

almost a century.

Upon the subversion of monarchy the centre of power was a Council of State. After the appointment of a committee for foreign affairs Milton was chosen Latin Secretary. The duties properly belonging to this office were not arduous; but Milton's scholarship and patriotism imposed upon him more difficult engagements. The number of foreign dispatches was small, and the letters of the Parliament and Protectors averaged only fourteen per year. Remembering the poet's boasted high intentions in a nobler sphere, some have reproached him for accepting such a position; but is it not to the poet's honor that with such a lofty ambition he could turn aside at the call of the oppressed, and spend eleven years within official walls? Politics meant to him the interests of the faithful nation to which he belonged, it meant the happiness and well-being of humanity; so that he did not consider that his poetical ambition exempted him from using his power against those who ruthlessly trampled on human freedom and destroyed the tranquility of three kingdoms.

The excellent domestic qualities of Charles I. and the nature of the kingly office had served to turn the attention of many from the king's public severity and unfaithfulness; and on this account there was demanded a vindication of the bloody act enacted in front of Whitehall Palace. Pursuant to the wish of the government, Milton prepared his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, wherein the arguments, as far as they relate to royalty, are directed against tyrannical rulers, and not against kings, as such. If the power entrusted to sovereignty were used with a view to the best interests of subjects, then there could be no stronger advocate for the rights of the king to be cherished and obeyed than this very man who has been called a regicide. His doctrine was that justice is no respecter of persons, and it should follow the king as well as the subject; so that if the former disregarded the right by which

he ruled, and were guilty of rapine, perfidy, and violence, he should be arraigned before its impartial bar and have meted out to him such punishment as his offences deserved. In the private excellencies of the king, Mr. Macaulay sees but poor compensation for his flagrant public wrongs; and while he disapproves of the execution of Charles, he finds ample ground upon which not only to justify the course pursued by Milton after the act had been committed, but he feels himself called upon to *applaud* that course.

The reactionary feeling consequent on beheading the sovereign found expression in a volume fraudulently purporting to be from the king's own hand, and aiming to awaken that sympathy which would produce resentment of what the Royalists called the Martyrdom of their beloved Ruler. The Republicans felt that a reply to this was imperatively demanded; and the task was entrusted to Milton who energetically exposed its falsehoods and sophistries.

The profligate Prince of Wales, wishing to vindicate his father's memory, and also clear the way for his own promotion to the English throne, secured the services of a learned Professor at Leyden on behalf of his cause. Salmasius' *Defensio Regia* was followed by Milton's *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*,—the former endeavoring to show that the sovereign power rests with the king naturally and by right, and that he is responsible to God alone; the latter holding to the original and unlimited sovereignty of the people. Milton was acknowledged victor; and out of wounded vanity at defeat his antagonist is said to have sought a secluded spot and prematurely died. There is one element of this much applauded defense, however, which all are agreed in pronouncing a decided blemish; and that is, the discourteous and abusive manner in which Milton treats Salmasius. Some degree of palliation is found, perhaps, in the fact that the times fostered this spirit, and that with many, contumely would have more weight than solid argument and