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CHARLES I AND CROMWELL

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CHARLES I AND CROMWELL

AN ESSAY

BY
G. M. YOUNG

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INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW EDITION

I had hoped at one time to write a companion piece to *Charles I and Cromwell*, which was to have been called *Charles I and Pym*. Every great institution, it has been said, follows the direction imparted to it by one hand, and it seemed to me that in creating for himself the part of Leader, Pym set Parliament on a course which without him it might never have taken. No doubt we can see foreshadowings of the part in earlier Parliaments, but it is not till 1640 that we are aware of a conscious need consciously met.

> Among the Athenians there was a man who had lately come into the front rank. His name was Themistocles.

So quietly, and one might say, so innocently, does Herodotus bring his greatest character on to the stage. With hardly more noise does Pym make his entrance in the page of Clarendon.

> While men gazed upon each other looking who should begin (much the greatest part having never before sat in Parliament), Mr. Pym, a man of good reputation, but much better known afterwards, who had been as long in those assemblies as any man then living, brake the ice.

It is April 1640, and of the members there assembled in Westminster, not one, we may be sure, in his angriest fancy, had for a moment dreamed that the debate then opened might issue in war. Yet war came. On August 22, 1642, the King raised his standard at Nottingham. What had happened in the meantime?

Or, to put it another way—what had those who drew the sword really in mind? A question to which both sides, with equal assurance and for the most part with equal sincerity, would have given the same reply. They were in arms to maintain the Fundamental Laws of England against a usurped and arbitrary power. And, pressed to say what those fundamental laws were, neither party could have given an answer which to us would seem historically valid. There were no Fundamental Laws—only such general ideas of government as might be collected from Plantagenet statutes and Tudor practice: case law, we might say, in abundance, but no jurisprudence.

Take, for instance, Ship money, which was in the minds of everybody who came up to Westminster that April. What fundamental law did that levy violate? Suppose a pinnace had come flying into Plymouth harbour with the tidings

> Spanish ships of war at sea
> We have sighted fifty-three,

then, beyond a doubt, the danger to the realm would have authorized the King in Council to call on the seaports for men and shipping, or money if no ships were to be had. And the inland shires and boroughs? Not so clear, though some black-letter sage could have pointed out that in Domesday Book, Malmesbury was charged with 20 shillings to feed the King's sailors, and Malmesbury is far enough inland. But suppose the message was: 'there is much activity in the Spanish dockyards and talk of a descent on Ireland next summer.' Then, the danger not being imminent, the King must lay the matter before his other Council, namely Parliament, and ask the Commons to sustain, by means of a subsidy, his endeavours to keep the realm in safety.

That, I think, is sound law. But in the operation it supposes that the two parties, the King-in-Council and the King-in-Parliament, are in harmony, each respecting the rights of the other, and each acknowledging its own limitations. Parliament cannot set fleets and armies in motion—only the King can do that. And rightly, because only the King—that is the Privy Council—knows enough to give the necessary orders. On the other side, the King cannot pay the shipwrights and sailors out of his personal income. He must ask Parliament to find the wherewithal: rightly again, because only Parliament knows where the money is and how it can best be collected. All that had been settled, or seemed to have been settled, in the Middle Ages—*de tallagio non concedendo* and the rest—when wool was the chief jewel of the kingdom, and only the wool-merchants knew how to discount a bill on Florence or Bruges, and who, in the long run, would have to pay the tax. When judgment was given for the Crown in the case of Hampden, it was plain that the harmony was lost; and that the country was both angry and alarmed. If Ship money, why not Army money? If a shilling on my field, why not a pound? And that was what Strafford never understood.

Elizabeth, in like circumstances, would have staged one of her motherly appearances—you know how careful I am in the management of the revenue and that I would not ask for a subsidy unless the country really needed it. I am most truly

grateful to you for calling my attention to certain abuses which have crept in, and the offenders shall be smartly punished. As for Ship money, I see you don't like it, and we won't talk of rights. So come to the Palace and kiss my hand, and then go back to the country and take care of my poor people. But you will vote that subsidy, won't you?

But that was not Charles's way. He would go on arguing when there was no more to be said: and he would sell what he ought to have given. So this April. The Exchequer calculated that twelve subsidies, spread over three years, would see the country through its difficulties, without recourse to Ship money. The figure, at first hearing, was formidable: on reflection it seemed no great matter. But, beyond all question, the Commons had the right to debate the amount and the mode of assessment and collection: and it must have been fairly clear to any man of sense, that once launched on this discussion the Commons would certainly raise the question of Ship money, which was still being capriciously collected, and sulkily paid. And Charles thrust it into the faces of the Commons. He insisted that he had a right to Ship money. True, he offered to sell it—the price being that the Commons should pass his subsidies without debate. And as there was no likelihood of the Commons coming into this bargain, Parliament was dissolved. *And men had much of the misery in view that shortly came to pass.* The dissolution of that Parliament was in fact the first blow struck in the Civil War.

The members went home to their shires, gloomy and anxious. But there is one group we should like to follow, to Broughton near Banbury, where Lord Saye and Sele kept such state as his narrow means allowed: a man of whom it might be said that he would hold a more conspicuous place in history if he had not had the misfortune to be a peer. Not that he regarded it as a misfortune, because he seems to have believed in peers as Saint Simon believed in dukes, or Sir Vavasour Firebrace in baronets. Indeed if he had had his way, New England would have started life under a government of Lords selected by himself. Disappointed there, he set himself to develop Old Providence Island, under a less aristocratic regime, with a Board of Governors which included among other Puritan notables John Pym, Treasurer to the Company. Their offices were in Gray's Inn Lane, and there, so the Oxford gossip ran, the notions canvassed at Broughton were put into Parliamentary shape.

'Don't allow any private gatherings before Parliament or during Parliament. That is where the mischief is hatched.' Strafford knew what it was to be a leader without a party, and therefore what a leader with a party might do. And it is in those private meetings that parties take shape, that men get to know each others' leanings and aptitudes, and so discover what support they can rely on when the time for action comes. Gossip apart, we might be certain that in that summer of 1640 someone was at work to make sure that when Parliament met (as meet it must quite soon) the parts would be assigned, the procedure agreed, the objective fixed, the approaches planned. The proof is in the sequel. The members who came up in November, to take their seats in what was to be known as the Long Parliament, found a party there, and, if not yet a leader, a group, exercising, though not in office, the Parliamentary functions of a Government—to frame a programme, and get it through.

It is one of the commonest experiences in history that a problem which to one generation is insoluble, to the next is perfectly simple. Ideas have to be invented no less than machines. We, with the advantage of a backward view, can see that, the problem being how to keep Council and Parliament in harmony, the solution is that the Councillors, the Ministers of the Crown, should, in effect, be appointed by the party which has the majority in the House of Commons; and right from the beginning of the Long Parliament we are conscious that crude projections of this solution are in the air. Rather more than projections, because at one moment it seems as if, those Councillors being removed who did not enjoy the confidence of Parliament—Laud and Strafford in the Tower, Finch and Noy in exile—a group who did would succeed to their places and authority, with the Earl of Bedford Lord Treasurer, Pym Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the Commons. One of the most curious speculations in our history is—how would things have gone if that grave and upright peer had lived? He was in the prime of life, and in every way a sound man: a Churchman who was liked by the Nonconformists, a Peer who was trusted by the Commons, a man of affairs, a patron of the arts, with an excellent Parliamentary record. He was admitted to the Privy Council on February 3, 1641, but he would not assume office until he had worked out his plans for restoring the national finances. Early in May he was taken suddenly ill. From Bedford House he could hear the roar of the London mob calling for blood, and he died on the morning of that Sunday which Charles was to remember on the scaffold, the Sunday when he consented to Strafford's death.

Such a call means that fear is at work in the multitude, and Pym, with his Army plots and Popish plots, was a master of alarms. Of what, then, were men most afraid in those months? I think the answer is two-fold. First, there was the fear that the King might use force against Parliament: Parliament which was the only defence against arbitrary inroads on the rights of property. Here the country gentlemen and their yeomen, the merchants of London and Bristol and their 'prentices, are at one—another foreshadowing, because from here we can see in the distance the alliance of the Whig party and the City. Triennial Parliaments, abolition of Ship money, of Star Chamber and High Commission, all the popular legislation of those early months when the Long Parliament was still a united body, meant nothing so long as the King had an army and was prepared to use it.

The other was the fear of Rome, of Jesuits, of the northward surge of the Counter-Reformation. And the two things are so intricately connected that no one clue will serve us in the labyrinth of controversy: we have constantly to be dropping one and groping for another. But if there is a point where, so to say, they can be knotted together it is—Episcopacy.

Where would a wise man have taken his stand in that debate? It is extraordinarily difficult to think one's way into a world where, for instance, a man (and one of the most brilliant men of his generation, young Vane) might abstain from the Communion for two years because he could not get a clergyman to administer it to him standing: while the Dean of Worcester could be charged with Popish leanings because he made the choirboys come in two by two instead of rushing into the chancel in a bunch. With Popish leanings—as who might say—with bourgeois ideology. Indeed, if we made a spectrum of opinion—Rome, the Arminian Anglican, the Calvinist Anglican, the Presbyterian, and the Anabaptist, we might match it with another more familiar—the Fascist, the Conservative, the Liberal, the Socialist, and the Communist. It is not a comparison to be forced, but it is one usefully to be kept in mind.

In matters of religion Pym was Elizabethan. He upheld the penal legislation against Catholics on Elizabethan grounds. They were not to be punished for believing as they did, but they were to be prevented from doing the things to which their beliefs inclined them—assassination plots, gunpowder treason, Irish rebellions. And he would, I think, have concurred in Hooker's defence of the Establishment. Our order, the episcopal order, Hooker maintained, is certainly very ancient, and there is nothing in it contrary to natural reason or the revealed will of God. Also it is the legal order, and it perfectly fits the social and political structure of the realm. You aver that your order, the presbyterian order, was instituted by Christ. But you have failed to prove it, and in practice you will find that it does not fit our national fabric. I have nothing to say against Geneva or Scotland. But Scotland and Geneva are not England. 'By the goodness of Almighty God, and his servant Elizabeth, we are.'

Unluckily, the new Anglicanism, traditional, sacramental, ritualist, fitted the Stuart conception of monarchy all too well. This is where our clues approach each other. The *Jus Divinum* claimed for the Bishops was only too like the Reserve of Power, the prerogative claimed for the King. When Parliament was not sitting, neither was controllable. When it was, the Bishops, Crown nominees, might on a division sway the balance in the Lords. And yet if there was a Fundamental Law in England, it was that the church is governed by Bishops and that all Bishops are Lords of Parliament. It was possible to suppose, or at least to imagine, that there had been a Plantagenet Constitution under which Parliament met regularly to redress grievances, impeach ministers, make laws and vote supplies: and that this present Parliament was only exercising a long-intermitted authority: that it was engaged upon a conservative reformation, bringing the pristine beauty of the old constitution into light, its wisdom into operation. All that we might have heard a hundred times from all quarters of the House. But it was impossible to pretend that removing Bishops from their House—still more abolishing the Episcopal order—was anything but a revolution. If the Bishops, why not the Barons, one member asked, and if the Barons, why not all the others? Here is the crack which will widen till it splits the Commons, leaving Pym the leader not of the House, but of the Puritan Party. Materially, the story is immensely complicated by the affairs of Scotland and the affairs of Ireland, by the Covenant on one side and the Catholic rebellion on the other. But the formal truth emerging is that there is no room in the same constitution for a Sovereign choosing his own Council and a Leader commanding a majority in the House of Commons.

And that majority was visibly shrinking, was losing its popularity and its prestige. After all, someone must govern the country, someone must give orders, someone must raise money to meet the expenditure of the state. Certainly there is danger from Rome—look at Ireland. But there is danger from Geneva too—look at Scotland. That the Bishops have behaved very foolishly, we all admit. But will Presbyteries be any wiser, any less troublesome? Will extempore prayer,

and sermons three hours long, do more for the spiritual welfare of the people than the ancient liturgy, Sunday by Sunday repeated in the cherished form? And will the rights of property be any more secure if taxes are to be levied by Parliamentary ordinance? The King may use force against the Houses. Suppose Pym and his waning party use force against the King—against his friends, against the Church? And there is a force willing enough to be employed, and paid, in such a cause—the Scottish Army. Treason no doubt it would be to use them—in Strafford's case the Judges had advised that to quarter troops on the King's subjects, if unwilling, would be tantamount to levying war on the King's Majesty, and the Scottish army was as much a foreign force as those Danes and Frenchmen whom the Queen was supposed to be enlisting. The tide was turning, Charles had only to wait, and in the meantime form such a Council as Parliament must respect; not (Hyde and Falkland would have advised) a showy Council of great Lords, selected for their conformity with the King's notions, with an Inner Cabinet doing all the work, but a real representative Council where divers views could be debated.

All which seems, in retrospect, quite possible, and, though in a different form from what we actually achieved, would have realized the harmony between Council and Parliament which all sober minds desired to see. That such a settlement would have been welcomed by the country the voting on the Grand Remonstrance shows: a majority of no more than eleven made it in substance a vote of No Confidence in Pym. The reformed constitution would have been, in fact, the Elizabethan constitution brought up to date, by a limitation of the prerogative on one side, and an abatement on the other of the Puritan demands in matters of religion. Things were as hopeful in December 1641 as they were in the summer of 1647. But both times the fair prospect ended in storm, and disaster for the King: and both times for the same reason. All he had to do was to show that he could be trusted. And he made it plain that he could not. Any student in the Temple could have told him that the King cannot arrest for treason, or indeed for anything else. Any man who knew his London could have told him that if he did lodge the Five Members in the Tower, they would be delivered by the Train bands supported by an uproarious force of shopboys. If he had asked the Five, or Six with Lord Kimbolton, to dinner, shown them his pictures, and treated them to a consort of chamber music, they might have acknowledged on the way back to their lodgings that the King had won the game. Unless . . . And the attempt on the Five Members was so perfectly calculated to ruin the King and rescue the party, that it is impossible to keep out of one's mind the suspicion that it was a laid and baited trap. Did Pym and his fellows really mean to impeach the Queen? I doubt it. But that someone whispered to Charles that they meant to impeach the Queen is not beyond reckoning. Lady Carlisle was certainly at Court that day, and Lady Carlisle was Pym's dear friend. King Pym had won. After that there was nothing for King Charles but abject surrender—or war.

G. M. Y.

1950.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

I wrote this essay partly to lay a ghost in my own mind, and partly as an exercise in form. With the departure of the King from Oxford in 1646, we enter a labyrinth from which, three years later, we emerge on to the scaffold at Whitehall, and when we endeavour to recount our steps and recall the turnings, we are constantly baffled by some interruption of the clue, to extricate which is my one object in this book.

In this perplexing story there are two decisive moments between which, I think, a very close psychological nexus must have existed, even if it can no longer be with any certainty traced. One is the collapse of the Hampton Court negotiations in 1647. The other is Ireton's violent revulsion from the King. The Trial follows logically—not inevitably, because Cromwell and even Fairfax might have intervened to prevent it—from Pride's Purge, and Pride's Purge from Ireton's manifesto, the Remonstrance of the Army. But this carries us no farther than October 1648, and, still moving backwards, we can say that to October 1647 almost anything might have happened. Political bets were sometimes made in Presbyterian London, and a sportsman might safely have laid, any time in those twelve months, a hundred to one against the King's execution, and ten to one against even his deposition. When we go behind September 1647, the odds lengthen out of all calculation. The King personally, the Monarchy politically, were as safe in the summer of 1647 as Queen Victoria and her Monarchy in the summer of 1847. All the signs pointed to a brilliant and popular restoration of the King.

Yet, as we know, the prospect was dashed. Between July and October something happened. Carlyle's treatment of the period is perfunctory. Gardiner had the advantage of knowing the Clarke papers, but he was at the disadvantage, perhaps unperceived by himself, of always picturing Cromwell as a Good Man, like Mr. Gladstone, and Charles as a Bad Man, like Mr. Disraeli. Mid-Victorian Liberalism is not a satisfactory instrument by which to measure the convulsions of the seventeenth century, and the French publicist who wrote in 1911 of Mr. Lloyd George, *type du Puritanisme anglais*, flashed a signal which lets much light into dark corners. The shifting of the political centre of gravity in the nineteenth century from the upper to the middle classes, and from the middle classes to the working classes, offers an instructive analogy to the much swifter process of the Civil War, if for the three classes we substitute the Crown, the Presbyterian gentry, and the Saints. In its turn, the rise of the Saints, the Independents of the Army, was leading in 1646 and 1647, as post-Gladstonian Liberalism did lead, to democracy, and the apprehension, at least, of subversion 'not of *the* Government but of government'. Manhood Suffrage and the March on London sounded as ominous in 1647 as the Unauthorized Programme in 1885 and the General Strike in 1926. In those critical months, between July and October, the line of development became clear, and Cromwell, whose profound anxiety is manifest in the reports of the Putney debates, set himself to arrest the Liberalism of the Independents at the point where it was just about to turn into the Democracy of the Levellers, to keep it satisfied, and to take the edge off its more dangerous appetites.

Did this necessarily involve the sacrifice of the Monarchy or the King? Cromwell, it is plain, did not think so: as late as October 1648 he was prepared for a Restoration. Ireton's mind was swifter, and it was spurred by the exasperation of the honest man who is conscious of his own sincerity and has been deceived, of the intellectual man whose plans have been spoilt, and who will not acknowledge to himself that the fault was in the plans. His device for restoring the Monarchy in 1647 is a masterpiece of political construction, but without any political appeal for either of the parties to whom it was addressed. It would have made Charles a powerful sovereign of a new kind, and Parliament not only the most august but the most efficient Council in Christendom. Charles had no idea of being a new sort of King, and Parliament had to go through a long process of tuition and experience before it learnt to govern. The Remonstrance of 1648 was the fruit of Ireton's bitter resentment when the Heads of Proposals were set aside by Parliament, and the vindictive rage that followed the discovery that the King had never taken the Proposals, or their author, seriously. He saw red and went red.

It is only by fixing our minds on the fact that in July 1647 the Army leaders, Parliament and the City of London, all desired the restoration of the King on terms, and that nine tenths of the good people of England desired it too, that we can estimate the force and the peculiar character of the King's resistance on one side, and, on the other, of the Anabaptist resolution which Cromwell and Ireton made their own. The King did not want terms, and the Anabaptists did not want a King. I use the word Anabaptist as a contemporary would have used it, to cover the whole of that mingled, explosive mass, which, always running no doubt in secret veins under the compact surface of medieval society, gathered and swelled upwards through the fissures made by the great convulsion of the sixteenth century. To a foreign observer, Cromwell is a simpler figure than he is to us: he is the last and greatest of the Anabaptists, and the execution of King

Charles in 1649 is the culmination and termination of a train of explosions first fired by John of Leyden in 1533. After that there was nothing for it but to go back and start all over again, and we had to go back farther than we need have gone. The Restoration of 1660 was, broadly speaking, a Clarendon restoration, which had to be undone and redone in 1688. The frustrated Restoration of 1647, an Ireton restoration, would have jumped the interim. And, in history, as Cromwell once pointed out, you can't jump.

At least Charles could not, and it is the King's character, his intellectual make-up much more than his moral disposition, that brings the threads together. If he could have made the deeper part of his mind move, and kept the surface part quiet, all would have been well. But his intellect was all eddy and no tide. In many ways his dealings with Parliament and the Army remind me of his grandmother's dealings with Elizabeth, just as Cromwell's dizzying changes of front, and the nerve-storms which accompany them, often recall the great Queen whose subject he was proud to have been born, whose true successor he felt, and showed, himself to be. For what is Cromwell, once released from the servitudes, falsities and austerities of party, but a rustic Tudor gentleman, born out of due time, of the stock of Hunsdon and Henry Sidney, rejoicing in hawk and hound, pictures and music, Scotland subjugated, Ireland prostrate, and England, the awe of the Western world, adorned and defended with stout yeomen, honourable magistrates, learned ministers, flourishing universities, invincible fleets? Aubrey once went to see the great man dine in state at Hampton Court. He was seated between a Presbyterian and a Catholic Lord, Fitzwilliam of Lifford, who founded the fortunes of his family by marrying a City widow, and Arundell of Wardour, who bred the hounds from which the Quorn pack is descended. Fitzwilliam had been turned out of Parliament by the soldiers: Arundell had destroyed his own castle that it might not be a fortress for rebels. But all that was long ago. The Lord Protector spoke. 'I have been in all the counties of England,' he said, 'and I think the husbandry of Devonshire is the best.'

