

What sort of man was Oliver Cromwell?

Read each of these sources carefully. Use your knowledge, and understanding of Cromwell, together with word processing, copying and pasting skills to answer the questions underneath each source.

Description of Oliver Cromwell

The first time that I ever took notice of him was in the beginning of the Parliament held in November 1640, when I vainly thought myself a courtly young gentleman. I came into the House well clad, and perceived a gentleman speaking (whom I knew not) very ordinarily dressed, for it was a plain-cloth suit, which seemed to have made by an ill country tailor: his linen was plain and not very clean. His stature was of good size, his sword stuck close to his side, his countenance swollen and reddish, his voice sharp and full of passion.

Sir Philip Warwick, Memoirs of the Reign of Charles I (1676-77)

Questions

1. Who wrote this source? *Highlight or change text to red*
2. When was this source written? *Highlight or change text to blue*
3. What does this source tell you about Cromwell?

Type your answer and explanation

Cromwell after Marston Moor

Truly England and the Church of God hath had a great favour from the Lord, in this great victory given to us, such as the like never was since this war began. We never charged but we routed the enemy. The left wing, which I commanded, being our own horse beat the entire Prince's horse, God made them as stubble to our swords. Sir, God hath taken away your eldest son by a cannon shot. It broke his leg. We were forced to have it cut off, whereof he died. There is your precious child full of glory, to know sin nor sorrow any more. He was a gallant young man, exceeding gracious. God give you his comfort.

Cromwell writing to his sister's husband in Wilbur Cortez Abbott ed., Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell (1937)

Questions

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Answer and explanation:

The Night after the King's Execution

The night after King Charles the First was beheaded, my Lord Southampton and a friend of his got leave to sit up by the body in the Banqueting House of Whitehall. As they were sitting there about two o'clock in the morning, they heard the tread of somebody coming very slowly upstairs. By-and-by the door opened, and a man entered, very much muffled up in his cloak, and his face quiet hid in it. He approached the body, considered it very attentively for some time, and then shook his head and sighed out the words, 'Cruel necessity'! He then departed in the same slow manner as he had come in. Lord Southampton used to say that he could not distinguish anything of his face; but that by his voice and gait he took him to be Oliver Cromwell.

Quoted in Esme Wingfield-Stratford, King Charles the Martyr (1950)

Questions

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Answer and explanation:

The Siege of Drogheda 1649

The enemy retreated into the Mill Mount; a place very strong and of difficult access, being exceedingly high and strongly protected. The Governor, Sir Arthur Ashton, and divers considerable officers being there, our men, getting up to them, were ordered by me to put them all to the sword. And indeed, being in the heat of the action, I forbade them to spare any that were in arms in the town, and I think that night they put to the sword 2000 men.

Oliver Cromwell quoted in John Buchan, Oliver Cromwell (1941)

Questions

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Answer and explanation:

The Character of Oliver Cromwell

He was not a man of blood. It was confidently reported, that, in the council of officers, it was more than once proposed, 'that there might be a general massacre of all the royal party, as the only way to secure the government', but that Cromwell would never consent to it; it may be, out of too much contempt of his enemies. In a word, as he had all the wickedness against which damnation is denounced, and for which hell-fire is prepared, so he had some virtues; and he will be looked upon by posterity as a brave bad man.

Edward Hyde First earl of Clarendon, True Historical Narrative of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England (1843)

Questions

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Answer and explanation:

Conclusion

'Cromwell was a dangerous and unprincipled villain who used power ruthlessly to achieve his own ambitions.' Do you agree with this statement based upon the sources you have read?

In answering this question, make sure you cover both points of view – one paragraph giving three pieces of evidence that supports the statement, and another paragraph arguing against the statement. Finish with a conclusion in which you reach your own opinion.

Remember to quote from the sources (cut and paste), consider who wrote the source and when it was written; and support the sources you choose with your own knowledge.

