

VARIOUS

BLACKWOOD'S
EDINBURGH MAGAZINE,
VOLUME 61, NO. 378,
APRIL, 1847

Various

**Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,
Volume 61, No. 378, April, 1847**

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=35492047

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Volume 61, No. 378, April, 1847:

Содержание

CROMWELL

4

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

84

Various
Blackwood's Edinburgh
Magazine, Volume 61,
No. 378, April, 1847

CROMWELL

Mr Carlyle's services to history in collecting and editing these letters¹ and speeches of Cromwell, all men will readily and gratefully acknowledge. A work more valuable as a guide to the study of the singular and complex character of our pious revolutionist, our religious demagogue, our preaching and praying warrior and usurper, has not been produced. There is another portion of Mr Carlyle's labours which will not meet so unanimous an approbation. As *editor*, Mr Carlyle has given us a valuable work; as *commentator*, the view which he would teach us to take of English Puritanism is, to our thinking, simply the most paradoxical, absurd, unintelligible, mad business we ever encountered in our lives.

Our Hero-worshipper, it must be allowed, has been more fortunate this time in the selection of his object of devotion than

¹ *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, with Elucidations by Thomas Carlyle.*

when he shouted to the skies his Mirabeaus and Dantons. But he makes an unfortunate species of compensation. In proportion as his hero is more within the bounds of humanity has his worship become more extravagant and outrageous. He out-puritans the Puritans; he is more fanatic than his idol; he has chosen to express himself with such a righteous truculence, such a sanguinary zeal, such a pious contempt for human virtue and human sympathies, as would have startled Old Noll himself. It is a bad religion this hero-worship—at least as practised by Mr Carlyle. Here is our amiable countryman rendered by it, in turn, a terrorist and a fanatic. All his own intellectual culture he throws down and abandons. Such dire transformation ensues as reminds us of a certain hero-worship which Milton has celebrated:

"Horror on him falls,
And horrid sympathy; for what he sees
He feels himself, now changing; down his arms,
Down falls the spear and shield; down he as fast;
And the dire hiss renews, and the dire form,
Caught by contagion."

But to our task—which is no light one; for in our survey of this book we have to keep in view both hero and hero-worshipper, Cromwell and Carlyle, both somewhat slippery personages, abnormal, enigmatical.

The speeches of Oliver Cromwell have a formidable reputation for prolixity, confusion, and excessive tediousness;

yet we have not, for our own part, found these volumes to be of the dry and scarce readable description which their title foreboded; and we would caution others not to be deterred by any fears of this nature from their perusal. They will find an interest grow upon them as they proceed, and the last volume to be more attractive than the first. As the work advances, the letters and speeches of Cromwell become more intimately connected with the great transactions of the period, and the editor himself more frequently favours us with some specimen of his happier manner, where concentration of style, a spirit of humour and reflection, and a power of vivid portraiture, have *not* degenerated into mere quaintness, into a species of slang, into *Carlylisms*, into vague generalities about infinitudes and eternities. At all times the interspersed commentary—written in that peculiar, fantastic, jingling manner which, illegitimate as it is, disorderly and scandalous to all lovers of propriety in style and diction, is at all events the very opposite to dulness—forms perhaps the most fortunate contrast that could have been devised with the Cromwellian period, so arid and colourless, so lengthy and so tortuous, tinged often with such a dismal obscurity, and valuable in fact only as showing *the man*, utterly valueless as an exposition of thought. Perhaps, as models of style, a critic would be as little disposed to applaud the writing of Mr Carlyle as the compositions of Cromwell, but they form here all admirable relief the one to the other; taken together, one can consume a considerable quantity of both. Your dry bread is

wearily mastication, and your potted anchovies have a somewhat too stinging flavour; but taken together, sandwich-fashion, as they are here, the consumption may go on rapidly enough.

But, whether dry or not, the letters and speeches of Cromwell should be read by every one desirous of obtaining an insight into the character of not the least extraordinary, nor the least misrepresented personage in history. If there is any one who still believes that Cromwell was a thorough hypocrite, that his religion was a systematic feint to cover his ambitious designs, the perusal of these volumes will entirely undeceive him. We look upon this hypothesis, this Machiavelian explanation of Cromwell's character, as henceforth entirely dismissed from all candid and intelligent minds. It was quite natural that such a view should be taken of their terrible enemy by the royalists of the Restoration, hating his memory with a most cordial hatred, and accustomed, in their blinding licentiousness, to look upon *all* religion as little better than cant and hypocrisy. It was quite natural that such a portrait of him should be drawn by the men who unearthed his bones, and vented their rage upon a senseless corpse. We see it was quite inevitable that some such coarse caricature should be thus limned and transmitted to us. But it has lasted long enough. We believe, indeed, that by most persons it has already been dismissed and disowned. It may now be torn into shreds, and cast aside as utterly faithless.

Cromwell was a *genuine Puritan*. There is no doubt of that. He was no youth when the war broke out, nor a man who

had yet to seek his religious party or principles. As the farmer of St Ives, we see him, as distinctly as if he still lived upon the earth, the man of fierce sectarian piety, in natural temper not unamiable, somewhat gloomy and hypochondriacal, but, above all, distinguished by whatsoever of good or ill the sort of Calvinistic divinity prevalent at the time could infuse into its professors. Such the war found him, and such he continued to be; throughout his whole career we never for a moment lose sight of "the saint," the title which, then as now, the profane world gave to this class of men.

Was Cromwell, then, always sincere in his utterances? was there no cant, *no* hypocrisy? Did he never conceal the ambition and domineering spirit of the soldier under the humility of the saint? Another matter quite. Because a man is religious in the main, it follows not that he is incapable of occasionally practising hypocrisy: he may lapse as well into this, as into any crime of the decalogue. Although we might find it difficult to put our finger exactly upon the spot, and say, Here speaks the hypocrite, we are not without suspicion that Cromwell was at times practising dissimulation. But if he dissembled, if he used with artifice the language of religion, it was no new and foreign disguise that he put on. He had but to draw the folds a little higher over his face of a robe that he had long worn in all times and seasons, and which was verily his own.

In common with almost all men who in times of civil broil have risen from a lowly station to great power, Cromwell had

occasion, no doubt, at times for dissimulation. His religion, genuine as it was, would no more prevent him from the practice of this necessary craft than from the sanguinary deeds not more necessary to the triumph of his cause. Nay, it was precisely of that enthusiastic order which, in the most liberal manner, justifies the means for the end. Now, at a period when the saints were in the ascendant, dissimulation would unavoidably take a religious form, and when most deceiving men, or most faithfully addressing them, he would still colour all his language with the same hue of piety. As, in an age of chivalry, the dissembler would have the boast of honour and the parade of knightly courtesy for ever on his lips, so in these times of saintship he would lull the suspicions of men by a gross emblazonry of religion. It might well happen, therefore, that such a man as Cromwell, working his way upward to the highest post of authority, would deal in much insincerity of phrase, and yet have "the root of the matter" in him. Indeed, nothing is more common in the world than this combination of genuine feelings of piety with a great abundance of cant, habitual or designed. It would betray a very slender knowledge of mankind, and none at all of what is called the religious world, to conclude that a man is destitute of sincere piety because he sometimes makes use of the language of religion for ulterior purposes not peculiarly pious.

It is to be observed, moreover, that to readers unfamiliar with the peculiarities of *professing* Christians, whether Puritans or of other denomination, the expressions of humility and

self-abasement which Cromwell frequently makes use of have appeared to be plain symptoms of hypocrisy. They are nothing but the habits of the sect. Such expressions are supposed to have been employed to blind men to his ambitious projects, to shelter him from the jealous scrutiny of rivals and superiors. Such a purpose they may have sometimes answered, and been intended to answer; but in the main they are nothing more nor less than the dialect of the tribe. Because is a Christian virtue, certain religious people have thought fit to indulge in a false vituperation of themselves. Striving avariciously after *all* virtues, however incompatible the one with the other, they counterfeit vice and meanness, that, good men as they are, they may have abundance of contrition. How far there can be Christianity or piety in an abuse and degradation of ourselves, when that abuse and degradation must be felt all along to be untrue—if any reflection whatever accompanies such language—we leave such people to settle amongst themselves. Certain it is that the Puritans excelled in this as in every other kindred extravagance. The elect of the Lord were fond of describing themselves as the most contemptible of sinners; the salt of the earth as being rottenness and corruption. It is to this habit of unmeaning self-disparagement that we are to attribute many of those phrases which have been thought in Cromwell to be studied artifices to cloak ambitious designs.

They are rife on all occasions, and their frequency and energy bear no relation to the supposed exigencies of his political career.

Take the following instance. No man surely knew better than he, that at the conclusion of the civil war the army had become paramount. He could sometimes speak of this army with the natural pride of a soldier, with the full consciousness of the power it possessed, and had conferred on him; and yet, at other times, he would talk of this terrible force in the puling strain, in more than the drawl and drivel of the conventicle. As Lord High Protector, addressing his first parliament, he says:—"I had the approbation of the officers of the army, in the three nations of England, Scotland, and Ireland. I say of the officers: I had that by their express remonstrances, and under signature. But there went along with that express consent of theirs, an implied consent also of a body of persons who had had somewhat to do in the world; who had been instrumental, by God, to fight down the enemies of God, and his people, in the three nations. And truly, until my hands were bound, and I was limited, (to my own great satisfaction, as many can bear me witness,) while I had in my hands so great a power and arbitrariness—the soldiery were a very considerable part of these nations, especially all government being dissolved. I say, when all government was thus dissolved, and nothing to keep things in order but the sword!" There can be no doubt of it—the soldiery were a very considerable part of the nation. But the Lord High Protector, in a speech he makes to his second parliament, referring to the very same period, narrating the very same events, can talk of this army as "a company of poor men," "your poor army," "those poor

contemptible men." To attempt to detect any political motive for this absurd phraseology, would be a very idle speculation, mere waste of ingenuity: he was simply more in the puritanic vein in the one case than the other.

In his letters to the parliament, giving an account of his successes in the war, he generally concludes with some expression of this strained evangelical modesty, and seems very much afraid lest Speaker Lenthall and other honourable members should attribute the victories he announces, in any measure to the army and the general who won them. He might be very sure, however, that, notwithstanding these self-renunciations, the parliament knew very well who was fighting their battles. Such a mode of speech would not endanger his reputation, nor diminish from his claims; might perhaps—though we will not say this was present to his thoughts—induce the parliament to presume that *he* would not insist on any very egregious reward for services he was so anxious to disclaim. We will quote one instance of this self-denying style; and perhaps the following passage contains altogether as much of a certain fanatical mode of reasoning as could be well found in so short a compass. Prince Rupert, then at Worcester, had sent two thousand men across the country, to his majesty at Oxford, to convoy his majesty's person and the artillery over to him at Worcester. Cromwell attacked and routed this convoy; he also took Bletchington House. After giving an account of the transaction, he continues:—"This was the mercy of God; and

nothing is more due than a real acknowledgment. And though I have had greater mercies, yet none clearer: because, in the first place, God brought them to our hands when we looked not for them; and delivered them out of our hands, when we laid a reasonable design to surprise them, and which we carefully endeavoured. His mercy appears in this also, that I did much doubt the storming of the house, it being strong and well manned, and I having few dragoons, and this being not my business; and yet we got it. I hope you will pardon me if I say, God is not enough owned. *We look too much to men and visible helps:* this hath much hindered our success." This from Oliver, who so well knew how "to keep his powder dry!" from Oliver, who, enthusiast himself, could yet shrewdly calculate on the military efficacy of enthusiasm, and set it down amongst the ways and means! Cant or not, it is sad stuff.

