

CHAPTER II.

Defeat of Van Tromp.—Character of the Little Parliament.—Cromwell's Address to this Assembly.—Its Provisional Constitution.—Their proceedings and tendencies.—Resignation of the Little Parliament.—Oliver inaugurated as Protector.—Social Condition of the Kingdom.

THE summons which Cromwell sent throughout the country for the assembling of a body of men that should, in some degree, though not wholly as a parliament, represent the interest of England, Scotland, and Ireland, was made public at a propitious season of national triumph. On the 4th of June, Blake and Monk had sent a despatch to Cromwell, announcing a great victory over the Dutch fleet. Monk and Dean were cruising, with a portion of the English fleet, between the North Foreland and Nieupoort; Blake was on our northern coasts. Van Tromp decided to encounter the fleet thus separated from their great admiral. The engagement continued all through the day of the 2nd of June. Dean had been killed by a cannon-shot at the first broadside. Each of the fleets had been sorely crippled when night separated them. The action re-commenced on the 3rd. On that morning the sound of cannon from the north told the welcome news to Monk that the Sea-king was at hand. Blake's ships broke through the Dutch line. Van Tromp fought with desperation. His ship, the Brederode, was boarded by the crew of Penn's flag-ship, the James, after having repulsed Van Tromp's boarders. The Dutch admiral, resolved not to be a prisoner, threw a lighted match into his own powder-magazine. The explosion blew up the deck, but he himself escaped, to renew the battle in a frigate. He at last felt that he was beaten; retreated to his own coasts; and left with the triumphant English eleven vessels and thirteen hundred and fifty prisoners. The Council of State ordered a thanksgiving for the victory. Cromwell's Little Parliament met, on the 4th of July, under prosperous auspices.

The character of this Little Parliament has been studiously misrepresented. We are taught to believe, especially in histories addressed to the youthful understanding, that "the persons pitched

upon for exercising this seemingly important trust were the lowest, meanest, and most ignorant among the citizens, and the very dregs of the fanatics."* Clarendon's statement, "there were among them divers of the quality and degree of gentlemen," is wholly suppressed in the usual narratives. Hume's chief objection to them is a characteristic one—"They began with seeking God by prayer." The great scandal of this Assembly was that amongst them "was Praise-God Barebones, a leather-seller of Fleet Street;" as Clarendon mentions, to enable men to form a judgment of the rest. It has no great historical interest to discuss, as some have done, whether the leather-merchant was named Barebones, or Barbone. There he is, sitting by the side of Robert Blake, when Robert has no fighting on his hands; and with Francis Rouse, Provost of Eton, and sundry men, not altogether the lowest, meanest, and most ignorant, bearing the aristocratic names of Montagu, Howard, and Anthony Ashley Cooper. To Cromwell's Summons only two answered by non-attendance. Whitelocke, not at that exact time in good humour with Cromwell, expresses his surprise that "many of this Assembly being persons of fortune and knowledge" they would accept the supreme authority of the nation from such hands. The "persons of fortune and knowledge"—even the leather-seller of Fleet Street—might justly think that it became them, at a crisis when most men perceived that it would have been dangerous to summon a regular Parliament, to accept a trust which might avert the two extreme evils of military despotism or popular outrage. And so, on the 4th of July, they came to the Council-Chamber at Whitehall; and sitting in chairs round a table, the Lord-General, surrounded by his officers, made a speech to the Assembly—"full of the same obscurity, confusion, embarrassment, and absurdity, which appear in almost all Oliver's productions," says Hume: "All glowing with intelligibility, with credibility; with the splendour of genuine veracity, and heroic depth and manfulness," says one who is not scandalised, as Hume is, at Cromwell's words of rejoicing that a body of men was there come to supreme authority upon the principle of "owning God and being owned by Him." That this principle was to involve the exercise of justice and mercy to the people, according to Oliver's notion, may be collected from a passage or two in his speech, which is characteristic enough of his style of oratory. "He was an entire stranger to oratorical art, to harmony of composition, and to ele-

* Goldsmith.

gance of language," says a great writer and orator; but he adds, "he impelled his auditors with resistless force towards the object which he wished to attain, by exciting in their minds, at every step, the impression which it was his object to produce." * What, we ask, can the highest oratorical art effect beyond this?