In Charles, as before in Mary and again in his son James, we are aware of the same professional detachment from the feelings and interests of their subjects, the same gap between the serene central conviction of their royalty and the surface workings, which in James are mostly temper, in Mary mostly conspiracies to murder. Of Charles, his nineteenth-century historian has observed that he was always looking back to the Monarchy of Elizabeth instead of forward to the Monarchy of Victoria. Really, the poor gentleman was not called upon to attempt any such extravagant feat of imagination. He was only asked to do what Elizabeth had done, when she recalled the Monopolies, to realize that the other side were serious and must be taken seriously. On the evening of the first day in Westminster Hall the King asked one of his gentlemen who the judges were. Members of Parliament, he was told, officers, City men. 'I looked at them carefully,' the King replied, 'but there were not above eight whose faces I knew.' There was one he knew very well, the dark, sunken-eyed face of the man who would have made him once more a great king. But there is no reason to suppose that Charles ever regretted that he had declined the offer, or even realized that it had been made. 'A subject and a sovereign are clean different things.'[1]

I

On a spring morning of 1646, old Sir Jacob Astley, marching from Worcestershire to Oxford, was brought to battle at Stow-on-the-Wold. A few hours later he was sitting on a drum, talking cheerily to the victors. 'Well, boys,' he said, 'you have done your work and may go home and play—unless you will fall out with one another.' The Civil War was over, but the real difficulties were just beginning.

They were not insuperable. There was a universal desire for peace and little desire for vengeance. Nothing had been done on either side that could not be forgiven. The war had been fought for the most part with mutual chivalry and good feeling, often with exemplary politeness, and there cannot, I feel sure, be any other instance in history of the victors in a four years' conflict applying to the Courts for an injunction to stop the vanquished from making unkind remarks about them. Mrs. Carter said that the Parliamentary garrison of Warminster had been stealing linen. The garrison, deeply hurt by a charge which, 'we conceive, refflecks not so much uppon us as uppon the High Court of Parliament', could only petition the Justices of the Peace to do something about it, in the intervals of reducing redundant alehouses, abating unlawful weirs, and reproving Miss Gibbs for sticking a pin in Miss Courtley, in time of Divine Service, in Imber Parish Church.

This is not the atmosphere in which revolutions are conceived. It had indeed passed through some minds that the best course would be to depose King Charles, and start afresh with one of his sons—the little Duke of Gloucester for choice—and a trusty peer as Regent. But even this seemed more drastic a measure than circumstances warranted. Hopelessly beaten in the field, the King had recovered the initiative in Council. It was his move.

The chief pieces on the other side of the board were: the City of London, rich, well-armed, and devoted to the Parliament; the Lords and Commons at Westminster (thirty peers still sat there); their army under Fairfax and Cromwell; and the Scots. A Tudor would have seen in an instant the weak place in this combination. Elizabeth—if we can imagine Elizabeth ever getting herself into such a tangle—would have ridden straight for the Army, played a dazzling succession of parts, from the Puritan maiden in distress to the Queen among her loving people, flirted with the inarticulate Fairfax, made audacious jokes about our Brethren in Christ and their precious Covenant, and in a few weeks would have had Lords, Commons and City weeping at her feet, and the Scots flying for their lives.

But the note—'a King, and a King of England, too'—which Elizabeth and her father knew so well how to strike, was not within the Stuart compass. The egoism of the race, which brought Mary to Fotheringay and was to send James II to St. Germain, had been qualified in James I by an earthy, vulgar shrewdness. He was not a good King, but he was a very clever, amusing Scotsman. Charles was neither vulgar, nor earthy, nor amusing, nor clever, and in both his kingdoms he was always something of an alien. A solitary child, short, bandy, with a slight stammer, he had formed himself by reading and exercise—by conscious admiration of his brilliant Elizabethan brother, and conscious reaction, perhaps, from his drunken mother and exuberant father—into the grave, dignified, self-controlled young King of 1625. To the end of his life his health and dignity never failed him, his self-control rarely. Two people only ever got past these outworks and lodged themselves in his affections. To Buckingham he yielded as a repressed self-centred boy will often yield to an elder, radiant with adventure, success and irresponsibility. To Mary, when Buckingham had gone, he gave his heart. And Mary (he would never call her Henrietta), of all those who came near him, was perhaps the one least able to understand or reach the central nerve of his intricate and contradictory conscience, his devotion to the Church of England.

He was not only a King, he was an Anglican King. Every man who fought on his side was fighting for the Elizabethan Settlement, for a Catholic hierarchy dependent on the Crown, and a theology and liturgy to which, read together, no man from the day of their formulation to this has ever been able to attach a convincing label. Protestant is the best, because it means least.[2] But a true instinct on both sides made the Prayer Book the test. The Church of England is the church which uses the Prayer Book, and Elizabeth never meant it to bear any other mark. All through the bad years, with *Eikon Basilike* and Martin Parker's songs, it was the Prayer Book that kept up the morale of the subjugated Royalists. 'The people dote on it', one observer wrote in 1659; when Ussher died, the Lord Protector gave him such a funeral as befitted a Prince of the Church, and the Anglican service was read over the grave; and Lady Mary Cromwell herself—or so it was said—having been married with such ceremonies as pious Independents allowed, insisted on being privately remarried by Prayer Book rites.

In his refusal to abandon the Church of Elizabeth, therefore, Charles was at one with his people and with the future: in 1660 the King, the Bishops, and the Prayer Book all came back together, and Presbytery, after imparting to the sister

kingdom the blessings of the Westminster Confession and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, faded into Unitarianism. To account for its success in Scotland and its complete failure in England it is not necessary to sound the imaginary depths of national psychology. In England there was historically no need for it, spiritually no room for it. Scotland, after its brief Renaissance glow, shattered by disaster in the field and the turbulence of long minorities, was remade by its ministers, the bearers of a new revelation which imported a new social order. In England there was nothing to re-make. Here, the transition from the Middle Ages had been conducted by a strong crown operating on a compact and law-abiding society, and after a few violent lurches to left and right the Church was steadied down into the official channel, with scientific articles, a traditional liturgy, and a hierarchy which might with equal truth be regarded as an inheritance from Apostolic times or a branch of the Civil Service. For the multitude, whose religion is a matter of use and wont, the Elizabethan Church was enough. It was enough for those whose religion was also a matter of order, authority, and history. But it was not stimulating to the inert; it was not satisfying to the impatient; and in an age profoundly, often hysterically, preoccupied with the Unseen, with ghosts and devils and the fires of hell, it furnished no equivalent for the Catholic discipline of devotion and observance, or the Puritan discipline of prayer and preaching, the one to protect, the other to fortify the soul, in its warfare with the powers of darkness. The one bad mistake Elizabeth ever made was in not providing the Church with preachers. The craving, active or passive, for sermons must be taken as a psychological datum of the age, and as there were few parsons competent to preach the true Church doctrine, the flock turned gladly to those who preached something different, not because it was different, but because it was preached.

But Presbytery was, in England, only an alternative form of Church government. It was not, like Anabaptism and Independency, a new source of spiritual power to the believer, and it was quite as hard as Episcopacy, perhaps rather harder, on the unauthorized expounder, on the man with a private revelation, on the tinker, tailor, ploughboy, sailor, convinced of sin and yearning to impart the story of his redemption. Even as an alternative, it was handicapped by the historic appeal of the Elizabethan Church, and its perfect adaptation to the social structure of the country. If the Borough had been dominant over the Manor, Presbytery might have won. But the day of the great towns was far ahead and, when it came, Evangelicalism, Anglican or Methodist, was in occupation of the ground.

In the nature of things, therefore, Presbytery could be no more than an episode in our history, a swerve which sooner or later was bound to rejoin the main-road of an Established episcopal church surrounded by tolerated sects. Yet good reasons can be given why this swerve should have set in when it did. In Elizabethan days, Presbytery—against Prelacy—was the creed of the young, the ardent, the self-sufficient. In James's time, when England had been hardened by war and the Jesuits into a vigilant anti-Papalism, Presbytery was the most emphatic repudiation of Rome, from which the Anglican system was a reluctant, uncompleted departure, retaining, too, far more than the independent clergyman or layman cared for of the coercive power of the old Catholic Church. The bishop, with the Crown and the Court of High Commission behind him, could make things very uncomfortable for a non-conforming parson and for laymen who declined the ministrations of a more orthodox pastor. Technically, he could still condemn a heretic to the stake, and require the sheriff to execute the sentence. Actually, the power was never exercised after 1614; but it may be questioned whether the occasional burning of some outrageous heretic would not have done the Church less harm than the perpetual worrying of peaceful congregations and earnest ministers over the minutiæ of ceremony and doctrine; and an active archdeacon, exercising a kind of petty police jurisdiction over Drunks, Incontinents and Irregular Churchgoers, could be as vexatious to the easy-living layman as the Bishop's Court to the independent-minded minister.

In theology, the two sides were wheeling into reverse positions: the Anglicanism of 1640 was a much more modern creed than its Puritan alternative; but there was no statesmanship to make the appeal of the Church effective. The bishops were the trouble. Materially, as a logician would have put it, they were usually right: formally, they were nearly always wrong. Mr. Sherfield ought not to have poked an unauthorized stick through the stained glass window in St. Edmund's, Salisbury. But it was monstrous to fine him £500 for doing it. The churchwardens ought not to have provided vintage wine for masters and mistresses, and *vin ordinaire* for servants, at the Holy Communion. But Laud gained no more goodwill by docking the middle classes of their privileges than by rebuking the upper classes for their adulteries. To pull down the tabernacles where Dutch navvies in the fens met to sing Dutch hymns was simply foolish; and if the people of Lancashire wanted to spend their Sundays like circumcised Jews, the only sensible course was to leave them alone until they were tired of it. Nor, while loyal churchmen were mourning over the unwisdom of their rulers, could it escape the calculations of City men and their friends in Parliament that, as the Tudor nobility had been financed by the plunder of the monasteries, so a new aristocracy might be raised on the proceeds of the Bishops' Lands. In a sense, perhaps the deepest sense of all, the Civil War was, like the unlucky Scottish campaign of 1639, *Bellum Episcopale*.

Now it was over, and the victors were under contract to replace the episcopal by the presbyterian system throughout the land—which did not, in fact, in the least desire it. This was the price of Scottish assistance in the dark days of 1643 when Hampden had fallen, the Fairfaxes had been defeated in the north, and the King's army of the west was forging along, by Bath and Devizes, to join hands with the Royalists of Kent and encircle London from the south. But there was an immense difference between the political state-regulated Presbytery of English politicians and the militant dogma in defence of which the Scots had risen against the King. They had asked for an undertaking that the Church of England should be reformed according to the example of the Best Reformed Churches, meaning particularly their own; and the English negotiators, by introducing a pious and subtle reference to God's Holy Word as well, had left themselves free to remodel the Church very much as they liked.

The bishops were removed; the Prayer Book was more or less effectively superseded by the Directory for Public Worship; the churchwardens dutifully spent ninepence on 'a Parliamentary ordinance for the establishment of a Presbytryall Government': as they might have bought a new shovel or bell-rope, and there left it. And where it did establish itself—among the middle classes of the City, for example—it was subject to legal restrictions of the kind most abhorrent to the Presbyterian conscience. To the pure Genevan model two things are essential: the free election of elders, and the uncontrolled right of the ministers and elders to exclude any member of the congregation from communion. In Presbyterian London, the elections were regulated by a Parliamentary Board, and the aggrieved communicant was given an appeal to Parliament itself. The Best Reformed Churches would not have recognized themselves. In a society so coherent and socially so mature as that of England there was no standing-ground for a new theocracy with ten thousand church courts thrust in upon the ancient, popular, and efficient machinery of Petty Sessions and Quarter Sessions. Elizabeth had settled that.[3]

Yet to an observer from outside, Presbytery in 1646 must have seemed very formidable. It had, apart from the Scots, an army of its own, the City militia, and those who had been at Newbury could tell how London shopboys fight. It had the wealth of the City, the prestige of Parliament on its side. The Queen was baffled. If Paris was worth a mass, surely London was worth the letters C.R. at the top of the Covenant. Her father would not have hesitated. Nor would her son. Why should her husband? Henry of Navarre and Charles II were very astute men: they would have taken the Covenant, if it suited them, as often as they were asked, because they would have seen that, in England, there was nothing in it. Charles I, for good and evil, had not that kind of mind; he could realize as clearly as any Revolution Whig that there might be two Established Churches in one island; and if he refused to take the Covenant it was simply because he thought that Presbytery, an unfortunate necessity in Scotland, was in England not only impolitic but wrong.

> NOTE. It is perhaps worth recalling here that *The Whole Duty of Man*, which, for its vitality and diffusion, must be called our most successful attempt at an Ethical Code, was the product of a group of sequestered Anglican ministers, living in retirement under the Commonwealth.

II

As soon as the news of Astley's defeat reached him, the King wrote to Parliament proposing to return to London. Simultaneously, he wrote to the Scottish Commissioners, offering, if Parliament declined to receive him, to join the Scottish army at Newark. Parliament did decline, and the negotiations with the Scots went busily forward through the hands of a young French diplomat. Really, there was no ground on which the two could meet: vague phrases about his Majesty's just rights, and his Majesty's desire to be instructed in the Presbyterian government, meant nothing: and if Charles thought that he, or his agents, had committed the Scottish leaders to anything, he was mistaken. The Scots, in fact, were beginning to open their mouths rather wide. The King was slipping into their hands: Parliament was bound by the Solemn League and Covenant. They published their plans for the settlement of the Kingdom. Parliament replied with some asperity that any settling would be done by King, Lords, and Commons: in accordance, of course, with the Covenant (and God's Holy Word), but any doubt arising as to the interpretation of the Covenant (and the same Holy Word) would be determined, in the usual way, by Parliament and the Courts of Law. That their meaning might be perfectly clear, the Commons ordered the Scottish proposals to be publicly burnt.

It was hardly possible to send up a plainer signal to the King that definite proposals on his side would be welcome. The attitude of the Army was even more encouraging. Apart from isolated country houses, only two places still held out for the King, but the generous treatment of Exeter, when it surrendered, was an indication of what he might expect when Oxford opened her gates: there would be no trouble about the Covenant from Fairfax and Cromwell. Everything, in fact, was being done to make it easy for him to capitulate. He might still have joined the Queen in France: it was one of the many projects that flashed through his busy, impatient mind, and perhaps his wisest course would have been to retire from the scene until the Scots and the English, the Army and the City, the Presbyterians and the Independents, had argued one another to a standstill, and then return bringing peace in his hands. He preferred to go to Newark, and in the dark of an April night he rode over Magdalen Bridge on the long journey that ended at Whitehall.

He had persuaded himself that the Scots were not really so keenly set on Presbytery as they made out. It was the kind of mistake he was always making—the old Stuart mistake: his grandmother never quite believed that Englishmen might object to having their Queen murdered for her benefit. When he found that his countrymen were every whit as obstinate as he was, he propounded a compromise—legal establishment of Presbytery, toleration for Anglicans, and a joint heresy-hunt against everyone else. But the Scots, who had the gravest misgivings about English Presbytery in its purest form, were not at all disposed to countenance an Anglo-Presbyterian church, which would have lasted until the next Parliament abolished it. In June they delivered their ultimatum. It was what everyone except their unfortunate king might have expected: Covenant or nothing.

Now was the moment for Parliament to strike in with an offer which the King could at least consider. But though Parliament wanted peace they did not know how to make peace, and the nineteen propositions which arrived from Westminster at the end of July were no more conciliatory than the Scottish ultimatum. First came the Covenant, to be taken by the King and all his subjects. Then the 'utter abolishing and taking away' of the Anglican hierarchy (including the choirboys). Then the transference of fleet and militia, for the space of twenty years, from the Crown to Parliament. Finally, a long and complicated series of Branches and Qualifications involved the whole of the Royalist aristocracy and gentry in penalties varying from one third to two thirds of their estates. Parliament, in fact, believed that, the Scots having declined to support him further, they had the King at their mercy. He had only to abandon his Crown, his Church, and his friends, and he might, for what it was worth, be King of England still.

The terms were so exorbitant that the King was bound to refuse: so ungenerous that he would assuredly earn the goodwill of all reasonable men by refusing. The King of England—a prisoner in a foreign camp, forbidden to have his own chaplains, reduced to reading the Prayer Book alone in his bedroom—was becoming that dangerously attractive figure, the Injured Man; and it was against that background, in those weary, wasted months at Newcastle that the lineaments of the Royal Martyr first took shape. He answered with dignity that he could not accept the Propositions until he understood their exact import, and to understand them he must receive explanations. He proposed, therefore, to come to London and there treat with Parliament in person. But a royal journey to London in the cause of peace would have ended in a triumphal progress. His offer was not even acknowledged, and for half a year he was left in the Scottish camp weaving fresh combinations—his favourite, to which he clung obstinately till the end, was the establishment of Presbytery for three years, and an agreed settlement to follow—while the vital combination was being arranged over his head. On January 30th 1647, the Scottish army handed him over to the Parliamentary Commissioners, took their money,

and marched away. For one happy fortnight the King was on the road again, through cheering crowds and clashing bells, from Newcastle to Holdenby House in Northamptonshire.

III

Everybody wanted peace—peace with guarantees, if possible, but in any case peace. But in one part of the Kingdom there was no peace, and no likelihood of peace, unless Ireland was allowed to go her way as an independent Catholic state. And the only alternative was a fierce war, and a reconquest from sea to sea.

On the day that Oxford surrendered, the main army of the Parliament—Fairfax being General, and Cromwell Lieutenant-General with command of the horse—numbered some 21,000 men. Of these, 12,600 were intended for Ireland, leaving 8400 to be disposed at home. The idea was to disband the foot, keep 2800 horse embodied and bring their number up to 6600 by voluntary enlistment. Provided therefore that the men were prepared to go to Ireland, the problem of demobilization had been neatly solved. The home cavalry would absorb all the men who wanted to stay with the colours: the rest would go back to their shops and farms.

The neatness of the solution was, however, marred by two practical considerations. Before they went home, the men wanted their arrears. Before they went to Ireland they wanted to be sure that they would be properly paid and fed when they got there. And there were rumours—well-grounded rumours—that Parliament meant to remove Fairfax and Cromwell, and appoint their pet general, Skippon, to the Irish command. For some time past good Presbyterians, Scots and English, had been disquieted at the way the soldiers were talking in billets. The army chaplains had gone back to their parishes; the prayers were now led and the sermons preached by gifted majors and corporals with a message; and the message was usually based on the pamphlets of John Lilburne.

Why has London, so rich in memorials of the deservedly forgotten, raised no monument to the irrepressible cheek of this great-hearted, explosive, and scurrilous Cockney? A list of the people he quarrelled with might adorn the base and furnish a complete *Who's Who* of Puritan England. His family, we read, came from Thickley Puncherdon: it is the sort of place they would come from. John, after serving his time with a London clothier, started his career of universal opposition at the age of twenty-two by helping to print and circulate unlicensed books. He was whipped from the Fleet to Palace Yard, and in the pillory contrived to distribute pamphlets among the crowd. At all times pamphlets sprang from him like sparks from the anvil. At twenty-seven he had the singular distinction of being the subject of debate in both Houses on the same day, the Commons voting that the treatment he had received was bloody, and the Lords calling him to the bar for disrespectful language used of the King. In the war he was always being shot, plundered, and taken prisoner, and he had more than the usual difficulty in collecting his pay. Once he was sentenced to be hanged. In the intervals he wrote pamphlets.

The return of peace opened a magnificent field for his favourite activity. He went for the House of Commons (three pamphlets), the House of Lords (eight pamphlets), the Lord Mayor, and the King. The Commons sent him to prison for three months: the Lords for seven years. He appealed to the Army, and the Army put the release of Lieutenant-Colonel Lilburne in their list of demands to be made to Parliament. He was not released, but it made no difference. Pamphlets spouted from the Tower and were absorbed with open ears by the soldiers: 'Jonah's Cry from the Whale's Belly', 'The Just Man in Bonds', 'The Pearl in the Dunghill'. He was a great journalist, and he had two ideas. One was John Lilburne; the other was Fair Play; and Fair Play, in the tangible form of so many pounds, shillings, and pence, was what the Army wanted. But when once the question is raised: 'Is Authority playing fair?' it is not far to the more dangerous question: 'How did it come to be Authority?'

No one can read the political literature of these years without being constantly struck by the similarity of Puritan and early nineteenth century thought, and even expression. We shall notice hereafter a most engaging resemblance between the remarks of Lord President Bradshaw and Mr. Honeythunder on the subject of murder. The Lilburne tradition, idealist and equalitarian, runs underground in the eighteenth century, and rises to the surface in the Revolutionary years, with Godwin and Shelley, Cartwright and Place, Carlile and Hone. But there is a parallel tradition, religious and authoritarian, which also rises with the increasing wealth of the commercial classes, and is the principal affluent in the great stream of Respectability, and we may understand what Parliament, what Ireton, what Cromwell felt about Lilburne by recalling what the Whigs of 1830 thought of the Benthamites, what Macaulay in 1840 thought of the Chartists, what John Bright thought of Trade Unions.

