

gentlemanly bearing; but it must be admitted that little is gained for any good cause, even at the time, by the use of ignoble means, and eventually it proves injurious to the party and stands to the discredit of its champion. In this famous controversy the combatants are ostensibly contending as the representatives of royalty and republicanism; but the interests at stake are often hidden by gross personalities. Possibly great men find too many apologists for their crooked ways.

At length the fondest hopes of the Commonwealth began to fade. Richard had not his father's skill to hold together the heterogeneous elements; and ere long Charles II. was called to the throne amid unprecedented pomp. To Milton the forebodings of renewed kingship gave much disquietude, and with a faint hope that even at the eleventh hour the threatened restoration might be prevented, he again took up his pen and warned his fellow-countrymen against receiving the yoke of bondage which he said was being prepared for them. As one writer remarks, "This treatise is sadly grand and its eloquence is full of tears." The second edition was overtaken by the Restoration, and the Latin Secretaryship was at an end.

Some have expressed deep regrets that John Milton should ever have spent those precious years in writing official dispatches and engaging in political squabbles. They consider that his transcendent powers lay dormant during the best portion of his life, whilst the duties of his office could have been discharged by one vastly inferior. They say we might have had another such poem as the *Paradise Lost* if this sublimest of men had not been drawn from the muse's bower. But after all there may be little occasion for these regrets. The poet had received a University training, he had spent five years of retirement in close study of classical literature, he had reaped the advantages of continental travel—all uniting to fit him for the work he purposed performing in the sphere of letters; but he had

not mingled with men and gained those experiences which alone could enable him to clothe his poem with human sympathies. He had lived largely in an ideal region; and although his former habit of seclusion remained by him after his appointment to public service, he was subjected to the buffetings of his opponents, and was compelled to look out upon what was real and make a study of it. And in attempting to state for what portions of the *Paradise Lost* we are indebted to this political period of the poet's history, or what other portions received their coloring from the experiences of that time, one would be more likely to fall below than to overstate the truth. Then this episode of Milton's life was far from being a loss if we leave out of sight the fact that it was an essential part of his training. True it is that he had seen the failure of the hope which brightened the early days of the Commonwealth, that he had received the opprobrium of many, and that he became blind before his state labors closed; but while his efforts seemed at the time to have fallen to the ground, yet they were as seeds which sprang up again under more favorable conditions. Those principles of civil and religious liberty which form the very soul of his prose works have not been disseminated within any narrow area, but have found their way to distant nations and wrought a salutary influence wherever they have gone. "It is to be regretted," says Macaulay, "that the prose writings of Milton should in our time be so little read." In these tractates there is discernible the same sublimity as stands forth upon the pages of his immortal epic.

After twenty years of civil service—the best years of his life,—now old and poor and blind, Milton still retains the ambition of earlier days. The fire so long pent up, and no doubt with difficulty repressed a thousand times amid irritating occupations, now bursts forth, and his *great* life-work begins. He emerges from the political corruptions and intrigues with "unsullied imagination and uncontaminated morals,"