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THE CELT IN POWER: TUDOR AND CROMWELL.

By J. FOSTER PALMER, F.R.Hist.S.

(*Read April 1886*).

IN a former paper I pointed out some of the distinctive marks which appear to belong especially to the early British character.¹ The importance of this is obvious both from a historical and from a political point of view when we consider the mixed and various types which in the present day inhabit our country.

I propose now to offer a few suggestions as to the character of those among our countrymen of Celtic origin who have attained supreme power in the kingdom, and who have therefore had full scope for the development of their distinctive ethnical qualities; which development may be examined by the aid of that fierce light which beats about a throne.

From the time of William the Conqueror to the present day nearly all our rulers have been, on the male side, of foreign origin. The Stuarts were no exception. Though Scotland had been their home for many centuries, they were descended in a direct male line from the Norman Alan, a companion of the Conqueror, and the ancestor of the Fitzalans. They were neither Celts nor Anglo-Saxons.²

Two only out of eight ruling dynasties since the Conquest have been of native origin—the Tudors and the Cromwells—and both were Celtic, the Tudors being descended from an ancient noble family in Wales, while the Cromwells belonged to the family of Williams, also of noble, if not of royal, Welsh

¹ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* for 1884, p. 190 *et seq.*

² *Vide* Appendix, 'Pedigree of the Stuarts.' The descent from Banquo is purely mythical.

descent, the name Cromwell being theirs only on the female side.¹

The number of our rulers who were of true Celtic descent, therefore, is limited to seven ; but these all, with but one exception,² possessed strongly-marked characters. To form a true estimate of these we must consider the work they accomplished, both collectively and individually, as well as their personal qualities.

The influence of the Tudors and Cromwells upon the history of the English nation, the social and political condition of the people, their religious feelings and modes of thought and action, has been greater than that of all the rest of our sovereigns from the Conquest combined. And this was brought about by their own personal influence and inflexibility of will-power. When we speak of the tyranny of the Normans and Plantagenets we must remember that they were not autocrats. The most powerful of them could only exist by the will and pleasure of the aristocracy by which they were surrounded. And this could only be secured by large bribes. Not even William himself, with all his talent and capacity, could have held his own had he not parcelled out the country among his followers, and, thus attaching them to his interests, divided the work among them. Those who ventured to act in opposition to the nobility, as John, Edward II., and Richard II., lost their crown, their power, or their life ; while those who merely failed actively to support them, as Henry III. and Henry VI., passed a life of virtual slavery.

But the Tudors changed all this. Henry VII. at once set his foot firmly on the neck of the aristocracy, and his policy was in this respect consistently carried out by all his immediate descendants.

The Welsh Britons had now been in a state of slavery and dependence for nearly 1,000 years. Every attempt to regain their freedom had been hopelessly crushed by the power of the English kings. But though crushed, their spirit had not been conquered. We have seen in their ardent struggles for

¹ *Vide* Appendix, Tudor and Cromwell Pedigrees. ² Richard Cromwell.

liberty and more especially in the writings of their bards their independent spirit, their intensity of feeling, their impatience of subjection, and their desire for revenge. And now the whirligig of time has brought its revenges: an Ancient Briton is seated on the throne of England, and the pent-up feeling of centuries breaks out in action. The Tudors were essentially men of action, and the old intensity of feeling now shows itself in intensity of action. However great their differences in other respects, however opposite their characters, we find in all the Tudors an *intensity*, an *impatience of control*, and a *power of will* which have hardly their equal in English history. Greater changes were brought about in England and Wales during the single century allotted to this native race than in the seven centuries passed under rulers of foreign descent. There can be no greater contrast than that between the noble and accomplished family of Stuart, Norman in descent and high in power, dwindling away in the bigoted James, the feeble Anne, and the drunken Pretender, and the once down-trodden family of the Tudors, powerful to the last, and ending with one who possessed, in the highest degree, all the great qualities of her race.

In the Tudors we find breaking out in an extreme form the old spirit of religious fanaticism so characteristic of the Celt. All the Tudors were, in a greater or less degree, religious bigots: bigots only, irrespective of any influence their religion might have on their life and character. The great era of religious persecution commenced during the reign of the first of the Tudors, and continued till the death of the last. Whatever religion they possessed (and it would be difficult to define the various forms of Christianity adopted by these five monarchs), so firmly did they hold it that they would compel all others to believe as they did. Religious persecution, whatever else it may be, is certainly a sign, in those who resort to it, of strong conviction, of zeal and enthusiasm. Wise and just as most of the Tudors were in other respects, it is incredible that they should condemn others to death for their religious opinions if they were not firmly impressed with the

truth of their own. Natural cruelty was certainly no part of the character of Henry VII. He pardoned both Simnel and Warbeck when self-defence would have dictated and justified their execution. The murder of the Earl of Warwick was only brought to pass through the dominance of his ruling passion, and this crime he would gladly have avoided. The clemency of his nature was well known to Ferdinand, who insisted on sending his own minister to witness the deed, lest Henry should save Warwick's life and conceal the fact; a proceeding which would have been quite in accordance both with his magnanimity and his duplicity.

An overbearing despot like Henry VIII. might tyrannically destroy a Suffolk, a Buckingham, or a Surrey because he found their influence inconvenient to him; but he would not put to death without some motive numbers of his subjects whom he had never seen, who had never done him, nor were likely to do him, harm, and who would be of service to him as soldiers if needed. On the other hand, to say that in these persecutions they were merely the tools of the Church is simply to ignore the whole history and the despotic character of the Tudor family. Religious persecution is now so much a thing of the past that we are unable to appreciate its bearings, and are even disposed to hear of it with incredulity. But it is in reality only bigotry in its extreme form and uncontrolled; and bigotry implies a firm, though not necessarily either an intelligent or a consistent, belief.

