THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC IDEAS IN THE PURITAN ARMY IN 1647.

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During the early decades of the seventeenth century two tendencies were silently advancing to power over the minds of English-speaking men: one was towards religious, the other towards political, life. These two tendencies, for all practical purposes, acted together and the religious took the lead. Indeed, the political had its origin in the religious, and their united action produced what we call "Puritanism." The movement began in the protest of a loyal and religious people against the absolutism of the priest in the Church; but the priest was supported by the king who practised a parallel absolutism in the State, and the religious tendency was driven to pitch its tents outside of all existing ecclesiastical institutions. Here it organized little congregations of worshipers, independent of each other, each choosing its own lecturer or minister, electing its own officers and making rules for the government of its own body. Under the existing conditions in both Church and State the peace could not be kept, and when war came the progressive spirit found the freest field of development in the army it had created.

One of the most remarkable things in English history is the evolution of the Puritan Army after the Civil War had dragged on for two years and a half. This army, called by its friends the "New Model," by its enemies the "New Noddle," was organized by Sir Thomas Fairfax at Windsor during the early months of 1645. The history of armies is made up of marches, sieges and battles, and

no one would think of speaking of their politics or religion. But the New Model was a peculiar army. It had enough of marches, sieges and battles to make a splendid story. During its first campaign, which extended over thirteen months and a half, it marched near a thousand miles, took thirty-six strongholds and cities, stormed nine fortified houses and towns, and fought seven battles, and Naseby was among them. It captured 1,007 pieces of ordnance, 45,000 stands of arms and 13,125 prisoners. (Sprigg's *Anglia Rediviva*). Brilliant as this record is, perhaps a record unsurpassed in the annals of war, the history of the New Model would be wretchedly incomplete without an account of its politics and religion. Indeed, so important a place did these occupy in its story that to leave them out would be like playing Hamlet without the prince in "inky cloak."

The object aimed at in the organization of the New Model was to create a Puritan chivalry that could beat the Cavaliers in battle. The idea had been developed in a small way in the Sixty-seventh Troop of Horse, attached for a time to the army of the Earl of Essex. This little body of sixty men had increased since the battle of Edgehill (Oct. 23, 1642), to a regiment of fourteen troops of eighty men each, and their captain had become Colonel Cromwell. At Grantham, May 13, 1643, they met a force of three times their number and scattered them like chaff before the wind; at Gainsborough, on the 30th of August, they won a victory in the presence of an army five times their own number; at Marston Moor, July 2, 1644, their superb mount, their splendid physique, the spirit that was in them, the discipline that was over them, which enabled their commander to reorganize them "in the red blaze of battle," not only broke but destroyed the power of the Cavaliers under Rupert himself.

The New Model was a small army, as we reckon armies, of about twenty-one thousand men; but the ranks, espec-

ially of the horse which composed about one-third of the army, were filled with what in those days were called "godly men." Perhaps Cromwell's description of them will give us a better idea: "Men of a spirit that is likely to go as far as any gentleman will go." (Lomas's edition of Carlyle's "Cromwell," III., 65). In the organization of the Ironsides we find a decided break with the spirit of the seventeenth century and a strong tendency towards modern democratic thought and feeling. These men felt that by becoming soldiers they did not cease to be citizens. They disdained the name of "common soldier" and introduced the phrase "private soldier" into our language. As few men of "honor and birth" volunteered at first, they were obliged to select their officers from the ranks, and this made them the butt for the scorn and ridicule of both Cavaliers and Presbyterians. Cromwell wrote to the Committee of the Eastern Association at Cambridge in reply to some criticism: "Gentlemen, may be it provokes some spirits to see plain men made captains of horse; it had been well that men of honor and birth had entered into these employments. But why do they not appear? Who would hinder them? But seeing it is necessary the work must go on, better plain men than none, but best to have men patient of want, faithful and conscientious in the employments." (Lomas's "Carlyle," I., 161). At another time he expressed himself with great clearness: "I rather have a plain russet-coated captain who knows what he fights for and loves what he knows than that you call a gentleman and is nothing else." (Lomas's "Carlyle," I., 154).

In the organization of the New Model many of these "russet-coated captains" were promoted. Both in the infantry and in the cavalry, education, ability and courage were sure of promotion. The star was put on the brave man's breast without regard to his calling in life or his father's position. Thus William Allen rose from the

ranks to be adjutant-general of horse in the Irish army, and Edward Sexby to the command of a regiment of foot. (Firth's "Cromwell's Army," 41.) Soon we shall see private soldiers taking part with the officers in discussions, not only in regard to the grievances of the army, but in regard to its movements, and acting on important committees for drafting papers and in presenting them at Westminster. The committee to present to Parliament (July 16, 1647), the impeachment of the eleven members was composed of four colonels, two lieutenant-colonels, four captains and two soldiers. (Clarke Papers, I., 151.) The committee appointed by Fairfax to examine and report to the Council of the Army on the "Heads of Proposals," as presented by Ireton, consisted of twelve officers, of all ranks, and twelve soldiers, and Lieutenant-General Cromwell was to attend when his duties would permit. (Clarke Papers, I., 216.)