Lilburne stands for the Radical refusal to acknowledge on the grounds of tradition, habit or even convenience, any obstruction to the free flow of natural justice, or the free exercise of natural rights, and this is the note which, in divers settings, sounds in the Agreement of the People, in the American Declaration of Independence, in Mill *On Government*,

in *Prometheus Unbound*, in the People's Charter. In political terms, it meant, in the seventeenth century, a Sovereign Representative elected by universal suffrage to deal with everything not excluded as a natural right. To Lilburne and his readers there were five such rights: freedom of worship, no conscription, amnesty for the past, no exemptions from the law, 'and as the laws ought to be equal, so they must be good.' Who was to decide whether the laws were good or bad, needed not to be set forth. Where John was affected, it would be John.

Thus in the spring of 1647 the victorious Parliament found itself confronted with a Third Party, an Armed Opinion. Cromwell tried to reassure them. 'In the presence of Almighty God', he said, 'before Whom I stand, I know this Army will disband and lay down their arms at your door, whenever you command them'. In private he was cursing Parliament as lustily as any Suffolk yeoman with 48 weeks' pay due to him and his farm going to rack and ruin. But after the death of Pym in 1643 there was no one who could steer or manage the House of Commons. The majority was Presbyterian, and therefore without the sense of public support behind it. Of the three best heads for civil affairs in the House of Commons, Selden had no special Parliamentary gifts. He was an expert, with the arrogance of his tribe, and their untimely generosity of communication. His immense knowledge was at everyone's disposal, most readily perhaps at moments when they could have done without it. From his *Table Talk*, which seems to be a fair mirror of his spoken manner, we can infer how disconcerting his interventions must have been. Once the House was debating whether Ussher of Armagh should be invited to serve on the Westminster Conference. Selden rose. 'Mr. Speaker,' he asked, 'might we not at the same time consider whether Mr. Inigo Jones is qualified to be a member of the Mouse-Trap Makers' Company?' After this, we may understand why Cromwell, in one of his tantrums, proposed that he should be expelled the House. His religion was so simple that many people supposed he had none. His political convictions—and he had suffered for them—centred in a profound reverence for the common law. But he was an ageing man, and though every now and then he gleams in the murk like a ray of serene wisdom, it was only a gleam, and it threw no light on the dim and dangerous way his fellows had to tread.

Vane, the younger Vane in whom contemporaries discerned the successor of Pym, was a puzzle to his own age, and he has remained a puzzle ever since. His religion—for in those years it is always with a man's religion that we must begin—seems to have been a kind of mystical anti-clericalism. Perhaps it was this that attracted Milton, who seems to have regarded him for a while as the man who had finally succeeded in putting organized religion in its proper place—in Milton's view, a very humble place—in the State. Vane was the champion of religious toleration, and Charles at Oxford had hopes of gaining his support in resistance to the Covenant. Vane could not forgo his position and advantage, as leader of the House of Commons, and he declined. Yet he held it by a precarious tenure in face of the Presbyterian majority, and at this moment, in the spring of 1647, he was moving away from Parliament towards the Army, just as the Army was moving towards the King. He was not a straightforward man: Cromwell, when they quarrelled, told him that he lacked common honesty. There have been better judges of honesty than Cromwell. Rather he seems to be an outstanding example of a type of character not uncommon in Puritan England: very great abilities and a fervent zeal for the public good, clouded and perverted by self-intoxication with a religion of pure emotion. Cromwell was of the same type, and for years Brother Fountain and Brother Heron lived in gushing intimacy. But Cromwell was built on a larger scale in all directions, and his emotion, like his religion, served rather than controlled his purposes. What he needed was not a Brother Seeker but a clear intelligence at his side to show him where he was going and how to get there.

He found it in Ireton. When Ireton was gone, Cromwell floundered, floundered like Leviathan indeed,

> which God of all his works
> Created hugest that swim the Ocean stream,

and if his heavings and lashings kept Britain quiet and Europe agitated for the best part of ten years, in the long run they made no difference to Europe, and did no good to England, except so far as they destroyed once for all the fancy that Englishmen could be governed by a minority of saints or soldiers. 'What more do you want?' he once asked the Republican Ludlow. 'What we fought for,' was the reply: 'the right to govern ourselves.' And there were many who believed that, if only Ireton had lived, they might have won it.

By birth a gentleman, by education an Oxford man, Ireton had joined the Parliamentary army at the beginning of the war as a Captain of Horse. Eleven years younger than Cromwell, he became his closest friend, and just before the surrender of Oxford he married Cromwell's daughter, Bridget.[4] Of Cromwell's fury and geniality, his sudden expansions of mind, his unforeseen subtlety and unexpected tenderness, Ireton had nothing. His soldiership and his courage were both suspected, and he could neither cant nor gush. With men in numbers he could do little. In small conferences, his

promptness and lucidity made him irresistible—and exasperating. His insatiable industry was known to the world: to his friends, his signal virtue was his disinterestedness: even enemies acknowledged his entire sincerity.

This is something to hold on to in the manoeuvres and recriminations of the next few months. The first indication that the Army might resist the Plan of Demobilization was an Officers' Petition, respectful but firm. Before disbanding, they wanted, for themselves and their men, arrears of pay, indemnity for acts done in the war, guarantee against future conscription, and compensation for disabled men, widows and children. It can hardly be doubted that the Petition was drawn by Ireton: no one else could say so much in so few words: and it contains one parenthesis which gives the key to his whole behaviour at this juncture.

> First [the Petition runs], whereas the necessity of the War has put us upon many actions which the Law would not warrant (nor we have acted in time of settled peace):
>
> We humbly desire that before our disbanding a full and sufficient provision may be made by Ordinance of Parliament (*to which the Royal Assent may be desired*) for our indemnity and security in all such cases.

That is the note of the sound constitutionalist, determined to get back as soon as possible into the ancient, known and well-tried ways. Without the Royal Assent, an Ordinance of Parliament was only a form of words. It would not protect Captain Brown from an action for breaking into a Royalist's hen-run, or Ensign Green for smacking a Royalist's face. A disbanded Army without an Act of Indemnity might spend its remaining years in perpetual appearances at Quarter Sessions or Assizes to explain about Mrs. Carter's linen. And only the King could pass such an Act.

Parliament replied to the Petition by a threat to prosecute the promoters. The agitation was spreading. A suspicion ran through Parliament that Cromwell was at the bottom of it all and that his emphatic declaration 'in the presence of Almighty God' was a device to put Parliament off the scent till he and Ireton had completed their plans. It may have been his misfortune, but few colleagues ever trusted Cromwell. One member demanded his immediate arrest: another challenged Ireton to come over to Lambeth and fight. There was equally wild talk in the Army. They would raise the country against the war taxes, which (a suspicious circumstance) were still being collected though the war was over and the troops not paid. They would march on London, and they would take the King with them.

Many eyes were turning to Holdenby. Messages, secret, and hotly disavowed when the secret leaked out, were carried across country from the regiments to the Royal captive. To one of them there came a truly Royal answer. 'We will not', the King said, 'engage our people in another war. Too much blood hath been shed already. The Lord be merciful to my distracted Kingdom when He accounts with them for rebellion and blood.' 'But,' he added, 'let the Army know that we highly respect their expressions, and when we shall, by the blessing of God, be restored to our throne in peace, we shall auspiciously look upon their loyal affections towards us.' The one cry that would rally the country was: Not another war. Whoever said it first and showed that he meant it would be the real victor. But there would be no mercy for the man who said it and went back on his word.

At this point—we are now in April 1647—a new figure appears from behind the scenes: Trooper Edward Sexby, four years' service, first in Cromwell's regiment, now in Fairfax's. As the remaining eleven years of his life gave him sufficient opportunity to prove, he was a clever, violent, unprincipled man, and we know enough of his disreputable career (he plotted to murder Cromwell, and died mad in the Tower) to be sure that whereever he was, things would be stirring. But the remarkable experiment in government which was now to be set on foot, though it centred round him and bears many traces of his bustling and fertile mind, was directed by a brain of far finer calibre.

Ireton had made up his mind that the way to peace lay through the restoration of the King. He believed in the Old Constitution, 'its reason, prudence and justice', as fervently as Burke. He was a Member of Parliament, but he had not sat long and he was not popular. Cromwell was an old Parliamentary hand, and he had—like so many men of his age, men of the late-Elizabethan vintage—an instinct of reverence for Parliament, very like the Royalist's sentiment for the Crown, or the Anglican's for the Church. He had known it in its great days, in '28 and '41 when it had not yet degenerated into the leaderless, cantankerous assembly which continued to sit in St. Stephen's with no visible intention of ever doing anything but sit there and distribute jobs among its friends. But still it was Parliament: even in its decay, it stood for the Cause,[5] for order and liberty . . . for justice?—hardly; for peace?—perhaps. To Ireton's quicker and bleaker mind it was fast becoming a public nuisance. It was driving the Army to mutiny, and if once the Army got out of hand no man could foresee the end—London sacked, Ireland lost, a Scottish Army in Yorkshire, a French Army in Kent, and Charles the

absolute King of a vassalized England. And if by a miracle the Army did consent to disband, what would happen to Ireton and Cromwell?

At all costs, therefore, the Army must be kept together and under control. And here Trooper Sexby was invaluable. He was just the man to get committees started and keep them going, hire printing-presses, draft manifestoes, and arrange for their circulation. The eight horse-regiments came into the scheme at once: the foot soon followed. By the middle of May the Army had its own Parliament in two chambers. The officers formed the Upper House: the Lower was composed of members elected by the committees of each regiment. Discipline was preserved: the soldiers only addressed their officers, the officers in their representations confined themselves strictly to military grievances. Even when it met for political discussion the Army was still an army. The danger—for a moment it had been a very real danger—of military anarchy had been averted. The danger of a military despotism was by so much the nearer.

Cromwell's report to Parliament on the new situation was in guarded, and indeed contradictory, language. He was sure—though the customary reference to Almighty God was this time omitted—that the Army would disband. At least most of them would: there were still some discontented spirits. As for getting them to go to Ireland, it was not to be thought of in their present temper. This we are not bound to take quite literally. They would not go with Skippon. It might be different if they were asked to go with Fairfax and Cromwell. Parliament seems to have thought that these rather dubious assurances were good enough to go on, and ordered the demobilization to start on June 1st—without visible security for the arrears of pay.

Did Cromwell really suppose the Army would disband? It is incredible. Had he any plan in mind if they refused? He was in London: Ireton at G.H.Q., Bury St. Edmunds. On May 25th, Sexby 'rid hard' to London and got there by four in the afternoon. He waited to see what the House would do, and when the vote for immediate demobilization was taken he went off to consult with ——. Here, unluckily, he fails us, because the names are in cipher, '59' and '89'. They were evidently persons of some authority, because Sexby tells his comrades that they are to do exactly as '59' and '89' advise—remove Skippon from the Army, call on Fairfax to stand by them, and, above all, prevent the disbandment of Fairfax's regiment. Riding all night Sexby's messenger could have been at Bury on the 26th, a Wednesday. The official copies of the votes reached Fairfax on Thursday. His plans were already made—or, more likely, made for him. The situation was well in hand. A council of officers was summoned for Saturday morning, and to prevent mischief Skippon was politely invited to be present. Effectively he was under arrest, and the Council proceeded without him. By a majority of eighty-six to three the officers found that the votes of the House were 'dangerous and unsatisfactory'. The Army was in revolt. It is plain that in this combination the decisive word was spoken in London: Sexby was sent for instructions. And who could have given them but Cromwell himself?

The results of the Council must have reached London on Saturday or Sunday. On Monday evening there was a meeting at Cromwell's house in Drury Lane to settle the next move. Again, Ireton was ready. He had sent Cornet Joyce to London with instructions, for Cromwell to confirm if he saw fit. Cromwell did see fit. Riding swiftly by Oxford, to make sure that the guns there were in safe hands, and picking up detachments as he rode, by Tuesday evening Joyce was at Holdenby. The King had been playing bowls that afternoon at Althorp, when Joyce's advance guard was sighted making its way along the lanes. After a brief consultation, it was decided that the King, and the Parliamentary Commissioners, who always attended him, should return at once. The guards were doubled, and the evening passed in peace. In the night the Colonel commanding made his escape. Early on Wednesday morning Joyce entered the house, the garrison and the invaders shaking hands as they met at the door. Sexby had done his work neatly.

Joyce's orders were to secure the person of the King. He therefore made no attempt to interview Charles himself, but waited on the Commissioners. He had come, he said, referring to a written paper no doubt prepared at Bury St. Edmunds, to arrest Colonel Graves, who was wanted for a plot to convey the King to London without the authority of Parliament. The soldiers, satisfied that a conspiracy existed to raise a new army and put the King at its head, were determined to prevent the renewal of the war and the ruin of the kingdom. With which he took his leave, and sat down to write his report and ask for further instructions. Holdenby, one of the most magnificent of Tudor palaces, the work of Elizabeth's Hatton, was so vast that all this coming and going caused little disturbance to the Royal household. Towards evening Joyce began to feel his responsibility. It occurred to him that Graves perhaps had not fled but was in the neighbourhood arranging a rescue. Late that night he put the Commissioners under guard and made his way up the backstairs to the room of the King's gentlemen. He was sorry, he said, to disturb His Majesty, but he must speak to him at once. Maxwell and his colleagues were arguing with him through the bolted door when the King's silver bell rang. He had heard the altercation and wanted to know what it was all about. Maxwell explained, and the King sent the persistent

Cornet the reply that he would see him in the morning.

As soon as early prayers were over he sent for Joyce. After some conversation, he consented to leave Holdenby on conditions to which the Cornet readily agreed. They went out into the great court together. Joyce waved to his troopers to come nearer. 'I have promised,' he said, 'three things in your name. You will do no harm to his Majesty's person: you will force him to nothing against his conscience: you will allow his servants to accompany him. Do you all promise?' 'All!' thundered the five hundred Buffcoats. 'And now, Mr. Joyce,' said the King, 'tell me where your commission is? Have you anything in writing from Sir Thomas Fairfax?' Joyce hesitated, and Charles persisted. 'Pray deal ingenuously with me. Where is your commission?' Joyce had an inspiration. 'Here,' he said, pointing to the troopers. The King ran his eye along the ranks, and turned to the Cornet with the smile which so often served him well. 'Indeed, it is one that I can read without spelling: as handsome and proper a company of gentlemen as I have seen this many a day.'

The Commissioners and Household were nervous and puzzled. The King was laughing merrily. 'Where next, Mr Joyce?' The Cornet proposed Oxford: the King thought it was unhealthy. Joyce—apparently by a natural association of ideas—offered Cambridge. The King wished to see Fairfax, but he preferred Newmarket. All was promptitude and courtesy in those loyal ranks, and at eleven that night Joyce was scribbling a hurried note to the nearest regiment. 'The King is at Huntingdon. Will be at Newmarket to-morrow. Persuade all the friends you can to come and meet him.' The King had come back, and was to have a royal welcome. The next night he was at Childerley, and there he spent three days. The University flocked out with loyal addresses, and in the wake of the University came Fairfax, Ireton, and Cromwell.

He had had a narrow escape. The news that Joyce was at Holdenby reached London on Thursday. It was a declaration of war, and few could doubt that Cromwell was behind it. He was much nearer the scaffold that night in Drury Lane than Charles at Holdenby. There was nothing for it but flight. On Saturday he was with the Army, and on Monday, for the first time, he and the King stood face to face, both in high spirits, each in the mood to see the best in the other. For the kingdom it was a day of hope. For Ireton a day of triumph. And though history and even gossip are silent, I cannot but suspect that the triumph was not unshared. If any woman in England was confident of her ability to adorn a peerage it was Cromwell's daughter, Ireton's wife.

IV

The object of the forward party in Parliament, as conceived by Pym and transmitted to his feebler successors, was to reduce the Monarchy to a Dogeship. The Venetian Constitution, against which Disraeli was to inveigh in the nineteenth century, was already an ideal of the seventeenth, and requests had gone to Venice for a more exact account of its working. Between Venice and England there was indeed a difference: the Grand Council had the experience and the lustre of four hundred glorious years: Parliament had no experience of Government, and what lustre it had acquired in 1641 was rapidly fading.

On the other hand, the monarchy though it kept much of its imaginative appeal had ceased to be indispensable. Alternative forms of government could at least be canvassed. We are passing through one of those periods—very like our own—of intense but superficial activity when ideas are generated so much faster than they can be set to work that they tend to neutralize each other in a voluble and sterile dialectic. Everything was in the melting-pot of speculation. London alone (it was said) professed twenty-nine religions, a modest figure to us but terrible to those who believed in one revelation and one Church order. Politically, every system had its advocate. But all systems, which had any practical sense in them, swung about two points, classic, senatorial, Republicanism, or Kingship by Contract. If for any reason Kingship by Contract broke down, Republicanism was the only alternative.

But in the summer of 1647 it was only a speculative alternative. Pious majors might hold forth about Ehud and Eglon, Saul and Samuel, Ahab and Jehu; political corporals demonstrate that before the Conquest all power lay in the people, and that somehow or other the people had got done out of their rights, but no one of any consequence seriously thought of deposing the King, far less of slaying him. Even in reducing the Monarchy to a Dogeship, the Presbyterians were overshooting the mark. The real solution was to restate the medieval doctrine of contract in modern terms. There was no time to lose. Radicalism—academic, demagogic, and revivalist all at once—was coming up in flood, and with Radicalism was coming something which contemporaries called Anabaptism and derived from Munster, and we in like circumstances might call Bolshevism and derive from Moscow. And this Radicalism was becoming the creed of the Army, or of as much of the Army (perhaps not a very formidable proportion) as wanted anything except to be paid and sent home.

All that June the Army chiefs were in daily touch with the King, first at Newmarket, then at his hunting lodge at Royston, then at Hatfield. No possible courtesy was omitted that could conciliate his goodwill or exalt his dignity. Royalist officers were allowed to come and pay their respects, and Radicals growled to see as much kneeling and bowing and kissing of hands as if Hatfield was Whitehall. And not Royalist officers only: Parliamentary officers and their wives thronged the lawns and the presence chamber. The King was carefully guarded, but the Commander was enjoined to keep the sentries well out of sight and to interfere in no way with his comfort or devotions. He had asked that his chaplains might join him. Fairfax forgot to answer the letter, but he sent the chaplains. The Household, standing respectfully apart, while the King paced briskly up and down the privy garden with the generals, wondered, hopefully, what they were all laughing about. The King, Cromwell said enthusiastically after one of these interviews, was the most upright and conscientious man in the three kingdoms. By the beginning of July, the talk was of peace in a fortnight.

Ireton had undertaken to draft a permanent plan of settlement, the Heads of Proposals, which would serve also as a manifesto from the Army to the nation. Coming from such a source, it was not likely to be wholly acceptable to the Radicals. But the Radicals in politics were also, in the main, anti-Presbyterian in religion, and the Radicals in religion—the Sectaries or Independents—were, in the main, anti-Parliament in politics. The Army had not laid aside its hostility to Westminster: it was still unpaid and it suspected Parliament of a design to call back the Scots, raise the City of London, and effect a restoration in which there would be no room for Radicals or Sectaries. The soldiers, and many of their officers, wanted to march on London and settle with their paymasters there. Even Ireton's capacity for work must have been taxed to get his Proposals ready, while he was arguing every day with the King and his agents and struggling, in concert with Cromwell, to keep the Army in hand.

The crisis came in a long and stormy meeting of officers and men at Reading on July 16th. Hour after hour, the two fought to prevent any irrevocable step being taken before the Proposals had been published. 'Suppose you march on London,' Ireton asked, 'and transfer all power from Parliament to the Army, what have you gained? Are we any nearer to a settlement, to peace? Before we ruin our good name by disputes among ourselves, let us show the country what we mean to do with power when we get it. A plan has been drawn up to that end: it is open to discussion still: it may require to be

amended...' Here Cromwell took up the running. Surely, he urged, if that was so, the right course was to consider the Proposals first. Then they could resume their discussion of the March on London—a matter on which, really and truly, he was not convinced. He must have time to consider his position: a sub-committee perhaps—and an adjournment till six o'clock. He was fighting for time and even one day saved was something.

The Proposals which Ireton produced that afternoon were intended as a compromise between the extreme claims on both sides, but with a leaning to the left. The bishops were to be abolished and their lands sold—so much for the Presbyterians and the City. But the Covenant was made optional—so much for the Anglicans and Independents. By a curious adumbration of the Parliament Act of 1911, a bill passed in two successive Parliaments might become law, without the Royal Assent, and the militia was transferred for ten years—so much for the Commons. But the present Parliament was to be dissolved at an early date, and no further diminution of the Royal Power was to be proposed, though the Royal authority was to be exercised through a reformed Privy Council, which Ireton called a Council of State and which in substance—being jointly dependent on the Crown and Parliament—would have been a Cabinet.