Henry VII.—Never did Shakespeare depart more widely from historical accuracy than when he penned the feeble and inanimate character of the first of the Tudors in *Richard III.* But this is a necessary consequence of a one-character play, and the character of Henry is purposely attenuated in order to give greater intensity to that of Richard, which it is essential to keep up till his career is closed. Henry VII. was one whose course of action was not greatly affected by dreams, fair-boding or otherwise. The most truly powerful king since the Norman Conquest, his power did not depend on the terror of his armies, nor on his military talents, for he was essentially

a man of peace. It depended solely on his vast personal influence. Nor was it less real because it was not ostentatiously exhibited. It was the solid substance only that he cared for, not the empty show, and his wisdom taught him that the latter was often destructive of the former. Nothing shows Henry's power and influence more forcibly than the peaceable state of the country during his reign. No king since the Conquest had had the moral courage to maintain peace throughout his reign, and in opposition to the will of the nation. If not employed in civil war they always endeavoured to attract military glory either by a crusade or a campaign on the Continent. This is almost invariably a sign of personal weakness. If a king is unable to rule wisely his own country, he endeavours to divert attention from his incapacity as a ruler to his capacity as a commander. To be able successfully to resist this temptation is a sign of moral and intellectual greatness. As an example of the truth of this statement we have only to look at the career of another king of England whose love of peace was as great as that of Henry VII., but whose intellect and whose force of character were insufficient to support it. And what was the result? The weakness of the peace-loving Henry VI. plunged the country into the most disastrous series of civil wars that ever a nation was cursed with. Henry VII., to use a modern expression, struck out a new line of action, and gained a great and unprecedented victory over prejudice and conventionality. That he was hated thoroughly no one will deny. It is the lot of all reformers, and Henry VII. was a reformer in every sense of the word. Before his time it had been enough that a king should be a good commander, and able to lead his soldiers to victorious battle-fields. That he should understand how to rule his country in time of peace, that he should endeavour to improve its commercial relations, that he should devote any part of his attention to filling the Royal Exchequer, that, instead of spending money in foreign wars, he should employ it to send out an Italian sailor on a voyage of discovery in the far West, were departures so new and striking

that only the strongest of kings could support the odium they brought upon him, while a weak one would inevitably have met death or deposition. And so firmly fixed were these prejudices that, although the world has advanced and more enlightened views now prevail, there are still those who, picking out a single trait in his character, think they have exhausted the subject when they write down the first of the Tudors 'an old miser.' To do him justice, we must also call him an educator of his country.

Henry VII. was the type of the Tudor family: all his descendants possessed his qualities in a greater or less degree, but in none were they so evenly balanced. It was the preponderance of certain qualities in the latter which showed their characters in a stronger light.

The execution of the Earl of Warwick was certainly, as has been so often stated, a blot on the character of Henry. But the assertion of such a fact is greatly to his credit. Blots are only visible on a white background, and such a crime would form no blot on the character of any member of the House of York, hardly on that of a Stuart.

Bacon has made much of Henry's avarice and extortion,¹ but the presence of a ruling passion of this character need not blind us to his many other great and good qualities. This lesson the life of his biographer himself may teach us. The 'wisest of mankind' was not free from the same shortcoming as that which he ascribes to Henry, though his opportunities of satisfying it were smaller. We do not deny his greatness as a philosopher, as a judge, and even as a man, on account of his notorious corruption and self-seeking servility. And the making of money by bribes and other similar doubtful methods was stated by Bacon in his defence of himself to be an almost universal custom.

But Henry VII. was not devoid of some of the special vices which were characteristic of the Celtic race. The mendacity of that race showed itself in his unparalleled duplicity, which he brought to the perfection of a fine art. Indeed,

¹ Bacon, *History of Henry VII.*

much of the system of diplomacy described by Machiavel appears to be, and perhaps is, an account of the actual doings of this monarch.

Henry's domestic affairs are not strictly connected with our subject. His marriage was a political necessity, and his imperfect sympathy with his wife was the cause of much trouble and unpopularity. But this was an inevitable result. He could have neither love nor respect for the despicable woman he was compelled to marry, and who, there is reason to believe, would have been willing to marry her uncle, Richard III., the murderer of her brothers, had he not discovered that the nation would be horrified at the unnatural union.

Henry VIII.—The character of Henry VIII., in spite of his more conspicuous position in English history, shows, upon the whole, a distinct falling-off in comparison with that of his father. Inheriting, as he did to the fullest extent, his father's intensity, will-power, and impatience of control, these qualities took an evil direction through the influence of his mother, from whom he inherited many of the vices of the House of York. The combination produced one of the most odious characters that ever sat on a throne. It would be idle to deny his great intellectual qualities, his insight into character, and his deep learning, theological and classical, as well as political; while his intuitive power of keeping in touch with the masses of the people has only been approached by that of his daughter Elizabeth. But, unlike his father, he was devoid of fixed purpose, had no definite plan of action, and was swayed by the caprice of the moment. Possessing all his father's despotic will, his aim was in effect weak and irresolute. So long as his will held good in any particular direction, it was all-powerful; but he was totally incapable of concentrating his energies in a single direction for any length of time. The slightest causes served to change his opinions, however intense they appeared to be; and they would then become as violent in the opposite direction. Direct opposition, whether active or underhand, augmented in the highest

degree the strength of his determination ; indeed, this was the only atmosphere in which his convictions seemed to flourish. It was this opposition which kept him for seven years intent on his divorce from Queen Catharine and his marriage with Anne Boleyn ; but the feeblest of arguments, if they succeeded in gaining his attention, would overturn his most fixed and cherished principles. A few words of theological sophistry from Gardiner sufficed to make him consent, certainly against his will, to the arrest and impeachment, with a view to execution, of his wife Catharine Parr, a proceeding that can hardly be considered trivial. A few words of feminine cajolery sufficed to make him change his intention and break out into violent abuse of those who attempted to carry out his own orders. It is this caprice, I submit, which is really the keynote of Henry's character ; the absence of that steady consistency of purpose which, combined with many other great qualities, formed the character of Henry VII. The influence of Henry VII. was therefore permanent ; that of Henry VIII. was chiefly felt during his lifetime. This may seem a strange statement in view of the so-called reformation in religion which occurred during this reign, but I am not alone in thinking that the Reformation was really due, not to Henry's quarrel with the Pope, but to a revival of religious feeling in the masses of the people, the result, to a large extent, of the earlier teaching of Wycliffe. The Agnostic Taine and the Calvinist D'Aubigné both concur in this view. The former says in reference to this subject : ' Great revolutions are not introduced by Court intrigues and official sleight of hand, but by social conditions and by popular instincts. When five millions of men are converted, it is because five millions of men *wish* to be converted. Let us therefore leave on one side the intrigues in high places, the scruples and passions of Henry VIII., the pliability and plausibility of Cranmer, the vacillations and baseness of the Parliament, the oscillation and tardiness of the Reformation, begun, then arrested, then pushed forward, then with one blow violently pushed back, then spread over the whole nation, and hedged in by a legal

establishment, built up from discordant materials, but yet solid and durable. Every great change has its root in the *soul*, and we have only to look close into this deep soil to discover the national inclination and the secular irritations from which Protestantism has issued.'¹