After going through a narrative of the circumstances which preceded the dissolution of the Long Parliament, and accounted for his participation in that act, Cromwell says, "Having done that we have done upon such ground of necessity as we have declared, which was not a feigned necessity but a real,—it did behove us, to the end we might manifest to the world the singleness of our hearts and our integrity who did these things, not to grasp at the power, ourselves, or keep it in military hands, no, not for a day; but, as far as God enabled us with strength and ability, to put it into the hands of proper persons that might be called from, the several parts of the nation. This necessity, and I hope we may say for ourselves, this integrity of concluding to divest the Sword of all power in the Civil Administration,—hath been that that hath moved us to put you to the trouble of coming hither; and having done that, truly we think we cannot, with the discharge of our own conscience, but offer somewhat to you on the devolving of the burden on your shoulders. * * *

"I think, coming through our hands, though such as we are, it may not be ill taken if we do offer somewhat as to the discharge of the trust which is now incumbent upon you. And although I seem to speak of that which may have the face and interpretation of a charge, it's a very humble one; and if he that means to be a servant to you, who hath now called you to the exercise of the supreme authority, discharge what he conceives to be a duty to you, we hope you will take it in good part. And truly I shall not hold you long in it; because I hope it's written in your hearts to approve yourselves to God. * * *

"It's better to pray for you than to counsel you in that matter, that you may exercise the judgment of mercy and truth. It's better, I say, to pray for you than counsel you; to ask wisdom from Heaven for you; which I am confident many thousands of Saints do this day, and have done, and will do, through the permission of God and His assistance. I say it's better to pray than advise; yet truly I think of another Scripture, which is very useful, though it seems to be for a common application to every man as a Chris-

* Guizot, vol. ii. p. 16.

tian,—wherein he is counselled to ask wisdom; and he is told what that is. That's 'from above,' we are told; it's 'pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits;' it's 'without partiality and without hypocrisy.' Truly my thoughts run much upon this place, that to the execution of judgment (the judgment of truth, for that's the judgment) you must have wisdom 'from above,' and that's 'pure.' That will teach you to exercise the judgment of truth; it's 'without partiality.' Purity, impartiality, sincerity; these are the effects of 'wisdom,' and these will help you to execute the judgment of truth. And then if God give you hearts to be 'easy to be entreated,' to be 'peaceably spirited,' to be 'full of good fruits,' bearing good fruits to the nation, to men as men, to the people of God, to all in their several stations,—*this* will teach you to execute the judgment of mercy and truth. And I have little more to say to this. I shall rather bend my prayers for you in that behalf, as I said; and many others will.

"Truly, the 'judgment of truth,' it will teach you to be as just towards an Unbeliever as towards a Believer; and it's our duty to do so. I confess I have said sometimes, foolishly it may be: I had rather miscarry to a Believer than an Unbeliever. This may seem a paradox; but let's take heed of doing that which is evil to either! Oh, if God fill your hearts with such a spirit as Moses had, and as Paul had,—which was not a spirit for Believers only, but for the whole people! Moses, he could die for them; wish himself 'blotted out of God's Book;' Paul could wish himself 'accursed for his countrymen after the flesh:' so full of affection were their spirits unto all. And truly this would help you to execute the judgment of truth, and of mercy also. * * * In my pilgrimage, and some exercises I have had abroad, I did read that Scripture often, forty-first of Isaiah; where God gave me, and some of my fellows, encouragement 'as to' what He would do there and elsewhere; which he hath performed for us. He said, 'He would plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle and the oil-tree; and He would set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine-tree, and the box-tree together.' For what end will the Lord do all this? That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this;—that it is he who hath wrought all the salvations and deliverances we have received. For what end? To see, and know, and understand together, that he hath done and wrought all this for the good of the Whole Flock. Therefore, I beseech you,

—but I think I need not,—have a care of the Whole Flock! Love the sheep, love the lambs; love all, tender all, cherish and countenance all, in all things that are good. And if the poorest Christian, the most mistaken Christian, shall desire to live peaceably and quietly under you,—I say, if any shall desire but to lead a life of godliness and honesty, let him be protected.”

We shall not often have occasion to introduce passages of this serious character into our text. It is necessary in this place to exhibit the sort of exhortations addressed by Cromwell to those described by Hume as “low mechanics, fifth monarchy men, anabaptists, antinomians, independents,—the very dregs of fanatics;” and although the style of oratory may differ from modern usage when parliaments are addressed, it may not be regarded as wholly inappropriate and ineffectual.

The constitution of Cromwell's Assembly was provisional. The supreme authority was devolved upon them by an instrument signed by the Lord-General and his officers, but they were to engage not to retain it beyond the 3rd of November, 1654; three months before that time they were to choose their successors; and these were not to sit longer than a year, and then to determine upon a future constitution of government. This was an arrangement not altogether consistent with the theory that Cromwell aimed at an arbitrary government in his own person; and is only explained by the assertion that he adopted a temporary expedient which he knew could not stand in the way of his own ambitious designs. Upon this principle it is held that it was “the deep policy of Cromwell to render himself the sole refuge of those who valued the laws, or the regular ecclesiastical ministry, or their own estates, all in peril from the mad enthusiasts who were in hopes to prevail” *—that he therefore chose the mad enthusiasts, “mingling them with a sufficient proportion of a superior class whom he could direct.” A deep policy, no doubt, but also a policy of very uncertain result. When we look back upon the earnestness with which Cromwell had advocated the reform of the law; his zeal for amending the condition of the poor; his eager pleadings against the oppressions of prisoners for debt; his desires for the promotion of education,—it appears somewhat unlikely that if he meant these men to do nothing, and thus ultimately to throw the popularity of remedial measures into his hands, they should at once have applied themselves to these objects with a vigour that con-