But, Puritan as he was, we can admire Cromwell. Every great man, in whatever times, or in whatever part of the world he has made his appearance, has earned his title to fame and distinction, not by qualities peculiar to the sect or religion to which he may have belonged, but qualities which, though connected with his own especial faith or tenets, are recognised as the common property of mankind; he has been great not as Catholic, as Puritan, as Pagan, as Mahometan, but as *man*; he has been great, because he was pious, brave, patriotic, sagacious, resolute, and has achieved great enterprises on the theatre of life. The greatness of Cromwell was indeed allied to Puritanism, inasmuch

as his mind grew up under this peculiar form of religion; but what we, and all posterity must admire in Cromwell, is by no means the puritan. His steadiness of purpose, his unshaken resolution, his military prowess, his eminent talent to govern and command, and his religious sense of duty to the Supreme, might all have existed under other modes of religion. In our admiration we entirely separate these qualities from that least gainly and least wholesome of the forms of Christian piety with which they are here found connected. History gives us examples of every kind of virtue, and every kind of talent, united with every species of fanaticism that has afflicted civilised life. It follows not that we applaud the fanaticism. The early caliphs were several of them distinguished by exalted virtues, temperance, self-denial, justice, patriotism: we praise these virtues, we acknowledge, too, that they are here linked with the profession of the faith of Islam; but for all this we do not admire the religion of Mahomet, nor that fanaticism which writ its texts upon the sword.

We insist upon this obvious distinction, because, whilst agreeing—to a certain extent—in Mr Carlyle's view of the character of Cromwell, we beg not to be implicated in that esteem and reverence which he professes to entertain for Puritanism, or the Puritans as a body. And this brings us to the extraordinary part of Mr Carlyle's performance—his ardent sympathy, nay his acquiescence with, and adherence to the Puritans, to that point that he adopts their convictions, their feelings, and even some of their most grotesque reasonings. Their

violence and ferocity, we were prepared to see Mr Carlyle, in his own sardonic fashion, abet and encourage; his sympathy is always with the party *who strikes*; but that he should identify himself with their mumming thoughts, their "plentiful reasons," their gloomiest superstitions, was what no one could have anticipated. On this subject we must quote his own words; our own would not be credited; they would seem to any one who had not read his work to be scandalous misrepresentations. The extravagance runs through the whole book, but we have it perhaps more concentrated in the Introduction.

This Introduction, which we sat down to with keen expectations, disappointed us extremely, at least in those parts where any general views are taken. We feel, and have elsewhere ungrudgingly expressed, a certain admiration for the talents of Mr Carlyle. We shall never forget the surprise and pleasure with which we read the "Sartor Resartus," as it one day burst suddenly and accidentally upon us; and no one who has once read his graphic and passionate history of the French Revolution, can ever forget the vivid pictures that were there presented to him. We opened this book, therefore, with a sort of anticipatory relish. But we found very little of his genius, and very much of his extravagance; less of the one and more of the other, than we thought could possibly have been brought together. Metaphors and allusions, already worn thread-bare, are introduced as stock phrases, as if he had inserted them in his dictionary of the English language. All his vices of manner are exaggerated, while

the freshness of thought, which half excused them, is departed. These strange metaphors, these glaring colours, which are ready spread out upon his palette, he transfers with hasty profusion to his canvass, till—(as it has been said of Mr Turner's, pictures)—the canvass and the palette-plate very nearly resemble. But were it otherwise, were there all and more than the wit, and humour, and sarcasm, and pungent phrase, and graphic power, which may be found scattered through Mr Carlyle's best performances, there is here a substratum of sheer and violent absurdity, which all these together would fail to disguise or compensate. Certainly there are pages of writing in this Introduction which contain such an amount of extravagant assertion, uttered in such fantastic jargon, as we think could nowhere be paralleled. Dulness could never have attained to any thing so extraordinary; and surely genius never before condescended to such workmanship.

"What and how great," thus commences the book, "are the interests which connect themselves with the hope that England may yet attain to some, practical belief and understanding of its history during the seventeenth century, need not be insisted on at present, such hope being still very distant, very uncertain. We have wandered far away from the ideas which guided us in that century, *and indeed which had guided us in all preceding centuries, but of which that century was the ultimate manifestation.* We have wandered very far, and must endeavour to return and connect ourselves therewith again! It is with other feelings than those of poor peddling dilettantism, other aims than

the writing of successful or unsuccessful publications, that an earnest man occupies himself in those dreary provinces of the dead and buried. The *last glimpse of the godlike* vanishing from this England; conviction and veracity giving place to hollow cant and formalism—antique 'Reign of God,' which all true men in their several dialects and modes have always striven for, giving place to the modern reign of the No-God, whom men name devil; this, in its multitudinous meanings and results, is a sight to create reflections in the earnest man! One wishes there were a history of English Puritanism, *the last of all our heroisms*, but sees small prospect of such a thing at present."

Then, beginning to quote himself, as his manner is, changing his voice and adopting another key, as if by this thin disguise to obtain somewhat more license for the wildness and vehemence of his speech—an artifice surely not necessary here—he thus continues:—

"'Few nobler heroisms,' says a well-known writer, long occupied on this subject, 'at bottom, perhaps, *no nobler heroism*, ever transacted itself on this earth; and it lies as good as lost to us, overwhelmed under such an avalanche of human stupidities as no heroism before ever did. Intrinsically and extrinsically it may be considered inaccessible to these generations. Intrinsically, the spiritual purport of it has become inconceivable, incredible to the modern mind. Extrinsically, the documents and records of it, scattered waste as a shoreless chaos, are not legible. They lie there printed, written, to the extent of tons of square miles, as

shot-rubbish; unedited, unsorted, not so much as indexed; full of every conceivable confusion; yielding light to very few; yielding darkness, in several sorts, to very many.' ...

"This, then,' continues our impatient friend, 'is the Elysium we English have provided for our heroes! The Rushworthian Elysium. Dreariest continent of shot-rubbish the eye ever saw. Confusion piled on confusion to your utmost horizon's edge; obscure in lurid twilight as of the shadow of death; trackless, without index, without finger-post, or mark of any human foregoer; where your human footstep, if you are still human, echoes bodeful through the gaunt solitude, peopled only by somnambulant pedants, dilettants, and doleful creatures, by phantasms, errors, inconceivabilities, by nightmares, pasteboard norroys, griffins, wiverns, and chimeras dire! There, all vanquished, overwhelmed under such waste lumber mountains, the wreck and dead ashes of some six unbelieving generations, does the age of Cromwell and his Puritans lie hidden from us. This is what we, for our share, have been able to accomplish towards keeping *our heroic ones* in memory."

After some further diatribe against all preceding historians, collectors, and editors, he drops his ventriloquism, and, resuming a somewhat more natural voice, he proceeds:—

"Nay, in addition to the sad state of our historical books, and what indeed is fundamentally the cause and origin of that, our common spiritual notions, if any notion of ours may still deserve to be called spiritual, are fatal to a right understanding of that

seventeenth century. *The Christian doctrines, which then dwelt alive in every heart, have now in a manner died out of all hearts*—very mournful to behold—and are not the guidance of this world any more. Nay, worse still, the cant of them does yet dwell alive with us, little doubting that it is cant, in which fatal intermediate state the eternal sacredness of this universe itself, of this human life itself, has fallen dark to the most of us, and we think that, too, a cant and a creed."

So!—as our honest German friend would exclaim, puffing from his mouth at the same time a huge volume of symbolic smoke. We have withdrawn it seems, from the path of light ever since the reign of the army and its godly officers established a.d. 1649. We must return and connect ourselves therewith; it is our only salvation; though, indeed, if Puritanism was the manifestation of the ideas of all preceding centuries—if the same current of thought can be traced from William the Conqueror to Oliver the conqueror—a very little ingenuity would suffice to trace the same ideas, the same current of thought, somewhat farther still. But this reign of the puritanical army was really "the last glimpse of the godlike!"—it was "the reign of God!" and we live under the reign of —, psha! Why, he does not even give us a substantial devil, but coins a strange personification of a negative. Such was not the devil, by the way, at the time of "the noblest heroism ever transacted on the earth." Such a definition of the "roaring lion," would, in those days of light and happiness, have procured its author, at the very least, a trip to Barbadoes. Even

Cromwell himself would have *Barbadoesed* him.

"This last of our heroisms!" God grant it is the last! It is only out of another religious war that another such heroism can arise. If church and dissent should take up arms, and, instead of controversies carried on in pamphlets, upon tradition and white surplices, should blow out each other's brains with gunpowder, then Mr Carlyle would see his "heroic ones" revive upon the earth.

"The Christian doctrines which then dwelt alive in every heart, have now in a manner died out of all hearts." Only the cant of them dwells alive with us. The same clear-sighted author, who sees the Christian doctrines so beautifully and pre-eminently developed in the Ironsides of Cromwell, in the troopers of Lambert and Harrison, sacking, pillaging, slaughtering, and in all that tribe of men who ever shed blood the readier after prayer-time—men who had dropped from their memory Christ's own preaching, to fill their mouths with the curses which the Hebrew prophets had been permitted, under a past dispensation, to denounce against the enemies of Judea, who had constructed their theology out of the darkest parts of the New, and the most fearful portion of the Old Testament;—this same author, opening his eyes and ears upon his own day and generation, finds that Christianity has died out of all hearts, and its phraseology, as he expresses himself elsewhere, "become mournful to him when spouted as frothy cant from Exeter Hall." If Mr Carlyle would visit Exeter Hall, and carry there one tithe of the determination to

approve, that he exhibits in favour of the Puritan, he would find a Christian piety as sincere, as genuine, and far more humane, than his heroes of Naseby, or Dunbar, or Drogheda were acquainted with. He would see the descendants of his Puritans, relieved, at least we may say, from the necessity of raising their psalm on the battle-field, indulging in none of the ferocities of our nature, assembling in numerous but peaceful meetings, raising annually, by a quiet but no contemptible sacrifice, their millions for the dissemination of Gospel truth. But Mr Carlyle would call this cant; he sees nothing good, or generous, or high-minded in any portion of the world in which he lives; he reserves his sympathies for the past—for the men of buckram and broad-sword, who, on a question of church government, were always ready "to hew Agag to pieces," let Agag stand for who, or what number it might.

If there is one spectacle more odious than another of all which history presents to us, whether it take place amongst Mahometan or Christian, Catholic or Protestant, it is this:—to see men practising all the terrible brutalities of war, treading down their enemies, doing all that rage and the worst passions prompt, and doing all amidst exclamations of piety, devout acknowledgments of submission to Divine will, and professions of gratitude to God. Other religious factions have committed far greater atrocities than the Puritans, but nowhere in history is this same spectacle exhibited with more distasteful and sickening accompaniments. The Moslem thanked God upon his sword in at least a somewhat soldierly manner; and the Catholic, by the very pomp with which

he chants his *Te Deum*, somewhat conceals the meaning of his act, and, keeping God a little out of sight, makes his mass express the natural feeling of a human triumph. But the sleek Puritan, at once grovelling and presumptuous, mingles with his sanguinary mood all the morbid sickly conceit, all the crawling affected humility of the conventicle. All his bloodsheds are "mercies," and they are granted in answer to his long and miserable prayers—prayers which, to a man of rational piety, sound very much like blasphemies. He carries with him to the battle-field, to the siege, to the massacre, not one even of those generous feelings which war itself permits towards a foe. He chooses to call his enemy the enemy of God, and kneels before he fights, that the inexpressible *mercy* may be granted of cutting his throat!

"That the sense of difference between right and wrong," says Mr Carlyle, "had filled all time and all space for man, and bodied itself forth into a heaven and hell for him,—this constitutes the grand feature of those Puritan, old-Christian ages; this is the element which stamps them as heroic, and has rendered their works great, manlike, fruitful to all generations." Quite on the contrary. The sense of right and wrong was obscured, confused, lost sight of, in the promptings of a presumptuous enthusiasm; and it is exactly *this* which constitutes the perilous characteristic of such men as the Puritans and Cameronians, and similar sectaries. How can the sense of right and wrong keep its footing in an enthusiasm which has brought itself to believe that all its successes are a direct answer to its prayers?

Success becomes the very measure of right and wrong. The two extremes of Atheism and Fanaticism have met; they may both dispense with conscience, and make the event the criterion of the deed. Hear how the pious heroes of Mr Carlyle reason on one of the most solemn occasions of the civil war. The army is remonstrating with the Parliament because it appeared slow to shed the blood of their conquered and captured King, and it actually speaks of the death of Charles "as appeasing the wrath of God" against that sovereign! and bids the Parliament "sadly to consider, as men accountable to the Highest," how far an accommodation with the King, "when God hath given him so clearly into your power to do justice, can be just before God or good men." The *power* to do the act is full authority, is absolute command to do it. What other doctrine could a Cæsar Borgia, or an Eccelino, the tyrant of Padua, desire to be governed, or rather to be manumitted by from all government?

