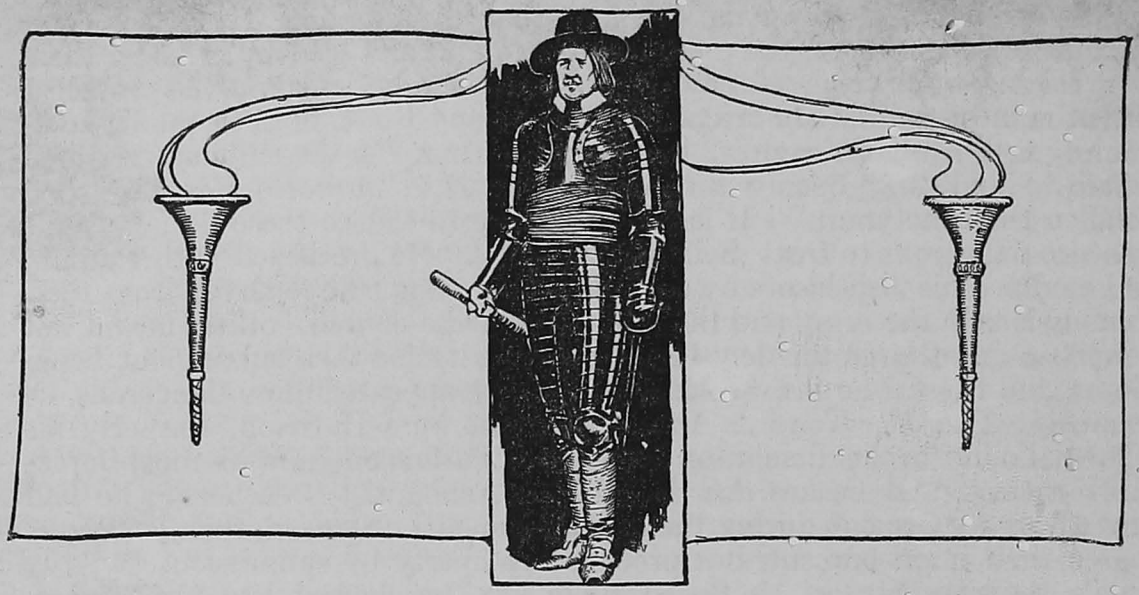


CHAPTER V

CROMWELL AS PROTECTOR

[1653–1658 A.D.]

> Cromwell at the head of the army had conquered and crushed king, lords, and commons. As opposed to the constitution of the kingdom he seemed to be a great destroyer. But further than this he would not budge. The instant his partisans inclined to threaten civil institutions and the social structure they found him their most potent enemy. In the wreckage of all authority, political or churchly, Cromwell rose the champion of the social fabric of property, of civil rights, and the lower clergy. It was in this spirit that he grasped the supreme power — and with the approval of a large part of the public. Both lawyers and clergymen had seen their very existence endangered by the destructive enactments of the Independents. Cromwell was their deliverer; to them the full meaning of the word was implied by his title, protector. — VON RANKE.[b]

IT cannot be supposed that this elevation of Cromwell to the supreme power was viewed with satisfaction by any other class of men than his brethren in arms, who considered his greatness their own work, and expected from his gratitude their merited reward. But the nation was surfeited with revolutions. They readily acquiesced in any change which promised the return of tranquillity in the place of solicitude, danger, and misery. The protector, however, did not neglect the means of consolidating his own authority. Availing himself of the powers entrusted to him by the "instrument," he gave the chief commands in the army to men in whom he could confide; quartered the troops in the manner best calculated to put down any insurrection; and, among the multitude of ordinances which he published, was careful to repeal the acts enforcing the Engagement; to forbid all meetings on racecourses or at cockpits, to explain what offences should be deemed treason against his government; and to establish a high court of justice for the trial of those who might be charged with such offences.

[1653 A.D.]

He could not, however, be ignorant that, even among the former companions of his fortunes, the men who had fought and bled by his side, there were several who, much as they revered the general, looked on the protector with the most cordial abhorrence. They scrupled not, both in public companies, and from the pulpit, to pronounce him "a dissembling perjured villain"; and they openly threatened him with "a worse fate than had befallen the last tyrant." If it was necessary to silence these declaimers, it was also dangerous to treat them with severity. He proceeded with caution, and modified his displeasure by circumstances. Some he removed from their commissions in the army and their ministry in the church; others he did not permit to go at large till they had given security for their subsequent behaviour; and those who proved less tractable, or appeared more dangerous, he incarcerated in the Tower. Among the last were Harrison, formerly his fellow-labourer in the dissolution of the Long Parliament, now his most implacable enemy; and Feakes and Powell, the Anabaptist preachers, who had braved his resentment during the last parliament. Symson, their colleague, shared their imprisonment, but procured his liberty by submission.

To the royalists, as he feared them less, he showed less forbearance. Charles, who still resided in Paris, maintained a constant correspondence with the friends of his family in England. Among the agents whom he employed were men who betrayed his secrets, or pretended secrets, to his enemies, or who seduced his adherents into imaginary plots, that by the discovery they might earn the gratitude of the protector. Of the latter class was an individual named Henshaw, who had repaired to Paris, and been refused what he solicited—admission to the royal presence. On his return, he detailed to certain royalists a plan by which the protector might be assassinated on his way to Hampton Court, the guards at Whitehall overpowered, the town surprised, and the royal exile proclaimed. When a sufficient number were entangled in the toil, forty were apprehended and examined. Of these, three were selected for trial before the high court of justice. Fox pleaded guilty and obtained his pardon. Vowell, a schoolmaster, and Gerard, a young gentleman two-and-twenty years of age, received judgment of death.

On the same scaffold, but an hour later, perished a foreign nobleman, only nineteen years old, Dom Pantaleon Sa, brother to Guimaraes, the Portuguese ambassador. Six months before, he and Gerard, whose execution we have just noticed, had quarrelled in the New Exchange. Pantaleon, the next evening, repaired to the same place with a body of armed followers; a fray ensued; Greenway, a person unconcerned in the dispute, was killed by accident or mistake; and the Portuguese fled to the house of the ambassador, whence they were conducted to prison by the military. The people, taking up the affair as a national quarrel, loudly demanded the blood of the reputed murderers. On behalf of Pantaleon it was argued that he was an ambassador, and therefore answerable to no one but his master; but the instrument which he produced in proof of the first allegation was no more than a written promise that he should succeed his brother in office. He was sacrificed, if we believe one of them, to the clamour of the people, whose feelings were so excited, that when his head fell on the scaffold, the spectators proclaimed their joy by the most savage yells of exultation. It was the very day on which his brother, perhaps to propitiate the protector, had signed the treaty between the two nations.

These executions had been preceded by one of a very different description. Colonel Worseley had apprehended a Catholic clergyman, of the name of Southworth, who, thirty-seven years before, had been convicted at Lan-

caster, and sent into banishment. The old man (he had passed his seventy-second year), at his arraignment, pleaded that he had taken orders in the church of Rome, but was innocent of any treason. Judgment of death was pronounced; and the protector, notwithstanding the urgent solicitations of the French and Spanish ambassadors, resolved that he should suffer. It was not that Cromwell approved of sanguinary punishments in matters of religion, but that he had no objection to purchasing the good-will of the godly by shedding the blood of a priest. The fate of this venerable man excited the sympathy of the higher classes. On the scaffold he pointed out the inconsistency of the men who pretended to have taken up arms for liberty of conscience, and yet shed the blood of those who differed from them in religious opinions. He suffered the usual punishment of traitors.

SCOTLAND SUBDUED AND INCORPORATED

In Scotland as in Ireland the spirit of disaffection equally prevailed among the superior officers; but their attention was averted from political feuds by military operations. In the preceding years, under the appearance of general tranquillity, the embers of war had continued to smoulder in the Highlands: they burst into a flame on the departure of Monk to take the command of the English fleet. To Charles in France, and his partisans in Scotland, it seemed a favourable moment; the earls of Glencairn and Balcarres, were successively joined by Angus, Montrose, Athol, Seaforth, Kenmore, and Lorne, the son of Argyll; and Wogan, an enterprising officer, landing at Dover (November 22nd, 1653), raised a troop of loyalists in London, and traversing England under the colours of the commonwealth, reached in safety the quarters of his Scottish friends. A petty but most destructive warfare ensued. To Middleton the protector opposed Monk. Middleton was surprised at Loch Garry (July 19th) by the force under Morgan; his men, embarrassed in the defile, were slain or made prisoners; and his loss taught the royalist leaders to deserve mercy by the promptitude of their submission, and the lenity of Monk contributed as much as the fortune of war to the total suppression of the insurgents.

Cromwell, however, did not wait for the issue of the contest. Before Monk had joined the army, he published three ordinances, by which, of his supreme authority, he incorporated Scotland with England, absolved the natives from their allegiance to Charles Stuart, abolished the kingly office and the Scottish parliament, with all tenures and superiorities importing servitude and vassalage, erected courts-baron to supply the place of the jurisdictions which he had taken away, and granted a free pardon to the nation, with the exception of numerous individuals whom he subjected to different degrees of punishment.

Thus the whole frame of the Scottish constitution was subverted: yet no one ventured to remonstrate or oppose. The spirit of the nation had been broken. The experience of the past, and the presence of the military, convinced the people that resistance was fruitless. Of the nobility, many languished within the walls of their prisons in England; and the others were ground to the dust by the demands of their creditors, or the exactions of the sequestrators; and even the kirk, which had so often bearded kings on their thrones, was taught to feel that its authority, however it might boast of its celestial origin, was no match for the earthly power of the English commonwealth. Soon after Cromwell had called his Little Parliament, the general assembly of the kirk met at the usual place in Edinburgh; and Dickson, the

[1653 A.D.]

moderator, had begun his prayer, when Colonel Cotterel, leaving two troops of horse and two companies of foot at the door, entered the house, and inquired by what authority they sat there; Was it by authority of the parliament, or of the commander of the forces, or of the English judges in Scotland? The moderator meekly but firmly replied, that they formed a spiritual court, established by God, recognised by law, and supported by the Solemn League and Covenant. But this was a language which the soldier did not, or would not, understand.

Mounting a bench, he declared that there existed no authority in Scotland which was not derived from the parliament of England; that it was his duty to put down every illegal assumption of power; and that they must immediately depart or suffer themselves to be dragged out by the military under his command. No one offered to resist: a protestation was hastily entered on the minutes; and the whole body was marched between the two files of soldiers through the streets, to the surprise, and grief, and horror of the inhabitants. At the distance of a mile from the city, Cotterel discharged them with an admonition. "Thus," exclaims Baillie[v] "our general assembly, the glory and strength of our church upon earth, is by your soldiery crushed and trod under foot. For this our hearts are sad, and our eyes run down with water."

Yet after this they were permitted to meet in synods and presbyteries, an indulgence which they owed not to the moderation of their adversaries, but to the policy of Vane, who argued that it was better to furnish them with the opportunity of quarrelling among themselves, than, by establishing a compulsory tranquillity, allow them to combine against the commonwealth. For the ministers were still divided into resolutioners and protestors, and the virulence of this religious feud appeared to augment in proportion as the parties were deprived of real power.

FINAL BATTLES OF THE DUTCH WAR

By foreign powers the recent elevation of Cromwell was viewed without surprise. All who had reason to hope from his friendship, or to fear from his enmity, offered their congratulations, and ambassadors and envoys from most of the princes of Europe crowded to the court of the protector. He received them with all the state of a sovereign. It appears from the Council Book that the quarterly expense of the protector's family amounted to thirty-five thousand pounds.

The treaty with the United Provinces was the first which engaged the attention of the protector, and was not concluded till repeated victories had proved the superiority of the English navy, and a protracted negotiation had exhausted the patience of the states. In the preceding month of May the hostile fleets, each consisting of about one hundred sail, had put to sea, the English commanded by Monk, Deane, Penn, and Lawson; the Dutch by Tromp, De Ruyter, De Witt, and Evertsen. While Monk insulted the coast of Holland, Tromp cannonaded the town of Dover. They met each other (June 2nd, 1653) off the North Foreland, and the action continued the whole day. The enemy lost two sail; on the part of the English, Deane was killed by a chain-shot. He fell by the side of Monk, who instantly spread his cloak over the dead body, that the men might not be alarmed at the fate of their commander.

The battle was renewed the next morning. Though Blake, with eighteen sail, had joined the English in the night, Tromp fought with the most deter-

mined courage; but a panic pervaded his fleet; his orders were disobeyed; several captains fled from the superior fire of the enemy; and, ultimately, the Dutch sought shelter within the Wielings, and along the shallow coast of Zealand. They lost one-and-twenty sail; thirteen hundred men were made prisoners, and the number of killed and wounded was great in proportion.[1]

Cromwell received the news of this victory with transports of joy. Though he could claim no share in the merit (for the fleet owed its success to the exertions of the government which he had overturned), he was aware that it would shed a lustre over his own administration; and the people were publicly called upon to return thanks to the Almighty for so signal a favour.

To the states, the defeat of their fleet proved a subject of the deepest regret. It was not the loss of men and ships that they deplored; such loss might soon be repaired; but it degraded them in the eyes of Europe, by placing them in the position of suppliants deprecating the anger of a victorious enemy. In consequence of the importunate entreaties of the merchants, they had previously appointed ambassadors to make proposals of peace to the new government. They were informed that England would waive the claim of pecuniary compensation, providing Tromp were removed for a while from the command of their fleet, as an acknowledgment that he was the aggressor; but that, on the other hand, it was expected that the states should consent to the incorporation of the two countries into one great maritime power, to be equally under the same government, consisting of individuals chosen out of both.[2] This was a subject on which the ambassadors had no power to treat; and it was agreed that two of their number should repair to the Hague for additional instructions.

But a few days before their departure, another battle had been fought at sea (July 31st), and another victory won by the English. For eight weeks Monk had blockaded the entrance of the Texel; but Tromp, the moment his fleet was repaired, put to sea. Each admiral commanded about one hundred sail; and as long as Tromp lived, the victory hung in suspense; he had burst through the English line, and returned to his first station, when he fell by a musket-shot; then the Dutch began to waver; in a short time they fled, and the pursuit continued till midnight. That which distinguished this from every preceding action was the order issued by Monk to make no prizes, but to sink or destroy the ships of the enemy. Hence the only trophies of victory were the prisoners, men who had been picked up after they had thrown themselves into the water, or had escaped in boats from the wrecks. Of these, more than a thousand were brought to England, a sufficient proof that, if the loss of the enemy did not amount to twenty sail, as stated by Monk, it exceeded nine small vessels, the utmost allowed by the states.[3]

[1 Gardiner points out that in the first place Tromp had but 104 sail, six of them fireships; the English had 115 including 5 fireships, their vessels and cannon being decidedly superior in size and weight. Furthermore, Blake came up now with 13 fresh ships, and once more Tromp's ammunition began to give out, as the parsimony of the Dutch republic had insufficiently supplied him. Gardiner again credits Tromp with superior seamanship.]

[2 Gardiner calls this "the most astounding proposal ever made by an Englishman to the minister of a foreign state." It was proposed to include Denmark, Sweden and the Protestant German provinces in one great amalgamation to partition the whole world, the Dutch to have all of Asia, the English all of America.]

[3 Gardiner puts the Dutch loss at 26 men-of-war, 2,700 drowned, 2,500 wounded and 1,000 prisoners. The English lost 2 ships, 7 captains and 250 men slain, and 5 captains and 800 men wounded; the fleet was so badly shattered, however, that it was compelled to abandon the blockade to refit. Of Tromp, Gardiner says that he "was, in every sense, the hero of the war. If tactical skill could have merited victory from an enemy greatly superior in force he would have made the battle off the Gabbard as glorious for his countrymen as had been the fight in the Downs in 1639." Fighting for the liberty of his country's trade he was borne

[1653 A.D.]

During the absence of the other ambassadors, Cromwell sought several private interviews with the third who remained, Beverning, the deputy from the states of Holland; and the moderation with which he spoke of the questions in dispute, joined to the tears with which he lamented the enmity of two nations so similar in their political and religious principles, convinced the Dutchman that an accommodation might be easily and promptly attained. At his desire his colleagues returned; the conferences were resumed; the most cheering hopes were indulged; when suddenly (November 24th) the English commissioners presented seven-and-twenty articles, conceived in a tone of insulting superiority, and demanding sacrifices painful and degrading. Every question was adjusted, with the exception of this: whether the king of Denmark, the ally of the Dutch, who, to gratify them, had seized and confiscated twenty-three English merchantmen in the Baltic (January 6th, 1654), should be comprehended or not in the treaty. The ambassadors were at Gravesend on their way home, when Cromwell proposed a new expedient, which they approved. At the same time he equipped a fleet of one hundred sail, and ordered several regiments to embark. The ambassadors, aware that the states had made no provision to oppose this formidable armament, reluctantly acquiesced; and on the 5th of April, after a negotiation of ten months, the peace was definitively signed.