The latter (D'Aubigné) expresses a similar opinion:—

'To say that Henry VIII. was the reformer of his people is to betray our ignorance of history. The kingly power in England by turns opposed and favoured the reform in the Church; but it opposed before it favoured, and much more than it favoured.'²

It is an *à priori* impossibility for Henry VIII. to have had any permanent influence on the thought and feeling of the country. One with no fixed ideas of his own cannot mould the opinions of others. The feebleness of Henry's grasp is shown more fully by his treatment of his fellow-men than by the numerous and divergent forms of Christian opinion which by turns he attempted to cram down his subjects' throats with fire and hemp. Buckingham, Wolsey, Norfolk, Anne Boleyn, Catharine Howard, Cromwell, More, and Fisher, all experienced his highest esteem and his deepest hate; while Cranmer and Catharine Parr lived through two turns of the weathercock.

Thus Henry VIII., with all the great qualities he inherited from his father, failed, for want of a fixed principle of action, to confer any permanent benefit on his race and country. However great may have been his love of learning in the abstract, he can never be called its true friend who sacrificed either to expediency or to caprice such men as Wolsey, Fisher, More, Surrey, and many others of the most learned men of the time.

Shakespeare has done all that genius can do to soften the asperities and attenuate the vices of Henry VIII. Living

¹ *History of English Literature*, Van Laun's Translation.

² *History of the Reformation*, book xix. chap. i. page 770, White's Translation (revised by the author).

at a period so shortly after Henry's death, and knowing many who had had a personal knowledge of Henry's character, Shakespeare would have ready to his hand all the materials for such a work. His respect for Elizabeth would induce him to make the best of the character, while his own political feelings were always as distinctly in favour of the Tudors as they were in opposition to all members of the House of York. And the play represents the earlier and better part of Henry's life, before his tyrannical nature had reached its full development. Yet even at this period, and in spite of these tendencies in Shakespeare's mind, we see Henry's caprice and shallowness of conviction constantly breaking out. He believes all he hears, true or false, and whatever be the character of his informant. The acute discrimination of Catharine stands out in marked contrast, while Henry's fits and starts of love and hatred, passion and scruple, confidence and suspicion, form the centre-point of the play. If Shakespeare, writing in the Tudor period, could not clear the character of Henry VIII., can Froude in the Guelphic? Indeed, Mr. Froude's own argument on the subject is double-edged, and tells against him. Shakespeare's was not the opinion of a remote posterity living in the nineteenth century and 'unable to realise political embarrassments which have ceased to concern them.'¹

Such were the two Henry Tudors. Alike in a few general ethnical qualities, they were in most other respects complete opposites. As physically we see a marked descent from the finely-cut features, the noble head and face of Henry VII. to the bloated and porcine physiognomy and small and ill-shaped head of Henry VIII., so mentally and morally there is no less a descent from one who, with all his faults, with all his tyranny and extortion, had a fixed plan of action, taught his people the blessings of the peaceful arts, and proved a real benefactor to his country, to one who, with all his talents, with all his knowledge, with all his great surroundings, was guided by selfish caprice, and who, as Wolsey truly said of

¹ Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*.

him, 'rather than miss or want any part of his will, would endanger one half of his kingdom.'¹

The remarkable will-power of the Tudors is a point which Mr. Froude seems entirely to have overlooked. 'Henry VIII.,' he says, 'had no Prætorians encamped at Westminster to overawe the Legislature.'² But he makes no allowance for the influence exerted by a powerful mind. The power even of an army depends primarily on the will-power of its commander; and this power, as has been abundantly shown in history, may be exercised on bodies of men without the intervention of an army. The power of Henry VIII., like that of Henry VII., was personal.

Edward VI.—The character of Edward VI. can hardly be made a subject for discussion. A youth dying at sixteen, though a king, has had but little opportunity of exemplifying the qualities of his race. The love of learning which characterised all the Tudors in a greater or less degree, and which they derived from their ancestress, the noble Lady Margaret, is shown in Edward in his personal habits of study and love of the classics, and in the endowment of the many educational establishments which bear his name. But though a student and a Protestant, he showed no toleration. Religious persecution had no cessation during his reign; and he appears to have had as little compunction as Henry VIII. himself in consenting to the execution of those nearest and dearest to him. From his character at sixteen there is nothing to show that at fifty it might not have been a copy of his father's.

Mary I.—Of all the Tudor family there is none whose character requires more careful examination than Mary's. One of the most unfortunate women in history, both in her life and in her posthumous fame, there is nothing in her character which compares unfavourably with that of any other member. The characteristic qualities of her race she certainly possessed

¹ Quoted on the authority of Cavendish in Craik and Macfarlane's *Pictorial History of England*, vol. ii. book vi. chap. i. page 373, and in Guizot's *History of England*, chap. xvi. page 49.

