The Dutch, on the contrary, abstained from reprisals; their ambassadors thrice assured the council that the battle had happened without the knowledge, and to the deep regret of the states; and on each occasion earnestly deprecated the adoption of hasty and violent measures, which might lead to consequences highly prejudicial to both nations. They received an answer, which, assuming it as proved that the states intended to usurp the rights of England on the sea, and to destroy the navy, the bulwark of those rights, declared that it was the duty of parliament to seek reparation for the past, and security for the future. Soon afterwards Pauw, the grand pensionary of Holland, arrived. He proposed that a court of inquiry, consisting of an equal number of commissioners from each nation, should be appointed, and exemplary punishment inflicted on the officer who should be found to have provoked the engagement; and demanded that hostilities should cease, and the negotiation be resumed. He was told by order of parliament, that the English government expected full compensation for all the charges to which it had been put by the preparations and attempts of the states, and hoped to meet with security for the future in an alliance which should render the interests of both nations consistent with each other. These, it was evident were conditions to which the pride of the states would refuse to stoop; Pauw demanded an audience of leave of the parliament (June 30); and all hope of reconciliation vanished.

If the Dutch had hitherto solicited peace, it was not that they feared the result of war. The sea was their native element; and the fact of their maritime superiority had long been openly or tacitly acknowledged by all the powers of Europe. But they wisely judged that no victory by sea could repay them for the losses which they must sustain from the extinction of their fishing trade, and the suspension of their commerce. For the commonwealth, on the other hand, it was fortunate that the depredations of Prince Rupert had turned the attention of the leaders to naval concerns. Their fleet had been four years in commission:[1] the officers and men were actuated by the same spirit of civil liberty and religious enthusiasm which distinguished the land army; Ayscue had just returned from the reduction of Barbadoes with a powerful squadron; and fifty additional ships were ordered to be equipped, an object easily accomplished at a time when any merchantman capable of carrying guns could, with a few alterations, be converted into a man-of-war. Ayscue with the smaller division of the fleet remained at home to scour the Channel.

Blake sailed to the north, captured the squadron appointed to protect the Dutch fishing-vessels, exacted from the busses the duty of every tenth herring, and sent them home with a prohibition against fishing without a license from the English government. In the meanwhile Tromp sailed from the Texel with seventy men-of-war. It was expected in Holland that

[1 As Gardiner[1] points out, the Dutch were out of practice, having had no fighting since 1639.]

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he would sweep the English navy from the face of the ocean. His first attempt was to surprise Aysoue, who was saved by a calm followed by a change of wind. He then sailed to the north in search of Blake. But his fleet was dispersed by a storm; and on his return he was received with murmurs and reproaches by the populace. Indignant at a treatment which he had not deserved, he justified his conduct before the states, and then laid down his commission. De Ruyter, a name almost equally illustrious on the ocean, was appointed his successor. That officer sailed to the mouth of the channel, took under his charge a fleet of merchantmen, and on his return was opposed by Ayscue with nearly an equal force. The English commander burst through the enemy, and was followed by nine sail; the rest of the fleet took no share in the action, and the convoy escaped. The blame rested not with Ayscue, but with his inferior officers; but the council took the opportunity to lay him aside, not that they doubted his courage or abilities, but because he was suspected of a secret leaning to the royal cause. To console him for his disgrace, he received a present of three hundred pounds, with a grant of land of the same annual rent in Ireland.

De Witt now joined De Ruyter, and took the command. Blake accepted the challenge of battle (Sept. 28) off the Kentish Knock, and night alone separated the combatants. The next morning the Dutch fled, and were pursued as far as the Gorée. Their ships were in general of smaller dimensions, and drew less water than those of their adversaries, who dared not follow among the numerous sand-banks with which the coast is studded.[m] The English commander Appleton sent to convoy home the Smyrna fleet was blockaded in Leghorn by a Dutch fleet and on August 27th Badiley, sent to his relief, was attacked near Elba by the Dutch under Van Galen and was driven to take refuge in a friendly Spanish port after losing a ship. Meanwhile the Danish king had detained twenty English merchantmen. Parliament now ordered thirty new frigates built.[a] Blake, supposing that naval operations would be suspended during the winter, had detached several squadrons to different ports, and was riding in the Downs with thirty-seven sail, when he was surprised by the appearance of a hostile fleet of double that number, under the command of Tromp, whose wounded pride had been appeased with a new commission.[1] A mistaken sense of honour induced the English admiral to engage in the unequal contest. The battle raged from eleven in the morning till night. The English, though they burned a large ship and disabled two others, lost five sail either sunk or taken; and Blake, under cover of the darkness, ran up the river as far as Leigh. Tromp sought his enemy at Harwich and Yarmouth; returning, he insulted the coast as he passed; and continued to cruise backwards and forwards from the North Foreland to the Isle of Wight [capturing prizes, including one man-of-war. Dutch sailors also landed on the coast of Sussex and carried off cattle].

The parliament made every exertion to wipe away this disgrace. The ships were speedily refitted; two regiments of infantry embarked to serve as marines; a bounty was offered for volunteers; the wages of the seamen were raised; provision was made for their families during their absence on service; a new rate for the division of prize-money was established; and, in aid of Blake, two officers, whose abilities had been already tried, Deane and Monk, received the joint command of the fleet. On the other hand, the Dutch were

[1 According to Gardiner Blake went into battle with 45 sail to Tromp's 85. Blake's ships, however, were as a rule much more powerful than Tromp's. But 20 of Blake's ships kept out of the fight. See also the history of the Netherlands, chapter XIV, for the Dutch view of the wars.]

intoxicated with their success; they announced it to the world in prints, poems, and publications; and Tromp affixed a broom to the head of his mast as an emblem of his triumph.[1] He had gone to the Île de Ré to take homeward-bound trade under his charge, with orders to resume his station at the mouth of the Thames, and to prevent the egress of the English. But Blake had already stationed himself with more than seventy sail across the Channel, opposite the Isle of Portland, to intercept the return of the enemy. On the 18th of February, 1653, the Dutch fleet, equal in number, with one hundred and fifty merchantmen under convoy, was discovered near Cape La Hogue, steering along the coast of France. The action was maintained with the most desperate obstinacy. The Dutch lost six sail, either sunk or taken, the English one, but several were disabled, and Blake himself was severely wounded.

