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."

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

believe we might; *but how to remove him out of this place without doing what we have done*, unless we had a commanding army on both sides of the river of Forth, is not clear to us, or how to answer the inconveniences afore-mentioned, we understand not." He then entreats that the council of state would collect what forces they could without loss of time, to give the enemy some check, until he should be able to overtake them. Meantime, he sent Lambert at the head of the cavalry, who, upon joining with Harrison, whose forces were at Newcastle, was ordered to advance through the western parts of Northumberland, to intercept the Scots in their progress through Lancashire, to watch their motions, straiten their quarters, impede their progress in every way, but not to risk a battle.

Charles, meanwhile, with but sorry success, had pushed on by Kendal and Preston to Warrington, where, at the bridge, he received a momentary check from Lambert and Harrison. He still forced his way, summoned Shrewsbury in passing, but without effect, and at last made for Worcester, where he was proclaimed, according to Clarendon, king of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland.

London, anticipating his entry almost every hour, gave way to fearful alarms. Even Bradshaw himself, it is said, lion-hearted as he was, could not among his private friends conceal his fears. Some raged against Cromwell, and uttered deep suspicions of his fidelity. No one could understand his intentions, nor where he was, nor why he had allowed an enemy to enter the land when there were no troops to oppose him. Both the city and the country, says Mrs. Hutchinson, were all amazed, and doubtful of their own and the commonwealth's safety. Some could not hide very pale and unmanly fears, and were in such distraction of spirit as much disturbed their counsels.

Yet truly there was little need. The genius of Cromwell had already saved them. He had collected a tremendous

force—nearly thirty thousand men—and on the 28th of August had them all in position within two miles of Worcester. The Presbyterian force was greatly inferior, but the almost impregnable site of the city of Worcester was an ample set-off against that circumstance.

Built along the right bank of the Severn, it defied immediate assault, and Charles's officers had, of course, done their best to increase its already splendid resources of resistance and defense. Cromwell found the bridges broken above and below, every boat removed—not even a punt to be seen—and, in the extensive line of fires above, saw how strongly the heights of the place were occupied. But not for a moment did he hesitate. Inspired by the genius which had served him so often, and never failed him yet, he took the sudden and daring resolve of throwing his army astride upon two rivers—of forcing at their higher transits a passage across both the Severn and the Teme—and of coming down at once upon the enemy from the eastern and western heights overlooking Worcester!

The preparations for this daring exploit were completed on the 2d of September, for Cromwell had, moreover, determined to fight this decisive battle for the possession of three disputed kingdoms on what he called his *fortunate day*—his day of Dunbar. Skirmishes meanwhile took place between the out-posts on both sides of the river, and before the morning of the 3d a desperate struggle had passed at the half-broken Upton bridge, between Lambert and its gallant defender, Massey. Lambert carried it at last, repaired the broken arch, and conducted across ten thousand men, who took their ground along the course of the Teme.

It was now the morning of the 3d. The Presbyterians had the day before, in alarm at Lambert's movement, destroyed every bridge upon that river. Yet Cromwell, not caring to husband life at any time, and still less now when his superior numbers gave him so many lives to play with—sent out an

order to Fleetwood to force, at any loss, his detached corps across the Teme. Cromwell at the same moment threw a bridge of boats over the Severn at Bunshill, near the confluence of the two rivers, and restored the communication that had been partially cut off. A hot fire near Powick—so sudden were these movements—was the first thing that attracted the attention of Charles, who, from one of the towers of the cathedral, was examining the positions of the enemy, when, finding that an attack was begun in that quarter, he instantly dispatched a re-enforcement of horse and foot to the spot, and gave instructions to the commanding officer to prevent, if possible, the formation of the bridge. But a similar addition had been made to the detachment under Fleetwood, who again outnumbered his opponents, and pressed them with great vivacity toward Worcester. "The Scots, in the hope that, by occupying so large a force, they might afford to their countrymen on the other side of the Severn an opportunity of breaking the regiments under Cromwell, maintained the most obstinate resistance." They disputed every inch of ground which presented the slightest advantage; fought from hedge to hedge, and frequently charged with the pike, to check the advance of the enemy.