The argument drawn from the success given to their cause, is perpetually in the mouth of Cromwell and of his Puritans. It establishes, without a doubt, that they have used the sword justly, and are still further to use it. Every "mercy" of this kind is in answer to prayer. Basing-House, a private residence, cannot be sacked and plundered, and the inhabitants put to the sword, but the pious historian of the feat, Mr Peters, adds, that it, and the like triumphs, were "answers to the prayers and trophies of the faith of some of God's servants." When Greek meets Greek, when the Scottish Covenanter encounters the English Puritan,

and the former, being worsted, finds out "that he had not so learned Christ as to hang the equity of a cause upon events," Cromwell answers, "Did not you solemnly appeal and pray? Did not we do so too? And ought not you and we to think, with fear and trembling, of the hand of the Great God, in this mighty and strange appearance of His, instead of slightly calling it an 'event'? Were not both your and our expectations renewed from time to time, whilst we waited upon God, to see which way He would manifest himself upon our appeals? And shall we, after all these our prayers, fastings, tears, expectations, and solemn appeals, call these bare 'events'? The Lord pity you."

Men prayed in those days! says Mr Carlyle, "actually prayed! It was a capability old London and its preachers and populations had; to us the incrediblest." Beyond a doubt the Puritans and the Covenanters prayed, and in such a manner and at such a length, that the strange doctrine on which Southey has founded his "Curse of Kehama," of the essential and irresistible force of prayer, seems to have got mixed up with their Christianity.²

² Take the following instance from the early and more moderate times of the Revolution, and wherein the most staid and sober of this class of people is concerned. When Essex left London to march against the king, then at Oxford, he requested the assembly of divines to keep a fast for his success. Baillie informs us how it was celebrated. "We spent from nine to five graciously. After Dr Twisse had begun with a brief prayer, Mr Marshall prayed large two hours, most divinely confessing the sins of the members of the assembly in a wonderful, pathetic, and prudent way. After Mr Arrowsmith preached an hour, then a psalm; thereafter Mr Vines prayed near two hours, and Mr Palmer preached an hour, and Mr. Seaman prayed near two hours, then a psalm; after Mr Henderson brought them to a sweet conference of the heat confessed

But we do not think that the voice of prayer has quite died out amongst us. It is curious to observe what a vivid perception this author has for the historical past, and what a voluntary blindness and deafness for the actually present. It is a fact! he frequently exclaims, with all the energy of a discoverer,—a fact! that men in these ages prayed, and had a religious faith. Our churches and chapels are not facts. The control—none the worse for being exercised without pike or musket—which the religious public, meeting in that very Exeter Hall, have over the measures of government, and all political transactions,—is not a fact. Were he writing, some centuries hence, the history of this our age, he would detect these facts. What facts, indeed, might he not detect, and what exaggerated significance might he not give to them! Why, in those days, he might exclaim, in his enthusiasm, the very beggars in the street, in asking charity, poured God's blessing on you! It was a credible thing, in those days, God's blessing!—and men gave their money for it!

A passage in one of Cromwell's letters instances, in rather a touching manner, what school of piety this army of saints must have proved. At the battle of Marston Moor a Colonel Walton had lost his son. "He was a gallant young man, exceedingly gracious," and Cromwell, giving an account of his death, in his consolatory letter to the father, writes thus,—"A little after, he

in the assembly, and other seen faults to be remedied, and the conveniency to preach against all sects, especially anabaptists and antinomians. Dr Twisse closed with a short prayer and blessing. God was so evidently in all this exercise that we expect certainly a blessing."—*Baillie*, quoted from *Lingard*.

said, one thing lay upon his spirit. I asked him what that was. He told me it was that God had not suffered him to be any more *the executioner of his enemies!*"

But nothing disturbs the equanimity of our editor, or interrupts his flow of rapture over the fanaticism of these times, especially when expressed in the letters of Cromwell. Over the theological effusions which the general of the Puritan army addresses, from his camp, to the Edinburgh clergy, Mr Carlyle thus expatiates:—"Dryasdust, carrying his learned eye over these, and the like letters, finds them, of course, full of 'hypocrisy,' &c. Unfortunate Dryasdust! they are corruscations terrible as lightning, and beautiful as lightning, from the innermost temple of the human soul; intimations, still credible, of what a human soul does mean when it *believes* in the Highest—a thing poor Dryasdust never did, nor will do. The hapless generation that now reads these words ought to hold its peace when it has read them, and sink into unutterable reflections, not unmixed with tears, and some substitute for 'sackcloth and ashes,' if it liked. In its poor canting, sniffing, flimsy vocabulary, there is no word that can make any response to them. This man has a living God-inspired soul in him, not an enchanted artificial 'substitute for salt,' as our fashion is. They that have human eyes can look at him; they that have only owl-eyes need not."

And then follows something upon *light* and *lightning*. "As lightning is to light, so is a Cromwell to a Shakspeare. The light is beautifuller. Ah, yes; but, until by lightning and other fierce

labour your foul chaos has become a world, you cannot have any light, or the smallest chance for any!... The melodious speaker is great, but the melodious worker is greater than he. Our Time cannot speak at all, but only cant and sneer, and argumentatively jargon and recite the multiplication-table: neither, as yet, can it work, except at mere railroads and cotton-spinning. It will, apparently, return to chaos soon, and then more lightnings will be needed, lightning enough,—to which Cromwell's was but a mild matter,—to be followed by light, we may hope!"—by another Shakspeare, as the tenor of the passage would imply.

Strange jumble this of Cromwell and Shakspeare, of light and lightning! There is one species of light which we are often reminded of here; a certain fitful, flickering beam, which partakes indeed of a luminous nature, but which chooses its path for ever over bottomless bog.

The sincerity of Oliver Cromwell, in these his letters and speeches, has been questioned and discussed; the sincerity of their present editor may become a question at least as difficult and perplexing. Is there any genuine conviction at the bottom of all this rant and raving? Our extravagant worshipper of the "old heathen" Goëthe, stands forth the champion and admirer of certain harsh, narrow-thoughted, impetuous sectaries, proclaims *them* the only "Reformers" of the world; descends to their lowest prejudices, to their saddest bigotries, to their gloomy puerilities; arguing with them solemnly against the sinfulness of drinking healths, and quite fraternising with them in all their animosity

against Popery and Prelacy. What does he mean? Is it a case of conversion? Is it an outpouring merely, by a strange vent, of certain acrid humours? Is he honest, and in earnest? or is he making sport of those hapless Englishmen whom he pronounces "in human stupidity to have no fellow?"

Observers of a curious and speculative turn might, perhaps, explain it thus:—Mr Carlyle is evidently a writer of strong religious feelings. Marry, when he would exhibit them to the world, he is under the necessity of borrowing a creed from some one else. His own philosophy has nothing palpable enough for ordinary vision; nothing, as we remember, but vague infinities and eternities, with an "everlasting *yes*," and an "everlasting *no*." As the choice lay quite open to him, there was no reason why he should not select the very hottest creed he could anywhere find lying about in our history. From contemporaries it was not likely that he should borrow: he loves nothing, praises nothing, esteems nothing of this poor visible present; but it was an additional recommendation to the Puritanic piety, that it had left a detestable memory behind it, and was in declared hostility with all contemporaneous ways of thinking. What could he better do, therefore, than borrow this old volcanic crater of Puritanism, and pour out from it his religion and his anger upon a graceless world?

Others, not given to such refinements, would explain the phenomenon upon more ordinary principles, and reduce the enigma to a case merely of literary monomania. Mr Carlyle, they

would say, has been striving to understand these Puritans till he has grown, for the time, to resemble them. In the effort to project his mind into their mind, he has overshot the mark; he has not been able yet to get his own mind back again. It is a case, they would say, of mere imagination. Could you bring Mr Carlyle into contact with a live Puritan, the charm would be instantly dispelled. If one of Harrison's troopers would but ask him to step aside with him, under a hedge, to wrestle for a blessing, or would kindly undertake to catechise him on some point of divinity,—on that notion of his, for instance, of "Right and Wrong bodying themselves into Hell and Heaven,"—the alliance would be dissolved, not, perhaps, without violent rupture.

For ourselves, we sometimes think that Mr Carlyle is in earnest. Men should be honest. One who talks so loudly about *faith*, ought to be sincere in his utterances to the public. At other times, the mummery becomes too violent, grows too "fast and furious," to permit us to believe that what we witness is the sane carriage of a sane man. At all events, we can but look on with calm surprise. If our philosopher will tuck his robe high up about his loins, and play the merry-andrew, if he will grimace, and paint thick, and hold dialogue with himself, who shall hinder him?—only we would rather not wear, on such an occasion, the docile aspect of admiring pupils; we prefer to stand aside, and look on with Mr Dryasdust.

It is worthy of note, that however Mr Carlyle extols his "Heroic Ones" in a body, Cromwell is the only individual

that finds a good word throughout the work. Every one else, Hampden not excepted, is spoken of with slight and disparagement. Amongst all the "godlike," there is but one who finds favour in his sight,—him, however, he never deserts,—and the very parties who have before been applauded, in general terms, become the subjects of ridicule or castigation the moment they are seen in opposition to Cromwell.

To Cromwell, then, let us turn our attention. Him we also can admire. We admire his great practical sagacity, his eminent talents for war and for government, the moderation and the conscientiousness which, though a usurper and a zealot, he displayed in the use of power. He was, as we have said, a genuine Puritan. This must be understood, or no intelligible view of his character can be taken. It is not only hostility to his memory which has attributed to him a studied hypocrisy; the love of the marvellous has lent its aid. Such a supposition was thought to magnify his talents and his genius. It was more dramatic to make him the "honest Iago" of the piece. A French writer, M. Villemain, in his History of Cromwell, expresses this feeling very naïvely, and speaks of an hypocrisy "que l'histoire atteste, et qu'on ne saurait mettre en doute sans ôter quelque chose à l'idée de son génie; car les hommes verront toujours moins de grandeur dans un fanatique de bonne foi, que dans une ambition qui fait des enthousiastes. Cromwell mena les hommes par la prise qu'ils lui donnaient sur eux. *L'ambition seule lui inspira des crimes, qu'il fit exécuter par le fanatisme des autres.*" That he thus employed

the spirit of the age without sharing it, is a theory which will not stand the light for a moment. Besides, it is not in this manner that history is transacted: we may all be puppets, if you will, upon the scene, but it is not in this fashion that any one man gets hold of the wires. The supposition, whatever honour it may do the genius of Cromwell, will do very little honour to the speculative genius of any writer who adopts it. But this is evident, that to whatever extent Cromwell shared the distempered feelings of a sectarian party, nothing ever clouded his penetration upon any affair of conduct, any question of means to an end. The hour never came that found him wanting. At every phase of the revolution he is there to lead, or control, or predominate over it.

Starting from this point of view—understanding him, in the first place, as the conscientious zealous Puritan, and endeavouring to estimate, as the history proceeds, the modifications which the soldier and the general, and finally the Protector, would induce upon this original substratum—the character of Cromwell becomes intelligible, and his conduct, in a measure, consistent. Whilst yet a private man, he had warmly espoused the extreme opinions of that religious party who looked on Popery as antichrist, and the Church of England as little better than Popery in disguise, as the same scarlet lady in a somewhat more modest attire. He was one of a class occasionally met with in the most quiet walks of life, men who torment their spirit on some public question till it becomes a personal grievance, or rather a corroding passion. What were bishops personally

to him? He might have prayed, and expounded, and walked meditative in his fields, and left a public question to be decided by the movements, necessarily slow, of public opinion. But no; he was constituted quite otherwise. From a spiritual jurisdiction, claimed though not exercised over him, his soul revolted. And this hatred to prelacy, to any spiritual authority over him or his—this determination to be his own priest—is, if not the strongest, certainly the steadiest and most constant feeling that he manifests. We trace it throughout his whole career. The first thing we hear of him in the House of Commons is a protest, a sort of ominous growl, against the promotion of some Arminian or semi-Popish divine. "If these are the steps to church preferment, what are we to expect!" Almost the first glimpse we catch of him when he has taken arms, is as the captain of a troop entering some cathedral church, and bidding the surpliced priest, who was reading the liturgy, "to cease his fooling, and come down!" And throughout the letters which he addresses to the Speaker from the seat of war, he rarely omits the opportunity of hinting, that the soldiers are worthy of that religious liberty for which they have fought so well. "We pray you, own His people more and more; for they are the chariots and horsemen of Israel." And in one of his latest speeches, he describes it as the great "extremity" of past times, that men were not permitted to preach in public unless they were ordained.