* Hallam, “Constitutional History,” Chap. x.

trusted with the comparative torpor of the last days of the Long Parliament. They formed Committees to examine these questions, and others of political importance, such as Union with Scotland, the division of lands in Ireland, and the financial condition of the kingdom. They did, however, some things which gave offence to two powerful classes—the clergy and the lawyers. They abolished the Court of Chancery, and they decreed by a majority of two, that tithes should be abolished. The abolition of tithes, before a maintenance by law should have been otherwise provided, was against a report of their own Committee. The more enthusiastic of the religious party had gained the ascendancy over those who despised this world's wisdom. Cromwell did not despise it; and he saw the real evils that had developed themselves in an authority of which the majority, led by Major-General Harrison, held that “the Saints shall take possession of the kingdom and keep it.” † These extreme doctrines were preached in the meetings of sectaries. Two anabaptists, Feake and Powell, were most violent in urging great social changes, at which the more moderate became alarmed. The men of station and property began to regard Cromwell as the only power interposed between order and anarchy. In the next year, when he called a general Parliament, he spoke very clearly upon these dangers of the Commonwealth. He pointed to “the ranks and orders of men, whereby England had been known for hundreds of years;—a nobleman, a gentleman, a yeoman—that is a good interest of the nation, and a great one. For the orders of men and ranks of men, did not that Levelling principle tend to the reducing of all to an equality? What was the purport of it but to make the tenant as liberal a fortune as the landlord—which, I think, if obtained, would not have lasted long. The men of that principle, after they had served their own turns, would then have cried up property and interest fast enough.” With reference to the most fanatical of the sectaries, those who believed in the approach of the Fifth Monarchy, when the Saints of Christ should alone reign in the earth, Cromwell says, “When more fullness of the Spirit is poured forth to subdue iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness, then will the approach of that glory be. The carnal divisions and contentions among Christians, so common, are not the symptoms of that kingdom. But for men, on this principle, to betitle themselves, that they are the only men to rule kingdoms, govern nations, and give laws to the people, and

† See Ludlow, “Memoirs,” p. 565.

determine of property and liberty and everything else, upon such a pretension as this is,—truly they had need to give clear manifestations of God's presence among them, before wise men will receive or submit to their conclusions. Cromwell, the hypocrite, or Cromwell, the fanatic, or Cromwell, the statesman and natural ruler of men—whatever we please to call him—saw that the Fifth Monarchy men, with Major-General Harrison at their head, were too strong in their enthusiasm, to make a stable government of the people a practicable thing. There were many of his adherents of the same opinion. On the 12th of December, colonel Sydenham rose in his place, and forthwith accused the majority of desiring to take away the laws of the land, and substitute a Mosaic code; of seeking to remove a regularly appointed Christian ministry; of opposing all learning and education. He proposed that they should repair in a body to the Lord-General, and resign the trust which had been committed to them. The motion was seconded by sir Charles Wolseley. The accusations were earnestly pronounced to be unjust; and the meritorious labours of the Assembly were dwelt upon. The Speaker suddenly left the chair, followed by about forty members. Leaving a number of members behind, not sufficient to constitute a House, they repaired to Whitehall, and there hastily wrote a paper resigning their authority into the hands of Cromwell. In the course of the next four days it was signed by eighty members, constituting a majority of the whole House.

The resignation of the Little Parliament is quickly followed by the event to which it was, without doubt, a pre-arranged prelude. "The perfidious Cromwell," writes Ludlow, "having forgot his most solemn professions and former vows, as well as the blood and treasure that had been spent in this contest, thought it high time to take off the mask, and resolved to sacrifice all our victories and deliverances to his pride and ambition, under colour of taking upon him the office as it were of a High Constable, in order to keep the peace of the nation, and to restrain men from cutting one another's throats."* This honest republican does not, however, inform us that such an office was altogether unnecessary. Looking calmly back upon this great issue of a Civil War, we can scarcely doubt that a High Constable was absolutely wanted, and that if the man of due vigour had not been at hand, worse evils might have ensued than this—that on the 16th of December, 1653, Oliver Cromwell was inaugurated "Lord Protector of the Com-

* "Memoirs," vol. ii. p. 471.

monwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland." On that day Oliver Cromwell, then fifty-four years of age, dressed in a plain suit of black velvet, sat down on a Chair of State in the Court of Chancery, when Major-General Lambert prayed him to accept the office of Protector; and Cromwell consented "to take upon him the protection and government of these nations, in the manner expressed in the form of government." That form was an instrument of forty-two articles. It was anything but an instrument constituting the Protector a Dictator. The sovereignty was to reside in the Parliament. He was not to have the power of a negative on their laws. He had a power of making temporary ordinances until the meeting of a Parliament. A Council of State was to assist the Protector in the government. And so, "having taken the oath as directed in the close of the said instrument," writes Ludlow, "Major-General Lambert kneeling, presented him with a Sword in the scabbard, representing the Civil Sword; which Cromwell accepting, put off his own, intimating thereby that he would no longer rule by the military sword."* The indignant Ludlow adds, "though like a false hypocrite, he designed nothing more."