When the debate was resumed at six o'clock, Cromwell was in a position to declare himself. The Proposals had been well received by the officers, and they were the main business. The negotiations between the Army and Parliament were of secondary importance. He was definitely against the March on London. But he agreed that they might properly present their demands with a time limit attached. If Parliament refused to accept them—well, they might have to march after all.

They did. But it was not to coerce but to rescue Parliament. In those strange years, London had come to feel itself a power in the land, and to behave with the prompt and organized turbulence of a Greek or Italian city state. Then too, as now, it was the refuge of all who had only their wits to live by, and it was crowded with disbanded Royalists and deserting soldiers from the army of Fairfax. The 'démarche with a time limit', on which the Reading convention had decided, stipulated that the City militia should cease to act as a separate force. Lords and Commons agreed. A vast mob swarmed through the City gates, along the Strand to Westminster, and Lords and Commons rescinded their votes. The two Speakers and a crowd of Members fled to Fairfax. For a moment it seemed as if London would go to war with the Army, a situation which cut short all debating, and which no man could deal with more efficiently than Fairfax. In the debate at Reading it does not seem that he opened his mouth. But he could take London. Indeed, he is the only soldier since the Conqueror who ever has taken it. His left wing, sweeping through the Middlesex villages, reached Tilbury. His right was ordered to secure Gravesend. They got as far as Deptford: it was not necessary to go farther. Southwark—really we might be reading of ancient Athens or medieval Florence—made a separate peace, and London yielded.

Time was slipping past. The Heads of Proposals had been in the King's hands for a fortnight. Hard-bitten Radical officers like Rainborough were growing furious at the facility with which Ireton adopted the Royal amendments and turned them pat into new articles while the rest were puzzling out their meaning. The King objected to the loss of the Royal veto: it was put back. He refused to agree to the abolition of bishops or the confiscation of their lands. Ireton promptly substituted a plan by which the bishops kept their spiritual functions—and their lands—and lost only their coercive jurisdiction. The Proposals thus revised were published on August 2nd, just before London surrendered. In spite of accidents, Cromwell had carried his time-table through: before seizing power the Army had told the nation what they meant to do with it.

Regarded as terms offered to a beaten enemy, the revised Proposals are astonishing. They show how anxious, over-anxious in fact, the Army leaders were to secure the King's name. It did them no good with the Army, and it gave the King a false idea of his own importance. They were the production of a convinced Monarchist, who saw none the less that the Crown must be brought up to date—the one thing unhappily that Charles could never grasp. The Church was left undisturbed, and the only material restraint on the royal authority—the transference of the militia for ten years—had already been offered by the King himself at Newcastle. The heavy fines imposed in the Newcastle Propositions on the Royalist gentry were cut down, and a general offer was included that any Royalist who would join the Army in preventing a new war—in other words, would stand in against the City, the Presbyterians, and the Scots—might compound for five per cent of his estate. One of Ireton's supporters wrote, after the debate at Reading: 'When the Army were in their greatest glory, and the enemy under their foot, yet we were ever humane and Christian to them, and now being so near to a reconciliation, we should not show any aversion or indisposition.' There were those who thought that Cromwell had no very great 'aversion or indisposition' to an earldom. Some one objected that Parliament was not likely to ratify such terms. 'Then,' snapped Ireton, 'we will purge and purge them till they do. Join the Cavaliers? I would join the French and the Spaniards to get the King's business settled.'

Ireton's critic proved right. The Army entered London on August 6th, and for the next fortnight the Generals were engaged on the first purge, getting the leading Presbyterians to vacate their seats. Then, with a majority of their own, as they believed, in both Houses, they returned to their conferences with the King. Their headquarters were at Putney: the King was now at Hampton Court. Charles was a skilful as well as a stubborn debater, and another fortnight passed before he was satisfied. About September 8th Cromwell and Ireton, in a garden house at Putney, received his final reply. Tactically, it was thought by them desirable that the initiative should seem to remain with Parliament, and the negotiation was therefore formally reopened by sending the Newcastle Propositions once more to the King. Ireton explained privately that he need not pay any attention to them: Cromwell afterwards averred, more subtly, that it was a device to discredit the Presbyterians and clear the ground. As revised by the two, the King's reply was in these terms:

> His Majesty conceives [the Propositions of Parliament] as being destructive to the main principal interests of the Army, and of all those whose affections concur with them; and His Majesty having seen the Proposals of the Army . . . believes his Two Houses will think with him that they much more conduce to the satisfaction of all interests and may be a fitter foundation for a lasting peace than the Propositions [now tendered by Parliament]. He therefore propounds (as the best way in his judgement in order to peace) that his Two Houses would instantly take into consideration those Proposals.

The King's letter reached Westminster on September 9th. On the 21st Parliament decided to stand by the Newcastle Propositions. Ireton's Proposals, Cromwell's promises, were scattered to the winds.

Our judgment on the situation must depend on the view we take of the chief actors. Cromwell had nothing to gain by disappointing the King. The Proposals gave him everything he really cared for, religious freedom for the Sectarians, a representative working House of Commons, and peace. Against the ill-will of the Radicals, which he had certainly incurred, he could set his popularity with the average trooper; as the author of peace he would have held, at the lowest, such a position in the country as Monck held after the Restoration; and, if he still needed action, Ireland awaited his sword. There is a story which can be neither proved nor disproved, but which seems on the face of it not unlikely, that the King's offer included more than an Earldom. What shape would the Irish Question have taken in the next three hundred years if Ireland, reconquered and settled by the New Model Army, had become a principality under the House of Cromwell?[6]

But to assume his sincerity is to convict him of a political mistake so gross, that, with a man of Cromwell's capacity, it cast a backward doubt on the assumption. He ought to have secured his House of Commons first. Having once accepted the King's reply, he made himself responsible for its acceptance by the House, and the Vote of September 21st was, in modern terms, a vote of no confidence in Lieutenant-General Cromwell, Member for Cambridge. Awkward for the Member, and dangerous for the Lieutenant-General; but far more awkward and dangerous, if they had known it, for the House of Commons. They had thrown over their best officers, imperilled the discipline of the Army, and released the King from all obligations. His moral position was unassailable, if he could hold it. Beaten in a fair fight, he had accepted fair terms. In disavowing the officers, Parliament showed that they did not want fair terms. What they did want —apart from the Bishops' lands—is not so clear. What they got, and in no short time, was a military democracy, which if it made no more of the King than they did, made equally little of the House of Commons.

V

We are approaching a decisive turn in the King's fortunes, and it is time to examine somewhat more closely the King's own attitude. Charles was the martyr to an ecclesiastical theory and the victim of a political theory, both of which he had, as it were, incorporated into his own personality. He never felt the least temptation, for the sake of a quiet life as a beloved and harmless sovereign, to surrender either the rights of the Church or the rights of the Crown; in which, as he saw them, the rights of his Christian people were involved. He believed, and many thousands of his most intelligent subjects believed with him, that the confiscation of Church lands was a sin against God, and that the cessation of episcopal orders involved an interruption of the sacraments, the channels of grace. No man can fairly be asked to involve himself, and those who trust him, in what he believes to be the most fearful of all calamities, simply because others happen to believe otherwise: and Charles had given the best pledges of his conviction by the purity of his life in prosperity and the constancy of his profession in captivity and defeat. All this, men who like Vane, Cromwell and Ireton were at once religious and intelligent, could thoroughly understand and appreciate. Here there was no difficulty.

It is less easy, with his record from 1625 to 1640 before us, to sympathize with his assurance that politically he was, in asserting his own prerogatives as King, defending the liberties of his people. Yet time and the process of events had drawn him, 'really and truly' as Cromwell might have said, into this position. Experience had convinced his people that those liberties depended on two things, the free functioning of the ordinary Courts of Law, and regular meetings of Parliament. On these they had insisted in 1641, and these they had won. But by 1647 their property was at the mercy of tribunals unknown to the law, which were expelling gentlemen from their lands, clergymen from their livings, harrying even yeomen, who had put on a buff coat or lent the King a horse, for delinquency-fines which to a poor man meant ruin and a life as a day-labourer. And Parliament, protected by Statute against dissolution, had ceased to represent anything but itself. A third of the Commons had joined the King; their places had been filled by coupon, and few of the recruiters had any reason to expect that if once they left Westminster the freeholders and burgesses would ever send them back there. If, that September, Fairfax had expelled the House of Commons and issued new writs in the King's name, steeples would have rocked and bonfires blazed from one end of England to the other, as they did thirteen years later when Monck at last opened his mouth and declared for a free Parliament.

Fairfax was not the man to do it unprompted. But it seems at first sight strange that neither Cromwell nor Ireton should ever—so far as we know—have discovered what seems the obvious solution of the difficulty in which they had involved themselves. The King had accepted their terms: Parliament had rejected them. A new Parliament, summoned, on what would now have been the Royal programme, to pass the Act of Indemnity, settle the Church, pay the Army, and re-conquer Ireland; Cromwell Lord Lieutenant—or something more; Ireton Lord Chancellor with a free field in which to exercise his skill in drafting redistribution bills, tithe bills, judicature bills, and all the other practical reforms his heart was set on—if we could re-arrange history to our liking, the last twenty years of Charles's reign might have been our golden age. But we should have to re-make Charles first, and by now Ireton had seen it.[7]

There was in any case one initial obstacle to be overcome, the Independents of the Army. Cromwell had strained his credit and reputation to bring the negotiations with the King to a successful conclusion, and he had naturally suffered the consequences. He was losing his hold on his own people. Personally sympathetic to the common man, and always attracted by odd types, Cromwell had no illusions about the collective wisdom either of the common or the odd. His definition of democracy as the creed of all Bad men and all Poor men, expresses with unusual pungency what seems to have been one of his deepest convictions. But he could humour them—and Ireton could not—because he could not only speak their language but think their thoughts. That misty sphere of the mind where feelings are just condensing into ideas with the help of catchwords was Cromwell's brooding-place, and it is the sphere in which most men, and all crowds, do what thinking they are capable of. He knew exactly what the Army was thinking about him now: he knew that if authority were once lost, there would be a universal dissolution of order. And, for the moment, authority meant Parliament. 'It's like holding on to a hare when you're swimming across the Thames,' he once said, 'but we have nothing else to hold on to.' He could not transfer the Army bodily from Parliament to King, even in defence of the Heads of Proposals. They were after all a Programme for Generals, for men who would be the peers and baronets of the restored monarchy. The soldiers were conning a much more drastic paper: so were many of the officers. It was laid before Fairfax on October 18th. It demanded a second purging, followed by an early dissolution of Parliament, and it said nothing about the King. Repudiated by the Houses, Ireton's Proposals were disavowed by the Army.

There is some slight ground for thinking, what in view of the antecedents of the two men is probable, that Ireton still

wanted to press on negotiations with the King, Cromwell to conciliate the House of Commons. On October 6th the officers agreed to stand by the Proposals as being 'more honourable and satisfactory' to the King. But they were not unanimous, and they were losing heart. The Royal Household, anxiously observing every change, felt the air about them growing chilly. Cromwell no longer rode over from Putney. The guards were doubled: the soldiers omitted to salute the King's staff. Cromwell indeed had other things to think about. The Presbyterians had always been his enemies, and now even his own regiment was turning on him. That earldom was receding into the distance, and unless he could recover the Army, even a quiet life in Huntingdon might be too much to expect.

And the Army—or at least Sexby and his friends who had organized those Committees which Ireton had managed so dexterously to his own ends—was getting very angry indeed. Fairfax had told the men on October 18th that he sympathized with them, and that their views ought to be considered by the officers. Fairfax always had so much difficulty in saying anything that he usually found it simplest to agree with everybody. A general council—officers and men—was summoned for the 28th, and if any Royalist had been present he would have learnt in the first ten minutes what a frail fabric all these negotiations with the King had turned out to be. Even in the fragmentary state in which it has come down to us, Sexby's speech has the true ring of that rough eloquence which, on the eve of battle, had so often given the Puritan soldier the assurance of victory.

> We have been by Providence put upon strange things, which the ancientest of us here doth scarce remember. While the Army acted to these ends, Providence hath been with us: and yet we have found little fruit of our endeavours, and all of us, I think, great and small, officers and soldiers, may say:
>
> 'What confidence is this wherein thou hast trusted? Thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh, King of Egypt, unto all that trust in him.'
>
> We sought to satisfy all men, and it was well. But in going about to do it, we have dissatisfied all men. We have laboured to please a King, and unless we cut our own throats, I think we shall never please him. We have gone about to support a House of rotten studds, a House of Commons and its company of rotten members.
>
> And one thing I must say to General Cromwell and General Ireton themselves. Your credit and reputation hath been much blasted upon two accounts—your dealings with the King, your plan of settlement which was to satisfy everybody and has satisfied nobody, and your dealings with Parliament. The authority of Parliament is a thing which most here would give their lives for, but the Parliament to which we would loyally subject ourselves has still to be called. In my conscience I think these things are the causes of all the reproach that has been cast on you. Consider what we soldiers have to propose, and if you find it reasonable, join with us. So may the Kingdom have peace: so may your fellow-soldiers be quieted in spirit. These things I have represented as my thought. I desire your pardon.

The proposals of Sexby and his colleagues, based on Lilburne's teaching, and entitled, somewhat ambitiously, The Agreement of the People, bore out the promises of Sexby's opening speech and the warning Cromwell had given the House of Commons a month earlier. 'Remember,' he said, 'that there is a Royalist party in the Army, and a strong one. Efforts are being made to form a Presbyterian party. But there is a third party little dreamt of whose aim is to have no power but the sword.' The Agreement of the People was the manifesto of this party, Lilburnian democracy in its simplest form, armed and ready for war. Its immediate sting lay in its conclusion:

> These things we declare to be our native rights, and therefore are agreed and resolved to maintain them with our utmost possibilities, against all opposition whatsoever: who having long expected, and dearly earned the establishment of those certain rules of government, are yet made to depend for the settlement of our peace and freedom upon him that intended our bondage and brought a cruel war upon us.

Look forward fifteen months, from the Council-room at Putney to the High Court of Justice in Westminster Hall:

> Charles Stuart, out of a wicked design to erect and uphold in himself an unlimited power to rule according to his own will, and to overthrow the rights and liberties of the people, hath traitorously and

maliciously levied war against the present Parliament and the people therein represented.

The sense is the same: the charge against the King was implicit in the Agreement of the People: and the ultimate ground of his execution is the picture, which gradually formed itself in the soldiers' minds, of Charles Stuart, the Man of Blood. Was it a true picture? In a sense it was, a sense which Charles himself would never have admitted, or indeed understood. Here lay the second obstacle to the splendid peace which Ireton and Cromwell had imagined to themselves. The Army might be managed, Parliament brought to reason. The rock on which all combinations split was the King's devotion, as sincere and disinterested as his devotion to the Church, to his own conception of Kingship, a conception of almost metaphysical purity which no surface calculations of advantage could touch. Hard-hearted, Cromwell once called him. Cromwell always thought emotionally, and hard-minded would perhaps be a better word. It is the quality that runs through the race: hard as a diamond, Mary said of herself; as hard as marble, Churchill said of James. Herein is the explanation of that duplicity which from his own time till now has been the standing charge against him. His purpose was pure. 'I should never make a lawyer,' he once said, 'because I could not defend a bad case or yield in a good one.' He asked nothing more than to be the King which God had ordained him, for the sake of his people, to be, and he would accept nothing less. 'He had no hungry appetite to prey upon his subjects though he had a greatness of mind not to live precariously by them'. But if we had put all that to Colonel Goffe and Colonel Rainborough, and Buffe Coate, and the Bedfordshire Man, who met that day at Putney, and if they had asked, 'Do you mean that, whatever promises he makes now, he will break through them as soon as he gets a chance, and is he going to let the Scots loose on us?' we could not have answered this rough and ready reading of the King's mind with a confident 'No'. One of his most faithful friends had come from France to Hampton Court to see him. 'I really do believe,' the King said brightly, 'we shall soon have another war.' The first war could be forgiven. But not another war. And Charles would have fought as long as he could persuade or hire anyone to fight for him—Scots, Irish, Danes, or Frenchmen—if only at the end he might be King again. This was the side of him that the Queen understood, and there is always this to be reckoned with in Charles—a desire to show her that he really was the man she wanted him to be. He had brain enough for the part for which history had cast him, the steadfast, wary guardian of tradition in a feverish and changing world. But he had not brain enough for the part in which inheritance and marriage had involved him. The difference between firmness and obstinacy, ingenuity and shiftiness is not, on the surface, very great. But it was just enough to make Charles an almost impossible king in 1647, quite impossible if he thought himself a match for the subtlest will and the most resolute intelligence in England.

VI

The Council of Officers was held on October 6th, and adjourned till the 14th. The Case of the Army was in draft on the 9th and laid before Fairfax on the 18th. The adjourned meeting of October 14th never took place. On the 20th, Cromwell appeared at Westminster. For what he said, and he spoke for three hours, we are dependent on a brief note by an Italian correspondent whose sympathies were evidently on the other, the Presbyterian, side. 'Speaking with as much eloquence as hypocrisy, he endeavoured to convince the House that neither he nor Fairfax nor any of the Army leaders had the least share in the designs of the regiments, but that from the beginning of the war their purpose and interest was no other than to serve the King and establish the Crown in its authority. All through he spoke of the King in the highest terms, and ended by saying that he must be restored as soon as possible.' If this is compared with his three-party speech a month before, it will not necessarily appear so hypocritical as our Italian reporter imagined. If Cromwell had reason to fear the storm that was rising in the Army, so had Parliament, and so had every member of the possessing classes throughout the country. Behind the Agreement of the People was the menace of Democracy. On the 28th Sexby made the speech we have read, and on the 29th, after a morning spent in prayer, the two sides, Grandees and Levellers, met in a grapple on the question of Manhood Suffrage. The Revolution had burst its banks.[8]

But in this sequence we must interpolate another date. On October 11th, the Scottish Commissioners in London were joined by two colleagues, Loudoun and Lanark, bringing the latest news from Edinburgh. The Scots were not happy over the part they had played at Newcastle in January, and the English situation had developed on lines which made the establishment of Presbytery seem more remote than ever. The combination which the Army always feared—London, Westminster, and Scotland—had for the moment been averted by the reduction of the City and the purging of the House of Commons. But it might always revive, and events had shown that the purging had not been so effective after all. If Colonel Rainborough and Colonel Goffe did not realize it, there were clearer eyes in the Army Council who saw well enough that all this debating on Manhood Suffrage might be terminated by a Royalist rising with a Scottish army in support. And they knew also that if England were polled that autumn, without any coercion from the Army, it would vote for a new Parliament, the disbandment of all Armies, an Act of Oblivion, and a restoration of the King on any terms or none at all. The government of Charles, in the secular sphere, had been technically incorrect rather than personally oppressive, and now as one bad harvest followed another, rents fell and fell, and taxes rose and rose, people were beginning to look back with fondness on the happy thirties. In the ecclesiastical department it had been vexatious—but hardly more so than this new Presbytery. Nobody, except a few fanatics who knew the history of Israel better than the history of England, really believed that Charles was a 'tyrant, traitor, and murtherer': he was so obviously nothing of the kind. But he was an exasperatingly difficult person to negotiate with, and for the moment he had won. Ireton and Cromwell were so deeply committed to the King that it would have been an immense relief to both of them to learn that he had passed away. The King had come between them and Parliament, between them and the Army. They were isolated and they were bound. If he lived, the only thing that could release them and restore their authority with the Army was that he should contract some new engagement, or run away.