The following morning the enemy were seen opposite Weymouth, drawn up in the form of a crescent covering the merchantmen. Many attempts were made to break through the line; and so imminent did the danger appear to the Dutch admiral, that he made signal for the convoy to shift for themselves.[2] The battle lasted at intervals through the night; it was renewed with greater vigour near Boulogne in the morning; till Tromp, availing himself of the shallowness of the coast, pursued his course homeward unmolested by the pursuit of the enemy. The victory was decidedly with the English; the loss in men might be equal on both sides; but the Dutch themselves acknowledged that nine of their men-of-war and twenty-four of the merchant vessels had been either sunk or captured.

CROMWELL'S GROWING AMBITION

This was the last naval victory achieved under the auspices of the parliament, which, though it wielded the powers of government with an energy that surprised the several nations of Europe, was doomed to bend before the superior genius or ascendancy of Cromwell. When he first formed the design of seizing the supreme authority, is uncertain; it was not till after the victory at Worcester that he began gradually and cautiously to unfold his object. He saw himself crowned with the laurels of conquest; he held the command in chief of a numerous and devoted army; and he dwelt with his family in a palace formerly the residence of the English monarchs. His adversaries had long ago pronounced him, in all but name, "a king"; and his friends were accustomed to address him in language as adulatory as ever gratified the ears of the most absolute sovereign. His importance was perpetually forced upon his notice by the praise of his dependants, by the foreign envoys who paid court to him, and by the royalists who craved his protection. In such circumstances it cannot be surprising if the victorious general indulged the aspirings of ambition; if the stern republican, however he might hate to see the crown on the brows of another, felt no repugnance to place it upon his own.

The grandees of the army felt that they no longer possessed the chief sway in the government. War had called them away to their commands in Scot-

[1] This story though discredited by some writers is accepted by the vast majority.]

[2] As Gardiner points out Tromp had long been removed from his base of refitting, and his ammunition now gave out, half of his ships having none at all; while Blake's fleet was fully supplied. Gardiner says that while the victory remained with the English it was due to circumstances rather than to their commanders and "the honours of that heroic struggle lay with Tromp" for his "magnificent seamanship and undaunted courage." The geographical position of England, he says, gave her always an advantage over Dutch commerce which must always be convoyed in time of war, thus hampering any war fleet.]

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land and Ireland; and during their absence, the conduct of affairs had devolved on those who, in contradistinction, were denominated the statesmen. Thus, by the course of events, the servants had grown into masters, and the power of the senate had obtained the superiority over the power of the sword. Still the officers in their distant quarters jealously watched, and severely criticised the conduct of the men at Westminster. With want of vigour in directing the military and naval resources of the country, they could not be charged; but it was complained that they neglected the internal economy of government; that no one of the objects demanded in the Agreement of the People had been accomplished; and that, while others sacrificed their health and their lives in the service of the commonwealth, all the emoluments and patronage were monopolized by the idle drones who remained in the capital.

On the return of the lord-general, the council of officers had been re-established at Whitehall (Sept. 16, 1651); and their discontent was artfully employed by Cromwell in furtherance of his own elevation. When he resumed his seat in the house, he reminded the members of their indifference to two measures earnestly desired by the country, the Act of Amnesty and the termination of the present parliament. Bills for each of these objects had been introduced as far back as 1649; but, after some progress, both were suffered to sleep in the several committees; and this backwardness of the "statesmen" was attributed to their wish to enrich themselves by forfeitures, and to perpetuate their power by perpetuating the parliament. The influence of Cromwell revived both questions. An Act of Oblivion was obtained (Feb. 24, 1652), which, with some exceptions, pardoned all offences committed before the battle of Worcester, and relieved the minds of the royalists from the apprehension of additional forfeitures. On the question of the expiration of parliament, after several warm debates, the period had been fixed (Nov. 18, 1651) for the 3rd of November, 1654; a distance of three years, which, perhaps, was not the less pleasing to Cromwell, as it served to show how unwilling his adversaries were to resign their power. The interval was to be employed in determining the qualifications of the succeeding parliament.

In the winter, the lord-general called a meeting of officers and members at the house of the speaker; and it must have excited their surprise, when he proposed to them to deliberate, whether it were better to establish a republic, or a mixed form of monarchical government. The officers in general pronounced in favour of a republic, as the best security for the liberties of the people; the lawyers pleaded unanimously for a limited monarchy, as better adapted to the laws, the habits, and the feelings of Englishmen. With the latter Cromwell agreed, and inquired whom in that case they would choose for king. It was replied, either Charles Stuart or the duke of York, provided they would comply with the demands of the parliament; if they would not, the young duke of Gloucester, who could not have imbibed the despotic notions of his elder brothers. This was not the answer which Cromwell sought: he heard it with uneasiness; and, as often as the subject was resumed, diverted the conversation to some other question. In conclusion, he gave his opinion, that, "somewhat of a monarchical government would be most effectual, if it could be established with safety to the liberties of the people, as Englishmen and Christians." That the result of the meeting disappointed his expectations, is evident; but he derived from it this advantage, that he had ascertained the sentiments of many, whose aid he might subsequently require. None of the leaders from the opposite party appear to have been present.

Jealous, however, of his designs, "the statesmen" had begun to fight him with his own weapons. As the commonwealth had no longer an enemy to

contend with on the land, they proposed a considerable reduction in the number of the forces, and a proportionate reduction of the taxes raised for their support. The motion was too reasonable in itself, and too popular in the country, to be resisted with safety: one-fourth of the army was disbanded (Dec. 19), and the monthly assessment lowered from one hundred and twenty thousand pounds to ninety thousand pounds. Before the expiration of six months, the question of a further reduction was brought forward; but the council of war took the alarm, and a letter from Cromwell to the speaker induced the house to continue its last vote. In a short time it was again mentioned; but (August 13) six officers appeared at the bar of the house with a petition from the army, which, under pretence of praying for improvements, tacitly charged the members with the neglect of their duty. Whitelocke remonstrated with Cromwell on the danger of permitting armed bodies to assemble and petition. He slighted the advice.

