

**HARPER'S STEREOTYPE
EDITION; LIFE OF
OLIVER CROMWELL. IN
TWO VOLUMES. VOL. I**

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Harper's Stereotype Edition; Life of Oliver Cromwell. In Two Volumes. Vol. I by M. Russell

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M. RUSSELL

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Recommendations of the Family Library.

THE following opinions, selected from highly respectable Journals, will enable those who are unacquainted with the Family Library to form an estimate of its merits. Numerous other notices, equally favourable, and from sources equally respectable, might be presented if deemed necessary.

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Harper's Stereotype Edition.

L I F E

OF

OLIVER CROMWELL. .

BY THE

REV. M. ^{Richard} RUSSELL, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF "A CONNEXION OF SACRED AND PROFANE
HISTORY," "HISTORY OF PALESTINE," "HISTORY
OF EGYPT," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE object of these volumes is to give a popular outline of the History of Oliver Cromwell, who, it is allowed on all hands, was, in many respects, the most extraordinary man that England has ever produced. Like all persons who from a low beginning have risen to elevated rank, he had ardent friends, and most violent enemies; and hence the record of his life, in most instances, has either been an undistinguishing eulogy or a furious invective. The personal and political animosity which sprang from the double struggle of the Civil War survived a long time the events which marked its progress; as a proof of which, we have only to mention the bitter hatred which was directed against the memory of Cromwell by the writers who espoused the royal cause immediately after the Restoration, and who continued to exercise a powerful influence over the public mind as long as the Stuart dynasty occupied the throne.

But in this as in all other instances where the triumph of faction is carried too far, or where the cause of truth is sacrificed to the interests of a party, a strong reaction took place, as soon as the bias was

removed which had perverted at once the judgment and the feelings of the people. The men of the Commonwealth were restored once more to public favour; the virtues of Hampden, and the patriotism of Pym, became again subjects of popular veneration; and the ablest writers were not ashamed to acknowledge, that even the Protector himself possessed many high qualities, both as a statesman and a soldier; that he increased or maintained the glory of his country; and that he wanted nothing to secure for him a place among the most illustrious of princes but a just title to exercise the power which he had seized with an armed hand.

- ▼ In this case, as in the former, there was manifested a decided tendency to excess. The hypocrisy and dissimulation of Cromwell were forgotten, or represented as nothing more than that political caution which was altogether indispensable in the difficult circumstances wherein he administered the government. His ambition, even when it deviated the farthest from the path of sincerity and honour, was identified with that honest love of fame which warms every generous bosom; or if it was admitted to be in any respect questionable, it was vindicated as the justifiable feeling of self-defence, which compels a man to take out of the hand of an enemy the sword which he is sure would be used against himself. Again where it was not possible to throw upon his character the direct rays of approbation, an attempt was made to secure for it a favourable light, by darkening to the utmost degree the actions and motives of King Charles the First.