A rooted animosity to prelatival or other spiritual domination, is the key-note of this "melodious worker," as Mr Carlyle calls

him. Cromwell entered the civil war provided with no theory or plan of civil government, animated with no republican zeal; it was not patriotism in any ordinary sense of the word, it was his controversy with the church of England that brought him on the field of battle. After fighting against episcopacy, he fought with equal zeal against presbyterianism; but against monarchy, or for the republic, he can hardly be said to have drawn the sword. We all applaud the sagacity which saw at once that the strongest antagonist to the honour and fidelity of the royalist, was to be found in the passion of the zealot. He enlisted his praying regiment. From that time the battle was won. But the cause was lost. What hope could there be for the cause of civil freedom, of constitutional rights, when the champion who won its victories was fanatical zeal, and the rage of theological controversy?

It is the glaring defect in Cromwell—a defect which he had in common with many others of his time—that he threw himself into a revolution having for its first object to remodel the civil government, animated only with the passions of the collateral controversy upon ecclesiastical government. He fought the battle which was to destroy the monarchy, without any fixed idea or desire for the republican government which must be its substitute. This was not the subject that had engaged his thoughts or inflamed his ardour. When, therefore, the royalists had been conquered, it is not at all surprising that he should have seen nothing but the difficulties in the way of forming a republic. At this point of his history some excuse for him may be drawn

from the very defect we are noticing. His mind had dwelt on no theory of civil government—to the cause of the commonwealth his heart had never been pledged—and we can hardly call him, with justice, as Godwin does, a traitor to the republic. But, on the other hand, what a gap, what a void, does this disclose in the mind of our hero? What should we say of one who had plunged heart and soul into the French Revolution, conducted only by his rage against the Roman Catholic hierarchy? Such a one, had he risen to take a leading part in that drama, might have acted with greater wisdom and moderation than ardent and patriotic men; the very absence of any political opinion or passion might have enabled him to see more clearly than others the position which they all occupied; but this would not justify or palliate the original error, the rash, exclusive, self-blinding zeal which had brought him into that position.

To the ecclesiastical controversy, Cromwell clings throughout with an utter recklessness of the fate of civil government. When episcopacy had been vanquished, and presbyterianism threatened to take its place, he was quite as willing to plunge the whole kingdom into confusion and anarchy in his opposition to this new enemy, as to the old. Those who would defend him from the charge of personal ambition—all who excuse his conduct at this period of the history, put this plea upon record,—and without a doubt his hostility to presbyterianism was a very great and leading motive with him in his opposition to the Parliament, and his determination to prevent a reconciliation between the

House and the King. When Charles was a prisoner at the Isle of Wight, it is well known that the Parliament were anxious to come to some terms of reconciliation, and the concessions which he then made were voted to be "a sufficient ground for the future settlement of the kingdom." Why did Cromwell interfere at this juncture between the two parties, in such a way as entirely to destroy both? His best public ground is his hostility to presbyterianism. And what was the presbytery, that to him it should be so distasteful, and an object of so great animosity? Its forms of worship, the doctrines preached by its divines, were exactly those he himself practised and approved. There were no altars here, no surplices, no traditions, no sympathies with Rome, no stealthy approximations to her detested idolatries. But there was a claim put forward to ecclesiastical supremacy, to ordain, and authorise, and control public preachers, which he could not tolerate; and if no other motive had existed, he was ready to oppose every settlement, at every risk, having for its object to establish a claim of this description.

We will open the Letters and Speeches of Cromwell at this period of the history, and present our readers with a specimen of his epistolary style, and one which will go far to show how little his mind was influenced, even at this great crisis, by any thing which we should describe as political reasoning. Cromwell was a great *administrator*, but he had no vocation for speculative politics, and little attachment to forms of government. Framers of constitutions are not in repute at present; they have not

covered themselves with applause, rather with confusion; and this defect in Cromwell's mind will probably be looked upon with great indulgence. Nevertheless, people who go to war to demolish an existing government, ought to have taken thought for a substitute; on *them* it is incumbent to have a political creed, and a constitution to set up. At this very moment when the question is no less, than whether the king should be put to death, and monarchy rooted out of the land—ay, and the Parliament coerced, in order to effect these objects—our Puritan general reasons—like a Puritan and nothing better.

The following letter was addressed to Colonel Hammond, then governor of the Isle of Wight. The colonel had been distressed by his scruples at the extreme course the army was disposed to take, and had solicited this appointment to the Isle of Wight as a retreat from the scene of faction and violence. But it was precisely in this quiet little island that the king took refuge; his perplexities, therefore, were increased and not diminished. Cromwell writes to him to remove his scruples, and makes a characteristic allusion to this circumstance—*improves* it, as we should say.

We must apprise the reader, however, that it would be dangerous to form any opinion upon the religious sincerity or insincerity of Cromwell, upon extracts from his letters and speeches, or even upon any single letter or speech. From the incongruity we feel between the solemnity of the subject of religion, and the manner and occasion in which it is introduced, and from the use of certain expressions long since consecrated

to ridicule, it is impossible for a modern reader, on falling upon some isolated passages, not to exclaim, that this is cant and hypocrisy! But when the whole series, or the greater part of it, is read—when the same strain of thought and feeling, in season and out of season, is constantly observed—it is equally impossible not to feel persuaded that these letters and speeches body forth the genuine character of the man, and that the writer was verily a solemn and most serious person, in whom religious zeal was the last quality which needed reinforcement.

"Dear Robin,—No man rejoiceth more to see a line from thee than myself. I know thou hast long been under trial. Thou shalt be no loser by it. All things must work for the best.

"Thou desirest to hear of my experiences. I can tell thee, I am such a one as thou did formerly know, having a body of sin and death; but I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, there is no condemnation though much infirmity; and I wait for the redemption. And in this poor condition I obtain mercy, and sweet consolation through the Spirit. And find abundant cause every day to exalt the Lord and abase flesh—and herein I have some exercise.

"As to outward dispensations, if we may so call them, we have not been without our share of beholding some remarkable providences and appearances of the Lord. His presence hath been amongst us, and by the light of his countenance we have prevailed (*alludes to the battle of Preston.*) We are sure the goodness of Him who dwelt in the bush has shined upon us; and we can humbly say, we know

in whom we have believed; who can and will perfect what remaineth, and us also in doing what is well-pleasing in His eye-sight.

"I find some trouble in your spirit, occasioned first not only by your sad and heavy burden, as you call it, but also by the dissatisfaction you take at the ways of some good men whom you love with your heart, who through the principle, that it is lawful for a lesser part, if in the right, to force a numerical majority, &c. &c.

"To the first: call not your burden sad or heavy. If your Father laid it on you, He intended neither. He is the Father of light, from whom comes every good and perfect gift; who of His own will begot us.... Dear Robin, our fleshly reasonings ensnare us. These make us say 'heavy,' 'sad,' 'pleasant,' 'easy.' Was there not a little of this when Robert Hammond, through dissatisfaction too, desired retirement from the army, and thought of quiet in the Isle of Wight? Did not God find him out there? I believe he will never forget this. And now I perceive he is to seek again; partly through his sad and heavy burden, and partly through his dissatisfaction with friends' actings.

"Dear Robin, thou and I were never worthy to be door-keepers in this service. If thou wilt seek, seek to know the mind of God in all that chain of providence, whereby God brought thee thither, and that person (*the king*) to thee; how, before and since, God hath ordered him, and affairs concerning him; and then tell me, whether there be not some glorious and high meaning in all this, above what thou hast yet attained? And, laying aside thy fleshly reason, seek of

the Lord to teach thee what that is; and He will do it. I dare be positive to say, It is not that the wicked should be exalted that God should so appear as indeed He hath done. For there is no peace to *them*. No; it is set upon the hearts of such as fear the Lord, and we have witness upon witness, that it shall go ill with them and their partakers.

"As to thy dissatisfaction with friends' actings upon that supposed principle—I wonder not at that. If a man take not his own burden well, he shall hardly others'; especially if involved by so near a relation of love and Christian brotherhood as thou art, I shall not take upon me to satisfy; but I hold myself bound to lay my thoughts before so dear a friend. The Lord do His own will.

"You say, 'God hath appointed authorities among the nations, to which active or passive obedience is to be yielded. This resides, in England, in the Parliament. Therefore, active or passive resistance,' &c. &c.

"Authorities and powers are the ordinance of God. This or that species is of human institution, and limited some with larger, others with stricter bands, each one according to its constitution. But I do not therefore think that the authorities may do *any thing*, and yet such obedience be due. All agree that there are cases in which it is lawful to resist. If so, your ground fails, and so likewise the inference. Indeed, dear Robin, not to multiply words, the query is,—Whether ours be such case? This, ingenuously, is the true question.

"To this I shall say nothing, though I could say very much; but only desire thee to see what thou findest in thy own heart to two or three plain considerations.

First, Whether *Salus populi* be a sound position? *Secondly*, Whether, in the way in hand (*the parliamentary treaty with the king*,) really and before the Lord, before whom conscience has to stand, this be provided for—or if the whole fruit of the war is not likely to be frustrated, and all most like to turn to what it was, and worse? And this contrary to engagements, explicit covenants with those who ventured their lives upon those covenants and engagements, without whom, perhaps in equity, relaxation ought not to be? *Thirdly*, Whether this army be not a lawful power, called by God to oppose and fight against the king upon some stated grounds; and being in power to such ends, may not oppose one name of authority, for those ends, as well as another name—since it was not the outward authority summoning them that by its power made the quarrel lawful, but the quarrel was lawful in itself? If so, it may be, acting will be justified *in foro humano*. *But truly this kind of reasoning may be but fleshly, either with or against: only it is good to try what truth may be in them. And the Lord teach us.*

"My dear friend, let us look into providences; surely they mean somewhat. They hang so together; have been so constant, so clear, unclouded. Malice, sworn malice against God's people, now called 'saints,' to root out their name;—and yet they these poor saints getting arms and therein blessed with defence and more! I desire he that is for a principle of suffering (*passive obedience*) would not too much slight this. I slight not him who is so minded; but let us beware lest fleshly reasoning see more safety in making use of this principle than in acting! Who acts, if he resolve

not through God to be willing to part with all? Our hearts are very deceitful, on the right and on the left.

"What think you of providence disposing the hearts of so many of God's people this way—especially in this poor army, wherein the great God has vouchsafed to appear! I know not one officer but is on the increasing side (*come over to this opinion.*) ...

"Thou mentionest somewhat as if by acting against such opposition as is like to be, there will be a tempting of God. Dear Robin, tempting of God ordinarily is either by acting presumptuously in carnal confidence, or in unbelief through diffidence: both these ways Israel tempted God in the wilderness, and He was grieved by them. Not the encountering of difficulties, therefore, makes us to tempt God; but the acting before and without faith. If the Lord have in any measure persuaded His people, as generally He hath, of the lawfulness, nay of the *duty*,—this persuasion prevailing upon the heart is faith; and acting thereupon is acting in faith; and the more the difficulties are the more the faith. And it is most sweet that he who is not persuaded have patience towards them that are, and judge not; and this will free thee from the trouble of others' actings, which thou sayest adds to thy grief....

"Robin, I have done. Ask we our hearts whether we think that after all these dispensations, the like to which many generations cannot afford, should end in so corrupt reasonings of good men, and should so hit the designings of bad? Thinkest thou in thy heart that the glorious dispensations of God point out to this? Or to teach his

people to trust in Him and wait for better things—when, it may be, better are sealed to many of their spirits (*indubitably sure to many of them.*)

"This trouble I have been at because my soul loves thee, and I would not have thee swerve or lose any glorious opportunity the Lord puts into thy hand. The Lord be thy counsellor. Dear Robin, I rest thine,
"Oliver Cromwell."

