Reg. 20th July 1904

PURITAN LEADERS.

LECTURE BY PROFESSOR HENDERSON.

At the Adelaide University on Tuesday evening Professor Henderson, M.A., gave the second of his course of extension lectures on "Leaders of the Puritan Age." The hero for the evening was Cromwell. For the first time in the history of the University the spacious lecture room was crowded, and more than a hundred applications for tickets had to be refused. The lecturer promised to repeat the address on Thursday night.

—The Man and His Ancestry.—

Cromwell, he said, was born in 1599, somewhat later than Thomas Strafford, at Huntingdon. He was descended from that Thomas Cromwell who was known in the time of Henry VIII. as the "hammer of the monks." The father was a Puritan; his uncle a Royalist. Cromwell was little disposed to place much weight on his aristocratic descent, but believed that the mind was the man. He judged humanity by those inward qualities called the soul. In Parliament he was the type of man whom the House of Commons would be disposed to rate very highly—the man who talked little but did much committee work.

—A Change in the Nation's Weapons.—

The time was one of transition, and in English warfare the bow had been the principal weapon; but it was passing away in favour of the musket. The latter was 6 ft. long, and very heavy, and needed something to rest it upon. The match with which it was fired was apt to go out at critical moments, and the powder was weak and easily spoiled by bad weather. The musket took 1½ minutes to fire; the soldier carried the ball in his mouth, and often forgot in those early days whether shot or powder went in first. Not only had the technique of war to be looked after, but Cromwell would organize a force on the basis of character, and that grounded on religious zeal. His was a man who knew what he fought for, and loved what he knew. Cromwell, at Hatton Hill, saw that the Parliamentary Horse could not stand the shock of Rupert's cavalry, and trained his men on the lesson he gained there as to the value of cavalry. By the middle of 1643 the King had the better of it, and only in the eastern Midlands were the Parliamentary forces making headway. That was near Cromwell's home. He did not force his men, but said "Come." The turning point, at Marston Moor, was due to Cromwell's zeal and his determination that to strike quickly till the war was finished was the most merciful policy.

—The Execution of Charles I.—

Then they came to that part of Cromwell's career in which, if he did not commit an act, he was mainly responsible for an act which, many of the people of England still held him in great abhorrence for—the execution of Charles I. They had evidence that this man knew that Charles had been negotiating with foreign Powers for an army to come into England and fight against his own subjects, and that Cromwell's decision was only finally arrived at when he discovered that the King had been intriguing with the Scots, while at the same time negotiating with the Parliament, which took him at his word. They had the story of Cromwell visiting the place where Charles's body was laid, and whispering the words "Cruel necessity." That might not be true, but such stories generally indicated some groundwork of popular belief in a man's character. Cromwell and his men were familiar with the Old Testament rather than the New, and his duty as a general was not to investigate the authenticity of the allegations on which his instructions were based, but to take his directions from the constituted powers.

—The Charge of Cruelty Refuted.—

He had never come across one instance in Cromwell's life that would help to drive home the charge that he was wantonly cruel. According to the military code of the seventeenth century he was quite within his rights in putting the people in Ireland to the sword to show what would happen if they rebelled against the English Government, and to prevent the effusion of blood for the future. It was a matter of policy, and some of the most famous generals in history had said that the most merciless war was the most merciful. If Cromwell's policy had succeeded in England it had not done so in Ireland, where the people associated one of their most malignant curses with the name of Cromwell. Perhaps like many to-day he did not understand the Irish people. (Applause.) The kind of government which prevailed in any country must be relative to the circumstances that existed in that country. If they wanted to realize the difference between turbulent and peaceful conditions they must think of the difference between the government of a peaceful country like our own and the government of an army on the field. Despotism was necessary in one instance, but not in the other. Cromwell had said that his was not the time for improving the English Constitution, but for defending it from its enemies. He was a true man, who sought to do his duty in circumstances of unparalleled necessity. His mental bias was essentially practical; his genius lay not in originating ideas, but in selecting ideas on which to work. By practical observation he realized the essentials in his reforms.