The celebrated self-denying ordinance, which made it incumbent upon all members of Parliament who held commissions in the army to resign within forty days, was aimed at Cromwell; but it transferred the power from the peace party to the war party, from politicians to soldiers, and removed the aristocratic element from the army by compelling the lords who held many of the high offices in the army to resign. Yet rank and social position were not wanting in the Puritan army. Of the thirty-seven generals and colonels, nine were sons of noble families, twenty-one were commoners of good families, and only seven were not sons of gentlemen. (Markham's "Fairfax," 199.) But among the men of noble and gentle blood, among the Montagues, Pickerings, Sidneys and Sheffields and Fairfaxes were officers like Ewer, who had been a serving man, Okey, who had been a drayman, Hewson, who was a cobbler, Rainsborough, who had been "a skipper at sea," and Pride, who was said to have been a foundling. The under officers were for the most

part tradesmen, brewers, tailors, goldsmiths, shoemakers, and the like. The men who first wore, as the soldiers of the New Model did, "the red-coat," or, as it is called today, the "red rag," so dear to the heart of the English soldier for now two centuries and a half, soon found that courage and competency were sure of promotion. (Gardner: "English Historical Review," July, 1899, 571.)

In this army was utilized the great democratic element in human nature,—the element that brings all men up to a high standard and puts them on a level there,—the element of religion. This element was introduced into the army by the captain of the Sixty-seventh Troop of Horse. Andrew Marvell truly sings in his "Poem on the Death of the late Lord Protector":—

"He first put arms into Religion's hand,
And timorous conscience unto courage manned;
The soldier taught that inward mail to wear,
And fearing God, how they should nothing fear;
'Those strokes,' he said, 'will pierce through all below,
Where those that strike from Heaven fetch their blow.'"

In one sense, the New Model was a national, in that it was a patriotic, army. It was the first English army that took no notice of the counties, but looked upon England as one country. But in another and very important sense it was not a national army, for it was not drawn from all parties in the State, nor all sects in religion, but it was made up principally of one political party and one sect in religion, marshalled under one name, "Independency." The Independents were the vanguard of the two great tendencies of which I spoke at the beginning. They were already familiar with democratic principles in the government of the Church, and had been taught by their Calvinism that "the individual was to consider himself as in some special sense the instrument of some great purpose of God." This made it very easy to step across the line that divides the Church from the State.

Indeed, there was nothing else to do, for the legitimate result of a "Church Democracy" is a "State Democracy."

The idea of religious liberty had a stronger hold upon the Puritans, and especially the Independents, and developed faster than the idea of political liberty. The animosity of the Puritans was not directed at first against the king, but against the bishops. It was a proverb among them, if anything went wrong or turned out badly, to say, "The Bishop's foot has been in it." They remembered that the Scriptures had not one good word to say for a dog, and, true to their allegiance to Holy Writ, if a Puritan had a spotted dog he was very sure to name him "Bishop," and many a cur in England in those days bore the august name of some high official position in the Church. They were, however, very careful to make it clear that "no bishops" did not mean "no king."

But soon after the first civil war, the New Model, which was essentially an army of Bible readers and prayer meetings, became an army of political discussion, and prayer meetings of almost interminable length were held to ascertain the Lord's mind and will on questions of reorganizing the State; and a religious reformation became a political revolution, and soon men were not wanting who would bring the king to trial, and, if found guilty, would cut his head off with the crown on it.

The causes that brought about this radical change of opinion are apparent. Charles the First was not without responsibility for his own execution, but schism between the two parties into which Puritanism was divided, the Presbyterian and the Independent, greatly accelerated the movement.

English Presbyterianism drew its inspiration from Scotland: English Independency from the Puritan exiles in New England, and it had much to say of the "New England way." The Presbyterians were strongly attached to the monarchy as it was, and will by-and-by unite with

the Royalists and bring in Charles the Second. The Independents entertained hospitable feelings toward some fundamental republican ideas, but were willing to accept a constitutional monarchy, and in the beginning thought of nothing else. There was a striking difference between the two parties in regard to toleration. Toleration is democracy in religion. A tolerant man fulfills Lowell's definition of democracy, which is, not "I am as good as you are," but "You are as good as I am." But to the Presbyterian, "toleration was the Devil's masterpiece." The Independent took little or no notice of the opinions of others so long as they did not interfere with his enjoyment of his own. The Presbyterians were strong in the House of Commons, but weak in the army; the Independents were weak in the Commons, but strong in the army.

The first civil war ended with the surrender of Oxford to the New Model under Fairfax, in June, 1646. The king, however, had escaped from Oxford and surrendered himself to the Scots, who had a large army in the north of England. But, on the payment of an indemnity of 400,000 pounds, one-half in hand, the Scots withdrew beyond the border and left the king in the hands of a commission appointed by Parliament to receive him. The field was now clear, and the antagonism between the two parties into which Puritanism was divided, the Presbyterian and the Independent, came to the front at once. It was really a quarrel between Parliament and the army. The fundamental ideas of each were soon developed: Parliament sought to establish its own supremacy, and, as the representative of the nation, to force upon it a Presbyterian state church; the idea of the army was to establish the rights of Englishmen, by limiting the power both of the king and Parliament, and if there was a state church, no one should be obliged to attend it.