By this treaty the English cabinet silently abandoned those lofty pretensions which it had originally put forth. It made no mention of indemnity for the past, of security for the future, of the incorporation of the two states, of the claim of search, of the tenth herring, or of the exclusion of the prince of Orange from the office of stadtholder. To these humiliating conditions the pride of the states had refused to submit; and Cromwell was content to accept two other articles, which, while they appeared equally to affect the two nations, were in reality directed against the Stuart family and its adherents. It was stipulated that neither commonwealth should harbour or aid the enemies, rebels, or exiles of the other. The only questions which latterly retarded the conclusion of the treaty related to the compensation to be made to the merchants for the depredations on their trade in the East Indies before, and the detention of their ships by the king of Denmark during the war. It was, however, agreed that arbitrators should be chosen out of both nations, and that each government should be bound by their award. These determined that the island of Polerone should be restored, and damages to the amount of one hundred and seventy thousand pounds should be paid to the English East India Company; that three thousand six hundred and fifteen pounds should be distributed among the heirs of those who suffered at Amboyna;[1] and that a compensation of ninety-seven thousand nine hundred and seventy-three pounds should be made to the traders to the Baltic.

By Sagredo,[d] the Venetian ambassador, who resided during the war at Amsterdam, we are told that the Dutch acknowledged the loss of one thousand one hundred and twenty-two men-of-war and merchantmen; and that the expense of this war exceeded that of their twenty years' hostilities with Spain. He states that their inferiority arose from three causes: that the English ships were of greater bulk; the English cannon were of brass, and

down by official incompetence, and by the defects of a complicated administrative machinery even more than by the material superiority of the English navy." For fuller accounts of his character, see the history of Holland.]

[1 The Amboyna massacre took place in 1623 at Amboyna, one of the Moluccas islands, where the Dutch claiming that certain Englishmen had conspired to seize the island and murder the inhabitants, put 110 English to death after torturing them. See the history of the Netherlands, chapter XII, volume XIII.]

of a larger calibre; and the number of prizes made by the English at the commencement crippled the maritime resources of their enemies. It has been said that the Dutch employed one hundred thousand men in the herring-fishery.

On one subject, in the protector's estimation of considerable importance, he was partially successful. Possessed of the supreme power himself, he considered Charles as a personal rival, and made it his policy to strip the exiled king of all hope of foreign support. From the prince of Orange, so nearly allied to the royal family, Cromwell had little to fear during his minority; and, to render him incapable of benefiting the royal cause in his more mature age, the protector attempted to exclude him by the treaty from succeeding to those high offices which might almost be considered hereditary in his family. The determined refusal of the states had induced him to withdraw the demand; but he intrigued, through the agency of Beverning, with the leaders of the Louvestein party;[1] and obtained a secret article, by which the states of Holland and Friesland promised never to elect the prince of Orange for their stadholder, nor suffer him to have the chief command of the army and navy.

RELATIONS WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN

The war in which the rival crowns of France and Spain had so long been engaged induced both Louis and Philip to pay their court to the new protector. Alonzo de Cardenas, the Spanish ambassador, had the advantage of being on the spot. He waited on Cromwell to present to him the congratulations of his sovereign, and to offer to him the support of the Spanish monarch, if he should feel desirous to rise a step higher, and assume the style and office of king. When Don Alonzo communicated the draft of a treaty of alliance which had all but concluded with the deputies appointed by the late parliament, he was asked whether the king of Spain would consent to a free trade to the West Indies, would omit the clause respecting the Inquisition,[2] reduce to an equality the duties on foreign merchandise, and give to the English merchant the pre-emption of the Spanish wool. He replied, that his master would as soon lose his eyes as suffer the interference of any foreign power on the two first questions; as to the others, satisfactory adjustments might easily be made. This was sufficient for the present. Cromwell affected to consider the treaty at an end; though the real fact was, that he meditated a very different project in his own mind, and was careful not to be precluded by premature arrangements.

The French ambassador, though he commenced his negotiation under less propitious auspices, had the address or good fortune to conduct it to a more favourable issue. That the royal family of France, from its relationship to that of England, was ill-disposed towards the commonwealth, there could be no doubt; but its inclinations were controlled by the internal feuds which distracted, and the external war which demanded, the attention of the government. The first proof of hostility was supposed to be given before the death of the king, by a royal *arrêt* (October 21st, 1648) prohibiting the importation into France of English woollens and silks; and this was after-

[1] The leaders of the republicans were so called, because they had been confined in the castle of Louvestein, whence they were discharged on the death of the late prince of Orange.

[2] The clause respecting the Inquisition was one which secured the English traders from being molested by that court, on condition that they gave no scandal, — modo ne det scandalum. This condition Cromwell wished to be withdrawn.

[1653–1658 A.D.]

wards met by an order of parliament (August 23rd, 1649) equally prohibiting the importation into England of French woollens, silks, and wines. The alleged infraction of these commercial regulations led to the arrest and subsequent condemnation of vessels belonging to both nations; each government issued letters-of-marque to the sufferers among its subjects; and the naval commanders received instructions to seek that compensation for the individuals aggrieved which the latter were unable to obtain of themselves. Thus the maritime trade of both countries was exposed to the depredations of private and national cruisers, while their respective governments were considered as remaining at peace. But in 1651, when the cardinal Mazarin had been banished from France, it was resolved by Cromwell, who had recently won the battle of Worcester, to tempt the fidelity of d'Estrades, the governor of Dunkirk and a dependant on the exiled minister. An officer of the lord general's regiment made to d'Estrades the offer of a considerable sum, on condition that he would deliver the fortress into the hands of the English; or of the same sum, with the aid of a military force to the cardinal, if he preferred to treat in the name of his patron. The governor complained of the insult offered to his honour; but intimated that, if the English wished to purchase Dunkirk, the proposal might be addressed to his sovereign. The hint was taken, and the offer was made, and debated in the royal council at Poitiers. The cardinal, who returned to France at the very time, urged its acceptance; but the queen-mother and the other counsellors were so unwilling to give the English a footing in France, that he acquiesced in their opinion and a refusal was returned. Cromwell did not fail to resent the disappointment. By the facility which he afforded to the Spanish levies in Ireland, their army in Flanders was enabled to reduce Gravelines, and, soon afterwards, to invest Dunkirk. That fortress was on the point of capitulating when a French flotilla of seven sail, carrying from twenty to thirty guns each, and laden with stores and provisions, was descried stealing along the shore to its relief. Blake, who had received secret orders from the council, gave chase; the whole squadron was captured (September 5th, 1652), and the next day Dunkirk opened its gates.

Bordeaux had been appointed ambassador to the parliament (February 21st, 1653); after the inauguration of Cromwell it became necessary to appoint him ambassador to his highness the protector. But in what style was Louis to address the usurper by letter? "Mon cousin" was offered and refused; "mon frère," which Cromwell sought, was offensive to the pride of the monarch; and, as a temperament between the two, "monsieur le protecteur" was given and accepted. Bordeaux proposed a treaty of amity. To thwart the efforts of his rival, Don Alonzo, abandoning his former project, brought forward the proposal of a new commercial treaty between England and Spain. Cromwell was in no haste to conclude with either. He was aware that the war between them was the true cause of these applications; that he held the balance in his hand, and that it was in his power at any moment to incline it in favour of either of the two crowns. His determination, indeed, had long been taken; but it was not his purpose to let it transpire; and when he was asked the object of the two great armaments preparing in the English ports, he refused to give any satisfactory explanation.

THE FIRST PROTECTORATE PARLIAMENT

In this state of the treaty, its further progress was for a while suspended by the meeting of the protector's first parliament. He had summoned it for

the 3rd of September, his fortunate day, as he perhaps believed himself, as he certainly wished it to be believed by others. But the 3rd happened in 1654 to fall on a Sunday; and, that the Sabbath might not be profaned by the agitation of worldly business, he requested the members to meet him at sermon in Westminister Abbey on the following morning. At ten the procession set out from Whitehall. The personal appearance of the protector formed a striking contrast with the parade of the procession. He was dressed in a plain suit, after the fashion of a country gentleman, and was chiefly distinguished from his attendants by his superior simplicity, and the privilege of wearing his hat. After sermon, he placed himself in the chair of state in the Painted Chamber, while the members seated themselves, uncovered, on benches ranged along the walls. The protector then rose, took off his hat, and addressed them in a speech which lasted three hours. It was, after his usual style, verbose, involved, and obscure, sprinkled with quotations from Scripture to refresh the piety of the saints, and seasoned with an affectation of modesty to disarm the enmity of the republicans.

He described the state of the nation at the close of the last parliament. He then bade them contrast this picture with the existing state of things. The taxes had been reduced; judges of talent and integrity had been placed upon the bench; the burthen of the commissioners of the great seal had been lightened by the removal of many descriptions of causes from the court of Chancery to the ordinary courts of law; and "a stop had been put to that heady way for every man who pleased to become a preacher." The war with Holland had terminated in an advantageous peace; treaties of commerce and amity had been concluded with Denmark and Sweden;[1] a similar treaty, which would place the British trader beyond the reach of the Inquisition, had been signed with Portugal, and another was in progress with the ambassador of the French monarch. Thus had the government brought the three nations by hasty strides towards the land of promise; it was for the parliament to introduce them into it. The prospect was bright before them; let them not look back to the onions and flesh-pots of Egypt.

To procure a parliament favourable to his designs, all the power of the government had been employed to influence the elections; the returns had been examined by a committee of the council, under the pretext of seeing that the provisions of the "instrument" were observed; and the consequence was, that the lord Grey of Groby, Major Wildman, and some other noted republicans, had been excluded by command of the protector. Still he found himself unable to mould the house to his wishes. By the court, Lenthall was put in nomination for the office of speaker; by the opposition, Bradshaw, the boldest and most able of the opposite party. After a short debate, Lenthall was chosen, by the one, because they knew him to be a timid and a time-serving character; by the other, because they thought that, to place him in the chair was one step towards the revival of the Long Parliament, of which he had been speaker.

It was not long before the relative strength of the parties was ascertained,

[1] That with Sweden was negotiated by Whitelocke, who had been sent on that mission against his will by the influence of Cromwell. The object was to detach Sweden from the interest of France, and engage it to maintain the liberty of trade in the Baltic, against Denmark, which was under the influence of Holland. It was concluded April 11. After the peace with Holland, the Danish monarch hastened to appease the protector; the treaty which, though said by Cromwell to be already concluded, was not signed till eleven days afterwards, stipulated that the English traders should pay no other customs or dues than the Dutch. Thus they were enabled to import naval stores on the same terms, while before, on account of the heavy duties, they bought them at second hand of the Dutch.

[1654 A.D.]

After a sharp debate, in which it was repeatedly asked why the members of the Long Parliament then present should not resume the authority of which they had been illegally deprived by force, and by what right, but that of the sword, one man presumed to "command his commanders," the question was put, that the house resolve itself into a committee, to determine whether or not the government shall be in a single person and a parliament; and, to the surprise and alarm of Cromwell, it was carried (September 8th) against the court by a majority of five voices. The leaders of the opposition were Bradshaw, Haslerig, and Scott, who now contended in the committee that the existing government emanated from an incompetent authority, and stood in opposition to the solemn determination of a legitimate parliament; while the protectorists, with equal warmth, maintained that, since it had been approved by the people, the only real source of power, it could not be subject to revision by the representatives of the people. The debate lasted several days, during which the commonwealth party gradually increased in number. That the executive power might be profitably delegated to a single individual, was not disputed; but it was contended that, of right, the legislative authority belonged exclusively to the parliament.[e]

This was far more than the assertion of a rival ambition: it was a systematic determination to admit the legitimacy of no government and of no power which did not emanate from the parliament, as the creature from its creator; it was the proclamation of the primordial, individual, and absolute sovereignty, in principle, of the people, and in fact, of the parliament, as representing the people.

Cromwell was not a philosopher, he did not act in obedience to systematic and premeditated views; but he was guided in his government by the superior instinct and practical good sense of a man destined to govern. He had watched the operation of this arrogant design to create the entire government by the sole will of the people, or of the parliament; he had himself audaciously promoted the work of destruction which had preceded the new creation; and, amidst the ruins which his hands had made, he had perceived the vanity of his rash hopes; he had learned that no government is, or can be, the work of man's will alone; he had recognised, as essential to its production, the action of time, and a variety of other causes apart from human deliberation. Entering, so to speak, into council with these superior powers, he regarded himself as their representative and minister, by the right of his genius, and of his manifold successes. He resolved not to suffer interference with what they had done, and he had done, to establish, in the stead of fallen monarchy, the new government over which he presided.

CROMWELL OVERAWES THE PARLIAMENT (1654 A.D.)

The parliament had spent four days in discussing the question whether it should give this government its approbation. On the morning of the 12th of September, 1654, the members were proceeding to the house, as usual, to continue this debate; and on their way they were constantly met by reports that the parliament was dissolved, and that the council of state and council of war, sitting together as one body, had decided upon its dissolution. On their arrival at Westminister, they found the doors of the parliament house shut, and guarded by soldiers; some of them attempted to go up the stairs: "There is no passage that way," said the guard; "the house is locked up, and we have orders to give no admittance to any person. If you are a member, go into the Painted Chamber, where the protector will presently be."

At about ten o'clock Cromwell appeared, attended by his officers and life guards, and took his stand on the raised dais where he had stood a week before to open the parliament.

"Gentlemen," he said to them, in part, "it is not long since I met you in this place, upon an occasion which gave me much more content and comfort than this doth. I called not myself to this place. I was by birth a gentleman, living neither in any considerable height, nor yet in obscurity. I have been called to several employments in the nation — to serve in parliament and elsewhere; and I did endeavour to discharge the duty of an honest man in those services. Having had some occasions to see, together with my brethren and countrymen, a happy period put to our sharp wars and contests with the then common enemy, I hoped, in a private capacity, to have reaped the fruit and benefit of our hard labours and hazards. I hoped to have had leave to retire to a private life. I begged to be dismissed of my charge; I begged it again and again — and God be judge between me and all men if I lie in this matter. That I lie not, in matter of fact, is known to very many; but whether I tell a lie in my heart, as labouring to represent to you what was not upon my heart, I say, the Lord be judge."

He then proceeded to narrate, in this tone, all his past career — his struggle with the Long Parliament, the overtures he had received from that body, and the necessity he had been under to dissolve it. "Because of my manner of life," he continued, "which had led me up and down the nation, thereby giving me to see and know the temper and spirits of all men, and of the best of men; I knew that the nation loathed their sitting. Under their arbitrary power, poor men were driven, like flocks of sheep, by forty in a morning, to the confiscation of goods and estates, without any man being able to give a reason why two of them had deserved to forfeit a shilling. And so far as I could discern, when they were dissolved, there was not so much as the barking of a dog, or any general and visible repining at it!"

He then referred to the convocation of the Barebones Parliament. "I have appealed to God before you already," he said, "though it be a tender thing to make appeals to God, yet I trust in such exigencies as these it will not offend his majesty. And I say to you again, in the presence of that God who hath blessed, and been with me in all my adversities and successes, that my greatest end was to lay down the power which was in my hands. The authority I had was boundless — for by act of parliament, I was general of all the forces in the three nations; in which unlimited condition I did not desire to live a day — wherefore, we called that meeting. The result was that they came and brought to me a parchment, signed by very much the major part of them, expressing their re-delivery and resignation of the power and authority that had been committed them, back again into my hands. And I can say it, in the presence of divers persons here who know whether I lie in that, that I did not know one tittle of that resignation, till they all came and brought it, and delivered it into my hands.

"My power was again, by this resignation, become as boundless and unlimited as before. All government was dissolved: all civil administration was at an end. I was arbitrary in power; having the armies in the three nations under my command; and truly not very ill-beloved by them, nor very ill-beloved by the people — by the good people. The gentlemen that undertook to frame this government did consult divers days together, how to frame somewhat that might give us settlement; and that I was not privy to their councils they know. When they had finished their model in some measure, they told me that except I would undertake the government,

[1654 A.D.]

they thought things would hardly come to a composure or settlement, but blood and confusion would break in upon us. I refused it again and again; not complimentingly — as they know, and as God knows! They urged on me, 'That I did not hereby receive anything which put me into a higher capacity than before; but that it limited me — that it bound my hands to act nothing without the consent of a council, until the parliament met, and then limited me by the parliament. After many arguments, and at the entreaty and request of divers persons of honour and quality, I did accept of the place and title of protector. I shall submit to your judgment, that I brought not myself into this condition.

"This was not done in a corner: it was open and public. I have a cloud of witnesses. I have witnesses within, without, above! I had the approbation of the officers of the army, in the three nations. And with their express consent, there went along an implied consent also of a body of persons who had had somewhat to do in the world; who had been instrumental, under God, to fight down the enemies of God and of His people — I mean the soldiery. And truly, the soldiery were a very considerable part of these nations, especially when all government was thus dissolved, and nothing to keep things in order but the sword. And yet they — which many histories will not parallel — even they were desirous that things ought to come to a consistency, and arbitrariness be taken away, and the government be put into the hands of a person limited and bounded, as in the Act of Settlement, whom they distrusted the least, and loved not the worst.

"Nor is this all. The judges did declare, that they could not administer justice to the satisfaction of their consciences, until they had received commissions from me. And I have yet more witnesses. All the sheriffs in England are my witnesses; and all that have come in upon a process issued out by sheriffs are my witnesses. All the people in England are my witnesses; and many in Ireland and Scotland. And I shall now make you my last witnesses — and shall ask you, whether you came not hither by my writs, directed to the several sheriffs? To which writs the people gave obedience; having also had the Act of Government communicated to them, which was required to be distinctly read unto the people at the place of election, to avoid surprises, or misleadings of them through their ignorance. There also they signed the indenture, with proviso 'That the persons so chosen should not have power to alter the government as now settled in one single person and a parliament.'

