

neath these was a temper hard as steel, a nature purely intellectual, the strongest type of reason untouched by the least spark of delusive imagination. Her vanity and caprice found no place with her in state affairs. The coquette of the presence chamber became the hardest and coolest of politicians at the council board, and, luxurious and pleasure-loving as she seemed, she lived frugally and worked hard. Her expenditure was very moderate, and, contrary to what is often said, she saved not so much to lavish upon herself as to provide for state emergencies and to be able to succor those in exile and distress.

Moreover in tracking Elizabeth through all the mazes of falsehood, duplicity and intrigue we must not lose sight of her unquestionable greatness and real worth. Her sagacity and unerring judgment are seen in the choice of her ministers. None of our sovereigns ever had such a group of advisers. Her council board was a grand constellation of mind and intellect, and the wisdom which is seen in the choice of Cecil, Bacon and Walsingham is seen in every selection of all departments of state. However, great and intellectual as were her councillors, she was the tool of none; she would listen, she would weigh, and query in every direction, but she would put aside what did not please her, and adopt only what her judgment commended, so that her policy was mainly her own, and her's was a policy throughout, temperate, moderate and simple. The grasping schemes of ambition which have been the ruin of so many states and princes she steadily refused; she was resolute in her refusal of the low countries; she put aside with a laugh the offer of the Protestants to make her head of their religion and mistress of the seas. Her great and signal success in the end sprang mainly from this limitation of purpose.

She has sometimes been accused of hesitancy, but this was broken at times by sudden emergencies, that proved it was not one of weakness. She could wait, but she could also strike; she could be pliant, but she could also be firm. Indeed she ever pursued her purpose with an uncompromising steadfastness and singular tenacity of mind. "This woman," said Phillip's envoy, after a wasted effort to turn her, "is possessed of a hundred thousand devils." He made a great mistake. Elizabeth was not possessed, but she was great and had baffled him; he could not cope with her, and he was vexed. Her apparent hesitancy was perhaps more a want of candor. She lived in an age of lying, when religious teachers of high standing had made the abominable maxim "end justified the means" very general; and, though we make no attempt to excuse or apologize for her shameless mendacity, we cannot but call to mind that in this unenviable notoriety she had many and great rivals, some of whom claimed to be the highest examples in morality and religion. Her excuse was that it gained time, and every year gained was an increase of strength. Of political wisdom in its larger and more generous sense she had none, but her tact was unerring. Her notion of statesmanship was to watch how things turned out about her and make the most of them as they passed. She had an aversion to war. "No war, my lords, no war," she would cry, if the subject was but mooted at the council board; but, great as was her aversion to war, it sprang less from aversion to blood and expense, real as was her aversion to both, than from another motive. Peace left the field open to diplomatic manoeuvres at which Elizabeth was an adept; to mystify was delight, and she took pleasure in the reflection that, for near fifty years, she had outwitted every statesman of Europe.

But her greatness is best seen in her boundless power over her people. For fifty years nearly she was regarded as the "*Virgin Protestant Queen*," and this bright ideal was never dimmed to the last. She commanded a passion of love, a loyalty of fervid admiration, extending in a measure to