The year 1647 is ever memorable in the political history

of England, for it is here that we find "the cradle of modern political revolution." To disband the New Model was the subject uppermost in the minds of the Presbyterian leaders in Parliament. This could have been accomplished without friction by men who appreciated the work of the soldier and were willing to give him protection and justice when he had laid down his arms; but the Presbyterian majority took a course which led to the rapid development of democratic ideas in a soil already prepared for their growth. It is very dangerous business to trample on the rights of an English-speaking man's conscience, and try to rob his pocket at the same time. He is very like to think about that penny, and auguring misgovernment while it is yet in the distance, take measures to prevent its coming.

On the 6th of March, the Presbyterians began their attack on the New Model by attempting to oust Fairfax from the command, but their forces broke. Two days later they aimed a blow at Cromwell with better success, and voted that there should be no officers in the army, with the exception of Fairfax, above the rank of colonel. Not content with this, they voted that all the officers and soldiers should take the covenant, and then passed the outrageous ordinance that all the officers should subscribe to the Presbyterian form of church government. They ordered the New Model to be reorganized, appointing a new set of officers, dropping many Independents and putting Presbyterians in their places. They attempted to organize an army out of the New Model for the conquest of Ireland, and, ignoring Fairfax and Cromwell, appointed Skippon and Massey to the command, and then made a bold attempt to cheat the soldiers out of their just dues.

These measures created great excitement at Saffron Walden in Essex, where the bulk of the New Model were quartered. The question of back pay, protection against the malice of royalists when they had laid down their

arms, and a rigid system of intolerance imposed upon the country, began to agitate their minds. The soldiers prepared a mammoth petition, couched in high language; but it was toned down by the officers, and sent to Fairfax and not to Parliament. The petition was very moderate in its demands and respectful in its tone, and may be summarized as follows: 1st, the payment of arrears; 2d, an act of indemnity; 3d, that those who had volunteered be exempted from impressment in future wars; 4th, that widows and orphans of soldiers killed in the service might receive pensions; 5th, that those who had suffered in the cause might be compensated for their losses; and, finally, to use their own words, "that, till the army be disbanded, some course might be taken to supply the soldiers with money, that they may not be beholden to Parliament's enemies, burdensome to its friends, or oppressive to the country." ("Old Parliamentary History," XV., 342-344.)

A copy of the petition, "unseasonably possessed," as the officers afterwards said, was presented by the commissioners to Parliament, with an account of the petition of the soldiers, and produced a storm of indignation; and at the instigation of Denzil Holles, a declaration was passed, condemning the petition, as tending to put the army in a distemper and mutiny, and declaring that those who continued to promote it should be proceeded against as enemies of the State and disturbers of the public peace.

On the 27th of April, Parliament voted to disband the army with six weeks' pay of arrears. But before night a paper was presented to the Commons, entitled, "A Vindication of the Army: A humble Petition of the Officers of the Army under the command of his Excellency, Sir Thomas Fairfax, on behalf of themselves and the Soldiers of the Army."

The petition begins by expressing in very proper language the sorrow of the soldiers at "the hard thoughts

and expressions of Parliament," and also at "the alienation of its affections from its ever trusty and obedient army," and declares that "our late petition was not in the least from distemper, and aimed in no measure at mutiny, nor in anywise to put conditions on Parliament," but that it "was no more than necessity prompted," and that they "knew not anything more essential to freedom than the liberty of petition." In support of their right in this, they cited the Declaration of the 2d of April, 1642, wherein "Parliament bound itself to receive the petitions of the people," and they express the hope, that "by becoming soldiers we have not lost the capacities of subjects, nor divested ourselves thereby of our interest in the Commonwealth, nor that, in purchasing the freedom of our brethren, we have lost our own." But it may be said, "We have arms in our hands." They then instance the cases of the soldiers in the armies of the Earl of Essex and of Sir William Waller, who petitioned Parliament and received the thanks of "your honorable body," and, "We hope therefore we shall not be considered as without the pale of the kingdom, excluded from the fundamental privilege of the subject." They then remind Parliament that the petition had the approbation and mediation of his Excellency, "our ever honored General." After answering the various objections to the petition, they asked in conclusion for the "liberty of petitioning in what concerns us now as soldiers and afterwards as members of the Commonwealth, and as the sense of some expressions, as those found in the recent Declaration of Parliament, is irksome to us, who have ventured whatsoever we esteem dear to us in this world for the preservation of your freedom and privileges, we earnestly implore your justice in vindication of us." This was signed by one hundred and fifty officers.

The Commons postponed the consideration of the petition until the 30th, but when the 30th came they had

business of ominous import on their hands. While the officers had been preparing their petition, the soldiers had not been idle. They had organized themselves for united action. The horse took the lead. Each troop elected two men to represent the troop at a meeting of the representatives of all the troops of the regiment, and these elected two men to represent them at a meeting of all the representatives of all the regiments. These representatives were called "Agitators." The word did not then carry the sinister meaning that it does now, but simply meant "agent." When it was desirable to ascertain the opinion of the army upon any point, the Agitators passed through the troop and interviewed every man personally, and reported the result at a meeting of the Agitators of the regiment.