Soon afterwards the lord-general requested a private and confidential interview with that lawyer. So violent, he observed, was the discontent of the army, so imperious the conduct of the parliament, that it would be impossible to prevent a collision of interests, and the subsequent ruin of the good cause, unless there were established "some authority so full and so high" as to be able to check these exorbitances, and to restrain the parliament. Whitelocke replied, that, to control the supreme power was legally impossible. All, even Cromwell himself, derived their authority from it. At these words the lord-general abruptly exclaimed, "What, if a man should take upon him to be king?" The commissioner answered that the title would confer no additional benefit on his excellency. By his command of the army, his ascendancy in the house, and his reputation, both at home and abroad, he already enjoyed, without the envy of the name, all the power of a king. When Cromwell insisted that the name would give security to his followers, and command the respect of the people, Whitelocke rejoined, that it would change the state of the controversy between the parties, and convert a national into a personal quarrel. His friends had cheerfully fought with him to establish a republican in place of monarchical government; would they equally fight with him in favour of the house of Cromwell against the house of Stuart? They separated; and Whitelocke soon discovered that he had forfeited his confidence.

CROMWELL DISSOLVES THE LONG PARLIAMENT APRIL 20TH, 1653

At length Cromwell fixed on a plan to accomplish his purpose by procuring the dissolution of the parliament, and vesting for a time the sovereign authority in a council of forty persons, with himself at their head. It was his wish to effect this quietly by the votes of parliament — his resolution to effect it by open force, if such votes were refused. Several meetings were held by the officers and members at the lodgings of the lord-general in Whitehall. St. John and a few others gave their assent; the rest, under the guidance of Whitelocke and Widdrington, declared that the dissolution would be dangerous, and the establishment of the proposed council unwarrantable. On the last meeting, held on the 19th of April, 1653, all these points were long and warmly debated. Some of the officers declared that the parliament must be dissolved "one way or other"; but the general checked their indiscretion and precipitancy; and the assembly broke up at midnight, with an understanding that the leading men on each side should resume the subject in the morning. At an early hour (April 20) the conference was recommenced, and after a short time interrupted, in consequence of the receipt of a notice by the general

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that it was the intention of the house to comply with the desires of the army. This was a mistake: the opposite party, led by Vane, who had discovered the object of Cromwell, had indeed resolved to pass a bill of dissolution, not, however, the bill proposed by the officers, but their own bill, containing all the obnoxious provisions; and to pass it that very morning, that it might obtain the force of law before their adversaries could have time to appeal to the power of the sword. While Harrison "most sweetly and humbly" conjured them to pause before they took so important a step, Ingoldsby hastened to inform the lord-general at Whitehall. His resolution was immediately formed, and a company of musketeers received orders to accompany him to the house.

At this eventful moment, big with the most important consequences both to himself and his country, whatever were the workings of Cromwell's mind, he had the art to conceal them from the eyes of the beholders. Leaving the military in the lobby, he entered the house, and composedly seated himself on one of the outer benches. His dress was a plain suit of black cloth, with grey worsted stockings. For a while he seemed to listen with interest to the debate; but, when the speaker was going to put the question, he whispered to Harrison, "This is the time; I must do it"; and rising, put off his hat to address the house. At first his language was decorous and even laudatory. Gradually he became more warm and animated: at last he assumed all the vehemence of passion, and indulged in personal vituperation. He charged the members with self-seeking and profaneness; with the frequent denial of justice, and numerous acts of oppression; with idolising the lawyers, the constant advocates of tyranny; with neglecting the men who had bled for them in the field, that they might gain the Presbyterians who had apostatised from the cause; and with doing all this in order to perpetuate their own power, and to replenish their own purses. But their time was come; the Lord had disowned them; he had chosen more worthy instruments to perform his work.

Here the orator was interrupted by Sir Peter Wentworth, who declared that he never before heard language so unparliamentary, language, too, the more offensive, because it was addressed to them by their own servant, whom they had too fondly cherished, and whom, by their unprecedented bounty, they had made what he was. At these words Cromwell put on his hat, and, springing from his place, exclaimed, "Come, come, sir, I will put an end to your prating." For a few seconds, apparently in the most violent agitation, he paced forward and backward, and then, stamping on the floor, added, "You are no parliament. I say you are no parliament: bring them in, bring them in." Instantly the door opened, and Colonel Worseley entered, followed by more than twenty musketeers. "This," cried Sir Henry Vane, "is not honest. It is against morality and common honesty." "Sir Henry Vane," replied Cromwell, "O Sir Henry Vane! The Lord deliver me from Sir Henry Vane! He might have prevented this. But he is a juggler, and has not common honesty himself." From Vane he directed his discourse to Whitelocke, on whom he poured a torrent of abuse; then, pointing to Challoner, "There," he cried, "sits a drunkard"; next, to Marten and Wentworth, "There are two whoremasters"; and afterwards, selecting different members in succession, described them as dishonest and corrupt livers, a shame and a scandal to the profession of the gospel.

Suddenly, however, checking himself, he turned to the guard, and ordered them to clear the house. At these words Colonel Harrison took the speaker by the hand, and led him from the chair; Algernon Sidney was next compelled to quit his seat; and the other members, eighty in number, on approach of the

military, rose and moved towards the door. Cromwell now resumed his discourse. "It is you," he exclaimed, "that have forced me to do this. I have sought the Lord both day and night, that he would rather slay me, than put me on the doing of this work." Alderman Allen took advantage of these words to observe, that it was not yet too late to undo what had been done; but Cromwell instantly charged him with peculation, and gave him into custody. When all were gone, fixing his eye on the mace, "What," said he, "shall we do with this fool's bauble? Here, carry it away." Then, taking the act of dissolution from the clerk, he ordered the doors to be locked, and, accompanied by the military, returned to Whitehall.

That afternoon the members of the council assembled in their usual place of meeting. Bradshaw had just taken the chair, when the lord-general entered, and told them, that if they were there as private individuals, they were welcome; but, if as the council of state, they must know that the parliament was dissolved, and with it also the council. "Sir," replied Bradshaw, with the spirit of an ancient Roman, "we have heard what you did at the house this morning. and before many hours all England will know it. But, sir, you are mistaken to think that the parliament is dissolved. No power under heaven can dissolve them but themselves. Therefore take you notice of that." After this protest they withdrew.