² *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, Appendix to vol. ii. 'Fresh Evidence about Anne Boleyn,' page 600.

in a marked degree—viz. their intensity, their impatience of control, their power of will, and their religious fanaticism. But in many respects she compared favourably with the rest of the Tudor kings. She was free from the sensuality which characterised most of the members of this Celtic family, from the avarice and extortions of her father and grandfather, and from the duplicity of both the Henrys and Elizabeth. Bigoted and zealous after their manner as were all the Tudors, Mary was the only one that can be considered in any true sense religious. And Mary alone was capable of true devoted love. Her faithful attachment to the unworthy Philip stands in strong contrast to the peculiar matrimonial arrangements of Henry VII. and Henry VIII. and the intrigues of the coquetish Elizabeth. But all the crimes of her ancestors appear to have been visited on her head. Disgraced and driven from her home in early life through no fault of her own, her father thirsting for her blood,¹ burning with indignation at her mother's wrongs, she was equally unhappy in all her subsequent relations, unsuccessful in all her wars, a prey to constant and painful disease, treated with refined cruelty by her husband, thwarted in all her best objects, disappointed in her fondest hopes, hated by her subjects, and finally 'damn'd to everlasting fame' for no better reason than that, sprung from a persecuting race, and living in a persecuting age, she persecuted, as her brother, her father, and her grandfather had done before her. That Mary was a persecutor no one will deny. But the amount of religious persecution she inflicted will bear no comparison with that of either Henry VIII. or Elizabeth. They called their persecutions by another name it is true; but the act was in its essence precisely the same, the difference was in name only. Mary called Protestantism heresy, Elizabeth called Popery treason. The adherents of both suffered equally for their religion, and for that alone. A

¹ *Vide* Froude's 'Fresh Evidence about Anne Boleyn.' If Chapuys's letters to the Emperor prove anything, they prove conclusively that but for their relationship to Charles both Queen Catharine and Mary would have been put out of the way.

persecutor by hereditary descent, a persecutor by education, belonging to a persecuting Church, and advised to persecute by her spiritual advisers, is it not too much to expect that she alone, the most conservative of her race, should be in advance of her age, and emancipate herself from this too prevalent custom? And she would be no Tudor if she proceeded in a half-hearted manner: she had all the fierceness, bigotry, intolerance, and intensity of her race. And there is little doubt that she believed persecution to be a religious duty. This we can hardly assert of the subtler minds of Henry VII., Henry VIII., and Elizabeth. Intellectually, perhaps, Mary was the feeblest of the Tudors, but morally she was the strongest. All dynasties have their scapegoat; there is no fact so well established in history as that the sins of the fathers are visited on the children. The crimes of the Bourbons were heaped on the head of the unoffending Louis XVI. Of the English Stuarts Charles I. was not the guiltiest. And the Nemesis of the House of Tudor fell upon the most virtuous of her line.

Elizabeth.—The last of the Tudor kings shows no falling off in the distinctive qualities of her House. Indeed she partakes in some degree of the character of them all. A religious persecutor like the rest, her own religious convictions were, to a greater degree than any of them, a matter of expediency. At the beginning of her reign it was doubtful whether Popery or Protestantism would prevail, and her choice doubtless depended to some extent on the increasing influence in England of the latter, and on the attitude of the Pope and the bishops towards her. The power of her will there is no room to doubt; and her peers, both temporal and spiritual, found that even a woman could inherit a considerable share of the arbitrary nature of Henry VIII. At the same time she was second only to him in her estimate of the popular feeling. Her respect for the *vox populi* was one great secret of her success. But with her counsellors and with foreign States her line of conduct was almost as Machiavellian and as replete with dissimulation as that of Henry VII. himself. As a judge

of character she certainly excelled: her advisers were all men of great parts; the Earl of Leicester was the only really worthless character who enjoyed her favour, and here, there is little reasonable doubt, she was blinded by Cupid. She could see through the feebleness of character of the great Bacon, and though she made use of him in the vilest offices, though he sacrificed for ever his good name out of abject servility to her, she never advanced, never fully trusted him.

The unprecedented success of Elizabeth's reign was due partly to her own character, partly to that of her ancestors. As all the crimes and shortcomings of the Tudors appear to have been visited on the head of the unfortunate Mary, so the accumulated results of their great qualities were reaped by Elizabeth. All that had gone before paved the way for the grandeur, political, naval and military, literary, philosophical, and commercial, of her reign. Her talents were certainly not equal to those of her father and grandfather, but she had greater constancy of purpose than the former, and greater sympathy with the masses than the latter. She had not the conscientious bigotry of her sister, but the greater adaptability of her religious convictions served her in good stead with the people. All her qualities were telling ones, and her popularity has never been equalled before or since in our history. Few rulers have ever been able to shed with impunity the blood of a crowned head upon the scaffold: the execution of Charles I. almost turned the tide of popular opinion against the powerful Cromwell: but so great and durable was the popularity of Elizabeth that the condemnation and execution of the Queen of Scots were followed by bonfires and demonstrations of joy throughout the city of London.

In fine, it was during the century allotted to the native line of Tudor kings that our country emerged from the condition of mediæval barbarism into that of post-mediæval civilisation. And this was due in no small degree to the personal character of the race from which they sprang. It was Henry VII. who first practically showed his subjects the blessings of peace, and thus paved the way for the vast progress made in

the peaceful arts in commerce, in literature, in science, in philosophy, in discovery, and in legislation that took place during his reign and those of his successors. And the result of this teaching was made permanent by the genius of Shakespeare, who, by his vivid pictures of the evil consequences of war, and the bitter sarcasm with which he treated the old warlike spirit, has done more than any other man since the early foundation of Christianity to establish a love of peace on a sound mental footing.

'I am not yet of Percy's mind, the Hotspur of the North ; he that kills me some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife, "Fie upon this quiet life! I want work!"'¹

'Can honour set a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? No. What *is* honour? A word. What is in that word honour? What is that honour? Air. Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. But will it not live with the living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it.'²

Still more is war divested of its artificial glamour and made to appear in all its naked horror and absurdity in the account of the siege of Troy in 'Troilus and Cressida.' The disillusioning worked out in this play in the person of Ther-sites is a boon to humanity. The real origin of the war is here reduced to its true dimensions. The semi-divine heroes of the 'Iliad' are stripped of the artificial halo of romance in which they have been enveloped by the genius of Homer, and shown to be what they really are, uncultured barbarians in an extremely low state of mental and moral development, with only a faint glimmering sense of justice, capable of all but the most atrocious crimes, recognising none but the most rudimentary obligations, and, indeed, hardly capable of distinguishing between right and wrong. The ethics of the 'Iliad,' Shakespeare teaches us, are not adapted for Christians of the sixteenth century.