Before this great change in the government of England, White Locke had set forth on an embassy for the conclusion of a treaty with Sweden. Cromwell had especially urged this mission upon the reluctant Commissioner, but at last he had prevailed. † We here notice this embassy, to point to two remarkable passages in the conversations between queen Christina and the ambassador of the English Commonwealth, which have reference to Cromwell. In an interview, before the news of the event of the 16th of December had reached Sweden, the following dialogue took place:—

"*Queen.* Much of the story of your general hath some parallel with that of my ancestor, Gustavus the First, who, from a private gentleman of a noble family, was advanced to the title of marshal of Sweden, because he had risen up and rescued his country from the bondage and oppression which the king of Denmark had put upon them, and expelled that king; and for his reward, he was at last elected king of Sweden; and I believe that your general will be king of England in conclusion.

"*Whitelocke.* Pardon me, madam, that cannot be, because England is resolved into a Commonwealth; and my general hath

* Ludlow, "Memoirs," vol. ii. p. 480. † See vol. iii. p. 626.

already sufficient power and greatness, as general of all their forces by sea and land, which may content him.

"*Queen.* Resolve what you will, I believe he resolves to be king: and hardly can any power or greatness be called sufficient, when the nature of man is so prone (as in these days) to all ambition."

But very shortly the news reached the Swedish Court of the altered relations of the English government with foreign states; and then Christina asks these pertinent questions:—

"*Queen.* Is your new government by a protector different from what it was before as to monarchy, or is the alteration in all points?"

"*Whitelocke.* The government is to be the same as formerly, by successive representatives of the people in parliament; only the protector is the head or chief magistrate of the commonwealth."

The queen is still curious upon several difficult points which arise out of her meditations upon this novel form of chief magistracy:—

"*Queen.* Why is the title protector, when the power is kingly?"

"*Whitelocke.* I cannot satisfy your majesty of the reasons of this title, being at so great a distance from the inventors of it.

"*Queen.* New titles, with sovereign power, proved prejudicial to the state of Rome.

"*Whitelocke.* One of your majesty's ancestors was not permitted to keep the title of marshal of Sweden.

"*Queen.* He was afterwards king, and that will be next for your protector.

"*Whitelocke.* That will not be so consonant to our Commonwealth as it was to your crown. * * *

"*Queen.* Is your protector sacred as other kings are?"

"*Whitelocke.* He is not anointed and crowned; those ceremonies were not used to him.

"*Queen.* His power is the same with that of king, and why should not his title have been the same?"

"*Whitelocke.* It is the power which makes the title, and not the title which makes the power; our protector thinks he hath enough of both.

"*Queen.* He is hardly a mortal man then; but he hath brought his business notably to pass, and hath done great things. I give you my hand for it, that I have a great value for him."

Before we enter upon a narrative of the public events of the Protectorate, let us endeavour, out of very imperfect materials, to present a brief view of the social condition of the kingdom, in continuation of those "glimpses of the life of the people" which we gave at the commencement of the Civil War.* The changes of a decade are not very marked in ordinary times. But those who had lived through the fierce struggles of this decade,—had seen the fall of the Monarchy, and of the Anglican Church; the almost utter subjection of the Cavaliers; the growing power of the Army; the triumphs of the Independents over the Presbyterians; the dissolution of the Long Parliament; and the approach once again to a monarchical form of government—these must have looked upon great vicissitudes. More than this, those who were boys when the Puritan William Prynne stood in the pillory in 1633 must have beheld an entire revolution in the domestic framework of society when the Puritan Oliver Cromwell sat in the Chair of State in 1653. Such phases of common life are rarely observed in the whirl of public events. A casual notice here and there of a letter-writer or a diarist enables us to piece together a few fragments. Such mosaic work could not be elaborated into a picture with any pretension to verisimilitude. It can scarcely aspire to any symmetrical proportion.