—Cromwell's Religion.—

Those who identified him as a man who endeavoured to rule by force had many difficulties to explain, and chiefly his zeal for religious toleration. Cromwell did not despise outward forms and ceremonies in religion, but did not consider them essential. He possessed a spiritual experience, arising from a sense of impassioned union with what was highest and best. With this he united the sects in his army, and hoped to unite them elsewhere. Precisely this principle enabled him to hold to his belief in toleration, and to show that if men differed in opinion they could attain to unity, and that real unity could not be attained without allowing for difference of opinion. Unity must be based on the spiritual relation between a man and his God; and that was what Cromwell looked to in advocating toleration. Cromwell never bullied men in discussions; he listened to advice, hesitated at each point in making up his mind; but when it was at once made up he acted like a thunderbolt. He believed that a Providence watched over England, and refused to mould his plans too far ahead, lest he might cross the lines of Providence. Those who called Cromwell a hypocrite knew nothing about him, and, apart from religion, his character was inexplicable. He used force, but to say he believed in force was contrary to his pronouncements in 1647, after the battles of Marston and Naseby. He was a representative Englishman, and, like John Milton, English to the core. (Applause.)

A number of fine lantern slides were shown during the course of the lecture.

Reg 22nd July.

OLIVER CROMWELL.

"Neither was it, I think, by 'masterstrokes of duplicity' that Cromwell steered himself victoriously across such a devouring chaos; no, but by continuances of noble, manful simplicity. I rather think—by meaning one thing before God and meaning the same before men, as a strong man does. By conscientious resolution; by sagacity and silent wariness and promptitude; by religious valor and veracity, which, however it may fare with foxes, are really, after all, the grand source of clearness for a man in this world." In his analysis of the great Protector's character, Carlyle borrows these words from an "ancient manuscript," and something of the spirit of them permeated Professor Henderson's extension lecture at the University last night. It was a thoughtful character study; sympathetic, but not rhetorical, and revealing in the lecturer that inward vision which is so necessary to illuminate the subtle recesses of a mind like Cromwell's. In opening the professor explained what a wonderful combination of complimentary qualities Cromwell possessed; how he was a man of enthusiasm, and yet of cautious observation; a man of splendid self-restraint; and how this wonderfully complex nature came out most majestically when the odds against the man were heaviest. In one of his novels George Meredith wrote, "Purpose wedded to plans may easily suffer shipwreck, but the man of unfettered purpose, who moulds circumstances as he goes, masters us and is terrible." Such a man was Cromwell. The Puritan Revolution revealed a Cromwell, the French Revolution a Napoleon; wherever there was a revolution a strong man came out to lead it and remain at the head till matters were settled. Cromwell's character had been one of the most controversial subjects in history. To some he was a dissembling hypocrite; to some, like Carlyle, he was the "divine Oliver;" to Firth and Gardiner he was no faultless hero, no saint, but a brave, sincere, and true man, who strove to do his duty. Maidstone wrote of him that a larger soul had seldom dwelt in a house of clay. One must go deeper than intellect to find the secret of Cromwell's religious position, and deeper than argument to find the root of his conviction in practical matters. He believed a Divine agency was at work in Puritan England, moulding events to her servant, Destiny, and that that destiny could be discovered by noting in what direction decisive events pointed. From this conviction Cromwell derived an unfailing hope, which shone in him like a pillar of fire, when it had gone out in everyone else. Apart from religion, Cromwell's character was inexplicable. It was not wonderful that the Irish cherished a feeling of resentment to the deeds of Cromwell, and one could understand Scotchmen were not called upon to recognise any deep sense of obligation to him, but it was amazing that so many English men should still be found ready to take up the cry of "Traitor, tyrant, hypocrite." If they condemned Oliver Cromwell they condemned the English people, too, for Cromwell was a representative Englishman. In his firm hold of faith, in his unshaken belief in Providence, Cromwell represented one side of the English character. In his dislike of mere theories, his strong common-sense, his appreciation of such ideas as would work, he represented the other side. Like John Milton, he was English to the core. In closing, Professor Henderson showed his audience a limelight impression of that noble portrait of Cromwell, of which Macaulay wrote—"Content that his face should go forth marked with all the blemishes which had been put on it by time, by war, by sleepless nights, by anxiety, perhaps, by remorse; but with valor, policy, authority, and public care written in all its princely lines."