REVIEW OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT

Thus, by the parricidal hands of its own children, perished the Long Parliament, which, under a variety of forms, had, for more than twelve years, defended and invaded the liberties of the nation. It fell without a struggle or a groan, unpitied and unregretted. The members slunk away to their homes, where they sought by submission to purchase the forbearance of their new master; and their partisans, if partisans they had, reserved themselves in silence for a day of retribution, which came not before Cromwell slept in his grave. The royalists congratulated each other on an event which they deemed a preparatory step to the restoration of the king; the army and navy, in numerous addresses, declared that they would live or die, stand or fall, with the lord-general, and in every part of the country the congregations of the saints magnified the arm of the Lord which had broken the mighty, that in lieu of the sway of mortal men, "the fifth monarchy, the reign of Christ, might be established upon earth."

It would, however, be unjust to the memory of those who exercised the supreme power after the death of the king, not to acknowledge that there existed among them men capable of wielding with energy the destinies of a great empire. They governed only four years; yet, under their auspices, the conquests of Ireland and Scotland were achieved, and a navy was created, the rival of that of Holland and the terror of the rest of Europe. But there existed an essential error in their form of government. Deliberative assemblies are always slow in their proceedings; yet the pleasure of parliament, as the supreme power, was to be taken on every subject connected with the foreign relations, or the internal administration of the country; and hence it happened that, among the immense variety of questions which came before it, those commanded immediate attention which were deemed of immediate necessity; while the others, though often of the highest importance to the national welfare, were first postponed, then neglected, and ultimately forgotten. To this habit of procrastination was perhaps owing the extinction of its

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authority. It disappointed the hopes of the country, and supplied Cromwell with the most plausible argument in defence of his conduct.

Of the parliamentary transactions up to this period, the principal have been noticed in the preceding pages. We shall add a few others which may be thought worthy the attention of the reader. It was complained that, since the abolition of the spiritual tribunals, the sins of incest, adultery, and fornication had been multiplied, in consequence of the impunity with which they might be committed; and, at the prayer of the godly, they were made criminal offences, cognisable by the criminal courts, and punishable, the first two with death, the last with three months' imprisonment. But it was predicted at the time, and experience verified the prediction, that the severity of the punishment would defeat the purpose of the law. Scarcely a petition was presented, which did not, among other things, pray for the reformation of the courts of justice; and the house, after several long debates, acquiesced in a measure, understood to be only the forerunner of several others, that the law books should be written, and law proceedings be conducted in the English language.

So enormous were the charges of the commonwealth, arising from incessant war by sea or land, that questions of finance continually engaged the attention of the house. There were four principal sources of revenue; the customs, the excise, the sale of fee-farm rents, of the lands of the crown, and of those belonging to the bishops, deans, and chapters, and the sequestration and forfeiture of the estates of papists and delinquents. The ordinances for the latter had been passed as early as the year 1643, and in the course of the seven succeeding years, the harvest had been reaped and gathered. Still some gleanings might remain; and (Jan. 22, 1650) an act was passed for the better ordering and managing such estates; the former compositions were subjected to examination; defects and concealments were detected; and proportionate fines were in numerous cases exacted. In 1651, seventy individuals, most of them of high rank, all of opulent fortunes, who had imprudently displayed their attachment to the royal cause, were condemned to forfeit their property, both real and personal, for the benefit of the commonwealth. The fatal march of Charles to Worcester furnished grounds for a new proscription in 1652. First nine-and-twenty, then six hundred and eighty-two royalists were selected for punishment. It was enacted that those in the first class should forfeit their whole property; while to those in the second, the right of pre-emption was reserved at the rate of one-third part of the clear value, to be paid within four months.

During the late reign, as long as the Presbyterians retained their ascendancy in parliament, they enforced with all their power uniformity of worship and doctrine. The clergy of the established church were ejected from their livings, and the professors of the Catholic faith were condemned to forfeit two-thirds of their property, or to abjure their religion. Nor was the proof of recusancy to depend, as formerly, on the slow process of presentation and conviction; bare suspicion was held a sufficient ground for the sequestrator to seize his prey; and the complainant was told that he had the remedy in his own hands, he might take the oath of abjuration. The Independents, indeed, proclaimed themselves the champions of religious liberty: they repealed the statutes imposing penalties for absence from church; and they declared that men were free to serve God according to the dictates of conscience. Yet their notions of toleration were very confined: they refused to extend it either to prelacy or popery, to the service of the Church of England, or of the church of Rome. The ejected clergymen were still excluded

from the pulpit, and the Catholics were still the victims of persecuting statutes. In 1650, an act was passed offering to the discoverers of priests and Jesuits, or of their receivers and abettors, the same reward as had been granted to the apprehenders of highwaymen. Immediately officers and informers were employed in every direction; the houses of Catholics were broken open and searched at all hours of the day and night; many clergymen were apprehended, and several were tried, and received judgment of death. Of these only one, Peter Wright, chaplain to the marquis of Winchester, suffered. The leaders shrunk from the odium of such sanguinary exhibitions, and transported the rest of the prisoners to the continent.

But if the zeal of the Independents was more sparing of blood than that of the Presbyterians, it was not inferior in point of rapacity. The ordinances for sequestration and forfeiture were executed with unrelenting severity. In 1650 the annual rents of Catholics in possession of the sequestrators were returned at £62,048 17*s.* 3¾*d.* It should, however, be observed that thirteen counties were not included. It is difficult to say which suffered most cruelly — families with small fortunes who were thus reduced to a state of penury; or husbandmen, servants, and mechanics, who, on their refusal to take the oath of abjuration, were deprived of two-thirds of their scanty earnings, even of their household goods and wearing apparel. The sufferers ventured to solicit from parliament such indulgence as might be thought "consistent with the public peace and their comfortable subsistence in their native country." The petition was read: Sir Henry Vane spoke in its favour; but the house was deaf to the voice of reason and humanity, and the prayer for relief was indignantly rejected. In proof we may be allowed to mention one instance of a Catholic servant-maid, an orphan, who, during a servitude of seventeen years, at seven nobles a year, had saved twenty pounds. The sequestrators, having discovered with whom she had deposited her money, took two-thirds, thirteen pounds six shillings and eightpence, for the use of the commonwealth, and left her the remainder, six pounds thirteen and fourpence. In March, 1652, she appealed to the commissioners at Haberdashers' Hall, who replied that they could afford her no relief, unless she took the oath of abjuration. [m]

Hallam [n] has said of the Long Parliament that "scarce two or three public acts of justice, humanity, or generosity, and very few of political wisdom or courage, are recorded of them from their quarrel with the king to their expulsion by Cromwell." They fell unlamented by the nation, though a few republican enthusiasts have chanted dirges to their memory. The praises of their panegyrists, we may observe, are almost confined to their successes in war; but these are surely the praises of Cromwell, Blake, and such men, and not of them. Their financial system was as simple as that of an eastern despot: they laid on enormous taxes and levied them by the swords of the soldiery; if they wanted money on any occasion, they ordered the sale of delinquents' estates; if timber was required for the navy, they directed the woods of some delinquent to be felled. In these cases justice was not to be had from them. Lord Craven, for example, had been out of England all the time of the war; one might therefore expect that no charge of delinquency could be made against him; but some one having sworn that he had seen the king in Holland, the parliament voted that his lands should be sold, though it is said he convicted the informer of perjury. Many other acts of oppression of a similar nature will be found.