The first result of this new organization was a unanimous vote on this significant sentence: "We must stand by our officers; they have stood by us." The second was to have a decided effect upon the destinies of the army. The petition of the officers was followed to London by a letter from the soldiers to their generals, Fairfax, Skippon and Cromwell. It was not written in modern diplomatic form, but in what Cromwell called "the soldier's dialect." It was an appeal to their generals, and strikingly illustrates the relations of trust and confidence that existed between the soldier and the general. But it contained some very caustic phrases pointing to men in power at Westminster. General Skippon laid the letter before the House on the 30th, and it caused a storm of indignation and the three messengers were ordered to the bar. But it was evident at once that a new spirit had taken possession of "plain men." The three troopers in buff and steel faced their angry masters with provoking coolness. There was nothing apologetic in their manner or tone; they were civil, but not overawed in that august presence. When asked to explain certain phrases, they replied:

"If it pleased this Honourable House to putt the queries in writing the eight regiments whereof I am a member whose joynt act it was will give an answer to them." ("Clarke Papers," I., 431.) The Commons were thoroughly frightened. Denzil Holles tells us "the House flatted."

A commission was appointed, consisting of Skippon, Cromwell, Ireton and Fleetwood, who were members of the House and also officers in the army, to repair to Saffron Walden at once and ascertain the cause of the discontent. On arriving at headquarters the commission took advantage of the new organization which had now extended to the whole army. The Agitators passed through each troop, interviewed every man, collected and tabulated the grievances, and reported to the officers those about which there was unanimity among the soldiers. A report was then made to the Commission from each regiment.

On Sunday afternoon, May 16th, at a meeting of the officers and the Agitators in the church at Saffron Walden, the additional votes of Parliament were read, giving eight weeks' back pay instead of six, providing an act of indemnity, and promising securities for the arrears. Skippon asked Cromwell to speak. This speech has been hidden away among the "Clarke Papers" for two hundred and fifty years, and has only recently been brought to light, and shows that Cromwell did not say one thing in Parliament and another in the army, but, notwithstanding his sympathies for the soldiers, he stood firm at this time for the authority of Parliament. "Truly, Gentlemen," said Cromwell in closing his speech, "it will be very fitt for you to have a very great care in the making the best use and improvement that you can both of the votes and of this that hath been last told you, and of the interest which all of you or any of you may have in your severall respective regiments, namely, to worke in them a good opinion of that authority that is over both us and them.

If that authoritie falls to nothing, nothing can followe but confusion. You have hitherto fought to maintaine that duty, and truly as you have vouchsafed your hands in defending that, soe [vouchsafe] now to express your industry and interest to preserve it, and therefore I have nothing more to say to you. I shall desire that you will be pleased to lay this to heart that I have said." ("Clarke Papers," I., 72.)

The officers drew up a declaration, and two of the commissioners were recalled to make a report. Cromwell presented an elaborate report, and said that he believed the army would disband at the command of Parliament, but they would by no means hear of going to Ireland.

But during his absence great changes had taken place at Westminster. Cromwell was not a man to be deceived. He found that the Presbyterians had been plotting with the Royalists, and were interested in a scheme to bring Prince Charles over from France, put him at the head of a Scottish army to invade England, and, with the strong support of the city of London, restore the king to the throne without any conditions, except that he would establish the Presbyterian church government for three years; and his own report encouraged them to strike the fatal blow. They voted at once to scatter the army and disband it, regiment by regiment, at different times and places, and to begin with Fairfax's regiment of foot on the 1st of June. At that time the pay of Fairfax's regiment of horse, Cromwell's old Ironsides, was thirteen months in arrears. In other words, Parliament owed each trooper £36 8s, and proposed to pay him £5 12s; or to put it into our money today, Parliament owed each trooper about $630, and proposed to pay him about $99.

The time had now come when Cromwell must choose between the Parliament and the army, and he cast his lot with the army. By one bold move he threw his enemies into confusion and ruined all their plans. He saw that

the king was the centre round which all things moved, and, without the knowledge of the General, he gave orders to George Joyce—once a tailor in London, now a cornet in Fairfax's regiment—to go to Oxford and secure the artillery and then with five hundred picked troopers to proceed to the Holdenby House and see to it that the king was not carried off to London. This was Cromwell's original order; but Joyce got frightened, and started with his royal captive for the army.

The soldiers were angered beyond endurance when they heard of the disbanding measures, but the Agitators were on the alert, called a council of war, and petitioned Fairfax to order a general rendezvous, that the soldiers might have an opportunity to advise together. It was a very dangerous thing to do, but Fairfax was now in the hands of the army; he could not lead, he must follow. He issued the order, for he knew if he did not they would, and the army would be out of hand. On the 4th of June, the army was drawn up on Kentford Heath, about four miles from Newmarket, and the soldiers put into Fairfax's hands a paper called, "A humble representation of the Grievances of the Army." The next day, June 5th, a second rendezvous was held, and a paper, called "The Solemn Engagement of the Army," was read and signed by all the officers and men. The army was now in the hands of the Agitators and was an enraged and infuriated mob with arms in their hands. It was no time for arbitrary measures; a compromise must be effected. Fortunately, a genius in practical affairs who knew men and who knew soldiers, particularly these soldiers, was at hand to put the finishing touches to this document. Cromwell, who was always clear-headed, and was always, no matter how long he had hesitated, equal to any emergency when it came, had arrived at headquarters the night before. The last two paragraphs of this remarkable document bear the unmistakable marks of his hand and mind.

"We, the Officers and Soldiers," the first clause begins, "of the army subscribing hereunto, do hereby declare, agree, and promise to and with each other, and to and with the Parliament and Kingdom as followeth.