For ourselves, we cannot read this, and other letters breathing the same spirit, without being convinced that Cromwell fully shared in those fanatical sentiments which prompted the army to insist upon the king's death. A contemporary account, from which Mr Carlyle, some pages before this letter occurs, has quoted largely, represents this chief of the Puritans in exactly the same point of view. The officers of the army had made certain overtures to the king, certain efforts at a reconciliation, which had been fruitless; and which had been, moreover, attended with much division and contention amongst themselves. They had turned aside, it seems, from "that path of *simplicity* they had been blessed in, to walk in a *politic* path," and were, accordingly, afflicted, "as the wages of their backsliding hearts," with tumults, and jealousies, and divisions. But the godly officers, says the pious record of Adjutant Allen, met at *Windsor Castle!* "and there we spent one day together in prayer; inquiring into the causes of that sad dispensation. And, on the morrow, we met again in the morning; where many spake from the Word and prayed; and the then Lieutenant-General Cromwell did press very earnestly on

all there present, to a thorough consideration of our actions as an army, and of our ways particularly as private Christians; to see if any iniquity could be found in them; and what it was; that, if possible, he might find it out, and so remove the cause of such sad rebukes as were upon us, (by reason of our iniquities, as we judged,) at that time. And the way, more particularly, the Lord led us to herein was this: to look back and consider what time it was when, with joint satisfaction, we could last say, to the best of our judgments, The presence of the Lord was amongst us, and rebukes and judgments were not, as then, upon us.... By which means we were, by a gracious hand of the Lord, led to find out the very steps, (as were all there jointly convinced,) by which we had departed from the Lord, and provoked Him to depart from us, which we found to be those cursed carnal conferences, our own conceited wisdom, our fears, and want of faith, had prompted us, the year before, to entertain with the king and his party. And at this time, and on this occasion, did the then Major Goffe, (as I remember was his title,) make use of that good word, Proverbs 1st and 23d, *Turn you at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.*" In fine, their "iniquities," their want of faith, their carnal conferences—that is to say, all desire for peace, all humanity, all moderation, all care for their country—were cast aside, and they came to the solitary gloomy resolution, "That it is our duty to call Charles Stuart, that man of blood, to an account for that blood he had shed, and mischief he had done to his utmost, against the Lord's

cause and people in these poor nations."

Let no one suppose that, because Cromwell, and other officers of the army, had been negotiating with the king, bidding for him, in fact, against the Parliament, and offering terms such as it was mere infatuation upon his part not to accept, that they were, therefore, not sincere in this their fanaticism, which now so clearly told them they should be doing the express will of God in putting him to death. Those who have paid attention to this disease of the mind, know well, that while nothing is more violent at one moment, nothing is more flexible at another. Against the assaults of reason it is rock,—it is adamant; but to self-interest, or a covert passion, it is often surprisingly ductile. The genuine fanatic is gifted with a power which will equally uphold him, whether he walks to the right or to the left, and lets him change his course as often as he will. He has a logic that is always triumphant—which proves him always in the right—whether he would advance or recede. Success—it is God's own sanction; failure—it is what you please,—God's disapproval if you would retreat—a trial only of your faith, if you have the heart to advance. In the present case, our pious army, having found it impossible to treat with the king, has but to spend "its day in prayer," and its fierce zeal resumes its former channel with greater violence than ever. It has been led astray, it finds, by carnal reasonings and sinful weakness; and, rushing back to its old "path of simplicity," it raises the cry of death!

This account, which Adjutant Allan gives of diseased

piety and perilous fanaticism, Mr Carlyle accompanies with interjections of applause, and cheers of encouragement. To him, also, it seems quite fit that the army should return to its path of "simplicity." The King must die.

How little, up to the very last, did that unfortunate monarch know of the terrible spirit of those enemies into whose hands he had fallen! He saw himself necessary to the tranquillisation and stable government of a nation still imbued with the love of monarchy, he therefore thought himself and the monarchy were safe; he knew not that he was contending with men who, when they rose to their high "heroic" mood, had a supreme contempt for all considerations touching mere human polity,—the mere peace and government of mankind. He trusted much to the sacredness of royalty, the majesty of the purple, the divinity of a King; he was delivered over to the power of enemies, whose glory it was to tread down the glories of the world; who, so far from finding any sacredness in his royalty, had classed him amongst all the wicked kings of the Old Testament, sentenced to be exterminated with the idolatry they fostered, and with whom the very audacity and fearful temerity of the deed, (if this at all affected them,) would add only to its merit. Unfortunate monarch! The tide of sympathy runs now against him, but we confess still to retain our compassion for the fallen prince,—our compassion, very little, it may be, of admiration. We see him contending against fearful odds, keeping up a high and kingly spirit to the last. So far he braved it nobly, and played a desperate

game, if not wisely, yet with unshaken nerves. His character, without a doubt, bears, as Lingard writes, "the taint of duplicity." But it was a duplicity which, in his father's court, would have been chuckled over as good practice of state-craft. We are strangely fashioned—kings, and all of us—made up of fragments of virtue, ill-assorted parcels of morality. Charles, when he had given his parole of honour, would not escape from his imprisonment in the Isle of Wight, though the means of escape were offered to him. But the wily and diplomatic monarch thought he was entitling himself to the praise of all men of spirit and intelligence, when, by fallacious promises and protestations, he strove to play off one party of his enemies against the other. He was practising, to the best of his ability, all the traditionary maxims and manœuvres of a subtle policy. Nor was it ability that he wanted. On an Italian soil, these Italian arts might have availed him. But what were the sleights and contrivances of a traditionary state-craft against the rude storm of tumultuous passions which had been conjured up around him! He was fencing with the whirlwind. Perhaps no prince, trained in a court, can be a match for the rude adversaries which revolutionary times raise up against him. What chance is there that he should ever learn the nature of his new and terrible enemy? You have taught him, according to all the laws of woodcraft, to chase the stag and the fox, and now you let loose upon him the wild beast of the forest! How was Charles to learn what manner of being was a Puritan, and how it struck its prey? His courtiers would have taught him to despise and ridicule

—his bishops to look askance with solemn aversion,—but who was there to teach him to fear this Puritan?—to teach him that he must forthwith conciliate, if he could not crush?

It is worth while to continue the narrative a little further. We adopt Mr Carlyle's words. "At London, matters are coming rapidly to a crisis. The resumed debate, 'shall the army remonstrance be taken into consideration?' does not come out affirmative; on the contrary, on Thursday the 31st, it comes out negative, by a majority of ninety. 'No, we will not take it into consideration.' 'No?' The army at Windsor thereupon spends again 'a day in prayer.' The army at Windsor has decided on the morrow, that it will march to London; marches, arrives accordingly, on Saturday, December 2d; quarters itself in Whitehall, in St James's, 'and other great vacant houses in the skirts of the city and villages about, no offence being given any where.' In the drama of modern history, one knows not any graver, more note-worthy scene; earnest as very death and judgment. They have decided to have justice, these men; to see God's justice done, and his judgments executed on this earth."

Adjutant Allen and Mr Carlyle are both of the same mind,—take the same views of public matters, political and religious. But the Adjutant himself would open great eyes at the sentence which next follows:—

"The abysses where the thunders and splendours are bred—the reader sees them again laid bare and black. Madness lying close to the wisdom which is brightest and highest;—and owls

and godless men who hate the lightning and the light, and love the mephitic dusk and darkness, are no judges of the actions of heroes! Shedders of blood? Yes, blood is occasionally shed. The healing surgeon, the sacrificial priest, the august judge, pronouncer of God's oracles to man, these and the atrocious murderer are alike shedders of blood; and it is an owl's eye, that, except for the *dresses* they wear, discerns no difference in these! Let us leave the owl to his hootings; let us get on with our chronology and swift course of events."

By forcibly expelling more than one hundred of the members of Parliament, and thus converting a minority into a majority, these "sacrificial priests" contrived to accomplish their very righteous act. In the face of raving such as this, it would be absurd to enter seriously upon any consideration, moral or political, touching the King's death. We would rather that Mr Carlyle occupied the field alone. We saw him just now dealing with his "abysses," and his "lightning;" we quote his concluding comment on this event, which will present a specimen of his more facetious style of eloquence, and the singular *taste* he is capable of displaying:—

"This action of the English regicides did in effect strike a damp like death through the heart of *flunkeyism* universally in this world. Whereof flunkeyism, cant, cloth-worship, or whatever ugly name it have, has gone about incurably sick ever since; and is now at length, in these generations, very rapidly dying. The like of which action will not be needed for a thousand

years again. Needed, alas! not till a new genuine hero-worship has arisen, has perfected itself; and had time to degenerate into a flunkeyism and cloth-worship again! which I take to be a very long date indeed.

"Thus ends the second civil war: in regicide, in a Commonwealth, and keepers of the liberties of England: In punishment of delinquents, in abolition of cobwebs;—if it be possible, in a government of Heroism and veracity; at lowest of anti-flunkeyism, anti-cant, and the *endeavour* after heroism and veracity."

Flunkeyism! Such is the title which our *many-sided* man thinks fit to bestow on the loyalty of England! But serious indignation would be out of place. A buffoon expression has this advantage, it is unanswerable. Yet will we venture to say, that it is a losing game this which you are playing, Mr Carlyle, this defiance of all common sense and all good taste. There is a respectability other than that which, in the unwearying love of one poor jest, you delight to call "gig respectability," a respectability based on intelligence and not on "Long-Acre springs," whose disesteem it cannot be wise to provoke, nor very pleasant to endure.

The Commonwealth is proclaimed by sound of trumpet. The king and the lords are cashiered and dismissed. A house of representatives and a council of state form the constitution of England. Cromwell is one of the council. But for the present the war in Ireland carries him away from the scene of politics.

On this Irish campaign, Mr Carlyle breaks out, as may be supposed, in a strain of exultation. He always warms at blood and battle. His piety, or his poetry—not admirable whichever it may be—glows here to a red heat. We are as little disposed perhaps as himself, to stand "shrieking out" over the military severities of this campaign, but if we could bring ourselves to believe that Mr Carlyle is really serious in what he writes, we should say that the most impracticable maudlin of peace societies, or "Rousseau-sentimentalism," were wisdom itself compared to his own outrageous and fanatical strain. If the apologist of Cromwell will be content to rest his case on the plain ground open to all generals and captains on whom has devolved the task of subjecting a rebellious and insurrectionary country—on the plain ground that the object is to be more speedily effected, and with less bloodshed and misery to the inhabitants, by carrying on the war at the commencement with the utmost severity, (thus breaking down at once the spirit of insurrection,) than by prolonging the contest through an exercise of leniency and forbearance—we are not aware that any decisive answer can be given to him. It is an awful piece of surgery to contemplate—one may be excused, if one shudders both at it and the operator—but, nevertheless, it may have been the wisest course to pursue. As a general rule, every one will admit that—if war there must be—it is better that it should be short and violent, than long and indecisive; for there is nothing so mischievous, so destructive of the industry and moral character of a people, as a war which,

so to speak, *domesticates* itself amongst them. Put aside "the saint" entirely,—let us see only the soldier,—and Cromwell's campaign in Ireland may present nothing more terrible than what elsewhere, and in the campaigns of other generals, we are accustomed to regard as the necessary evils of war; nothing more than what a Turenne, a Condé, or a Frederic of Prussia, might have applauded or practised. But this is precisely the last thing our editor would be disposed to do; any so common-place, and commonsense view of the matter, would have been utterly distasteful: he *does* bring the saint very prominently upon the field, and we are to recognise in Cromwell—"an armed soldier, terrible as Death, relentless as Doom; *doing God's judgments on the enemies of God!*"

"It is a phenomenon," he continues, "not of joyful nature; no, but of awful, to be looked at with pious terror and awe. Not a phenomenon which you are taught to recognise with bright smiles, and fall in love with at sight:—thou, art thou worthy to love such a thing; worthy to do other than hate it, and shriek over it? Darest thou wed the Heaven's lightning, then; and say to it, Godlike One? Is thy own life beautiful and terrible to thee; steeped in the eternal depths, in the eternal plendours?"—(Vol. ii. p. 53.)

In the despatch which Cromwell addresses to the Speaker, Lenthall, after the storm of Tredah, otherwise Drogheda, we observe that the Puritan is as strong as ever, but that the Soldier and the great Captain speak out with increased boldness. Our

sectarian farmer of St Ives, who brooded, by the dark waters of the Ouse, over the wickedness of surpliced prelacy, whose unemployed spirit sank at times into hypochondria, and was afflicted with "strange fancies about the town-cross," has been moving for some time in the very busiest scene the world could furnish him, and has become the great general of his age. The spirit of the "big wars" has entered, and grown up side by side with his Puritanism. The ardour of the battle fully possesses him; he is the conqueror always in the tremendous charge he makes at the head of his Ironsides; and he lets appear, notwithstanding his self-denying style, a consciousness and a triumph in his own skill as a tactician. He is still the genuine Puritan; but the arduous life, the administrative duties of a soldier and a general, have also been busy in modifying his character, and calling forth and exercising that self-confidence, which he will by and by recognise as "faith" and the leading of Providence, when he assumes the place of dictator of his country.