For an instant this rolled the tide of battle back toward the Teme; but fresh battalion after battalion arrived to the support of Fleetwood, who then bore the Scots by fair force of numbers even across the bridge.

Cromwell was meanwhile deciding the battle under the walls of the town; and here, or on both sides of the river, from two o'clock in the morning till night-fall, had this terrible contest raged with unceasing fury. The main body of the enemy's infantry had advanced out of the city against the renowned chief of the Ironsides, and the conflict upon one spot in this quarter, Cromwell wrote in his dispatch, lasted three hours. It was closed by the veteran regiment which had so often closed the battles of the Parliament, and which

now, for the last time, advanced at the word of Cromwell. The victory was complete—gloriously complete, as the lord-general exultingly wrote, and "gained after as stiff a contest for many hours—including both sides of the river"—as he had ever seen. The fort having been summoned, and Colonel Drummond still refusing to surrender it, it was carried, in all the wild triumph of the victory, by a furious storm, wherein fifteen hundred men were put to the sword. Charles, flying through the streets in piteous despair, in vain attempted to rally his troops, and, finding they would no longer move, is said to have cried out, with a burst of passionate tears, "Then shoot me dead, rather than let me live to see the sad consequences of this day." A crown had vanished from his grasp.

On another man, who still stood upon that field, a crown was now descending. He stood there, some time after the day was won, in a state of uncontrollable emotion. Then, calling Fleetwood and Lambert to his side, he told them, with a fit of boisterous laughter, that he would knight them, as heroes of old were knighted (he did not say by kings), on the field where they had achieved their glory. The excitement subdued, he retired to his tent, and there, at "ten o'clock at night," "weary, and scarce able to write," he yet wrote to the Parliament of England these memorable words: "The dimensions of this mercy are above my thoughts. It is for aught I know a crowning mercy."

XLII.

DISSOLUTION OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT.—GARDINER.

[The Long Parliament, or what was left of it, was now the highest legitimate authority in the land. In the course of the revolution, however, it had been weeded out several times, and, in its present maimed and shrunken form, could not pretend to represent the public sentiment of the country. Nevertheless it clung to power, and steadily refused to make way for a new Parliament, freely chosen. For this reason Cromwell drove it out.]

"PEACE," sung Milton, in his sonnet to Cromwell, "hath her victories no less renowned than war." Peace, too, has her forlorn hopes, her stout battling for a cause lost by anticipation, and destined only to re-appear in other days when the standard shall have been intrusted to arms more fortunate, if not more stalwart. Cromwell and the higher officers in the army, Sir Henry Vane and the nobler spirits yet remaining in the Parliament, were alike bent upon realizing the same high object—a free state governed in accordance with the resolutions of its elected representatives, and offering guarantees for individual liberty of thought and speech, without which Parliamentary government is only another name for tyranny. But their powers were not equal to their wishes. The revolutionary force in the country had been spent long before the execution of Charles; and now that his possible successor was a youth of whom no harm was known, the Royalist flood was mounting steadily. Even the original feeling of the nation had not been against royalty, but against the particular way in which the king had acted; and the necessity for dethronement, and the supposed necessity for execution, had been founded upon reasoning which had never stirred the popular heart. The nation at large did not really care for a commonwealth, did not care for religious liberty. The violent suppression of the Episcopalian worship had

alienated as many as had been alienated by Laud's injudicious resuscitation of obsolete forms. Most Englishmen would have been quite content if they could have got a king who would have shown some reasonable respect for the wishes of Parliament, and who would abstain from open illegality.

In short, the leaders of the commonwealth found themselves, in some sort, in the same position as that in which Laud found himself in 1629. They had an ideal of their own, which they believed to be really good for the nation, and they hoped that, by habituating the nation to that which they thought best, they could at last bring it to a right frame of mind. If their experiment and its failure is more interesting than Laud's experiment and its failure, it is because their ideal was far higher than his. It broke down, not because they were wrong, but because the nation was not as yet ripe for acceptance of any thing so good.

