

under his cap; the king thought he was going to strike. "Wait for the signal," he said. "I shall wait for it, sir, with the good pleasure of your majesty." In about a minute the king held out his hands; the executioner struck; the head was severed at a blow. "This is the head of a traitor," he cried, as he held it up to the people; a long, deep murmur spread around Whitehall; many persons rushed to the scaffold to dip their handkerchiefs in the king's blood. Two troops of horse, advancing in different directions, slowly dispersed the crowd. When the scaffold was at length clear, the body was taken away; it was already inclosed in the coffin when Cromwell wished to see it. He considered it attentively, and, taking up the head in his hands, as if to make sure that it was severed from the body, said: "This was a well-constituted frame and promised a long life."

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XLI.

THE DECISION AT WORCESTER.—FORSTER.

[The execution of Charles was followed by the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic or "commonwealth." But the new state was forced at once to enter upon a struggle for existence. Widespread disaffection existed in England; in Scotland, the son of the "martyr-king" was called to the throne; in Ireland there was open rebellion. Cromwell's vigorous campaign restored order in Ireland, and in the summer of 1650 he was sent against the Scots. He defeated them disastrously at Dunbar, but they rallied the next year, and staked all on an invasion of England. Cromwell followed and overtook them at Worcester.]

WITH the advance of winter an attack of ague seized Cromwell, but after severe suffering he rallied, and in time for that ill-judged movement of the young king of Scots which brought on the battle of Worcester.

The Presbyterian army, restored to a numerous and most effective force, now held a strong position near Stirling.

Charles II. commanded it in person. Taught by the fatal experience of Dunbar, however, he kept acting on the defensive, and could not be drawn from his well-selected ground. As a last effort with this view, Cromwell, with singular daring, transported his army into Fife, and proceeded toward Perth, which he captured after a siege of two days. The stratagem succeeded, in one sense, but, besides moving the Scots from their stronghold, it had also induced Charles to adopt the plan of marching into England. It is said that in this he yielded to the advice of his English followers, who overruled the more prudent Argyle, looked with contempt upon the Parliament, and counted upon the numerical majority of the English nation as unquestionably in his favor. On the 31st of July he broke up his camp near the Torwood, and on the 6th of August reached Carlisle.

Cromwell was engaged in the superintendence of a new citadel by means of which he designed to hold Perth in subjection, when the news reached him of the movement of the Presbyterians and the king. His spirit rose to that crisis with a renewal of the excitement which men noted in him at Dunbar. He wrote at once to London to give all necessary courage and confidence to the council and citizens. After informing them of the meditated invasion hanging over them, he observed that it "was not out of choice on our part;" and did not conceal his fear that it would trouble some men's thoughts, and occasion some inconvenience. But, he adds, "this is our comfort, that, in simplicity of heart as to God, we have done to the best of our judgments, knowing that, if some issue were not put to this business, it would occasion another winter's war, to the ruin of your soldiery, for whom the Scots are too hard in respect of enduring the winter difficulties of this country, and have been under the endless expense of the treasury of England in prosecuting this war. It may be supposed we might have kept the enemy from this by interposing between him and England, which I truly