At the same time they were most liberal in providing for themselves; they of course monopolised all lucrative offices; and in perusing Whitelocke [o]

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and the journals, the ignorant admirers of these stern republicans will be surprised at the sums which they voted themselves under the name of arrears, compensations for losses, etc. Neither should their high court of justice and their abolition of trial by jury be forgotten; at the same time it should be recorded to their credit, that they always inflicted the penalty of death in a mild form, and never butchered their victims by quartering and disembowelling, as was done under the monarchy. One most remarkable part of the policy of the republicans has been left almost unnoticed by historians, namely, their selling their prisoners for slaves. This we may suppose they did in imitation of the Greeks and Romans. They actually commenced this practice during the lifetime of the king, for the Welsh taken by Cromwell in 1648 were sold into the plantations. The same, as we have seen, was the fate of the Scots after the battle of Worcester. That the wretched Irish should have been sold without compunction was a matter of course; but even the English were not treated any better; for as we shall see, Cromwell after the rising of Grove and Penruddock in 1655, sold the prisoners for slaves. The tyranny, as it was termed, of Charles, surely did not extend so far as this. We shall however find that the example of the commonwealth was not lost on his sons.*f*

COSTUME OF SOLDIER IN TIME OF CHARLES II

THE NEW COUNCIL OF STATE APPOINTED

Whoever has studied the character of Cromwell will have remarked the anxiety with which he laboured to conceal his real designs from the notice of his adherents. If credit were due to his exertions, he cherished none of those aspiring thoughts which agitate the breasts of the ambitious; the consciousness of his weakness taught him to shrink from the responsibility of power; and at every step in his ascent to greatness, he affected to sacrifice his own feelings to the judgment and importunity of others. But in dissolving the late parliament he had deviated from this his ordinary course: he had been compelled to come boldly forward by the obstinacy or the policy of his opponents, who during twelve months had triumphed over his intrigues, and were preparing to pass an act which would place new obstacles in his path. Now, however, that he had forcibly taken into his own hands the reins of government, it remained for him to determine whether he should retain them in his grasp, or deliver them over to others. He preferred the latter; for the maturity of time was not yet come: he saw that, among the officers who blindly submitted to be the tools of his ambition, there were several who would abandon the idol of their worship, whenever they should suspect him of a design to subvert the public liberty. But if he parted with power for the moment, it was in such manner as to warrant the hope that it would shortly return to him under another form, not as won by the sword of the military, but as deposited in his hands by the judgment of parliament.

It could not escape the sagacity of the lord-general that the fanatics

with whose aid he had subverted the late government, were not the men to be entrusted with the destinies of the three kingdoms; yet he deemed it his interest to indulge them in their wild notions of civil and religious reformation, and to suffer himself for a while to be guided by their counsels. Their first measure was to publish a vindication of their proceedings (April 22nd, 1653). They next proceeded to establish a council of state. Some proposed that it should consist of ten members, some of seventy, after the model of the Jewish sanhedrim; and others of thirteen, in imitation of Christ and his twelve apostles. The last project was adopted as equally scriptural, and more convenient. With Cromwell, in the place of lord president, were joined four civilians and eight officers of high rank; so that the army still retained its ascendency, and the council of state became in fact a military council. From this moment for some months it would have embarrassed any man to determine where the supreme power resided.

CROMWELL CALLS A NEW PARLIAMENT

In the mean while, the lord-general continued to wear the mask of humility and godliness; he prayed and preached with more than his wonted fervour; and his piety was rewarded, according to the report of his confidants, with frequent communications from the Holy Spirit.

In the month of May he spent eight days in close consultation with his military divan; and the result was a determination to call a new parliament, but a parliament modelled on principles unknown to the history of this or of any other nation. It was to be a parliament of saints, of men who had not offered themselves as candidates, or been chosen by the people, but whose chief qualification consisted in holiness of life, and whose call to the office of legislators came from the choice of the council. With this view the ministers took the sense of the "congregational churches" in the several counties: the returns contained the names of the persons, "faithful, fearing God, and hating covetousness," who were deemed qualified for this high and important trust; and out of these the council in the presence of the lord-general selected one hundred and thirty-nine representatives for England, six for Wales, six for Ireland, and five for Scotland. To each of them was sent a writ of summons under the signature of Cromwell, requiring his personal attendance at Whitehall on a certain day, to take upon himself the trust, and to serve the office of member for some particular place. Of the surprise with which the writs were received by many the reader may judge. Yet, out of the whole number, two only returned a refusal: by most the very extraordinary manner of their election was taken as a sufficient proof that the call was from heaven.

On the appointed day, the 4th of July, 1653, one hundred and twenty of these faithful and godly men attended in the council chamber at Whitehall. They were seated on chairs round the table; and the lord-general took his station near the middle window, supported on each side by a numerous body of officers. He addressed the company standing, and it was believed by his admirers, perhaps by himself, "that the Spirit of God spoke in him and by him." Having vindicated in a long narrative the dissolution of the late parliament, he congratulated the persons present on the high office to which they had been called. It was not of their own seeking. It had come to them from God by the choice of the army, the usual channel through which in these latter days the divine mercies had been dispensed to the nation. He would not charge them, but he would pray that they might "exercise

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the judgment of mercy and truth," and might "be faithful with the saints," however those saints might differ respecting forms of worship.

