

cut so short that he had to climb to the topmost rung, lean his body and his left arm against the rock, and then make copies of the cuneiform signs as best he could. With muscles aching from the strain he doggedly copied the top lines of the tablet: "I am Darius the Great King," on the first line.

The servant below, facing the precipice, poor man, as he held the ladder from inside the angle, trembled not quite so much when he saw the wonderful white man leave the top rung and work in comparative safety.

Rawlinson knew that he had only just begun. The inscriptions overhanging the chasm had still to be copied.

"Master, let well alone! You have copied some," implored the native. "You are seeking death."

"When I am dead," said the Englishman, smiling, "it will be time for you to howl. Get out of the way. I've got to do this alone."

Rawlinson had planned to lay his ladder across the chasm from ledge to ledge. He now found that, shortened as it was, it was not long enough to serve as a bridge across the gulf. The men who were watching below, straining their eyes against the deep blue sky, saw the tiny figure up there moving this way and that, pushing the ladder here and there. Then they held their breath. What was he doing now?

He turned the ladder upon its side and fixed one end of the upper side upon the rock of the ledge on which he was standing, and the other end on a jutting out piece of rock on the other side of the chasm. The ladder fixed like that would just hold.

Rawlinson began the slow journey across, resting his feet between the rungs on the lower side of the ladder and climbing with his hands to the upper side. In and out went his brave feet. How many rungs were there? He did not count. A bird circling above swooped to see this strange sight.

Suddenly there was a crash. The under side of the ladder gave clean away under the man's weight. Henry heard the crack. Before he had time to think, the long slender timber had loosened itself from the rungs and fell smashing down the precipice. He found himself in a second of time with no foothold whatever, hanging with his hands on to a simple bar of wood which might very easily snap at any moment. Below him yawned the death chasm.

Frozen with horror the native who had held the ladder waited for the body to fall. Rawlinson began working back, hand over hand, as if he were dangling from a gymnasium pole. His magnificent strength and flawless courage stood him in good stead. He never told anyone just what it was to hang suspended there, seeing the ledge of safety coming foot by foot nearer. At last he hauled himself on to the tiny platform and was glad to crouch a minute, trembling in reaction, thankful to feel the solid rock at his side and under his feet.

After that Rawlinson went a little more cautiously. At his next attempt he got two ladders, first testing them, laid one across the gulf and stood the other upright on it, climbed it, and copied the tablets.

To far-away England the news of this wonder presently came. Here was the tale of Darius set down in three languages, opening up a way of knowledge into the far past of Persia.

"I am Darius the Great King."

For the first time for two thousand five hundred years human eyes had read those words.

Of the ruler's greatness we think little. In Time's perspective he seems small, smaller than brave Henry Rawlinson seemed, clinging like a fly to the rock. But we are glad of his story; it is another piece set in its place in the great jig-saw puzzle of the Past.—From *The Children's Pictorial*.

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## Milton--A Typical Puritan

W. CLARK SANDERCOCK

### PART II.

#### Artillery of Words

Yes, this was Milton's method. Hear how he wages war on the Presbyterians, who, though they were first to take arms against the King, veered round at a later stage to a kind of sympathy with him. "I doubt not to affirm that the Presbyterians, who now so much condemn deposing, were the men themselves that deposed the King, and cannot, with all their shifting and relapsing wash off the guiltiness from their hands. Have they not utterly broke their oath of allegiance? Have they not abjured the oath of supremacy? And have not these things in plain terms unkinged the King much more than hath their seven years' war; not deposed him only, but outlawed him and defied him as an alien, a rebel to the law, and an enemy to the state? Have they not hunted and pursued him round about the kingdom with fire and sword? Besieged him, and to their power forbid him water and fire save what they shot against him to the hazard of his life? And now, after cursing him almost in all the sermons, prayers and fulminations that have been uttered this seven years by those cloven tongues of falsehood and dissension, now, to the stirring-up of new discord, they acquit him, absolve him, unconfound him, though unconverted, unrepentant, insensible of all their precious saints and martyrs whose blood they have so often laid upon his head, giving the most approbious lie to all the acted zeal that for these many years hath fed fat upon the foolish people."

