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Cromwell and America.

THE personal and intimate part that Cromwell played in relation to the English Colonies in America is by no means generally realised. The story that is most familiar—that he was actually on board one of the ships bound for America stopped by Order of Council in May, 1638—is demonstrably false. It is by no means the only suppositious happening in Cromwell's life that is without any real foundation. Yet there is a persistent tradition that he did contemplate migrating to New England, and there is at least the concrete fact that, when he left Huntingdon in May, 1631, he converted all his landed property into money, as a man with a mind to emigrate would naturally do. Furthermore, in 1630 and 1631 the Puritan exodus was at its height, and most of the New England Colonists went out from East Anglia.

Whatever may have been Cromwell's intention in 1631, it is incontestable that in 1641, had things turned out otherwise than they did, he would have left the Old Land for good. After a stormy debate, the Grand Remonstrance to Charles I. was passed by the House of Commons in November, 1641—but only by eleven votes! As the members went home, it is said that Cromwell whispered to Falkland, "If the Remonstrance had been rejected, I should have sold all I had the next morning, and never seen England more; and I know there are many other honest men of the same resolution." What would the history of England (and of the Colonies) have been had the Remonstrance not been passed—with the consequence that Cromwell and these "many other honest men" had left the Mother Country for the new lands oversea?

All the English Colonies had grown up during Cromwell's lifetime. When he was born—in 1599—England had none. He was seven years old when James I. granted his charter to the Virginia Company, and he married in the year when the Pilgrim Fathers sailed in the *Mayflower*. Certain it is that he felt the keenest interest in the Puritan settlers in New England. Moreover, we know that for a period of fifteen years—that is, from 1643 to the time of his death—Cromwell was directly associated with the government of the Colonies. In November, 1643 (exactly two years after the passing of the Grand Remonstrance), he was appointed by Parliament one of the Commissioners for the government of the plantations in America and the West Indies.

In the Colonies themselves the civil strife in the Homeland naturally had its repercussions. Six months before Cromwell became a Colonial Commissioner, the four Colonies of Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven formed themselves into a Confederation under the name of the United Colonies of New England. These New England Colonies heartily sympathised with the English Parliament in its struggle against the King. Indeed, these outposts of Puritanism across the Atlantic sent many volunteers to the Parliamentary armies fighting on English soil. Yet further, the example and the ideals of these New England recruits exercised an important influence in relation to the development and strengthening of democracy and the spirit of independence in England.

In the islands and in the Southern Colonies, on the other hand, the general feeling was hostile to the Puritans. Virginia, so soon as the execution of Charles I. became known, proclaimed Charles II. as successor to the crown. Barbadoes also refused to acknowledge the Commonwealth. In the autumn of 1651—just after Cromwell's "crowning mercy" at Worcester—Sir George Ayscule was sent to reduce Barbadoes and Virginia to obedience.

The passing of the Navigation Act was a potent force in preventing the Colonies from shaking off their allegiance. That Act bound the Colonies to the Mother Country by ensuring their commercial dependence upon her. Moreover, the Act was notable as being the first attempt on the part of England to legislate for the Colonies as a whole and to treat them as integral parts of one political system.

When Cromwell became Protector, the sovereignty of the English State was universally acknowledged overseas, although it could scarcely be said that it had been accepted with cordiality. In the Southern Colonies a strong anti-Puritan feeling prevailed; New England manifested a growing spirit of independence; and on the continent and in the islands alike there was general aversion to the restrictions which the Navigation Act had imposed upon Colonial trade. Under the provisions of that Act the products of a Colony could not be brought into England except in English or Colonial ships, and no foreign ships might import to the Colonies anything but the products of their own country. Dutch ships caught trading in prohibited commodities to the islands or the Southern Colonies were confiscated, although in the case of the New England Colonies non-observance of the Act seems to have been discreetly winked at.

Cromwell interfered very little in the internal affairs of the Colonies or with their relations to each other. He protected the Puritan party in the islands, and appointed or removed Governors. He endeavoured to arbitrate on the boundary dis-

putes between Maryland and Virginia, and in New England he sought to mediate between Rhode Island and the other Colonies. The corner-stone of his policy was the maintenance of good relations between New England and the Home Government.

Cromwell's feeling towards the New Englanders particularly, as brethren in the faith, was peculiarly warm, and that sentiment was as warmly reciprocated. In 1651 Massachusetts thanked the Lieutenant-General for "the tender care and undeserved respect" he had manifested on all occasions towards it, and wished him prosperity in his "great and godly undertakings." When he became Protector it congratulated him upon being called by the Lord to supreme authority. Citizens of Massachusetts and New Englanders in general were freely employed by him both in Great Britain and in the Colonies themselves.

In August, 1654, Cromwell made up his mind to send an expedition to attack the Spanish settlements in the West Indies, and in December of that year a fleet of thirty-eight ships, commanded by Admiral Penn, sailed from Portsmouth. With help from Barbadoes, St. Kitts, and elsewhere, General Venables had command of 7,000 men, and endeavoured several times (without success) to take possession of Hispaniola. With the remnants of his forces Venables next attacked Jamaica, and in May, 1655, the capital was occupied without much resistance.

The Protector looked to New England and the islands to supply him with the planters and farmers needed by the new Colony. Some years earlier he had asked the New Englanders to help in the re-settlement of Ireland, and undeterred by his failure then, he now invited them to remove to Jamaica. Generous offers were made to induce settlers to migrate from Massachusetts. Ships were to be furnished for their transportation; they were to have land rent free for seven years; and to be free from all taxes for three years. In addition, the colonists were to have privileges and rights of self-government like any English town. Cromwell even suggested that there was "as clear a call" for them to transport themselves from New England to Jamaica in order to better their outward position as they had had to go from England to New England.

But Cromwell's protestations and pleadings were to little purpose. The people of Massachusetts thanked the Protector for his good intentions with humble and effusive piety, and promised him their prayers; but at the same time they made it quite clear that they meant to stay where they were. Two or three hundred New Englanders accepted the invitation, but that was all. Eventually Jamaica was colonised by the surplus population of the other West Indian islands.

The Spaniards made repeated attempts to reconquer the

island. In 1658 the English Governor, Colonel Edward Doyley, defeated thirty companies of Spanish foot and sent ten flags to Cromwell as trophies, but ere the news of the victory reached him, the Lord High Protector had breathed his last. "So," says a Colonial historian, "he never had one syllable of anything that was grateful from the vastest expanse and the greatest design that was ever made by the English."

Nevertheless the Colonial policy which Cromwell and the statesmen of the Commonwealth initiated became the permanent policy of succeeding rulers, and it became so because it represented the aspirations, the interests, and the desires of Englishmen in general.

George Fox manifested a "concern" for the spiritual welfare of the American Indians. It is of great inerest to note that Cromwell also had this point of contact with the aboriginal people of North America. John Eliot crossed the Atlantic and landed at Boston in November, 1631. A year later he settled as pastor to a congregation at Roxbury, and there for almost sixty years he carried on an unremitting and heroic ministry both to white men and to red, which earned for him the title of "the Apostle to the Red Indians." Finding that the great hindrance to work amongst the Indians was "the poverty and barbarousness of the people, which made many to live dispersed like wild beasts in the wildernesses," Eliot set himself to civilise so as to Christianise. He won their goodwill and found an entrance for the Gospel into their hearts by building for them houses and schools, so that they could live together in villages. In this good work, it is recorded, he was aided by funds raised by Cromwell in the Homeland.

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