"This being the case, though I told you in my last speech that you were a free parliament, yet I thought it was understood withal that I was the protector, and the authority that called you; that I was in possession of the government by a good right from God and men. I do not know why I may not balance this providence, in the sight of God, with any hereditary interest. And for you to disown or not to own it; for you to act with parliamentary authority, especially in the disowning of it, contrary to the very fundamental things, yea, against the very root itself of this establishment; to sit, and not own the authority by which you sit — is that which I believe astonisheth more men than myself, and doth as dangerously disappoint and discompose the nation as anything that could have been invented by the greatest enemy to our peace and welfare, or that could well have happened. In every government there must be somewhat fundamental, somewhat like a Magna Charta, which should be standing, unalterable."

He would have them to know that four things were fundamental: (1) that the supreme power should be invested in a single person and parliament;

(2) that the parliament should be successive, and not perpetual; (3) that neither protector nor parliament alone should possess the uncontrolled command of the military force; and (4) that liberty of conscience should be fenced round with such barriers as might exclude both profaneness and persecution. The other articles of the instrument were less essential; they might be altered with circumstances; and he should always be ready to agree to what was reasonable. But he would not permit them to sit, and yet disown the authority by which they sat.[e]

He went on: "I can sooner be willing to be rolled into my grave, and buried with infamy, than I can give my consent unto the wilful throwing away of this government, in the fundamentals of it! And therefore I must deal plainly with you. What I forbore upon a just confidence at first, you necessitate me unto now! Seeing the authority which called you is so little valued, and so much slighted — till some assurance be given and made known that the fundamental interest shall be settled and approved, according to the proviso in the writ of return, and such a consent testified as will make it appear that the same is accepted — I have caused a stop to be put to your entrance into the parliament house.

"I am sorry, I am sorry, and I could be sorry to the death, that there is cause for this. But there is cause. There is therefore somewhat to be offered to you: a promise of reforming as to circumstantials, and agreeing in the substance and fundamentals, that is to say, in the form of government now settled. The making of your minds known in that, by giving your assent and subscription to it, is the means that will let you in, to act those things as a parliament which are for the good of the people. The place where you may come thus and sign, as many as God shall make free thereunto, is in the lobby without the parliament door."

So much boldness in displaying his power, and in making indiscriminate use of force and right, truth and falsehood, in the assertion of his authority, struck all minds with stupor. Indignant, but powerless, the republican leaders, Bradshaw, Scott, and Haslerig, refused to give any pledge, and returned home again; and to the honour of the party, about a hundred and fifty members followed their example. But the majority of members either approved or submitted; on the very first day, a hundred and forty signed the required engagement; before the end of the month, more than three hundred had subscribed it, and the parliament resumed its labours. Cromwell manifested no ill-feeling towards the recusant members. On the 18th of September, in order to give an air of independence to their servility, the house converted the whole of Cromwell's recent conduct into a measure of their own, and resolved: "That all persons returned, or who shall be returned, to serve in this parliament, shall, before they be admitted to sit in the house, subscribe the recognition of the government — to be true and faithful to the lord protector, and not to propose, or give consent, to alter the government, as it is settled in one person and a parliament." A disreputable artifice of a mutilated assembly, which falsely ascribed to itself an act of violence, in order to cover its humiliation by the lie!

A singular accident was well nigh causing the abrupt overthrow of the precarious edifice, so laboriously supported by the strong arm of one man. On the 29th of September, Cromwell had taken it into his head to dine in the open air, in Hyde Park, with Thurloe and some of his household; his carriage was harnessed with six Friesland horses which the duke of Oldenburg had sent him not long before; and he resolved to try, with his own hand, the mettle of these animals, "not doubting," says Ludlow,[g] "but they would prove

[1654–1655 A.D.]

as tame as the three nations which were ridden by him." Thurloe[h] could not resist the desire to ride in a carriage driven by the protector, and so got inside. Cromwell, he says, "drove pretty handsomely for some time, but, at last, provoking the horses too much with the whip, they grew unruly"; the postilion was thrown; Cromwell fell from the coach-box upon the pole, and from the pole to the ground; his foot caught in the harness, and he was dragged along for a moment, but he quickly extricated himself, and the carriage passed on without touching him. During his fall, a pistol went off in his pocket, revealing, in the accidental danger which he had incurred, his secret precautions against the constant dangers by which he was surrounded. He was immediately taken up — as well as Thurloe, who had dislocated his ankle by jumping out of the carriage — and conveyed to Whitehall, where he was let blood, and remained confined to his room for nearly three weeks, during which time he received few visitors, and gave but little attention to business. The government newspapers made no allusion to the accident; those of the opposition merely mentioned the danger to which the protector had been exposed, without specifying its cause; the court poets celebrated his miraculous deliverance.[1]

Cromwell's real or apparent inactivity lasted much longer than his indisposition; for more than three months, he remained almost utterly unmoved and silent, as if his only intention were to watch and wait. Meanwhile parliament was discussing the constitution of the protectorate.[f]

CROMWELL DISSOLVES THE PARLIAMENT (1655 A.D.)

The force so lately put on the parliament, and the occasion of that force, had opened the eyes of the most devoted among his adherents. His protestations of disinterestedness, his solemn appeals to heaven in testimony of his wish to lead the life of a private gentleman, were contrasted with his aspiring and arbitrary conduct; and the house, though deprived of one-fourth of its number, still contained a majority jealous of his designs and anxious to limit his authority. The accident which had placed his life in jeopardy naturally led to the consideration of the probable consequences of his death; and, to sound the disposition of the members, the question of the succession was repeatedly, though not formally, introduced. The remarks which it provoked afforded little encouragement to his hopes; yet, when the previous arrangements had been made, and all the dependants of the government had been mustered, Lambert, having in a long and studied speech detailed the evils of elective, the benefits of hereditary, succession, moved that the office of protector should be limited to the family of Oliver Cromwell, according to the known law of inheritance. To the surprise and the mortification of the party, the motion was negatived by a division of two hundred against eighty voices; and it was resolved that, on the death of the protector, his successor should be chosen by the parliament if it were sitting, and by the council in the absence of parliament. Cromwell, on his part, betrayed no symptom of impatience; but waited quietly for the moment when he had resolved to break the designs of his adversaries. They proceeded with the revision of the "instrument"; their labours were embodied in a bill, and the bill was read a third time. During two days the courtiers prolonged the debate by moving a variety of amendments; on the third Cromwell summoned the house to meet him in the Painted Chamber. Displeasure and contempt were marked

[1 The cavaliers declared with better wit than prophesy that Cromwell's next fall would be from the end of a hangman's cart.]

on his countenance; and the high and criminatory tone which he assumed taught them to feel how inferior the representatives of the people were to the representative of the army.

They appeared there, he observed, with the speaker at their head, as a house of parliament. Yet, what had they done as a parliament? He never had played, he never would play, the orator; and therefore he would tell them frankly, they had done nothing. For five months they had passed no bill, had made no address, had held no communication with him. But had they then done nothing? Yes: they had encouraged the cavaliers to plot against the commonwealth, and the levellers to intrigue with the cavaliers. By their dissension they had aided the fanatics to throw the nation into confusion, and by the slowness of their proceedings had compelled the soldiers to live at free quarters on the country. They supposed that he sought to make the protectorship hereditary in his family. It was not true; had they inserted such a provision in the "instrument," on that ground alone he would have rejected it. He spoke in the fear of the Lord, who would not be mocked, and with the satisfaction that his conscience did not belie his assertion. The different revolutions which had happened were attributed to his cunning. How blind were men who would not see the hand of providence in its merciful dispensations, who ridiculed as the visions of enthusiasm the observations "made by the quickening and teaching Spirit!" It was supposed that he would not be able to raise money without the aid of parliament. But "he had been inured to difficulties, and never found God failing when he trusted in Him." But that he might trouble them no longer, it was his duty to tell them that their continuance was not for the benefit of the nation, and therefore he did then and there declare that he dissolved the parliament.

This was a stroke for which his adversaries were unprepared. The "instrument" had provided that the parliament should continue to sit during five months, and it still wanted twelve days of the expiration of that term. But Cromwell chose to understand the clause not of calendar but of lunar months, the fifth of which had been completed on the preceding evening. Much might have been urged against such an interpretation; but a military force was ready to support the opinion of the protector, and prudence taught the most reluctant of his enemies to submit.

ROYALIST CONSPIRACIES AND CROMWELL'S DESPOTISM

The coalition of royalists and republicans to which Cromwell alluded was no fiction. The common hatred of him united them, and each hoped that when he was overthrown they would be able to subdue their allies and establish their own system. Some of the leading republicans, such as Colonel Overton and Major Wildman, entered into correspondence with the exiled king. Okey, Alured, Lawson, and Hacker, held consultations with Wildman, at which Marten and Lord Grey of Groby are said to have been sometimes present. Of the co-operation of Haslerig, Harrison, Carew, and some others, there seems to have been no doubt. The vigilance of the government, however, disconcerted all their plans. Overton was arrested and sent up from Scotland; Lord Grey, Harrison, and Carew, were committed to various prisons. Wildman was taken in the very act of dictating "The Declaration of the free and well-affected people of England, now in arms against the tyrant Oliver Cromwell, Esq." A part of Whitelocke's remarks on it are as follows: "Divers suspected their designs at the bottom in it to intend the bringing in of the king; because they conclude in their declaration for a truly free parliament, which

[1655 A.D.]

was the way for the king's restauration. And that began now to be held fit and requisite by many sober and faithful patriots, who were distasted at the private ambition of some and their domineering." He hints that he was himself of this way of thinking. We everywhere meet with proofs of the general wish for the restoration of the monarchy.

The general rising of the royalists had been fixed for the beginning of March (1655). Wilmot (now earl of Rochester) and Sir Joseph Wagstaff came over privately to take the command of them, and Charles himself with Ormonde and others moved from Cologne to Middelburg, to be ready to pass over to England. The wakeful eye of government, however, was on their projects, and the partial risings which they made in Yorkshire and the west were easily suppressed. Sir Henry Slingsby and Sir Richard Malever, who had been with Wilmot at the head of the former, were taken, but Wilmot himself escaped. In the west, Wagstaff being joined by Colonel Penruddock, Captain Grove, and about two hundred others, entered Salisbury on a Sunday night (March 11th), and seized in their beds the judges and the sheriff who were there to hold the assizes next day. In the morning Wagstaff prepared to hang them; but Penruddock and others, horrified at such barbarity, interposed so warmly that he consented to liberate them. The insurgents then proclaimed the king, but finding that none joined them, and that a reinforcement which they expected from Hampshire did not arrive, they retired and passed through Dorset into Devon, where they were attacked at South Molton by Captain Crooke, and routed. Wagstaff made his escape, the rest surrendered. Cromwell resolved to venture on trying them by jury, and as their guilt was manifest according to the existing laws, they were all found guilty. Grove and Penruddock were beheaded; some were hanged, others were pardoned; the remainder, without any regard to their station in life, were, in the usual way, shipped off for slaves to Barbadoes.

Hitherto Cromwell had been lenient to the royalists in the hopes of gaining them; of this he now despaired, and he resolved to keep measures with them no longer. A great number of noblemen and gentlemen were arrested; the Episcopalian clergy were forbidden to act as schoolmasters or tutors, or to use the church service either in public or private; priests were ordered to quit the kingdom under pain of death; cavaliers and papists were not to come within less than twenty miles of the city. He finally "decimated" the royalists, that is, imposed an annual income-tax of ten per cent. on all possessing £100 a year and upwards in land, or £1,500 in personal property, who had ever borne arms for the king, or declared themselves to be of the royal party. He thus openly trampled on the Act of Oblivion, which, when it suited his purpose, he had pressed on so strenuously. The reason he assigned was, that as, by their obstinately keeping themselves separate from the rest of the nation, they were a continual cause of danger, it was but just that they should be made to defray the expenses incurred in guarding against it.

For the collection of this tax, and for carrying into effect his other arbitrary measures, he divided England into eleven districts, over each of which he set a major-general. These officers were furnished with most extensive authority; they were empowered to raise troops, levy the taxes, disarm cavaliers and papists, inquire into the conduct of ministers and schoolmasters, arrest and imprison dangerous and suspicious persons. When to these we add the arbitrary system of general taxation continued or imposed, the high courts of justice, the interference with the functions of judges and advocates, we have a picture of despotism before which that of the Stuarts almost sinks into insignificance.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND NAVAL EXPEDITIONS

We now turn to the foreign affairs of the protector's government. France and Spain, we have seen, were rivals for his favour. Of all the states of Europe, Spain was, perhaps, the one with which there was least ground of quarrel: it had given no countenance whatever to the royal family; it had been the first to acknowledge the commonwealth. But on the other hand, Cromwell was a zealous Protestant, and Spain was Catholic, and the chief seat of the Inquisition; and the gold and silver which it drew from America were, moreover, tempting to the protector's cupidity. He did not see why Spain should monopolise the wealth of an immense country, the innocent people of which she had so barbarously massacred, and treat as pirates the crews of all ships which were found in those latitudes. The Spanish court, meantime, aware that Cromwell was equipping a fleet, and fearing that it might be intended for the West Indies, sent the marquis of Leyda to London; but after staying there five months, he returned without having effected anything.

Cromwell had, in fact, prepared two fleets; the one of thirty sail under Blake had sailed in the preceding month of October (1655) to the Mediterranean, to exact reparation for injuries done to the English trade by the states around that sea. Blake first cast anchor before the port of Leghorn, and he made the duke of Tuscany and the pope pay 60,000*l.* for the injuries done to the English nation [in permitting Prince Rupert to sell in their ports three English merchantmen captured in 1650]. He then sailed to Algiers (March 10th, 1656), and required the dey to deliver up the English ships and men taken by his piratic subjects. Having received a conciliatory reply, he proceeded to Tunis, and made a similar demand; but the dey bade him destroy the castles of Goletta and Porto Forina, and his fleet, if he was able. Blake speedily silenced the fire of these castles, and then entered the harbour and burned nine ships of war that were lying there. He sailed thence to Tripoli, whose dey submitted at once to his demands. Having thus chastised these pirates, Blake returned to England.

The other fleet, which consisted of thirty sail, commanded by Admiral Penn, and carrying four thousand land forces under General Venables, sailed about the end of December for the West Indies,[1] with sealed orders. When they reached Barbadoes January 29th, they opened their instructions, and having enlisted and regimented a good number of those who had been sent thither as slaves, and thus raised their forces to nine thousand men, to which they added twelve hundred at St. Christopher's, they sailed to Haiti; but instead of entering the port of Santo Domingo at once (April 14th), when the town would probably have submitted, they landed the troops at a distance of forty miles from it. Here a mutiny broke out in consequence of Commissioner Winslow's issuing a proclamation, stating, in Roman fashion, that all plunder should be public property. This being appeased by Venables, they advanced for three days under a burning sun, and living chiefly on unripe fruit, which caused diseases among the men. At length they joined a detachment which had landed within ten miles of the town. As they advanced they fell into an ambuscade; they drove off the enemy, but their success was of no avail, for the diseased condition of the troops made it necessary for them to fall back to the station of the detachment, where they remained for a week. When they

[1 Gardiner notes that the mundane spirit of conquest now revealed marks a turning point in the Puritan attitude, and in Cromwell's soul. He also thinks that, whatever the provocation, the act of sending a fleet to attack Spanish colonies previous to any declaration of war was highly dishonourable.]

advanced again toward the town (on the 25th), the road, lying through a thick wood, was commanded by a battery, and the sides were lined with Spanish marksmen. The advance guard in disorder fell back on a regiment of foot, and they on a troop of horse; all was confusion till a body of seamen cleared the wood. But night then came on, and they returned once more to their former station. Here a council of war having decided that success was now hopeless, it was resolved to re-embark the troops. They therefore left Haiti (May 3rd); but as the commanders feared to return without having effected something, they made a descent on the 10th on the island of Jamaica, the people of which offered no resistance; but they had placed the greater part of their property in security, so that the plunder gained was trifling. By Cromwell and the nation, the acquisition of Jamaica was thought a matter of no importance; yet there were people who saw further into things, and regarded it as really of more value to England than Haiti would have been. Penn and Venables were, on their return, both committed to the Tower by the indignant and mortified protector. They had shown themselves inefficient commanders, and by their want of harmony they had almost ensured failure.

Cromwell at this time added to his reputation in the eyes of the world by his prompt and effectual interference in behalf of the Vaudois, or Protestant inhabitants of the valleys of Lucerne, Perusa, and San Martino in Piedmont, who were persecuted by their Catholic sovereign. There are of course conflicting statements on this subject; but it is a fair conclusion, where the Catholics were by far the stronger party, they were the aggressors. The Vaudois, it appears, were ordered to give up a part of the valley of Lucerne; they expressed their dissatisfaction, and the duke of Savoy forthwith quartered troops in their valleys. The soldiers acted with insolence and tyranny; the people resisted but were overpowered, and a massacre of about three hundred of the inhabitants of Lucerne was perpetrated (April 21st) with all the circumstances, we are assured, of the most revolting barbarity.[1] When the intelligence reached England, Cromwell lost no time in sending off Under-Secretary Morland as his envoy to Turin; he wrote letters to all the Protestant states of Europe, and he made the security of the Vaudois a *sine quâ non* in the treaty which was pending with the court of France. The duke was therefore obliged to allow his Protestant subjects to exercise the religion of their fathers, and Cromwell sent them a sum of money from himself in addition to what had by his permission been collected for them in the churches.