From one passage in this despatch it would appear that his severity at the storm of Drogheda was not wholly the result of predetermined policy, but rose, in part, from the natural passion which the sword, and the desperate struggle for life, call forth.

"Divers of the enemy retreated into the Mill-Mount, a place very strong and of difficult access. The Governor, Sir Arthur Ashton, and divers considerable officers being there, our men getting up to them, were ordered by me to put them all to the sword. *And, indeed, being in the heat of action,* I forbade them to

spare any that were in arms in the town; and, I think, that night they put to the sword about 2000 men: divers of the officers and soldiers being fled over the bridge into the other part of the town, where about 100 of them possessed St Peter's church steeple, some the west gate, and others a strong round tower next the gate called St Sunday's. These being summoned to yield to mercy, refused; whereupon I ordered the steeple of St Peter's church to be fired, when one of them was heard to say in the midst of the flames, 'God damn me, God confound me! I burn, I burn.'"

In the same despatch there is rather a noticeable passage, which illustrates the manner in which the Puritan general was accustomed to regard the Roman Catholics and their worship. There may be some who have been so far deceived by the frequent use of the terms "religious toleration" in conjunction with the name of Cromwell, as to attribute to him a portion of that liberal spirit which is the greatest boast of cultivated minds in the present century. His religious toleration extended only to the small circle of sects whose Christian doctrine, whose preaching, and whose forms of worship were almost identical; it was just the same toleration that a Baptist dissenter of our day may be supposed to extend towards an Independent dissenter, or a member of the Countess of Huntingdon's connexion. The Independents differed from the Presbyterians in no one definite article of creed, with this exception—that they set no value upon *ordination*, and violently objected to the restraining any good man from public preaching, or any of the ministrations of a

pastor, because he wanted this authorisation of a visible church. For this point of "religious freedom" (an expression which in their mouths has little other than this narrow signification) they had to contend with the Presbyterians. The sect which has to resist oppression, or the restraints of power, uses, of course, the language of toleration. The Independents used it in their controversy with the Presbyterians, just as the latter had employed it in their controversy with Episcopacy. But Independents and Presbyterians were alike intolerant of the Episcopalian or the Roman Catholic. All sects of that age preached toleration when a powerful adversary was to be deprecated—preached it then, and then only. The Independents coming last upon the field, preached it last; but they have no title beyond others to the spirit of toleration. Cromwell put down the mass as he would put down a rebellion—as openly, as decidedly, as rigorously.

"It is remarkable," continued the despatch, "that these people, at the first, set up the mass in some places of the town that had been monasteries; but afterwards grew so insolent, that, the last Lord's day before the storm, the Protestants were thrust out of the great church called St Peter's, and they had public mass there; and in this very place near 1000 of them (*the Catholics—a clear judgment*) were put to the sword, fleeing thither for safety. I believe all their friars were knocked on the head promiscuously but two; the one of which was Father Peter Taaff, brother to the Lord Taaff, whom the soldiers took the next day and made an end

of. The other was taken in the Round Tower, under the *repute*, (*the disguise*) of a lieutenant, and when he understood that the officers in that tower had no quarter, he confessed he was a friar; but that did not save him."

Ireland was no sooner subjected by this unflinching and terrific severity, than the presence of the great general of the Commonwealth was needed in Scotland. The Scots had no predilection for a republic, no desire whatever for it; they were bent solely on their covenant, their covenant and a Stuart king. It was a combination very difficult to achieve. Nevertheless they took their oath to both, and marched into England to establish them both over the United Kingdom. Here was sufficient enthusiasm at all events; sufficient, and of the proper kind, one would think, to earn the sympathies of our editor. And he does look upon the Scots at this time as an "heroic nation." But, unfortunately, it is precisely the heroic nation that his own great hero is about to combat and subdue. He is compelled, therefore, upon his part, as the faithful bard and minstrel of his chosen champion, to give them up—their, and their covenant, and Stuart king—to merciless sarcasm. Indeed, he tells us, that the great, the sole fault of the Scots, was precisely this—that they did not produce a Cromwell. "With Oliver born Scotch," he says or sings, "one sees not but the whole world might have become Puritan!"

However, he launches his Puritan hero against the godly and heroic nation with full sound of trumpet, not unmixed with a certain vague and solemn voice of prophecy.

"In such spirit goes Oliver to the wars—a god-intoxicated man, as Novalis elsewhere phrases it. I have asked myself, if any where in modern European history, or even in ancient Asiatic, there was found a man practising this mean world's affairs with a heart more filled by the idea of the Highest? Bathed in the eternal splendours—it is so he walks our dim earth: this man is one of few. He is projected with a terrible force out of the Eternities, and in the Times and their arenas there is nothing that can withstand him. It is great; to us it is tragic; a thing that should strike us dumb! My brave one, thy noble prophecy *is* divine; older than Hebrew David; old as the origin of man; and shall, though in wider ways than those supposed, be fulfilled."—(P. 172.)

We feel no disposition to follow Cromwell to the Scottish wars, though "bathed in the eternal splendours." We hardly know of any thing in history to our taste more odious than this war between the Scottish Covenanter and the English Puritan; the one praying clamorously for victory against "a blaspheming general and a sectarian army;" the other animating his battle with a psalm, and charging with a "Lord, arise! and let thy enemies be scattered," or some such exclamation. Both generals, in the intervals of actual war, sermonise each other, and with much the same spirit that they fight. Their diplomacy is a tangled preachment, and texts are their war-cries. Meanwhile, both are fighting for the gospel of Christ! only one will have it *with*, the other *without* the covenant! Such "eternal splendours" are not inviting to us. We will step on at once to the battle of Worcester,

which concluded both the Scottish war, and all hopes for the present of the royalist party.

This last of his battles and his victories dismisses the great Puritan from the wars. It is a striking despatch he writes from the field of Worcester. He is still the unmitigated Puritan; he still preaches to Speaker Lenthall, but he preaches somewhat more dogmatically. There is an air of authority in the sermon. We all know that godly exhortation may be made to express almost every shade of human passion; as what son and what wife has not felt who has lived under the dominion and discourse of one of these "rulers in Israel." The Parliament felt, no doubt, the difference between the sermons of their general and those of their chaplain.

Cromwell and the army return to London. It is now that the Commonwealth is to be really put upon its trial. Hitherto the army, that had made and could unmake it, had been occupied first in Ireland, then in Scotland; and the minds of people at home had been equally occupied in watching its achievements. The Commonwealth has lived upon the expectations of men. It has been itself an expectation. It is now to be perfected, its organisation to be completed, its authority established.

But Cromwell was not a Washington. Not only did he want that serene and steady virtue which counselled the champion of American independence to retire into the ranks of the constitution—commander in the field, private soldier in the city—not only did he fail in this civic virtue, and found it hard

to resign the sway and authority he had so long exercised; but the inestimable advantages of a constitutional government his mind had not been cultivated to appreciate. His thoughts had hitherto taken another direction. His speculative habits theology had moulded; his active habits had been formed in the camp. He felt that he could administer the government better than any of the men around him: we will give him credit, too, for the full intention to administer it conscientiously, and for the good of the nation; but for those enlarged views of the more enlightened patriot, who is solicitous to provide not alone for the present necessities, but for the future long life of a people—he had them not. He grew afterwards into the statesman, as he had grown into the soldier; but at this time the Puritan general had very little respect for human institutions.

We are far from asserting, that even with the assistance of Cromwell a republic could have been established in England. But he lent no helping hand; his great abilities, his fervent zeal, were never employed in this service. He kept aloof—aloof with the army. He gathered himself to his full height, standing amidst the ruins of the civil war: all men might see that he alone kept his footing there. When the unhappy Parliament, struggling with its cruel embarrassments, not knowing how to dissolve itself with safety, had brought down on it the impatience, the distrust, the contempt of men—when he had allowed its members to reap the full harvest of a people's jealousies and suspicions—when at length they were on the point of extricating themselves by

a bill determining the mode of electing a successor—*then* he interfered, and dissolved them!

A question may be raised, how far Cromwell had the power, if such had been his wish, to take over the army to the side of the Parliament, to lead it into due allegiance to the Commonwealth. The officers of the army and the members of the Parliament formed the two rival powers in the kingdom. Cromwell, it may be said, *could* not have united them, could only make his choice between them. It would have been only a fraction of the army that he could have carried over with him. The division between the council of officers and the Parliament was too wide, the alienation too confirmed and inveterate, to have been healed by one man, though it was the Lord General himself. Thus, it may be said that Cromwell, in the part he acted against the Long Parliament, was thrust forward by a revolutionary movement, which, according to the law of such movements, must either have carried him forward in the van, or left him deserted or down-trodden in the rear.

This would be no flattering excuse. But whatever truth there may be in this view of the case, Cromwell never manifested any intention or any desire to quit the cause of the army for that of the Parliament. He was heart and soul with the army; it was there his power lay; it was there he found the spirits he most sympathised with. He walked at the head of the army here as in the war. It was alone that he entered the House of Parliament—alone "in his gray stockings and black coat," with no staff

of officers about him, no military parade, only a few of his Ironsides in the lobby. Though aware he should have the support of his officers, there is no proof that he had consulted them. The daring deed was *his*. And it is one of the most daring deeds on record. The execution of the King—in that day when kings were something more in the imagination of men than they are now—was indeed an audacious act. But it was shared with others. This dissolution of the Parliament, and assumption of the dictatorship—this facing alone all his old compeers, met in due legislative dignity, and bidding them one and all depart—strikes us as the bolder deed.

The scene has been often described, but nowhere so well, or so fully, as by Mr Carlyle. We cannot resist the pleasure of quoting his spirited account of this notable transaction.

"The Parliament sitting as usual, and being in debate upon the bill, which it was thought would have been passed that day, 'the Lord General Cromwell came into the House, clad in plain black clothes and gray worsted stockings, and sat down, as he used to do, in an ordinary place.' For some time he listens to this interesting debate on the bill, beckoning once to Harrison, who came over to him, and answered dubitatingly. Whereupon the Lord General sat still for about a quarter of an hour longer. But now the question being to be put, That this bill do now pass, he beckons again to Harrison, says, 'This is the time; I must do it!' and so 'rose up, put off his hat, and spake. At the first, and for a good while, he spake to the commendation

of the Parliament, for their pains and care of the public good; but afterwards he changed his style, told them of their injustice, delays of justice, self-interest, and other faults,' rising higher and higher into a very aggravated style indeed. An honourable member, Sir Peter Wentworth by name, not known to my readers, and by me better known than trusted, rises to order, as we phrase it; says, 'It is a strange language this; unusual within the walls of Parliament this! And from a trusted servant, too; and one whom we have so highly honoured; and one—' 'Come, come,' exclaims my Lord General, in a very high key, 'we have had enough of this'—and in fact my Lord General, now blazing all up into clear conflagration, exclaims, 'I will put an end to your prating,' and steps forth into the floor of the House, and 'clapping on his hat,' and occasionally 'stamping the floor with his feet,' begins a discourse which no man can report! He says—Heavens! he is heard saying: 'It is not fit that you should sit here any longer!' You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing lately, 'You shall now give place to better men! Call them in!' adds he, briefly, to Harrison, in way of command; and some 'twenty or thirty' grim musketeers enter, with bullets in their snaphances; grimly prompt for orders; and stand in some attitude of carry arms there. Veteran men: men of might and men of war, their faces are as the faces of lions, and their feet are swift as the roes upon the mountains; not beautiful to honourable gentlemen at this moment!

"'You call yourselves a Parliament,' continues my Lord General, in clear blaze of conflagration. 'You are no

Parliament! Some of you are drunkards,' and his eye flashes on poor Mr Chalmer, an official man of some value, addicted to the bottle; 'some of you are'—and he glares into Henry Martin and the poor Sir Peter, who rose to order, lewd livers both—'living in open contempt of God's, commandments. Following your own greedy appetites, and the devil's commandments. Corrupt, unjust persons,' and here I think he glanced 'at Sir Bulstrode Whitlocke, one of the Commissioners of the Great Seal, giving him and others very sharp language, though he named them not.' 'Corrupt, unjust persons, scandalous to the profession of the Gospel: how can you be a Parliament for God's people? Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name, of God—go!