"That we shall chearfully and readily disband, when thereunto required by the Parliament, or else shall many of us be willing (if desired) to engage in further Services either in *England* or *Ireland*, having first such satisfaction to the Army in relation to our Grievances and Desires heretofore presented, and such Security, That we of our selves or other the free-born People of England, shall not remain subject to like Oppression, Injury, or Abuse, as in the Premises have been attempted and put upon us while an Army, by the same Mens continuance in the same Credit and Power (especially if as our Judges) who have in these past Proceedings against the Army, so far prevailed to abuse the Parliament and us, and to endanger the Kingdom. . . ."

The security of the soldiers after the army has been disbanded is then provided for in the most ample manner. Then a practical suggestion is made, tending to bring the army back into the hands of the officers and to conciliate the soldiers. The army shall be governed in all matters by a council of the army, composed of the general officers, with two commissioned officers from each regiment elected by the officers of the regiment, and two soldiers from each regiment elected by the soldiers of the regiment. This council may be called together by the General, and all questions must be decided by a majority vote. Having made these statements and proposed this organization, the challenge is boldly thrown down: "That without such satisfaction and security as aforesaid, we shall not willingly disband, nor divide, nor suffer ourselves to be disbanded or divided." ("Rushworth," VI., 512.)

We have here a declaration not only that the army will not disband until the pecuniary grievances of the soldier are redressed and his personal safety secured, but a declaration that passes into the field of politics and

declares war upon the Presbyterian leaders in Parliament; but, what is most remarkable of all, a government is provided for the army, composed of a fusion of the body representing the soldiers and the body representing the officers. The soldiers are now organized for deliberation and discussion as well as for fighting, and their enemies will find them as skilful with the pen as with the sword, and as bold in the fields of political speculation as on the battlefield.

In the second paragraph is a denial that "dangerous Principles, Interests and Designs" are entertained in the army, such as the "overthrow of the Magistracy, the suppression or hindering of Presbytery, the Establishment of Independent Government, or upholding of a general Licentiousness in Religion, under pretence of Liberty of Conscience." A promise is made that a vindication of the army shall presently be published, and it closes with stating the real object of the soldiers: they study, it says, "to promote such an Establishment of common and equal Right and Freedom to the Whole, as all might equally partake of, but those that do, by denying the same to others, or otherwise, render themselves incapable thereof."

On the 15th of June came the promised declaration of the army. It was addressed to Parliament, but really intended for the English people. It was not transcribed on the records of either House, but was published by the soldiers. Little was said in it about grievances, but it was devoted for the most part to a discussion of the right and liberties of the subject, and to suggestions as to how to prevent the evils of the present in the future. It was very severe in its criticisms of some members of Parliament, and promised to name them shortly. This paper was followed to London by another impeaching Denzil Holles and ten other members of Parliament in the name of the army.

In a remonstrance published on the 27th of June against some of the acts of Parliament, the statement is made "that Parliament Privileges, as well as Royal Prerogative, may be perverted and abused, or extended to the destruction of the greater Ends for whose Protection and Preservation they were admitted or intended, viz., the Rights and Privileges of the People and the Safety of the whole." ("Old Parliamentary History," XVI., 9.) The army is, however, still loyal to the king, and in the same remonstrance makes this declaration: "We farther clearly profess we do not see how there can be any firm or lasting Peace to this Kingdom, without a due Consideration of, and Provision for the Rights, Quiet and Immunity of his Majesty, his Royal Family, and his late Partakers; and herein we think that tender and equable Dealing (as supposing their Case had been ours), and of a common Love and Justice diffusing itself to the Good and Preservation of all, will make up the most glorious Conquest over their Hearts, if God in his Mercy see it good, to make them and the whole People of the Land lasting Friends." ("Old Parliamentary History," XVI., 15.)

The army was now so completely organized that it was in truth a little state. The Council of the army might correspond to a senate, and the Agitators, in closer relations to the soldiers, to a house of representatives. It was organized with permanent officers, had a secretary, and even a printer. The Council was called together by the general, usually at the request of the Agitators, and could adjourn from day to day. The general presided when present, and it was opened with a prayer meeting which lasted usually about an hour, but the time was not limited and once, at least, it was prolonged to three hours. Much of the work was done in committees. It has been noted that in times of perplexity and doubt, Cromwell always asked that the subject be referred to a committee, and that Colonel Goffe invariably pro-

posed a "seeking of the Lord." ("Clarke Papers," I., lxxiv.)

Great freedom of discussion was allowed. The discussions were sometimes long and angry, and the speakers indulged in personalities. Cromwell, lieutenant-general that he was, did not escape the criticism of the Agitators; but his hard good sense and superb temper usually won the victory. He believed in reasoning with and persuading men, and there never was in all human history a great man "who was so tolerant of lunatics and fools."

The Presbyterians had made several elaborate attempts to come to terms with the king, but without success. The soldiers thought that too much had been asked of him and resolved to make an effort themselves. The subject was referred to the commission of the army, which, with the approval of Fairfax, appointed Commissary-General Ireton to prepare a paper expressing the wishes of the army. Henry Ireton, now the penman of the army, was a university man, had studied in the Temple, and was one of the clearest political thinkers of the age. A rough draft was presented to the General Council on the 18th of July and an invitation was extended to the officers and Agitators to make suggestions. It was desired to make it a paper upon which they could all agree, and it was referred to a representative committee of twelve officers, of all ranks, and twelve Agitators, and Lieutenant-General Cromwell was to attend when his duties would permit.