His enthusiasm kindled as he proceeded; and the visions of futurity began to open to his imagination. It was, he exclaimed, marvellous in his eyes; they were called to war with the Lamb against his enemies; they were come to the threshold of the door, to the very edge of the promises and prophecies; God was about to bring his people out of the depths of the sea; perhaps to bring the Jews home to their station out of the aisles of the sea. "God," he exclaimed, "shakes the mountains, and they reel; God hath a high hill, too, and his hill is as the hill of Bashan; and the chariots of God are twenty thousand of angels; and God will dwell upon this hill forever." At the conclusion "of this grave, Christian, and seasonable speech," he placed on the table an instrument under his own hand and seal, entrusting to them the supreme authority for the space of fifteen months from that day, then to be transmitted by them to another assembly, the members of which they should previously have chosen.[m]

GUIZOT'S ACCOUNT OF THE "LITTLE" OR "BAREBONES" PARLIAMENT

The members resolved, after a long debate, and by a majority of sixty-five votes against forty-six, that they would assume the name of the parliament. They elected as their speaker Francis Rouse, who had been a member of the Long Parliament; ordered that the mace, which Cromwell had removed, should be replaced on their table; appointed a council of state of thirty-one members, with instructions similar to those given to the preceding council; and, in short, resumed all the prerogatives and re-established all the usages of the expelled parliament. Cromwell and his officers had made them a parliament; to show their gratitude, they voted, in their turn, that the lord-general, major-generals Lambert, Harrison, and Desborough, and Colonel Tomlinson should be invited to sit with them as members of the house. On the day on which they installed themselves at Westminster, they devoted nearly their whole sitting to pious exercises; not, as the previous parliament had done, by attending sermons preached by specially appointed ministers, but by themselves engaging in spontaneous prayers, without the assistance of any professional ecclesiastic.

Eight or ten members often spoke in succession, invoking the divine blessing on their labours, or commenting on passages of Scripture; "and some affirmed," says one of them, "they never enjoyed so much of the spirit and presence of Christ in any of the meetings and exercises of religion in all their lives as they did that day." They therefore persisted in this practice, and instead of appointing a chaplain every day, as soon as a few members had arrived, one of them engaged in prayer, and others followed him, until a sufficient number had assembled to open the sitting and begin business. On the day after their installation, they voted that a special day should be devoted to the solemn invocation of the divine blessing upon their future acts; and having discharged this duty, with a view to induce the nation to join its prayers to their own, for the same purpose, they published a declaration, which is expressive at once of proud hopes, of mystical enthusiasm, and of feelings of the deepest humility.

"We declare ourselves, to be the parliament of the commonwealth of England. . . . . When we look upon ourselves, we are much afraid, and tremble at the mighty work and heavy weight before us, which we justly acknowledge far above, and quite beyond, our strength to wield or pose; so that we oft cry out and say with Jehoshaphat, '*O Lord we know not what*

to do, but our eye is towards thee!' . . . . We hope that God, in his great and free goodness, will not forsake his people; and that we may be fitted and used as instruments in his hand, that all oppressing yokes may be broken, and all burdens removed, and the loins also of the poor and needy may be filled with blessing; that all nations may turn their swords and spears into plough-shares and pruning-hooks, that the wolf may feed with the lamb, and the earth be full of the knowledge of God, as waters cover the sea. This is all we say, if this undertaking be from God, let him prosper and bless it, and let every one take heed of fighting against God; but if not, let it fall, though we fall before it."

Thus strengthened and confident, they set to work finally to effect those reforms which had been so long and so earnestly desired. Twelve committees were appointed for this purpose. The ardour and assiduity of these committees, and of the parliament itself, in their respective labours, were great. The parliament voted that it would meet at eight o'clock in the morning of every day in the week, excepting Sunday. A sincere zeal animated the assembly; questions and considerations of private interest had but little influence in their deliberations; like bold and honest men, their only thought was how they might best serve and reform the state. But two contingencies which popular reformers never foresee, obstacles and speculative theories, soon arose. In order to accomplish great reforms in a great society, without destroying its peace, the legislator must possess extraordinary wisdom and a high position: reforms, when they originate with the lower classes, are inseparable from revolutions. The parliament of Cromwell's election was neither sufficiently enlightened, nor sufficiently influential to reform English society, without endangering its tranquillity; and as, at the same time, it was neither so insane, nor so perverse, nor so strong, as blindly to destroy instead of reforming, it soon became powerless, in spite of its honesty and courage, and ridiculous, because it combined earnestness with impotence.

It found, however, one part of its task in a very advanced state: the two committees which the Long Parliament had appointed in 1651 for the purpose of preparing a scheme of law-reform, had left a large body of materials, in which most of the questions mooted were solved, and the solutions even given at length. Twenty-one bills were ready prepared to receive the force of laws by the vote of the house. After long debates, however, four measures of reform were alone carried; one to place under the control of the civil magistrates, the celebration and registration of marriages, and the registration of births and deaths; the other three, for the relief of creditors and poor prisoners for debt, for the abolition of certain fines, and for the redress of certain delays in procedure.[1] The collection of taxes, the concentration of all the revenues of the state in one public treasury, and the administration of the army and navy, also formed the subject of regulations which put an end to grave abuses. The question of the distribution of confiscated lands in Ireland, first among the subscribers to the various public loans, and then among the disbanded

[1] The condition of the law was in itself certainly bad enough, but they regarded it as a perfect Augean stable. There were said to be not less than twenty-three thousand causes pending in the court of chancery, some of which had been there twenty, others thirty years; the expenses were enormous; the justice of the decisions was suspicious. The whole body of the law itself being in their eyes a mere chaos of confusion, made up of traditions, statutes and decisions, often obscure, often contradictory, it was deemed the wisest course to do away with it altogether, and form out of it a reasonable code which might be comprised in a pocket-volume and be accessible to all men, and not be a mystery confined to a few. A committee was appointed to effect this, and a commencement was made with the articles "*Treason*" and "*Murder*." In matters of religion one of the first points which presented itself was that of advowsons. Nothing seemed to be (perhaps nothing is) more adverse to the spirit of true religion, than that a layman, merely as the owner of land, should have the right of imposing a religious teacher on a parish, and could even sell that right like any other species of property. It was therefore resolved that the right of presentation should be taken away, and that the parishioners should be empowered to choose their own pastors. — KEIGHTLEY.