"The House is of course all on its feet—uncertain, almost, whether not on its head: such a scene as was never seen before in any House of Commons. History reports with a shudder that my Lord General, lifting the sacred mace itself, said, 'What shall we do with this bauble? Take it away!'—and gave it to a musketeer. And now—'Fetch him down!' says he to Harrison, flashing on the Speaker. Speaker Lenthall, more an ancient Roman than any thing else, declares, He will not come till forced. 'Sir,' said Harrison, 'I will lend you a hand;' on which Speaker Lenthall came down, and gloomily vanished. They all vanished; flooding gloomily, clamorously out, to their ulterior businesses, and respective places of abode: the Long Parliament is dissolved! 'It's you that have forced me to this,' exclaims my Lord General, 'I have sought the Lord night

and day, that He would rather slay me than put me upon the doing of this work.' 'At their going out, some say the Lord General said to young Sir Harry Vane, calling him by his name, That *he* might have prevented this; but that he was a juggler, and had not common honesty.' 'O Sir Harry Vane,' thou, with thy subtle casuistries and abstruse hair-splittings, thou art other than a good one, I think! 'The Lord deliver me from thee, Sir Harry Vane!' 'All being gone out, the door of the House was locked, and the key, with the mace, as I heard, was carried away by Colonel Otley,' and it is all over, and the unspeakable catastrophe has come, and remains."— (Vol. ii. p. 361.)

The usurpation of Cromwell is, we believe, generally considered as the most fortunate event which, under the peculiar circumstances of the country, could have occurred. The people, it is said; were not prepared for a republic. The attempt, therefore, to establish one, would have been attended by incessant tumults; its short and precarious existence would have been supported by the scaffold and the prison. It would have terminated indeed, as did the Protectorate, in a Restoration, but the interval between the death of Charles I. and the accession of his son, would have been passed in a very different manner. Under the Protectorate the country rallied its strength, put forth its naval power, obtained peace at home, and respect abroad. Under a republic, it would have probably spent its force, and demoralised itself, in intestine strife and by a succession of revolutionary movements.

But if this view be quite correct, it will not justify Cromwell.

It is one thing to be satisfied with the course of events, quite another with the conduct of the several agents in them. Cromwell, in the position in which he stood, as an honest man and a patriot, should have done his best for the establishment of the Commonwealth; and this he did not. We are far, as we have said, from venturing to give a decisive opinion on the probability (with the united efforts of the victorious general and the Parliament) of forming a republic. But we are not disposed to think that the cause was hopeless. Had the Parliament been allowed to recruit its numbers without dissolving itself—the measure which it constantly desired, and which Cromwell would not hear of, though, without a doubt, it was the very line of conduct which his own practical sagacity would have led him to, if his heart had been in the business—the minds of men would have had time to settle and reflect, and a mode of government, which had already existed for some years, might have been adopted by the general consent.

We look upon the Restoration very calmly, very satisfactorily, for whom a second revolution has placed another dynasty upon the throne, governing upon principles quite different from those which were rooted in the Stuarts. We see the Restoration, with the Revolution of 1688 at its back, and almost consider them as one event. But a most loyal and contented subject of Queen Victoria, would have been a Commonwealthsman in those days. How could it then have been foreseen that all the power, and privilege, and splendour of royalty, should exist only to *protect* the

law, to secure the equal rights of all—that monarchy, retaining a traditional awe and majesty derived from remote times, should remain amongst us to supply to a representative government that powerful, constant, and impartial executive which, from the mere elements of a republic, it is so difficult to extract? Who could have imagined that a popular legislature, and the supremacy of the law, could have been so fortunately combined and secured under the shadow of the monarchy? Enlightened minds at that time could not have looked calmly towards a Restoration; they probably thought, or would have been led to think, that, in the position they then were, it was better to take the constitution of Holland, than the government of France, for their model.

But the multitude—with what enthusiasm they welcomed the restoration of the Stuarts! Very true. But the Protectorate was no antagonist to monarchy. Republican pride was never called forth to contend in the public mind against the feeling of loyalty, and an attachment to kings. The Protectorate was itself a monarchy without its splendour, or the prestige of hereditary greatness. It was a monarchy under the Geneva gown. Was it likely that the populace would accept of this in lieu of the crowned and jewelled royalty which was wont to fill its imagination?

However, the experiment—fortunately for us, as the result has turned out—was never destined to be made. Cromwell dissolved the Long Parliament. He now stood alone, he and the army, the sole power in the state. His first measure, that of sending a summons in his own name, to persons of his own choice,

and thus, without any popular election whatever, assembling what is called the Little Parliament, or Barebones Parliament, shows a singular audacity, and proves how little trammelled he was himself by traditionary or constitutional maxims. He who would not allow the Long Parliament to recruit its numbers, and thus escape the perils of a free election of an altogether new assembly, extricates himself from the same embarrassment by electing the whole Parliament himself. Some historians have represented this measure as having for its very object to create additional confusion, and render himself, and his own dictatorial power, more necessary to the state. It has not appeared to us in this light. We see in it a bold but rude assay at government. In this off-hand manner of constituting a Parliament, we detect the mingled daring of the Puritan and the Soldier. In neither of these characters was he likely to have much respect for legal maxims, or rules of merely human contrivance. Cromwell was educating himself for the Statesman: at this juncture it is the Puritan General that we have before us.

The Little Parliament having blundered on till it had got itself entangled in the Mosaic dispensation, resigned its power into the hands of him who had bestowed it. Thereupon a new *Instrument of Government* is framed, with the advice of the council of officers, appointing Cromwell Protector, and providing for the election of a Parliament.

This Parliament being elected, falls, of course, on the discussion of this very Instrument of government. Henceforth

Cromwell's great difficulty is the management of his Parliaments. The speeches he delivered to them at various times, and which occupy the third volume of the work before us, are of high historical interest. They are in every respect superior to his letters. Neither will their perusal be found to be of that arduous and painful nature which, from the reputation they have had, most persons will be disposed to expect. The *sermon* may weary, but the *speech* is always fraught with meaning; and the mixture of sermon and speech together, portray the man with singular distinctness. We see the Puritan divine, the Puritan soldier, becoming the Puritan statesman. His originally powerful mind is excited to fresh exertion by his onerous and exalted position. But he is still constant to himself. Very interesting is the exhibition presented to us of this powerful intellect, breaking out in flashes of strong sense, and relapsing again into the puerilities of the sect. But as it falls upon the strong sense to *act*, and on the puerilities only to *preach*, the man comes out, upon the whole, as a great and able governor.

The reputation which Oliver's speeches have borne, as being involved, spiritless, tortuous, and even purposely confused, has resulted, we think, from this—that an opinion of the whole has been formed from an examination of a few, and chiefly of those which were delivered on the occasion of his refusing the offered title of king. His conduct on this occasion, it would be necessary for an historian particularly to investigate, and in the discharge of this duty he would have to peruse a series of discourses

undoubtedly of a very bewildering character. They are the only speeches of Cromwell of which it can be said that their meaning is not clearly, and even forcibly expressed. And in this case it is quite evident, that he had no distinct meaning to express; he had no definite answer to give the Parliament who were petitioning him to take the title of king. He was anxious to gain time—he was talking *against time*—an art which we moderns only have thoroughly mastered. How could Cromwell, who was no great rhetorician, be otherwise than palpably confused, and dubious and intricate? Nothing can be clearer than that he himself leant towards the opinion of the Parliament, that it would be good policy to adopt the royal title. It was so connected with the old attachments and associations of Englishmen, it had so long given force to the language of the law, its claims were so much better known, its prerogatives so much better understood than those of the new title of Protector, that the resumption of it must have appeared very advisable. But the army had been all along fighting against *the King*. Whilst to the lawyer and the citizen the title was still the most honourable and ever to be venerated, to the soldier of the Commonwealth it had become a term of reproach, of execration, of unsparing hostility. Oliver Cromwell might well hesitate before assuming a title which might forfeit for him the allegiance of a great portion of the army. He deferred his answer, to have an opportunity for estimating the nature and amount of the resistance he might expect from that quarter; and he came to the conclusion, that the risk of unsettling

the affections of the army was not to be incurred for either any personal gratification to himself (which we take to have not weighed much with him) in assuming the title of king, or for the advantages which might accrue from it in the ultimate settlement of the nation. His addresses, therefore, to the Parliament on this occasion not being definite answers to the Parliament, nor intended to be such, but mere postponements of his answer, were necessarily distinguished by indecision, uncertainty, and all sorts of obscurities. But, these excepted, his speeches, however deficient in what pertains to the *art of composition*, in terseness, or method, or elegance of phrase, are never wanting in the great essentials—the expression of his meaning in a very earnest and forcible manner. The mixture of sermon and speech, we allow, is not inviting; but the sermon is just as clear, perhaps, as any which the chaplain of the House would have preached to them, and it must be remembered, that to explain *his* meaning, *his* political sentiments, the sermon was as necessary as the speech.

By the new instrument of government, the Protector, with his council, was authorised, in the interval before the meeting of Parliament, to issue such ordinances as might be deemed necessary. This interval our Puritan governor very consistently employed, first of all, in establishing a gospel ministry throughout the nation. Thirty-eight chosen men, "the acknowledged flower of English Puritanism," were nominated a Supreme Commission, for the trial of public preachers. Any person holding a church-living, or pretending to the tithes or

clergy-dues, was to be tried and approved of by these men. "A very republican arrangement," says Mr Carlyle, "such as could be made on the sudden, but was found in practice to work well."

This and other ordinances having been issued, his first Parliament meets. It cannot be said that our Puritan Protector does not rise to the full level of his position. One might describe him as something of a propagandist, disposed to teach his doctrine of *the rights of Christian men* to the world at large. It is thus he opens his address:—"Gentlemen, You are met here on the greatest occasion that, I believe, England ever saw; having upon your shoulders the interests of three great nations, with the territories belonging to them: and truly I believe I may say it without any hyperbole, you have upon your shoulders *the interest of all the Christian people in the world*. And the expectation is, that I should let you know, as far as I have cognisance of it, the occasion of your assembling together at this time."

But this Parliament fell upon the discussion, as we have said, of the very instrument of government under which they had been called together. Mr Carlyle is as impatient as was Oliver himself at this proceeding of the "Talking apparatus." But how could it be otherwise? Every thing that had taken place since the dissolution of the Long Parliament was done by mere arbitrary authority. The present Parliament, however called together, must consider itself the only legitimate, the only constitutional power: it *must* look into this instrument of government. But if it was impossible not to commence the discussion, it was equally impossible ever to

conclude it. We all know to what length a debate will run upon a constitutional question; and here there was not one such question, but a whole constitution to be discussed. In vain they debated "from eight in the morning to eight at night, with an hour for refreshment about noon:" there was no probability of their ever coming to a conclusion.

This would never do. Oliver shuts up the Parliament-house, stations his musketeers at the door, calls the members to him, presents them with a parchment, "a little thing," to sign, acknowledging his authority, and tells them he will open the door of the House to such only as shall put their names to it. We will quote some parts of the speech he made to them on this occasion, and our readers shall judge whether such a speech, delivered by the living man Cromwell, was likely to fail in effect, whether it was deficient in meaning or in energy. We shall omit the parenthetical comments of the editor, because, however these may amuse and relieve the reader who is making his way through the whole work, and who becomes familiarised with their style, they would only confuse and distract the attention in a brief extract. The single words or phrases which he has introduced, merely to make the sense clear, are retained whenever they are really necessary for this purpose, and without the inverted commas by which they are properly distinguished in the text. We will premise, that the protestations which Cromwell here makes, that he did not seek the government, but was earnestly petitioned to undertake it, may well, in part, be true. When he had

once dissolved the Long Parliament, it was no longer a matter of choice for himself or others whether he would take the reins of government. To whom could he commit them? From that time, the government rested upon his shoulders. If he had manifested a wish to withdraw from the burden he had thus brought down upon himself, there is no doubt but that he would have been earnestly petitioned to remain at his post. The greatest enemy of Cromwell, if he had been a lover of his country, would have joined in such a petition; would have besought him to remain at the helm, now he had thrown all other steersmen overboard. No; he must not quit it now. He is there for the rest of his life, to do battle with the waves, and navigate amongst rocks and quicksands as best he may.

