

Speech 10 was at the Dissolution of the Second Protectorate Parliament on 4th February 1657. (Note - English Calendar. New Year started on 25th March).

What he might have expected in this Meeting of Parliament. Angry debating and dissolution.

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MY LORDS, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

I had very comfortable expectations that God would make the meeting of this Parliament a blessing; and, the Lord be my witness, I desired the carrying on the Affairs of the Nation to these ends! The blessing which I mean, and which we ever climbed at, was mercy, truth, righteousness and peace,-which I desired might be improved.

That which brought me into the capacity I now stand in was the Petition and Advice given me by you; who, in reference to the ancient Constitution ("Which had Two Houses and a King,"-though we do not in words mention that!), did draw me to accept the place of Protector. ("I was a kind of Protector already, I always understood; but let that pass. Certainly you invited me to become the Protector I now am, with Two Houses and other appendages, and there lies the gist of the matter at present.") There is not a man living can say I sought it; no, not a man nor woman treading upon English ground. But contemplating the sad condition of these Nations relieved from an intestine War into a six or seven years Peace, I did think the Nation happy therein! ("I did think even my first Protectorate was a successful kind of thing!") But to be petitioned thereunto, and advised by you to undertake such a Government, a burden too heavy for any creature; and this to be done by the House that then had the Legislative capacity:-certainly I did look that the same men who made the Frame should make it good unto me! I can say in the presence of God, in comparison with whom we are but like poor creeping ants upon the earth,-I would have been glad to have lived under my woodside, to have kept a flock of sheep-(Yes, your Highness; it had been infinitely quieter, healthier, freer. But it is gone forever: no woodside now, and peaceful nibbling sheep, and great still thoughts, and glimpses of God "in the cool of the evening walking among the trees:" nothing but toil and trouble, double, double, till one's discharge arrive, and the Eternal Portals open! Nay even there by your woodside, you had not been happy: not you,-with thoughts going down to the Death-kingdoms, and Heaven so near you on this hand, and Hell so near you on that. Nay who would grudge a little temporary Trouble, when he can do a large spell of eternal Work? Work that is true, and will last through all Eternity! Complain not, your Highness!-His Highness does not complain. "To have kept a flock of sheep," he says)-rather than undertaken such a Government as this. But undertaking it by the Advice and Petition of you, I did look that you who had offered it unto me should make it good.

I did tell you, at a Conference concerning it, that I would not undertake it, unless there might be some other Persons to interpose between me and the House of Commons, who then had the power, and prevent tumultuary and popular spirits: and it was granted I should name another House. I named it

of men who shall meet you wheresoever you go, and shake hands with you; and tell you it is not Titles, nor Lords, nor Parties that they value, but a Christian and an English Interest! Men of your own rank and quality, who will not only be a balance unto you, but a new force added to you, while you love England and Religion.

Having proceeded upon these terms;-and finding such a spirit as is too much predominant, everything being too high or too low; where virtue, honesty, piety and justice are omitted:-I thought I had been doing that which was my duty, and thought it would have satisfied you! But if everything must be too high or too low, you are not to be satisfied. (There is an innocency and childlike goodness in these poor sentences, which speaks to us in spite of rhetoric.)

Again I would not have accepted of the Government, unless I knew there would be a just accord between the Governor and Governed; unless they would take an Oath to make good what the Parliament's Petition and Advice advised me unto! Upon that I took an Oath (On the Twenty-sixth of June last,) and they (On the Twentieth of January last, at their long Table in the Ante-room) took another Oath upon their part answerable to mine:-and did not everyone know upon what condition he swore? God knows, I took it upon the conditions expressed in the 'Act of Government'! And I did think we had been upon a foundation, and upon a bottom; and thereupon I thought myself bound to take it, and to be "advised by the Two Houses of Parliament." And we standing unsettled till we arrived at that, the consequences would necessarily have been confusion, if that had not been settled. Yet there were not constituted "Hereditary Lords" nor "Hereditary Kings;" 'no,' the Power consisteth in the Two Houses and myself'.-I do not say, that was the meaning of your Oath to you. That were to go against my own principles, to enter upon another man's conscience. God will judge between you and me! If there had been in you any intention of Settlement, you would have settled upon this basis, and have offered your judgment and opinion, 'as to minor improvements.'

God is my witness; I speak it; it is evident to all the world and people living, That a new business hath been seeing in the Army against the actual Settlement made by your consent. I do not speak to these Gentlemen ("pointing to his right hand," says the Report) or Lords, or whatsoever you will call them; I speak not this to them, but to you.-You advised me to come into this place, to be in a capacity by your Advice. Yet instead of owning a thing, some must have I know now what;-and you have not only disjointed yourselves but the whole Nation, which is in likelihood of running into more confusion in these fifteen or sixteen days that you have sat, than it hath been from the rising of the last session to this day. Through the intention of devising a Commonwealth again! That some people might be the men that might rule all! (Intemperate Haselrig, peppery Scott, and such like: very inadequate they to "rule;" inadequate to keep their own heads on their shoulders, if they were not RULED, they!) And they are endeavouring to engage the Army to carry that thing.-And hath that man been "true to this Nation," whosoever he be, especially that hath taken an Oath, thus to

prevaricate? These designs have been made among the Army, to break and divide us. I speak this in the presence of some of the Army: That these things have not been according to God, nor according to truth, pretend what you will! (No, your Highness; they have not.) These things tend to nothing else but the playing of the King of Scot's game (if I may so call him); and I think myself bound before God to do what I can to prevent it. ("I, for my share:" Yea!)

That which I told you in the Banqueting-House 'ten days ago' was true, That there are preparations of force to invade us. God is my witness, it hath been confirmed to me since, not a day ago, That the King of Scots hath an Army at the water's side, ready to be shipped for England. I have it from those who have been eyewitnesses of it. And while it is doing, there are endeavours from some who are not far from this place, to stir up the people of this Town into a tumulting, -(City Petitions are mounting very high, -as perhaps Sir Arthur and others know!)-what if I said, Into a rebellion! And I hope I shall make it appear to be no better, if God assist me. (Noble scorn and indignation is gradually getting the better of every other feeling in his Highness and us.)

It hath been not only your endeavour to pervert the Army while you have been sitting, and to draw them to state the question about a "Commonwealth;" but some of you have been listing of persons, by commission of Charles Stuart, to join with any Insurrection that may be made. (What a cold qualm in some conscious heart that listens to this! Let him tremble, every joint of him;-or not visibly tremble; but cower home to his place, and repent; and remember in whose hand his beggarly existence in this world lies!) And what is like to come upon this, the Enemy being ready to invade us, but even present blood and confusion?-(The next and final Sentence is partly on fire)-And if this be so, I do assign 'it' to this cause: Your not assenting to what you did invite me to by your Petition and Advice, as that which might prove the Settlement of the Nation. And if this be the end of your sitting, and this be your carriage- (Sentence now all beautifully blazing), I think it high time that an end be put to your sitting. And I DO DISSOLVE THIS PARLIAMENT! And let God be judge between you and me!