The rapidity with which some nations, after they have been harassed and devastated by foreign invasion or intestine wars, recover and become prosperous, mainly depends upon the fact of nations being constituted of an industrious or slothful race. But it also in no small degree depends upon their political institutions,—the amount of individual liberty, the security of property. From a comparison of all accounts we may judge that England recovered with wonderful ease from the destruction of capital, from the taxes, the confiscations of Civil War. Mrs. Hutchinson's account may be received with little qualification, that the Parliament before its dissolution "had restored the Commonwealth to such a happy, rich, and plentiful condition, as it was not so flourishing before the war; and although the taxes that were paid were great, yet the people were rich, and were able to pay them." The forfeitures of property, so calamitous to individuals, had thrown extensive estates into the hands of the middle classes, who cultivated them to greater profit than their hereditary proprietors. The war itself, calling forth a remarkable union of religious enthusiasm with sober in-

* Vol. iii. p. 435.

dustry, gave an elevation to the pursuits of the trading classes, which made the dignity of work more appreciated by themselves and by others. There was a general desire for religious knowledge which created an aspiration for higher things than money even in the humblest mechanical pursuits. It was not a period of very unequal distribution of wealth amongst those who lived by their industry, except in the larger operations of commerce. Baxter, speaking of his parishioners at Kidderminster, says, "my people were not rich. There were among them very few beggars, because their common trade of stuff-weaving would find work for all, men, women, and children, that were able. * * * * The generality of the master-workmen lived but a little better than their journeymen, from hand to mouth, but only that they laboured not altogether so hard." Yet amongst this humble community, according to this good man, "it was a great advantage to me that my neighbours were of such a trade as allowed them time enough to read or talk of holy things. * * * * As they stand in their loom they can set a book before them."*

Whatever might be the contrarieties of doctrine and discipline amongst the great body of Puritans, the time of scoffing and reviling them was entirely passed. There might be secret mutterings against fanatics amongst the old Cavaliers, but the great religious body was too powerful, their influence was too universal, to meet with violent resistance or open contempt. The more extreme sectaries necessarily provoked much suppressed ridicule; but the great body of the puritan Clergy were too orderly in their lives, too active in their zeal for godliness and sobriety, and in many cases had established so great a reputation for sound learning, that the most devoted Episcopalians and staunchest Royalists could not pretend to despise them, as in the times of Laud. The toleration which was imperfectly carried out by the republican Independents, but which Cromwell made the ruling principle of his ecclesiastical policy, had a tendency to mitigate some of the old feuds of the surplice and the Geneva gown. Evelyn, the most devoted of men to the past system of government, spiritual and temporal, is naturally disgusted when, on the 4th of December, 1653, "going this day to our church, I was surprised to see a tradesman, a mechanic, step up; I was resolved yet to stay and see what he would make of it." The mechanic inferred from his text that "now the Saints were called to destroy temporal governments;" and

* "Life," pp. 89 and 94.

Evelyn remarks that "with such feculent stuff, so dangerous a crisis were things grown to." Cromwell rather averted the danger of the crisis, as we have seen. Evelyn is severe upon "the usurper" being feasted at the Lord Mayor's on Ash Wednesday; though he expresses no grateful sense of the change which permitted him "to hear the famous Dr. Jeremy Taylor, at St. Gregory's." This true English gentleman has unconsciously given his testimony that the kingdom was not in a very wretched condition when "the usurper" began openly to take the regulation of affairs. He saw indeed, at Caversham, in 1634, lord Craven's woods being felled "by the rebels,"—the confiscation of this property having been an expiring act of the despotism of the Rump Parliament of which Oliver complained. But in this summer tour, he enjoys "the idle diversions" of Bath; "trifling and bathing with the company who frequent the place for health." He goes to Bristol, "a city emulating London, not for its large extent, but manner of building—shops, bridge, traffic, exchange, market-place"—standing "commodiously for Ireland and the Western world." He was welcomed with old hospitality at Oxford; and heard the famous Independent, Dr. Owen, preach, "perstringing [glancing upon] Episcopacy." Cromwell was Chancellor of Oxford, and Dr. Owen Vice-Chancellor; yet Evelyn heard excellent orations; and was delighted at All Souls, with "music, voices and theorbos, performed by some ingenious scholars." Some of the roaring habits of the Cavaliers were not yet banished by Puritanism; for his party's coachmen, at Spie Park, the seat of sir Edward Baynton, were made "exceeding drunk" by that "humourous old knight," who ordered all gentlemen's servants to be so treated. At Wilton House, the earl of Pembroke's, he beholds the mansion and gardens in the most beautiful order. He finds at Coventry "the streets full of great shops, clean and well-paved." In Rutlandshire he meets an exception to the general neatness of English villages: "Most of the rural parishes are built of mud, and the people living as wretchedly as in the most impoverished parts of France, which they much resemble, being idle and sluttish." In Leicestershire the gentry are "free drinkers." With these exceptions, wherever he travels he finds stately houses, fair gardens, ample parks, orderly and contented people. He sees very few evidences of the ravages of war. The country seems quiet and prosperous—not altogether a bad country to live in, though "an usurper" does rule it. And so Mr. Evelyn completes his purchase of

Sayes Court; and sets out his oval garden; and trims his holly hedge, afterwards so famous; and is not wanting for amusements even in this strict age; for "my lady Gerrard treated us at Mulberry Garden, now the only place of refreshment about town for persons of the best quality to be exceedingly cheated at." There are indications that some of the levities are creeping in that preceded the coming age of licentiousness: "I now observed how the women began to paint themselves."