When the Spanish court was certified of the attempt on Haiti, it was thrown into great perplexity, being already engaged in a war with France. It could not, however, tamely pass over such an indignity; it was therefore resolved (September 1st) to lay an embargo on the English ships and property in Spain; and Cardenas also received orders to remonstrate, and if not satisfied, to withdraw. He accordingly left England (October 24th), and the day after his departure Cromwell put forth a declaration of the justice of the war on his part, and signed the treaty with France by a secret article of which ten Frenchmen were to be excluded from the British dominions, and Charles II, the duke of York, Ormonde, Hyde, and fifteen others from those of France.

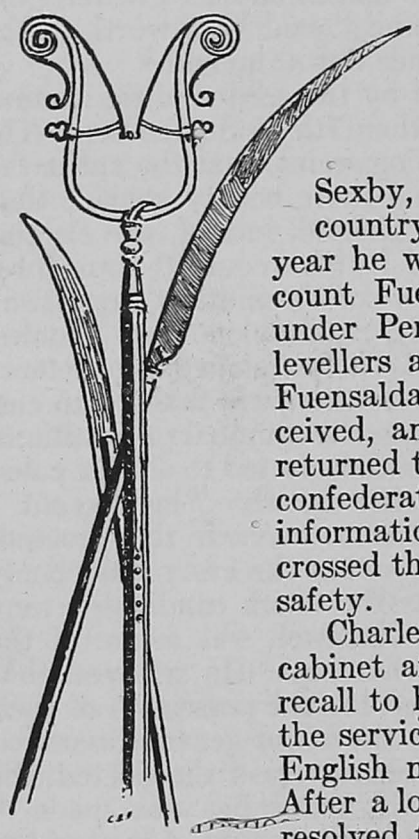
Among the events of this year may be noticed the return of the Jews to England, where they had not been settled since the reign of Edward I. Manasseh Ben Israel, a distinguished rabbi, came over to England to negotiate with

[1 On this atrocity Milton wrote his sonnet beginning:

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold."]

the protector on this subject [and to offer a large sum for permission to settle and trade in England]; and though the bigotry of the committee appointed to consider his propositions did not allow Cromwell to go so far as he wished, he permitted them to come over, to build a synagogue, and to purchase ground for a cemetery.

Political parties are willing to join with those whom they most hate to overthrow an object of common aversion. In accordance with this principle, we now meet the sectarian levellers again in alliance with the royalists, and even with the court of Spain. Edward Sexby, a man who had risen from the ranks to the post of colonel, had been an admirer and an agent of Cromwell's in the army; he had been a leading agitator; he was a zealot for liberty, and when his former idol apostatised as he thought, he became his inveterate foe. After the arrest of Wildman and others, Sexby, who had not been taken, went through the country distributing pamphlets. In the May of this year he went over to Brussels, where he informed the count Fuensaldaña of the real destination of the fleet under Penn and Venables, and offered the aid of the levellers against the protector, if furnished with money. Fuensaldaña sent him to Madrid, where he was well received, and he obtained 40,000 crowns, with which he returned to Antwerp, whence he sent various sums to his confederates in England; and though Cromwell had gotten information, and even seized a remittance of £800, Sexby crossed the channel, remained some time, and returned in safety.



SCYTHES USED AS WEAPONS IN CIVIL WARS, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Charles had made an offer of alliance to the Spanish cabinet after the rupture with England. He engaged to recall to his standard the English and Irish regiments in the service of France; he boasted of his influence in the English navy, and, like Sexby, only asked for money. After a long period of the usual delay, the court of Spain resolved to accept both offers, and to effect a union between Charles and Sexby. The latter said that the wish of his friends was to have a free parliament, in which case there was no doubt that Charles would be restored, though with some limitations. The plan formed was, that Charles should raise four regiments out of his subjects in the service of France, that Spain should furnish a body of six thousand men, and that the levellers should secure for them a port and fortress not distant from London, where they might effect a landing.[i]

THE SECOND PROTECTORATE PARLIAMENT (1656 A.D.)

The equipment of the fleet had exhausted the treasury, and the protector dared not impose additional taxes on the country at a time when his right to levy the ordinary revenue was disputed in the courts of law. On the ground that the parliamentary grants were expired, Sir Peter Wentworth had refused to pay the assessment in the country, and Coney, a merchant, the duties on imports in London. The commissioners imposed fines, and distrained; the aggrieved brought actions against the collectors.[e]

[1656 A.D.]

Cromwell tried to soothe the sturdy citizen Coney who reminded him that he himself had said in the Long Parliament, that the subject who yields to an illegal impost is more the enemy of his country than the tyrant who imposes it. The protector sent the merchant to prison; and then more arbitrarily imprisoned the counsel, who had, in pleading for his writ of habeas corpus, used arguments which went to deny altogether the legality of the authority of the existing government. There was a compromise in which Coney at length withdrew his opposition to the impost, and his legal defenders were released. Sir Peter Wentworth was brought before Cromwell and his council. He was required to withdraw an action which he had commenced against the tax-collector. "If you command it I must submit," said Wentworth to the protector. He did command it, and the resistance was at an end.[k]

But the want of money daily increased, and by the advice of the council he consented to call a parliament to meet on the 17th of September. The result of the elections revealed to him the alarming secret, that the antipathy to his government was more deeply rooted, and more widely spread, than he had previously imagined. In Scotland and Ireland, indeed, the electors obsequiously chose the members recommended by the council; but these were conquered countries, bending under the yoke of military despotism. In England, the whole nation was in a ferment; pamphlets were clandestinely circulated, calling on the electors to make a last struggle in defence of their liberties; and though Vane, Ludlow, and Rich were taken into custody; though other republican leaders were excluded by criminal prosecutions, though the cavaliers, the Catholics, and all who had neglected to aid the cause of the parliament, were disqualified from voting by the "instrument"; though a military force was employed in London to overawe the proceedings, and the whole influence of the government and of the army was openly exerted in the country, yet in several counties the court candidates were wholly, and in most, partially, rejected. But Cromwell was aware of the error which he had committed in the last parliament. He resolved that none of his avowed opponents should be allowed to take possession of their seats. The returns were laid before the council; the major-generals received orders to inquire into the political and religious characters of the elected; the reports of these officers were carefully examined; and a list was made of nearly one hundred persons to be excluded under the pretext of immorality or delinquency.

On the appointed day, the protector, after divine service, addressed the new "representatives" in the Painted Chamber. His real object was to procure money, and with this view he sought to excite their alarm, and to inflame their religious antipathies.

From the Painted Chamber the members proceeded to the house. A military guard was stationed at the door, and a certificate from the council was required from each individual previously to his admission. The excluded members complained by letter of this breach of parliamentary privilege. A strong feeling of disapprobation was manifested in several parts of the house. Several members, to show their disapprobation, voluntarily seceded, and those, who had been excluded by force, published (September 22nd) in bold and indignant language an appeal to the justice of the people.

Having weeded out his enemies, Cromwell had no reason to fear opposition to his pleasure. The house passed a resolution declaratory of the justice and policy of the war against Spain, and two acts, by one of which were annulled all claims of Charles Stuart and his family to the crown, by the other were provided additional safeguards for the person of the chief governor. With

the same unanimity, a supply of four hundred thousand pounds was voted, but when the means of raising the money came under consideration, a great diversity of opinion prevailed. Week after week, month after month, was tediously and fruitlessly consumed; though the time limited by the "instrument" was past, still the money bill had made no progress; and, to add to the impatience of Cromwell, a new subject was accidentally introduced, which, as it strongly interested the passions, absorbed for some time the attention of the house.

At the age of nineteen, George Fox, the son of a weaver of Drayton, heard, or persuaded himself that he heard, an inward voice, calling on him to forsake his parents' house, and to make himself a stranger in his own country. Docile to the celestial admonition, he began to lead a solitary life, wandering from place to place, and clothed from head to foot in garments of leather. He found himself inebriated with spiritual delights, and received an assurance that his name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life. At the same time, he was forbidden by the Lord to employ the plural pronoun "you" in addressing a single person," to bid his neighbour good even or good morrow, or to uncover the head, or scrape with the leg to any mortal being. In 1647, he preached for the first time at Duckenfield, not far from Manchester; but the most fruitful scene of his labours was at Swarthmoor, near Ulverston. His disciples followed his example. Their refusal to uncover before the bench was usually punished with a fine, on the ground of contempt; their religious objection to take an oath, or to pay tithes, exposed them to protracted periods of imprisonment; and they were often and severely whipped as vagrants. Still, in defiance of punishment and calumny, the Quakers, or Friends, so they were called, persevered in their profession.

Of the severities so wantonly exercised against these religionists it is difficult to speak with temper. Of this, James Naylor furnished a striking instance. He accepted the worship which was paid to him, not as offered to James Naylor, but to Christ dwelling in James Naylor. Under this impression, during part of his progress to Bristol, and at his entrance into that city, he rode on horseback with a man walking bareheaded before him, two females holding his bridle on each side, and others attending him, one of whom, Dorcas Erbury, maintained that he had raised her to life after she had been dead the space of two days. These occasionally threw scarfs and handkerchiefs before him, and sang, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hosts; Hosanna in the highest; holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Israel." The house voted that Naylor was guilty of blasphemy; the more zealous moved that he should be put to death. The punishment to which he was doomed ought to have satisfied the most bigoted of his adversaries. He stood with his neck in the pillory for two hours (December 18th) and was whipped from Palace Yard to the Old Exchange, receiving three hundred and ten lashes on the way. Some days later he was again placed in the pillory; and the letter B for blasphemer was burned on his forehead, and his tongue was bored with a red-hot iron. From London the house ordered him to be conducted to Bristol (January 13, 1657), the place of his offence. He entered at Lamford's Gate, riding on the bare back of a horse with his face to the tail; dismounted at Rockley Gate, and was successively whipped in five parts of the city. His admirers, however, were not ashamed of the martyr. On every occasion they attended him bareheaded; they kissed and sucked his wounds; and they chanted with him passages from the Scriptures. On his return to London, he was committed to solitary confinement, without pen, ink, or paper, or fire, or candle, and with no other sustenance than what

[1657 A.D.]

he might earn by his own industry. Here the delusion under which he laboured gradually wore away. By the Rump Parliament he was afterwards discharged. In 1660 he was found in a dying state in a field in Huntingdonshire, and shortly afterwards expired.

CROMWELL WOULD BE KING

While the parliament thus spent its time in the prosecution of an offence which concerned it not, Cromwell anxiously revolved in his own mind a secret project of the first importance to himself and the country. To his ambition, it was not sufficient that he actually possessed the supreme authority, and exercised it with more despotic sway than any of his legitimate predecessors; he still sought to mount a step higher, to encircle his brows with a diadem, and to be addressed with the title of majesty. It could not be, that vanity alone induced him to hazard the attachment of his friends for the sake of mere parade and empty sound. He had rendered the more modest title of protector as great and as formidable as that of king, and, though uncrowned, had treated on a footing of equality with the proudest of the crowned heads in Europe. It is more probable that he was led by considerations of interest. He knew that the nation was weary of change; he saw with what partiality men continued to cling to the old institutions; and he, perhaps, trusted that the establishment of an hereditary monarchy, with a house of peers, though under a new dynasty, and with various modifications, might secure the possession of the crown, not only to himself, but also to his posterity. However that may be, he now made the acquisition of the kingly dignity the object of his policy.

The first opportunity of preparing the public mind for this important alteration was furnished by the recent proceedings against Naylor, which had provoked considerable discontent on account of the judicial authority exercised by the house — an authority which appeared subversive of the national liberties.[e] Cromwell, as we have seen by what he said to Whitelocke, had had this idea in his mind for some time. He now consulted on the subject with Thurloe, Pierrepoint, and St. John; and to gain the good-will of the people, he resolved to commence with allowing the arbitrary rule of the major-generals to be terminated. A bill being brought in (January 7th, 1657), of which the object was to confirm their past acts, and invest them with legal authority for the future, it was opposed by Claypole, the protector's son-in-law, and by Lord Broghill his confidant. The debate was continued for ten successive days; the tyranny of the "bashaws," as they were called, was detailed and dwelt on; but, headed by Lambert, they defended themselves with spirit. One of their arguments amounting to this, that the whole body of the cavaliers should be punished for the offence of some, Henry Cromwell, the protector's nephew, replied, that on this principle, all the major-generals ought to be punished, because some of them had done ill, of which he could produce proofs. He was called on to name, and he professed himself ready to do so; but the debate was adjourned. It was hinted to him that his uncle would not be pleased with his conduct; but he went that very night and told the protector what he had done, and added, that he "had his black book and papers ready to make good what he had said." Cromwell replied in a jesting manner; and taking off a rich scarlet cloak and his gloves, gave them to Henry, who strutted into the house with them next day. The bill was finally lost (on the 29th) by a large majority, and

the major-generals remained exposed to actions at law for their previous conduct.

While this bill was pending, a plot to murder the protector was discovered. The agent was Miles Syndercomb, who had been a quartermaster in Monk's army, but had been dismissed for his share in Overton's plot. Sexby, when last in England, had arranged the plan with him, and there can be no doubt that Charles and his court knew and approved of it. The death of Cromwell was to be the signal for the rising of the levellers and royalists, and the invasion from Flanders. Syndercomb and another named Cecil bribed Tooke, a life-guardsman, to give them information of the places where Cromwell was to pass, intending to shoot him from a window; but something always occurred to frustrate them, and at Wildman's suggestion they altered their plan. One evening at six o'clock (January 9th, 1657), they entered the chapel at Whitehall, and having set a basket of combustibles in one of the pews, lighted a slow match, calculated for six hours; but as they were coming out they were all seized, for Tooke had betrayed them. Cecil told all he knew, which only amounted to this, that some persons in the palace were to kill Cromwell in the confusion. Syndercomb was tried and condemned for high treason (February 9th); he would give no information, and he was found dead in his bed a few hours before the time appointed for his execution (13th). The royalists and levellers maintained that he had been strangled by Cromwell's orders; the verdict of the jury was suicide by snuffing up a poisonous powder.

The pulse of the house on the subject of kingship having been felt after the discovery of this plot, about a month later (February 23rd), Alderman Pack rose and presented a paper, called "A Humble Address and Remonstrance," protesting against the present uncertain form of government, and calling on the protector to assume a higher title. The officers instantly rose in a great heat, and Pack was borne down to the bar; but order being restored, and Lord Broghill, with Glyn, Whitelocke, and the lawyers and dependents of the court supporting Pack, the paper was read, and it was resolved to take it into consideration. It was debated, article by article, and at length adopted under the title of "The Humble Petition and Advice."

The only opposition which Cromwell had to fear was that of the army, in which interest swayed some, fanaticism others, to oppose it. Lambert, in particular, was against it; for being the second person in the country and a vain ambitious man, he looked forward to being the next protector. His proposal to the officers was, to bring up five regiments of cavalry and compel the house to confirm the "instrument" and the establishment of major-generals. They hesitated however to adopt this bold measure, and he then withdrew from their councils. The inferior officers also held meetings, and they sent (on the 28th) one hundred of their number to inform the protector of their sentiments. He reminded them that at one time they had offered him the title of king; he said he had always been the drudge of the officers; that the parliament had been called contrary to his judgment, that it required to be controlled, which could only be done by enlarging the authority of the protector. Several were convinced by his reasons, but they had no effect on the majority. They, however, agreed that if the question of the title were kept to be last considered, they would make no opposition to those of his being empowered to name his successor, and of the parliament's consisting of two houses as he proposed.

On the 25th of March the title of king was voted, and six days after a committee waited on the protector with The Humble Petition and Advice. He spoke of the "consternation of his mind" at the offer, and requested time "to ask

[1657 A.D.]

counsel of God and his own heart"; at the same time approving of everything but the new title to be given to himself. At his desire, a committee was appointed to hear and resolve his scruples. After various conferences, he owned (Apr. 20th) that his doubts were removed, and at length he appointed a day (May 6th) to meet the parliament, when it was fully expected that he would accept the royal title.

Cromwell had vainly sought to gain his brother and son-in-law, Desborough and Fleetwood, over to his design. They now told him that they must resign their commissions; and Desborough having informed Pride of what Cromwell was about to do, the latter cried out, "He shall not." When asked how he could prevent it, he said by a petition signed by the officers: they approved of his plan, and went straight to Doctor Owen, and prevailed on him to draw up one without delay.

The 8th was the day finally fixed for the protector to meet the parliament. On the morning of that day, Colonel Mason and six-and-twenty other officers came and presented the petition, in which they asserted that the design of those who urged the general to take the title of king was to destroy him and bring the nation under the old servitude, and prayed the parliament to continue steady to the old cause, for which they themselves were willing to lay down their lives.