During the last days of July, the report was so far advanced that it was submitted to the king's friends, who made some suggestions. It was then informally submitted to the king, who is said to have made some suggestions which were approved, and then it was submitted to the General Council of the army, where it was discussed and adopted and sent to Parliament, and it was also published. It differed widely from anything

that had yet been suggested. The object of the soldiers was to protect themselves and their posterity against the tyranny of the Parliament, the tyranny of the church and the tyranny of the king. Each proposal (and there were sixteen), stated a point in contention between the army on the one side, and the Parliament, the church, or the king on the other. Each proposal was conceived with consummate political wisdom and stated with the most lawyer-like precision, and the whole proceeds in logical order, and there is no break with the past.

The first proposal, under eleven short sections, deals with Parliament. It proposes that a certain period be set for the ending of this Parliament, such period to be put within a year, and in the same act provision be made for the succession and constitution of Parliament in the future as followeth: That Parliaments may be biennially called and with certainty; that every biennial Parliament sit one hundred and twenty days, unless dissolved sooner by its own consent and afterwards to be dissolved by the king, and no Parliament shall sit past two hundred and forty days; that the king, with the consent of a council which is provided for, may call a Parliament Extraordinary, provided it meet at least seventy days before the biennial day and close sixty days before the same; that the elections of the Commons may be distributed so that all the counties may have a number of members allowed to their choice proportionable to the respective rates they bear in the common charge and burden of the kingdom, to render the House of Commons as near as possible an equal representative of the whole; that there shall be freedom of election, certainty of returns, and freedom of speech; and that the House of Commons alone have power to judge in cases of elections and make further distribution of seats to insure just representation. We have here the reform bill of 1832 anticipated by almost two centuries.

The second proposal deals with the army and the navy,

and puts them under the control of the Lords and Commons for ten years, and after that, under the king, with the consent of the two Houses. This struck down the dynastic policy so long in vogue, and made war and peace a matter of national well-being, and not dependent upon the caprice of the sovereign or the interests of the ruling family.

The eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth deal with the church, and are the most remarkable and original of all. Nothing is said about a state church, or whether it shall be Presbyterian or Episcopalian; that is left to a Parliament to be elected; but it provides for either. It first deals with Episcopacy: that an act be passed taking away all coercive powers, authority and jurisdiction of bishops, and all ecclesiastical officers whatsoever, extending to civil penalties; that there be repealed all acts or clauses of any act enjoining the use of the Book of Common Prayer, and imposing any penalties for the neglect thereof, as also all acts or clauses of an act imposing any penalties for not coming to church or for attending religious meetings elsewhere. It next deals with the Presbyterians, and provides that the Covenant shall not be enforced upon any, nor any penalty imposed on those who refuse to take it.

The fourteenth proposal deals with the king: "That the things here before proposed being provided, for settling and securing the rights, liberties, peace and safety of the kingdom, His Majesty's person, his Queen, and royal issue, may be restored to a condition of safety, honour and freedom in this nation, without diminution to their personal rights, or further limitation to the exercise of the regal power than according to the particulars foregoing." It proposed many reforms of the laws, especially the laws of imprisonment for debt; that law officials should be paid a regular salary; and it asked for a more lenient treatment of the king's party, and that all treaties

made with individuals by the army should be kept inviolate. (Gardiner's "Constitutional Documents," 237.)

Although the army had occupied London within a few days after the proposals had been sent to Westminster, Parliament paid no attention to the request of the army that they should be immediately considered, but sent to the king a slightly revised edition of the Newcastle Propositions. In his reply of September 14th, the king expressed his preference for the proposals of the army. ("Rushworth," VII., 810.)

But in a few weeks troubles were brewing in the army. A new radicalism was coming to the front. Democratic ideas were advancing more rapidly in the minds of the soldiers than in the minds of the officers. The soldiers were getting tired of the king, and of kings. The frequent conferences of Cromwell and Ireton with the king, and between them and the king's friends, excited their jealousies and fears. Even the faithful Hugh Peters, that "Prince of Chaplains," attacked them as "too great courtiers." (Gardiner, "Civil War," III., 357.) But their action in Parliament caused still greater alarm. On the 21st of September, they both vehemently opposed a motion that there should be no more addresses to the king, which meant that the kingdom should be settled without him, and two days later they supported a motion for another address. The suspicion of the soldiers was now confirmed that their generals were playing them false and were making personal arrangements with the king. This led five regiments of horse, Cromwell's and Ireton's among them, to cashier their old Agitators and to elect new ones, whom they called "Agents."

On the 18th of October, these Agents presented to Fairfax a printed pamphlet of twenty quarto pages, called "The Case of the Army Truly Stated." It was probably written by John Wildman, an ex-soldier who had been a scholar at Cambridge and was a disciple of John Lilburne,

the Leveller. It was accompanied with a long letter explanatory of their motives and object. Among many things common today, but alarming novelties then, "it announced for the first time," says Dr. Gardiner, " 'the paramount law' that all power is originally and essentially in the whole body of the people of this nation and that their free choice or consent of their representers is the only original foundation of all just government." (Gardiner, "Civil War," III., 379.) This law is at the bottom of the English and American constitutions as they stand today.