The healthful influence upon the morals of the rural population, through the exertions and examples of the religious gentry, is well illustrated by the course of life which colonel Hutchinson pursued: "He had for about a year's time applied himself, when the parliament could dispense with his absence, to the administration of justice in the country, and to the putting in execution those wholesome laws and statutes of the land provided for the orderly regulation of the people. And it was wonderful how, in a short space, he reformed several abuses and customary neglects in that part of the country where he lived, which, being a rich fruitful vale, drew abundance of vagrant people to come and exercise the idle trade of wandering and begging. But he took such courses that there was very suddenly not a beggar left in the country; and all the poor in every town so maintained and provided for, as they never were so liberally maintained and relieved before nor since. He procured unnecessary alehouses to be put down in all the towns; and if any one that he heard of suffered any disorder or debauchery in his house, he would not suffer him to brew any more. He was a little severe against drunkenness, for which the drunkards would sometimes rail at him; but so were all the children of darkness convinced by his light, that they were in awe more of his virtue than his authority." In the instance of colonel Hutchinson, an accomplished gentleman of the Independent party, Puritanism is thus exhibited in its mildest mood. It is suppressing vagrancy and assisting honest poverty. It is putting down unnecessary alehouses, and is a little severe against drunkenness. But Puritanism as exhibited in such a man is not playing the fantastic tricks which made it odious to the great body of the people, and drove the nation into the disgusting sensuality and base self-seeking of the Restoration. Puritanism naturally offended the large remaining body who were attached to the ceremonial of the Anglican Church, when it fasted on Christmas Day, and feasted on Ash Wednesday. It took this course upon the old principle, that the greater

was the remove from Roman Catholicism the nearer was the approach to true religion. The people generally did not take these sour protestations against old customs very much to heart. Salt-fish and mince-pie were not banished from their boards, although the orthodox seasons for their consumption had a little varied. They had no great reverence for those who opposed Christmas carols and mummeries; to whom the Yule-log and the Boar's head were abominations. But in spite of them they had their dances and their health-drinkings; and wished their neighbours a merry Christmas after the good old fashion. But when Puritanism put itself into a rampant attitude, as it did in many districts, the people began to loath a power which was so intermeddling and so morose. The neglect of public worship in a few was not likely to be remedied by fines and the stocks. "Katherine Bartlett, widow, upon her own confession, did absent herself from Church the last Lord's day, contrary to the law, in the morning; was ordered to pay 2s. 6d., and in default of paying was ordered to be set in the stocks," says a record of the Dorchester justices.* From the same authority, we learn that John Samwages, not having been to Church for five weeks, and having not money to satisfy the law, was ordered to be stocked for his said offence. Nor was the just observance of Sunday likely to be greatly promoted by informations against husbands and wives, and also,—cruel Puritans,—against "sweethearts," for walking abroad in sermon time. One unhappy victim is stocked three hours for the heinous offence of going to Charminster immediately after dinner on Easter day, and eating milk and cream with some lads and lasses, upon which entertainment they spent twopence each.† Even the plea that the moving about on the Sabbath-day was to hear a preacher in another parish was no mitigation of the offence of taking a longer walk than to the Church at the offender's own door. Working on Sunday was punished by the rigid in the most exemplary manner. A tailor is brought up for labouring at two o'clock on a January morning, to have a piece of his manufacture completed in due time for some orthodox church-goer. Children were punished for playing at nine-stones. Hanging out clothes to dry on the Sabbath was an especial offence. Swearing had been a statutable crime since the time of James I.; but the extreme Puritans not only vis-

* Hearn's MS. Book of Proceedings, quoted in "Roberts's Southern Counties," p. 241.

† Hearn's MS. Book of Proceedings.

ited profane cursing with fine and the stocks, but punished even such as followed lady Percy's example of "good sooth," and "God shall mend me." To swear "like a comfit-maker's wife" * was a grievous sin. "Plague take you" was finable. The magisterial interference with private affairs was unceasing. Alice Hill "is found to keep company with Philip Bartlett, in unseasonable time;" and William Steevens is sent to gaol for frequenting the company of Christian, the wife of Edward Coles, "in a very suspicious manner."

That the extreme severity of some Puritans not only made them hateful but ridiculous when their doctrines were in the ascendant, we may readily believe. But at the same time we cannot fail to discover that many of the imputations against them generally were gross exaggerations. They did not give their children such names as "Fight the good fight of Faith," and "Stand fast on high." When Hume solemnly records that the brother of Praise-God Barebone had for a name, "If-Christ-had-not-died-for-you, you-had-then-been-damned, Barebone," Hume is hoaxed by a joke invented half-a-century after Barebone had terminated his career of politics and leather-selling. Neither were the Puritans, after the rantings of Stubbes and Prynne against every species of recreation were forgotten, distinguished for any capricious dislike of music, or any contempt of secular knowledge. No man was more eager than Cromwell himself to protect learning and learned men. He sought out scholars for public employments. But, what is more to our present purpose, his house, during the Protectorate, was as remarkable for its refined amusements as for its decorous piety. The love of music was with him almost a passion, as it was with Milton. But we can nowhere find a more complete refutation of the idle belief that all the Puritans were opposed to every harmless pleasure, than in Lucy Hutchinson's description of her own household. Her husband, after his retirement from public affairs, was occupied with the improvement of his estate in the vale of Belvoir. He was a sportsman, and recreated himself, for a little time, with his hawks; "but when a very sober fellow, that never was guilty of the usual vices of that generation of men, rage and swearing, died, he gave over his hawks, and pleased himself with music, and again fell to the practice of his viol, on which he played excellently well; and, entertaining tutors for the diversion and education of his children in all sorts of music, he pleased him-