Cavalier of the Seventeenth Century

CROMWELL REFUSES THE TITLE AND IS INAUGURATED PROTECTOR

This bold step subdued the reluctance of the protector. He abandoned the lofty hopes to which he had so long, so pertinaciously clung, despatched Fleetwood to the house to prevent a debate, and shortly afterwards summoned the members to meet him at Whitehall. Addressing them with more than his usual embarrassment, he said, that neither his own reflections nor the reasoning of the committee had convinced him that he ought to accept the title of king. If he were to accept it, it would be doubtingly; if he did it doubtingly, it would not be of faith; and if it were not of faith, it would be a sin. "Wherefore," he concluded, "I cannot undertake this government with that title of king, and this is mine answer to this great and weighty business."

Thus ended the mighty farce which for more than two months held in suspense the hopes and fears of three nations. But the friends of Cromwell resumed the subject in parliament. It was observed that he had not refused to administer the government under any other title; the name of king was expunged for that of protector; and with this and a few more amendments, the Humble Petition and Advice received the sanction of the chief magistrate. The inauguration followed. On the platform, raised at the upper end of Westminster Hall, and in front of a magnificent chair of state, stood the protector; while the speaker, with his assistants, invested him with a purple mantle lined with ermine, presented him with a bible superbly gilt and embossed, girt a sword by his side, and placed a sceptre of massive gold in his hand. At a signal given, the trumpet sounded; the heralds proclaimed the

style of the new sovereign; and the spectators shouted, "Long live his highness; God save the lord-protector." He rose immediately, bowed to the ambassadors, and walked in state through the hall to his carriage. Most of the officers took the oath of fidelity to the protector. Lambert refused, and resigned his commissions, which brought him about six thousand pounds per annum. Cromwell, however, assigned to him a yearly pension of two thousand pounds.

That which distinguished the present from the late form of government was the return which it made towards the more ancient institutions of the country. That return, indeed, had wrung from Cromwell certain concessions repugnant to his feelings and ambition, but to which he probably was reconciled by the consideration that in the course of a few years they might be modified or repealed. The supreme authority was vested in the protector; but, instead of rendering it hereditary in his family, the most which he could obtain was the power of nominating his immediate successor. The two houses of parliament were restored; but, as if it were meant to allude to his past conduct, he was bound to leave to the house of commons the right of examining the qualifications and determining the claims of the several representatives.

To him was given the power of nominating the members of the "other house" (he dared not yet term it the house of lords); but, in the first instance, the persons so nominated were to be approved by the house of representatives, and afterwards by the other house itself. In the appointment of councillors, the great officers of state, and the commanders of the forces, many of the restrictions sought to be introduced by the Long Parliament were enforced. In point of religion, it was enacted that a confession of faith should be agreed upon between the protector and the two houses; but that dissenters from it should enjoy liberty of conscience, and the free exercise of their worship, unless they should reject the mystery of the Trinity, or the inspiration of the Scriptures, or profess prelatic, or popish, or blasphemous doctrines. The yearly revenue was fixed at one million three hundred thousand pounds, of which no part was to be raised by a land-tax; and of this sum one million was devoted to the support of the army and navy, and three hundred thousand pounds to the expenses of the civil list; but, on the remonstrance of the protector, that with so small a revenue it would be impossible to continue the war, an additional grant of six hundred thousand pounds was voted for the three following years. After the inauguration, the commons adjourned during six months, that time might be allowed for the formation of the "other house."[1]

The failure of the Syndercomb conspiracy would not have prevented the intended invasion by the royal army from Flanders, had not Charles been disappointed in his expectations from another quarter. No reasoning, no entreaty, could quicken the characteristic slowness of the Spanish ministers. But Sexby's impatience refused to submit to these delays; his fierce and implacable spirit could not be satisfied without the life of the protector. A tract had been recently printed in Holland, entitled *Killing No Murder*, which, from the powerful manner in which it was written, made a deeper impression on the public mind than any other literary production of the age. After an address to Cromwell, and another to the army, both conceived in a strain of the most poignant and sarcastic irony, it proceeds to discuss the three

[1] In a catalogue printed at the time, the names were given of one hundred and eighty-two members of this parliament, who, it was pretended, "were sons, kinsmen, servants, and otherwise engaged unto, and had places of profit, offices, salaries, and advantages, under the protector," sharing annually among them out of the public money the incredible sum of one million sixteen thousand three hundred and seventeen pounds, sixteen shillings, and eightpence.

[1657 A.D.]

questions: Whether the lord-protector be a tyrant? Whether it be lawful to do justice on him by killing him? and, Whether this, if it be lawful, will prove of benefit to the commonwealth? Having determined each question in the affirmative, it concludes with an eulogium on the bold and patriotic spirit of Syndercomb, the rival of Brutus and Cato, and a warning that the protector's own muster-roll contains the names of those who aspire to the honour of delivering their country; that his highness is not secure at his table or in his bed; that death is at his heels wherever he moves, and that though his head reaches the clouds, he shall perish like his own dung, and they that have seen him shall exclaim, Where is he?

Of this tract thousands of copies were sent by Sexby into England; and, though many were seized by the officers, yet many found their way into circulation. Having obtained a sum of one thousand four hundred crowns, he followed the books to organise new plots against the life of the protector. But by this time he was too well known. All his steps in Holland were watched; his departure for England was announced; emissaries were despatched in every direction; and within a few weeks he was apprehended and incarcerated in the Tower. There he discovered, probably feigned, symptoms of insanity. He was never brought to trial, but died, probably by violence, in the sixth month of his imprisonment.[1]

VICTORY AND DEATH OF BLAKE (1657 A.D.)

During the winter Blake continued to blockade Cadiz: in the spring he learned that the Plate fleet from Peru had sought an asylum in the harbour of Santa Cruz, in the island of Teneriffe. There the merchantmen, ten in number, were moored close to the shore, in the form of a crescent; while the six galleons in their front formed a parallel line at anchor in deeper water. The entrance of the bay was commanded by the guns of the castle; seven batteries erected at intervals along the beach protected the rest of the harbour; and these were connected with each other by covered ways lined with musketry. Blake examined the defences, and, according to custom, proclaimed a solemn fast. At eight on the morning of April 20th, 1657, Stayner took the lead in a frigate; the admiral followed in the larger ships; and the whole fleet availing itself of a favourable wind, entered the harbour under a tremendous shower of balls and shells. The Spaniards, though few in number of ships, were superior in that of men; their hopes were supported by the aid which they received from the land; and during four hours they fought with the most determined bravery. Driven from the galleons, the crews retreated to the second line of merchantmen, and renewed the contest till they were finally compelled to save themselves on the shore.

At two in the afternoon every Spanish ship was in possession of the English, and in flames. Still there remained the difficulty of working the fleet out of the harbour in the teeth of the gale. About sunset they were out of reach of the guns from the forts; the wind, by a miracle, as Blake persuaded himself, veered to the south-west, and the conquerors proceeded triumphantly out to sea. This gallant action, though it failed of securing the treasure which the protector chiefly sought, raised the reputation of Blake in every part of Europe. Unfortunately the hero himself lived not to receive the congratulations of his country. He had been during a great part of three years at sea;

[1] Clarendon assures us that Sexby was an illiterate person, which is a sufficient proof that he was not the real author of the tract, though he acknowledged it for his own in the Tower, probably to deceive the protector. By most historians it has been attributed to Captain Titus.

the scurvy and dropsy wasted his constitution; and he expired August 7th, 1657, in his fifty-ninth year, as his ship, the *St. George*, entered the harbour of Plymouth.

Blake had served with distinction in the army during the civil war; and the knowledge of his talents and integrity induced the parliamentary leaders to entrust him with the command of the fleet. For maritime tactics he relied on the experience of others; his plans and his daring were exclusively his own. He may claim the peculiar praise of having dispelled an illusion which had hitherto cramped the operations of the British navy — a persuasion that it was little short of madness to expose a ship at sea to the fire from a battery on shore. Though Cromwell prized his services, he doubted his attachment. But he publicly acknowledged his merit, honouring his bones with a funeral at the national expense, and ordering them to be interred at Westminster, in Henry the Seventh's chapel.[1] In the next reign the coffin was taken from the vault, and deposited in the churchyard.

The reader is aware of Cromwell's anxiety to form a more intimate alliance with Louis XIV. For this purpose Lockhart, one of the Scottish judges, who had married his niece, and received knighthood at his hand, proceeded to France. After some discussion, a treaty, to last twelve months, was concluded. To avoid disputes, the treaty was written in the Latin language, and the precedency was given to Louis in one copy, to Cromwell in the other. Sir John Reynolds landed at Calais with an auxiliary force of six thousand men, one half in the pay of the king, the other half in that of the protector. But as an associate in the war, Cromwell demanded a share in the spoil, and that share was nothing less than the possession of Mardyke and Dunkirk, as soon as they could be reduced by the allies. To this proposal the strongest opposition had been made in the French cabinet. Louis was reminded of the injuries which the English, the natural enemies of France, had inflicted on the country in the reigns of his predecessors. Dunkirk would prove a second Calais; it would open to a foreign foe the way into the heart of his dominions. But he yielded to the superior wisdom or ascendancy of Mazarin, who replied that, if France refused the offer, it would be accepted with a similar sacrifice by Spain.[2]

The combined force was placed under the command of the celebrated Turenne, who was opposed by the Spaniards under Don John of Austria, with the British exiles, commanded by the duke of York, nd the French exiles, by the prince of Condé. The English auxiliaries, composed of veteran regiments, supported the reputation of their country by their martial appearance and exemplary discipline; but they had few opportunities of displaying their valour; and the summer was spent in a tedious succession of marches and countermarches, accompanied with no brilliant action nor important result. Cromwell viewed the operations of the army with distrust and impatience. At last he would brook no longer delay; the army marched into the neighbourhood of the town, and the fort of Mardyke capitulated (September 23) after a siege of three days. Mardyke received a garrison, partly of English and partly of French, under the command of Sir John Reynolds; but that officer in a short time incurred the suspicion of the protector.

[1 Keightley says, "Our naval history properly begins with Blake and the first Dutch war."]

[2 Gardiner sees in this alliance of the French king and the protector that the seeds, which were ultimately to come to evil fruitage in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, ever being unwittingly sown by the self-constituted protector of the Protestant world.]

[1658 A.D.]

CROMWELL CALLS AND DISSOLVES HIS FOURTH PARLIAMENT

At home the public attention was absorbed by a new and most interesting spectacle. The parliament met on the day to which it had been adjourned (Jan. 20, 1658) but it was now divided according to the ancient form into two houses. Sixty-two individuals had been summoned to the upper house, and the writs, as they were copies of those formerly issued by the sovereign, were held to confer in like manner the privileges of an hereditary peerage, subject to certain exceptions specified in the Humble Petition and Advice. The commons, at the call of the usher of the black rod, proceeded to the house of lords, where they found his highness seated under a canopy of state. His speech began with the ancient address: "My lords and gentlemen of the house of commons." It was short, but its brevity was compensated by its piety, and after an exposition of the eighty-fifth psalm, he referred his two houses for other particulars to Fiennes, the lord-keeper. After the departure of the commons, the lords spent their time in inquiries into the privileges of their house. Cromwell had summoned his two sons, Richard and Henry, seven peers of royal creation, several members of his council, some gentlemen of fortune and family, with a due proportion of lawyers and officers, and a scanty sprinkling of persons known to be disaffected to his government. Of the ancient peers two only attended, the lords Eure and Fauconberg of whom the latter had recently married Mary, the protector's daughter; and of the other members, nine were absent through business or disinclination. As their journals have not been preserved, we have little knowledge of their proceedings.

In the lower house, the interest of the government had declined by the impolitic removal of the leading members to the house of lords, and by the introduction of those who, having formerly been excluded by order of Cromwell, now took their seats in virtue of the article which reserved to the house the right of inquiry into the qualifications of its members. The opposition was led by two men of considerable influence and undaunted resolution, Haslerig and Scott. Both had been excluded at the first meeting of this parliament, and both remembered the affront. To remove Haslerig from a place where his experience and eloquence rendered him a formidable adversary, Cromwell had called him to the upper house; but he refused to obey the writ, and took his seat among the commons. That a new house was to be called according to the articles of the Humble Petition and Advice, no one denied; but who, it was asked, made its members lords? Who gave them the privileges of the ancient peerage? Who empowered them to negative the acts of that house to which they owed their existence? Was it to be borne that the nominees of the protector should control the representatives of the people, the depositaries of the supreme power of the nation?

Cromwell sought to soothe these angry spirits. He read to them lectures on the benefit, the necessity, of unanimity. England was the only stay, the last hope of religion. But his advice, and entreaties, and menaces were useless.

Never, perhaps, during his extraordinary career, was Cromwell involved in difficulties equal to those which surrounded him at this moment. He could raise no money without the consent of parliament, and the pay of the army in England was five, and of that in Ireland seven months in arrear; the exiled king threatened a descent from the coast of Flanders, and the royalists throughout the kingdom were preparing to join his standard; the leaders of opposition in parliament had combined with several officers in the army to re-establish the commonwealth, "without a single person or house of 'lord'";

and a preparatory petition for the purpose of collecting signatures was circulated through the city.

The morning of February 4th Cromwell unexpectedly threw himself into a carriage with two horses standing at the gates of Whitehall; and, beckoning to six of his guards to follow, ordered the coachman to drive to the parliament house. Sending for the commons, he addressed them in an angry and expostulating tone. "They," he said, "had placed him in the high situation in which he stood; he sought it not; there was neither man nor woman treading on English ground who could say he did. God knew that he would rather have lived under a wood side, and have tended a flock of sheep, than have undertaken the government. But, having undertaken it at their request, he had a right to look to them for aid and support. Yet some among them, God was his witness, in violation of their oaths, were attempting to establish a commonwealth interest in the army; some had received commissions to enlist men for Charles Stuart; and both had their emissaries at that moment seeking to raise a tumult, or rather a rebellion, in the city. But he was bound before God to prevent such disasters; and, therefore," he concluded, "I think it high time that an end be put to your sitting; and I do dissolve this parliament; and let God judge between me and you." "Amen, amen," responded several voices from the ranks of the opposition.

This was the fourth parliament that Cromwell had broken. The republicans indulged their resentment in murmurs, and complaints, and menaces; but the protector, secure of the fidelity of the army, despised the feeble efforts of their vengeance, and encouraged by his vigour the timidity of his counsellors. Strong patrols of infantry and cavalry paraded the streets, dispersing every assemblage of people in the open air, in private houses, and even in conventicles and churches, for the purpose, or under the pretext, of devotion. The colonel-major and several captains of his own regiment were cashiered. "I," says Hacker, "that had served him fourteen years, and had commanded a regiment seven years, without any trial or appeal, with the breath of his nostrils I was outed, and lost not only my place but a dear friend to boot. Five captains under my command were outed with me, because they could not say that was a house of lords."[e]

At the same time several arrests took place; for the conspiracies of which he spoke were no fictions. Ormonde was actually in London at this very time negotiating with the various political parties, and transports were collected at Ostend to carry over an invading force. But Cromwell had a source of intelligence which the royalists little suspected. There was a select band of six, named the Sealed Knot, who enjoyed the principal confidence of Charles and his court, and were the directors of the royalists in England. Sir Richard Willis had most influence in the Sealed Knot, and he was in the pay of Cromwell! For Willis having been arrested one time, Cromwell, it is said, undertook to prove to him that it was for the interest of the royalists themselves that their plots should be prevented; Willis was, or affected to be, convinced, and it was arranged that he should give information, but never be brought forward as a witness or required to name any person. For this service he had an annual stipend of 200*l.*

The protector, therefore, knew of Ormonde's being in London, and when it was thought that he had been there long enough, a hint was given him, and he hastened to Shoreham and embarked for France. Shortly after, some of the members of the Knot and other royalists were arrested, and Sir Henry Slingsby Doctor Hewit, John Mordaunt brother to Lord Peterborough, Sir Humphrey Bennet, and Captain Woodcock were brought to trial before a high court of

[1658 A.D.]

justice. Slingsby was a gentlemen of advanced age; he had been a prisoner at Hull ever since the rising in 1655, in which he had been engaged; the charge against him was his having given the officers of the garrison commissions from King Charles. Hewit was an Episcopalian clergyman and an active agent for the exiled king. Mordaunt also had distributed commissions. Hewit refused to plead, but that availed him not, and he and Slingsby were found guilty. Mordaunt was acquitted, the principal witness against him having been bribed to abscond. Slingsby was married to the aunt of Lord Fauconberg, and the lady Claypole strongly interested herself for Hewit; but the protector would hearken to neither daughter nor son-in-law in their favour: they were both beheaded (June 8). Bennet and Woodcock were acquitted. While Cromwell thus suppressed conspiracy at home, his arms prospered on the Continent.

THE BATTLE OF THE DUNES: CAPTURE OF DUNKIRK (1658 A.D.)

During the winter, the gains and losses of the hostile armies in Flanders had been nearly balanced. If, on the one hand, the duke of York was repulsed with loss in his attempt to storm by night the works at Mardyke; on the other, the Marshal d'Aumont was made prisoner with fifteen hundred men by the Spanish governor of Ostend, who, under the pretence of delivering up the place, had decoyed him within the fortifications. In February, the offensive treaty between France and England was renewed for another year; three thousand men, drafted from different regiments, were sent by the protector to supply the deficiency in the number of his forces, and the combined army opened the campaign with the siege of Dunkirk. Don John, with the consent of his mentor, the marquis Caracena, resolved to hazard a battle; and, collecting a force of six thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry, encamped between the village of Zudcote and the lines of the besiegers. But Turenne, aware of the defective organisation of the Spanish armies, resolved to prevent the threatened attack; and on the morning of June 4, before the Spanish cannon and ammunition had reached the camp, the allied force was seen advancing in battle array. Don John hastily placed his men along a ridge of sand-hills which extended from the sea-coast to the canal, giving the command of the right wing to the duke of York, of the left to the prince of Condé, and reserving the centre to himself.