One of Cromwell's favourite officers—a Royalist whom he won by calling on him suddenly and offering him a command—once asked him outright: 'General, why did you drop the King?' And this is the story Cromwell told. A secret message came from the King's bedchamber that the King's decision was taken and their doom was sealed. What it was they might learn by going to the 'Blue Boar' in Holborn and waiting till ten o'clock, when a man would come in with a saddle on his head. They would find a letter sewed up in the skirt. In troopers' coats, Ireton and Cromwell rode to the 'Blue Boar', called for beer, and sat drinking till the man with the saddle arrived. They searched the saddle and found the letter. If Bolingbroke is to be believed, the Earl of Oxford—a great collector of manuscripts—had had the letter in his hands. Unluckily, as the owner refused his price of £500, it is not in the Harleian Collection. It was a letter to the Queen, and in it Charles said, in answer to some protest of hers, that he knew perfectly well what he was about in his negotiations with the Army, Cromwell's Garter and the Viceroyalty of Ireland. 'He should know in time how to deal with the rogues, who instead of a silken garter should be fitted with a hempen cord'. This is not quite how Cromwell told the tale to his young friend; one can imagine he did not care to dwell, in 1649, on the day-dreams of 1647. But the two accounts join perfectly. How was the King to provide Cromwell or anyone else with a hempen cord? By joining the Scots: this was the decision that was to seal their doom. 'And then,' said Cromwell, 'we resolved his ruin.'[9]

The Scots—or at least the party which happened for the nonce to be uppermost in the politics of that fractious country—had learnt wisdom by experience. In England the Covenant was a hopeless business and they were ready to drop it, or

make it optional as Ireton had proposed. As a matter of fact Charles had been won over already to a compromise which bears the name of Ussher and which really does seem to be the closest approximation possible to the polity, not indeed of the Apostles about which we know nothing, but certainly of the Third, perhaps of the Second Century.[10] The Covenant thus out of the way, there was little left for the King and the Scots to differ about. The Scots were not much interested in English politics. The only danger to themselves lay in the English Army. But, rightly divining that England was royalist at heart, seeing that if the Army was at odds with Parliament the Army chiefs were also losing their hold on their men, they naturally calculated that a nation so divided would collapse at the first impact of an invasion, led in the name of the King by the heir to the Throne.

Nor can the King be blamed for accepting an overture which, almost by a miracle, promised to save his Church. He had no intention of making a bad use of the victory which patience had brought within his reach. What use he would have made of it is another question, on which no doubt Cromwell and Ireton had their private misgivings: a restoration on the Scots' terms involved them both in personal danger. Charles was not a generous man, and by failing to carry through the Heads of Proposals they had discharged him from all personal obligations to themselves. It is true that by his negotiations with the Scots he was releasing them from all personal obligation to him. But—in spite of intercepted letters in saddle-skirts—they had nothing to act on. Even if Charles had assured his wife that he meant to hang Cromwell when he saw a chance, the letter could not be with any advantage made public. The Just Man would have burst all Bonds in triumph over the Grandees, the Radicals would have exulted; and a great part of England would have said, Quite right too. Indeed, the general tenor of the King's dealings with the Scots was no secret—in passing, one must admire, or wonder at, the strange kind of nerve which the King must have possessed to sit in Hampton Court, with the profound frivolity of a solemn man, almost openly weaving plots for the destruction of the Army whose prisoner he was. There were mutterings at Putney that if Parliament and the Scots thought they could restore the King over the head of the Army they might find themselves without a King to restore. Cromwell warned the Commander at Hampton Court to be on his guard: 'If any such thing should be done, it would be accounted a horrid act'. It would certainly have been a very convenient one. But Cromwell was too late—perhaps he meant to be. The King had fled. There was a weak spot in that armour of placid, unimaginative courage with which he faced the world: he was afraid of assassination—it is the only trace in him of his father's physical timidity—and some one had touched it.

The world said it was Cromwell.

> And Hampton shows what part
> He had of wiser art;
> Where, twining subtle fears with hope,
> He wove a net of such a scope
> That Charles himself might chase
> To Caresbrooke's narrow case.

Indeed it may have been. The officer commanding at Hampton Court was Cromwell's cousin, Colonel Whalley, and some time on November 11th he received a warning letter to be delivered to the King. 'My brother,' the unknown correspondent wrote, 'was at a meeting last night, with eight or nine agitators, who, in debate of the obstacle which did most hinder the speedy effecting of their designs, did conclude it was your Majesty, and as long as your Majesty doth live, it will be so. And, therefore, resolved for the good of the Kingdom, to take your life away.' Now, we know that on November 11th these views were openly expressed in a meeting at Putney. It is highly probable that the agitators had a preliminary meeting on November 10th to settle the line they were to take, and if Cromwell knew of it—as he almost certainly would—nothing was easier than to arrange for a private account—a distorted account, because the agitators were not thinking of assassination, but open trial—to be conveyed to the King.

That night the King retired to his room early, as usual on a Thursday, to write letters for the foreign mail. Swiftly changing his clothes, he slipped out into the park, crossed the river at Thames Ditton and rode away. He left behind a letter of thanks to Colonel Whalley, assuring him that he had not been frightened away by any warnings of intended assassination, but was tired of being kept prisoner. To the House of Lords he wrote, with his usual dignity, explaining his action and his proposals for a settlement:

> I appeal to all indifferent men to judge, if I have not just cause to free myself from the hands of those who change their principles with their condition, and who are not ashamed openly to intend the destruction of the nobility, by taking away their negative voice; and with whom the Levellers' doctrine

> is rather countenanced than punished? Nor would I have this my retirement misinterpreted: for I shall earnestly and uncessantly endeavour the settling of a safe and well-grounded Peace, wherever I am or shall be, and that (as much as may be) without the effusion of more Christian blood: for which how many times have I desired, pressed to be heard, and yet no ear given to me? And can any reasonable man think, that (according to the ordinary course of affairs) there can be a settled peace without it, or that God will bless those who refuse to hear their own King? Surely, no.

'Those who change their principles with their condition.' If Cromwell had seen through Charles, it is plain from these words that Charles, assisted no doubt by the Scottish Commissioners, had seen through Cromwell. To regain the Army, he had had to make a quick shuffle to the left. But he could now declare his position with a clear conscience. The flight of the King released him from an entanglement. He discovered that his eyes had been dazzled by the glories of this world: he was resolved to humble himself and desire the prayers of the saints, that God would be pleased to forgive his self-seeking. The wandering sheep signalized his return to the fold by a sudden outburst of energy. A regiment appeared on parade with mutinous tickets in their hats, England's Freedom: Soldiers' Rights. It reads like an advance puff of Lilburne's next pamphlet. Cromwell rode at them with his sword drawn, seized the leaders, and had one tried by drumhead court-martial and shot then and there. The regiments quietly subscribed an Engagement to be obedient to their General and officers, and to leave politics to the General Council of the Army—that military Parliament which Ireton had organized in May. But the Lower House—the Soldiers' Deputies, as in another and fiercer revolution they would have been called—were shouldered aside. The control of Army politics was henceforth in the hands of the officers, and in the officers' programme one demand stood prominent: 'That a period be set to this present Parliament.' The pattern of the future is beginning to emerge. The Agreement of the People issues in the death of the King: the Engagement of November 15th will lead us step by step to that April morning in 1653, and the Member for Cambridge, in the centre of the picture, bellowing 'Drunkard', 'Whoremonger', 'Take away that Bauble!' So seen the trial and execution of Charles appears as an incident in a conflict, the nature of which we, perhaps, are better able than the nineteenth century to conceive, the struggle between a drilled, determined, and self-conscious minority, and the loose, slow, compromising organ which every Parliament is bound to be.

VII

On November 14th 1647, the unhappiest man in England was Colonel Hammond, Commandant of Carisbrooke Castle. He had been miserable among all the quarrels at Putney: he did not like Republicans, or common soldiers mixing themselves in politics. Indeed, the position of a gentleman in the Army of the Parliament, heartily convinced that he was on the right side and that it was being very rapidly turned into the wrong side, must have been distressing. He had applied for this quiet, distant, uncontentious post, and got it, and now the King had arrived to make it, beyond all question, the most difficult post in England. The King had been told that Hammond was that sort of man, and he had seen him at Hampton Court. That is why he went to Carisbrooke.

The King's nerves had been shaken, and when once he had made the effort to get away from Hampton Court, he was at a loss. Effort was in fact becoming difficult for him altogether, and the companions of his flight were not very helpful. They began by losing their way, which mattered the less as they really do not seem to have known where they were going.[11] Presumably to the Isle of Wight—but they had made no arrangements either for getting there or for getting away again. Possibly to France—but they had omitted to charter a ship, and by the time they were near the coast all the outports were closed. The King stayed all day at Lord Southampton's house at Titchfield, while two of them went ahead to see what Hammond would do. They met him on his morning ride round the Castle. He nearly fell off his horse. He could only moan, 'If he is in the Island I am ruined. If he isn't, keep him away.' They persuaded him to come across and see the King, and that evening the King crossed back with him. The care-worn Hammond was a good soldier, and he knew the rules. He could make no promises, and so he made none. But he could behave like a gentleman, and he did.

In the unceasing criss-cross of these months, we have to stop every now and then to take our bearings afresh. Down to September at least, there is an *entente* of King and officers against Parliament, soldiers growling in the background, and Scots hovering hopefully in the wings. With the King's flight the characters re-group themselves: it is now the King and the Scots against Parliament and Army. Not that Parliament is solid by any means: there is a strong Presbyterian section which is in the nature of things pro-Scot, pro-King, and anti-Army, and this section has the City of London with it. But in the Commons the attendance is so slack, and the whipping so perfunctory, that Parliament may decide almost anything one day and almost anything else the next. The Lords had ceased to count. Still, on the whole we must think, in November and December 1647, Army and Parliament as reconciled, and on the last night of the year their reunion was celebrated by a dinner party at Windsor where everybody swore to live and die with, and for, everybody else. It must have been, as one of the guests said, 'very sweet and comfortable'. Prohibition was not part of the Puritan creed.

Meanwhile the King was living in unwonted freedom and comfort. Carisbrooke had been hastily furnished by stripping Cranborne Lodge. His books were sent after him, and Hammond began to arrange the parade-ground as a bowling green, with a garden house where he could read and write when the fine weather came. To ride about the Isle of Wight all the morning, hunting or looking at the ships: to work at his papers all the afternoon; a game of bowls, a good dinner and an evening over the fire, writing mottoes on the fly-leaves of his favourite books: to be greeted with loyal cheers whenever he went out and devoted courtesy when he came back—if Charles could have pictured himself as a public man in retirement, he might have thought that life had treated him very fairly. But it never occurred to him that a King could retire. He had recovered his liberty—his moral liberty by the breakdown of Ireton's projects, his bodily liberty by withdrawing to the Isle of Wight. Actually, Hammond had a closer hold on him than he knew and, just before Christmas, Cromwell, who seems to have had a great liking for the scrupulous Colonel—they were a sort of cousins, as Hammond had married Hampden's daughter—paid a flying visit to the Island to stiffen his principles.

The King had made his offer—Ussher's Plan for the Church, no confiscation of Church lands; general toleration for all but Papists and open anti-Christians; the militia and Privy Council to be regulated and appointed by Parliament for his life; the Army to be paid, and a general Act of Oblivion passed. The offer was so reasonable, the sacrifices made by the Crown were so large, that no one, unless he was infected with an incurable distrust of the King, could hesitate to open negotiations on the new basis. Someone remarked to Ireton that it looked as if King and Parliament would settle at last. 'I hope they will,' he said, moodily, 'and on such terms that we can fight them both with a clear conscience.'

With this enigmatic remark we pick up our clue again. Ireton had divined that the real conflict would be Army against Parliament, and he was in a mood to welcome it. He had reason to be aggrieved with Parliament, which had torn through all his fine-spun projects. Possibly, like Cromwell, though he would not have put it in Cromwell's chapel-going style, he was uncomfortable about the part for which he had cast himself in the bright days at Hampton Court. And he had realized

that the Army could only be kept together on a left-wing programme. He was neither a republican nor a democrat. His convictions were monarchic, his temperament was aristocratic. But a left-wing programme was beginning to mean a Republic.

We seem to have forgotten all about the disbandment of the Army, which only six months before had set the country a-quiver with excitement and apprehension. It was still unpaid. With the ascendancy the Army leaders had acquired by the reduction of London, it would not have been difficult to require Parliament to pay the men and send them home. But they could not be sent home. The combination—London, Westminster, Scotland—would then have been unopposed, and this time the King would be at the head of it. Again and again he had pressed for a Personal Treaty: he knew well enough that once in London with the train-bands round him he was impregnable. Next to London, his most hopeful place was Scotland—if he could get there. If he could not, the Scots might come to England. Therefore the Army could not disband. Therefore, if the Army wanted the King's head, they must have it. A serious conclusion for a Conservative statesman to arrive at, but practical logic demanded it. No doubt the Army might conceivably be managed: the execution of the King was not yet inevitable: it was only a possibility that had to be faced. If there was another war, it would have to be faced very soon. No one could contemplate without dismay the picture of fresh armies marching and counter-marching over England, fresh sacks and sieges, fresh war taxation, if it was all to end in fresh negotiations for the settlement of a country which by then would be a desolate appendage of the Kingdom of Scotland.

The negotiations with the Scots, as we have seen, were in train while the King was at Hampton Court. They were continued at Carisbrooke, parallel with the English negotiations—the response to the King's offer of November 17th. Parliament had not budged from its position when it tendered the Newcastle Propositions—Dogeship or nothing. Militia in perpetuity, proscription of the Prayer Book, abolition of the hierarchy, sale of Church lands, they were all still on the programme. The fruits of the reconciliation of Parliament and the Army were now seen. The King, very naturally, turned to the Generals for support. Fairfax declined to intervene between King and Parliament. Only one resource was left him, and on December 26th he signed the Engagement with the Scots. Two days later he refused the propositions of Parliament. The cry of relief is audible in Cromwell's letter to Hammond, informing him that the House had voted for No More Addresses to the King, and that the Committee of Both Kingdoms was dissolved.

> Blessed be God! I can write and thou receive freely. Dear Robin, this business hath been, I trust, a mighty providence to this poor Kingdom and to us all. The House of Commons is very sensible of the King's dealings—and of Our Brethren's!—in this late transaction. You should do well, if you have anything that may discover juggling, to search it out, and let me know it. It may be of admirable use at this time, because we shall, I hope, instantly go upon business in relation to them, tending to prevent danger.

And it ends with something like a chuckle. Parliament had been persuaded to think that the Isle of Wight was exposed to a French attack and ought to be reinforced—how very convenient that the King should be there just now.

In effect, and almost without restriction, the Scots had undertaken to replace the King on the throne by arms. When they had done their work, the Scottish army was to return home, and the English forces were to be disbanded. England, naturally, was to pay, and His Majesty's Blessed Restoration was to be commemorated by a grand uprooting of Baptists and Congregationalists, and a handsome distribution of Court and diplomatic appointments to subjects of the King's 'ancient and native Kingdom'. It is very difficult to believe that either party to this wonderful compact took, it seriously. Presumably both reckoned that with a country so divided as England, where the King's name could still sometimes set Parliamentary regiments cheering on parade, the threat of armed intervention would be enough and that the practical difficulties of beating Fairfax in the field and collecting the war indemnity would not have to be faced.

All over England and Wales that winter the King's friends were on the alert. So, it is true, was the intelligence service on the other side, always one of the most efficient branches of the Parliamentary administration. The worry seems to have got on the unfortunate Colonel's nerves and to have impaired his manners. It would not have required much boldness or organization to have contrived the King's escape so long as the whole Island was open to him, and Hammond decided to remove some of his staff and confine him to the castle. The King lost his temper and berated Hammond soundly. 'You are an equivocating gentleman. You use me neither like a gentleman nor a Christian.' The distracted Colonel exploded. 'I'll speak to you,' he said, 'when you are in a better temper.' 'I have not slept well to-night,' the King explained mildly. 'I have used you very civilly, Sir.' 'Then why don't you now?' 'Sir, you are too high,' 'That,' replied the little King, apparently thinking that a mild joke would ease the situation, 'must be my shoemaker's fault. All

my shoes are made to the same last.' But Hammond sulked. 'Shall I have liberty to go about to take the air?' 'No; I cannot grant it.' His chance had passed. One of his pages, Henry Firebrace, went on working out a plot for his escape. It broke down. It all turned on the King being able to get through a particular window. Firebrace was sure he could not. The King was sure he could. He tried, and Firebrace was right. Charles was not an easy man to work for.

This was on March 20th. On March 23rd, evidently by pre-arrangement, the Captain of Pembroke Castle rose for the King. He was followed, in Ireland, by Lord Inchiquin, who closed a succession of savage victories over the Catholic rebels by suddenly changing sides. The next thing would be an Irish army landing in Chester and the Welsh ports. The two gates of the Kingdom, Berwick and Carlisle, were seized by Royalist commanders. London was distracted. The Spanish Ambassador took a simple delight in bonfires and Catherine wheels, and Parliament had to request him to desist from his exciting hobby. One mob went forth to attack the troops at Whitehall, very nearly captured Cromwell and Ireton, and was scattered by a cavalry charge along the Strand. Another seized Newgate and Ludgate, chased the Lord Mayor into the Tower, and was broken up by infantry and cavalry at Leadenhall. The Home Counties, from Norfolk round to Sussex, even the old Puritan counties, Essex and Suffolk, were stirring for the King. On May 3rd the Scottish ultimatum arrived in London, demanding the immediate disbandment of the English Army. With the Scots mustering for war, the Royalists gathering in every English shire, it was useless either to arraign the King for the past or to make plans for the future. The only thing to do was to keep him safe and wait on events.

A strange quietism, the passivity of exhaustion, was gaining even on the Army:

> Some of us judging it a duty to lay down our arms, to quit our stations and put ourselves into the capacities of private men. Some also even encouraged themselves and us to such a thing, by urging for such as practice the example of our Lord Jesus: who when He had borne an eminent testimony to the pleasure of His Father in an active way, sealed it at last by His sufferings: which was presented to us as our pattern for imitation.

The religious mind, especially when its chief nourishment is the rhetoric of prayers and preaching, loves to dramatize its movements. There is very little reason to suppose that if Captain Allen and his fellow-mourners had laid down their arms and returned to the station of private men they would have had to suffer anything more serious than the pain of hearing the Prayer Book read in their parish churches, and, no doubt, of disgorging some of the estates they had annexed. Their superior officers might indeed have found it convenient to retire to Holland. Cromwell seems to have been less anxious about his spiritual than his financial future: he was agreeably surprised 'as things stand' by the handsome portion which Mr. Mayor offered with his daughter's hand for Richard Cromwell, and a sharp attack, perhaps of influenza, produced very serious reflections. Parliament had assigned him an estate of £1680 a year in land, at the expense of the Marquess of Worcester. He now made over £1000 a year to the State for the service of Ireland. If he remained in the Army he lost little, because his pay as Lieutenant-General was £1100 a year—and much easier to collect than Lord Worcester's rents. If the King came back, there would be no rents and no pay either.

But Fairfax had his army thoroughly in hand, and the promptness of his dispositions suggests that as a commander he has been unfairly over-shadowed by the splendour of Cromwell's victories in the field. The pious *défaitisme* to which Captain Allen bears witness vanished as soon as the Army was at bay. The story has often been told how the officers met in prayer at Windsor to brace themselves against the coming storm: how the Lieutenant-General pressed very earnestly on all then present a thorough consideration of their actions as an Army, and their ways particularly as private Christians: how Major Goffe preached from Proverbs i, 23.

> Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

And how 'hardly able to speak a word to each other for weeping', they were led and helped to a clear agreement

> that it was the duty of our day, with the forces we had, to go out and fight against those potent enemies, which in all places appeared against us, with an humble confidence, in the name of the Lord only, that we should destroy them.

Detaching Cromwell for the Welsh front, Fairfax prepared to march to Berwick. He got as far as Hounslow. Kent had risen, and the fleet in the Downs had declared for the King. The Prince of Wales, in slippers and a very dirty shirt, landed at Sandwich. He was the right height but the wrong colour, and he proved to be an imaginative lad who admitted

under examination that, as everyone said he was the Prince, he decided to say so too. He got away with £100 and three bunches of asparagus from a loyal lady, an afternoon's duck-shooting with admirers from the Fleet, and a wigging from the House of Lords. In twelve days Fairfax had recovered Kent, only to find that he was now wanted in Essex, and from the middle of June to the end of August the Army that should have been defending the North was pinned down at Colchester. In the West, Cromwell found the Welsh garrisons tougher than he had expected. The only force available to meet the invasion was Lambert's few regiments in the Pennines, with two roads to watch, and a hostile Scarborough and Pontefract in their rear. The Scots crossed the Border on July 8th. Pembroke surrendered on July 11th. There was just time for Cromwell to pick up the guns which were coming round to Hull by sea, and to reach Lambert before the Scottish army got past him into Cheshire. But it was enough. The marching powers of that Army seem to have been poor. By August 17th they had only got as far as Preston. Three days later, with half of them prisoners and the rest scattered in flight, Cromwell sat down to draw the moral, 'Take courage', he wrote to the Speaker, 'to do the work of the Lord, in fulfilling the end of your magistracy, in seeking the peace and welfare of the land: that all that will live peaceably may have countenance from you, and they that will not leave troubling the land may speedily be destroyed out of the land.' Whether this ominous phrase included the king was, in Cromwell's mind, an open question. But it was a question which Ireton and Harrison had already answered for themselves.