As the great French critic, Taine, says: "Milton was not born for happiness but for conflict." The sternness of the Puritan mind could scarcely know what happiness meant. The word suggests to us a kind of jubilant tranquility. In place of this the Puritan felt a kind of frenzy. He could hardly distinguish war and worship. He went into battle singing psalms. In his prayer meetings he continually denounced his enemies, like the soldier-psalmist, King David.

The average Puritan was not a practical man. He lived too much in the clouds, so to speak, to have a true grasp of worldly affairs. When the New World was discovered the appeal to people's imagination was intense. All kinds of wonders, there, were dreamed of. It seemed as if every kind of social, political and moral ill might be redressed by exploring the resources of the Americas. But that was a hundred and fifty years ago, and those hopes had not been fulfilled. A deep disappointment took hold of most men. The Puritan was one group of men who turned for comfort to an intense spirituality. He over-estimated his disappointment, and went to the other extreme. Since man is partly body and partly spirit, a well-proportioned mixture of worldliness and spirituality is necessary for the best character. Worldliness is not all wickedness, only the fanatic thinks so. And the Puritan was a fanatic. He was tactless, fiercely combative, possessed of but one remedy for all ills.

#### The Battle of the Bulls

For Milton the greatest conflict was yet to come. He had had very little to do with the events that led to the death of Charles. Those questions were arbitrated by the sword whose din outclasses the voice of the prophet. But now the sword was sheathed, though the issue was still debated. Milton's defence of the execution of Charles called forth a new champion for the Royalist cause from over the water. This was a professor in a Dutch university, Salmasius, a man of enormous reading but no judgment. It was young Charles who employed Salmasius, but

the chief reason the Long Parliament had in asking Milton to reply was to vindicate their position in the eyes of Europe. Before long the genius of Cromwell for statecraft and foreign politics was to win respect for the young republic on a different basis, but now it would never do to be impeached for treason, murder, regicide, and not reply. How we wish Milton had had less rage and more dignity in this debate. It would have reflected dignity on the nation, and the corresponding disadvantage in its foreign critics. There was but little logic in either debater. All their efforts were bent on tripping each other up. All their energies spent in calling each other names. "A puppy, once my pretty little man, now bear eyed; having never had any mental vision, he has now lost his bodily sight; a silly coxcomb, fancying himself a beauty; should be hanged and have his head set on the Tower of London." So wrote Salmasius about Milton. And Milton's reply "amounts to calling Salmasius fool and knave through a couple of hundred pages, till the exaggeration of the style altogether defeats his purpose." Hobbes says the two books were like two declamations, for and against, made by one and the same man merely for exercise. And Taine says we fancy we are listening to the bellowing of two bulls.

#### Myopia

The short sight of Milton comes out here in the firm conviction which he held that the reputation of the Commonwealth was at stake, and that he was saving it. He felt that it was a duty, a responsibility, a sacred trust, and though the work would no doubt drive him blind, yet he must do it. Fanatical zeal. Mental blindness. He should have known that the temper of the nation was changing. He should have known that almost everybody wished Charles were home. But he didn't. He continued to blow with his breath and imagine he was making a great wind, while he did not realize that in reality a hurricane was blowing in an entirely different direction. Charles was coming, and everybody except the most active Puritans was ready to welcome him. Milton did not believe he was returning. Even at the last moment he wrote and published a tract showing a Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth. Nobody paid any attention to it. Indeed, we may safely say that Milton's influence upon the current of politics during those years when he wrote was absolutely nothing. If he had not written his great poem, "Paradise Lost," we should have forgotten him today as we have forgotten many another man who wrote fiery stuff and tried to burn up his enemies with it.

#### The Gold in the Dross

I fear this paper thus far has depicted the Puritan Age in too dark colors. Surely underneath all this mistaken zeal there was something of permanent worth. For the Puritan was still an Englishman, and the Englishman is too steady ever to act entirely out of his character. And indeed there were elements in this struggle that were valuable and true. In all these stormy sixteen years there never was an hour of mob-rule. Such things are possible in France and Portugal, but not in England. Tyrants may be removed by anarchism in other lands, but the love of order sits very near to the heart of the Englishman. So when the monarchy fell, a genuine earnest attempt was made to found something substantial and well adjusted on the old site. We admire this spirit. We admire the earnestness of these reformers. We admire their grand disdain of their enemies, their confidence in