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officers and soldiers, was finally settled. The salaries of the persons employed in several departments of the public service were reduced; and serious and persevering efforts were made to meet all the expenses, and discharge all the liabilities of the state.

But, when it came to treat of really great political questions, when it was in presence of the obstacles and enemies which those questions raised up against it, then the insufficiency of its information, its chimerical ideas, its anarchical tendencies, its internal dissensions, and the weakness of its position, became fully apparent. Not only were their innovations naturally opposed by those classes whose interests would be seriously affected by their adoption, by the clergy, the lay impropriators, the magistrates, the lawyers, and all the professions dependent on these; but they interfered, more or less directly, with those rights of property and hereditary succession which could not be infringed upon, even in the slightest degree, without shaking the whole framework of society. Accordingly, whenever these vital questions were mooted, a deep schism arose in the parliament. But the reformers, wilfully or blindly obedient to the revolutionary spirit, required that, in the first instance, the innovations which they demanded should be resolved upon, and the principle which they involved be absolutely admitted, and that the house should then inquire what was to be done to fill up the vacancies, and repair the losses which they had occasioned.

Irritated at resistance, the revolutionary spirit became increasingly manifest; strange propositions multiplied — some of them puerile, as this, "that all who have applied for offices shall be incapable of public employment"; others menacing, not only to the higher classes, but to all who had a settled occupation, from the demagogic and destructive mysticism which they exhibited. Although strongly opposed in their progress through parliament, these propositions were always sooner or later adopted; for the zealous and mystical sectaries, with Major-General Harrison at their head, daily obtained a greater preponderance in the house. From their friends out of doors they received impetuous encouragement and support: all questions, whether political or religious, which at any time occupied the attention of parliament, were discussed at the same time by meetings of private citizens, unlimited as to numbers, unrestricted as to ideas and language. Two Anabaptist preachers, Christopher Feake and Vavasor Powell, may be particularly mentioned. These eloquent enthusiasts held meetings every Monday at Blackfriars, which were crowded by multitudes of hearers, mutually encouraging one another to a spirit of opposition and revolution. At these meetings, foreign politics were treated of, as well as home affairs, with equal violence and even greater ignorance.

Cromwell was an attentive observer of these disorders and conflicts. It was in the name and with the support of the reforming sectaries that he had expelled the Long Parliament, and assumed possession of the supreme power. But he had quickly perceived that such innovators, though useful instruments of destruction, were destructive to the very power they had established; and that the classes among whom conservative interests prevailed, were the natural and permanent allies of authority. Besides, he was influenced by no principles or scruples powerful enough to prevent him, when occasion required, from changing his conduct and seeking out other friends. To govern was his sole aim; whoever stood in the way of his attainment of the reins of government, or of his continuance at the head of the state, was his adversary—he had no friends but his agents. The landed proprietors, the clergy, and the lawyers, had need of him, and were ready to support him if he would defend

them: he made an alliance with them, thus completely changing his position, and becoming an aristocrat and conservative instead of a democrat and revolutionist. But he was an able and prudent man, and he knew the art of breaking with old allies only so far as suited his purpose, and of humouring them even when he intended to break with them. He sent for the principal leaders of the sectaries, the Anabaptist preacher, Feake, among others; upbraided them with the blind violence of their opposition which, both at home and abroad, tended only to the advantage of their common enemies, and declared that they would be responsible for all the consequences that might ensue. He dismissed them without further rebuke. But his resolution was taken; and, in his soul, the fate of a parliament in which such persons had so much influence, was irrevocably determined.

THOMAS SYDENHAM
(1624–1689)

On Monday, the 12th of December, 1653, a number of members devoted to Cromwell, were observed to enter the house of commons at an unusually early hour. No sooner had prayers been said, than Colonel Sydenham rose and made a most violent attack upon the measures of the parliament, particularly of a majority of its members. "They aimed," he went on to say, "at no less than destroying the clergy, the law, and the property of the subject. Their purpose was to take away the law of the land, and the birthrights of Englishmen, for which all had so long been contending with their blood, and to substitute in their room a code, modelled on the law of Moses, and which was adapted only for the nation of the Jews. In these circumstances, he could no longer satisfy himself to sit in that house; and he moved that the continuance of this parliament, as now constituted, would not be for the good of the commonwealth; and that, therefore, it was requisite that the house, in a body, should repair to the lord-general, to deliver back into his hands the powers which they had received from him." Colonel Sydenham's motion was at once seconded by Sir Charles Wolseley, a gentleman of Oxfordshire, and one of Cromwell's confidants.

Notwithstanding their surprise and indignation, the reformers defended themselves. The debate promised to be of considerable duration. The issue seemed exceedingly doubtful. Rous, the speaker, suddenly left the chair, and broke up the sitting. The serjeant took up the mace and carried it before him, as he left the hall. About forty members followed him, and they proceeded together towards Whitehall. Thirty or thirty-five members

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remained in the house, in great indignation and embarrassment, for they were not sufficiently numerous to make a house; but twenty-seven of them, Harrison among the number, resolved to keep their seats, and proposed to pass the time in prayer. But two officers, Colonel Goffe and Major White, suddenly entered the house and desired them to withdraw; they answered that they would not do so, unless compelled by force. White called in a file of musketeers; the house was cleared, and sentinels were placed at the doors, in charge of the keys. The cavaliers, in their ironical narratives of the occurrence, assert that, on entering the house, White said to Harrison, "What do you here?" "We are seeking the Lord," replied Harrison. "Then," returned White, "you may go elsewhere, for, to my certain knowledge he has not been here these twelve years."

Meanwhile, the speaker, and the members who had accompanied him, had arrived at Whitehall. They first of all went into a private room, and hurriedly wrote a brief resignation of their power into Cromwell's hands. This they signed, and then demanded an interview with the lord-general. He expressed extreme surprise at their proceeding, declaring that he was not prepared for such an offer, nor able to load himself with so heavy and serious a burden. But Lambert, Sydenham, and the other members present, insisted; their resolution was taken—he must accept the restoration of power which he had himself conferred. He yielded at last. The act of abdication was left open for three or four days, for the signatures of those members who had not come to Whitehall; and it soon exhibited eighty names — a majority of the whole assembly. Cromwell had slain the Long Parliament with his own hand; he did not vouchsafe so much honour to the parliament which he had himself created; a ridiculous act of suicide, and the ridiculous nickname which it derived from one of its most obscure members, Mr. Praise-god Barebone,[1] a leather-seller in the city of London, are the only recollections which this assembly has left in history. And yet, it was deficient neither in honesty nor in patriotism; but it was absolutely wanting in dignity when it allowed its existence to rest on a falsehood, and in good sense when it attempted to reform the whole framework of English society: such a task was infinitely above its strength and capacity. The Barebones Parliament had been intended by Cromwell as an expedient; it disappeared as soon as it attempted to become an independent power.