VIII

To classical Republicans, nurtured on Livy and Plutarch, an occasional act of tyrannicide, the Brutus and Cassius business, is a kind of professional gesture intended to show that they are true to their principles. Republicanism of that austere and academic type is rather the creed of the aristocrat than of the people, of a Sydney or a Ludlow, than of Hunckes or Jubbes. To become popular it must be alloyed with some more massive emotion, which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was supplied by religion, and in its turn the emotion must be justified by a theory. Cardinal Manning once observed that there was only a plank between the Presbyterians and the Jesuits. In the seventeenth century the two classics of regicide were the books, respectively, of the Scottish Presbyterian, Buchanan, and the Spanish Jesuit, Mariana. They were constantly coupled together, and though naturally they start from different premises, they arrive at the same conclusion. The King is king by contract. If he violates the terms of his contract he may be removed or slain.

The ordinary Puritan officer had probably never heard of Buchanan or Mariana.[12] But their ideas were in the air, and he had direct access to the Sacred Book on which they drew. The old Testament bears hard on kings, and one text, improved by a marginal reading from the Genevan version, seems to have sounded in the ears of the fanatic Harrison and his like with baleful reiteration. 'Come out, come out, thou Man of Blood. The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul in whose stead thou hast reigned. Thou art taken in thy mischief because thou art a Man of Blood.' It was at Putney in 1647 that these murmurings had first become audible.

> What [asked Captain Bishop] is the reason that we are distracted in Council, and that we cannot as formerly preserve this Kingdom from that dying Condition in which it is? After many enquiries in my spirit I find this answer, and the answer which is given to many Christians besides amongst us. I say: a compliance to preserve that Man of Blood and those principles of tyranny which God from Heaven by His many mercies hath manifestly declared against, and which I am confident may be our destruction.

Mr. Wildman followed on: 'I am clearly of opinion that it is not of God to decline the doings of justice where there is no way left of doing mercy. I much agree that it is very questionable whether there be a way left for mercy upon that Person.' On November 11th, the day of the King's flight, Harrison insisted on having the question debated without disguise. Cromwell took him on his own ground. 'He put several cases in which murder was not to be punished. Stated the case of David upon Joab's killing of Abner, that he spared him upon two prudential grounds: firstly, he would not spill more blood; secondly, the sons of Zeruiah were too hard for him.' Ireton as usual took the Constitutional point. The King might be a man of blood, but as the law had provided no means of trying a King, to execute him would in its turn be murder. Cromwell urged the argument which was rarely out of his mouth in those days—we have heard it before when the march on London was debating: 'We can only do it if it becomes our absolute and indisputable duty to do it; in the present circumstances it is not.' Fairfax for once broke silence with the most sensible observation of the day. To kill the King merely meant transferring all rights of the Crown to his successor: the main question was to determine what the rights of the Crown were. And Commissary Cowling summed up. 'What we have been fighting against is the exorbitant powers of the King, not his person. Bring them within the law, and leave him alone.' All the struggles of the next twelve months are there in embryo, and the process of the drama is that Ireton rationalized the prophesyings of Harrison into a policy and confronted Cromwell with an accomplished idea. Fairfax went with the stream as long as he could, and then stood apart and waited for 1660.

Colchester surrendered on August 27th. By an ominous departure from the chivalry of the last war, the Royalist commanders were shot. We are entering on that phase through which all revolutions seem predestined to pass, when the thirst for blood swallows every other appetite, when the simplicity of a violent solution seizes on minds exhausted by the turmoil of patternless events. It is most formidable when it seizes the intellectual man, and it had now seized Ireton. Contemporaries called him the Cassius of the Revolution: perhaps there was a touch of Robespierre in him too. He had, it was said, a conscientious objection to engaging in the duels which his insolence provoked, and he died calling out 'I will have more blood'. Neither story need be true, but we can divine the sort of man he must have been to have such stories told about him.

Once more the war was over, and once more the difficulties were beginning all over again. With Cromwell's victory at Preston peace was assured, and Parliament seized the occasion, with the main body of the Army far away, to reopen negotiations with their prisoner. The City was clamorous for a settlement and Fairfax approved. In all these negotiations we feel like a ship caught in a whirlpool. We are going round and round a point which, without some violent,

extraordinary effort, we shall never pass. Everything is superficial: nothing really goes home. Presbytery for three years, militia for ten years, optional Covenants, Acts of Oblivion, they all mean nothing. And on the other side, Ehud and Eglon and the Man of Blood do not mean very much either. That way there is no future. There was too much monarchy in the English fabric for a Dogeship to be workable. No one, except a few rarefied intellectuals like Milton, could conceive an impersonal government. But there had been experiences which made it equally impossible for anyone, with perhaps as many exceptions on the other side, to think of England as a pure monarchy, with subordinate and revocable powers delegated to Parliament. Unluckily, Charles was one of the exceptions.

A House of Commons which had told Elizabeth that she was 'admitted Queen of England and therein trusted with a limited power to govern by, and according to, the laws of the land' would have withered under the blast of Royal anger. But there was no need to say it, so long as both parties behaved as if it were so. Doubtless as the pressure of foreign danger relaxed and the new gentry began to feel the Abbey lands firm under their feet, this happy reciprocity was certain to develop points of tension. The important thing, for the Crown, was that no one should be provoked into theorizing about them. There are things, as St. Augustine said of Time, which are all right till you begin talking; monarchy is one, and James was always talking. 'I do wish,' one of his courtiers said, 'that His Majesty was not always pointing out the analogy between himself and God,' which, incidentally, Elizabeth had taken for granted. One can imagine a wise King taking over the Tudor constitution, modifying it gradually in the direction that Tudor precedent indicated by calling his Parliament into regular and willing, not forced and spasmodic, co-operation, and so evolving a new type of sovereignty, as solid and popular as that of 1660, but without the virus of party in its tissues. Hyde believed it could be done: Ireton very nearly did it. In 1641, even in 1647, it was still not impossible—in the abstract. But with Charles, a man of deep convictions and no instincts, with a very active brain and no real intellectual power, it had become impossible. From every negotiation, from every undertaking, he sinks back to his centre, the unlimited, indispensable kingship, from which he starts up on some new negotiation towards some incompatible undertaking. This is the midpoint of the whirlpool, which only a desperate pilot could force the vessel past.

IX

On September 18th negotiations were opened at Newport. Cromwell that day was near Berwick, preparing to invade Scotland, and thoughtfully promising the Scots to make the invasion as inexpensive to that kingdom as possible. Fairfax was at St. Albans, with Ireton sulking and resigning, and writing long letters on the situation to his father-in-law. Fairfax wanted the new Treaty to succeed. Ireton and the Republicans did not.

The King had removed from Carisbrooke a few days before to the house of Mr. Hopkins, a gentleman of Newport. What with the King's household, headed by four peers and two bishops, the fifteen Parliamentary commissioners and their attendant divines and servants, the little town was crowded. They met in the Town Hall, the King sitting in a chair of state, the Commissioners at a long table below. The King's advisers stood behind him, they were not permitted to join in the discussion. So the Treaty opened, and the first words showed that Parliament was quite as immovable as the King. The propositions tendered at Newport were those tendered a year before at Hampton Court. It would be a waste of time to follow the details: both parties had lost all hold on reality: they were in perpetual check to each other. But the King, in thinking that, if he could hold out long enough or if he could escape, he might still recover his Crown, was nearer the truth than Parliament in supposing that a vote of the two Houses would be enough to impose the Covenant on an army of victorious sectaries.

Perhaps it is time to look at this memorable instrument more closely. An English Covenanter undertakes first, as we have seen, to endeavour the reformation of the Church according to the Word of God and the example of the Best Reformed Churches; second, to extirpate popery, prelacy, heresy, superstition, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness; third, to preserve the rights of Parliament, the liberties of the Kingdom, and to defend the King's person and authority; fourth, to discover and punish all incendiaries, malignants and evil instruments in Church and State; fifth, to maintain peace with Scotland; sixth, to pursue this Covenant jealously and neither to quit it for the contrary part, nor give himself over to a detestable indifference or neutrality.

It will, of course, be seen that Article II is equally repugnant to Churchmen, to Congregationalists, and to Baptists, since, if the Presbyterian is right, all the others must be heretics and therefore liable to the vague but alarming process known as extirpation. Parliament had in fact, on one of its happy-go-lucky days, already voted that anyone who got the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration wrong should be imprisoned for life, and on that mysterious topic it might safely be assumed that all the views that could be held were held, and that all but one were profane or superstitious in the eyes of those who held the other. Indeed, the term malignant in Article IV had come to have in Presbyterian circles a very odd association. Colonel Petit of Snow Hill found that his instructions required him to fight against 'all malignants, sectaries, and godly persons'. It was not a slip of Alderman Gibb's tongue; godly, on both sides, had become a party term, exchangeable with sectary. The reunion of the Anglican and Presbyterian wings was in train.

In reiterating their demands for the Covenant, therefore, Parliament were beating the air to their own undoing. The singular thing is that they should have persisted so long and stubbornly. The truth is, that it had become a party obsession, like Free Imports with old Liberals. Anti-prelacy was the only rag left of the flag unfurled in 1640. The great Reform Party split—very much as the Reform Cabinet of 1831 split—on the Church question. Hyde and Falkland went right, Pym went left; and what was left of Pym's crew clung to the last plank still afloat of Pym's platform. If that went under, there was nothing left for them to do. They just had a majority in Parliament, and they knew better than to dissolve.

Early in October, Cromwell entered Edinburgh. The Commission of Kirk appointed three members to wait on him, Mr. Blair, Mr. Guthrie and Mr. Dickson. Blair was an old acquaintance, familiar with Cromwell's religious views. They proceeded in the approved manner of a deputation taking the measure of a candidate.

'What,' they asked, 'is your opinion of monarchical government?'

'I am for monarchical government, and that in the person of this King and his posterity.'

'What is your opinion anent the Toleration?'

'I am altogether against toleration.'

'What is your opinion anent the government of the Kirk?'

'Oh, now, Mr. Blair, you article me too severely: you must pardon me that I give you not a present answer to this; I must have time to deliberate.'

The deputation retired. Mr. Dickson, rubbing his elbow, said: 'I am very glad to hear this man speak as he does.' Mr. Blair replied: 'And do you believe him? If you knew him as well as I do you would not believe one word he says. He is an egregious dissembler and a great liar. Away with him! He is a Greeting Devil.'

The evidence for this story,[13] so important for the attitude of Cromwell at this time and his character at all times, is unimpeachable. However we interpret it, the story is a strange one, but not inexplicable if we recall the dates. Cromwell must have known of the opening stages of the Newport negotiations. To declare against This King just then was equally to declare against Parliament and, in Edinburgh, he could not have known how far forward the Army of the South had been brought, whether in fact Fairfax or Ireton was in control. But on the whole, from a distance, it must have looked as if things were moving towards a Restoration, and indeed, if Charles could have brought himself to close promptly at Newport, he might have been back in London in time to welcome the victor from the North, Oliver Earl of Essex, Malleus Scotorum.

> Dios! que buen vassallo se hobiesse buen senore!

But, all the while, the call for justice on the Man of Blood was growing louder, and, in the Newport Treaty, Parliament seemed to be sheltering the great delinquent. If only we had some of those long letters which Ireton sat up at night writing—a habit over which his father-in-law could be waggishly reproachful—we should be able to trace far better than we now can the closing of the threads. Indirectly, we can see his line of reasoning, because he wrote to Hammond, Hammond sought counsel from Cromwell, and Cromwell, who was marching slowly South, replied in a letter which is preserved.

Ireton—so I read him in Cromwell's interpretation—admitted that the Republicans of the Army were a minority party. Were they justified in employing their armed strength to coerce the majority? Here we may revert to the Ireton of 1647 and his emphatic demand that the Army programme should be published before the Army marched on London. He was in the same position now, and he had more time to play with because nothing could be done till the Army of the North returned, and Cromwell was deliberately not hurrying. He began, I think, to work at it soon after the fall of Colchester, with one eye fixed on Newport and the proceedings of Parliament with the King. Most men's minds move in a pattern, and Ireton could not help remembering how Parliament had treated his last attempt to provide the country with a constitution. This time, however, he had force behind him.

But could force properly be applied to Parliament? This was the agitating question that he had planted in Hammond's mind—and in the mind of that good House of Commons man, his father-in-law. With the question he had provided means for arriving at an answer.

'First: *Salus populi; summa lex.* Is this a sound position? Second (and this argument has two branches): (*a*) Is not Parliament by conduct involved in certain understandings with the Army, and therefore bound to consult the Army in any negotiations for a settlement? (*b*) Are these particular negotiations at Newport likely to result in *Salus populi*, as the Army if so consulted would define it? Third: Is not the Army, being assembled on stated grounds to secure certain ends, an equiponderant authority to obtain those ends?'

The argument is close-woven, but the practical conclusion is obvious. If the Newport Treaty is not likely to have results which the Army can approve, the Army may properly set Parliament aside.

But is there any prospect of success? There are two elements of weakness in our position. One is indifference. A party in the Army are for non-intervention because they do not see any balance of advantage on either side. If the King comes back on Newport terms they will be, personally, no worse off. And this party is strongly influenced by fear of social subversion: they are disquieted by the alliance of Republicans and Anabaptists: their position is that any government is better than none, and the best government is that under which property is safest. Really, Anabaptism is not dangerous, their alarms are groundless. On the other side, an increasing number of the officers are in favour of action, especially in the Army of the North, where they are practically unanimous.

These are only arguments in favour of doing something, and as Ireton had said a year ago: before you decide to do something, you must know what you are going to do. To translate the terms of Revolution into terms of peaceful politics,

you may turn the Government out, but are you prepared to take office? Have you a programme? We are back in the Reading position, only this time it is Army against King (and the Presbyterians in Parliament) instead of Army against Presbyterians and the City. The programme must therefore be one which will unite Army and Radicals against Presbyterians and King. It must provide for the King's trial, for the payment of the Army arrears, for the exclusion of Presbyterians from Parliament. Beyond that lies the constitution of the future—biennial Parliaments and a limited monarchy, or presidency, without a negative voice. But this part of the Programme was never completed. Things were beginning to move with a rush, and always towards the left. We approach the darkest turn in the labyrinth and, as usual, our best course is to stop and reckon up the dates.[14]

The Newport negotiations ended on October 21st when the King made a final offer of Ussher's Plan for the Church. On the 27th the House of Commons rejected it. A fortnight later, on November 10th at St. Albans, Ireton laid before the officers the proposal on which the Republicans were now agreed, that the King should be brought to trial. Fairfax and his officers emphatically declined to follow him. Instead, they took out of their pigeon-hole the old Heads of Proposals and sent them to the King. With them went an urgent letter to Hammond to redouble his vigilance and not let That Person escape. Charles replied, neither accepting nor rejecting, but proposing to come to London, and consider them, in consultation with Parliament, there.

The most remarkable fact in this sequence is the side-step of the officers between November 10th and November 20th. It is clear that Fairfax had asserted himself—a feat calculated to take anybody by surprise—and insisted on the old compromise, the Heads of Proposals, being tried once more. One can follow his line of reasoning because he was in the position of Cromwell a month earlier. The Republican alternative was directed as much against Parliament as against the King. It was revolutionary in a sense for which Fairfax was not prepared. It is clear, too, that in taking this line he had the bulk of his officers behind him.

Everybody who was still capable of thinking at all knew that the Trial of the King, however it was dressed up, could be nothing but a drumhead court-martial. Parliament was against it: the City was against it: the country overwhelmingly against it. And it was very doubtful how much of the Army when it came to the point would really be for it. The Army of the South was devoted to Fairfax. The Army of the North was a doubtful factor. Its commander, as we have seen, had argued himself into the position that it might have to act if the Newport terms proved unsatisfactory. If the Newport terms proved to be after all the old Heads of Proposals, Cromwell was well able to discover for himself that Providence had meant them all along, and Ireton might well believe that Providence, by a miracle, had brought victory within his grasp. If the miracle did not happen, if Pharaoh's heart continued stubborn, then the intention of Providence was equally clear. And, in profane language, the odds were ten to one against a miracle. Charles would not accept the proffered terms. But he was quite ready to start an argument about them. It was his last, and irreparable, mistake, and Ireton swooped.

The King's reply reached Fairfax at St. Albans on November 18th or 19th. Cromwell, in camp near Pontefract, was advised of the latest turn, and on the 20th he wrote to Fairfax in language of menacing significance:

> My Lord:
>
> I find in the Officers of the Regiments a very great sense of the sufferings of this poor Kingdom; and in them all a very great zeal to have impartial justice done upon Offenders. And I must confess, I do in all, from my heart, concur with them.

The Council of Officers decided to proceed at once in the sense of the Remonstrance. Colonel Ewer was sent to replace the scrupulous Hammond and to secure the King's person. Ewer was a brute who had done well out of the war: I can hardly suppose that he was Fairfax's choice for a mission requiring judgment as well as firmness: it looks as if Fairfax was quailing before his terrible subordinates. In fact Ewer's mission very nearly resulted in the King's escape. He took no troops with him, and Hammond refused to surrender his charge. The two returned to Windsor together, and for some days the Island was in the charge of three Deputy-Governors, none of whom knew quite what he was expected to do. On the 29th Colonel Cobbett arrived from Windsor.

It was a wet and stormy day, with a high sea running in the Solent. As one boatload after another of drenched troopers was put ashore and hurried inland, the rumours and excitement multiplied. By the evening it was known in the town that the King was to be removed. One of the soldiers whispered it to one of the servants, and the King summoned the Duke of Richmond and the Earl of Lindsay to consider what should be done. With them came one of Hammond's officers, Colonel Cooke, with whom the King had made friends at Carisbrooke. It was decided that Cooke should find the

Deputy-Governor, Rolfe, and ask him whether the rumours were true. 'Not that I know of,' was Rolfe's reply. But he added with some emphasis, 'You may assure the King from me that he may rest quietly this night. On my life he shall have no disturbance this night.' 'But is there,' Cooke asked, 'really any such design at all?' Rolfe hesitated. 'I cannot,' he finally said, 'know what is being done at Headquarters, but so far I have received no such orders.' 'But you will give me notice? You will not take the King by surprise?' 'Of course,' Rolfe answered, 'that is but a respect due to the King.'

'He was fearless, but in his later years not enterprising'. Charles had never been a man of action; he was nearing fifty, and his last eight years had been a time of continuous and exhausting strain. In the darkness and confusion it would not have been difficult to make a dash for freedom. But the nervous impetuosity of his earlier years had subsided into that languor of mind which finds it easier to talk of reasons for doing nothing than to think of what to do. He now sent Cooke back to ask if it was true that fresh troops were arriving in the Island. Rolfe, who seems to have been a punctiliously truthful man, replied that reliefs were on their way—he was not sure if they had landed.

Meanwhile news came that two thousand foot were at Carisbrooke. Cooke offered to ride over and see. The King objected that the weather was too bad to go out in, and it took some argument to persuade him that a young officer might ride a mile and back on a wet night without mortal injury to his constitution. At Carisbrooke Cooke found a number of officers, whom he recognized, in the Governor's parlour, but what they were there for he could not learn. It was nearly midnight when he returned to Newport, to find the guards doubled, and soldiers, with matches burning, posted at the King's bedroom door. Once more Cooke went out into the storm to expostulate with Rolfe, and by his orders the sentinels were removed to a less suffocating distance.

Cooke's energy had succeeded in establishing the fact that something was on foot, and the King settled down to debate the situation all over again. It is clear that no thought of personal danger had entered his mind: that the Army was acting in force seems even to have encouraged him against his one fear, assassination. 'They must preserve me,' he repeated, 'for their own sakes. No party can hope to win without me.' Escape was so difficult too, perhaps impossible, and if it failed, he would only have exasperated the Army for nothing. The Lords argued in vain. Lindsay had no illusions about the Indispensable King, and Richmond was sure that escape was still possible. 'How did you get out?' he asked Cooke. 'I have got the password,' he answered, 'and I could get you out too if you like to try.' The Duke slipped on an officer's coat, and the two walked past the sentinels, out of the house and back again.

But the King could not be persuaded. 'Listen, Sir,' Cooke pleaded, 'I know the Army mean to seize and remove Your Majesty. It is a dark night made for our business. I can take you past the sentries. I have horses at hand and a boat at Cowes. You have only to say the word and it can be done. Now, Sir, what do you mean to do?' The King was silent. Then, firmly: 'They have promised me, and I have promised them, and I will not break first.' 'But it was Parliament, Sir, you gave your promise to, and the Army have already violated the pledges you received from Parliament in return.' 'No,' said the King, 'I will do nothing that looks like breaking my word. And now, good night. I must get as much rest as I can.' Once more the three turned over among themselves the chances of escape. The Duke went in with their conclusion. It was no good. 'The King was resolved to go to bed.' For eight years Charles had been haunted by a memory. He had promised to save Strafford and he had been persuaded out of his word. He remembered it on the scaffold, and he remembered it now. The next day, he was taken across the Solent, from Yarmouth, to the gloomy discomfort of Hurst Castle.