The battle was begun by the English, who found themselves opposed to their countryman, the duke of York. They were led by Major-General Morgan; for Lockhart, who acted both as ambassador and commander-in-chief, was confined by indisposition to his carriage. Their ardour to distinguish themselves in the presence of the two rival nations carried them considerably in advance of their allies; but, having halted to gain breath at the foot of the opposite sand-hill, they mounted with impetuosity, received the fire of the enemy, and, at the point of the pike, drove them from their position. The duke immediately charged at the head of the Spanish cavalry; but one-half of his men were mowed down by a well-directed fire of musketry; and James himself owed the preservation of his life to the temper of his armour. The advantage, however, was dearly purchased: in Lockhart's regiment scarcely an officer remained to take the command.

By this time the action had commenced on the left, where the prince of Condé, after some sharp fighting, was compelled to retreat by the bank of the canal. The centre was never engaged; for the regiment, on its extreme left, seeing itself flanked by the French in pursuit of Condé, precipitately

abandoned its position, and the example was successively imitated by the whole line. But, in the meanwhile, the duke of York had rallied his broken infantry, and while they faced the English, he charged the latter in flank at the head of his company of horse-guards. Though thrown into disorder, they continued to fight, employing the butt-ends of their muskets against the swords of their adversaries, and in a few minutes several squadrons of French cavalry arrived to their aid. James was surrounded; and, in despair of saving himself by flight, he boldly assumed the character of a French officer; rode at the head of twenty troopers toward the right of their army; and, carefully threading the different corps, arrived without exciting suspicion at the bank of the canal, by which he speedily effected his escape to Furnes. The victory on the part of the allies was complete. The Spanish cavalry made no effort to protect the retreat of their infantry; every regiment of which was successively surrounded by the pursuers, and compelled to surrender. By Turenne and his officers the chief merit of this brilliant success was cheerfully allotted to the courage and steadiness of the English regiments; at Whitehall it was attributed to the prayers of the lord-protector, who, on that very day, observed with his council a solemn fast to implore the blessing of heaven on the operations of the allied army.

Unable to oppose their enemies in the field, the Spanish generals proposed to retard their progress by the most obstinate defence of the different fortresses. The prince de Ligne undertook that of Ypres; the care of Newport, Bruges, and Ostend was committed to the duke of York; and Don John returned to Brussels to hasten new levies from the different provinces. Within a fortnight Dunkirk capitulated (June 17th), and the king of France, having taken possession, delivered the keys with his own hand to the English ambassador. Gravelines was soon afterwards reduced (Aug. 20th); the prince de Ligne suffered himself to be surprised by the superior activity of Turenne; Ypres opened its gates, and all the towns on the banks of the Lys successively submitted to the conquerors. Seldom, perhaps, had there occurred a campaign more disastrous to the Spanish arms.

CROMWELL'S MANY DISTRESSES AND DEATH (SEPTEMBER 3RD, 1658)

In the eyes of the superficial observer, Cromwell might now appear to have reached the zenith of power and greatness. At home he had discovered, defeated, and punished all the conspiracies against him; abroad, his army had gained laurels in the field; his fleets swept the seas; his friendship was sought by every power; and his mediation was employed in settling the differences between both Portugal and Holland, and the king of Sweden and the elector of Brandenburg. But, above all, he was now in possession of Dunkirk, the great object of his foreign policy for the last two years. The real fact, however, was that his authority in England never rested on a more precarious footing than at the present moment; while, on the other hand, the cares and anxieties of government, joined to his apprehensions of personal violence, and the pressure of domestic affliction, were rapidly undermining his constitution, and hurrying him from the gay and glittering visions of ambition to the darkness and silence of the tomb.

Cromwell was now reduced to that situation which, to the late unfortunate monarch, had proved the source of so many calamities. His expenditure far outran his income. Though the last parliament had made provision, ample provision, as it was then thought, for the splendour of his establishment, and for all the charges of the war, he had already contracted enormous

[1658 A.D.]

debts; his exchequer was frequently drained to the last shilling; and his ministers were compelled to go a-begging — such is the expression of the secretary of state — for the temporary loan of a few thousand pounds, with the cheerless anticipation of a refusal. He looked on the army, the greater part of which he had quartered in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, as his chief — his only support against his enemies; and while the soldiers were comfortably clothed and fed, he might with confidence rely on their attachment; but now that their pay was in arrear, he had reason to apprehend that discontent might induce them to listen to the suggestions of those officers who sought to subvert his power. On former occasions, indeed, he had relieved himself from similar embarrassments by the imposition of taxes by his own authority; but this practice was so strongly reprobated in the Humble Petition and Advice, and he had abjured it with so much solemnity, that he dared not repeat the experiment. He attempted to raise a loan among the merchants and capitalists in the city; but his credit and popularity were gone; he had, by plunging into war with Spain, cut off one of the most plentiful sources of profit, the Spanish trade; and the number of prizes made by the enemy, amounting to more than a thousand, had ruined many opulent houses.

There remained a third expedient — an application to parliament. But Cromwell, like the first Charles, had learned to dread the very name of a parliament.[1] Three of these assemblies he had moulded according to his own plan, and yet not one of them could he render obsequious to his will. Urged, however, by the ceaseless importunities of Thurloe, he appointed nine councillors (June 18) to inquire into the means of defeating the intrigues of the republicans in a future parliament; the manner of raising a permanent revenue from the estates of the royalists; and the best method of determining the succession to the protectorate. But among the nine were two who, aware of his increasing infirmities, began to cherish projects of their own aggrandisement, and who, therefore, made it their care to perplex and to prolong the deliberations. The committee sat three weeks. On the first two questions they came to no conclusion; with respect to the third, they voted, on a division, that the choice between an elective and an hereditary succession was a matter of indifference. Suspicious of their motives, Cromwell dissolved the committee (July 8th). But he substituted no council in its place; things were allowed to take their course; the embarrassment of the treasury increased; and the irresolution of the protector, joined to the dangers which threatened the government, shook the confidence of Thurloe himself. It was only when he looked up to heaven that he discovered a gleam of hope, in the persuasion that the God who had befriended Cromwell through life, would not desert him at the close of his career.

To the cares of government must be added his constant dread of assassination. It is certainly extraordinary that, while so many conspiracies are said to have been formed, no attempt was actually made against his person; but the fact that such designs had existed, and the knowledge that his death was of the first importance to his enemies, convinced him that he could never be secure from danger. He multiplied his precautions. We are told that he wore defensive armour under his clothes; carried loaded pistols in his pockets; sought to remain in privacy; and, when he found it necessary to give audience, sternly watched the eyes and gestures of those who addressed him. He was careful that his own motions should not be known beforehand.

[1 "It is a singular part of Cromwell's policy that he would neither reign with parliaments nor without them."]

His carriage was filled with attendants; a numerous escort accompanied him; and he proceeded at full speed, frequently diverging from the road to the right or left, and generally returning by a different route. In his palace he often inspected the nightly watch, changed his bed-chamber, and was careful that, besides the principal door, there should be some other egress, for the facility of escape. He had often faced death without flinching in the field; but his spirit broke under the continual fear of unknown and invisible foes. He passed the nights in a state of feverish anxiety; sleep fled from his pillow; and for more than a year before his death we always find the absence of rest assigned as either the cause which produced, or a circumstance which aggravated, his numerous ailments.

The selfishness of ambition does not exclude the more kindly feelings of domestic affection. Cromwell was sincerely attached to his children; but, among them, he gave the preference to his daughter Elizabeth Claypole. The meek disposition of the young woman possessed singular charms for the overbearing spirit of her father; and her timid piety readily received lessons on mystical theology from the superior experience of the lord-general. The following passage from one of Cromwell's letters to his daughter Ireton, will perhaps surprise the reader: "Your sister Claypole is (I trust in mercye) exercised with some perplexed thoughts, shee sees her owne vanitye and carnal minde, bewailinge itt, shee seeks after (as I hope alsoe) that wch will satisfie, and thus to bee a seeker, is to be of the best sect next a finder, and such an one shall every faythfull humble seeker bee at the end. Happie seeker, happie finder. Who ever tasted that the Lord is gracious, without some sense of self-vanitye and badness? Who ever tasted that graciousness of his, and could goe lesse in desier, and lesse than pressinge after full enjoyment? Deere hart presse on: lett not husband, lett not anythinge coole thy affections after Christ." But she was now dying of a most painful and internal complaint, imperfectly understood by her physicians; and her grief for the loss of her infant child added to the poignancy of her sufferings. Cromwell abandoned the business of state that he might hasten to Hampton Court, to console his favourite daughter. He frequently visited her, remained long in her apartment, and, whenever he quitted it, seemed to be absorbed in the deepest melancholy. It is not probable that the subject of their private conversation was exposed to the profane ears of strangers. We are, however, told by Clarendon[m] that she expressed to him her doubts of the justice of the good old cause, that she exhorted him to restore the sovereign authority to the rightful owner, and that, occasionally, when her mind was wandering, she alarmed him by uttering cries of "blood," and predictions of vengeance.

Elizabeth died August 6th. The protector was already confined to his bed with the gout, and, though he had anticipated the event, some days elapsed before he recovered from the shock. A slow fever still remained, which was pronounced a bastard tertian. One of his physicians whispered to another (Aug. 17th), that his pulse was intermittent; the words caught the ears of the sick man; he turned pale, a cold perspiration covered his face; and, requesting to be placed in bed, he executed his private will. The next morning he had recovered his usual composure; and when he received the visit of his physician, ordering all his attendants to quit the room but his wife, whom he held by the hand, he said to him: "Do not think that I shall die; I am sure of the contrary." Observing the surprise which those words excited, he continued: "Say not that I have lost my reason: I tell you the truth. I know it from better authority than any which you can have from

[1658 A.D.]

Galen or Hippocrates. It is the answer of God himself to our prayers; not to mine alone, but to those of others who have a more intimate interest in him than I have." The same communication was made to Thurloe, and to the different members of the protector's family; nor did it fail to obtain credit among men who believed that "in other instances he had been favoured with similar assurances, and that they had never deceived him." Hence his chaplain Goodwin exclaimed, "O Lord, we pray not for his recovery; that thou hast granted already; what we now beg is his *speedy* recovery."

In a few days, however, their confidence was shaken. For change of air he had removed to Whitehall, till the palace of St. James's should be ready for his reception. There on August 28th his fever became a double tertian, and his strength rapidly wasted away. Who, it was asked, was to succeed him? On the day of his inauguration he had written the name of his successor within a cover sealed with the protectorial arms; but that paper had been lost, or purloined, or destroyed. Thurloe undertook to suggest to him a second nomination; but the condition of the protector, who, if we believe him, was always insensible or delirious, afforded no opportunity. A suspicion, however, existed, that he had private reasons for declining to interfere in so delicate a business.

The 30th of August was a tempestuous day: during the night the violence of the wind increased till it blew a hurricane. Trees were torn from their roots in the park, and houses unroofed in the city. This extraordinary occurrence at a moment when it was thought that the protector was dying, could not fail of exciting remarks in a superstitious age; and, though the storm reached to the coasts of the Mediterranean, in England it was universally referred to the deathbed of the protector. His friends asserted that God would not remove so great a man from this world without previously warning the nation of its approaching loss; the cavaliers more maliciously maintained that the devils, "the princes of the air," were congregating over Whitehall, that they might pounce on the protector's soul.[1]

On the third night afterwards (Sept. 2nd), Cromwell had a lucid interval of considerable duration. It might have been expected that a man of his religious disposition would have felt some compunctious visitings, when from the bed of death he looked back on the strange, eventful career of his past life. But he had adopted a doctrine admirably calculated to lull and tranquillise the misgivings of conscience. "Tell me," said he to Sterry, one of his chaplains, "Is it possible to fall from grace?" "It is not possible," replied the minister. "Then," exclaimed the dying man, "I am safe; for I know that I was once in grace." Under this impression he prayed, not for himself, but for God's people. "Lord," he said, "though a miserable and wretched creature, I am in covenant with thee through thy grace, and may and will come to thee for thy people. Thou hast made me a mean instrument to do them some good, and thee service. Many of them set too high a value upon me, though others would be glad of my death. Lord, however thou disposest of me, continue, and go on to do good for them. Teach those who look too much upon thy instruments, to depend more upon thyself, and pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are thy people too."

Early in the following morning, he relapsed into a state of insensibility. It was his fortunate day, the 3rd of September, a circumstance from which his sorrowing relatives derived a new source of consolation. It was, they observed, on the 3rd of September that he overcame the Scots at Dunbar;

[1 Von Ranke[b] notes that when the news of Cromwell's death reached Amsterdam, people danced in the streets crying, "The devil is dead!"]

on that day, he also overcame the royalists at Worcester; and on the same day, he was destined to overcome his spiritual enemies, and to receive the crown of victory in heaven. About four in the afternoon he breathed his last, amidst the tears and lamentations of his attendants. "Cease to weep," exclaimed the fanatical Sterry, "you have more reason to rejoice. He was your protector here; he will prove a still more powerful protector, now that he is with Christ at the right hand of the Father." With a similar confidence in Cromwell's sanctity, though in a somewhat lower tone of enthusiasm, the grave and cautious Thurloe announced the event by letter to Henry Cromwell the deputy of Ireland. "Never was there any man so prayed for as he was during his sickness, solemn assemblies meeting every day to beseech the Lord for the continuance of his life; so that he is gone to heaven, embalmed with the tears of his people, and upon the wings of the prayers of the saints."

VARIOUS ESTIMATES OF CROMWELL; HIS DISSIMULATION: LINGARD

Till the commencement of the century, when that wonderful man arose, who, by the splendour of his victories and the extent of his empire, cast all preceding adventures into the shade, the name of Cromwell stood without a parallel in the history of civilised Europe. Men looked with a feeling of awe on the fortunate individual who, without the aid of birth, or wealth, or connections, was able to seize the government of three powerful kingdoms, and to impose the yoke of servitude on the necks of the very men who had fought in his company to emancipate themselves from the less arbitrary sway of their hereditary sovereign. That he who accomplished this was no ordinary personage, all must admit; and yet, on close investigation, we shall discover little that was sublime or dazzling in his character. Cromwell was not the meteor which surprises and astounds by the rapidity and brilliancy of its course. Cool, cautious, calculating, he stole on with slow and measured pace; and, while with secret pleasure he toiled up the ascent to greatness, laboured to persuade the spectators that he was reluctantly borne forward by an exterior and resistless force, by the march of events, the necessities of the state, the will of the army, and even the decree of the Almighty. He seems to have looked upon dissimulation as the perfection of human wisdom, and to have made it the keystone of the arch on which he built his fortunes. The aspirations of his ambition were concealed under the pretence of attachment to "the good old cause"; and his secret workings to acquire the sovereignty for himself and his family were represented as endeavours to secure for his former brethren in arms the blessings of civil and religious freedom, the two great objects which originally called them into the field.

Thus his whole conduct was made up of artifice and deceit. He laid his plans long beforehand; he studied the views and dispositions of all from whose influence he had any thing to hope or fear; and he employed every expedient to win their affections, and to make them the blind unconscious tools of his policy. For this purpose he asked questions, or threw out insinuations in their hearing; now kept them aloof with an air of reserve and dignity; now put them off their guard by condescension, perhaps by buffoonery; at one time, addressed himself to their vanity or avarice; at another, exposed to them with tears (for tears he had at will), the calamities of the nation; and then, when he found them moulded to his purpose, instead of assenting to the advice which he had himself suggested, feigned reluctance, urged objections, and pleaded scruples of conscience. At length he yielded; but it was not till he had acquired by his resistance the praise of moderation, and the

right of attributing his acquiescence to the importunity of others instead of his own ambition.

Exposed as he was to the continued machinations of the royalists and levellers, both equally eager to precipitate him from the height to which he had attained, Cromwell made it his great object to secure to himself the attachment of the army.[1] To it he owed the acquisition, through it alone could he ensure the permanence, of his power. Now, fortunately for this purpose, that army, composed as never was army before or since, revered in the lord-protector what it valued mostly in itself, the cant and practice of religious enthusiasm. The superior officers, the subalterns, the privates, all held themselves forth as professors of godliness. Among them every public breach of morality was severely punished; the exercises of religious worship were of as frequent recurrence as those of military duty; in council, the officers always opened the proceedings with extemporary prayer; and to implore with due solemnity the protection of the Lord of Hosts, was held an indispensable part of the preparation for battle. Their cause they considered the cause of God; if they fought, it was for his glory; if they conquered, it was by the might of his arm. Among these enthusiasts, Cromwell, as he held the first place in rank, was also pre-eminent in spiritual gifts. The fervour with which he prayed, the unction with which he preached, excited their admiration and tears. They looked on him as the favourite of God, under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit, and honoured with communications from heaven; and he, on his part, was careful, by the piety of his language, by the strict decorum of his court, and by his zeal for the diffusion of godliness, to preserve and strengthen such impressions. In minds thus disposed, it was not difficult to create a persuasion that the final triumph of "their cause" depended on the authority of the general under whom they had conquered; while the full enjoyment of that religious freedom which they so highly prized rendered them less jealous of the arbitrary power which he occasionally assumed.