¹ *Henry IV.*, part I, act ii. sc. 4.

² *Ibid.* act v. sc. 1.

And it was the Tudors who, by crushing the power of the aristocracy, paved the way for that of the masses, which has been increasing ever since. This was a necessary result of their policy. No monarchy can subsist for long without some external support. Tyranny is necessarily self-destructive. For a time the invincible will of the Tudors sufficed to uphold them in their power without the props they had thrown aside. But as soon as their firmly grasped sceptre descended to a feebler race, the democracy asserted its power, and the monarchy of former times was for ever swept away.

On the one side we see the great and powerful House of Tudor, representative of the royal authority, opposing its vast strength against all rivalry, both lay and ecclesiastic, and asserting its despotic will against the world. On the other side we see Cromwell, as the representative of the national will, applying the whole force of his still greater capacity and will-power in the contrary direction. And between these two opposing forces (both Celtic in their chief exponents) we see the Norman House of Stuart¹ and the Norman line of peers, both degenerated from centuries of power and mental indolence, crushed to atoms as between two vast millstones.

'Tis dangerous, when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensèd points
Of mighty opposites.

Cromwell.—Of the second family of our native rulers we have practically but one example. Of the early history of the ancestors of Oliver Cromwell we know but little so far as their personal characters are concerned. They attained in early times to a distinguished position in Welsh history, and at a later period they succeeded in attracting the attention of the Tudor and Stuart kings, under whom they served in various capacities.² But whatever may have been the actual course of the mental development of this family, however long may have continued its latent period of growth, we know

¹ *Vide* Appendix, Stuart pedigree.

² *Vide* Appendix, Cromwell pedigree.

that it reached its culminating point in the mind of Oliver Cromwell, and that then, by an almost universal law, retrograde metamorphosis immediately set in, and the accumulation of mental power came to an end. In minds of the highest order this has always been the case. It is exemplified by Aristotle in the degeneracy of mind (*ἀβελτερία*) of the descendants of Cimon, of Pericles, and of Socrates; and more recent experience points in the same direction. We must therefore consider Oliver Cromwell as the end of a series. If his great qualities were not inherited by his descendants, it was because the mental power of the race was, as it were, used up. The culmination and subsequent degeneration of intellect in families is a fact which no arguments can explain away. *φορὰ γὰρ τίς ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς γένεσιν ἀνδρῶν, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τὰς χώρας γιγνομένοις καὶ ἐνόστε, ἂν ἢ ἀγαθόν, τὸ γένος, ἐγγύγονται διὰ τινος χρόνου ἄνδρες περιττοί. καὶ πάλιν ἀναδίδωσιν.*¹ ('De Rhetorica,' lib. ii. cap. 15.)

We have seen in the Tudor family the qualities of the Celtic race standing out in strong relief; but shorn of much of their effect by certain shortcomings and weaknesses, moral or intellectual, in each of its members. But in Cromwell we have no deductions to make allowance for, no indecision to mar the full force of his influence. Whatever hesitation of purpose there may have been in his own mind, in his own mind the struggle was worked out, and the world saw only its result in the unalterable determination and inevitable course of action. He appears, by his own confession, to have experienced great difficulty in deciding on any strong course of action; but when once he had convinced *himself* his work was done, no earthly power could intervene between his intent and its fulfilment. And the result of his mental struggles was constantly in favour of the extreme course of action. Whatever was the question at issue, he always played trumps,

¹ For there is a certain (definite) ebb and flow in (the mental development of) families of men, as indeed there is in that of nations; and sometimes, if the family be a talented one, (a succession of) eminent men arise in it for a certain period; and then a backward movement takes place.

or, more scientifically speaking, the *dynamic* invariably prevailed over the *static* forces of his nature.

In Cromwell the old spirit of religious fanaticism existed in all its force, and framed the whole course of his life; and though not a religious persecutor, but in favour of the most perfect liberty of worship,¹ his hatred of the Churches of Rome, of England, and even of Scotland, had no small influence on his dealings with those in high authority in Great Britain, and with those proceedings which caused the terror of his name in the Sister Isle. In Cromwell, far more than in the Tudors, was revived the old emotional religious spirit of the Celts. So great was the spiritual intensity of Puritanism, of which Cromwell is a type, that it needed no visible signs or tokens to impress the minds of its followers. It was Puritanism, as Taine admits, which brought about the regeneration of England: and but for this strong current, the Church of England would have fallen back into the hands of Rome. Cromwell, like a true Celt, knew how to dissemble, and no doubt often turned the faculty to good advantage; but this does not prove, as has been so often assumed, that he was therefore a hypocrite in religion. It is possible, nay, inevitable, that his vast intellect was able to detect some of the mistakes and extravagances of many of its exponents; but there can be little doubt that, upon the whole, he was deeply imbued with that extreme form of spirituality which had so powerful an effect on his followers, and which has moulded the whole tenour of religious thought in Britain ever since.

Of Cromwell's intensity, will-power, and impatience of control it is needless to speak. In him were these qualities of the Celt personified. In him they found a field of action that had never before existed. The phileleuthery of the Tudors was personal, that of Cromwell was national. Independent of the least shadow of control as were the Tudors, it was no part of their programme to allow liberty to their subjects. In their laws they no doubt studied the best interests of the

¹ P. E. Dove, in the *Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography*, calls him 'the apostle of religious toleration.'

people, but their liberty was the last thing they thought of. If paternal government can ever be a success it should have been under the Tudors ; for by them it was carried out in its most extreme form and under the most favourable conditions, and under them it does not appear to have been greatly resented. But it was this which finally overthrew the monarchy : the love of liberty in the human mind is greater than the love of happiness and content, greater than the love of ease and protection. No nation, certainly no nation of British origin, will long submit to a condition of slavery, however paternal in its origin. The love of personal freedom which characterised the Tudors existed also in their subjects, and, accumulating in the minds of men, broke out in overwhelming force in the seventeenth century, and, under their great leader, overthrew the monarchy which had done so much, had passed so many stringent laws, to ensure their personal well-being, but had paid so little regard to their love of freedom.

