

CROMWELL'S PLACE IN HISTORY

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CROMWELL'S PLACE IN HISTORY

FOUNDED ON SIX LECTURES DELIVERED IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

BY

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FORD'S LECTURER IN ENGLISH HISTORY, 1896

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Kym - 3085

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK AND BOMBAY
1897

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P R E F A C E



It would be as undesirable as it is impossible to reproduce in print words spoken without notes to a sympathetic audience. Much even of my argument had passed from my mind when I was requested to publish what I had said last autumn. That I have been able to keep before myself the general line of thought on which my lectures were based is owing to two students of Lady Margaret Hall, Miss L. Verney and Miss Gunter, who kindly placed their notes at my disposal. To a certain extent, however, the lectures have been recast. Things fit to be spoken are not always fit to be printed, and things fit to be printed are not always fit to be spoken.

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LECTURE I

THE PURITAN AND CONSTITUTIONAL OPPOSITION

THE object of these lectures is not to deal with the biography of Cromwell, but to estimate his relation to the political and ecclesiastical movements of his time—to show how he was influenced by them and influenced them in turn.

The Revolution in which Cromwell played a conspicuous part was, like all other revolutions, the product of two factors, dissatisfaction with existing ideas and dissatisfaction with existing practice. The former appeals to thinking men who care about ideas, the latter to the mass which cares about practice. When the two are fused together the opposition becomes irresistible. Under ordinary circumstances political evolution results from the partial and gradual blending of these two influences when the holders of authority have become obnoxious alike to the men who think and to the men who feel. When the mischief is too tenacious to be got