On the subject of civil freedom, the protector could not assume so bold a tone. He acknowledged, indeed, its importance; it was second only to religious freedom; but if second, then, in the event of competition, it ought to yield to the first. He contended that, under his government, every provision had been made for the preservation of the rights of individuals, so far as was consistent with the safety of the whole nation. He had reformed the chancery, he had laboured to abolish the abuses of the law, he had placed learned and upright judges on the bench, and he had been careful in all ordinary cases that impartial justice should be administered between the parties. This indeed was true; but it was also true that by his orders men were arrested and committed without lawful cause; that juries were packed; that prisoners, acquitted at their trial, were sent into confinement beyond the jurisdiction of the courts; that taxes had been raised without the authority of parliament; that a most unconstitutional tribunal, the high court of justice, had been established; and that the major-generals had been invested with powers the most arbitrary and oppressive. These acts of despotism put him on his defence; and in apology he pleaded, as every despot will plead, reasons of state, the necessity of sacrificing a part to preserve the whole, and his conviction, that a "people blessed by God, the regenerated ones of several judgments forming the flock and lambs of Christ, would prefer their safety to their passions, and their real security to forms." Nor was this reasoning addressed

[1 The Venetian ambassador Sagredo[d] observes that during the protectorate, London wore the appearance of a garrison town, where nothing was to be seen but the marching of soldiers, nothing to be heard but the sound of drums and trumpets.]

in vain to men who had surrendered their judgments into his keeping, and who felt little for the wrongs of others, as long as such wrongs were represented necessary for their own welfare.

Some writers have maintained that Cromwell dissembled in religion as well as in politics; and that, when he condescended to act the part of the saint, he assumed for interested purposes a character which he otherwise despised. But this supposition is contradicted by the uniform tenor of his life. Long before he turned his attention to the disputes between the king and the parliament, religious enthusiasm had made a deep impression on his mind; it continually manifested itself during his long career, both in the senate and the field; and it was strikingly displayed in his speeches and prayers on the last evening of his life. It should, however, be observed, that he made his religion harmonise with his ambition. If he believed that the cause in which he had embarked was the cause of God, he also believed that God had chosen him to be the successful champion of that cause. Thus the honour of God was identified with his own advancement, and the arts, which his policy suggested, were sanctified in his eyes by the ulterior object at which he aimed — the diffusion of godliness, and the establishment of the reign of Christ among mankind.

The Opinion of a Contemporary Royalist, Lord Clarendon

He was one of those men, *quos vituperare ne inimici quidem possunt, nisi ut simul laudent;* "whom his very enemies could not condemn without commending him at the same time"; for he could never have done half that mischief without great parts of courage, industry, and judgment. He must have had a wonderful understanding in the natures and humours of men, and as great a dexterity in applying them; who, from a private and obscure birth (though of a good family) without interest or estate, alliance or friendship could raise himself to such a height, and compound and knead such opposite and contradictory tempers, humours, and interests into a consistence, that contributed to his designs, and to their own destruction; whilst himself grew insensibly powerful enough to cut off those by whom he had climbed, in the instant that they projected to demolish their own building. What was said of Cinna may very justly be said of him: "He attempted those things which no good man durst have ventured on; and achieved those in which none but a valiant and great man could have succeeded." Without doubt, no man with more wickedness ever attempted anything, or brought to pass what he desired more wickedly, more in the face and contempt of religion, and moral honesty; yet wickedness as great as his could never have accomplished those designs, without the assistance of a great spirit, an admirable circumspection, and sagacity, and a most magnanimous resolution.

When he appeared first in the parliament, he seemed to have a person in no degree gracious, no ornament of discourse, none of those talents which use to conciliate the affections of the stander by: yet as he grew into place and authority, his parts seemed to be raised, as if he had concealed faculties, till he had occasion to use them; and when he was to act the part of a great man, he did it without any indecency, notwithstanding the want of custom. In all other matters, which did not concern the life of his jurisdiction, he seemed to have great reverence for the law, rarely interposing between party and party. As he proceeded with this kind of indignation, and haughtiness, with those who were refractory, and durst contend with his greatness, so towards all who complied with his good pleasure, and courted his protection, he used great civility, generosity, and bounty.

[1658 A.D.]

To reduce three nations, which perfectly hated him, to an entire obedience to all his dictates; to awe, and govern those nations by an army that was indevoted to him, and wished his ruin, was an instance of a very prodigious address. But his greatness at home, was but a shadow of the glory he had abroad. It was hard to discover, which feared him most, France, or Spain, or the Low Countries, where his friendship was current at the value he put upon it. As they did all sacrifice their honour and their interest, to his pleasure, so there is nothing he could have demanded, that either of them would have denied him.

To conclude his character, Cromwell was not so far a man of blood, as to follow Machiavel's method; which prescribes upon a total alteration of government, as a thing absolutely necessary, to cut off all the heads of those, and extirpate their families, who are friends to the old one. It was confidently reported, that, in the council of officers, it was more than once proposed, "that there might be a general massacre of all the royal party, as the only expedient to secure the government, but that Cromwell would never consent to it"; it may be, out of too great a contempt of his enemies. In a word, as he was guilty of many crimes against which damnation is denounced, and for which hell-fire is prepared, so he had some good qualities which have caused the memory of some men in all ages to be celebrated; and he will be looked upon by posterity as a brave, wicked man.[m]

A German Estimate of Cromwell's Influence on Europe (Von Ranke)

The next generation execrated Cromwell as a monster of villainy: but posterity has declared him one of the greatest of the race of man. To him was given the marvellous honour of breaking through the sacred circle which restricts the common citizen of European countries. Clothed with royal authority, and needing no superior's approval — for unlike Richelieu he was not forced to persuade a royal master or burrow in cabinet plots — Cromwell forced his way into the history of the world. He had the self control to refuse the very crown. He felt the necessity of coercing all the forces of the nation into obedience to his will; yet the supreme power for its own sake was not his end. It was the means to establishment of those ideals of religious liberty as conceived by the Protestants, of civil order and national independence which filled his whole soul.

If we inquire what remained of Cromwell's work, we shall not find our answer in specific national and constitutional institutions. We are not sure that he planned the continuance of his own powers; neither his house of lords nor his commons was fated to survive: neither the army he organised nor the separatist movement he began. Time swept all this away. None the less his influence was rich in results of importance.

The dream of uniting the three kingdoms in Protestantism had floated before his predecessor, the earl of Somerset; Cromwell realised it brilliantly.

For general European history nothing is more important than Cromwell's direction of English energies against Spain. It was peculiarly his own idea: the commonwealth would hardly have done it. As a result the European system developed from the dynastic sway of the Burgundo-Austrian family dominant for nearly two centuries, was driven from their field. Thus the English people and their navy won a place of importance. Cromwell did not create the English navy; indeed its chiefs were opposed to him; yet he gave it its most powerful impulse. We have seen how stoutly it gained power in all parts of the world. The coasts of Europe felt the weight of English

weapons. Settlements were frequently suggested for the Italian and even the German coasts, and actually gained in the Netherlands. They said that the key of the continent hung at Cromwell's girdle. Holland against her will was forced to bow to English policy. Portugal yielded for the sake of her very existence. England could wait with calm any future developments on the continent. The influence of France had saved Protestantism from destruction, yet kept it subordinate. It was through Cromwell that Protestantism rose to independence among the world powers. Like most extraordinary natures Cromwell died little understood, and rather hated than loved.[b]

Cromwell as the Typical Englishman

Gardiner[n] ascribes to Cromwell practical universality of mind, comprising all the incongruities of human nature; but this very fact, he thinks, distinguishes the Protector as symbolising the traits of the English people. He does not hesitate to pronounce Cromwell, "with all his moral and physical audacity, with all his tenderness and spiritual yearnings, in the world of action what Shakespeare was in the world of thought, the greatest because the most typical Englishman of all time."

Nicholson,[w] speaking in similar vein, declares that "Cromwell's own prophetic hope is attaining fulfilment. 'I know God has been above all ill reports, and will in his own time vindicate me.'" He cites with approval the words of Milton: "In speaking of a man so great, and who has deserved so signally of this commonwealth, I shall have done nothing if I merely acquit him of having committed any crime, especially since it concerns, not only the commonwealth, but myself individually, as one so closely conjoined in the same infamy, to show to all nations and ages, as far as I can, the supreme excellence of his character, and his supreme worthiness of all praise." Modern estimates uphold this verdict of a contemporary. John Morley[o] is indeed disposed to regard the comparison of Cromwell with Charles V, or Louis XIV, or Napoleon, as "a hyperbole which does him both less than justice and more"; but he agrees with Guizot,[f] that we are near to the truth if we count "Cromwell, William III, and Washington as chiefs and representatives of sovereign crises that have settled the destinies of nations." And perhaps in all history it would be difficult to find three names better fitted to stand together than these.[a] There is no severer test of a man's character than the use he makes of absolute power. Tried by this test Cromwell bears comparison favourably with any of the greatest names in history. Elevated into supremacy, regal save only in name, he still preserved the plain simplicity of his former life. Armed with more than regal power, he limited himself within the strict bounds of necessity. Personally he cared little for the outward shows of royalty, but he stinted no pomp or ceremony so far as it seemed to involve the nation's dignity. Too great to be jealous or vindictive for himself, he was swift and stern in crushing the enemies of public tranquillity. He was truly a terror to all evil-doers, a praise to them that did well. He fostered learning, though himself not learned, and allied with some to whom learning was profanity. "If there was a man in England who excelled in any faculty or science, the Protector would find him out, and reward him according to his merit." The head of a triumphant cause, he was so little of a fanatic that he tolerated all sects, so long as they meddled not to disturb the state. His large and healthy spirit was bound by no party sympathies, but yearned towards all good men, of whatever name. At an era when toleration was looked upon by many as foolish in politics and criminal in religion, he stood out in

[1658 A.D.]

glorious prominence as the earnest advocate of the rights of conscience, and proclaimed all men answerable to God alone for their faith. Popery and prelacy he proscribed, on grounds political rather than religious; to the adherents of both he showed private lenity; under his rule men no more suffered at the stake or the pillory.

So far did his thoughts reach beyond his age, that he desired, and earnestly attempted, to extend the rights of citizenship to the outcast and persecuted Jews. Himself the greatest, "the most English of Englishmen" —he was determined that England should be the greatest of states. He encouraged trade, planted colonies, made wise peace with whom he would, or waged just and successful war. All Europe trembled at his voice, and the flag of Britain thenceforth waved triumphant over every sea. In fine, considering the comparative position of Britain in the times that preceded and followed him, the circumstances of his life and the difficulties with which he had to contend, making all allowance for his errors and his failings, he was a man for all ages to admire, for all Britons to honour in proud remembrance. No royal name, at least since Alfred's, is more worthy of our veneration than that of the "Usurper," Oliver Cromwell.[w]

Lord Macaulay's Comparison of Cromwell with Cæsar and Napoleon

At Naseby, in the very crisis of his fortune, Charles I's want of self-possession spread a fatal panic through his army. A Scotch nobleman, it seems, begged the king not to run upon his death, took hold of his bridle, and turned his horse round. No man who had much value for his life would have tried to perform the same friendly office on that day for Oliver Cromwell.

The death of Charles and the strong measures which led to it raised Cromwell to a height of power fatal to the infant commonwealth. No men occupy so splendid a place in history as those who have founded monarchies on the ruins of republican institutions. Their glory, if not of the purest, is assuredly of the most seductive and dazzling kind. In nations broken to the curb, in nations long accustomed to be transferred from one tyrant to another, a man without eminent qualities may easily gain supreme power. The defection of a troop of guards, a conspiracy of eunuchs, a popular tumult, might place an indolent senator or a brutal soldier on the throne of the Roman world. But a community which has heard the voice of truth and experienced the pleasures of liberty, in which the merits of statesmen and of systems are freely canvassed, in which obedience is paid, not to persons but to laws, in which magistrates are regarded, not as the lords, but as the servants of the public, in which the excitement of party is a necessary of life, in which political warfare is reduced to a system of tactics; such a community is not easily reduced to servitude. Beasts of burden may easily be managed by a new master. But will the wild ass submit to the bonds? Will the unicorn serve and abide by the crib? Will leviathan hold out his nostrils to the hook? The mythological conqueror of the east, whose enchantments reduced wild beasts to the tameness of domestic cattle, and who harnessed lions and tigers to his chariot, is but an imperfect type of those extraordinary minds which have thrown a spell on the fierce spirits of nations unaccustomed to control, and have compelled raging factions to obey their reins and swell their triumph. The enterprise, be it good or bad, is one which requires a truly great man. It demands courage, activity, energy, wisdom, firmness, conspicuous virtues, or vices so splendid and alluring as to resemble virtues.

Those who have succeeded in this arduous undertaking form a very small

and a very remarkable class. Parents of tyranny, heirs of freedom, kings among citizens, citizens among kings, they unite in themselves the characteristics of the system which springs from them, and those of the system from which they have sprung. Their reigns shine with a double light, the last and dearest ray of departing freedom mingled with the first and brightest glories of the empire in its dawn.

In this class three men stand pre-eminent, Cæsar, Cromwell, and Bonaparte. The highest place in this remarkable triumvirate belongs undoubtedly to Cæsar. He united the talents of Bonaparte to those of Cromwell; and he possessed also, what neither Cromwell nor Bonaparte possessed, learning, taste, wit, eloquence, the sentiments and the manners of an accomplished gentleman.

Between Cromwell and Napoleon Hallam[p] has instituted a parallel, scarcely less ingenious than that which Burke[q] has drawn between Richard Cœur de Lion and Charles XII of Sweden. In this parallel, however, and indeed throughout his work, we think that he hardly gives Cromwell fair measure. "Cromwell," says he, "far unlike his antitype, never showed any signs of a legislative mind, or any desire to place his renown on that noblest basis, the amelioration of social institutions." The difference in this respect, we conceive, was not in the character of the men, but in the character of the revolutions by means of which they rose to power. The civil war in England had been undertaken to defend and restore; the republicans of France set themselves to destroy. In England, the principles of the common law had never been disturbed, and most even of its forms had been held sacred. In France, the law and its ministers had been swept away together. In France, therefore, legislation necessarily became the first business of the first settled government which rose on the ruins of the old system. The admirers of Inigo Jones have always maintained that his works are inferior to those of Sir Christopher Wren, only because the great fire of London gave Wren such a field for the display of his powers as no architect in the history of the world ever possessed. Similar allowance must be made for Cromwell. If he erected little that was new, it was because there had been no general devastation to clear a space for him. As it was, he reformed the representative system in a most judicious manner. He rendered the administration of justice uniform throughout the island. We will quote a passage from his speech to the parliament in September, 1656, which contains, we think, simple and rude as the diction is, stronger indications of a legislative mind, than are to be found in the whole range of orations delivered on such occasions before or since.

"There is one general grievance in the nation. It is the law. I think, I may say it, I have as eminent judges in this land as have been had, or that the nation has had for these many years. Truly, I could be particular as to the executive part, to the administration; but that would trouble you. But the truth of it is, there are wicked and abominable laws that will be in your power to alter. To hang a man for sixpence, threepence, I know not what — to hang for a trifle, and pardon murder, is in the ministration of the law through the ill framing of it. I have known in my experience abominable murders quitted; and to see men lose their lives for petty matters! This is a thing that God will reckon for; and I wish it may not lie upon this nation a day longer than you have an opportunity to give a remedy; and I hope I shall cheerfully join with you in it."

Hallam truly says that, though it is impossible to rank Cromwell with Napoleon as a general, yet "his exploits were as much above the level of his contemporaries, and more the effects of an original uneducated capacity."

[1658 A.D.]

Bonaparte was trained in the best military schools; the army which he led to Italy was one of the finest that ever existed. Cromwell passed his youth and the prime of his manhood in a civil situation. He never looked on war till he was more than forty years old. He had first to form himself, and then to form his troops. Out of raw levies he created an army, the bravest and the best disciplined, the most orderly in peace, and the most terrible in war, that Europe had seen. He called this body into existence. He led it to conquest. He never fought a battle without gaining it. He never gained a battle without annihilating the force opposed to him. Yet his victories were not of the highest glory of his military system. The respect which his troops paid to property, their attachment to the laws and religion of their country, their submission to the civil power, their temperance, their intelligence, their industry, are without parallel. It was after the Restoration that the spirit which their great leader had infused into them was most signally displayed. At the command of the established government, an established government which had no means of enforcing obedience, fifty thousand soldiers, whose backs no enemy had ever seen, either in domestic or in continental war, laid down their arms, and retired into the mass of the people, thenceforward to be distinguished only by superior diligence, sobriety, and regularity in the pursuits of peace, from the other members of the community which they had saved.