* Henry IV., Part 1, Act iii. sc. 1.

self in these innocent recreations during Oliver's mutable reign. As he had great delight, so he had great judgment, in music, and advanced his children's practice more than their tutors: he also was a great supervisor of their learning, and indeed himself a tutor to them all, besides all those tutors which he liberally entertained in his house for them. He spared not any cost for the education of both his sons and daughters in languages, sciences, music, dancing, and all other qualities befitting their father's house. He was himself their instructor in humility, sobriety, and all godliness and virtue, which he rather strove to make them exercise with love and delight than by constraint. As other things were his delight, this only he made his business, to attend the education of his children, and the government of his own house and town. This he performed so well that never was any man more feared and loved than he by all his domestics, tenants, and hired workmen. He was loved with such a fear and reverence as restrained all rude familiarity and insolent presumptions in those who were under him, and he was feared with so much love that they all delighted to do his pleasure. As he maintained his authority in all relations, so he endeavoured to make their subjection pleasant to them, and rather to convince them by reason than to compel them to obedience, and would decline even to the lowest of his family to make them enjoy their lives in sober cheerfulness, and not find their duties burdensome. * * * * As he was very hospitable, and his conversation no less desirable and pleasant than instructive and advantageous, his house was much resorted to, and as kindly open to those who had in public contests been his enemies, as to his continued friends; for there never lived a man that had less malice and revenge, nor more reconcileableness and kindness and generosity in his nature than he."

Aubrey records that Hollar told him that when the Civil Wars broke out he went to the Low Countries, where he stayed till 1649: "When he first came to England, which was a serene time of peace, the people, both poor and rich, did look cheerfully; but at his return he found the countenances of the people all changed, melancholy, spiteful, as if bewitched." * It is not an unfavourable attribute of the English character that the people did take to heart their strife and bloodshed, their uncertainty as to the present and their dread of the future. Aubrey has no direct record that the old cheerful looks had returned; but we may well conceive, that

* "Lives," vol. iii. p. 402.

in spite of the Puritan rigour occasionally breaking out, the nation was gradually resuming the habits, if not wholly of merry England, of stirring and well-employed England. Prosperous industry always brings its own cheerfulness, if it is moderate in its desires, and not inordinate in its cravings for wealth and luxury. We see the stir of inventive genius at this period. We trace the beginnings of that experimental philosophy which was to put England at the head of all industrious nations. "Honest and learned Mr. Hartlib," the friend of Milton, has made "an ink that would give a dozen copies, moist sheets of paper being pressed on it." Robert Boyle, "that excellent person and great virtuoso," is improving the air-pump, and prosecuting his studies in chemistry. Colonel Blount invites philosophers to inspect his new-invented ploughs. Sir P. Neale is famous for his optic-glasses. Greatorex, the mathematical-instrument maker, has an invention to quench fire. The no less important principles of commerce are come to the aid of all science and industry. The City Goldsmiths have opened Banking establishments. Superfluous money has ceased to be buried or locked in chests. Agriculture feels the influence of the general stir of the national mind. The turnip-husbandry is teaching the farmer that the earth can bear as useful produce as corn; and the cultivation of clover is making a valuable addition to the "meadows trim with daisies pied," upon which the flocks of England have been hitherto sustained.

Amidst the many evidences that we occasionally meet with of the intellectual and industrial activity of the people, we also encounter many proofs of their subjection to superstitious fears. Even the learned and the scientific are not free from singular fancies, engendered in the atmosphere of fanaticism. Mr. Oughtred, "that renowned mathematician," says Evelyn in 1655, "had strong apprehensions of some extraordinary event to happen the following year, from the calculation of coincidence with the diluvian period; and added that it might possibly be to convert the Jews by our Saviour's visible appearance, and to judge the world." The Almanac makers of that time were deluding the people with those prophecies, which they continued to swallow for two centuries. Lilly was still in vogue; and Francis Moore had joined the ranks of imposture. The most remarkable of their exploits was to frighten the isle from its propriety, on the 29th of April, 1652, by the terrors of an eclipse of the sun. This fatal day was called Mirk Monday; and the dread of it "so exceedingly alarmed the

whole nation that hardly any one would work, or stir out of their houses."