Reg. 27th July '04

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION LECTURE.

On Tuesday evening Professor G. C. Henderson, M.A., delivered the last lecture of the course on "Leaders of the Puritan age," in connection with the University extension lectures. He took for his theme John Milton, and had a full audience in the large theatre of the University. He traversed the principal points in Milton's career, and set out at some length the political and religious attitude of the times. In analysing the sources of Milton's genius, he said that the great poet and statesman was early possessed with the idea to perform some great work, which he hoped men would not willingly let die. The expansion of his mind was a growth from within outwards. He listened for the promptings of an inward monitor, realizing that in order to write a poem he must be a poem. While himself a genius, he realized the necessity for close study, and felt that knowledge was not an end, but an equipment for performance. While Cromwell was beloved, the forces in Milton made his outer life repellant, and not attractive; but there could be nothing less than admiration for his consistent self-respect and unswerving fidelity to conviction. His supreme literary defect was a lack of humour; that defect accounted in some measure for his personal bitterness and lack of social sympathy. The lecture was concluded with an eloquent appreciation of the inward vision that had portrayed a world more beautiful than the Paradise on which he had gazed with his physical eyes.

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THE UNIVERSITY MOVEMENT.

SPEECH BY THE PREMIER.

MR. SODDY'S VISIT.

In Queen's Hall on Saturday night Mr. Frederick Soddy (Lecturer in Physical Chemistry and Radio-activity at Glasgow University) brought to a close the series of University Extension lectures which he visited Western Australia to deliver. At the close of the lecture the Premier (Mr. Walter James, K.C.) moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Soddy, and in the course of his remarks he referred to the University movement.

The Premier said it would be wrong if they did not take that opportunity of expressing to Mr. Soddy their grateful thanks for his visit to Western Australia and the work he had done. (Applause.) They owed him thanks for his interesting lectures. These lectures had been attended by two classes of people—those who were attracted by the subject and the reputation Mr. Soddy had made for himself, and those who had come with a sincere desire to obtain further knowledge and to commence or continue the study of these subjects to which the lectures related. Mr. Soddy needed no words of thanks from him on behalf of the audiences. The latter had shown this by the way they had attended the lectures. Mr. Soddy's visit had done the State great good in its collective capacity. They had been talking for some years about the desirability of establishing a University. (Applause.) There were those who advocated some few years ago that steps should be taken to secure the establishment of a University as early as possible. During the course of the last twelve months they had taken one distinct step in advancing the movement by the passage of University Endowment Act. They had appointed endowment trustees, and had vested in these trustees some 700 or 800 acres of land, which promised to give their future University the richest endowment enjoyed by any University in Australia. (Applause.) This alone would not have been sufficient. People might have been content to remain at this stage. They were very apt to think that no University could be established unless they first expended a large sum of money in an elaborate building. He wished they could only convince the residents of Western Australia that as long as they had efficient workshops for their professors, the sooner they commenced to get their professors the sooner could they begin the work of the University, without money overburdening it in the first instance. Mr. Soddy had done more than any other man to popularise with the people of the State the desirability of a University. (Applause.) In his lectures Mr. Soddy had been dealing with subjects which had attracted large audiences, who had carried away with them an appreciation of the reputation Mr. Soddy had made for himself and an interest felt by themselves in the subject with which he had dealt. Mr. Soddy's visit had done great good in bringing home more thoroughly than before how necessary it was that the establishment of this University should be commenced without undue delay. (Ap-