And now, after 200 years of freedom, in the teeth of all modern principles of political economy, Socialists are again clamouring for that State-interference which existed in its only possible form under the Tudors, when men who failed to obtain employment were flogged at the cart's-tail, and vagrancy was punished with death ; a state of things which was fatal to the government of the time, and which, but for the genius of Cromwell, would have led to complete anarchy ; a state of things which our fathers fought and died to abolish. Whatever it may be to other nations, to Englishmen freedom is dearer than bread, and if ever this blessing is interfered with by excessive State interference in the interests of any or all classes, another Cromwell will arise in our midst who will show that the old Celtic love of freedom is still amongst us.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. H. E. MALDEN said : I have listened with great interest to Dr. Palmer's paper, which deals, I think, with a very important and interesting subject : the permanence of family types, intellectual and physical, and the possibility of tracing them in history. On a large scale ethnic characteristics are very important, as helping to determine the course of the history of nations ; and, on a smaller scale, family characteristics are important when displayed in a ruling family such as the Tudors. That such family characteristics exist no one can doubt who has investigated, however slightly, the subject of scientific genealogy. The Claudii in Rome, the Stuarts in Scotland and England, the Bourbons in France, Spain, and Italy are interesting examples. In many of these cases, however, notably in the case of the Bourbons and the Claudian emperors, constant intermarriages have tended to preserve or intensify a type. I doubt whether it is safe to assume that one single male line of ancestors, from whom a surname is taken, is necessarily the dominant factor in the family character of their descendants. It may be so in some cases, but a complete investigation must take count of all the more immediate ancestors. More remote ancestors exercise rapidly decreasing proportions of influence, unless they recur through intermarriage. If a father is responsible, on an average, for half his child, a grandparent is responsible for one quarter, a great-grandparent for one-eighth, and so on. Mr. Francis Galton, whose experience of genealogical facts is probably greater than that of anyone else, says :

'We should remember the insignificance of any single ancestor in a remote degree. In the fourth generation backwards there are sixteen ancestors, from whom the child receives on the average an equal inheritance. . . .'

'I found that when making photographic composites of persons of the same race, that the change of one component in a group of eight different portraits rarely made any appreciable difference in the compound result. . . .'

'But when an alien element of race or disease has been introduced into the family, its influence lasts longer ; so that a dash of Hebrew, or even of Huguenot, blood may be traced far beyond the great-grandchildren.'—*Introduction to Record of Family Faculties*, pp. 1, 2, F. Galton, F.R.S.

I should doubt, therefore, whether the characteristics of the Tudors can safely be called Celtic. Far more should I doubt whether

Cromwell was appreciably Celtic at all. Richard Williams was, according to the received story, great-grandfather to Oliver Cromwell in the *male* line. But Richard Williams had an English mother, and to judge from his name he was the descendant in the male line of one of the Norman adventurers in Wales. A pure Welshman would not be 'son of William.' At all events for three generations before the Protector the family intermarried in the Eastern counties. To revert, however, to the Tudors. Henry VII.'s paternal great-grandfather and great-grandmother were apparently Welsh; therefore his grandfather was Welsh, and he was one-quarter Welsh, one-quarter French, one-half English or Norman. (*See Genealogy subjoined, pp. 367-370.*)

This supposes that each ancestor had the average influence upon him. We can hardly accept Welsh as such a specially alien influence that its effects would be marked, as the effects of Hebrew blood are marked, beyond the average. Celt and Teuton are Aryans. Welsh blood is not always entirely Celtic; English blood is not always entirely Teuton. The French blood of Katharine de France had at least as much chance of modifying the characteristics of the family as had the Welsh blood of Owen Tudor. But surely when we consider the characteristics of the House of Tudor we do not look chiefly to Henry VII. The imperious will, the masterfulness, the brutal English common-sense, the fellow-feeling with their countrymen which made Henry VIII. and Elizabeth popular through all, are not characteristic of the first Tudor. Even his personal courage was not quite above suspicion. I am not considering their comparative excellence as sovereigns; but I do say that there is a strong family likeness between Henry VIII., his children and his sisters, which is not remarkably like anything which we know of Henry VII., and which appears when the element of Celtic blood is reduced to one-eighth and then to one-sixteenth in the composition of the family. Is it possible to tell whence this common character came? It is, I think, possible to suggest a more likely origin than the very insignificant Owen Tudor and his silly Valois wife. If we look into the subjoined genealogy we shall see that, among the elements which concentrate upon Henry VIII., the Plantagenets, including the Beauforts, are the only family that recurs among the immediate ancestors, and that further back the Plantagenets recur again and again. Elizabeth of York was descended in three lines from Edward III., in two more from Edward I., and in another from Henry III. Henry VII. was descended from Edward III., Edward I., and Henry III., in different lines. Queen Elizabeth's mother, Anne

Boleyn, was also descended from Edward I. The recurrence of Plantagenet blood is remarkable, and I should venture to say the recurrence of Plantagenet characteristics too. We, at all events, bring the Tudors here into connection with a powerful family whose hereditary abilities and passions are a commonplace of history. They are connected, moreover, with this family through repeated intermarriages of cousins, the influence of which upon family characteristics is known to be extremely powerful; there are no other remarkable family combinations in their ancestry to counteract this; and finally, they show much of the courage and energy, much of the *bonhomie*, and much of the cruelty and sensuality, of some of these closely interwoven ancestors. Absolute proof cannot be looked for in such a matter, but I am strongly of opinion that the Tudors inherited from two women, the Lady Margaret Beaufort and the Lady Elizabeth of York, something more than a claim to the English crown—the ability, I mean, to wear it. I must let the subjoined genealogy (pp. 367–370) explain my reasons more fully.

