

severely censured. The condition of the country at the time, however, should not be forgotten. The Roman Catholics had broken out into rebellion, and upwards of two thousand persons fell victims to their frenzy. The atrocities committed were something without a parallel in history. By their frightful crimes, the people forfeited all claims to mercy. And terrible was the punishment meted out to them. The wretched peasants were made to feel the iron heel of the conqueror upon their necks. They had "sown the wind, and reaped the whirlwind." In the light of these facts, surely no fair minded person can judge the punishment greater than merited.

A favorite charge made against Cromwell is that he was a scheming, ambitious man. How did he act when fully established in his office of Protector, supported by a powerful army of his own training, ready to do his bidding at the shortest notice? Did he seek to increase his power, and satisfy his love of military glory, by embroiling the nation in foreign wars? On the contrary; he sought to promote peace by every means in his power. But, he never purchased it at the expense of the rights of English subjects. Peace and prosperity for England was his policy until the day of his death. As for other nations, he had no desire to interfere with them, except when they interfered with England, or the rights of England's subjects. And never before was the name of Britain so respected. Spain, the great champion of Catholicism, was made to realize, at the mouth of British cannon, that Protestantism now had a defender with a strong arm. The King of France, too, had such hearty respect for the messages sent him by the Lord Protector, that he was fain to give religious liberty to his Protestant subjects. Does all this look as if Cromwell was working simply for his own advancement? It is said that fear alone restrained him from taking the name of king—that this man who had beaten the cavaliers of Charles on their own ground, mercilessly lashed Ireland into obedience, and laid low the power of Scotland at one blow, was afraid to take the name of king, while exercising all the authority of one!

No, establishing a royal line was not Cromwell's purpose. His whole desire was for England's good, and for her he worked with all his strength. It was this very desire of his, to see England prosper, that led him to sanction the death of the king. Events had proved conclusively that Charles was not to be relied upon. Time after time, he had shown himself utterly void of uprightness. He himself taught his people, by many bitter lessons, that they should not trust him. And though it is to be deplored that he should have been condemned to death after a mock trial in which there was not the slightest semblance of justice, yet, it cannot be denied that it was expedient for the king to perish. The times compelled something desperate to be done. Charles, by his own acts, pushed his death upon the people. They either had to take their monarch's life, or suffer the whole king-

dom to be murdered by most tyrannous measures. They decided for one to suffer rather than many, and, in the light of subsequent events, we cannot say they decided wrongly.

Again, in politics Cromwell is accused of making matters subscribe his own interests. In the affair of the Self-Denying Ordinance, he was exempted from its application. But that, certainly, proves nothing disparaging to him. It is simply a clear evidence that he was regarded as the most capable man in the kingdom. In his great act of usurpation, when he seized the power by dissolving Long Parliament, his enemies profess to see proof conclusive that all his speeches and acts in defence of liberty were but hollow shams. Remember, however, that the Long Parliament dissolved by Cromwell, was not what it was when first assembled. No Pym nor Hampden graced its councils. Its great spirits were gone, and none but inferior ones had succeeded them. Hallam, who seldom, if ever, judges wrongly, says, "It may be said I think, with no greater severity than truth, that scarce two or three public acts of justice, humanity, or generosity, and very few of political wisdom or courage, are recorded by them, from their quarrel with the king, to their expulsion by Cromwell." It is necessary to bear this in mind. For these very men were even then hurrying a bill through Parliament, providing for their own perpetuity in office. Cromwell saw this, and knowing that they were not capable of governing the affairs of the kingdom, prevented them from accomplishing their purpose. As has been said, it was simply "the usurpation of capability against incapability." He well knew himself to be the only man who in those perilous times could guide aright "the ship of state," and he did not shirk the duty imposed upon him by Providence.

To any one looking at Cromwell in the light of history, and judging him as influenced by the times in which he lived, there can come but one estimate of his character. Whether we look at him through his public or private life, through his speeches or through his letters, we see him always the same man, influenced by but one purpose, and that to do his duty whatever men might think. And the terrible earnestness with which he strove to do his work told upon him. Being but mortal, restless days and sleepless nights worked their effects. The messenger of Death came to him and took him; came to him and found him planning for the good of his beloved England; came to him and found him perfectly willing to go and be with his Master, for whose cause he had so valiantly fought in life. To him, England owes much of the freedom she now enjoys. He laid a broad and firm foundation for true liberty. And so, whether he is blamed or praised, matters not. The object of his life was to preserve inviolate the privileges of the English people, and in its accomplishment, he built for himself a fame and glory which will not fade as long as the name of England lasts.