Four days after the fall of the Barebones Parliament, on the 16th of December, 1653, at one o'clock in the afternoon, a pompous cavalcade proceeded from Whitehall to Westminster, between a double line of soldiery. The lords commissioners of the great seal, the judges, the council of state, the lord mayor and aldermen of the city of London, in their scarlet robes and state carriages, headed the procession. After them came Cromwell, in a simple suit of black velvet, with long boots, and a broad gold band round his hat. His guards and a large number of gentlemen, bareheaded, walked before his carriage, which was surrounded by the principal officers of the army, sword in hand, and hat on head. On arriving at Westminster Hall, the procession entered the court of chancery, at one end of which a chair of state had been placed. Cromwell stood in front of the chair, and as soon as the assembly was seated, Major-General Lambert announced the voluntary

[1] Godwin *p* and Forster *q* have taken considerable pains to establish that this person's real name was Barbone, and not Barebone, and thus to remove the ridicule attaching to the latter name; but, by their own admission, the writ of summons addressed to this member spells his name as Barebone; I have therefore retained this spelling, which seems to be at once officially and historically correct.

dissolution of the late parliament, and in the name of the army, of the three nations, and of the exigencies of the time, prayed the lord-general to accept the office of protector of the commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland.[r]

THE INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNMENT MAKES CROMWELL PROTECTOR

The instrument of government, as the plan of the new constitution was named, was then read by one of the clerks of the council. Cromwell having with feigned reluctance given his consent, the oath was read to him by the lord-commissioner Lisle, and he signed it. Lambert then on his knees offered him the civic sword in a scabbard; he took it, and at the same time laid aside his own military one. He then sat down and put on his hat; the commissioners handed him the seal, the lord mayor the sword; he took them and gave them back. Having exercised these acts of sovereignty he returned to Whitehall. Next day the new government was proclaimed with the ceremonies usual at the accession of a king.

The substance of the instrument was, that the supreme authority should be in the lord protector and the parliament; the protector to be assisted by a council of not less than thirteen, nor more than twenty-one persons, immovable except for corruption or other miscarriage in their trust. The former functions of royalty in general were to be exercised by the protector, with the consent of parliament or the council. A parliament was to be summoned for the 3rd of September, 1654, and once in every third year, reckoned from the dissolution of the last, and not to be adjourned, prorogued, or dissolved for the space of five months without its own consent. The parliament was to consist of four hundred members for England and Wales, thirty for Scotland, and thirty for Ireland. The smaller boroughs were disfranchised and the number of county members was increased; the qualification for electors was to be the possession of an estate, real or personal, of the value of 200*l*. Those persons who had aided or abetted the royal cause in the late wars were to be incapable of being elected or of voting at elections for the next and three succeeding parliaments. Catholics, and the aiders and abettors of the Irish rebellion, were to be disabled forever. A provision more certain and less subject to scruple than tithes was to be made for the teachers of religion. All who professed faith in God through Jesus Christ were to be protected; but this liberty was not to extend "to popery or prelacy, or to such as under the profession of Christ hold forth and practise licentiousness."

Oliver Cromwell had thus, by taking advantage of a train of favourable circumstances, raised himself to the summit on which, since his victory at Worcester, he had probably fixed his view. His usurpation, if such it is to be called, was the greatest benefit that could befall the country in its present condition. Had the Presbyterians recovered their power, they would have bound their odious intolerant religious despotism on the necks of the people; the royalists, if triumphant, would have introduced the plenitude of absolute power. The rule of Cromwell gave time for men's minds to settle.[f] Von Ranke contrasts Cromwell's *coup d'état* with that of Napoleon, as follows:[a] "Were we to describe in a word the chief difference between the revolution in England and the similar catastrophe that occurred in France a hundred and fifty years later, we might say that the social revolution in France was practically complete before the victorious general grasped the sovereignty; while, by contrast, in England the rule of the sword intervened at an earlier period, and put a check to the progress of revolution the moment it began to undermine the social foundations."[b]

OLIVER CROMWELL

(From the painting by Sir Peter Lely in the Pitti Palace, Florence; sent by the Protector to the Grand Duke Ferdinand II)

[1653 A.D.]

Hallam on Cromwell's Usurpation

It can admit of no doubt that the despotism of a wise man is more tolerable than that of political or religious fanatics; and it rarely happens that there is any better remedy in revolutions which have given the latter an ascendant. Cromwell's assumption, therefore, of the title of protector was a necessary and wholesome usurpation, however he may have caused the necessity; it secured the nation from the mischievous lunacy of the Anabaptists, and from the more cool-blooded tyranny of that little oligarchy which arrogated to itself the name of commonwealth's men. Though a gross and glaring evidence of the omnipotence of the army, the instrument under which he took his title accorded to him no unnecessary executive authority. The sovereignty still resided in the parliament; he had no negative voice on their laws. Until the meeting of the next parliament a power was given him of making temporary ordinances; but this was not, as Hume,[s] on the authority of Clarendon[t] and Warwick,[u] has supposed, and as his conduct, if that were any proof of the law, might lead us to infer, designed to exist in future intervals of the legislature. In the ascent of this bold usurper to greatness he had successively employed and thrown away several of the powerful factions who distracted the nation. He had encouraged the levellers and persecuted them; he had flattered the Long Parliament and betrayed it; he had made use of the sectaries to crush the commonwealth; he had spurned the sectaries in his last advance to power. These, with the royalists and the Presbyterians, forming in effect the whole people, though too disunited for such a coalition as must have overthrown him, were the perpetual, irreconcilable enemies of his administration. Master of his army, which he knew well how to manage, surrounded by a few deep and experienced counsellors, furnished by his spies with the completest intelligence of all designs against him, he had no great cause of alarm from open resistance. But he was bound by the instrument of government to call a parliament; and in any parliament his adversaries must be formidable.[n]