Fairfax, after considering it, replied that he "thought it meet that it should be presented to the next General Council of the army" ("Rushworth," VII., 846), and on the 22d it was brought up for discussion. A committee was appointed to investigate the subject and to report on the 28th. Fairfax was not present at this meeting, and Cromwell, on taking the chair, announced that this was a public meeting and that any one might have liberty to speak. ("Clarke Papers," I., 226.)

Sexby, the Agitator, opened the discussion by declaring that: "Wee have lean'd on and gone to Egypt for helpe. . . . . Wee sought to satisfie all men, and itt was well; butt in going [about] to doe it, wee have dissatisfied all men. Wee have labour'd to please a Kinge, and I thinke, except wee goe about to cutt all our own throates, wee shall nott please him; and wee have gone about to support an house which will prove rotten studds, I meane the Parliament which consists of a Company of rotten Members." He then told Cromwell and Ireton: "Your creditts and reputation hath bin much blasted," *i. e.*, by their late action in Parliament. ("Clarke Papers," I., 227.)

The Agents soon produced a synopsis of the "Case of the Army," which was as short as the original was long, as it covered a little more than two pages of printed matter.

It was called, "The Agreement of the People." In a preamble, in which they called attention to the fact that "our late labors and hazards have shown the world at how high a rate we value our just freedom, and that God having so far owned our cause as to deliver our enemies into our hands, to avert the danger of returning into a slavish condition and another war," they affirmed "that we are fully agreed and resolved to make the following declaration:—

"1. That the people of England are very unequally distributed for the election of members of Parliament and ought to be proportioned according to the number of the inhabitants."

(You will notice here a sweeping reform and that manhood suffrage is called for.)

"2. That the present Parliament be dissolved the last day of September, 1648.

"3. That the people do, of course, choose a Parliament every other year to begin on the first Thursday of April, and continue until the last day of September next and no longer.

"4. That the power of all future Parliaments is inferior only to those who choose them, and doth extend, without the consent or concurrence of any other person or persons, to the erecting and abolishing of offices and courts, to the appointmenting, removing, and calling to account magistrates and officers of all degrees, to making of war and peace, to the treating with foreign states, and, generally to whatsoever is not especially reserved by the represented to themselves:

Which are as followeth,

"1. That the ways of God's worship are not to be entrusted to any human power: 2. That impressments to serve in war are against our liberties and therefore we do not allow it to our representatives: 3. That no person shall be at any time called in question for anything said or done in reference to the late public differences otherwise than in execution of the judgments of the House of Commons: 4. That in all laws made or to be made

every person may be bound alike: and 5. That the laws ought to be equal, so they must be good." (Gardiner's "Constitutional Documents," 333.)

You will notice that there is no room here for king or House of Lords, and that all feudal privileges and privileges of every kind are swept away. But no provision is made, as in American constitutions, for adjusting of government to the changed condition and needs of the people. The debate that ensued has been preserved in the papers of William Clarke, an under-secretary of the army, which have been edited by our associate, Mr. Charles H. Firth. They throw a new light upon the characters of some of the men, especially upon that of Ireton, and a very clear light upon the state of political thought in the two parties into which the army was then divided. The principal debaters on one side were: Cromwell, Ireton and Colonel Rich; on the other, Colonel Rainsborough, who was a member of Parliament and had recently been appointed to a high place in the navy, John Wildman, who said he came as "the mouth of the Agents of the five regiments of horse," and the Agitators Edward Sexby and William Allen, who were both very able men. The other officers and agitators spoke occasionally, and the debate ran through several days.

Cromwell, conservative, cautious and conciliatory, with an eye always on what was for the best interest of the people (although not always on what the people thought was best for themselves), but who never lost sight of the practical, opened the debate. Forms of government was a new subject for him, and he headed at once toward the unity of thought and action in the army. Of the "Case of the Army," or, as he called it, the "Book of the Army," he said:—

"These things you now offer are new to us; this is the first time we have had a view of them. This paper does contain in it very great alterations of the government

of the kingdom, alterations of that government it hath been under, I believe I may say almost since it was a nation. What the consequences would be, wise and godly men ought to consider. The paper is very plausible, and if we could jump from one condition to another, it might be well, but might not while we are discussing it, another party of men get up something just as plausible and still another, and so on, until we arrive at confusion. Then there are some difficulties that honest men ought to consider. We ought to look not only at the consequences but at the possibilities, of ways and means to accomplish it. That is to say, to consider whether according to reason and judgment the temper and spirit of the people of this nation are prepared to receive and to go along with it and to overcome and remove the great difficulties in the way. To anything that is good, objections may be framed, but let every honest man consider whether there are not some real objections to this. And I know a man can answer all difficulties with faith,—and faith will answer all difficulties really, where it is,—and we are very apt all of us to call that faith, that perhaps may be but carnal imagination and carnal reasoning. If I am not mistaken we have in time of our danger issued our Declarations and we must consider how far these are binding on us, if we mean honestly and seriously to approve ourselves to honest men. He that departs from a real engagement, I think transgresses without faith. I hope we shall prove ourselves honest men whether we are free to tender any good to the public."