In the general spirit and character of his administration, we think Cromwell far superior to Napoleon. "In civil government," says Hallam, "there can be no adequate parallel between one who had sucked only the dregs of a besotted fanaticism, and one to whom the stores of reason and philosophy were open." These expressions, it seems to us, convey the highest eulogium on our great countryman. Reason and philosophy did not teach the conqueror of Europe to command his passions, or to pursue, as a first object, the happiness of his people. They did not prevent him from risking his fame and his power in a frantic contest against the principles of human nature and the laws of the physical world, against the rage of the winter and the liberty of the sea. They did not exempt him from the influence of that most pernicious of superstitions, a presumptuous fatalism. They did not preserve him from the inebriation of prosperity, or restrain him from indecent querulousness in adversity. On the other hand, the fanaticism of Cromwell never urged him on impracticable undertakings, or confused his perception of the public good.

Our countryman, inferior to Bonaparte in invention, was far superior to him in wisdom. The French emperor is among conquerors what Voltaire is among writers, a miraculous child. His splendid genius was frequently clouded by fits of humour as absurdly perverse as those of the pet of the nursery, who quarrels with his food, and dashes his playthings to pieces. Cromwell was emphatically a man. He possessed, in an eminent degree, that masculine and full-grown robustness of mind, that equally diffused intellectual health, which, if our national partiality does not mislead us, has peculiarly characterised the great men of England.

Never was any ruler so conspicuously born for sovereignty. The cup which has intoxicated almost all others sobered him. His spirit, restless from its own buoyancy in a lower sphere, reposed in majestic placidity as soon as it had reached the level congenial to it. Rapidly as his fortunes grew, his mind expanded more rapidly still. Insignificant as a private citizen, he was a great general; he was a still greater prince. Napoleon had a theatrical manner, in which the coarseness of a revolutionary guard-room was blended with the ceremony of the old court of Versailles. Cromwell, by the confession even of his enemies, exhibited in his demeanour the simple and natural nobleness of a

man neither ashamed of his origin nor vain of his elevation, of a man who had found his proper place in society, and who felt secure that he was competent to fill it. Easy, even to familiarity, where his own dignity was concerned, he was punctilious only for his country. His own character he left to take care of itself; he felt it to be defended by his victories in war, and his reforms in peace. But he was a jealous and implacable guardian of the public honour. He suffered a crazy Quaker to insult him in the gallery of Whitehall, and revenged himself only by liberating him and giving him a dinner. But he was prepared to risk the chances of war to avenge the blood of a private Englishman.

No sovereign ever carried to the throne so large a portion of the best qualities of the middling orders, so strong a sympathy with the feelings and interests of his people. He was sometimes driven to arbitrary measures; but he had a high, stout, honest, English heart. Hence it was that he loved to surround his throne with such men as Hale and Blake. Hence it was that he allowed so large a share of political liberty to his subjects, and that, even when an opposition dangerous to his power and to his person almost compelled him to govern by the sword, he was still anxious to leave a germ from which, at a more favourable season, free institutions might spring. We firmly believe that, if his first parliament had not commenced its debates by disputing his title, his government would have been as mild at home as it was energetic and able abroad. He was a soldier; he had risen by war. Had his ambition been of an impure or selfish kind, it would have been easy for him to plunge his country into continental hostilities on a large scale, and to dazzle the restless factions which he ruled, by the splendour of his victories. Some of his enemies have sneeringly remarked, that in the successes obtained under his administration he had no personal share; as if a man who had raised himself from obscurity to empire solely by his military talents could have any unworthy reason for shrinking from military enterprise. This reproach is his highest glory. In the success of the English navy he could have no selfish interest. Its triumphs added nothing to his fame; its increase added nothing to his means of overawing his enemies; its great leader was not his friend. Yet he took a peculiar pleasure in encouraging that noble service which, of all the instruments employed by an English government, is the most impotent for mischief, and the most powerful for good. He placed England at the head of the Protestant interests, and in the first rank of Christian powers. But he did not squander her resources in a vain attempt to invest her with that supremacy which no power, in the modern system of Europe, can safely affect, or can long retain.

This noble and sober wisdom had its reward. If he did not carry the banners of the commonwealth in triumph to distant capitals, if he did not adorn Whitehall with the spoils of the Stadthouse and the Louvre, if he did not portion out Flanders and Germany into principalities for his kinsmen and his generals, he did not, on the other hand, see his country overrun by the armies of nations which his ambition had provoked. He did not drag out the last years of his life an exile and a prisoner, in an unhealthy climate and under an ungenerous gaoler, raging with the impotent desire of vengeance, and brooding over visions of departed glory. He went down to his grave in the fulness of power and fame; and he left to his son an authority which any man of ordinary firmness and prudence would have retained.

But for the weakness of that foolish Ishbosheth, the opinions which we have been expressing would, we believe, now have formed the orthodox creed of good Englishmen. We might now be writing under the government of his

[1658 A.D.]

highness Oliver the Fifth or Richard the Fourth, protector, by the grace of God, of the commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the dominions thereto belonging. The form of the great founder of the dynasty, on horseback, as when he led the charge at Naseby, or on foot, as when he took the mace from the table of the commons, would adorn our squares and overlook our public offices from Charing Cross; and sermons in his praise would be duly preached on his lucky day, the third of September, by court-chaplains, guiltless of the abomination of the surplice.

But, though his memory has not been taken under the patronage of any party, though every device has been used to blacken it, though to praise him would long have been a punishable crime, truth and merit at last prevail. Cowards who had trembled at the very sound of his name, tools of office who, like Downing, had been proud of the honour of lacqueying his coach, might insult him in loyal speeches and addresses. Venal poets might transfer to the king the same eulogies, little the worse for wear, which they had bestowed on the protector. A fickle multitude might crowd to shout and scoff round the gibbeted remains of the greatest prince and soldier of the age. But when the Dutch cannon startled an effeminate tyrant in his own palace, when the conquests which had been won by the armies of Cromwell were sold to pamper the harlots of Charles, when Englishmen were sent to fight under foreign banners, against the independence of Europe and the Protestant religion, many honest hearts swelled in secret at the thought of one who had never suffered his country to be ill used by any but himself. It must indeed have been difficult for any Englishman to see the salaried viceroy of France, at the most important crisis of his fate, sauntering through his harem, yawning and talking nonsense over a dispatch, or beslobbering his brother and his courtiers in a fit of maudlin affection, without a respectful and tender remembrance of him before whose genius the young pride of Louis and all the veteran craft of Mazarin had stood rebuked, who had humbled Spain on the land and Holland on the sea, and whose imperial voice had arrested the sails of the Libyan pirates and the persecuting fires of Rome.[1]

Carlyle's Eulogium

As things became gradually manifest, the character of the Puritans began to clear itself. Their memories were, one after another, taken down from the gibbet; nay a certain portion of them are now, in these days, as good as canonised. Eliot, Hampden, Pym, nay Ludlow, Hutchinson, Vane himself, are admitted to be a kind of Heroes; political Conscript Fathers, to whom in no small degree we owe what makes us a free England: it would not be safe for anybody to designate these men as wicked now. Few Puritans of note but find their apologists somewhere, and have a certain reverence paid them by earnest men. One Puritan, I think, and almost he alone, our poor Cromwell, seems to hang yet on the gibbet, and finds no hearty apologist anywhere. Him neither saint nor sinner will acquit of great wickedness. A man of ability, infinite talent, courage, and so forth; but he betrayed the Cause. Selfish ambition, dishonesty, duplicity; a fierce, coarse, hypocritical Tartuffe; turning all that noble Struggle for constitutional Liberty into a sorry farce played for his own benefit: this and worse is the character they give of Cromwell. And then there come contrasts with Washington and others; above all, with these noble Pyms and Hampdens, whose noble work he stole for himself, and ruined into a futility and deformity.

For my own share, far be it from me to say or insinuate a word of disparage-

ment against such characters as Hampden, Eliot, Pym; whom I believe to have been right worthy and useful men. They are very noble men, these; step along in their stately way, with their measured euphemisms, philosophies, parliamentary eloquences, Ship-moneys, *Monarchies of Man;* a most constitutional, unblamable, dignified set of men. But the heart remains cold before them; the fancy alone endeavours to get-up some worship of them. One leaves all these Nobilities standing in their niches of honour : the rugged outcast Cromwell, he is the man of them all in whom one still finds human stuff. The great savage Baresark: he could write no euphemistic *Monarchy of Man;* did not speak, did not work with glib regularity; had no straight story to tell for himself anywhere. But he stood bare, not cased in euphemistic coat-of-mail; he grappled like a giant, face to face, heart to heart, with the naked truth of things! That, after all, is the sort of man for one. I plead guilty to valuing such a man beyond all other sorts of men. Smoothshaven Respectabilities not a few one finds, that are not good for much. Small thanks to a man for keeping his hands clean, who would not touch the work but with gloves on!

From of old, I will confess, this theory of Cromwell's falsity has been incredible to me. Nay I cannot believe the like, of any Great Man whatever. Multitudes of Great Men figure in History as false, selfish men; but if we will consider it, they are but figures for us, unintelligible shadows; we do not see into them as men that could have existed at all. Can a great soul be possible without a conscience in it, the essence of all real souls, great or small? No, we cannot figure Cromwell as a Falsity and Fatuity; the longer I study him and his career, I believe this the less. Why should we? There is no evidence of it. Is it not strange that, after all the mountains of calumny this man has been subject to, after being represented as the very prince of liars, who never, or hardly ever, spoke truth, but always some cunning counterfeit of truth, there should not yet have been one falsehood brought clearly home to him? A prince of liars, and no lie spoken by him. Not one that I could yet get sight of.

Looking at the man's life with our own eyes, it seems to me, a very different hypothesis suggests itself. What little we know of his earlier obscure years, distorted as it has come down to us, does it not all betoken an earnest, affectionate, sincere kind of man? His nervous melancholic temperament indicates rather a seriousness too deep for him. His successes in Parliament, his successes through the war, are honest successes of a brave man; who has more resolution in the heart of him, more light in the head of him than other men. His prayers to God; his spoken thanks to the God of Victory, who had preserved him safe, and carried him forward so far, through the furious clash of a world all set in conflict, through desperate-looking envelopments at Dunbar; through the death-hail of so many battles; mercy after mercy; to the "crowning mercy" of Worcester fight: all this is good and genuine for a deep-hearted Calvinistic Cromwell. Only to vain unbelieving Cavaliers, worshipping not God but their own "lovelocks," frivolities and formalities, living quite apart from contemplations of God, living without God in the world, need it seem hypocritical.

Nor will his participation in the king's death involve him in condemnation with us. It is a stern business killing of a King! But if you once go to war with him, it lies there; this and all else lies there. Once at war, you have made wager of battle with him: it is he to die, or else you. Reconciliation is problematic; may be possible, or, far more likely, is impossible. It is now pretty generally admitted that the parliament, having vanquished Charles

[1658 A.D.]

First, had no way of making any tenable arrangement with him. The large Presbyterian party, apprehensive now of the Independents, were most anxious to do so; anxious indeed as for their own existence; but it could not be. The unhappy Charles, in those final Hampton Court negotiations, shows himself as a man fatally incapable of being dealt with.

The Presbyterians, in their despair, were still for believing Charles, though found false, unbelievable again and again. Not so Cromwell: "For all our fighting," says he, "we are to have a little bit of paper?" No!

In fact, everywhere we have to note the decisive practical eye of this man; how he drives towards the practical and practicable; has a genuine insight into what is fact. Such an intellect, I maintain, does not belong to a false man.

Cromwell's Ironsides were the embodiment of this insight of his; men fearing God; and without any other fear. No more conclusively genuine set of fighters ever trod the soil of England, or of any other land.

Neither will we blame greatly that word of Cromwell's to them; which was so blamed: "If the King should meet me in battle, I would kill the King." Why not? These words were spoken to men who stood as before a Higher than Kings. They had set more than their own lives on the cast.

Poor Cromwell — great Cromwell! The inarticulate Prophet; Prophet who could not speak. Rude, confused, struggling to utter himself, with his savage depth, with his wild sincerity; and he looked so strange, among the elegant Euphemisms, dainty little Falklands, didactic Chillingworths, diplomatic Clarendons! Consider him. An outer hull of chaotic confusion, visions of the Devil, nervous dreams, almost semi-madness; and yet such a clear determinate man's-energy in the heart of that. A kind of chaotic man. The ray as of pure starlight and fire, working in such an element of boundless hypochondria, unformed black of darkness! And yet withal this hypochondria, what was it but the very greatness of the man? The depth and tenderness of his wild affections: the quantity of sympathy he had with things — the quantity of insight he would yet get into the heart of things, the mastery he would yet get over things: this was his hypochondria. The man's misery, as man's misery always does, came of his greatness.

In fact there are two errors, widely prevalent, which pervert to the very basis our judgments formed about such men as Cromwell; about their "ambition," "falsity," and suchlike. The first is what I might call substituting the goal of their career for the course and starting-point of it. The vulgar Historian of a Cromwell fancies that he had determined on being Protector of England, at the time when he was ploughing the marsh lands of Cambridgeshire. His career lay all mapped-out: a program of the whole drama; which he then step by step dramatically unfolded, with all manner of cunning, deceptive dramaturgy, as he went on — the hollow, scheming ὑποκριτής or play-actor, that he was! This is a radical perversion; all but universal in such cases. And think for an instant how different the fact is! How much does one of us foresee of his own life? Short way ahead of us it is all dim; an unwound skein of possibilities, of apprehensions, attemptabilities, vague-looming hopes. This Cromwell had not his life lying all in that fashion of Program, which he needed then, with that unfathomable cunning of his, only to enact dramatically, scene after scene! Not so. We see it so; but to him it was in no measure so. What absurdities would fall away of themselves, were this one undeniable fact kept honestly in view by History!

But a second error, which I think the generality commit, refers to this same "ambition" itself. We exaggerate the ambition of great men; we mistake what the nature of it is. Great Men are not ambitious in that sense; he

is a small poor man that is ambitious so. Examine the man who lives in misery because he does not shine above other men; who goes about producing himself, pruriently anxious about his gifts and claims; struggling to force everybody, as it were begging everybody for God's sake, to acknowledge him a great man, and set him over the heads of men! Such a creature is among the wretchedest sights seen under this sun.

But with regard to Cromwell and his purposes: Hume,[s] and a multitude following him, come upon me here with an admission that Cromwell was sincere at first; a sincere "Fanatic" at first, but gradually became a "Hypocrite" as things opened round him. This of the Fanatic-Hypocrite is Hume's theory of it; extensively applied since — to Mahomet and many others. Think of it seriously, you will find something in it; not much, not all, very far from all. Sincere hero hearts do not sink in this miserable manner. I will venture to say that such never befell a great deep Cromwell; I think, never. Nature's own lion-hearted Son; Antæus-like, his strength is got by touching the Earth, his Mother; lift him up from the Earth, lift him up into Hypocrisy, Inanity, his strength is gone. We will not assert that Cromwell was an immaculate man; that he fell into no faults, no insincerities among the rest. He was no dilettante professor of "perfections," "immaculate conducts." He was a rugged Orson, rending his rough way through actual true work — doubtless with many a fall therein. Insincerities, faults, very many faults daily and hourly: it was too well known to him; known to God and him! Cromwell's last words, as he lay waiting for death, are those of a Christian heroic man. Broken prayers to God, that He would judge him and this Cause, He since man could not, in justice yet in pity. They are most touching words. He breathed out his wild, great soul, its toils and sins all ended now, into the presence of his Maker, in this manner.

I, for one, will not call the man a Hypocrite! Hypocrite, mummer, the life of him a mere theatricality; empty barren quack, hungry for the shouts of mobs? The man had made obscurity do very well for him till his head was gray; and now he was, there as he stood recognised unblamed, the virtual King of England. Cannot a man do without King's Coaches and Cloaks? Is it such a blessedness to have clerks forever pestering you with bundles of papers in red tape? A simple Diocletian prefers planting of cabbages; a George Washington, no very immeasurable man, does the like. One would say, it is what any genuine man could do; and would do. The instant his real work were out in the matter of Kingship — away with it!

One is sorry for Cromwell in his old days. His complaint is incessant of the heavy burden Providence has laid on him. Heavy; which he must bear till death. Old Colonel Hutchinson,[t] as his wife relates it, Hutchinson, his old battlemate, coming to see him on some indispensable business much against his will. Cromwell "follows him to the door," in a most fraternal, domestic, conciliatory style; begs that he would be reconciled to him, his old brother in arms; says how much it grieves him to be misunderstood, deserted by true fellow-soldiers, dear to him from old: the rigorous Hutchinson, cased in his Republican formula, sullenly goes his way. And the man's head now white; his strong arm growing weary with its long work! I think always too of his poor Mother, now very old, living in that Palace of his; a right, brave woman; as indeed they lived all an honest God-fearing Household there: if she heard a shot go-off, she thought it was her son killed. He had to come to her at least once a day, that she might see with her own eyes that he was yet living. The poor old Mother! What had this man gained; what had he gained? He had a life of sore strife and toil, to his last day. Fame,

[1658 A.D.]

ambition, place in History? His dead body was hung in chains; his "place in History" — place in History forsooth! has been a place of ignominy, accusation, blackness and disgrace; and here, this day, who knows if it is not rash in me to be among the first that ever ventured to pronounce him not a knave and liar, but a genuinely honest man! Peace to him. Did he not, in spite of all, accomplish much for us? We walk smoothly over his great rough heroic life; step-over his body sunk in the ditch there. We need not spurn it, as we step on it! Let the Hero rest. It was not to men's judgment that he appealed; nor have men judged him very well.[u]