Dr. Palmer, in reply, said:—Mr. Malden, in his remarks, has so fully entered into the spirit of my paper, that I can only thank him for bringing into prominence its central idea, while venturing to differ from him in a few matters of detail. It is objected that too much importance is attached to hereditary influence in the direct male line of descent. If we believe in hereditary influence at all, in the persistence of type, and in the accumulation or evolution of mental or physical qualities, we must attribute a certain predominance of these influences in the long run to a male line of descent. The familiar way in which we speak of family characters shows that universal experience has consented to attribute a certain generic similarity among those bearing the same surname.¹ The Stuarts and the Claudii were not alone in having characters which marked them out from other men. Nor were the elder Bourbons, who, though intellectually far inferior, resembled the Stuarts in many respects. Charles X. and his grandson learned no more in adversity than Louis XIV. had done in prosperity. The mental or physical character of a woman may sometimes be traced in her far-off descendants, but it comes down in the male line. This is the case with Nell Gwynne, whose features may still be traced in the direct line of her descendants. The Hapsburg line came to an end with Maria Theresa, and a new departure appeared to take place

¹ *E.g.* 'The family character seems to be owing partly to the physical connection' (Adam Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, p. 306). Mr. Malden himself, even when opposing this view, gives unconscious support to it by speaking of *Plantagenet characteristics*.

under her son Joseph II. 'Joseph,' said Frederick the Great, 'is an emperor such as Germany has not had for a long time.'

To take a more striking instance, William the Conqueror we consider to be a typical Norman, and yet his mother was a French girl of humble parentage. And surely we may assume that William inherited his courage, his military capacity, and his dauntless love of enterprise from his distant ancestor, Rolf the Ganger, rather than from the worthy tanner who was his grandfather on the maternal side. His warlike spirit certainly showed no falling off from that of the long line of his paternal ancestors, though if we accept the mathematical theory adopted by Mr. Malden, it ought to have deteriorated to the extent of one-half from the admixture of plebeian blood.

In speaking of the Celtic qualities of the Tudors, I have excluded those which are not common to them all, as these may have come from the female side; nor would I in the least underestimate the influence on them of Plantagenet blood, especially that of the mothers of Henry VII. and Henry VIII. Indeed, I have attributed most of their vices to Elizabeth of York, their learning and what virtues they possessed, to Margaret Beaufort. But where character is thus traced, it is always in its origin strongly marked. On the other hand, we can hardly expect a woman to transmit her character to her descendants when she has no character worth mentioning to transmit; which, as Mr. Malden admits, was the case with Catherine of Valois. Therefore on this ground also, we cannot accept as proven the equal division of hereditary impression among all the ancestors indiscriminately. Without endorsing Pope's dictum that 'most women have no characters at all,' we may safely assert that this absence of a marked character would occur more frequently on the female side, and that this alone would suffice to give a preponderating influence to male descent.

The Tudors and the Stuarts were both families possessing strongly marked characters. The Tudor character was seen in all the direct descendants of Henry VII.; and it contains elements which we do not find in any of the Plantagenet kings. No one would deny the existence of the Tudor character in his grand-daughters Mary and Elizabeth, diverse as were the characters of their mothers. But there is very little of the Tudor in James I. who was Henry's great-great-grandson, both on his father's and his mother's side. The line of descent having passed through two females on each side (Margaret Tudor and Mary Stuart, on the one side, and Margaret Tudor and Margaret Douglas on the other) the Tudor stamp was as completely effaced as if it had never existed. Yet the Stuart type continued in all its force;

for in Charles I. we see as strongly as in his far-off ancestor, James I. of Scotland, the love of literature and the fine arts, combined with that uncompromising spirit of resistance to public opinion which led them both to a violent death. Here the direct line of descent was broken only once, and both were descended in the male line from the same ancestor. But when, in its turn, the Stuart line is broken, by female descent, in its turn also the Stuart type disappears. It would be difficult to recognise in George I. with his contempt for 'bainting and boetry,' the great-grandson of one of the Stuart kings, who, with all their faults, were men of culture, talent, and refinement.

Of modern instances of heredity, one of the most conspicuous is that of the late Charles Darwin, who possessed in the highest degree that rare combination of accurate scientific observation with a wide range of philosophical speculation which existed in a less developed form in his grandfather, Erasmus Darwin.

But the above are only a few of the more striking *results*. It would take too long to enter into all the causes which bring about the persistence and development of certain qualities, or their decadence and obliteration. In short, a man's character is not the simple resultant of all the different elements which have been introduced by his ancestors, but depends on the successive cultivation of some and the neglect and consequent disappearance of others.

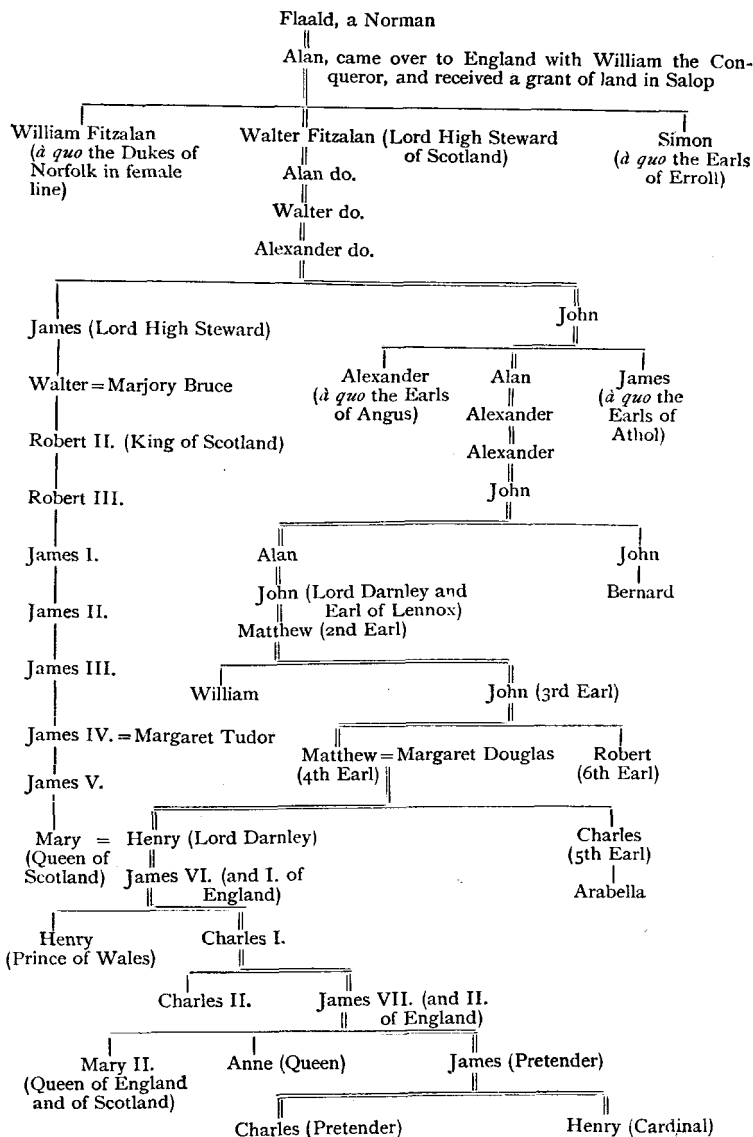
The existence of hereditary peerages cannot, perhaps, be employed as an argument; but unless some special tendency to persistence of type in the male line be accepted, there can be no *raison d'être* for their origin or their continuance.