Let us hear his own statement and defence of the manner in which he became advanced and "captive" to his high and perilous place.

"Gentlemen,—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. That which I have now to say to you will need no preamble to let me into my discourse; for the occasion of this meeting is plain enough. I could have wished, with all my heart, there had been no cause for it.

"At our former meeting I did acquaint you what was the first rise of this government which hath called you hither, and by the authority of which you have come hither. Among other things which I then told you of, I said you were a Free Parliament; and so you are, whilst you own the government

and authority which called you hither. But certainly that word (Free Parliament) implied a reciprocity, or it implied nothing at all. Indeed, there was a reciprocity implied and expressed; and I think your actions and carriages ought to be suitable. But I see it will be necessary for me now a little to magnify my office, which I have not been apt to do. I have been of this mind, I have been always of this mind, since I first entered upon my office. If God will not bear it up, let it sink!—but if a duty be incumbent upon me, to bear my testimony to it, (which in modesty I have hitherto forborne,) I am, in some measure, necessitated thereunto: and therefore that will be the prologue to my discourse.

"I called not myself to this place. I say again, I called not myself to this place! Of that God is witness: and I have many witnesses who, I do believe, could lay down their lives bearing witness to the truth of that, namely, that I called not myself to this place! And, being in it, I bear not witness to myself or my office; but God and the people of these nations have also borne testimony to it. If my calling be from God, and my testimony from the people, *God and the people shall take it from me, else I will not part with it!* I should be false to the trust that God hath placed in me, and to the interest of the people of these nations if I did.

"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 others; and, not to be over-tedious, I did endeavour to discharge the duty of an honest man, in those services, to God and his people's interest, and to

the Commonwealth; having, when time was, a competent acceptation in the hearts of men, and some evidences thereof. I resolve not to recite the times, and occasions, and opportunities, which have been appointed me by God to serve him in; nor the presence and blessing of God, therein bearing testimony to me.

"Having had some occasion 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, together with my brethren, of our hard labours and hazards: the enjoyment, to wit, of peace and liberty, and the privileges of a Christian and a man, in some equality with others, according as it should please the Lord to dispense unto me. And when I say God had put an end to our wars, or at least brought them to a very hopeful issue, very near an end,—after Worcester fight,—I came up to London to pay my service and duty to the Parliament which then sat, hoping that all minds would have been disposed to answer what seemed to be the mind of God, namely, to give peace and rest to his people, and especially to those who had bled more than others in the carrying on of the military affairs,—I was much disappointed of my expectation. For the issue did not prove so. *Whatever may be boasted or misrepresented, it was not so, not so!*

"I can say in the simplicity of my soul, I love not, I love not,—I declined it in my former speech,—I say, I love not to rake into sores, or to discover nakednesses! The thing I drive at is this: I say to you, 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. Let uncharitable men, who measure others by themselves, judge as they please. As to the matter of fact, I say it is true. As to the ingenuity and integrity of my heart in that desire—I do appeal, as before, upon the truth of that also. But I could not obtain what my soul longed for. And the plain truth is, I did afterwards apprehend some more of opinion, (such the differences of their judgment from mine,) that it could not well be.

"I confess I am in some strait to say what I could say, and what is true, of what then followed. I pressed the Parliament, as a member, to period themselves; once and again, and again, and ten, nay twenty times over. I told them, for I knew it better than any one man in the parliament could know it, because of my manner of life, which had led me every where 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—that the nation loathed their sitting. I knew it. 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 or visible repining at it.

"And that there was high cause for their dissolution, is most evident: not only in regard there was a just fear of that parliament's perpetuating themselves, but because it actually was their design. Had not their heels been trod

upon by importunities from abroad, even to threats, I believe there never would have been any thoughts of rising, or of going out of that room, to the world's end. I myself was sounded, and by no mean persons tempted; and proposals were made me to that very end: that the parliament might be thus perpetuated; that the vacant places might be supplied by new elections, and so continue from generation to generation."

He proceeds to object to the measure which the Parliament was really about to pass, that it would have established an uninterrupted succession of Parliaments, that there would have been "a legislative power always sitting," which would thereby have encroached upon the executive power. The speech then enlarges on the general assent of the people, of the army, of the judges, of the civic powers, to the instrument of government, to the Protectorate, and on the implied assent which they themselves had given by accepting their commissions under it.

"And this being so, 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 man. And I believe, that if the learnedest men in this nation were called to show a precedent equally clear of a government so many ways approved of, they would not in all their search find it. And if the fact be so, why should we sport with it? With a business so serious!... 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 any thing that could have been invented by the greatest enemy to our peace and welfare."

After drawing the distinction between fundamentals, which may not be shaken, and circumstantial, which it is in the power of Parliament to alter and modify, he continues:—

"I would it had not been needful for me to call you hither to expostulate these things with you, and in such a manner as this! But necessity hath no law. Feigned necessities, imaginary necessities, are the greatest cozenage which man can put upon the providence of God, and make pretences to break known rules by. But it is as legal, as carnal, and as stupid to think that there are *no* necessities which are manifest and real, because necessities may be abused or feigned. I have to say, the wilful throwing away of this government, such as it is, so owned by God, so approved by men, so witnessed to, as was mentioned above, were a thing which—and in reference to the good of these nations and of posterity—*I can sooner be willing to be rolled into my grave and buried with infamy, than I can give my consent unto!*

"You have been called hither to save a nation—nations. You had the best people, indeed, of the Christian world put into your trust, when you came hither. You had the

affairs of these nations delivered over to you in peace and quiet; you were, and we all are, put into an undisturbed possession, nobody making title to us: Through the blessing of God, our enemies were hopeless and scattered. We had peace at home; peace with almost all our neighbours round about. To have our peace and interest, whereof those were our hopes the other day, thus shaken, and put under such a confusion; and ourselves rendered hereby almost the scorn and contempt of those strangers who are amongst us to negotiate their masters' affairs!... Who shall answer for these things to God or to men? To men, to the people who sent you hither? who looked for refreshment from you; who looked for nothing but peace and quietness, and rest and settlement? When we come to give an account to them, we shall have it to say, 'Oh, we quarrelled for the *Liberty of England*; we contested, and went to confusion for that! — *Wherein, I pray you, for the Liberty of England?* I appeal to the Lord, that the desires and endeavours we have had — nay, the things will speak for themselves, — the liberty of England, the liberty of the people, the avoiding of tyrannous impositions either upon men as men, or Christians as Christians, — is made so safe by this act of settlement, that it will speak for itself."

The Protector then tells them that, "seeing the authority which called them is so little valued and so much slighted, he had caused a stop to be put to their entrance into the Parliament-house," until a certain "somewhat," which would be found "in the lobby without the Parliament-door" — an adhesion to the government

in its fundamentals—should be signed.

This extract, as will be readily supposed, would lead to a far too favourable opinion of Cromwell's oratory, if understood as a specimen of his usual manner of speaking; but our readers will probably confess, that they did not expect that the speeches of Cromwell would have yielded such an extract.

Oliver has, it will be observed, a singularly modest way of speaking of his political remedies and projects. In referring, on a later occasion, to his major-generals, he says, "Truly when that insurrection was, we did find out a *little poor invention*, which I hear has been much regretted. I say there was a *little thing* invented, which was the erecting of your major-generals, to have a little inspection upon the people thus divided, thus discontented, thus dissatisfied." On the present occasion, the "somewhat which was to be found at the lobby of the Parliament-door," was, after a little demur, accepted and signed by all but a certain number of declared republicans. The parliament afterwards fell from the discussion of a whole constitution, to debates apparently as warm, and as endless, upon poor Biddle the Quaker, and other kindred subjects. Thus their allotted session of five months passed; at the end of which time Cromwell dissolved them.

"I do not know what you have been doing," he tells them in his speech on this occasion. "I do not know whether you have been alive or dead. I have not once heard from you all this time—I have not—and that you all know."

Cromwell's second parliament manifested a wiser industry, and a more harmonious temper—thanks to one of the Protector's "little inventions." Each member was to be provided with a certificate before entering the house; "but near one hundred honourable gentlemen can get no certificate—none provided for *them*—and without certificate there is no admittance. Soldiers stand ranked at the door; no man enters without his certificate!" The stiff republicans, and known turbalent persons, are excluded. From this Parliament Cromwell accepts again the title of Protector, and is installed with great state; things take a more legal aspect; the major-generals are suppressed; a House of Lords is instituted; and a settlement of the nation seems at last effected.

But the second session of this Parliament relapsed again into a restive and republican humour. The excluded members had been admitted, and debates arose about this "other house," as they were disposed to nominate the Lords. So much confusion resulted in the country from this unsettled state of the representative assembly, and so many insurrectionary designs were fostered by it, that the Protector was compelled abruptly to dissolve the Parliament. He tells them:—

"That which brought me into the capacity I now stand in, was the petition and advice given me by you, who, in reference to the ancient constitution, did draw me to accept the place of Protector. *There is not a man living can say I sought it; no, not a man nor a woman treading upon English ground.* But, contemplating the sad condition of

these nations, relieved from an intestine war into a six or seven years' peace, I did think the nation happy therein. But to be petitioned thereunto, and to be advised by you to undertake such a government, a burden too heavy for any creature—and this to be done by the House which then had the legislative capacity—certainly I did look that the same men who made the frame, should make it good unto me. *I can say, in the presence of God, in comparison with whom we are but like poor creeping ants upon the earth, I would have been glad to have lived under any woodside, to have kept a flock of sheep, rather than have undertaken such a government as this.* But, undertaking it by the advice and petition of you, I did look that you who had offered it unto me, should make it good."

He concludes thus:—

"It hath been not only your endeavour to pervert the army while you have been sitting, and to draw them to state the question about a 'Commonwealth;' but some of you have been listing of persons, by commission of Charles Stuart, to join with any insurrection that may be made. And what is like to come upon this, the enemy being ready to invade us, but even present blood and confusion? And if this be so, I do assign it to this cause—your not assenting to what you did invite me to by your petition and advice, as that which might prove the settlement of the nation. And if this be the end of your sitting, and this be your carriage, I think it high time that an end be put to your sitting. And I do dissolve this Parliament! And let God be judge between you and me!"

It is at this latter period of his career that the character of Cromwell, to our apprehension, stands out to greatest advantage, becomes more grave, and solemn, and estimable. Other dictators, other men of ambitious aims and fortunes, show themselves, for the most part, less amiable, more tyrannous than ever, more violent and selfish, when they have obtained the last reward of all their striving, and possessed themselves of the seat of power. It was otherwise with Cromwell. He became more moderate, his views more expanded, his temper milder and more pensive. The stormy passions of the civil war were overblown, the intricate and ambiguous passages of his political course had been left behind; and *now*, whatever may have been the errors of the past, and however his own ambition or rashness may have led him to it, he occupied a position which he might say with truth he held for his country's good. Forsake it he could not. Repose in it he could not. A man of religious breeding, of strong conscientiousness, though tainted with superstition, he could not but feel the great responsibility of that position. A vulgar usurper is found at this era of his career to sink into the voluptuary, or else to vent his dissatisfied humour in acts of cruelty and oppression. Cromwell must govern, and govern to his best. The restless and ardent spirit that had ever prompted him onwards and upwards, and which had carried him to that high place, was now upon the wane. It had borne him to that giddy pinnacle, and threatened to leave him there. Men were now aiming at his life; the assassin was abroad; one-half the world was execrating him; we doubt not

that he spoke with sincerity when he said, that "he would gladly live under any woodside, and keep a flock of sheep." He would gladly lay down his burden, but he cannot; can lay it down only in the grave. The sere and yellow leaf is falling on the shelterless head of the royal Puritan. The asperity of his earlier character is gone, the acrimony of many of his prejudices has, in his long and wide intercourse with mankind, abated; his great duties have taught him moderation of many kinds; there remains of the fiery sectarian, who so hastily "turned the buckle of his girdle behind him," little more than his firmness and conscientiousness: his firmness that, as he truly said, "could be bold with men;" his conscientiousness, which made the power he attained by that boldness, a burden and a heavy responsibility.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.