The question of the engagements of the army was then taken up, and Wildman thought that the case before them was so much greater that all other engagements could be well laid aside. Rainsborough said that a bad engagement was better broken than kept. The debate was long and passionate, and Goffe, after a characteristic speech, in which he attributed the want of unity to a neglect of God, moved "a seeking of the Lord." The motion was supported by Cromwell and Ireton, but Cromwell moved that a committee be appointed. Ireton

said that he should like to be a member of the committee, and after some discussion both motions were adopted.

The next morning, October 29th, the prayer meeting took place at the quarters of the quartermaster, Mr. Chamberlain, and judging from the record, it occupied most, if not all, the forenoon. In the afternoon the discussion on the "Agreement of the Army" was renewed, and Ireton made an eloquent speech. He did not care so much about the engagements themselves as about the reputation and honor of the army. He said: "I would not have this army to incurre the scandall of neglecting engagements, and laying aside all consideration of engagements, and of jugling, and deceiving, and deluding the world, making them believe thinges in times of extreamity which they never meant." ("Clarke Papers," I., 297.)

In the afternoon, Cromwell in the chair, "The Agreement of the People" was read, and afterwards the first article. Ireton said: "This doth make mee thinke that the meaning is, that every man that is an inhabitant is to bee equally consider'd, and to have an equal voice in the election of representers." ("Clarke Papers," I., 299.) Rainsborough did not leave him in doubt on this point, if he had any, but replied at once: "I thinke that the poorest hee that is in England hath a life to live as the greatest hee; and therefore truly, Sir, I thinke itt's cleare, that every man that is to live under a Governement ought first by his owne consent to putt himself under that Governement; and I doe thinke that the poorest man in England is nott att all bound in a stricte sence to that Governement that hee hath not had a voice to putt himself under; and I am confident that when I have heard the reasons against itt, somethinge will bee said to answer those reasons, insoemuch that I should doubt whether he was an Englishman or noe that should doubt of these thinges." ("Clarke Papers," I., 301.)

They now plunged into a discussion of the birthright of Englishmen, the nature of the coronation oath of the king, a property qualification for the voter, the nature of civil and natural rights and abstract principles of government. Cromwell, whose mind revolved round practical principles and who really took more interest in religious than in civil liberty, had little to say. The debate was angry, and more than once he had to remind the speakers, "Wee should nott bee soe hott one with another." ("Clarke Papers," I., 309.) But Ireton was in his native element. He was a clear thinker, an able debater, and at home in the fields of political speculation; but he was too dogmatic to be eminently persuasive, and sometimes excited opposition where his more conciliatory father-in-law won a victory over his opponents by winning them to his view. He made short work with the historical argument that the first article of this agreement restored to the English people the liberties which they lost at the Norman Conquest. His speeches on natural rights remind one of the "Reflections on the Revolution in France," by Edmund Burke, one hundred and fifty years later.

Occasionally a soldier like Sexby would take the debate out of the field of argument. "There are many thousands of us souldiers," he said, "that have ventur'd our lives; wee have had little propriety in the Kingedome as to our estates, yett wee have had a birthright. Butt itt seemes now except a man hath a fix't estate in this Kingedome, hee hath noe birthright in the Kingedome. I wonder wee were soe much deceived . . . I shall tell you in a worde my resolution. I am resolved to give my birthright to none. Whatsoever may come in the way, and whatsoever may bee thought, I will give itt to none." ("Clarke Papers," I., 325.)

Ireton replied: "I am very sorry wee are come to this point, that from reasoning one to another we should come to expresse our resolutions."

The committee asked for by Cromwell was indeed a representative body, including Rainsborough and Sexby, as well as Cromwell and Ireton, among its members. They went to their work at once, and, taking the "Proposals of the Army" as a basis, they adopted some of the features of the "Agreement of the People," but retained the king and the House of Lords, and extended the franchise to all those who had borne arms in the Parliamentary cause or had contributed to its support.

But the decision of the Council of the army was not satisfactory to the soldiers, and, on November 5th, the Agitators carried a vote for a general rendezvous of the whole army in the hope to carry "The Agreement of the People," by acclamation. But Cromwell, November 8th, carried a vote that the Agitators and representative officers should be dismissed to their several regiments and also that there should be three separate gatherings instead of a general rendezvous. When two regiments broke away from their officers and came to Ware, Cromwell met them sword in hand. ("Rushworth," VII., 875, 878.) One of the ringleaders was shot and discipline was restored. The officers and Agitators early in January, 1648, were sent to their regiments, and the Council of the army was never called together again. Henceforth the army was governed by a Council of the officers.

The "Proposals of the Army" stand forth as the best results of all these discussions. It was indeed a fine piece of political work. Had Charles First accepted the "Proposals of the Army" as the basis of the settlement of the affairs of the kingdom, he would have found himself sustained by the most powerful army of which history gives any account, and his throne surrounded by the most remarkable men of the age; for the Puritan as a soldier and sailor, as a statesman and diplomatist, as a scholar and poet, was the peer of any man in Europe. Theoretically, he would have placed the English constitu-

tion and English liberty where they were at the ascension of Victoria, but practically, he could have done nothing of the kind. The plan of the army was born out of due season; it belonged to the nineteenth century, and not to the seventeenth. You cannot jump from one stage of civilization to another any more than you can jump from boyhood to manhood. Man must grow from generation to generation, from century to century:—

> "From the lower to the higher next,
> Not to the top, is Nature's text:
> And embryo good to reach full stature,
> Absorbs the evil in its nature."

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