X

Who, at this point in the development of the story, was really in control? Not Cromwell, who was tarrying in the Midlands on his return from Scotland. Not Fairfax, or things would have taken a very different turn. Rather, the decisive factor was the alliance in the Army Council, a most unnatural alliance, of Ireton with Harrison. Whether this strange creature was originally a butcher's boy or a lawyer's clerk we are not now in a position to determine. He may have been both. He was thirty-five at the outbreak of the war and, with other lawyers, enlisted in Essex's troop of Guards. He won, and seems to have deserved, very rapid promotion, being a prompt, skilful, and most energetic commander. His whole life seems to have been passed in a condition of sustained religious excitement, 'of such vivacity, hilarity and alacrity as another man hath when he hath drunken a cup too much', a man of visions and outpourings, 'an honest man who, from the impatience of his spirit, will not wait on the Lord's leisure,' 'a gallant, heavenly man, but most high-flown.' A creature of action, emotion and rhetoric, without, so far as one can discover, a single idea in his head which bore any relation to the state of England in 1648, from the beginning he had been the leader, the mouthpiece, the hero of the Party of Blood, and he is the only English politician whose resurrection has been expected by his party.

Always sudden and dramatic in his movements, he bore down on Hurst Castle in the night. The King, startled by the lowering of the drawbridge, the tramp of horsemen and then silence, sent Herbert early in the morning to find out who had arrived. Herbert was struck by the King's visible alarm when he heard that it was Harrison. 'That is the man that meant to kill me,' he explained. 'I was warned of it before, and this is a fit place. Don't let me be surprised.' Herbert was able to assure him that Harrison had only come to arrange for his removal to Windsor. Two days later the King left Hurst Castle under a cavalry escort, by Ringwood, Winchester, and Alton. Near Farnham a second troop joined company, at their head a splendid figure in velvet and scarlet who saluted like a born Cavalier. It was Harrison. At Farnham Castle the King was to dine and sleep. He was chatting before dinner with the lady of the house when he noticed the General at the far end of the room. He beckoned to him and drew him apart. For half an hour the two stood talking in a window. The King taxed him with his reported intentions. Harrison protested, 'It is not true, Sir. What I did say, I will say again. The Law is equally bound to great and small, and justice has no respect of persons.' The King's relief was visible when he sat down to dinner. By the Law, he was safe, and he still had reason to hope. The removal from Hurst Castle to Windsor was in itself encouraging. He was served in state: the royal dishes were tasted before him in the ancient form: the wine was offered on bended knee. He seemed happier, Herbert thought, than he had been since he left Hampton Court.

But there was no longer any Law in England. Too late the House of Commons realized whither all these moves of the Army, Engagements, Remonstrances, Agreements, and what not, were tending. They ought to have brought the King to London while the Army was before Colchester or in the North. Leaving him in the Isle of Wight, they had left him for the soldiers to dispose of. They might disavow the Army and vote that the Newport offer was 'a ground for the course to proceed upon'. The Council of Officers responded with a declaration that Parliament had forfeited its trust. On December 6th the House was to meet early. Before dawn the doors were occupied by soldiers. In the lobby stood Colonel Pride with a list of the members; Lord Grey of Groby, a simple young man always eager to be helpful, was at his side to identify them as they arrived. Nearly a hundred and fifty were turned back or arrested. Of the others, the great number absented themselves. The Greeting Devil entered London that evening. The Long Parliament had shrunk to an unauthorized assembly, meeting by permission of the soldiers to do what the soldiers told them, and what the soldiers would do depended on how Cromwell handled the situation which Ireton and Harrison had made for him.

By the death of the King, the allegiance of his subjects would be, in law and in feeling, transferred to his son, who would at once become King of Scotland too. War with Scotland was therefore almost inevitable. The Queen was a French princess: the Stadholder of Holland was the King's son-in-law. The Old Enemies, and the New Enemy whose triumphant advance in all the seas the City was watching with jealous eyes, might all be down on us at once. On the other hand, the execution of the King would be an extreme concession to the Wild Men, the Levellers, and Anabaptists, whose theories had given Ireton and Cromwell so many anxious days at Putney a year before. Only on those theories could it be even plausibly justified or distinguished from simple assassination. To profess even to try the King was to make a mockery of the law, to put the trial on the footing not of law but of some mysterious Natural Right inherent in the people of England, and then to maintain that the people were represented by one particular group in the House of Commons, was to make an equal mockery of justice and truth.

It was impossible to kill the King without abolishing the Monarchy. And then? As the future proved, there was no then. There was war with Scotland and Holland: there was a Parliament of Saints, which found its job above its capacity and

faded away, a new House of Lords that everybody laughed at, a foreign policy as spirited as Chatham's, and as immoral as Frederick's, and then a Restoration. Historically, the Commonwealth is so much time wasted. Its only consequence was the reaction it inspired, and the party divisions it consolidated. And yet—what was to be done with the King? So long as he regarded himself as Indispensable, nothing.[15] His death was the passionate solution of a problem which had become logically insoluble, which his own bearing had made insoluble. Simple deposition was more dangerous than death. Legally he would still have been King of Scots, in fact he would still have been King of nine Englishmen out of ten, the centre of continual plots against the security of any government that followed him. Nor would deposition have satisfied the wrath of the Saints.

'The Presbyterians brought the King to the block and the Independents cut off his head.' In other words, a Constitutional opposition to particular modes of Government developed under the stress of resistance into a revolutionary assault upon the essential character of that Government. So far the formula which governs the American, the French, and the Russian revolutions is equally applicable to the destruction of the English monarchy in 1649. If George III had been snapped up by an American privateer and carried to Philadelphia, plenty of Bradshaws and Iretons on the other side would have been prepared to arraign him as a 'tyrant, traitor and murtherer', and it was through the American Revolution that the Puritan Revolution, a purely insular transaction, was generalized, as it were, into a universal experience.

This explains the revulsion of the nineteenth century from the canonical view of the Revolution set forth in Clarendon. For the preliminaries, the setting of the pieces in 1641, Clarendon is indispensable, and I know no other historian, when once the ear is attuned to the stubborn magnificence of his style, with the same capacity to set his reader thinking as the men of his own age thought. His intense intellectual apprehension of persons, causes and situations, communicates itself to us as we read, until the voice of Clarendon sounds like the voice of history pronouncing doom. The great and lasting merit of Hallam was to demonstrate that it was the voice of an advocate and not a judge and, though it was written a hundred years ago, there is still no better way of adjusting one's mind to the issues of the seventeenth century than to read again Hallam's chapter on the Outbreak of the Civil War.

For the period covered by this essay Clarendon, writing in exile and often ill-informed, has no longer the authority of a direct observer. Hallam owns himself at a loss to interpret the events of 1647. The clue had not been found. Macaulay, who brought to the subject a practical experience of political transactions, divined the truth that the secret lay in Cromwell's relations with his party, and that they were to be judged by the laws which in all ages regulate the relations of parties and their leaders. It was not the whole truth, but none the less the three or four paragraphs which were all he could give to the subject are a remarkably correct evaluation of the factors which we now know from the Clarke Papers to have been operating at the time of the Hampton Court negotiations.

In the meanwhile Carlyle had exploded into the field, bringing with him the interpretation of Cromwell as a universal, almost a cosmic, figure or symbol, and by his magical gift of evoking past times and places, his demonic power of flashing characters on the screen, to be caught for a moment and never forgotten, he created a new tradition, a canonical view to replace that of Clarendon. But Carlyle graded the importance of things by their personal interest to himself: to all that is not odd or violent or dramatic in history he was indifferent. I suppose I am one of many who felt when young after reading the sunrise of Dunbar that there was nothing left for words to do. A maturer judgment inclines me to agree with an observation of the late Charles Ricketts. *Cromwell* had been one of his favourite books. But he could not read it in the war. 'It is so dreadfully like the Kaiser.'

Carlyle's *Cromwell* had been before the world fifteen years when Gardiner's first two volumes appeared. No one can speak without respect of the heroic and ill-rewarded labours of a life spent, as Thucydides might have said, in the pursuit of everything which passes for truth, and Gardiner's industry, his accuracy, his learning were such that every future interpretation of the period must be in the main a reinterpretation of his material. But he was dominated, not by Carlyle indeed but by the atmosphere which Carlyle had created, an atmosphere which—very much like that which the hurricane passage of Byron had diffused a generation before—had a peculiar influence upon safe-living Victorian Liberals, bearing witness from the security of their pulpit, their desk, or their counting-house, against the shortcomings of the gentry and the Church, lashing themselves to ideal stakes, and glowing in the flames of property bonfires.

As Grote's *History of Greece* is a monument to Philosophic Radicalism, so Gardiner's *History* is a monument to the Nonconformist Conscience. What Cæsar was to Mommsen, Cromwell was to Gardiner: the exemplar of an ideal polity, the pledge of its final triumph; and 'the greatest because the most representative Englishman' was one who, in a volcanic hour of anger, disappointment, ambition, impatience, and perhaps despair, flung himself against the English tradition at

the point where it has always been strongest and most sensitive, its respect for law, and so condemned his party to an age-long exclusion, hardening and narrowing, from the national life which, wisely led, it might have permanently enriched.

Crabbe, who knew it well, has painted the Independent character, as it survived, secluded and remote, among the leading families of our provincial towns:

> Grave Jonas Kindred, Sybil Kindred's sire,
> Was six feet high, and looked six inches higher;
> Erect, morose, determined, solemn, slow,
> Who knew the man, could never cease to know;
> Himself he viewed with undisguised respect,
> And never pardoned freedom or neglect.
> Peace in the sober house of Jonas dwelt,
> Where each his duty and his station felt:
> Yet not that peace some favoured mortals find,
> In equal views and harmony of mind;
> Not the soft peace that blesses those who love,
> Where all with one consent in union move;
> But it was that which one superior will
> Commands, by making all inferiors still;
> Who bids all murmurs, all objections cease,
> And with imperious voice, announces—Peace!

But this is Puritanism astringent, shut off, sectarian; and what transformations it underwent when in the nineteenth century its bearers rose in influence and wealth we all know. What would have been the future of Puritanism dominant, diffusive, mellow? One may think, remembering how much in the English character was ready to welcome it, remembering Sidney and Spenser and Falkland, Hopton and the Standard-Bearer, Bemerton and Little Gidding, that it might have worked with the silent pervasive power of Evangelicalism in a later age, bracing and humanizing as it moved. But in that December it made its fatal step aside, and took the indelible print of hypocrisy and self-will. It gained ten years of domination and lost its own soul. In defying the law which guarded both Parliament and King, it defied the 'ancient and inbred integrity and piety, good sense and good humour' of the people of England. To no man were they dearer than to Cromwell, and yet it was Cromwell, caught in a whirlwind which he had lost the will to control, that spoke the fateful word. 'Is it possible to fall from grace?' he asked when he was dying. 'No,' they assured him, 'it is not possible.' History may not feel so certain.

XI

The King reached Windsor on December 23rd. That evening the Speaker told a friend that they were going to make a last attempt. What form exactly it took we do not know. But it failed. It was bound to fail. All that was best and worst in Charles, his unimaginative egoism on one side, his profound conception of his duty on the other, now joined to keep him fixed and steady. He could not see himself as any other kind of King than the one he always had been, the King with the last word in the government. And he could not in conscience acknowledge the meeting at Westminster as Parliament. The *coup d'état* of December 6th had placed him in an inexpugnable position, as the guardian of the fundamental laws of the land. If the Commons were not safe in their House, what labouring man in England was safe in his cottage? Whether he had in secret counted the cost we cannot tell. He had a strange hopefulness in the darkest hours. But nothing now could have made him deviate from his path. He was, if need be, ready to die, believing—and history need not question his faith—that he would die for the rights, for the laws and liberties, of his people: a King and—at last—a King of England too.

To take him out into the Castle Yard and shoot him, as Lisle and Lucas had been shot at Colchester, would have been the simplest and most honourable course. Any form of trial was bound to be a portentous farce: every step towards the settled end revealed the hollowness of the ground on which the soldiers were proceeding. No English lawyer of repute would have anything to do with it, and the case was got up by an obliging Dutchman, Isaac Dorislaus. The Lords would not pass the necessary Ordinance. Out of 135 judges named by the House of Commons, 50 declined to act. That the Rump should have chosen to simulate the forms of a trial rather than of an attainder was a concession to the dramatic emotion. Lesser offenders had been tried. The greatest of all must be tried.

The preliminaries of the Trial read like the minutes of a Pageant Committee. On January 9th, Edward Dendy, Sergeant-at-Arms, rode into Westminster Hall, with six trumpets and his mace, and there to the sound of martial music declared that the Court would open on the 10th. In the afternoon he repeated the performance at the Exchange and in Cheapside. On the 12th, Bradshaw took his seat as President, and the Court ordered that in spite of his coy protests he should be addressed as Lord President. The sitting on the 17th was devoted to providing for the security of the Court, stopping up passages, patrolling the leads and disposing of the troops on guard. Sword and mace were to be carried before the Lord President: twenty gentlemen were to attend him. It may have been at this stage that the Lord President laid in the tin hat which is still preserved at Oxford. A Committee is to consider what habits the officers of This Court shall wear: they are to consult the Heralds. It would be dreadful to discover that you had murdered your Sovereign in the wrong-coloured breeches.

We may call up the picture of Stuart Westminster best, if we think of ourselves in Old Palace Yard looking past the east end of the Abbey. There a narrow lane began, running, not straight, to a point about as far as the statue of Peel. Everything on our right is buildings, clustered in irregular courts, like those at St. James's, round the Hall. Making our way among them towards the river we should find houses, with gardens and orchards, with water-steps leading down to an open foreshore. In one of these, Cotton House, the home of the great Cottonian collection, the King was lodged on January 20th. He had been brought from Windsor to St. James's the day before. His state had been cut down, but his guardians, Colonel Whichcott at Windsor and Colonel Tomlinson at St. James's, were humane and well-bred men, and they saw that his personal comfort was maintained.

Sixty-seven members of the High Court sat, with Bradshaw, on benches placed across the end of the Hall and hung with scarlet. The roll was called, 'Thomas, Lord Fairfax.' 'Not here, and never will be. He has too much sense.' It was Lady Fairfax in the gallery. The Lord President's chair was of crimson velvet. Facing him sat the King, his servants close to him on the left, the guards drawn up in hollow square, left, right, and behind him. The spectators sat in galleries on either side, or stood at the lower end of the Hall. Silence having been proclaimed, the Lord President required the prisoner to hear the charge.

If—passing over the fatal objection that no court could try the King, and that this court could try no man—we examine the charge as a political document, as it might be a vote of censure, we find that it contains three statements of fact and one of intention. The facts are: First, that the King was a trustee for the good and benefit of the people; second, that at various times and places between 1642 and 1644 he had engaged in acts of war against Parliament; third, that he had renewed, or caused to be renewed, the war in 1648. The intention alleged was to erect an unlimited power in himself, and to destroy the opportunities of redress for misgovernment furnished by regular and frequent meetings of Parliament. To which, if the King had condescended to plead, he had a conclusive answer. The intention could not possibly be

elicited from anything that had happened in the period covered by the facts. By giving his assent to the Triennial Bill in 1641, he had put it out of his power to interfere with regular and frequent meetings of Parliament, and the only answer to a charge so drawn was the contemptuous laugh with which the King received the conclusion that

> Charles Stuart was a tyrant, traitor and murtherer, and a public and implacable enemy, to the Commonwealth of England.

Bradshaw called on the prisoner to reply. As the King stood up, the surge of spectators forward from the doors of the hall drowned his first words. It was noticed, and it is perhaps not without significance, that the King's stammer left him when he confronted his judges. The restlessness of mind which was the source of so many errors, the cause of so many failures, had subsided into an entire serenity, into the simple apprehension of one simple idea. He challenged the competence of the Court. Like his son James, he had a trick of repeating his sentences. 'I would know,' he said, 'by what authority, I mean lawful authority, there are many unlawful authorities in the world, highwaymen and pickpockets: I would know by what authority, by what lawful authority, I was brought here. When I know a lawful authority I will answer.' And this was all the three days' proceedings in Westminster Hall came to—the King asserting that the sixty gentlemen on scarlet benches were not a court, Bradshaw replying that they were. And as they obviously were not, no more need be said.

Every effort had been made to secure for the Court names of repute in the country. Some of the best blood in the English counties was to be found in the roll of Members of Parliament nominated to sit—Fenwick of Northumberland, Brereton of Cheshire, Danvers of Wiltshire, Corbet of the Marches, Masham of Essex, Temple of Stowe—a hundred in all. Sidney's nephew was among them, and Wentworth's grandson and Burleigh's great-grandson. On a large view we might think of the High Commission as the sons of the Tudor gentry sitting in judgment on the heir of Tudor sovereignty, and preparing the way for the Whig aristocracy of the eighteenth century, and, so regarded, the charge, with its emphasis on the personal government of the 'thirties, while it remains untenable at law, becomes historically convincing. In calling a new aristocracy into existence the Tudors had created a power in equipoise to the Crown, a power deeply bedded in the land, in the indestructible fabric of the counties, with Parliament for its organ. Down to 1641 it was, to all intents and purposes, solid. Then it split into the party which held that enough had been done and the party of further advance. It always does—it always will. Graham and Stanley stop: Russell goes on, calls in O'Connell, and upsets the coach, and so the King, or the Conservatives, come back again. But in 1660 the King could not go behind 1641: in 1840 the Conservatives could not go behind 1831. The flood goes down, the stream flows on in the new channels which its violence has opened.

> Whosoever shall by God's blessing be able to preserve his conscience and his courage very few years, will find himself wished for again in his country, and may see good days again.[16]

What came back in 1660 was not only the Monarchy as an institution but the Image of the King. The Monarchy had to be resettled. The Image persisted. Parliament and the soldiers had set Charles in a light which made all flaws in the King invisible and revealed only the lineaments of the martyr.

After the fruitless altercation with Bradshaw he was removed to St. James's. He spent Sunday in devotion and in preparing a statement to read on the second day. The judges prayed, fasted, and heard three sermons in Whitehall. London was strangely, mournfully quiet. The ministers of the City churches met to draw up a reasoned declaration against the trial. The Scottish Commissioners had already lodged a protest against the proceedings taken against their King. It was whispered that Fairfax meant to declare for the King, that he would appeal to the Army, that he was under arrest at his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields. But whether it was the sight of the soldiers, the solemn pageantry of Westminster Hall, or the sudden and incredible march of events, London was overawed. Perhaps of her half-million souls there was not one in ten but would have heard with joy, or at least relief, that the King had been rescued. But no one stirred.

> So much one man can do
> That does both act and know.

Throughout these days Cromwell seems to have been in a state of hysterical exaltation, breaking out in laughter and horseplay and shouts of rage. It is indeed clear that only some demonic determination could have driven the Court through to its pre-appointed conclusion. On Monday, the King delivered as much as he was allowed of the demurrer

which he had prepared on Sunday. Bradshaw stopped him: 'Sir, you may not discuss the authority of the Court. You are to answer the charge.'

> 'By your favour, Sir: I do not know the forms of law. I am not a lawyer. But I know as much law as any gentleman in England and—by your favour, Sir—I know that I am pleading for the liberties of the people of England more than any of you. Any man brought before a court may demur against the proceedings. And if Power without Law may make Law, I do not know a subject in England who can be sure of his life or anything he can call his own.'

Monson, Pelham, Harington, Lascelles, Mauleverer, Grey—did not these words sound ominous to gentlemen who knew as much law as the King, who had seen their neighbours' parks and warrens sold, their timber felled, and the Saints battening on the proceeds? The King left the Hall that day to a loud murmur of 'God save the King'. At St. James's he talked freely to his staff. 'It is not a Court,' he said, 'and I believe the greater part of the judges agree with me.' The Court, in fact, was beginning to waver: he felt it in the air. But he was warned that evening—perhaps through Temple, who sent information to the Royal chaplains—that his death was intended, and he met the Court on Tuesday, his face grey and set after two sleepless nights, with the confidence of a man who has no more to lose. Once again he was summoned to answer.

> 'For the charge [he said] I value it not a rush. It is the liberties of the People of England that I stand for. For me to acknowledge a new court that I have never heard of before, I that am your King, that should be an example to all the people of England, to uphold justice, and to maintain the laws, indeed I know not how to do it.'