The difference of opinion which slowly grew up between army leaders and Parliamentary leaders was only the natural result of the tacit acknowledgment of this rock ahead, which was none the less felt because both parties shrank from avowing it. A free Parliament would, perhaps, be a Royalist Parliament. In that case it would probably care nothing about liberty, and would certainly care nothing about Puritanism. How was the danger to be met? The fifty or sixty men who called themselves a Parliament had their own remedy for the disease. Let there be new elections to the vacant seats, but let their own seats not be vacated. Let these old members have power to reject such new members as seemed to them unfit to serve in Parliament. There would be something that looked like a free Parliament, and yet it would not be a free Parliament at all. Those only would be admitted who were thought by the old members to be the right sort of persons to influence the nation.

The scheme, in fact, was a sham, and Cromwell disliked shams. He had another objection equally strong. If there

was one thing for which he and his soldiers had fought and bled, it was for the sake of religious liberty, a liberty which was real enough as far as it went, even if it was much less comprehensive than that which has been accepted in later times. No security was offered for religious liberty under the new-old Parliament. There was nothing to prevent it from abolishing all that existed at any moment it pleased.

As often happens, moral repugnance came to the help of logical reasoning. Not a few of the members of Parliament were conducting themselves in such a way as to forfeit the respect of all honest men. Against foreign foes, indeed, the commonwealth had been successful. The navy, reorganized by Vane, had cleared the seas of Royalist privateers. Commercial jealousy against the Dutch had mingled with the tide of political ill-feeling. In 1651 the Navigation Act was aimed at the Dutch carrying trade, which had flourished simply because the Dutch vessels were better built, and long experience had enabled them to transport goods from one country to another more cheaply than the merchants of other nations. Henceforth English vessels alone were to be allowed to import goods into England, excepting in the case of vessels belonging to the country in which the goods were produced.

War was the result. In January, 1652, the seizure of Dutch ships began. The two sturdy antagonists were well matched. There were no decisive victories; but, on the whole, the English had the upper hand.

Such a war was expensive. Royalists were forced to compound for their estates, forfeited by their adoption of the king's cause. Even if this measure had been fairly carried out, the attempt to make one part of the nation pay for the expenses of the whole was more likely to create dissension than to heal it. But it was not fairly carried out. Members of Parliament took bribes to let this man and that man off more easily than those who were less able to pay. The effects of unlimited power were daily becoming more manifest.

To be the son or a nephew of one of the holders of authority was a sure passport to the public service. Forms of justice were disregarded, and the nation turned with vexation upon its so-called liberators, whose yoke was as heavy to bear as that which had been shaken off.

Of this dissatisfaction Cromwell made himself the mouthpiece. His remedy for the evil, which both sides dreaded, was not the perpetuation of a Parliament which did not represent the nation, but the establishment of constitutional securities which would limit the powers of a freely elected Parliament. He and his officers proposed that a committee, formed of members of Parliament and officers, should be nominated to deliberate on the requisite securities.

On April 19 he was assured, or believed himself to be assured, by one of the leading members that nothing would be done in a hurry. On the morning of the 20th he was told that Parliament was hurriedly passing its own bill, in defiance of his objections. Going at once to the House, he waited till the decisive question was put to vote. Then he rose. The Parliament, he said, had done well in their pains and care for the public good. But it had been stained with "injustice, delays of justice, self-interest." Then, when a member interrupted him, he blazed up into anger. "Come, come! we have had enough of this. I will put an end to this. It is not fit you should sit here any longer." Calling in his soldiers, he bade them clear the House, following the members with words of obloquy as they were driven out. "What shall we do with this bauble?" he said, taking up the mace. "Take it away." Then, as if feeling the burden of the work which he was doing pressing upon him, he sought to excuse himself, as he had sought to excuse himself after the slaughter of Drogheda. "It is you," he said, "that have forced me to do this. I have sought the Lord night and day that he would rather slay me than put me upon the doing of this work."