

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## THE COMMONWEALTH (1649 to 1660).—1. THE COUNCIL OF STATE (1649 to 1653).

1. The death of Charles I. was immediately followed by the formal abolition of Monarchy and of the House of Lords. The Commons decreed that they were "useless and dangerous." The Council of State government was vested in a Council of State, composed of forty-one members. Bradshaw was appointed President; the celebrated poet Milton, Foreign Secretary; Sir Harry Vane, Controller of the Navy, with Blake as chief admiral; Fairfax and Cromwell, chief military commanders. The latter was also appointed Lord-Deputy to Ireland. It was made an act of treason to acknowledge the claims of "Charles Stuart, commonly called the 'Prince of Wales.'" To intimidate the Royalists, three of their most prominent leaders, the Duke of Hamilton, Lord Holland, and Lord Capel, were executed.

2. The execution of Charles I. excited great feeling throughout Europe. The Czar of Russia dismissed the English envoy. France recalled her ambassador. In Holland, the Prince of Orange, Charles's brother-in-law, warmly espoused the cause of his injured nephew, the Prince of Wales.

3. At home everything was in confusion. The Rump Parliament was unpopular. Even in the army opposition to the Council of State manifested itself. A party called the *Levellers* broke into mutiny. A number of the councillors refused to be sworn in, and it was estimated that more than half of the judges voluntarily retired from the bench. Still more discouraging to the popular leaders was the aspect of affairs in Ireland and in Scotland.

4. Under the Duke of Ormond almost the entire population of Ireland was united in support of the Royalist cause. The Prince of Wales was proclaimed as Charles II. immediately after his father's execution. Cromwell, realizing the importance of prompt action, crossed over to Ireland as soon as affairs at home would permit. He had sent, however, a body of troops in advance, by whom Ormond had been defeated before his arrival. His own attention was chiefly directed to the siege of the principal cities and towns held by the Royalists. Drogheda fell in September 1649; afterwards Wexford, Kilkenny, and Clonmel. The garrisons of the captured places were treated with remorseless severity, being butchered without mercy. The inhabitants of the country generally were treated with great harshness; thousands were transported to the West Indies, while immense numbers were driven to seek service in foreign lands. The Royalist rising in Ireland was effectually suppressed.