According to programme, the King was to have been sentenced on Friday and executed on Saturday. But it was necessary to secure a respectable attendance at the final sitting, and on Tuesday it seemed doubtful whether the waverers would come in. Cromwell strove hard to secure the adherence of Fairfax, but though he would not act against his old colleagues, he would not act with them. All Wednesday and Thursday were spent in hearing evidence that there had been a civil war, that the King had taken part in it, that various battles had occurred. One of the witnesses took the opportunity to air a grievance of his own: he was a barber by profession and a very gallant barber, because at Edgehill he had captured the Royal Standard. Then another man came along and took it away from him and was made a Colonel. The Court meanwhile had

> Resolved upon the whole matter:
>
> that this Court will proceed to sentence of Condemnation against Charles Stuart, King of England.
>
> Resolved: that the condemnation of the King shall be for a tyrant, traitor and murtherer:
>
> that the condemnation of the King shall be likewise for being a public enemy to the Commonwealth of England:
>
> that this condemnation *shall extend to death*.
>
> The Court being then moved *concerning the deposition and deprivation of the King*, before and in order to that part of the Sentence which concerned his execution, thought fit to defer the consideration thereof to some other time.

These are not the words or forms of English law. As Sarpi said of the dagger which struck him down in Venice, *Agnosco stylum Curiæ Romanæ*. In 1613 Suarez, at Coimbra, had produced a Defence of the Catholic Faith against the Errors of the Anglican Sect. The manuscript was sent to Rome for approval and there, to Suarez's great annoyance, the following passage was interpolated.

> Dicendum est, *post sententiam condemnatoriam regis de regni privatione*, latam per legitmam potestatem . . . posse quidem eum qui sententiam tulerit, vel cui ipse commiserit, regem privare regno, etiam illum interficiendo, si aliter non potuerit, *vel si justa sententia ad hanc etiam poenam extendatur*.

By adopting the Roman doctrine, procedure and phraseology, Dorislaus no doubt hoped to give the proceedings, as it

were, an international validity, to show that the game had been played according to some kind of rules.[17]

This was on Thursday, and the death warrant was prepared that night. But it was determined—of the debates inside the High Commission we know nothing, but there is evidence that they were long and anxious—that the King should be brought into Court once more on Saturday. A man may be ready to die and yet prefer to live. There was still one chance, one step the King might take without swerving from his course. He had challenged the Court. Suppose he challenged the body which had appointed it, stood up as the guardian of the Constitution in King, Lords, and Commons? It seems—though the clouds hangs very thick over those two days—that in some way his intention was imparted to those among his judges who might be thought to be his friends, so that they might be ready. On Saturday afternoon he was brought for the last time into the Hall. As Bradshaw opened his mouth, the King broke in with an eager earnestness:

'I desire a word: to be heard a little: I hope I shall give no occasion to interrupt.'

'You must hear the Court first,' Bradshaw answered.

'If it please you, Sir: I desire to be heard: I do not mean to interrupt: only a word. A sudden judgment——'

Again Bradshaw tried to quell his prisoner; again the King broke in:

'Sir, what I have to say bears on what I believe the Court is going to say. Therefore—Sir, a hasty judgment is not so soon recalled.'

'You shall be heard before judgment: in the meantime you may forbear.'

'I shall be heard before judgment be given?'

'You shall.'

At last the Lord President got under way.

'Gentlemen,' he said, 'it is well known to all or most of you here present that the prisoner at the bar hath been several times convented and brought before the Court to make answer to a charge of treason and other high crimes exhibited against him in the name of the people of England——'

'Not a half, nor a quarter of them,' rang out from the gallery. 'Oliver Cromwell is a traitor.'

In the confusion Axtell, second in command of the regiment, Hewson's, on duty, was heard shouting, 'Take those masks off. Come down, or I'll fetch you. Shoot the drabs if they say another word'. The Serjeant-at-Arms bustled to the spot, but the malignants had slipped out through a private door.

Bradshaw resumed once more. The Court, he said, had considered the charge: the notoriety of the facts alleged: the contumacy of the prisoner in refusing to answer, which in law amounted to confession. Nevertheless, if the King desired to offer anything in his own defence, the Court was still prepared to hear him.

The King rose. 'If', he said, 'I had a respect to my life more than to the peace of the Kingdom and the liberty of the subject, I must have made a particular defence for myself, for by that at least I might have delayed an ugly sentence which I believe will pass upon me.' He desired to be heard by the Lords and Commons in the Painted Chamber. . . .

While he was speaking a whispered altercation broke out on the scarlet benches. 'I must do it.' Cromwell was seen to turn round on the interrupter. 'Can't you be quiet?' 'No, I can't.' Downes stood up. 'I am not satisfied to give my consent to the sentence. I desire the Court may adjourn to hear my reasons.' Bradshaw was at a loss: the contingency had not been provided for, and his language sounds as if he intended to overrule both the King and Downes, but was forced by the feeling on the benches to grant an adjournment.

The sixty-seven filed into the Court of Wards. There an angry debate sprang up. Downes pleaded that the King's request should be referred to Parliament. Cromwell declaimed against the business of the day being interrupted by one 'peevish, tenacious' man. The allies on whom Downes had counted were silent. Bullied, scolded, and alone, poor Downes's stock of courage was soon exhausted, and he retired sobbing from the scene. So at least he told the story after the Restoration. The facts may have been as he alleged. But at the time he passed for a toady of Cromwell's: he recovered his spirits sufficiently to sign the death-warrant: he was provided with a comfortable job under the Commonwealth. I cannot avoid

the suspicion that the scene may have been arranged by Cromwell to test the strength of the Opposition before the final stage was reached.

The Court returned. Bradshaw acquainted the King with their decision and proceeded. He spoke at great length, and what he said came to this. He re-stated, as the prime issue, the case against the King as it stood in 1640—the intermission of Parliaments, proving the King's misfeasance in an office of trust. Herein lay the gravamen of those two counts, tyranny and treason.

And now the Lord President was running under full sail:

> 'Murder,' he boomed, 'is a hainous and crying sin. Sir, I will presume that you are so well read in Scripture as to know what God himself hath said concerning the shedding of man's blood. Sir, we know no dispensation in that Commandment "Thou shalt do no murder." God's law forbids it. Man's law forbids it, and the People, by their Representatives, having power in their hands, had there been but one act of wilful murder by you committed, had power to punish you for it.'[18]

Which in law was nonsense, and in fact irrelevant. The People, by their representatives, had already determined to negotiate with the King on Newport terms. That was why the Commons were turned out of their house on December 6th.

The King grew restless under this infliction, and as Bradshaw approached, by way of Nebuchadnezzar and Uriah the Hittite, to his conclusion, he broke in once more, in a last pitiful effort to avert the inevitable.

'I desire one word before you give sentence. I desire you to hear me concerning these great imputations you have laid on me.'

Humanity and dignity seem struggling in the Lord President's answer.

'Truly, Sir, I would not willingly interrupt you in any thing you have to say that is proper for us to admit of. But, Sir, you have not owned us as a Court. You look on us as a Sort of People met together!'

The Act was read, the proceedings recited, sentence given. As the guard closed in, the King's voice was heard for the last time calling through the tumult:

'Expect what justice other people will have.'

> NOTE.—The contemporary accounts of the Trial (of all degrees of value) will be found printed in Mr. Muddiman's *Trial of Charles I*, a collection of great interest, especially on the anecdotal and journalistic side. Of the king's last hours the story is told in Mr. Beresford's *Gossip of the XVII and XVIII Century*, so well that it need never be told again.

XII

Charles had less than three days to live. The events of those days are more minutely recorded than any passage of our older history. But none the less a certain mystery hangs over them. The death-warrant, as we have seen, was made out to take effect on Saturday. It was engrossed on Friday when the first signatures—Bradshaw, Grey, Cromwell, and so forth, not more than twenty-eight in all—were appended: and it was directed to three officers who were named. Two refused to act. To prepare a new warrant was hazardous because of the twenty-eight some might have refused to sign again. The parchment was therefore scraped, and new dates and names inserted. But the waverers were overawed, and hardly by threats, certainly not by violence, but by bluster and a fierce determination not very different from either, twenty-one signatures more were extracted, and the warrant was issued on Monday to Colonel Huncks, and as substitutes for the recalcitrant pair, Colonel Hacker and Lieutenant-Colonel Phayre. A Committee, of which Harrison and Ireton were members, had recommended the open street before Whitehall as a fit place. It was to be a public act, and grave difficulties might have arisen with the City had Tower Hill been chosen. To superintend the operations better, Ireton and Harrison took rooms in the Palace.

The King spent Saturday night at Whitehall. On Sunday, Juxon, Bishop of London, came to him. Several London ministers made a respectful tender of their services. The King courteously declined them, and he sent messages to his brother-in-law and other friends that henceforth he would receive no one but his children. At sunset he was removed to St. James's. Late at night, he sent Herbert into Westminster to recover from a lady who had it in charge a casket containing his Court jewels. Early on Monday he burnt his papers and ciphers. The two children were brought from Sion House: Elizabeth was fourteen, the Duke of Gloucester eight. The King bade her read Hooker, and Lancelot Andrewes and Laud's book to ground her against Popery, and to forgive his enemies, but never trust them. 'He bid me tell my Mother that his thoughts had never strayed from her, and that his love should be the same to the last. He desired me not to grieve for him, because he should die a martyr, and that he doubted not but the Lord would settle his throne upon his son, and that we should be all happier than we could have expected to have been if he had lived.' To the little boy he spoke more simply. 'They are going to cut off my head,' he said, 'and some of them may want to make you King. But you must not be a King so long as Charles and James live.' The child spoke up boldly. 'I will be torn in pieces first.' Then the King divided his jewels between them. Herbert, going out into the Park, met a kinsman, George Herbert's brother, Henry. He sent a message that the King should find much comfort in the second chapter of Ecclesiasticus.[19]

> For gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity.
>
> They that fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and humble their souls in his sight:
>
> Saying: We will fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men: for as His Majesty is, so is His Mercy.

Juxon stayed with him all that day.

Tuesday was bitterly cold. The King had slept soundly. Herbert, lying on a pallet by his side, had a vivid dream of Laud coming into the room and talking to the King. 'The King was pensive, the Archbishop gave a sigh.' He told his dream to the King as he was dressing him. 'It is remarkable,' he said, 'and indeed had he been living, though I loved him well, I might have said something to him that might have made him sigh.' Surely the thought must often have passed through his mind, faithful as he was to his Church, that the Churchmen had been his worst enemies, and of all Churchmen, Laud.

'Herbert,' he said, 'this is my second marriage day. I would be as trim to-day as may be, for before night I hope to be espoused to my blessed Jesus.' He had been crowned in white. Now he put on a waistcoat of garter blue, and a shirt more than ordinary, that he might not shiver and be thought to be afraid. 'I would have no such imputation. I fear not death. I bless my God I am prepared.'

Juxon came with the dawn. The King gave Herbert the few gifts he had to distribute—a ring dial for the Duke of York, the three books he had charged the Princess Elizabeth to read, some other books, a gold watch. His George, the Bishop promised to carry to the Prince of Wales. Then he retired to prayer for an hour. After prayer, he called Herbert in, and Juxon read Mattins and administered the Sacrament. The gospel for that day is the Trial of Jesus in St. Matthew. 'My Lord,' the King asked, 'did you choose that Scripture?' 'No, Sir,' was the reply, 'it is so appointed by our Church.'

It was now about ten o'clock. Hacker knocked gently at the door, and then again a little louder. It was opened, and he

entered to summon the King. After a little while, the King went out through the garden into the Park. Musqueteers on either side, halberdiers close in, drums beating, he walked briskly to Whitehall, sometimes talking to Tomlinson, now and then calling, 'March apace.' At Whitehall he was led to an inner room on the river side. He would not dine, but at the Bishop's persuasion he ate a piece of bread and drank a glass of wine. Eleven years later Huncks told a strange guardroom story of the scene at Whitehall when the King arrived. Harrison and Ireton were lying in bed together. Cromwell was in the room with the three officers and Axtell. He ordered Huncks to draw up the warrant for the executioners. Huncks refused and there were words. Cromwell stepped to a side table and wrote the order, passing it to Hacker to sign. It is certain that Harrison, Ireton, and Cromwell were at Whitehall early that morning, and that Fairfax joined them later. Where was he in the interim? One can only guess, and my guess would be that he was moving, anxiously, restlessly, and uselessly, backwards and forwards, hoping for something to happen and ready to take advantage of it if it did, and it seems most likely that the King was brought early to Whitehall where the soldiers were under Cromwell's eye, to avert the possibility of a rescue, and that Fairfax was invited, nominally to give his reasons for deferring the execution, actually to keep him from going to St. James's.

The generals kept in the background. The figure never absent from a public occasion, trivial or tragic, the self-important fat man going in and out and giving orders, was provided by Hugh Peters. He had been preaching furiously all these days, and would have preached the King's funeral sermon, had he been allowed, to his face. A fantastic idea had got about that the King, as he had refused to acknowledge the court, would resist the executioner, and workmen were set to hammer staples in the scaffold and fix ropes and pulleys to hold him down. The block was a billet six inches high. The executioners wore vizors, wigs, and false beards.[20] The scaffold was railed and hung with black, the floor being well above the heads of the crowd: access from the Banqueting Hall was provided by breaking down the wall under the second window from Charing Cross.

At about half-past one the King was summoned for the last time. He came down the Banqueting Hall under guard, the spectators lining his passage, some sorrowful, all silent. He stepped out under a brilliantly clear sky, looking over the street and the old Tiltyard into the Park. For an instant he was startled by the low block, but at the sight of the staples and pulleys he smiled. There was a broad space, occupied by soldiers, round the scaffold: his words would not have reached the multitude who stood in the street or filled the windows. Taking a slip of paper from his pocket he addressed himself to Colonel Tomlinson, the Bishop and the others, some twelve in all, who stood on the scaffold. The space was small: a tall soldier could read the King's notes over his shoulder. He could not, he said, hold himself guilty of the war: on that, the dates of the various Commissions and Declarations were enough to clear him. But he had done wrong in consenting to Strafford's death, and for that he was now to suffer. For the future, for the peace of the Kingdom—here he turned to the note-takers: 'I hope there is some one here that will carry my words further'—they must give God his due, the King his due, and the People their due. For God, he advised a national synod for the settlement of religion. For the King—some one moving shifted the axe, and the King broke off, 'Hurt not the axe, that may hurt me'—for the King, the laws would instruct them: he would say no more in his own behalf. For the People, he wished a free election of members to represent them in Parliament. But he did not believe their happiness lay in sharing government: a subject and a sovereign are clean different things. If he had consented to an arbitrary government, and to have all laws changed by the sword, he needed not to have suffered. 'And so I die a martyr for my people, and I pray that God will not lay it to their charge.'

Herbert had shrunk from the last scene, and Juxon helped the King to make ready. With the executioner's aid, his hair was turned up under a white satin nightcap. The King took off his cloak, giving his George to the Bishop with the word, 'Remember.' He next removed his doublet, showing the blue waistcoat, and then put on his cloak again. As he lay down his hair fell loose and the executioner replaced it. It was striking two. The multitude in the street saw only the upward and downward sweep of the axe and then, the head shown in silence. At the word of command two companies of horse moved up and down the street to scatter the crowd, while those who were nearest clambered up the scaffold to buy relics or trophies from the guards. The body was hastily coffined and borne through the Hall to an inner room. Returning to the Hall, Herbert met Fairfax. 'How is the King?' Fairfax asked. He had been detained, it would seem, in conversation until all was over. Then Cromwell appeared, and said they should have orders for the funeral of the King. He was buried at Windsor, the snow falling on the velvet pall as the coffin was carried from St. George's Hall to the Chapel.

FOOTNOTES:

Henry Beauclerk and his officials were a far abler team than Charles and his Ministers, but they turned the screw too tight, and the result was the anarchy under Stephen. If Cromwell had died in 1648 and left things to Fairfax, the parallel would have been very close. Henry II and Charles II succeeded because the old opposition, baronial or presbyterian, was willing to make the new Government work. In bad hands, James or John, the compromise breaks down—hence 1688 and 1215. The sequence: compression—fracture along the line of weakness—anarchy—reconstruction, seems to be one of the major rhythms of history. The world as a whole is now [1935] passing through the phase of compression in the shape of demagogic Cæsarism. Oswald Spengler, who prophesied it in 1920, observed at the same time: 'Foreigners think Parliamentarismus a form of government. It is nothing of the kind. It is an English game, like cricket, which only English people can play.' *Esto perpetua*.

The modern objection to this word is a fad, which only shows that the party in the Church who persist in it do not know their own history. In seventeenth-century English, *Protestant* is currently used in distinction not only to Papist, but to Puritan, Presbyterian, and Sectarian. This use lingered in some parts of England down to the nineteenth century, and is still, I believe, to be found in Ireland.

Butler has put in the mouth of the Independent, Ralpho, the fundamental English objection to Presbytery.

> Presbytery does but translate
> The Papacy to a free state:
> A Commonwealth of Popery:
> Where every village is a See
> As well as Rome, and must maintain
> A Tithe-Pig Metropolitan:
> Where every Presbyter and Deacon
> Commands the keys for cheese and bacon,
> And every hamlet's governéd
> By His Holiness, the Church's Head.

From this marriage Gardiner the historian was descended.

The history of this word in the sense *Temperance Cause*, *Good Old Cause*, etc, deserves to be traced in detail. From *case of one party in a lawsuit* it seems to have developed simultaneously in France and England: whether independently, I do not know. The new sense was certainly established in England as early as 1580.

A later proposal—to make Ireland a National Home for the Jews—is fraught with even more entertaining possibilities.

Cromwell, unlike Napoleon, had no head for legislation, and, except for the Redistribution Bill, suggested by Ireton and admired by Clarendon, the legislation of the Commonwealth is insignificant. Nothing shows the quality of Ireton's mind so clearly as his programme of reforms requiring to be undertaken, which would have kept Parliament busy and out of mischief for a generation.

Anyone who doubts the magnitude, not of the danger, but of the alarm, should consider Ireton's language as recorded in many places in the Clarke Papers, Vol. I. It is the language of a man who sees ahead of him the entire subversion of the social order he believes in. And Clarendon does not conceal his belief that Cromwell's 'rough, brisk' dealing with the Levellers had averted a great disaster.

The evidence for this story is quite good enough to make it, in its general sense, admissible; but the details, and the date, are doubtful.

The plan provided each bishop with a standing council of presbyters without whose consent he could perform no act of jurisdiction or ordination.

On the way, a pamphlet which the King had borrowed from Thomason the bookseller was dropped in the mud. The King gave his gentlemen the strictest injunction to see that it was returned. The pamphlet, and Thomason's grateful acknowledgment of the King's honesty as a book-borrower, still survive.

But that 'the Army are Jesuited' was a common saying in London that autumn.

It will be found in the Continuation of Blair's Autobiography by his son-in-law, Row (Wodrow Society, 1848).

I think it is plain, comparing the Ireton of the Putney debate with the Ireton of the Remonstrance, that he was mentally exhausted in the autumn of '48, and living on his nerves. The Remonstrance is a singularly flat, unconvincing manifesto.

There is indeed an alternative, which seems to have been canvassed in the summer of 1647, and which combines political efficacy with constitutional propriety. It may be admitted (*a*) that Parliament can depose a king; (*b*) that Parliament had no jurisdiction over the King of Scots (whether of Ireland, quaere). The solution was to arraign the King in Parliament for misfeasance, bind him over by statute to be of good behaviour and then reinstate him. A capably-led Parliament might have done it.

Hyde to Nicholas: November 15th, 1646.

The interpolated passage is in Suarez, Lib. VI, cap. 4. §18. That it was interpolated is known from his English secretary John Saltkell, who told the story to Bishop King of Chichester: his statement will be found in the appendix to Walton's Life of Hooker. Dorislaus was executed (it seems the right word) by Scottish royalists in Holland a few months later.

'Murder' proceeded Mr. Honeythunder. 'Bloodshed! Abel! Cain! I hold no terms with Cain. I repudiate with a shudder the red hand when it is offered to me. The Commandments say no murder. *No* murder, Sir!'

'And they also say, you shall bear no false witness,' observed Mr. Crisparkle.

The King's Bible, given to Juxon and preserved in his family, is now at Chastleton House in Oxfordshire.

An interesting Shakespearian allusion (hitherto, I believe, unnoticed), probably the first quotation from Shakespeare in any newspaper, will be found in the *Perfect Weekly Account* for January 31st, which refers to the executioners as *the deputies of that grim serjeant, Death*.

Transcriber's Notes:
hyphenation, spelling and grammar have been preserved as in the original
Page xviii, not a showy Council ==> a showy Council
Page 37, and doctine; and ==> and doctrine; and
Page 77, settled." ==> settled.'
Page 87, King of Eypt ==> King of Egypt
Page 114, rated Hammond soundly ==> berated Hammond soundly
Page 156, his unimaginative egosim ==> his unimaginative egoism

[The end of *Charles I and Cromwell* by G. M. Young]