With regard to the origin of the name Williams, Morgan Williams the great-great-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell, was the first of the family who bore this surname. Morgan's father was William ap Ievan, and thus his correct designation would be ap William; but being born in England, he appears to have adopted the English form Williams, as became the son of an English courtier. Up to this point, the nationality of the names is unmistakable.

Mr. Malden has thrown some doubt on the personal courage of Henry VII. His *moral* courage, as I have endeavoured to point out, was of a very high order; whether he also possessed the lower *physical* form is of minor importance. The latter, when it exists alone is but a poor substitute for the former.

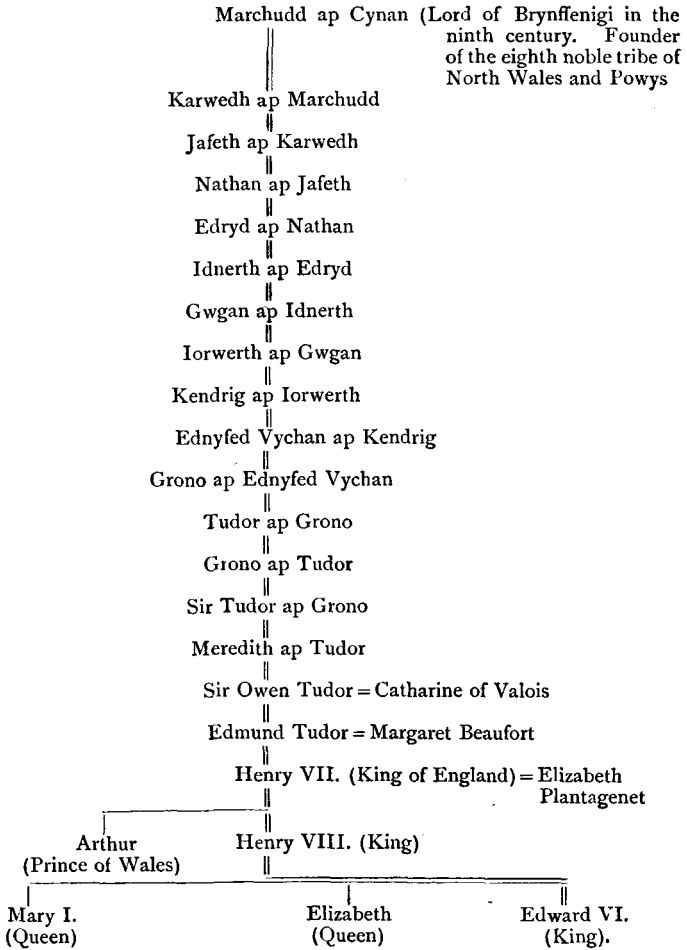
APPENDIX.

PEDIGREE OF THE STUARTS.¹

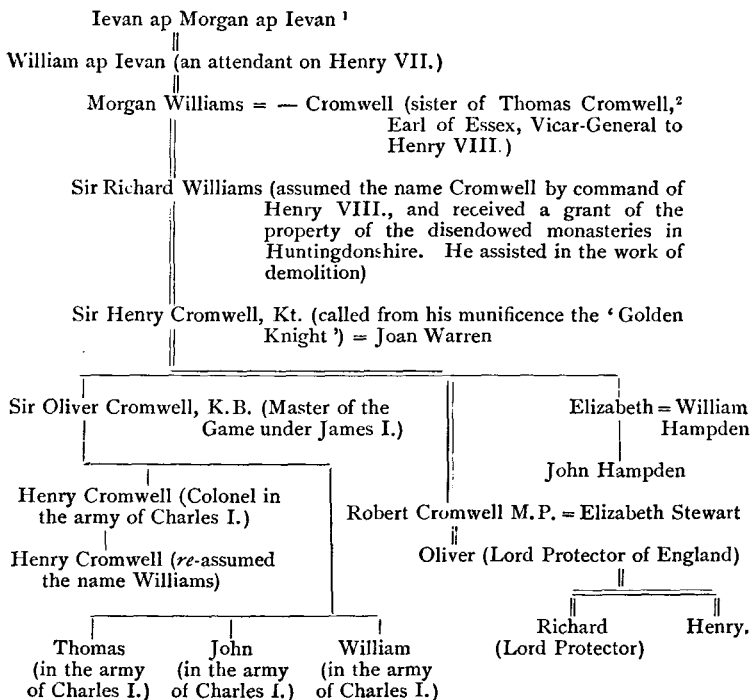


¹ The double line shows the direct male descent.

THE TUDOR PEDIGREE.



THE CROMWELL PEDIGREE.



¹ Ievan ap Morgan ap Ievan is said to have been descended in a direct male line (tenth in descent) from Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, King of Powys, and thus in the female line from Rhodri Mawr, King of Wales in the ninth century.

² It is uncertain who this lady was. She is called in Burke Anne Cromwell, but Cromwell appears to have had only two sisters, Elizabeth and Katherine, the former being married to William Wellyfed. His wife's sister was married to a Wyllyams alias Williamson, and had a son Richard. (*Vide* Thomas Cromwell's will.)

TABLE SHOWING THE PLANTAGENET DESCENT OF HENRY VIII.
IN NINE DIFFERENT LINES.