As regards the material prosperity of the country, we may conclude this sketch with the testimony of Howell, a devoted royalist, to the fact that the restorative powers that were possessed by an energetic people in their insular security and their ancient and renewed freedom, were the providential compensations for long years, first of tyranny and then of universal disturbance. "The calamities and confusions, which the late wars did bring upon us, were many and manifold, yet England may be said to have gained one advantage by it; for whereas before she was like an animal that knew not his own strength, she is now better acquainted with herself, for her power and wealth did never appear more both by land and sea."*

If the immediate effect of the Civil Wars was such that England "became better acquainted with herself," so that she increased in power and wealth, the more lasting consequence was that the whole nation became more earnest in its regard for the higher obligations of religion—that the great body of the people, amidst all the extravagances of sectaries, came to have a more elevated sense of the responsibilities that belonged to a condition approaching to religious liberty. The indifference and profaneness that came in with the return of the Stuarts were chiefly manifest amongst the upper classes,—the sycophants of a debauched Court, and the herd of writers who thought that wit and immorality were necessary companions. The fanaticism and intolerance died out; but the best portions of the Puritan spirit were never extinguished. When the Anglican Church again became oppressive and worldly, the principle of religious liberty asserted itself in strenuous non-conformity, and kept alive the zeal which ultimately placed the Church itself upon the only safe foundation for a wealthy establishment, that of emulation in the duty of diligently teaching, and kindly watching over, the congregations entrusted to its charge. Baxter, the Puritan, who was persecuted when the Episcopalians returned to power, is now regarded by English churchmen as the model of a parish priest; and we may well conclude this view of the period of his ministry immediately following the establishment of the Commonwealth, by his just account of the advantage to religion, through "the change that was made in public affairs by the success of the war:"

* "Letters," vol. iv. p. 11c.

"For before, the riotous rabble had boldness enough to make serious godliness a common scorn, and call them all Puritans and Precisians that did not care as little for God and Heaven and their souls as they did; especially if a man were not fully satisfied with their undisciplined, disorderly churches, or Lay Chancellor's excommunications, &c., then no name was bad enough for him. And the Bishop's Articles enquiring after such, and their courts and the High Commission grievously afflicting those that did but fast and pray together, or go from an ignorant drunken reader, to hear a godly able preacher at the next parish, &c. This kept religion among the vulgar under either continual reproach or terror, encouraging the rabble to despise it and revile it, and discouraging those that else would own it. And experience telleth us, that it is a lamentable impediment to men's conversion, when it is a way everywhere spoken against, and prosecuted by superiors, which they must embrace; and when at their first approaches they must go through such dangers and obloquy as is fitter for confirmed Christians to be exercised with, than unconverted sinners or young beginners: Therefore, though Cromwell gave liberty to all sects among us, and did not set up any party alone by force, yet this much gave abundant advantage to the Gospel, removing the prejudices and the terrors which hindered it; especially considering that godliness had countenance and reputation also, as well as liberty; whereas before, if it did not appear in all the fetters and formalities of the times, it was the way to common shame and ruin."*

* "Life," p. 86.

CHAPTER III.

The Protectorate.—Incentives to assassinate the Protector.—Royalist Plot concocted in France.—Cromwell's deportment to the French Government.—His Foreign Policy generally.—First Parliament of the Protectorate.—Cromwell's speech on opening the Session.—Parliament questions the Protector's authority.—The Parliament House closed.—Cromwell requires a Pledge from Members.—Recusant Members excluded.—Subsequent Temper of the Parliament.—Cromwell dissolves the Parliament.—Royalist Risings organised.—Failure of Risings in the West and North.—Resistance to Taxation.—The Major-Generals.—Severities against Papists and Episcopalians.—Tolerance to Sects.

THE Lord Protector of the Commonwealth, who had been inaugurated on the 16th of December, 1653, had, some four months afterwards, entered upon the occupation of the royal palaces of Whitehall and of Hampton Court. Warwick, the Cavalier, who, in 1640, had looked upon a gentleman speaking in Parliament "very ordinarily apparelled," yet lived as, he records, to see this very gentleman, "having had a better tailor, and more converse among good company," appear at Whitehall "of a great and majestic deportment and comely presence."* The same courtier says, speaking of a period when the dignity of Oliver was further confirmed, "And now he models his house, that it might have some resemblance unto a Court; and his liveries, and lacqueys, and yeomen of the guard are known who they belong to by their habit."† There was something more went to the making of the Protector Oliver than "a better tailor;" or than "liveries and lacqueys and yeomen of the guard;" something higher even than "more converse among good company." There had been fourteen years of such experience as belonged to no other man in his time. "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." More than this: "My manner of life, which was to run up and down the nation, had given me to see and know the temper and spirits of all men." Thus he spoke to his first Parliament with a dignified modesty. Out of his own courage, sagacity, and abiding sense that his destiny was in the hands of a supreme di-

* "Memoirs," p. 248.

† *Ibid.*, p. 382.